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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Oct. 19, 2019



JOSH WINSLOW

DYNAMIC DUO – Quarterback Justin Fields, left, and running back J.K. Dobbins led Ohio State's 296-yard, second-quarter outburst, which sparked the Buckeyes to a 34-10 win over Michigan State.

Ohio State Fights Through Early Adversity To Beat Michigan State

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

Ohio State sailed through its nonconference slate and the first two games of its Big Ten schedule with such ease that head coach Ryan Day has practically been begging for his team to face some sort of adversity this season.

When the fourth-ranked Buckeyes were finally tested for the first time on Oct. 5 against No. 25 Michigan State, they rose to the occasion and proved once again they belong in the conversation among the nation's elite with a 34-10 win over the Spartans.

During the opening quarter, though, Ohio State looked vulnerable. The Buckeyes were challenged – particularly on offense – in ways that they weren't in blowout wins over Florida Atlantic, Cincinnati, Indiana, Miami (Ohio) and Nebraska to open the season.

Ohio State failed to convert a first down on its first three possessions of the game and finished the first quarter with just 16 yards of total offense, all of which came through the air. The Buckeyes had 10 rushing attempts

for zero yards and held a slim 3-0 lead despite starting two drives inside the Michigan State 30-yard line thanks to a pair of fumbles.

"Early on, there were some mistakes made," Day said. "That was not a good quarter of football. But that was good. It was hard. You had guys kind of digging at each other, grinding and yelling at each other, so we've got to figure this thing out. And we did."

Ohio State – which donned all-black uniforms for just the third time in program history – has shown time and time again this season its penchant for explosive plays, and the second quarter of the Michigan State game was no exception. The Buckeyes racked up 296 yards as part of a 24-point quarter to take a 27-10 halftime lead.

The outburst, led by sophomore quarterback Justin Fields, marked the seventh time this season Ohio State has scored 21 or more points in a quarter.

Fields – who finished the game with 206 yards passing, 61 yards rushing and three total touchdowns – got the second-quarter scoring started when he rolled out right and found wide receiver Binjimen Victor all alone

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Buckeye Leaves

The Buckeyes put up more rushing yards than Michigan State had given up in its first five games combined, while the defense again held tall.

Here are the BSB staff's picks, as well as picks from our BuckeyeSports.com Forum, for who earned Buckeye Leaves during Ohio State's 34-10 win.

Wyatt Crosher, BSB: It may have not been the statistical performance of a lifetime for him, but Justin Fields went up against his toughest task yet in Michigan State's defense and once again put up a strong showing to help lead his team to a 24-point win.

Fields completed 17 of 25 passes for 206 yards and two touchdowns, while rushing for 61 yards on 11 carries and a score.

During the game, he also threw his first career collegiate interception, but he still managed to make up for it overall with a solid showing.

Michigan State's defense is no joke, and the sophomore quarterback still was a great game manager and was able to evade the pressure put forth by the defensive front often, something that doesn't completely show up in the stat sheet.

Joe Dempsey, BSB: J.K. Dobbins is worthy of a Buckeye Leaf for his powerful performance against the No. 4 rushing defense in the country. The Spartans entered the game allowing only 55.8 rushing yards per contest, but Dobbins did not seem to care. The junior captain accrued 172 yards on 24 carries (7.2 average) and made one of the biggest plays of the game.

With the Buckeyes leading 17-10 and facing third-and-2 from their own 33-yard line, they turned to Dobbins for 2 yards. The talented tailback from La Grange, Texas, gained the first-down yardage and a whole lot more, bursting through the stout Spartan front for a 67-yard touchdown run. Dobbins was run down from behind, but the Michigan State defender attempted to strip the ball from the 5-10, 217-pound back, and failed.

Dobbins also added two catches for 2 yards in the passing game.

Andrew Lind, BSB: It may not have counted thanks to a questionable blindside block call on linebacker Baron Browning, but safety Jordan Fuller picked off a tipped pass and ran it back 86 yards for a touchdown.

It was yet another strong effort from Fuller, a senior captain who recorded his second interception in as many weeks and also led the team in tackles against Michigan State with seven.

Fuller's leadership may be the least discussed part of Ohio State's defensive revival, particularly in the secondary where he's overshadowed by cornerbacks Damon Arnette and Jeffrey Okudah.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: None of Ohio State's defenders put up massive games on the stat sheet in Ohio State's 34-10 win over Michigan State, but that doesn't mean there weren't any star performers. Chase Young shined as usual, as did Jeff Okudah, while Jordan Fuller filled up the sheet with tackles. However, my Buckeye Leaf of the game on the defense goes to a bit of an unheralded playmaker: defensive tackle Jashon Cornell.

Cornell didn't have a massive game for recording stats,

as he finished with just four tackles, but his impact was felt all night long even when he wasn't directly making the play. With an inexperienced interior line in front of him, Cornell took up two blockers on basically every play and still managed to break through for a big sack in the third quarter to force a third down.

More importantly, Cornell's impact can be seen in Michigan State's rushing numbers. The Spartans ran for just 67 yards and had essentially no success up the middle. That's what an elite defensive tackle can do for a defense, and that's what Cornell did on Saturday night.

BSB Subscribers

The entire D-Line, especially Chase Young and Jashon Cornell. They may be more disruptive than the 2002 D-line that disrupted the Miami (Fla.) offense in the Championship game. J.K. Dobbins, the best back in the NCAA including the one from Wisconsin. Jordan Fuller, Tuf Borland, both were making plays visibly all night. The offensive play calling in the second quarter, the quick adjustments are amazingly good. And the whole D for the second-half shutout.

– AnthonyBuckeye

Dobbins. Rough going at first, then got a big hole and outraced the Sparty D to the end zone. 170-some yards – not a bad day's work against a solid D.

– mrbigbux

I'll have to give mine to Coach Day this week. We struggled out of the gate, but he drew up that beautiful fake bootleg play and he kept pounding the ball with J.K. and eventually we broke through.

– Tiffin Buckeye



From The Message Board

Following Ohio State's 34-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 5, Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as staff members, which player they think has been an unexpected difference maker on defense. Here are some of the responses:

"I think Pete Werner is playing much better than last season. If I could name two players, I'd go with Malik Harrison."

– Terrier Buck

"Baron Browning bringing another dimension (speed) to the linebacker corps. When he is coming on a blitz – look out!"

– mrbigbux

"I pick Damon Arnette, whose mouth works as hard as his muscles! The kid strives to be his best. I always enjoy watching him."

– PeyoteBuck

"I think the scheme change from man-man coverage that resulted in the Buckeye defensive players having their backs to the ball vs. the often zone coverage with the players with their eyes on the ball is a single large factor in the defensive improvement. A number of players starting with Chase Young, Jeff Okudah and several others are playing lights out this year."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"Malik Harrison. He was good last year but I think he is a game-changer this year. Next would be Shaun Wade. He has been a 'surprise' to me. I am not as big on Damon Arnette as some of you. I don't know how much of a surprise he would be anyway. He should be playing at a high level."

– Mcarr

"My pick would go to Shaun Wade, who has really found himself an

impressive role in the secondary. Wade has been an incredibly hard hitter all season and has made some incredibly athletic plays on the ball when he has gotten the opportunities to do so. Jeff Okudah is usually the first name talked about in the secondary, and fairly so, but Wade has been nearly just as much of a difference maker back there at this point in the season."

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB

"While I think the coaching changes and subsequent alterations in scheme made the biggest difference for the Ohio State defense, I'd be remiss if I failed to mention the play of Jashon Cornell.

"The fifth-year senior defensive tackle/end stepped into the biggest void of the defense, Dre'Mont Jones' three-technique spot, and has flourished in the role. Cornell has recorded the second-most tackles among Buckeye defensive linemen and sixth among all players with 17 (10 solo).

"The former top-100 recruit from St. Paul, Minn., has been a force in opposing backfields, posting five tackles for loss and 2½ sacks, which are both tied for third on the team with Baron Browning. Cornell has also forced one fumble so far."

– Joe Dempsey, BSB

"My answer is a bit of an easy one, but I'll say Damon Arnette. He's been excellent so far this season, and I think that having three truly excellent corners has really changed the way that Ohio State's defense can play. It would still be good with him struggling, but he sets the tone and forces teams to throw all over the field, instead of just at him."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB



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Columbus Sports Publications
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P.O. Box 12453
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bsb@buckeyesports.com

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PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

PRINT PRODUCT COORDINATOR
Andrew Lind

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow
Andrew Lind

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

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Jan Jager Dave Tebay
Ron Friedman

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Big Win Over Spartans Far From Flawless

It might have taken to the midway point of the 2019 season, but we finally discovered that Ryan Day isn't completely infallible, Justin Fields is human after all, and the Ohio State football team still has a weakness or two that need to be addressed before we anoint the Buckeyes as college football's next super team.

Still, after all of those flaws were exposed in front of 104,797 fans at Ohio Stadium and a television audience numbering several million more, the Buckeyes proved more than worthy of their No. 4 national ranking with a 34-10 victory against No. 25 Michigan State.

The Spartans, no doubt inspired by being 20-point underdogs, smothered the explosive OSU offense in the early going.

Michigan State's first two offensive possessions ended in turnovers, but a measly three points was the best the Buckeyes could do with those early gifts. The offense that seemed so streamlined and silky-smooth throughout five blowout wins got somehow stuck in first gear.

Day seemed strangely conservative with his early play-calling, almost tentative to the point that he had seen the Michigan State defense on tape and hadn't fully committed to what it was he wanted to do. As a result, Sparty came at the Buckeyes from a variety of angles, trying to rattle the OSU offense and largely succeeding in that pursuit.

Fields committed a pair of rookie mistakes on his team's first possession, overthrowing a wide-open Luke Farrell in the middle of the field before getting swallowed up in a furious rush on the next play and making things worse by retreating toward his own goal line. By the time MSU middle linebacker Joe Bachie put the finishing touches on the sack, it was an 18-yard loss all the way back to the Ohio State 9-yard line.

Things didn't get much better when the Buckeyes got the ball back following a Michigan State fumble. After running back J.K. Dobbins was stopped three yards short of a first down on third-and-9 – another conservative play call – junior kicker Blake Haubeil left his 37-yard field-goal attempt outside the right upright to keep things scoreless.

Two plays into the Spartans' next possession, MSU got too cute for its own good when it tried an option play that resulted in another fumble, this one at the Michigan State 22. But again, the Buckeyes couldn't cash in when a pair of sideline passes went nowhere and Fields took another third-down sack.

At least Haubeil redeemed himself with a 39-yard field goal, but Ohio State held only a 3-0 lead despite the fact its defense had created two turnovers in the first five minutes of the game.

The main culprit was a sputtering offense, the same one that came into the game averaging 7.3 yards on its previous 365 plays this season. Against the Spartans, the Buckeyes had exactly 19 yards to show for their first 18 plays.

Making matters worse were mental mistakes. A false-start penalty on right guard Wyatt Davis stunted momentum on the possession that ended with Haubeil's missed field goal, and a holding call against left guard Jonah Jackson wiped out a long run by Dobbins later in the first quarter. Those were just two of 10 penalties called against the Buckeyes, a team that had been flagged an average of only 4.4 times over its first five games.

But then, as explosive offenses tend to do, Ohio State, for lack of a better word, exploded. Facing a third-and-7 at his own 17 early in the second quarter, Fields completed a pass for 10 yards to senior receiver K.J. Hill, and then Dobbins ripped off a 13-yard gain

over the left side to give the Buckeyes some breathing room.

On the next play, Fields rolled to his right and found one of his favorite receivers standing all alone along the sideline. Whether the call came from Day or passing game coordinator Mike Yurcich, it was an ingenious one that called for a bunched set of three receivers split wide to the right. Senior Binjimen Victor was the middle man in the set, and when Michigan State defenders concentrated on the two outside receivers, Victor slipped away and into the clear.

After he caught Fields' pass at about the Ohio State 45, Victor let his athletic talents take over. He put an ankle-buckling move on MSU cornerback Kalon Gervin at about the 25 and then went airborne inside the 5, launching himself and the football just over the end zone pylon to finish the 60-yard touchdown play and give the Buckeyes a 10-0 lead.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

To Michigan State's credit, it came right back on its next possession and drove 75 yards in a little over a minute and a half to cut its deficit to 10-7 at the 10:36 mark of the second quarter.

But the pass play from Fields to Victor seemed to be the adrenaline shot the Buckeyes were looking for on offense. They marched the football right back the other way, scoring on a 75-yard drive of their own in less than two minutes with Fields' 21-yard scoring strike to Farrell pushing Ohio State's lead back to 10 points at 17-7.

It was part of an explosive second quarter for the Buckeyes, something that has become their calling card this season. By the time half-time came, OSU had tallied 24 points to take a 27-10 lead into the locker room.

Perhaps even more impressive was the fact the Buckeyes followed their sluggish start by rolling up 296 total yards in the second quarter alone against the fast-starting Michigan State defense that seemed totally gassed by the break.

That was never more evident than late in the period when Dobbins took a handoff and veered off power blocks from Jackson and center Josh Myers. The junior running back stepped out of a tackle at the line of scrimmage and then outraced three MSU defenders on his way to a 67-yard touchdown.

That made it 24-10 in favor of the Buckeyes with 2:24 remaining in the first half. Ohio State added a 43-yard field goal from Haubeil right before the break to push its lead to 27-10, and the game was essentially over at that point.

Victory Came With Flaws

It's hard to find fault with a 24-point victory against a ranked opponent, especially a victory during which you rush for 323 yards against the nation's No. 4 rush defense, a unit that had given up just 279 yards on the ground to its previous five opponents combined.

Dobbins rushed for 172 yards, his second straight effort of 170 yards or more, and that is something accomplished by an Ohio State player only three times before. Keith Byars did it against Purdue and Illinois in 1984, Eddie George equaled the feat against Minnesota and Illinois in 1995, and Ezekiel Elliott did it three straight times at the end of the 2014

season – in the Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin, vs. Alabama in the College Football Playoff semifinal, and against Oregon in the national title game.

But before we take Dobbins' latest performance, try to match it to anything Elliott did and then extrapolate all that into another national championship run, let's admit there were problems with Ohio State's performance against Michigan State, and those flaws are going to have to be addressed before any thought of competing in this season's College Football Playoff can be entertained.

Fortunately, most of the problems appear fixable.

Penalties are going to happen, but the Buckeyes committed a couple of boneheaded ones, especially the unsportsmanlike penalty against redshirt freshman Marcus Hooker midway through the second quarter. What possible point could there be in taunting an opponent who has just made a fair catch on a kickoff?

As sure as day follows night, Hooker likely got a trip to the principal's office for that one. Likewise on Baron Browning's fourth-quarter blindside block that wiped out teammate Jordan Fuller's interception return that would have been returned 86 yards for a touchdown. Browning tipped the pass that made Fuller's pick possible, but then tried to chip-block a Michigan State player who had already passed him – one who would have been hard-pressed to catch Fuller.

Those mistakes are addressable, as are some of the errors in judgment on the part of Fields. As well as he has played during the early part of the season, we might do well to remember Fields is still a sophomore in his first season as the starting quarterback in the white-hot spotlight that constantly shines on Ohio State football.

Fields seems to sometimes revert to his high school days when he was unquestionably the most gifted athlete on the field, and his first career interception was a perfect example. He locked on early to Hill and launched a deep ball off his back foot, giving MSU cornerback Josiah Scott plenty of time to adjust to the ball and make the interception.

Poor decision-making also led to Fields being sacked three times, and he had a couple of misreads on run-pass options. Again, those are problems that can be overcome with experience, and it's still pretty hard to argue with a player who has now accounted for 1,581 yards and 26 touchdowns in just six games.

What perhaps is not so easily fixable remains the play of the linebackers, something you can't find in the box score but might wind up being the Achilles' heel of an otherwise-stout Ohio State defense.

The linebacker corps turned in some high-light plays against Michigan State, including an early 22-yard fumble return by Malik Harrison, an important tackle for loss by Tuf Borland on Spartans slot receiver Cody White late in the third quarter, and Browning's sack two plays later that forced a Michigan State punt.

But there were also some glaring errors, and a lot of it had to do with sloppy attention to detail. Whether it was failing to seal an edge that resulted in a 13-yard scramble by Spartans QB Brian Lewerke to begin his team's second-quarter touchdown drive or allowing MSU tight ends to combine for six catches for 80 yards – roughly one-third of Sparty's passing output for the game – the Ohio State linebackers simply need to up their game.



California Bill 206 Officially Passes

California governor Gavin Newsom officially signed California Bill 206 into law on Sept. 30. The bill, proposed originally by Senator Nancy Skinner, makes it illegal for the NCAA to prohibit athletes from profiting off their own likenesses. While it would not begin until Jan. 1, 2023, the bill has already drawn the ire of the NCAA, in an official release.

"California Senate Bill 206 would upend that balance. If the bill becomes law and California's 58 NCAA schools are compelled to allow an unrestricted name, image and likeness scheme, it would erase the critical distinction between college and professional athletics and, because it gives those schools an unfair recruiting advantage, would result in them eventually being unable to compete in NCAA competitions. These outcomes are untenable and would negatively impact more than 24,000 California student-athletes across three divisions."

The NCAA was joined in opposition to the bill by a number of athletic departments across the country, including Ohio State's own Gene Smith during a press conference on Oct. 1.

"My concern with the California bill – which is all the way wide open with monetizing your name and your likeness – is it moves slightly towards pay-for-play," Smith said, "and it's very difficult for us – the practitioners in this space – to figure out how do you regulate it. How do you ensure that the unscrupulous bad actors do not enter that space and ultimately create an unlevel playing field?"

Smith is the co-chair of a committee that has been looking into the viability of compensation for athletes. That group will release its finding on Oct. 29.

Gonzalez To Propose National Bill

In response to the news that California would be passing bill 206, former Ohio State receiver and current U.S. House

of Representatives member Anthony Gonzalez plans to release a similar bill not just in Ohio but nationwide in the coming weeks. Gonzalez told his former teammate Pat McAfee the reasoning behind his hope for a national bill on McAfee's podcast.

"You need a national standard, which is what I'm trying to put in place," Gonzalez said, "and, again, I think you do need some guardrails to be determined on what that looks like. I'm working with my current athletic director, Gene Smith, on what that would look like, as well as some other folks because I think you could see where this would get abused quickly and I think you want to make sure that doesn't happen."

"Admittedly, it is really difficult," Gonzalez continued. "But I think if we're thoughtful and we're talking to all the right people and we're weighing these outcomes, I do think we can get this right."

Gonzalez did not set a timetable for the announcement of his bill, though he will likely need to move quickly, as Florida and South Carolina have announced intentions to introduce similar bills.

Buckeyes Moving Up In Both Major Polls

For the second straight week, Ohio State found itself moving up in both the AP and Amway coaches polls following its 34-10 victory over Michigan State on Oct. 5.

While the move in the AP poll may need a bit of an asterisk because the Buckeyes are technically tied for third with Georgia, Ohio State is up from its No. 4 spot. With 1,393 votes, the Buckeyes and Bulldogs are behind only Alabama and Clemson, both of whom were on off weeks.

Behind the Buckeyes, LSU, Oklahoma, Florida, Wisconsin, Notre Dame and Penn State round out the top 10. The only movers in the top 10 outside of the Buckeyes were Florida, up from No. 10 to No. 7 after a 24-13 win over Auburn, and Penn State, up two spots to 10th after beating Purdue 35-7.

The Buckeyes, Badgers and Nittany Lions are joined by two other Big Ten teams, led by No. 16 Michigan after a 10-7 win over No. 17 Iowa (down from 14). Minnesota and Michigan State are the only other Big Ten teams receiving votes with 80 – the highest of any team not included in the top 25 – and 17 respectively.

The Buckeyes are up one spot in the Amway coaches poll as well, from fifth to fourth. Ohio State jumped over Oklahoma to claim the No. 4 spot despite a big win for the Sooners over Kansas, 45-20. Alabama, Clemson and Georgia all remain in front of Ohio State, while LSU, Florida, Wisconsin, Penn State and Notre Dame

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2019 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	W, 45-21	FOX	3-2 (1-0 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	W, 42-0	ABC	4-1 (1-0 American Athletic Conference)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	W, 51-10	FOX	3-2 (0-2 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)	W, 76-5	BTN	2-3 (1-0 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	W, 48-7	TBA	4-2 (2-1 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	W, 34-10	ABC/ESPN	4-2 (2-1 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	8:30 p.m.	FS1	1-4 (0-3 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	TBA	TBA	5-0 (2-0 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	3-2 (2-1 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	1-4 (0-3 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	TBA	TBA	5-0 (2-0 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	12 p.m.	FOX	4-1 (2-1 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

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

No BSB Print Issue The Week Of Oct. 13

There will be no print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin the week of Oct. 13 due to Ohio State's off week. The next issue of BSB will be mailed on Oct. 22. There is no need to miss any of the Buckeye action, however. The BSB staff will be posting all the latest Ohio State sports news on our electronic BuckeyeSports.com site. Access to BuckeyeSports.com is free to all BSB print subscribers.

BuckeyeSports.com keeps you informed on more than just open weeks. Don't miss news from Ryan Day's Tuesday press conferences or practice during the week. Also enjoy Reprint Thursdays, with stories from the BSB archives, in addition to the popular Staff Predictions feature which runs each game day. Staffer Wyatt Crosher was closest among staff members with his prediction of a 38-13 OSU victory in the game with Michigan State.

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

close out the top 10.

The coaches poll gives slightly more recognition to the Big Ten, with six total teams, led by the Buckeyes, Badgers, Lions, No. 16 Michigan, No. 18 Iowa and No. 25 Minnesota, breaking into the poll for the first time after a 40-17 win over Illinois. Michigan State is the only other Big Ten team receiving votes with 41.

Buckeyes Named FWAATeam Of The Week

After Ohio State's big 48-7 road win over Nebraska on Sept. 28, the Football Writers of America named the Buckeyes the Reveal Suits Team of the Week.

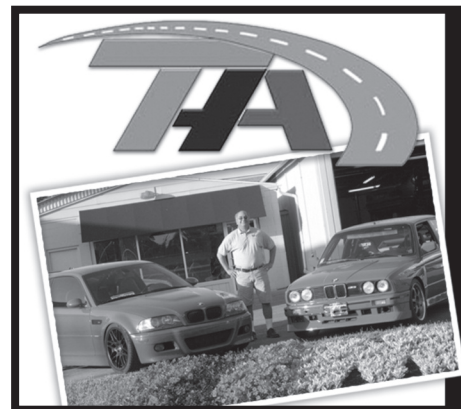
This is the fifth time Ohio State has been awarded the honor, though the first time this season. The last time Ohio State was named team of the week was

early in 2018, when the Buckeyes came from behind to beat Penn State in Happy Valley, 27-26. The Buckeyes beat out Arizona State (24-17 win over Cal), Duke (45-10 win over Virginia Tech) and SMU (48-21 win over South Florida) for the award.

Ohio State joined Georgia State, LSU, Kansas and San Jose State as teams to be honored through the first five weeks of the season.

Burrow Shares Insight On Meyer

While both Joe Burrow and Urban Meyer have moved on from Columbus, with Burrow finding great success at LSU and Meyer catching on as a FOX analyst, questions about their time together in Columbus remain. Burrow was asked



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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

It was another great day for Keith Byars. Only this time, even the sensational Byars wasn't enough to prevent defeat as the Buckeyes went down at the hands of Purdue, 28-23.

Byars rushed the football 30 times, caught nine passes and ran a kickoff back for 61 yards. On virtually every play, Byars punished Purdue defenders who entertained thoughts of stopping him. On more than one occasion, would-be tacklers caught in Byars' tracks were flattened and forced to leave the game.

Purdue coach Leon Burtnett told ESPN that it was probably the best performance he had ever seen a running back have and, for sure, the best he'd seen in his time in the Big Ten.

Buckeye coach Earle Bruce said, "I don't think I've seen a young man run harder and play harder than Keith Byars did."

The 233-pound back finished with 191 yards rushing and 102 receiving.

30 Years Ago – 1989

Traditional Ohio State football fans must have liked what they saw in Ohio State's 35-31 victory over Indiana, with the Buckeyes returning to the classic Woody Hayes "three yards and a cloud of dust" offense.

Using variations on about a half-dozen running plays, the Buckeyes powered to the win on the back of 52 rushes for 253 yards while passing just six times. Running back Carlos Snow ran for 136 yards and a score on 26 carries, while Scottie Graham added 124 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries.

Co-captain Joe Staysniak summed it up best when he said "I think Coach Hayes would have liked this game. I think he would have been proud today."

25 Years Ago – 1994

It was the 10th-largest crowd to ever watch a football game in Ohio Stadium, and it certainly ranked in the top 10 for restlessness.

Following Ohio State's fourth straight home loss to Illinois, this time a 24-10 romp for the Illini, many fans couldn't hold their contempt for what they obviously thought was less than the Buckeyes' best effort.

"You guys have no pride," screamed one guy. Another chimed in, "We haven't beaten these guys here since Reagan was president."

Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger walked off the field to someone chanting, "Time for a change! Time for a change!"

20 Years Ago – 1999

After close to 10 months of negotiations, Ohio State and John Cooper officially agreed to a contract extension for the 62-year-old head coach that would look to keep him in Columbus for five more years. The deal had Cooper making at least \$1.1 million a year.

"Every day I pinch myself and thank the good Lord," Cooper said as the deal was announced. "He has been good to me. To come where I've come from and to go through what I've been through, I've been very fortunate."

The new deal elevated Cooper, who was in his 12th season in Columbus, into the ranks of a handful of college football coaches making \$1 million or more annually.

"In the initial conversation with the university, they said they wanted to put me in the top echelon," Cooper said.

15 Years Ago – 2004

The last time Ohio State had lost two games in a row, it got a new head coach.

While nobody, save for possibly some overreacting denizens of the Internet, called for Jim Tressel's ouster, it was apparent that the 2004 Buckeyes were at a crucial point in their season.

The word "crossroads" came up more than once in the aftermath of OSU's 24-13 home loss to Wisconsin, a loss that not only sent the Buckeyes to 0-2 in the Big Ten but also snapped the team's 18-game home winning streak, which had been the second-longest such run in the nation behind Boise State's 22 home victories in a row.

"It's absolutely devastating, demoralizing," said red-shirt sophomore defensive lineman Jay Richardson. "This is our stadium. We haven't been beaten here since I've been here. Since my freshman year of 2002 I've never lost here."

10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State battled Wisconsin in what had been billed going into the game as an old-fashioned Big Ten slugfest between two physical teams that liked to run the football. The ninth-ranked Buckeyes' 31-13 win was instead one of the oddest games that Ohio Stadium had ever seen.

Wisconsin had twice as many total yards as Ohio State, 368-184, and had 22 first downs to the Buckeyes' eight. The Badgers ran 89 plays in the game compared to the Buckeyes' 40, allowing UW to possess the ball for 42:47 of the game's 60 minutes.

"I don't think I've ever participated in a game like this

before," said OSU offensive guard Bryant Browning.

Totals like that would have normally meant that Wisconsin's powerful rushing offense had controlled the game's tempo and the scoreboard, but Ohio State came out with the win thanks to a combined three touchdowns scored by the defense and special teams unit.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer had expressed concern leading up to Ohio State's game against visiting Rutgers that the Buckeyes might have lost momentum after a second early open week.

Those concerns proved unfounded. The Buckeyes continued their run of dominant play and routed an overmatched Rutgers squad 56-17 in front of 106,795 on homecoming day in Ohio Stadium.

"We had a lot of respect for Rutgers," Meyer said after Ohio State's fourth straight win. "They came in 5-1 and really could have been 6-0, so we're pleased with the get out, that we got out of the locker room fast. Going up 14-0, that's a good sign of several games in a row right now."

Redshirt freshman quarterback J.T. Barrett played a starring role for Ohio State, as he threw for 261 yards on 19-of-31 passing with three touchdowns and added 107 on the ground with two more scores.

One Year Ago – 2018

Bad losses are common in college football, but bad wins are harder to come by. For Ohio State, a 23-point victory, 49-26, against Indiana probably didn't fall into the "bad win" category, but parts of the performance were described as everything from tired to alarming during the postgame press conference.

The Buckeyes found themselves trailing 17-14 with 7:04 on the second-quarter clock. Indiana piled up 322 passing yards, and Ohio State managed just 154 yards on 48 attempts. The defense struggled to pressure the passer, and the back end struggled to make plays.

To some extent, Ohio State was bailed out by a huge game from sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins and his outstanding wide receiver corps. Haskins finished with 455 passing yards – just three shy of the program record set by Art Schlichter in 1981 – and six touchdowns (with two interceptions). Four different receivers caught at least one score, including two – Parris Campbell and Terry McLaurin – who had a pair each.

Oct. 3 about Meyer's motivational style and gave an answer that certainly fits the former Buckeye coach.

"Coach Meyer, when he gets a new quarterback there as a freshman, he kind of pokes and prods them to see what they can take and then if they can go out and execute while he's back there yelling at them," Burrow said. "He kind of mimics environments you're going to see on the road, so he wants to see if their quarterbacks can handle it. He would be back there yelling at me saying, 'You're a D-II quarterback, you can't throw,' and just see if you can handle it as a quarterback."

Burrow went on to say that Meyer told him that he "throws like a girl" and inspired the quarterback to seek out coaching from a specialist to improve his arm strength.

"It completely changed the way I threw the ball."

Haskins Named Backup To Colt McCoy

Despite getting the nod in week four after former starter Case Keenum left the game, Dwayne Haskins was not named the starter for Washington prior to its week-five matchup with the New England Patriots on Oct. 6. In his place, head coach Jay Gruden named Colt McCoy the starting quarterback.

"I knew it a long time ago: It's going to be Colt and we'll go from there," Gruden said. "It's his sixth year in the system, and the other guys just got here in the offseason. It means a lot, confidence in the protections. A lot of it is about being able to protect yourself and obviously knowing the route concepts we've been running for a long time."

While Haskins remained on the bench, Gruden said that he's still on track to be a starter down the road.

"There's a lot of talk of what we should do with him, but we're here every day and I have a pretty good gauge of what we should do with him," Gruden told ESPN, "and what his progression should be like and where he is as far as a quarterback in the NFL."

Haskins completed just nine of his 17 passes in a week-four loss to the New York Giants, tossing for 107 yards but three interceptions.

McCoy threw for 119 yards on 18 of 27 passing in the 33-7 loss to the Patriots. He threw one interception and fumbled twice, both of which were recovered by the Redskins.

Nugent Back In The NFL

Thanks to an injury to kicker Stephen Gostowski, the New England Patriots

signed Buckeye legend Mike Nugent to fill in against Washington.

Nugent, who last played for Oakland in 2018, was the most experienced of the seven kickers the Patriots tried out, beating out Kai Forbath, Blair Walsh, Elliott Fry, Matthew Wright, Younghoe Koo and Josh Gable for the job. Head coach Bill Belichick explained the decision on Oct. 4.

"Mike's got a lot of experience," Belichick said. "We felt like he was the best option. Just seeing where the player is currently, but the past has some relevance too. It's a combination, but it would be hard to sign somebody at that position that didn't kick well in a workout. There'd have to be a lot of other things in place that would override that, I would think."

The former second-round pick had a hit two field goals from 37 and 23 yards out, respectively. He also connected on 3 of 4 extra point attempts

Bell, Thomas Still Starring For Saints

There may not be a former Buckeye who has taken a bigger step forward at the start of the new NFL season than New Orleans Saints safety Vonn Bell. After his first three NFL seasons had

him make plays but struggle to stay on the field as a starter, Bell has fully taken over in New Orleans and looks to be one of the team's top leaders.

In a 12-10, defensive battle win against the Dallas Cowboys in week four, Bell carried the team not only with his leadership, but with his stats. He put up a team-high 10 tackles, deflected a pass and recovered two fumbles. The second of the two came at the expense of another former Buckeye, Ezekiel Elliott, and led to three of the Saints' points just before the half ended, giving them a 9-3 lead.

Offensively, the Saints' only real production came from another Buckeye: wideout Michael Thomas. Thomas has kept up his superstar pace early in the season, and despite a new quarterback in Teddy Bridgewater after an injury to Drew Brees, Thomas has been as dominant as any receiver in the league.

He had nine receptions for 95 yards in the win, both of which easily led the team. He caught all nine of his targets and went basically unchecked by the Cowboys for much of the game. After week four, he was tied for first for total receptions in the NFL with Los Angeles' Keenan Allen with 34.

Continued On Page 6



INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

Will Smith Inducted To Saints' Ring Of Honor

The Saints honored former Buckeye Will Smith on Oct. 6 during halftime of their prime-time matchup with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Smith, who played for the Saints from 2004 to 2013, officially entered the Saints' ring of honor, joining owner Tom Benson, kicker Morten Andersen, linebacker Rickey Jackson, quarterback Archie Manning and tackle Willie Roaf.

Smith tragically passed away in 2016. His wife, Racquel, and children William, Wynter and Lisa were on hand to receive the honor. A star on and off the field, Smith played a major role in Ohio State's 2002 national title role, just as he did for New Orleans in their Super Bowl win following the 2009 season. The Saints released a statement on the ceremony and made mention of Smith's off-the-field excellence.

"Just as important though to the driving force and outstanding player that

Smith was on the field, several important charitable causes were just as big winners on behalf of his generosity as the Saints were of his gameday efforts. Smith and his wife formed the 'Where There's a Will There's a Way' foundation to mentor, assist and provide educational support to at-risk children throughout Louisiana and in his hometown of Utica, N.Y., where he went to high school and was raised as a youth after being originally born in New York City."

Ohio State honored Smith following his death in 2016 with a moment of silence prior to the spring game.

Former Buckeye Funderburk Suspended Again

Former Ohio State basketball player Derek "D.J." Funderburk is apparently in trouble once again, though this time his troubles are coming at N.C. State rather than in Columbus. According to a release from the school, Funderburk has been suspended indefinitely.

The release doesn't specify anything further than saying that Funderburk was suspended for a "violation of team policy."

Funderburk was named offseason MVP by head coach Kevin Keatts just a few weeks prior to the news, which indicates that Funderburk's transgressions were recent.

The former Buckeye transferred out of Ohio State's program shortly after Chris Holtmann arrived. He had been suspended for a failure to meet program standards by Holtmann and was declared academically ineligible at Ohio State prior to his transfer.

Once a four-star prospect, Funderburk averaged 8.8 points and 4.2 rebounds a game as a forward for N.C. State in 2018, starting just once but playing all 36 games.

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Second-Quarter Explosion Put Game Out Of Reach

Continued From Page 1

in the secondary. Victor raced down the sideline before leaping into the end zone for the 60-yard touchdown.

"That was a great play and a great play call by Coach," Fields said after the game. "It was just the way we practiced it. Just going over it that many times in practice helped us execute it in the game."

Michigan State answered with its own scoring drive to cut the lead to 10-7, but Ohio State's offense was just getting warmed up.

Fields found tight end Luke Farrell from 21 yards out, then running back J.K. Dobbins added a 67-yard touchdown to put the Buckeyes ahead 24-7.

"That was a home-run hit right there that I think really changed the game," Day said of Dobbins' long score. "Up to that point, we started to get it going a little bit, but that kind of shifted and turned it into almost a 300-yard quarter."

"Anytime you can hit home runs like that in the run game – boy, it's a huge one."

Dobbins carried the ball 24 times for 172 yards and the score, while Ohio State finished the game with 323 yards on the ground against a Michigan State squad that entered the contest with the nation's No. 4 rushing defense, allowing 55.8 yards per game.

On the other side of the ball, Day felt the Buckeyes had some tackling issues in the secondary and weren't able to get



JOSH WINSLOW

FLYING HIGH – Senior wide receiver Binjimen Victor leaps for the pylon to cap off a 60-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Justin Fields in the second quarter.

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as much pressure up front as they would have liked thanks to the quick passing game of fifth-year senior quarterback Brian Lewerke. But, then again, that gives the team more film to critique heading into the first open week on the schedule.

"I think that we can learn a ton from this game," Day said. "I think that this is a perfect opportunity to sit back and look at these six games, evaluate where we've gone, where we are and where we're headed. But this was the perfect game to kind of do that."

"Going against a really good defense with really good players and a really good quarterback, they exposed some things that maybe we got away with in the last couple of games. The best thing to do now is get on the film and work on it to get better."

With that said, Ohio State held Michigan State to just 10 points and less than 300 yards of total offense. The Buckeyes never really felt in danger of losing the game, either.

"I feel like we just beat a top-25 team at home in a great atmosphere against a really well-coached team, a really good defense and a really good quarterback. We had to play 60 minutes of football," Day said as he shifted his focus to the Buckeyes' next game, Oct. 18 at Northwestern.

"I think the best part about that is we all kind of got off the field feeling like we can't wait to get on the film and figure out where we can improve."

Fields Tosses First Pick

Fields threw the first interception of

his college career against Michigan State when defensive back Josiah Scott picked off an errant pass in the third quarter and returned it 34 yards to the Spartans' 46-yard line.

To that point, Fields had gone 175 consecutive pass attempts to start his career without an interception, which included 39 attempts as a freshman at Georgia last season.

"I have mixed emotions about it because it was my first pick, but it was also like, 'It's football,' " Fields said. "It happens. I wasn't really frustrated by it."

"I think (the media) jinxed me by talking about it so much last week, but it's all good. I just have to move on to the next game."

Fields accepted responsibility for the interception, but Day was quick to point out it wasn't the quarterback's fault, as the Buckeyes expected Scott to follow wide receiver Garrett Wilson into the corner of the playing field instead of dropping into zone coverage.

"I told him it was my fault," Day said. "Then I told him, 'I'm not always going to be right. You have to make me right. And when the look isn't right, you have to throw the ball in the stands and live to see another down."

"That was my fault. It was not his fault. It was not a look we wanted on that play, and I'll take that blame for that one."

Damon Arnette Exits Game Early

Fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette left the game in the second quarter due to an undisclosed injury and returned to the sideline in the third quarter wearing street clothes.

In his postgame press conference, Day indicated that Arnette – who has been wearing a cast on his right wrist all season – will be good to go when the Buckeyes travel to Northwestern on Oct. 18.

"He's going to be fine," Day said, "but they're going to evaluate him tonight."

Before he exited the game, Arnette recorded three tackles and a forced fumble.

Sophomore cornerback Cameron Brown played a majority of the second half in his place, totaling two tackles, one tackle for loss and one pass breakup.



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Ohio State Rushing Attack Rises To Challenge

The Ohio State had excelled in the running game through five weeks, but it had not faced much of a challenge. That changed when Michigan State and the nation's No. 4 rush defense came to Columbus.

GAME NOTEBOOK

Joe Dempsey

The Spartans had allowed only 279 yards on the ground through five games for an average of 55.8 yards per contest, allowing just 1.9 yards per carry. Ohio State dominated Michigan State in the run game, amassing 323 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 49 carries (6.6 yards per carry).

The success was not immediate, however, with the Scarlet and Gray totaling zero rushing yards on 10 first-quarter carries. Ohio State running backs coach Tony Alford was asked about his message to the team when it is struggling in the running game.

"Just stay with it," Alford said postgame. "J.K. (Dobbins) does a great job of just staying with it and not getting frustrated. Just continue to do your job and keep punching and punching and punching the wall and eventually it's going to break. J.K. is very mature in that regard. He wasn't frustrated at all. He would come to the sideline, like, 'We're fine. It's all good.'

"You've got to understand that was a good defensive front. This wasn't a team that couldn't play. This is a team that obviously was one of the best in the country in rush defense. So, when we come out in the first quarter and holes aren't developing like they'd like, just keep going and keep playing and never too high, never too low, just keep doing your job."

Following the slow start, the Ohio State offense exploded in the second quarter, taking a 27-10 lead into halftime after leading only 3-0 after one quarter. Sophomore quarterback Justin Fields was asked about what adjustments the Buckeyes made following an ineffective first quarter.

"We didn't really make that many adjustments," Fields said. "We were just kind of ourselves. We didn't make any adjustments. We did what we were supposed to do and just executed."

The Buckeyes stuck to what made them so successful through their first five games, a balanced attack set up by success with their rushing offense.

With a 17-10 lead, the ball at its own 33-yard line and just 2:35 until halftime, Ohio State faced third-and-2. Hypothetically, a stop by the Spartans would set up a punt and give them a chance to tie the game before intermission.

Instead, Dobbins – a junior running back – bolted 67 yards for a backbreaking Buckeye touchdown, leaving the Green and White and their comeback hopes in the dust. Ohio State head coach Ryan Day emphasized the importance of Dobbins' explosive run in his postgame press conference.

"That was a home-run hit right there that really changed the game," Day said of Dobbins' 67-yard TD. "But up to that point we started to get it going a little bit but that kind of shifted and turned it into almost a 300-yard quarter. And anytime you can hit home runs like that in the run game, boy, it's a huge one."

Dobbins, a co-captain, was proud of his ability to finish the run and find the end zone, particularly after he had expressed throughout the offseason his disappointment in himself.

"I just feel like I got my step back, a lot more pop," Dobbins said. "Last year was terrible, so I think I'm doing better than last year."

A determined Dobbins was not sheepish when discussing his intent and that of his teammates in the run game.

"That's what we want to do," Dobbins said. "We want to break their will. I'm going to keep running hard the whole game, so if you're going to see me for four quarters, you better be ready, you better be in shape."

Dobbins' backup, redshirt freshman tailback Master Teague, ran with power and put together a handful of tough runs, particularly in the fourth quarter.

Teague gained 90 yards on 14 attempts (6.4 avg.) with a long run of 41, showing the skill set that has garnered him much praise in his young career.

"He's a young man who's hungry to play, and I don't think he was ready at this time last year," Alford said of Teague. "He's most certainly ready now, and obviously he's playing well. What I probably need to do – I need to get him in more in the first half."

Understanding how stout the Michigan State defensive front is, Day did not panic about the Buckeyes' slow start. He liked the way his guys responded against their best opponent yet.

"I want to see, when we get on film, what it looked like," Day said, "but to me it looked like they were fighting in there. Those guys are good. Up front they're as good as we'll play. And it was a fight. It's not going to be always clean, knock guys down 15 yards in the (defensive) backfield and finish guys down the field against defenses like this."

After defeating a top-25 team with an elite defense, Ohio State gained confidence in how good its offense could be, and the expectations are sky-high.

"I think of course Coach Day's offense, and we have a great O-line, great running backs, great receivers," Fields said of Ohio State's potential. "Once we put it all together, we showed flashes, but we really weren't consistent the whole game on the offensive side of the game."

"If we get better at that and be more consistent about that, we'll definitely be one of the best offenses in the country."

Young, Defense Disrupt Sparty

Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young dominated every team he had faced through five weeks, averaging nearly two sacks per game.

Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio was asked about Young heading into the matchup with the Buckeyes, and it was clear he was concerned about the threat posed by the standout edge rusher.

"Haven't really thought of him in the human context," Dantonio said of Young earlier in the week.

Since he didn't view Young as human, it wouldn't make sense to expect a human to block him one on one. Dantonio made sure to have two or three big bodies attempting

to keep Young in check all game and even simplified the playbook to avoid the dominant defensive end.

"It was definitely different," Young said. "I talked to one of their tight ends after the game, and he said they didn't run half of their plays. I was like, 'Dang.' It was definitely a good test for me. But as you see, if you do that, everybody else is going to get off. If one man eats, we all eat."

Young tallied four tackles (two solo), one tackle for loss and half a sack in the victory but also freed up his teammates to make some plays, including junior linebacker Baron Browning.

With Michigan State looking for a first down on third-and-14 at its 49-yard line, Young crashed hard, bringing the Spartans' tackle and guard with him. Browning came off the edge with a free shot at Michigan State quarterback Brian Lewerke and capitalized with a sack 9 yards in the backfield late in the third quarter.

"It feels good because we didn't even have to run a twist or anything," Young said of Browning's sack. "He just went and got it. Baron is always asking me about pass rush moves and things like that to get to the quarterback. I was really happy with Baron."

Ohio State's defense helped the offense when it was struggling by getting Fields and Co. the ball back. Although he's an offensive player, fifth-year senior H-back K.J. Hill appreciated the strong effort of the defense.

"The defense bailed us out today and let us get a rhythm," Hill said. "The defense played great, but that's how it's got to be in games like this. We definitely found out how tough we were today, especially the defense. They didn't break today. They came out with turnovers."

Part of what makes Young so good is his insatiable desire to improve. Despite the dominant performance, holding the Spartans to 285 yards and 10 points, he sees plenty of opportunity to get better.

"Overall, it went pretty well," Young said. "We can still always improve. There were points on the board, obviously. That's why we got a bye week, so we have an extra week to get that work."

Junior linebacker Tuf Borland, a two-time captain, continues to be impressed by Young and the tremendous impact he can have on every snap.

"He's a freak, unbelievable," Borland said of Young. "It's no secret why he's a top-three draft pick in next year's draft. It's really unbelievable. And you don't really know how good he is just watching him practice every day. He just goes out there and puts on a show every Saturday."

Zach Harrison Flashes Potential

Ohio State has dealt with a litany of injuries to its defensive line this season, allowing for more opportunities for true freshman Zach Harrison.

The five-star defensive end from nearby Lewis Center Olentangy Orange had an impact in the Buckeyes' biggest game of the season thus far.

On first-and-10 at their 45-yard line, the Spartans were hoping to get something going offensively, trailing just 17-7 in the second quarter. Harrison shot into the backfield like a missile, hitting Lewerke, who was finished off by Young.

Harrison was credited with a half sack and finished the game with two tackles (one solo). He was the No. 2 defensive end in the 2019 class and the No. 1 player in Ohio, so the hype has been there. Young was asked what



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Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The Ohio State rushing offense excelled against the formidable Michigan State defense. The Spartans entered the game with the nation's No. 4 rush defense, allowing just 55.8 yards per game. The Buckeyes compiled 323 yards on 49 carries with two rushing touchdowns in their dominating 34-10 performance against the visiting Green and White. Junior running back J.K. Dobbins led the way with 172 yards and one touchdown on 24 carries for a 7.2 yards-per-carry average, even though he spent most of the final quarter on the sideline.

Dobbins' touchdown came in the form of a haymaker blow to the will of the Spartans. The standout tailback gashed the defense for a 67-yard score, turning on the afterburners and dashing into the end zone. Redshirt freshman Master Teague complemented Dobbins with 90 yards on 14 attempts (6.4 avg.), with a long of 41.

The talented backup gained tough first downs, particularly in the fourth quarter to keep the clock churning while the Buckeyes protected their lead. Sophomore quarterback Justin Fields also made plays with his legs, eluding Spartan defenders and gaining 61 yards and one touchdown on 11 tries (5.5 avg.), with a long of 35.

What Didn't Work

It's difficult to nitpick a 34-10 victory over a tough Big Ten opponent with a top-tier defense, but Ohio State could have started the game better. Michigan State did not possess the offensive firepower to make the Buckeyes pay for their slow start, but if they want to win a national championship, they will have to start faster.

On the first drive of the game, Fields ran for a 2-yard gain, threw an incompleteness and then took a brutal 18-yard sack on third-and-8. After punting, the Buckeyes forced a turnover

and regained possession at the Michigan State 27-yard line. Following a three-and-out, Blake Haubeil missed a 37-yard field goal, giving the Spartans the ball back in a scoreless game.

The Green and White gave the Buckeyes the ball back again on another fumble at the MSU 22, but after another Ohio State three-and-out, Haubeil connected on a 39-yard field goal. On their next drive, the Scarlet and Gray stalled out after gaining just 25 yards and were forced to punt, giving them 16 total yards in the first quarter. The Buckeyes completed 3 of 6 passes for 16 yards, while rushing 10 times for zero yards.

Play Of The Game

Early in the second quarter, with the Buckeyes leading 3-0 and the offense struggling to move the ball against the Michigan State defense, they picked up a first down on third-and-7 on a 10-yard reception by fifth-year H-back K.J. Hill. Then Dobbins rushed for 13 yards to the Ohio State 40-yard line, setting up the play of the game.

Fields took a first-and-10 snap and rolled out to his right with his eyes downfield in search of one of his receiving weapons. The Spartan defense overpursued, expecting Fields to run the ball, but the Buckeye signal caller settled behind the line of scrimmage and fired a pass to senior wideout Binjimen Victor. The lanky receiver snagged the pass and sprinted down the sideline with one man to beat. Victor shook the Spartan defender with a nifty move, faking a cutback and then bursting full speed along the sideline.

Victor won the footrace and dived headfirst into the end zone for an Ohio State touchdown. The score and ensuing extra point put the Scarlet and Gray up 10-0 and gave the offense the spark it needed, leading to a 34-10 victory.

— Joe Dempsey

is different about Harrison since he enrolled in January.

"His mentality going into a game," Young said of Harrison. "He understands that he has to be a guy to go in a lot of plays, and I just see him every week taking things more and more seriously. That's what I like to see, that's what Coach Day likes to see. If he keeps going on the pace he's going, he can be a really good player."

Young's scouting report of Harrison bodes well for the highly touted freshman.

"He's a freak," Young said. "He's strong, big and fast, so I knew it was only a matter of time till he finds out what he is."

Josh Alabi Draws Start

Ohio State fifth-year senior offensive lineman Josh Alabi earned the start at right tackle against Michigan State over fellow fifth-year senior Branden Bowen, who returned from injury.

In Bowen's absence, Alabi started at Nebraska and earned offensive player of the game honors for his performance in the Buckeyes' 48-7 demolition of the Cornhuskers.

With Bowen back to full health after recovering from back spasms, it was expected he would regain his starting role. However, Alabi took the first reps with the first-string offense, with Bowen rotating in later.

Day said he liked the way the offensive line fought in Ohio State's 34-10 victory against the Spartans but had to check the tape for specifics. He also addressed the position battle at right tackle.

"The right tackle, we're rolling those guys," Day said. "I think they both deserve to play, and they are."



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Dobbins Leads Rush In Pounding Pesky Spartans

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State had won each of its previous four games by at least 41 points, but the Buckeyes looked like they might struggle to gain 41 yards when old Big Ten nemesis Michigan State visited Ohio Stadium on the night of Oct. 5.

The No. 4 Buckeyes were pushed for the first time this season, but they pushed back after a poor start to beat No. 25 Michigan State 34-10 before 104,797 fans at Ohio Stadium.

Junior J.K. Dobbins had 172 yards on 24 carries, and his 67-yard touchdown run in the second quarter made it 24-10 before the Buckeyes (6-0, 3-0 Big Ten) added a field goal to complete the first half on a mild 72-degree evening.

Ohio State sophomore quarterback Justin Fields had two touchdown passes on 17 of 25 completions for 206 yards, but in the third quarter he threw his first interception of the season on his 175th attempt of his career. His 1-yard run with 10:41 left in the game upped the lead to 34-10.

Ohio State had 323 of its 529 total yards on the ground. Michigan State had 285 yards (218 passing, 67 rushing), marking the sixth straight game this season the defense has yielded less than 300 total yards.

"We wanted to see where we're at," junior linebacker Baron Browning said. "We knew this was going to be a hard-

fought, 60-minute game. We haven't had too many of them so far."

Battle From The Start

Ohio State in its all-black uniforms got off to an inauspicious start on its first two drives – and the Spartans were even worse.

The opening series of the game resulted in a 4th-and-26 for the Buckeyes from the OSU 9 after Fields sustained an 18-yard sack.

A 53-yard punt by junior Drue Chrisman got the Buckeyes out of trouble. On MSU's second play, Cody White caught a pass for nine yards to the Spartans 49, but senior cornerback Damon Arnette stripped the ball and senior linebacker Malik Harrison scooped it up and ran 22 yards to the 27.

The Buckeyes put nothing on the board. A false start against sophomore right guard Wyatt Davis was instrumental in setting up a fourth-and-3 at the 20 that resulted in Blake Haubeil missing a 37-yard field-goal attempt to the right.

MSU turned it over again on its second play after the missed field goal when QB Brian Lewerke fumbled on the option and the ball was recovered by senior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton at the Spartans 22.

OSU ran three plays for a total of no yards, including a 1-yard sack of Fields on third down. This time, Haubeil nailed a 39-yarder for the 3-0 lead at 8:04 of the first.

Ohio State's next drive started at its 5 following a punt, and it stalled because a



ANDREW LIND

SWITCHING HANDS – Ohio State senior linebacker Malik Harrison recovered a fumble in the first quarter.

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holding call on left guard Jonah Jackson negated 33-yard run by Dobbins to the MSU 43. That was followed by senior receiver Binjimen Victor dropping a wide-open pass at the Michigan State 43-yard line.

The Buckeyes totaled 16 total yards, zero rushing, on 16 plays in the first quarter.

Victor ignited the crowd with a 60-yard TD reception at 12:12 of the second quarter for a 10-0 lead on the five-play, 86-yard, 1:57 drive.

The key play was grab across the middle by K.J. Hill for 10 yards on a third-and-7 from the OSU 17. Then Dobbins broke off a 13-yard gain before Fields rolled right and flipped the ball to an open Victor at the MSU 43. He raced down the sideline and dived into the end zone at the pylon.

MSU responded in kind with a five-play, 75-yard, 1:36 scoring drive. Lewerke started it with a designed run for 13 yards to the Spartans 38. After an incompleteness, Elijah Collins rushed for 23 to the OSU 39. Matt Seybert had a 19-yard catch, and Darrell Stewart caught a 20-yard TD pass to make it 10-7 at 10:36.

Fields led the Buckeyes 75 yards in 2:27 and seven plays, the last a 21-yarder to junior tight end Luke Farrell for the 17-7 advantage at 8:09. Fields had a 35-yard run to the MSU 35, Hill had a catch for 9 to the 26, and Dobbins ran for 2 yards.

The next play saw Fields run for 13 yards to the 11, but a hold by freshman receiver Garrett Wilson brought the ball back to the 21. Fields immediately found Farrell at the 10, and he bulled his way in.

MSU answered again with a series that consumed 5:06 and nine plays even though it went for only 34 yards and resulted in a 39-yard field goal by Matt Coghlin for a 17-10 score with 3:36 left before halftime.

Dobbins extended the lead to 24-10 just 72 seconds later on the third play of the drive with a 67-yard TD run at 2:24, shirking a would-be tackler at the 20.

"That was a home-run hit right there that I think really changed the game," said OSU coach Ryan Day.

Later, starting at their own 29 with 1:46 left, the Buckeyes drove as far as

the Spartan 24 before finally settling for Haubeil's 43-yard field goal with five seconds left that made it 27-10.

OSU had 24 points on its last four drives of the half after getting three in the first four series. The Buckeyes have outscored opponents 134-20 in the second quarter and 200-32 in the first half of their six games.

MSU drove to the 9 to open the third quarter only to see Coghlin miss to the left on a 27-yard field-goal attempt.

OSU's chance at increasing the lead when it got the ball evaporated after driving to the MSU 29. On first down, Fields threw his first interception of the season, and Josiah Scott returned it from the 12 to the Spartans 46. But the Ohio State defense forced a three-and-out.

The Buckeyes had another big stop to end the third quarter when MSU faced third-and-14 from its 49. Browning came off the edge and buried Lewerke for 9-yard sack.

OSU took a 34-10 lead at 10:41 of the fourth quarter on Fields' 1-yard rush, a play after Dobbins' 3-yard TD run was overruled after video replay because his knee was down.

Dobbins was a major contributor on the 11-play, 80-yard, 4:09 sequence with his 29-yard jaunt to the 20 after Victor's catch for 12. Fields ran for nine to the 6 on third down. Dobbins then went 5 yards on two carries before the score.

Later, Fields lost a fumble at the OSU 34, but on the ensuing play, senior safety Jordan Fuller had an 86-yard pick-six, although it was called back because of an illegal block by Browning, who had tipped the ball.

Neither team posed a serious threat to score after that.

Numbers

Redshirt freshman Master Teague had 90 yards on 14 carries for OSU. ... Hill had a team-high seven catches (57 yards). Victor led with 79 receiving yards on three catches. ... Fields had 61 yards on 11 rushing attempts. ... Lewerke was 20 of 38 for 218 yards, a touchdown and an interception. ... Fuller led OSU with seven tackles (five solo). ... Ohio State had four sacks and allowed three.

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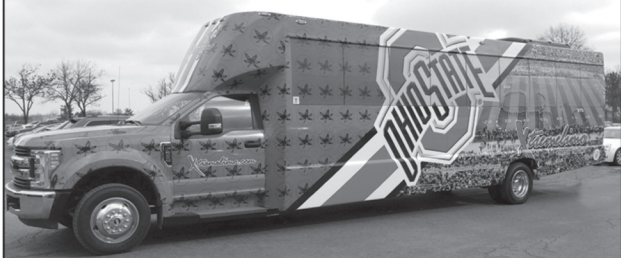
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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 34, Michigan State 10

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on what Michigan State does defensively that causes problems: "They do a lot of things. When I say always – the majority of the time they have an extra guy in the box. Whether you're playing 11 personnel or 12 personnel, they always have another guy in the box. That's why they've been so good at run defense over the years.

"It's very hard to run the ball against them. And you've got to wear them down. You have to wear them down. And you've got to cover them up. The running backs have to turn 4-yard runs into six. And then eventually over time, if you can start to run on them, you can maybe start to crack some. And that's kind of what happened. But the key to that is some of those play-action passes. Those kind of got us going a bit."

Day on if Michigan State's defense was running anything unusual that had not been seen on the film: "No, they ran the same defense they have. They were blitzing more than maybe they had coming into the game, but it wasn't anything we hadn't seen before."

Ohio State sophomore quarterback Justin Fields on if the upcoming off week is perfectly timed: "At least for me it is because this is definitely the most banged up I've been after a game, so I'm definitely glad we have a bye week next week. I think we'll all just get in the training room, get our bodies back right and get ready for the game."

Ohio State senior safety Jordan Fuller on if an off week is helpful for rest or harmful for cutting momentum: "I think it's good for resting purposes and just really self-scouting just at the midpoint of the season. We have a lot of tape out there, so just shoring up on the little things that you don't really get to shore up on a week-to-week basis because you're trying to game plan for other teams."

"So just getting better individually and as a team, I think a bye week is good and a much needed rest."

Ohio State junior linebacker Baron Browning on if the off week is coming at the right time in the season: "Yeah absolutely, I definitely think it's in a good spot. We came off two hard games with Nebraska and Michigan State this weekend. As far as guys who are a little banged up, it'll be more important to take advantage of this week and get healthy and be ready to roll for Northwestern."

Ohio State running backs coach Tony Alford on where junior back J.K. Dobbins has improved: "He's running hard. He's putting his foot in the ground. He's finishing runs. He's running violently. He's very definitive in the decisions that he's making in the run game."

Ohio State fifth-year senior offensive tackle Branden Bowen on if he expected to play after fifth-year senior Josh Alabi came out as the starter at right tackle: "It was just kind of a 'be ready' sort of thing. You know you never know what's going to happen, whether it be injury or whatever, so I came into the game just assuming I'd play so I'd be ready and have the right minds-set."

Bowen on being happy he missed only one game as opposed to his long-term injuries of the past: "Yes, absolutely. I mean even that hurt, you know, standing on the sideline at Nebraska. I mean I was very, very happy for my brothers, but at the same time I was like 'Man, I miss being out there with my brothers.' "

Bowen on being excited about Alabi's impressive performance on Sept. 28 against Nebraska: "I've got so much respect for Josh, and to see him come in, and I mean, everybody kind of expected it because we saw

him prove himself at Washington (in the Rose Bowl), and he's a great player and he can do great things whenever he's called upon."

Fuller on a football that is given out on the sideline for the defensive side of the ball when turnovers are forced: "We call that the bull ball. Ever since the spring, whoever had the most turnovers in a day, that guy would get the bull ball, so we brought it out today."

Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young on when he knew this Ohio State team was special: "I knew we were special from day one, everybody else just didn't know, so that's how we feel. But I mean obviously it's good I guess that we're getting national attention, but we're really not focused on that, we're focused on this bye week, and getting to Northwestern."

Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio on what his team needed to do to create a different outcome in the matchup: "We needed to play mistake-free football. We didn't do that."

Dantonio giving credit to the Buckeyes and Fields for their performance Saturday night: "They are a very explosive team. Justin Fields, we got people covered, we can't quite get to him and he sneaks out of there and runs for 20 yards, or 10 yards, or 5 yards, whatever he needs to do. But he had some explosive plays, and then (J.K.) Dobbins got loose on us."

Michigan State fifth-year senior quarterback Brian Lewerke on his team's performance against Ohio State: "They're a really good team, so it is difficult to get points on them. I think we moved the ball a little well, but we've just got to finish in the end."



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 34, Michigan State 10

Oct. 5, 2019 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, OH.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MICHIGAN STATE (4-2, 2-1)	0	10	0	0	10
OHIO STATE (6-0, 3-0)	3	24	0	7	34

First Quarter

OSU – Haubeil field goal, 39 yards, 8:04; 4 plays, 0 yards, 1:54 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU – Victor, 60 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 12:12; 5 plays, 86 yards, 1:57 TOP.

MSU – Stewart, 20 yard pass from Lewerke (Coghlin kick), 10:36; 5 plays, 75 yards, 1:36 TOP.

OSU – Farrell, 21 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 8:09; 7 plays, 75 yards, 2:27 TOP.

MSU – Coghlin 39 yard kick, 3:36; 9 plays, 34 yards, 5:06 TOP.

OSU – Dobbins, 67 yard run (Haubeil kick), 2:24; 3 plays, 75 yards, 1:12 TOP.

OSU – Haubeil field goal, 43 yards, 0:05; 10 plays, 45 yards, 1:41 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Fields, 1 yard run (Haubeil kick), 10:41; 11 plays, 80 yards, 4:09 TOP.

Att. – 104,797

Weather – 72 degrees, clear; wind SE 3 mph.

Team Statistics

	MSU	OSU
First Downs	18	22
Rushing	7	13
Passing	9	8
Penalty	2	1
Rushes-Yards	27-67	49-323
Passing Yards	218	206
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	20-38-1	17-25-1
Offensive Plays	65	74
Total Net Yards	285	529
Third Down Efficiency	4-13	8-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0
Punts-Avg.	7-46.9	4-48.2
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	1-1
Penalties	4-30	10-85
Time of Possession	28:23	31:37

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – MSU: Collins 11-63; White 2-8; Williams 3-2; Jefferson 1-0; TEAM 1(-2); Lewerke 8(-4). OSU: Dobbins 24-172; Teague 14-90; Fields 11-61.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – MSU: Lewerke 20-38-1-218-1. OSU: Fields 17-25-1-206-2.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – MSU: Stewart 6-68; White 4-42; Gillison 3-34; Seybert 2-37; Hayes 2-17; Barnett 1-9; Dotson 1-9; Collins 1-2. OSU: Hill 7-57; Victor 3-79; Wilson 2-24; Dobbins 2-2; Farrell 1-21; Mack 1-19; Ruckert 1-4.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – MSU: Hartbarger 7-46.9-60 OSU: Chrisman 4-48.2-53.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MSU: None. OSU: None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MSU: None. OSU: None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – MSU: Coghlin (27). OSU: Haubeil (37).

FORCED FUMBLES – MSU: Panasiuk. OSU: Arnette.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – MSU: Beesley 1-0. OSU: Harrison 1-22; Hamilton 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – MSU: Scott 1-34. OSU: Fuller 1-26.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – MSU: Bachie 2.0-19; Panasiuk 1.0-4. OSU: Browning 1.0-9; Wade 1.0-7; Cornell 1.0-2; Harrison 0.5-4; Young 0.5-3.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – MSU: Panasiuk 3.5-9; Bachie 3.0-19; Simmons 0.5-1. OSU: Browning 1.0-9; Wade 1.0-7; Borland 1.0-3; Young 1.0-3; Cornell 1.0-2; Harrison 1.0-2; Garrett 1.0-2; Brown 1.0-1; Harrison 0.5-4; Landers 0.5-1.

TACKLES (Solo.-Asst.-Tot.) – MSU: Scott 9-3-12; Bachie 6-5-11; Williams 5-3-8; Simmons 6-1-7; Panasiuk 5-2-7; Willekes 1-6-7; Henderson 5-0-5; Thompson 2-2-4; Dowell 2-1-3; Jones 1-2-3; Panasiuk 0-3-3; Cowell 1-1-2; Gervin 1-0-1; Stewart 1-0-1; Beesley 1-0-1; Long 1-0-1; Slade 0-1-1. OSU: Fuller 5-2-7; Wade 3-2-5; Borland 3-2-5; Werner 3-1-4; Cornell 3-1-4; Young 2-2-4; Harrison 2-1-3; Arnette 2-1-3; Browning 2-0-2; Brown 1-1-2; Harrison 1-1-2; Landers 0-2-2; Smith 1-0-1; Mack 1-0-1; Okudah 1-0-1; Garrett 1-0-1; Proctor 1-0-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – MSU: Offense, Higby, Campbell, Allen, Carrick, Reid, Lewerke, Collins, Dotson, Seybert, White, Stewart. Defense, Panasiuk, Williams, Panasiuk, Willekes, Simmons, Bachie, Thompson, Scott, Gervin, Dowell, Henderson. Reserves, Williams, Person, Barnett, Williams, Coghlin, Hayes, Hartberger, Slade, Long, Dowell, Lombardi, Nelson, Jefferson, Butler, Flowers, Chambers, Warinner, Razzano, Pedrozo, Mandryk, Harvey, Rosenthal, Fisk, Duplain, Davis, Beesley, Gillison, Camper, Jones, Hunt, Hahn. OSU: Offense, Fields, Dobbins, Mack, Victor, Hill, Farrell, Munford, Jackson, Myers, Jackson, Alabi. Defense, Young, Hamilton, Cornell, Cooper, Werner, Borland, Harrison, Arnette, Okudah, Wade, Fuller. Reserves, Berry, Harris, Olave, Teague, McCullough, Browning, Wilson, Jean-Baptiste, Riep, Smith, Banks, Harris, Gant, Williamson, Wint, White, Brown, Hooker, Harrison, Rossi, Pope, Proctor, Hilliard, Jackson, Cupp, Woidke, Landers, Toggiai, Bowen, Petit-Frere, Ruckert, Hausmann, Chrisman, Garrett, Haubeil, Cage.

Season Statistics

2019-20 Game-By-Game				Scoring					
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Aug. 31	(5)FLORIDA ATLANTIC	45-21	103,228	8	–	–	–	5-7	54
Sept. 7	(5) CINCINNATI	42-0	104,089	7	–	–	–	–	42
Sept. 14	(6) at Indiana	51-10	47,945	4	–	–	–	–	26
Sept. 21	(6)MIAMI (OHIO)	76-5	103,190	4	–	–	–	–	24
Sept. 28	(5)at Nebraska	48-7	89,379	3	–	–	–	–	18
Oct. 5	(4) MICHIGAN STATE	34-10	104,797	3	–	–	–	–	18
Oct. 18	at Northwestern	8:30 p.m.		3	–	–	–	–	18
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN (8)	TBA		3	–	–	–	–	18
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA		2	–	–	–	–	12
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA		1	–	–	–	–	6
Nov. 23	PENN STATE (10)	TBA		1	–	–	–	–	6
Nov. 30	at Michigan (16)	12 p.m.		1	–	–	–	–	6

OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	168	88
Rushing	90	40
Passing	64	39
Penalty	14	9
Average Per Game/Rush	288.5	82.0
Average Per Game/Pass	246.0	152.0
Total Offense	3207	1404
Total Plays	439	381
Average Per Game	534.5	234.0
Average Per Play	7.3	3.7
Penalties-Yards	32-294	34-304
Fumbles-Lost	9-5	12-5
Third Down Efficiency	38-68	23-90
Percentage	56%	26%
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-3	5-7
Percentage	66%	71%
Sacks-Yards	28-173	13-73
Time Of Possession Avg.	31:08	28:25

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	66	134	59	37	0	296	49.3
Opponents	8	20	10	15	0	53	8.8

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	116	826	7.1	6	67
Master Teague	66	416	6.3	3	41
Justin Fields	57	283	5.0	8	51
Marcus Crowley	15	102	6.8	0	36
Steele Chambers	10	79	7.9	1	15
Demario McCall	10	37	3.7	0	9
Amari McMahon	1	10	10.0	0	10
Gunnar Hoak	1	-7	-7.0	0	0
TEAM	4	-15	-3.8	0	0
OSU Totals	280	1731	6.2	18	67
OPP Totals	207	492	2.4	2	56

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Justin Fields	98	141	69.5	1298	18-1	187.5
Chris Chugunov	11	14	78.6	104	2-0	188.1
Gunnar Hoak	3	3	100.0	74	1-0	417.2
TEAM	0	1	0	0	0-0	0
OSU Totals	112	159	70.4	1476	21-1	190.7
OPP Totals	95	174	54.6	912	3-8	95.12

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
K.J. Hill	27	275	10.2	4	53
Binjimen Victor	18	348	19.3	3	60
Chris Olave	16	258	16.1	4	39
Austin Mack	11	157	14.3	1	38
Garrett Wilson	10	101	10.1	3	38
J.K. Dobbins	7	44	6.3	1	14
Jeremy Ruckert	6	66	11.0	2	25
Jaelyn Gill	4	13	3.3	0	9
Jameson Williams	2	74	37.0	1	61
Master Teague	2	45	22.5	0	28
Luke Farrell	2	37	18.5	1	21
Demario McCall	2	11	5.5	0	7
Rashod Berry	1	16	16.0	0	16
Elijah Gardiner	1	10	10.0	0	10
Jake Hausmann	1	9	9.0	0	9
Marcus Crowley	1	7	7.0	1	7
Jaylen Harris	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	112	1476	13.2	21	67
OPP Totals	95	912	9.6	3	49

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Blake Haubeil	1-1	2-4	2-2	0-0	5-7
OSU Totals	1-1	2-3	2-2	0-0	5-7
OPP Totals	4-5	1-2	0-0	0-0	5-7

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	17	795	46.8	0	59
OSU Totals	17	795	46.8	0	59
OPP Totals	47	1914	41.3	2	70

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Jeff Okudah	3	0	0.0	0	0
Jordan Fuller	2	26	13.0	0	26
Damon Arnette	1	96	96.0	1	96
Tuf Borland	1	42	42.0	0	0
Josh Proctor	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	8	164	20.5	1	96
OPP Totals	1	34	34.0	0	34

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Demario McCall	6	52	8.7	0	35
K.J. Hill	5	38	7.6	0	16
Garrett Wilson	2	54	27.0	0	52
Chris Olave	1	18	18.0	0	18
Sevyn Banks	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	15	167	11.1	0	52
OPP Totals	4	4	1.0	0	5

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Demario McCall	7	155	22.1	0	26
Chris Olave	1	15	15.0	0	15
OSU Totals	8	170	21.2	0	26
OPP Totals	17	266	15.6	0	30

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Jordan Fuller	23	9	32	–	–
Malik Harrison	16	12	28	9.0-32	3.5-22
Baron Browning	12	11	23	5.0-14	2.5-11
Pete Werner	14	8	22	4.0-8	–
Chase Young	14	7	21	9.5-63	8.5-61
Jeff Okudah	10	7	17	1.0-1	–
Jashon Cornell	10	7	17	5.0-20	2.5-10
Tuf Borland	8	7	15	1.0-3	–
Shaun Wade	11	3	14	3.0-15	2.0-14
Damon Arnette	10	4	14	–	–
Brendon White	10	1	11	2.0-3	1.0-1
Dallas Gant	4	6	10	1.5-5	1.5-5
Amir Riep	5	5	10	–	–
Davon Hamilton	6	3	9	3.0-6	–
Javontae Jean-Baptiste	4	5	9	1.5-9	1.5-9
Teradja Mitchell	4	4	8	1.0-1	–
OSU Totals	224	131	355	61-236	28-173
OPP Totals	271	156	427	34-121	13-73

Fumbles Forced: 10 – Chase Young (3), Jeff Okudah, Jashon Cornell, Dallas Gant, Shaun Wade, Marcus Williamson, Damon Arnette, TEAM.

Fumbles Recovered: 5 – Malik Harrison (2), Tyler Friday, Marcus Williamson, Davon Hamilton.

Versatile Alabi Proves Perseverance Pays Off

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Josh Alabi was recruited to Ohio State as a defensive lineman out of Detroit Cass Tech, and though his career may not have transpired as he imagined, he never lost his faith.

After redshirting as a freshman and playing in just five games at defensive tackle in 2016, Alabi made the shift to offensive tackle.

Serving as starting left tackle Jamarco Jones' primary backup, Alabi spent most of his sophomore season on the sidelines. However, when Jones went down with injuries against Iowa and Michigan, Alabi was called upon to fill in for him.

Alabi struggled when forced into action, allowing a strip sack in a loss at Iowa and moving the Buckeyes back with penalties during a comeback victory at Michigan.

Using his mistakes as lessons, Alabi showed drastic improvement entering his junior campaign. Unfortunately for the Detroit native, Isaiah Prince returned as Ohio State's starting right tackle, and talented sophomore Thayer Munford seized the left tackle spot.

Relegated to a backup role once again, Alabi stayed ready for his opportunity. After spending most of the season on the sideline, Alabi's number was called again when Munford went down with an injury during Ohio State's 52-51 overtime win at Maryland.

After filling in against the Terrapins, Alabi moved back to the bench with Munford's return. Munford started against Michigan and Northwestern in the Big Ten title game, but the Buckeyes elected to hold him out of the Rose Bowl due to lingering injuries.

Gaining the trust of the coaching staff with a string of solid practices during bowl season, Alabi became the starting left tackle for the Scarlet and Gray in the Rose Bowl against Washington.

The Buckeyes defeated the Huskies, 28-23, and Alabi excelled at protecting quarterback Dwayne Haskins' blind side as he threw for 251 yards and three touchdowns. The performance earned Alabi a place on ESPN's All-Bowl team, which consists of the best players at each position across every bowl game.

Despite the standout performance in "The Granddaddy of Them All," Alabi did not win a starting spot entering his senior season this fall. Munford recovered from injury and returned to left tackle, while fifth-year senior Branden Bowen finally recovered after missing 2018 to start at right tackle.

Bowen bested Alabi and redshirt freshman Nicholas Petit-Frere for the right tackle spot and performed well through four weeks. Alabi was listed as Munford's backup at left tackle while Petit-Frere was slotted behind Bowen on the right side.

"It was tough," Alabi said of not earning a starting spot in camp, "but I just keep my faith in the Lord. I know that he guides my footsteps, so it wasn't really my decision. I just kept pressing and looking forward to the season. I knew that when my number was called, I made sure I was ready."

When Bowen went down with injury, Alabi's number was called, and the fifth-year senior rose to the occasion.

Ohio State threw for 212 yards and



ANDREW LIND

WHEN CALLED UPON – Fifth-year senior offensive tackle Josh Alabi started at right tackle in place of classmate Branden Bowen during Ohio State's wins over Nebraska and Michigan State.

rushed for 368 more on the ground, with Alabi leading the way on many occasions throughout the Buckeyes' 48-7 blowout victory at Nebraska. The standout performance earned Alabi offensive player of the week for the Scarlet and Gray offense.

Sophomore right guard Wyatt Davis, who played alongside Alabi against the Huskers, said Alabi definitely deserved offensive player of the week honors.

"We were all really happy for Josh because he's gone through a lot of ups and downs through this program," Davis told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "For him to stay in tune and not give up in practice, even though things weren't going his way initially, the fact that he can come out there and play like how he did really tells you a lot about his character."

"He's a guy that never stops going, no matter what the circumstances are. That's why I believe he's probably going to be really successful in life no matter what he does, whether with football or off the field."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day applauded the performance of his fill-in right tackle, praising Alabi's mentality and approach.

"Josh Alabi played well, and it was a tribute to his attitude and what he's done up to this point," Day said. "In the world of people just wanting to go to another school or transfer and go into the portal and try to run to someplace else, this is a guy who stuck with it, kept a great attitude, and when the team called on him he stepped up and played really well. We all felt he deserved to be player of the game."

Day brought up a good point about Alabi, who was the No. 9 recruit in Michigan, when he committed to Ohio State. As a two-way standout at Cass Tech, Alabi helped lead the program, along with Mike Weber, to a state title in 2012 and back-to-back Detroit Public School League championships in 2013 and 2014.

If he wanted to transfer out, Alabi would surely have drawn interest across the country. With an ESPN All-Bowl team performance to his name, he would likely be guaranteed a starting spot elsewhere, but Alabi stuck it out.

"It's tough," Alabi said of not starting. "I had to face battles just like everybody else. It's very tough, but it's not going to be easy. I tell myself that all the time. Just because stuff is going bad right now, or say you're not starting, you still have a job to do. You still have a role on this team."

"Keeping that mind-set keeps me locked in. It's tough. It's not easy. I'm not going to sit up here and say, 'Oh yeah, it's easy just to walk around and not start.' I obviously want to start, but I know my role. As long as I know my role and keep faith in the Lord, I'll be fine."

Alabi trusted he would succeed when thrust into action. But he admitted it was tough to play on the right side with his prior experience coming at left tackle. The 6-5, 305-pound lineman credited offensive line coach Greg Studrawa for pushing him to master the play calls.

"Everything is backwards," Alabi said. "The whole last week of practice I was looking at the calls, like, 'Man, what was that call? All right, got to flip everything.' Coach Stud, he just stayed on me. I thank him for that, and I thank God for allowing me to be in this position."

In the past, Alabi may have been worried about how a bad rep would look on tape and potentially damage his chance at playing time in the future. Now a polished fifth-year player, Alabi put the team's success at the forefront of his mind, understanding his role in helping Justin Fields and J.K. Dobbins make plays.

"At first, when I was practicing at right tackle, getting in my stance was kind of awkward," Alabi said. "But as I got to get more reps at it in practice, I tried to get

comfortable getting lower in my stance. It doesn't feel the same at all, but it's football at the end of the day.

"Get down, get set, do your job – that's basically what my whole mind-set about it was. I didn't really try to focus on, 'How am I going to look on film?' It was really, 'Block for J.K., block for Justin and just do my job the best that I could.'"

Fields tossed three touchdowns along with the 212 passing yards and added 72 rushing yards and another score, while Dobbins accrued 177 yards on the ground in the Buckeyes' beatdown of the Cornhuskers. Based on those stats, Alabi did his job pretty well.

Day came away impressed with how quickly Alabi picked up the play calls on the right side and then executed them, which could potentially lead to more playing time.

"The good news is Josh can play both positions," Day said. "He can move back and forth from right to left. He's much more versatile than maybe he was when he first came over from defense, and that's a tribute to him, being able to move from the right to the left. He had mostly been practicing at left, and then he goes over to right and can play like he did. Again, hats off to him."

Day mentioned the possibility of rotating linemen and said Alabi will continue to play in some capacity, although he did not know what that would entail yet.

Alabi got the start and split time with Bowen at right tackle against Michigan State, but that will not deter Alabi. Diligent in his preparation, Alabi has learned from past mistakes and maintains an eagerness to help his team win.

"My expectation is just to always stay ready," Alabi said. "No matter when my number is called, whenever that is, I tell myself, 'Make sure you're ready.' Because if you're not ready, things can go bad. That's just really my mind-set right now: Stay healthy, stay ready."

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Hafley And Day Reconnect To OSU's Success

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When Ryan Day officially took over for Urban Meyer as head coach following the Rose Bowl, it did not take long for him to make his first hires on the defensive side of the ball. On Jan. 7, just six days after Ohio State's 28-23 victory against Washington in Pasadena, Day announced the hires of Greg Mattison and his former colleague Jeff Hafley.

Day and Hafley worked together during their times in the NFL, joining forces on the San Francisco 49ers in 2016 under head coach Chip Kelly.

Who knew that the Kelly experiment – which ended in a 2-14 record for San Francisco – would help lead to one of Ohio State's most impressive turnarounds on the defensive end the program has ever seen?

In 2018, the Buckeyes ranked No. 50 in scoring defense (25.5 points per game), No. 86 in pass defense (245.2 yards per game), No. 56 in rush defense (158.2 YPG), No. 72 in total defense (403.4 YPG), and No. 78 in interceptions (0.8 per game), some of the worst numbers the program has ever had.

A drastic improvement from the defense was not a guarantee. But what was a guarantee, at least in Day's mind, was that the one season he and Hafley shared in 2016 would not be the last time those two would work together.

"We had several conversations about

coaching in college, and that's where we both wanted to end up," Day said. "I told him ... we were going to coach together. I didn't know I'd be the head coach here and that's how it would work out. But I always knew I'd coach with him again."

"He's somebody I had a connection with right away, had a lot of respect for. He's a tremendous coach, relates well with players, and he's a great recruiter, and that was somebody I always wanted to be around. I knew I'd coach with him again. I just didn't know where."

While under Kelly in San Francisco, Day was the quarterbacks coach and Hafley ran the secondary.

Day could not get much going from his quarterback room of Colin Kaepernick and Blaine Gabbert, finishing last in the NFL with 2,911 yards through the air, though it came on the fourth-fewest attempts in the league (491), as well as allowing the 10th-fewest interceptions with 10.

Hafley, on the other hand, did manage to find success, even on a team with a winning percentage under 13 percent. Although San Francisco had the worst rush defense in every category, the 49ers allowed only 3,848 yards through the air, which ranked in the top half of the league at 14th.

Hafley said the two of them worked together while at San Francisco, bouncing ideas off each other on what needed to be improved or changed on both sides of the ball.



ANDREW LIND

DIFFERENCE MAKER – Jeff Hafley has made his presence felt in his first season as Ohio State's co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach.



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

"On a lot of the road trips, being that we were on the West Coast, we'd leave two days before, so we would spend a lot of time together in a hotel, just picking each other's brain, talking football, sharing thoughts," Hafley said. "I think there was a mutual respect, and we just kind of clicked."

Day said that he didn't necessarily have a list of coaches he wanted to hire for when he did become head coach. But the now-Ohio State head coach did always hold true to the belief that he and Hafley would work together again in some shape or form after the positive experiences they shared in the NFL.

"I had a list of guys that I was colleagues with and people I respected, but you just never know where people are at in their careers and where things are at, and you try to piece it together the best you can," Day said. "But he was always a guy that I obviously wanted to have on staff."

The decision for Day to go after Hafley was an easy one. But for Hafley, he had to leave the NFL to go back to college, somewhere he had not worked since being under former Ohio State defensive coordinator Greg Schiano at Rutgers in 2011.

But Hafley ultimately decided to return to college to work with an old friend, and he said there have been no regrets about making that decision.

"This is the most fun I've had coaching in a long time," Hafley said. "I feel re-energized, I love the staff, I love coaching for Coach Day, I love these players, I love coming to work every day, and I haven't been able to say that in a long time. But I mean that. This is fun."

Hafley's fun may be due somewhat in part to the success that his secondary unit, as well as the entire defense, has shared. Hafley, Mattison and company have come together for a defense that has improved on every front from the numbers in 2018. Through six games, Ohio State ranks No. 2 in total defense (223.8 yards per game), No. 4 in the nation in scoring defense (8.6 points per game), No. 6 in pass defense (138.8 YPG), No. 15 in rush defense (85.0 YPG). The Buckeyes are also tied for third with seven interceptions.

Day said that the success can be attributed

somewhat to just how well the new coaching staff has meshed early on.

"Our team can feel the staff chemistry," Day said. "If we love each other as coaches, then they're going to feel that."

For Hafley, there are certain things that make Day's coaching style at the helm so beneficial to not only the players, but the coaching staff as well.

The co-defensive coordinator said that the respect Day has for both the coaches and their families is something that goes a long way in growing a strong relationship.

"You guys could see my daughters running up and down the hall anytime you want," Hafley said. "My wife can come in here and feel comfortable anytime she wants. In this business, that's very rare to have a head coach that truly respects that."

When it comes to Day's impact in practices and on the field, Hafley appreciates the freedom that the new head coach allows his coordinators when it comes to their respective position groups.

"He lets you coach," Hafley said. "He doesn't often tell you exactly what to do.

He'll guide you, he'll give you suggestions, he'll give you ideas, but he lets you do your job. To any assistant, that's probably one of the most important things."

A 2-14 record together usually doesn't lead to a future together. But to Day, Hafley and Ohio State as a whole, that 2-14 record has led to one of the team's most important relationships and one of the most important new successes for the team in 2019.

After a season of turmoil on the defensive side, with seemingly nothing going right beside the numbers in the win column, it was time for a change. Hafley, Mattison and linebackers coach Al Washington were that change, and it has made all the difference.

Hafley and Day both knew they would coach together again after their time in San Francisco, yet neither knew where.

"I'm happy it's here," Hafley said.

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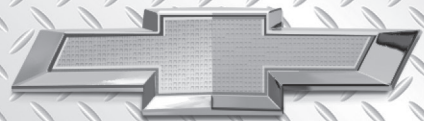
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Cooper Remained Upbeat On Road To Recovery

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Defensive end Jonathon Cooper came to Ohio State as a five-star prospect from Gahanna (Ohio) Lincoln and planned to meet those lofty expectations with a big senior year.

But when a teammate rolled onto his right ankle during an inside blocking drill late in fall camp, he was forced to put those plans on hold.

Cooper, who has been a valuable member of the Buckeyes' defensive line since his freshman year in 2016 and stepped up in Nick Bosa's absence last fall, suffered a high ankle sprain that afternoon that required surgery.

The procedure – called TightRope Fixation for Ankle Syndesmosis – involved putting the tibia and fibula back together.

Rehab typically takes six weeks, which meant Cooper was faced with the reality of missing half of his senior season. But he returned after just four games, recording one tackle and pressuring the quarterback into throwing an interception in the Buckeyes' 48-7 win over Nebraska on Sept. 28.

When speaking with reporters just days later, Cooper admitted the injury was a setback both physically and mentally. On the other hand, he was also relieved to have the grueling rehab process behind him.



ANDREW LIND

COULDN'T KEEP HIM DOWN – Defensive end Jonathon Cooper suffered a high ankle sprain in fall camp that forced him to miss the first four games of his senior season but returned for the 48-7 win over Nebraska on Sept. 28.

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"I don't think people really understand what it's like when a player goes down with an injury," Cooper said. "It's hard, really hard. Especially getting hurt the week before my senior season starts and knowing this is my last year, it's been really tough and hard."

"It beat me up, man. I'm not going to lie. It had me pretty low and pretty upset, just because I knew where I was at. I was playing my best football. It is my last year here and I wanted to go out and show the nation what I could do. But things happen, and the only thing you can control is what you can control. That's what my mind-set was, just staying positive and just going out there and keeping a positive mind-set."

As one of Ohio State's seven team captains this fall, Cooper refused to let the injury prevent him from being engaged with his teammates in defensive meetings, in practice or on the sidelines on game day.

"I treated it as if it was a game for me," he said. "When one of my players got a tackle, I felt like it was me out there. Watching the offensive linemen and watching the offense as they come off the field, I'm coaching them up. I'm cheering them on."

"I'm all up into this thing like I'm playing. I'm still that leader and that guy. As soon as game time starts, I was a different person. I didn't think about my injury. I didn't think about anything. I thought how can I help my team in any single way to help them win."

Cooper – who is naturally upbeat and always has a smile on his face – hasn't returned to full strength and won't be 100

percent for a few more weeks. But the pain of missing time and not being out on the field alongside his teammates was far greater than the pain of the injury itself.

"I can't say enough about that guy," first-year co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach Jeff Hafley said of Cooper. "How he battled through the injury, rehabbed and how hard he works – from the moment I got here, he's been one of the most impressive guys."

"The way he carries himself, when you think of Ohio State, that's the kind of guy you think of – attitude, toughness, leadership, speed and relentlessness. When he's around, you feel better. He just brings that certain way about him that everybody feels confident."

With Cooper sidelined, Ohio State defensive line coach Larry Johnson called upon fifth-year senior Jashon Cornell – who slid over from defensive tackle – and sophomores Tyler Friday and Tyreke Smith to fill his shoes.

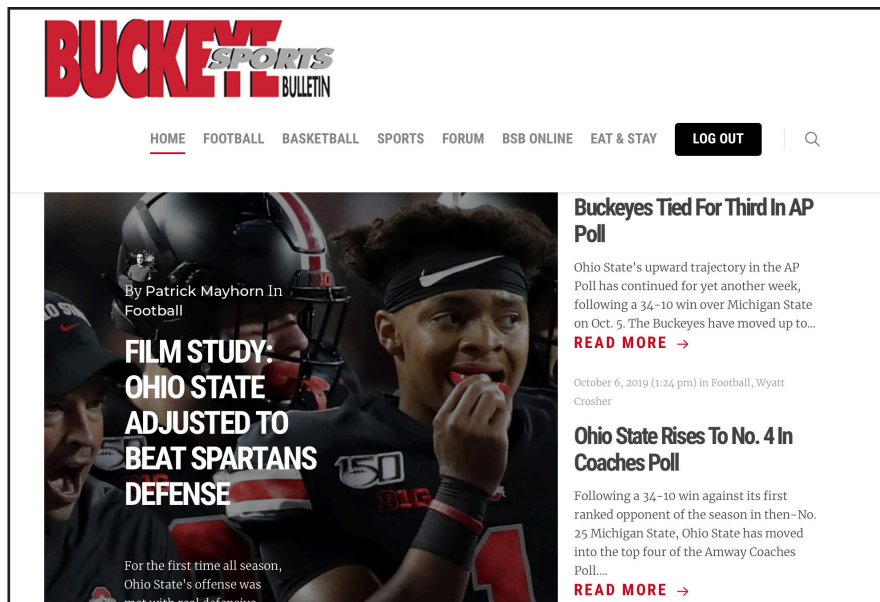
They did so admirably, but the Buckeyes are eager to see what kind of impact Cooper can make opposite junior Chase Young, who ranks second in the country with 8½ this season.

"It meant everything to me to be back out there with my boys," Cooper said when asked about his emotional return to the starting lineup against the Cornhuskers. "That's all I really wanted to do. I just wanted to play with them, and I worked extremely hard to just be able to go out there and do anything with them. It just meant a lot."

"Even though my season didn't start the way I wanted it to, I can make sure it finishes the way I want it to."

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Bengals vs Steelers in Cincinnati: Nov. 24

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Northwestern Searches For Offensive Firepower

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's Oct. 18 prime-time battle in Evanston, Ill., with Northwestern serves as the end of one stretch of games and the middle point of another, making it a bit of a crossroads game for the 6-0 Buckeyes. First, the Friday night bout is Ohio State's finale of a three-game prime-time stretch that has already seen the Buckeyes snag statement wins over Nebraska in Lincoln (48-7) and Michigan State in Columbus 34-10.

Secondly, and more importantly for the sake of preparation, this serves as the second of three games against teams that want to slow down the game and grind out wins with short passes, power runs and elite defenses. Ohio State passed its first test against such a team, making short work of the Spartans on Oct. 5. Now, with Northwestern on the docket, Ohio State is tasked with a very similar challenge, albeit against a lesser offense and a defense that runs far more zone than Michigan State does.

Those first two games should serve as at least a decent test run as Ohio State ramps up for the biggest test of the season so far on Oct. 26, a home battle with Big Ten West power Wisconsin. Neither Michigan State nor Northwestern presents the offensive challenge that the Badgers will (read: Taylor, Jonathan), but the Wildcats should at least test Ohio State's offense, just as the Spartans attempted to.

However, just like with Michigan State, Northwestern is likely without the offensive firepower to truly challenge the Buckeyes. The Wildcats have the 129th-best scoring offense in the country through five games and a dismal 140.4 passing yards per game.

While those passing stats are tied mostly to former five-star Clemson quarterback Hunter Johnson, only some of the blame should go to him. He has struggled, throwing four interceptions to just one touchdown and missing open receivers consistently, but he has very little help from the players around him, and from his coaches. Despite the struggles, head coach Pat Fitzgerald has shown little to no interest in

a change when asked about offensive coordinator Mick McCall's offense.

"To be quite honest with you, I understand there are 40,000 experts on Twitter that can call plays for me," Fitzgerald said. "My email address is hashtag I don't care. So, shoot that out."

Despite his indignation about the concerns, Fitzgerald's Wildcats have shown little offensive improvement since he made that comment, following a 31-10 loss to Michigan State on Sept. 21. They mustered just 15 points against Wisconsin in a six-point loss and 10 against Nebraska on Oct. 5 prior to an idle week. On top of that, Johnson has been pulled in almost every game this season due to poor performance, but no replacement has stepped up, with T.J. Green suffering a season-ending injury against Stanford in week one and the new backup, Aidan Smith, finding no more success than Johnson in limited time. Johnson will likely start against the Buckeyes.

Around him, Northwestern has perhaps the worst skill-position group in the conference outside of Rutgers. Running backs Drake Anderson and Isaiah Bowser have been unable to find any sort of consistency or big-play ability, though Anderson does seem to be at least serviceable with 366 yards and three scores on 74 carries for the season.

At wideout, Northwestern is led by Ben Skowronek, who may miss the game with a lower leg injury, and Riley Lees, who has just 19 receptions on the season. Everyone else on the roster (save for JJ Jefferson with 10) has reception totals in the single digits.

A large portion of Northwestern's issues stem from struggles in the trenches. Northwestern has struggled to keep Johnson upright, allowing 12 sacks through five games, or pave the way for runners (3.6 yards per carry) all season long.

With just two returning starters up front (tackle Rashawn Slater and center Jared Thomas), Northwestern has one of the least-experienced lines in the country, and it shows with a pretty severe lack of cohesion. Against Ohio State's elite defensive line, the Wildcats will almost certainly be forced into exclusively quick-hitting plays, because anything longer would put too much pressure

Get To Know ... Northwestern

About Northwestern

- **2019 record:** 1-4 (0-3 Big Ten)
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Pro; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 5, Defense 6, Specialists 1.
- **Head Coach:** Pat Fitzgerald, 97-74, 14th year at Northwestern.
- **Series History:** 78th meeting; Ohio State leads 62-1-14.
- **School Facts:** Location – Evanston, IL; Enrollment – 21,000; Nickname – Wildcats; Color – Purple; Conference – Big Ten (West Division); Stadium – Ryan Field (Surface, Grass; Capacity – 47,130).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Drake Anderson	74	366	4.9	3
Isaiah Bowser	29	103	3.6	0
Hunter Johnson	40	89	2.2	1

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Hunter Johnson	43-89	48.3	367	1-4

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Bennett Skowronek	12	141	11.75	0
Riley Lees	19	139	7.32	0
J.J. Jefferson	10	132	13.20	2

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game	– 14.4
Rushing Yards Per Game	– 152.6
Passing Yards Per Game	– 140.4
Total Offense Avg. Per Game	– 293.0

2019 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Aug. 31	at Stanford	L, 17-7
Sept. 14	UNLV	W, 30-14
Sept. 21	MICHIGAN STATE	L, 31-10
Sept. 28	at Wisconsin	L, 24-15
Oct. 5	at Nebraska	L, 13-10
Oct. 18	OHIO STATE	8:30 p.m.
Oct. 26	IOWA	12 p.m.
Nov. 2	at Indiana	TBA
Nov. 9	PURDUE	TBA
Nov. 16	UMASS	TBA
Nov. 23	MINNESOTA	TBA
Nov. 30	at Illinois	TBA
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo-Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Travis Whillock	20-24	44	1.5-7	1.0
Chris Bergin	14-24	38	4.0-13	0.5
Paddy Fisher	20-18	38	2.5-12	0.0
Blake Gallagher	16-18	34	0.5-1	0.0

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Paddy Fisher	1	7	7.0	0	7
J.R. Pace	1	0	0	0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed	– 19.8
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed	– 144.0
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed	– 176.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed	– 320.0

on Johnson, as both a passer and a presence behind a patchwork line.

Northwestern's saving grace is, as usual, the defense. It isn't quite as high-powered as it has been in years past – due to the losses of defensive tackles Jordan Thompson and Fred Wyatt, linebacker Jared McGee, and star cornerback Montre Hartage – but basically everyone else is back.

The biggest strength of the defense is at linebacker, as it was last season. Juniors Paddy Fisher and Blake Gallagher return as leaders of the defense and will serve as the primary run stuffers against Ohio State's high-powered rushing attack, though they likely won't have the athletic ability to do much against the Buckeye passing game.

Starting safeties J.R. Pace and Travis Whillock also return, making the middle of the Wildcat defense a strength despite inexperience at defensive tackle.

Sophomore Greg Newsome heads up the defensive backfield at cornerback, but he's surrounded by underclassmen in A.J. Hampton and Cameron Ruiz that Ohio State could look to pick on. Senior Trae Williams could play, but he's missed each of Northwestern's last three games with an undisclosed injury. Northwestern is an almost exclusively zone team, so those corners may be hidden a bit, but their athletic ability will be tested against Ohio State's horizontal game and in intermediate routes to the borders of the field.

Players To Watch

The key players on offense are Anderson and Skowronek. The son of Northwestern legend Damien Anderson, Drake is faster than he is powerful, and at 5-11, 190-pounds, he certainly needs that speed to make a difference. The redshirt freshman hasn't been great this season, but he is dangerous enough for Ohio State to think about, and he'll likely draw a spy from either Baron Browning or Malik Harrison to keep him from creating big plays off missed tackles.

Skowronek is the lone senior in Northwestern's passing attack and the only serious big-play threat. He has just 12

receptions for 141 yards on the season, but if Northwestern is going to move the ball at all on the Buckeyes, it will be on quick passes to the outside to Skowronek or similar looks to the less-explosive but similarly efficient Lees.

Almost all of Northwestern's playmakers are on the other side of the ball. Defensive end Joe Gaziano is a four-year starter and Northwestern's best pass rusher, with 3½ sacks on the season, and 24½ for his career. He isn't Chase Young, but he'll at least test Ohio State's tackles, as will Samdup Miller in the other end spot. Miller is more of a run stuffer (18 tackles) than Gaziano, but the two complement each other well.

With Alex Miller in the middle (22 tackles, 4½ TFLs, 2½ sacks) the Wildcats have a formidable defensive line, though it should probably be considered less than that of Michigan State or Wisconsin but firmly in the upper echelon of Big Ten front fours.

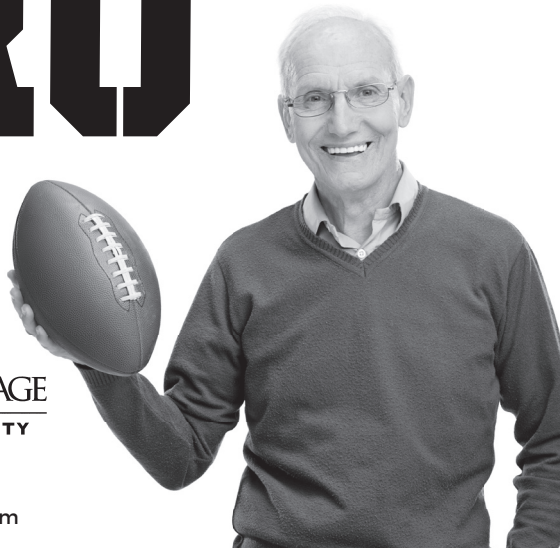
The line is made better by excellent linebacker play from Fisher, Gallagher and a relatively new star: Chris Bergin. The junior played plenty last year but didn't truly start. He has taken over that role this season, helping fill the void left by the departed McGee and Nate Hall, and Bergin helped filled it admirably through the first half of the season, picking up 38 tackles, four for a loss. He isn't the best athlete in the world, and he stands at just 5-11, 215, but he has the ability to make plays on the perimeter. Northwestern may need him to have a double-digit tackle day to keep Ohio State contained on the outside.

The best player on the defense could very well be Whillock, especially when it comes to tackling, as he has 44 on the season, leading the team. He's expected to do quite a bit in the defense and serves as somewhat of a hybrid, rushing the passer and dropping into coverage, while also stepping up to stop the run quite a bit more than most safeties are expected to. He'll likely be asked to focus on Justin Fields as a runner and to keep everything in front of him in the air.

If Williams actually plays, he's immediately Northwestern's best corner, but he doesn't seem likely to return against the Buckeyes.

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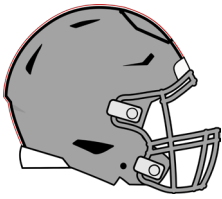


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How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. NORTHWESTERN RUSH DEFENSE

Ohio State defeated Michigan State 34-10 on Oct. 5 despite junior running back J.K. Dobbins. What? OK, that was a hot take, but it's true that OSU likes to establish the run to get the passing game rolling, and that didn't happen against the Spartans. That makes Dobbins' 172 yards on 24 carries (7.2 average) more remarkable. His first eight carries into early in the second quarter produced just 17 yards (2.1) before he and the offense went crazy. Dobbins had a career-long TD run of 67 yards, Master Teague chewed up 90 yards, and quarterback Justin Fields added 61 more for a total of 323 rushing yards against the nation's No. 4 rush defense that came in allowing 55.8 yards a game. OSU is No. 3 on the run with 288.5 yards per game. Northwestern is a decent 56th in rush defense (142.8) and limited Nebraska in its last game to 133 yards on the ground (3.3 per carry). Linebacker Paddy Fishers had 10 tackles vs. the Cornhuskers, and defensive back Cameron Ruiz is active, getting a career-high eight tackles (two for losses) in the game. The Buckeyes' offensive line will make room for Dobbins, but they can't forget how Michigan State used its physicality to make life miserable in the early going. **EDGE: EVEN**

NORTHWESTERN RUSH OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The nice thing about looking up Northwestern offensive stats is it's easy to just scroll to the bottom of the list because the Wildcats are near the bottom of the 130 teams in several categories. They are 77th when running (152.4 ypg) and average just 3.6 yards per carry. They have six rushing TDs – three by Drake Anderson – and their longest run has been a 35-yarder by Jesse Brown. NU starting back Isaiah Bowser from Sidney, Ohio, did not play against Nebraska because of an injury. He had a breakout 2018, but so far this season he's played three games in which he has a combined 103 yards (3.6 average). OSU fans might remember John Moten IV. He had a 77-yard TD run in last season's Big Ten title game (he finished with 76 yards on four carries). He has 32 yards on 11 totes (2.9) in three games this season. The Buckeyes are ninth nationally against the run (82.0 ypg). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. NORTHWESTERN PASS DEFENSE

Fields tossed his first interception of the season vs. the Spartans and lost a fumble. He still threw for 206 yards, and his two touchdowns give him 18 through the air with another eight scores rushing. His ability to scramble until he finds an open receiver causes headaches for the frustrated and exhausted defenders trying to catch him. The Buckeyes are 68th in passing (246.0) but when you've got such a balanced attack it doesn't really matter. Northwestern will present a challenge. They are 13th in pass defense (176.0 ypg). Although they have only two interceptions, they've allowed just four passing TDs. NU has 11 sacks. OSU has allowed 13. Defensive lineman Joe Gaziano is second on the Northwestern career sack list with 24½. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NORTHWESTERN PASS OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

The Buckeyes will have to prepare for two quarterbacks. Redshirt junior Aidan Smith got his first career start vs. Nebraska. Hunter Johnson, a five-star sophomore transfer from Clemson, injured his knee in the previous game against Wisconsin but was not on the injured list for the Huskers, so coach Pat Fitzgerald may have decided a change was needed. Johnson has completed 48.3 percent of his passes (43 of 89) for 367 yards with four picks and one TD. He also has 89 rushing yards and a TD. Smith is 12 of 31 (38.7 percent) for 137 yards, a TD and three interceptions. The Wildcats are 121st in passing (140.4 ypg) while OSU is fifth in pass defense (152.0 ypg). NU has thrown just two TD passes (against eight interceptions). Only Georgia Southern and Old Dominion (zero) have fewer touchdowns. On top of that, OSU leads the nation with 28 sacks. Chase Young is second with 8½. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Charlie Kuhbander missed a 34-yard field goal midway through the fourth quarter that would have broken a 7-7 tie, and Nebraska successfully made a FG on the last play of the game to win 10-7. Blake Haubeil missed a 37-yard try in the first quarter vs. Michigan State. Riley Lees had a career-long 50-yard kickoff return vs. Nebraska. Daniel Kubiuk averages 35.6 yards per punt for NU. Drue Chrisman has a 46.8 average for the Buckeyes. Case closed. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

Every season it seems that an opponent has an open weekend before playing the Buckeyes in a prime-time game. That's the case this year as well, but the catch is neither team plays on Oct. 12. The Wildcats don't match up well anywhere with the Buckeyes, but having extra time to prepare will give Fitzgerald an opportunity for a lot of wrinkles that he hopes will catch the Buckeyes off guard. **EDGE: NORTHWESTERN**

STAFF PREDICTION

It will be interesting to see how well Buckeye fans travel for a Friday game since they usually take over Ryan Field for a traditional Saturday game. This is a chance for OSU to shine in Chicago – the conference's biggest media market (no one in New York City except for TV execs cares about the Big Ten or college football). **OHIO STATE, 45-14**

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...

13 J.R. PACE, 6-1, 205, JR. 22 Bryce Jackson, 6-1, 185, So.	28 CHRIS BERGIN, 5-11, 215, JR. 31 Jaylen Rivers, 6-2, 225, R-Fr.	51 BLAKE GALLAGHER, 6-1, 235, JR. 40 Peter McIntyre, 6-2, 230, So.				
SS	SAM	MLB				
2 GREG NEWSOME II, 6-1, 193, SO. 9 Roderick Campbell, 6-0, 190, Jr.	42 PADDY FISHER, 6-4, 246, JR. 35 Erik Mueller, 6-2, 230, Jr.	7 TRAVIS WHILLOCK, 6-1, 200, JR. 26 Brian Bullock, 5-11, 195, So.				
CB	WILL	FS				
97 JOE GAZIANO, 6-4, 275, SR. 99 Earnest Brown IV, 6-5, 270, Jr.	96 TREVOR KENT, 6-6, 280, SO. 93 Joe Spivak, 6-0, 290, Jr.	91 SAMDUP MILLER, 6-3, 270, JR. 53 Eku Leota, 6-4, 255, R-Fr.				
DE	NT	DT				
18 CAM RUIZ, 5-11, 180, SO. 11 A.J. Hampton, 5-11, 180, R-Fr.		CB				
X	LT	LG	C	RG	RT	Z
75 THAYER MUNFORD, 6-6, 310, JR. 58 Joshua Alabi, 6-5, 305, 5th-Sr.	71 JOSH MYERS, 6-5, 305, SO. 77 Harry Miller, 6-4, 310, Fr.	76 BRANDEN BOWEN, 6-7, 315, 5TH-SR. OR 58 JOSHUA ALABI, 6-5, 305, 5TH-SR.				
9 BINJIMEN VICTOR, 6-4, 199, SR. 5 Garrett Wilson, 6-0, 188, Fr.	73 JONAH JACKSON, 6-4, 305, 5TH-SR. 54 Matthew Jones, 6-4, 305, R-Fr.	52 WYATT DAVIS, 6-4, 313, SO. 61 Gavin Cupp, 6-4, 308, Jr.	11 AUSTIN MACK, 6-2, 215 SR. 17 Chris Olave, 6-1, 185, So.			
P	QB	TE				
91 DRUE CHRISMAN, 6-3, 220, JR.	1 JUSTIN FIELDS, 6-3, 223, SO. 4 Chris Chugunov, 6-1, 208, 5th-Sr. OR 12 Gunnar Hoak, 6-4, 212, Jr.	89 LUKE FARRELL, 6-6, 250, JR. 88 Jeremy Ruckert, 6-5, 250, So.				
K	H					
95 BLAKE HAUBEIL, 6-4, 225, Jr.	2 J.K. DOBBINS, 5-10, 217 JR. 33 Master Teague, 5-11, 220, R-Fr.	14 K.J. HILL, 6-0, 195, 5TH-SR. 26 Jaelen Gill, 6-0, 195, R-Fr.				

WHEN NORTHWESTERN HAS THE BALL...

25 BRENDON WHITE, 6-2, 215, JR. 23 Jashen Wint, 5-11, 200, Jr.	39 MALIK HARRISON, 6-3, 240, SR. 7 Teradja Mitchell, 6-2, 242, So.	20 PETE WERNER, 6-3, 239, JR. 36 K'Vaughan Pope, 6-1, 231, So.	4 JORDAN FULLER, 6-2, 205, SR. 41 Josh Proctor, 6-2, 205, So.			
SS	WLB	MLB	SLB			
1 JEFF OKUDAH, 6-1, 200, JR. 12 Sevyn Banks, 6-1, 200, So.	32 TUF BORLAND, 6-1, 232, JR. OR 5 BARON BROWNING, 6-3, 248, JR.	24 SHAUN WADE, 6-1, 194, SO. 10 Amir Riep, 6-0, 195, Jr.	FS			
CB	NICKEL					
2 CHASE YOUNG, 6-5, 265, JR. 11 Tyreke Smith, 6-4, 267, So.	9 JASHON CORNELL, 6-3, 285, 5TH-SR. 92 Haskell Garrett, 6-2, 295, Jr.	3 DAMON ARNETTE, 6-0, 195, 5TH-SR. 26 Cameron Brown, 6-0, 188, So.				
DE	DT	DE	CB			
X	LT	LG	C	RG	RT	Y
70 RASHAWN SLATER, 6-3, 305, JR. 74 Payne He'Bert, 6-4, 300, R-Fr.	65 JARED THOMAS, 6-4, 310, SR. 52 Sam Gerak, 6-3, 291, So.	73 GUNNAR VOGEL, 6-6, 300, JR. 76 Ethan Wiederkehr, 6-5, 290, So.				
8 KYRIC MCGOWAN, 5-10, 210, JR. 4 Berkeley Holman, 5-11, 193, So.	66 NIK URBAN, 6-3, 305, JR. 57 Cam Kolwich, 6-5, 300, Jr.	52 SAM GERAK, 6-3, 291, SO. 56 Sam Stovall, 6-4, 300, R-Fr.	19 RILEY LEES, 6-0, 201, JR. 12 J.J. Jefferson, 5-10, 170, So.			
P	QB	SB				
17 DANIEL KUBIUK, 6-1, 201, 5TH-SR. 34 Andrew David, 5-8, 185, 5th-Sr.	15 HUNTER JOHNSON, 6-2, 216, SO. 11 Aidan Smith, 6-2, 215, Jr.	89 CHARLIE MANGIERI, 6-4, 252, SO. 83 Trent Goens, 6-3, 250, Sr.				
K	Z					
14 CHARLIE KUHBANDER, 6-0, 185, JR. 38 Drew Luckenbaugh, 6-1, 188, Jr.	25 ISAIAH BOWSER, 6-1, 215, SO. 6 Drake Anderson, 5-11, 190, R-Fr.	81 RAMAUD BOWMAN, 6-2, 203, JR. 14 Malik Washington, 5-11, 190, Fr.				

- Depth charts compiled by Andrew Lind and Patrick Mayhorn

1994 Game An Anomaly In NU-OSU History



TIM MOODY

LOOKING FOR FIRST WIN – Northwestern head coach Pat Fitzgerald is 0-6 against Ohio State since taking over the program in 2006. The Wildcats have not beaten the Buckeyes since they claimed a 33-27 overtime win in 2004.

By **WYATT CROSER**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

On Oct. 2, 1993, Ohio State emphatically defeated Northwestern by a score of 51-3.

After the two teams exchanged field goals in the first quarter, the then-undefeated Buckeyes put up 17 in the second quarter and 21 in the third to shut the door on any hopes the Wildcats, who were 2-1 at the time, had of pulling off the upset.

Ohio State outgained Northwestern 428-162 and was led by a performance of six catches for 119 yards by wide receiver Joey Galloway as well as rushing touchdowns by five different players.

At the other end, a true freshman linebacker by the name of Pat Fitzgerald did not play in the game. It was Fitzgerald's first experience against the Buckeyes as a member of Northwestern, but it would be far from his last.

That was Ohio State's 18th straight win against Northwestern, a streak that dated back to Nov. 13, 1971, and after how lopsided the result was – and the fact that the Wildcats went 2-9 that season while the Buckeyes went 10-1-1 – there was no reason to expect anything but the same when the teams met again a year later.

On Oct. 1, 1994 the teams played once more, and again Fitzgerald didn't play. His time to make an impact between these two teams would come in 2001, when he joined Northwestern's coaching staff as a

defensive backs coach, or the next season, when he coached the linebackers, or in 2006, when he took over for the late Randy Walker as the youngest head coach in college football at the time he took over.

But in that 1994 game, even without a linebacker who would go on to win both the Bronko Nagurski Trophy and Chuck Bednarik Award in back-to-back seasons, the first player to ever do that, the Wildcats put up a fight.

Northwestern opened the scoring with a 40-yard field goal by Sam Valenzisi, the only points that would be scored by either team in the first quarter.

Valenzisi added another three points early in the second quarter from 33 yards out to double Northwestern's lead and tacked on three more with only two seconds left in the half, this time hitting it through from 52 yards. The score was 9-0 in favor of the Wildcats at halftime.

Northwestern had 104 yards through the air in the first two quarters. The Buckeyes managed only nine. The Wildcats outgained Ohio State, 175-66, had the ball for 23:22 of the first 30 minutes and earned 13 first downs to the Buckeyes' two.

After getting completely dominated in the first half, Ohio State started to turn it around, and in a big way. The third quarter was all Buckeyes, started off by a 13-yard

catch by Galloway from Bobby Hoying to cut the deficit to two. Just 3:20 later, kicker Josh Jackson hit a 21-yard field goal to give the Buckeyes their first lead.

Running back Eddie George added a touchdown run as time expired in the quarter to give Ohio State a 17-9 lead off 17 unanswered points.

In the fourth, Northwestern fought back, scoring from 5 yards out on a throw by Tim Hughes to Dave Beazley. But on a two-point conversion attempt to tie the game, the run-in effort failed, and the Buckeyes held a 17-15 lead with 5:01 to play and the score remained that way.

The Wildcats had another opportunity from their own 25-yard line with 43 seconds to go to get Valenzisi, who had been dominant in the game, into field-goal range. They went backward for 9 yards and turned the ball over on downs.

Ohio State would extend the win streak to 24 games before it was snapped. Northwestern went 3-7-1 in 1994. Ohio State went 9-4. That 1994 matchup was the only game decided by less than 18 points since 1985 and the first by single digits since 1979.

The Wildcats Rise Under Fitzgerald

There was not much for Northwestern fans to cheer about in the decade of sea-

sons prior to Fitzgerald taking over. After a 9-3 run in 1996, seven of the next nine seasons the Wildcats failed to finish above a 50 percent win rate.

The 2004 season was one of them, with the Wildcats ending the year 6-6. Jim Tressel led the Buckeyes to an 8-4 record that season. One of those four losses, however, came at the hands of Northwestern.

The game took place in Evanston, and the Wildcats' offense was electric, outgaining the Buckeyes 444-308.

Still, Ohio State would not give in. Down 10 in the fourth quarter, the Buckeyes' Mike Nugent hit a 27-yard field goal.

Then Justin Zwick found wide receiver Santonio Holmes from 21 yards out with 1:54 remaining to tie the game.

In overtime, Nugent missed a field goal, giving the Wildcats an opportunity to win with any points.

Running back Noah Herron found the end zone for the third time in the game to win the game, 33-27.

That was Fitzgerald's first win of any sort against Ohio State, and the then-linebackers coach remembered how special that moment was.

"It was a crazy week," Fitzgerald said last year before Northwestern's matchup against Ohio State in the Big Ten Championship Game. "For me, my role was simple – we had to find a way to stop the run. We didn't do that good of a job, but we found a way to get it done."



Randy Walker

As head coach, Fitzgerald has not yet put the pieces together to beat the Buckeyes, getting outscored 266-101 in six attempts. But not all those games have been blowouts.

Fitzgerald's best chance came in 2013, when his team again went up early, as much as 23-13 following three field goals in a row by Northwestern kicker Jeff Budzien.

Ohio State back Carlos Hyde seemed to stop the upset from happening with a pair of touchdowns that gave the Buckeyes a 27-23 lead with 11:29 to go.

Instead of backing down, the Wildcats put together a six-play, 80-yard drive capped off with a 12-yard touchdown toss from Trevor Siemian to Cameron Dickinson.

Down three, Hyde again found the end zone with 5:22 left, putting Ohio State back up 34-30.

After a Northwestern turnover on downs and an Ohio State punt, the Wildcats had the ball with an opportunity for the upset. With a touchdown required, they would need to go 84 yards in 21 seconds.

Northwestern went backward 16 yards and fumbled, and Joey Bosa recovered the ball and scored with no time remaining, giving Ohio State the 40-30 win.

Fitzgerald's next effort in 2016 also came down to the wire.

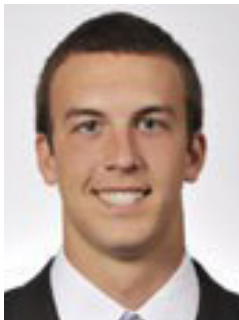
With Ohio State up 24-17, Northwestern got to first-and-goal at Ohio State's 3-yard line with 4:36 on the clock.

A 2-yard loss on a run and a holding penalty backed the ball up to the 15, and

after two incompletions, Fitzgerald elected to kick a field goal, making it 24-20 with 3:31 to go.

Northwestern never got the ball back. Ohio State ran the clock all the way down, securing the tight win against a growing Big Ten West opponent.

"We lost, right?" Fitzgerald said in 2018 about the loss in 2016. "It doesn't matter if it's close or not. We work our tails off to find a way to win, and the first thing we did, like every game, we came back and looked at things whether it was schematic issues or did we have the wrong personnel in or wrong checks.



Trevor Siemian

"Did we execute the game plan, how do we play fundamentally – you look at all those things and you do that after every game."

The success hasn't come against Ohio State, but Fitzgerald has turned a corner

with the program overall, putting together a winning record in eight of his past 11 seasons and competing for a Big Ten title last season that came to an end with a 45-24 loss, again to Ohio State.

Prior to that game, then-Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer called Fitzgerald "one of the best coaches in college football."

Starting at 31 is no easy task, but Fitzgerald has worked to build a program where he has spent 23 of his last 27 years.

That's probably not what Fitzgerald expected when his team received a 51-3 beatdown from Ohio State while he watched from the sidelines.

Chasing History

Ohio State is halfway through its regular season following a 34-10 win against Michigan State on Oct. 5, and there are multiple Buckeyes who are looking to make their way up the lists and into the record books by the end of the season.

- With seven receptions against the Spartans, fifth-year wide receiver K.J. Hill passed Michael Jenkins (165) and Cris Carter (168) to move up to second on Ohio State's all-time reception list. Hill has 27 catches this season and 171 for his career to this point and is now 20 away from tying David Boston's career total of 191, which is the most receptions in program history.

The seven catches also made it 40 straight games with a reception for Hill. If Ohio State manages to play in nine games, only possible through playing in the Big Ten championship and then two games in the College Football Playoff, Hill can break Gary Williams' record of 48 games straight with a catch in each contest.

- Chase Young recorded half a sack against Michigan State, which gives him at least one half sack in eight straight games. That also gives the junior defensive end 8½ sacks on the season, six away from breaking Vernon Gholston's single-season record of 14 from 2007.

Over his career, Young has 22½ sacks, which puts him tied for eighth on Ohio State's all-time list with Gholston. While it is unlikely Young can catch Mike Vrabel, who is at the top with 36 sacks, Jason Simmons' total of 27½ in second place on the program's leaderboard is definitely within reach.

- J.K. Dobbins rushed for 172 yards, passing Keith Byars (3,200) and J.T. Barrett (3,263) to move to No. 7 on Ohio State's all-time rushing leaderboard. With 3,282 career rushing yards, Dobbins is 680 yards away from passing Ezekiel Elliott as the No. 2 rusher of all time but is still 2,308 yards short of the No. 1 spot held by Archie Griffin.

Dobbins has 826 yards rushing through six games, which puts him on exact pace to match Eddie George's single-season rush record of 1,927 yards, assuming the Buckeyes play in 14 games.

- Justin Fields is the only quarterback in the country with both a passing touchdown and a rushing touchdown in each of his first six games.

- Ryan Day is now 9-0 as Ohio State head coach, the fourth-longest undefeated start of any coach in the program's history.



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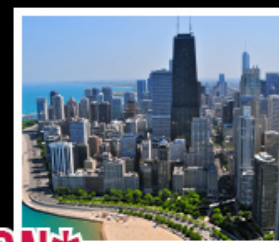
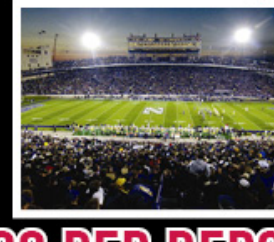
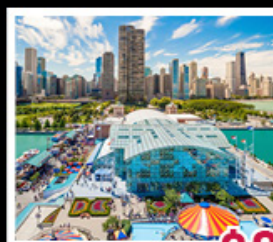
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Defensive Lineman Cowan Commits To OSU

As expected, Ohio State started off its big recruiting weekend with a bang when it landed a commitment from Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day School four-star defensive lineman Jacolbe Cowan the night of Oct. 4.

The 6-5, 262-pound Cowan – who is considered the 15th-best defensive tackle and No. 165 prospect overall in the class of 2020 – actually pledged his services to the Buckeyes following his official visit in mid-June but waited until the Michigan State weekend to announce his decision.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK

Andrew Lind

Cowan, who fits the mold of a big, athletic and versatile lineman coveted by defensive line coach Larry Johnson, picked Ohio State over finalists Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, LSU, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, South Carolina and Tennessee. He was a top priority for Johnson, head coach Ryan Day and running backs coach/area recruiter Tony Alford.

After he announced his decision, Cowan hopped on a plane bound for Columbus in order to attend the 34-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 5. It marked his fourth trip to campus in the last year.

Cowan becomes the 23rd member of Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class, joining Cincinnati Princeton four-star Darrion Henry and Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star Ty Hamilton along the Buckeyes' defensive line.

Johnson would like to add one more prospect to the haul, with Knoxville (Tenn.) Catholic four-star defensive end Tyler Baron – who also attended the win over the Spartans – among his top targets to fill that void.

Lengthy Visitor List For Michigan State Win

Ohio State welcomed a long list of visitors to Ohio Stadium for its first night game of the season, which included several committed prospects from the 2020 and 2021 recruiting classes.

In addition to Cowan, Henry and Hamilton, 2020 commits such as Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia five-star wide receiver Julian Fleming; Cincinnati Princeton five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson; Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star wide receiver Gee Scott; Rockwall, Texas, four-star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star cornerback Lejond Cavazos; Muskegon, Mich., three-star athlete Cameron Martinez; Warren (Mich.) De La Salle Collegiate three-star offensive guard Grant Toutant; Beech Grove, Ind., three-star offensive guard Josh Fryar; Cincinnati Elder three-star tight end Joe Royer; Olney (Md.) Good Counsel three-star linebacker Mitchell Melton; Norwalk, Ohio, three-star offensive tack-



ANDREW LIND

FUTURE BUCKEYES ABOUND – Four-star wide receiver commits Jaxon Smith-Njigba, above left, and Gee Scott made the trip to Columbus for Ohio State's 34-10 win over Michigan State. Four-star cornerback pledge Lejond Cavazos, below center, was also on hand for the game. He was accompanied by his parents, Melba and C.J.



A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

Larry Kennedy (5-11, 175) was generally regarded as the finest defensive back in Florida in 1989. He hailed from Riverview High School, the same school that produced former Buckeye cornerback Foster Paulk.

“He plays the bump and run as well as any defensive back in his state,” recruiting expert Tom Lemming said. “He is blessed with great reactions and quickness. He is just a fine all-around athlete who is a good bet for All-American honors.”

Kennedy finished second on the team in tackles as a junior as Riverview went to the state playoffs. He also grabbed six interceptions. Kennedy played wide receiver on offense but made no secret about wanting to play on the defensive side of the ball in college.

The Buckeyes were in the hunt for Kennedy’s services, along with Georgia, Florida, Florida State, Notre Dame, North Carolina, Michigan and Miami.

25 Years Ago – 1994

Opposing football teams didn’t have to look too hard to find defensive lineman Antwon Jones.

He was usually the one getting up off the quarterback after posting another demoralizing sack. He had 23 of them the previous year, so it was a good bet that opponents knew all about him.

The 6-4, 238-pounder followed in the footsteps of former Piqua (Ohio) High School teammate Matt Finkes, a former star defensive end for Ohio State. But while Finkes was a largely underpublicized player throughout much of his prep career, Jones had garnered much more attention.

He had a breakout junior year in 1993 and became one of the most feared defensive players in the state. A year later he was being recruited by some of the top schools across the nation, including Ohio State, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Tennessee and Hawaii.

“I’m doing a lot better in terms of reading my keys this year,” Jones said. “I was more of a straight pass rusher last year, whereas this year, I’m trying to play a complete game. I’ve become more explosive off the ball, and that’s helped me a great deal.”

20 Years Ago – 1999

Ordinarily, a talented consensus high school All-America wideout probably would have eased himself into the third receiver position for Ohio State, which would have given the Buckeyes an all-world stable of pass catchers for Steve Bellisari to throw to in 1999.

But these were not ordinary times for Maurice

Harris, a former Raines High School receiver from Jacksonville, Fla., who was on every recruiter’s wish list in 1998.

An academic casualty, Harris was one of three recruits denied admission to Ohio State in 1999 and was subsequently unable to complete his application on time to the Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, due to a mix-up that resulted from his paperwork being lost for some time, somewhere at the NCAA clearinghouse.

Uncertain where to turn, being stuck in eligibility limbo, Harris packed up his summer attire – the only kind that he owned – hopped on a plane and flew north, encouraged by the Buckeye coaching staff, to settle in and get his bearings in Columbus.

15 Years Ago – 2004

Shawn Oatis, a safety prospect out of Chino, Calif., stood 6-0, weighed around 200 pounds and ran the 40-yard dash in 4.6 seconds. Those were impressive measurables, to be sure, but those didn’t exactly separate him from the hundreds of elite athletes across the nation.

What did separate him, however, was a pairing of that athletic ability and an impressive level of intelligence, both on and off the field. Oatis maintained a lofty 4.1 GPA, and he applied those same skills on the gridiron.

“I guess you could say I’m a thinking player,” Oatis said. “I like to use my brain more than some other athletes do, and I think that helps out a lot. I study a lot of film and do a scouting report, and I think that benefits me on the field as far as having a little extra edge on some of the guys.”

Oatis had been studying film for the better part of his prep career, and he took to the task almost immediately in the hopes of finding anything that could give him an advantage over his opponents. His intelligence drew a crowd of teams to him, though his final three were Notre Dame, Ohio State and UCLA.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Scott McVey was set to play his college football on one of the biggest stages possible. If his past performances in such situations were any indication, he would do just fine.

As a senior at Cleveland St. Ignatius, McVey was not far removed from being just another talented junior football prospect from Ohio without any scholarship offers.

After completing a 9-1 season, McVey and his

teammates opened the 2008 state Division I playoffs as the overall top seed and blitzed Lakewood St. Edward by for a 37-0 score. Four games later, they held on for a 28-20 victory against Cincinnati Elder in the title game, giving the program its state-record 10th championship.

McVey saved his best for last against Elder. The linebacker prospect was officially credited with eight tackles, including 4½ sacks and an interception. When the dust had settled, he was named Championship Weekend MVP by Scout.com for his performance.

Five Years Ago – 2014

The 2016 class in Ohio appeared to be stronger than the 2015 version, and the Buckeyes continued to lay the groundwork for what could become the top class in the nation for that recruiting cycle when they offered Cleveland Benedictine four-star wide receiver Justin Layne.

The 6-3, 190-pounder, who was rated 30th among 2016 wideouts, received the offer over Twitter before speaking to running backs coach Stan Drayton.

“Ohio State let me know I had the offer today when they messaged me on Twitter, and then I spoke with Coach Drayton after school about it,” Layne said. “I didn’t really think too much about it when I saw that on Twitter but realized it was real when I spoke with Coach Drayton.”

“When we spoke on the phone and he let me know it was official, I was real excited. We didn’t really talk too long, but he let me know they would love to have me in their program and be a part of their family. The Ohio State offer means a lot because I’ve been hoping for one since my recruitment started. I was staying patient with Ohio State, and it finally came.”

One Year Ago – 2018

In an empty Ohio Stadium, Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic’s 2020 duo of four-star wide receiver Gee Scott (6-3, 200) and three-star running back Sam Adams (6-2, 200) wrapped up their unofficial visit at Ohio State sporting the scarlet-and-gray home uniforms and pads as they took photos on the field.

Earlier in the day, the Buckeyes had extended scholarship offers to both Scott and Adams, adding to their growing list of national offers. In the 247Sports composite for 2020, Scott was the No. 68 overall prospect and No. 12 wide receiver while Adams was the No. 340 overall prospect and No. 28 running back. In the state of Washington, Scott was No. 2 and Adams was No. 6.

le Trey Leroux; and Cincinnati La Salle three-star kicker Jake Seibert made the trip to Columbus.

They were also joined on the sidelines before the game by 2021 commits such as Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer; Philadelphia St. Joseph’s four-star quarterback Kyle McCord; Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star offensive tackle Ben Christman; and Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard.

Other notable prospects in attendance included Baron, 2020 Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., four-star quarterback C.J. Stroud, who is still seeking an offer from the Buckeyes’ coaching staff following his visit; 2020 Lancaster, Texas, four-star running back Kevontre Bradford; 2021 Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star wide receiver Beaux Collins; 2021 Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star offensive guard and Notre Dame commit Greg Crippen; 2021 Solon, Ohio, four-star defensive

end Najee Story; 2021 Belleville, Mich., four-star defensive tackle Damon Payne; 2021 Elkhart (Ind.) Central four-star defensive end Rodney McGraw; 2021 Valrico (Fla.) Armwood four-star athlete Charles Montgomery; 2021 Muskego, Wisc., four-star safety Hunter Wohler; 2021 St. Louis DeSmet four-star cornerback Jakailin Johnson; 2021 Cincinnati La Salle three-star safety Jaylen Johnson; and 2021 Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Cardinal Gibbons three-star wide receiver Troy Stellato.



Ryan Watts

Corner Ryan Watts Reopens Recruitment

Little Elm, Texas, four-star defensive back Ryan Watts announced that he had decommitted from Oklahoma on Oct. 2. Watts had taken an official visit to Ohio State for the 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21.

The 6-3, 187-pound Watts had been committed to the Sooners since April 21, but two trips to Columbus, including an unofficial visit in early June, would indicate the Buckeyes are now the front-run-

ners to land his pledge in the coming days or weeks.

Watts – who is considered the 19th-best cornerback and No. 257 prospect overall in the class of 2020 – was scheduled to take an official visit to Penn State on Oct. 19 and was in the process of setting up an official visit to Texas A&M.

However, sources close to Watts told Buckeye Sports Bulletin both of those trips are now off.

Ohio State is actively looking to bring on one more cornerback this cycle to put alongside Cavazos and La Habra, Calif., four-star Clark Phillips, and Watts has long been considered a more realistic option than Cavazos’ teammate at IMG Academy in LSU five-star commit Elias Ricks.

Watts has formed a strong bond with Day and co-defensive coordinator, secondary coach and area recruiter Jeff Hafley, who quickly reached out to Watts following his announcement in hopes of securing his pledge in short order.

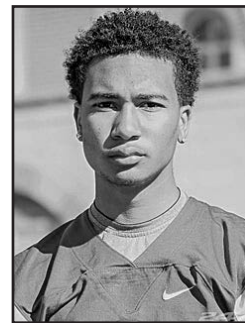
Day Opens Up About Quarterback Recruiting

Much has been made in recent weeks about Ohio State’s pursuit of a second quarterback in the 2020 recruiting cycle and how it impacts Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star Jack Miller, who has been committed to the Buckeyes since July 2018.

Although he could not speak directly on the situation, which also includes the previously mentioned Stroud, Day discussed how sensitive quarterback recruiting can be.

“You try to do the best you can,” he said. “We always want to have four on scholarship, and you do the best you can to adapt year-in and year-out and make the best decisions you can. You know, nobody is more aware of that than we are.”

“Think about what we had a few years ago. You had J.T. (Barrett), Joe (Burrow), Dwayne (Haskins) and Tate



C.J. Stroud

Continued On Page 28

DE Sawyer Shines On Both Sides Of The Ball

Continued From Page 27

(Martell) in the room, and they're all kind of gone. J.T. has graduated, Joe is at LSU, Dwayne is in the NFL and Tate decided to leave, and that was just a couple of years ago. So it happens quickly, especially at a high-profile place like Ohio State. We'll do the best we can to adapt to it and make sure we have four guys in the room."

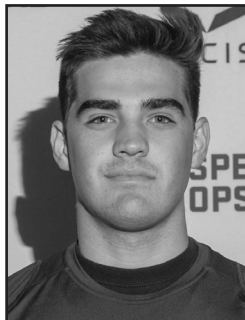
As it stands now, Ohio State will have just three scholarship quarterbacks on the roster next fall in Justin Fields, Gunnar Hoak and Miller. And while it's important to add another body to the room, keeping Miller happy and in the fold is just as critical.

"I think what you tell them in recruiting is all we can guarantee is that there's going to be three other guys in the room with you, and you're going to be part of an unbelievable program, have all the resources you need, be part of a great culture and you're going to get coached up at the highest level," Day said. "All we can guarantee is that, and the fact that there's going to be three other guys in the room with you – whether they're freshmen, seniors or transfers.

"You just don't know because you don't have a crystal ball."

Jack Sawyer Plays Both Ways

Sawyer, who is considered the second-best defensive end and No. 2 prospect overall in the class of 2021, was thrust into the emergency quarterback role when Pickerington North starter Dom Myers suffered a knee injury early in the season.



Jack Sawyer

He's completed 34 of 69 passes for 434 yards and five touchdowns compared to just one interception and led the Panthers to wins in three of four games, impressing his future head coach in the process.

"I can say that anytime somebody plays multiple positions or multiple sports, we look at it as a positive," Day said. "It allows them to compete and work through different things and learn skills that maybe they haven't learned at another position, so we love that.

"I just think anytime you get to play another position or another sport, you're increasing your ability as a total athlete, whether it's spatial awareness or – let's say you're a quarterback and someone puts you on defense – I love that because now they've got to learn to be tough and stick their face on people. Again, anytime they can do multiple things, I think it's great."

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	★★★★	Samamish (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
Jacolbe Cowan	DT	6-5	262	★★★★	Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day School

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)



ANDREW LIND

BACK AGAIN – Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer, the top-rated player in the state for the 2021 recruiting class, committed to Ohio State back in February and has attended every home game this fall.

ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler

If Ohio State offers and eventually lands a commitment from Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., four-star quarterback C.J. Stroud (6-3, 194), do you believe Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star and longtime Buckeye commit Jack Miller (6-4, 210) will look around at other potential opportunities? Or do you believe him and his father when they say they welcome any and all challengers?

"At this point, you just have to take the Millers at their word.

"Ohio State has been up-front with him throughout the process about the lack of numbers in the room and the likelihood of taking a second quarterback. This is something that has been discussed with Miller and his family since back in the spring, and through six months of talk, there has been no wavering on Miller's part.

"It would seem that if Miller was going to look around, that process should have started months ago when he was made aware of this possibility, so again,

you have to take him at his word that he's solid given the lack of action on his part in looking over these past few months."

Ohio State offered a scholarship to Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star running back Miyan Williams (5-10, 210) on Sept. 21. Do you believe it's a foregone conclusion that he eventually flips his pledge from Iowa State, where he's been committed since July, or do you think the Buckeyes have other targets ahead of him on the priority chart?

"I think the safe bet is that Williams does flip to Ohio State. He is a bit of a different kid who prefers to stay out of the spotlight, and he has built a strong relationship with the coaches at Iowa State.

"However, I think the opportunity to play at a place like Ohio State and to be a short drive from his family will win out. He's definitely someone that Ohio State would take today, so there aren't any hurdles there for him."

Michigan is in the midst of a tough stretch

in its schedule that includes games against Wisconsin (L, 35-14 on Sept. 21), Iowa (W, 10-3 on Oct. 5), Penn State (Oct. 19) and Notre Dame (Oct. 26) over the course of six weeks.

Let's say the Wolverines struggle mightily and Jim Harbaugh is fired or bolts for the NFL. Are there any commits the Buckeyes would target and try to flip?

"I could maybe see Ohio State kicking the tires on West Bloomfield, Mich., four-star safety Makari Paige (6-3, 182).

"At one point, it looked like Paige could end up in Columbus, but things turned over the summer, especially as the odds went up for Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic four-star safety and eventual commit Lathan Ransom (6-???, 193).

"That said, with limited spots available, I don't see a lot of realistic options there on the Michigan commit list, and while there was a little bit of overlap there in terms of a few kids looking at both programs, that's an awfully tough flip to make for a kid."

Defensively, Sawyer (6-6, 220) has 25 tackles – including a team-high 14 tackles for loss – and 11 sacks in just six games.

Current Buckeye Discusses Commit

The above-mentioned Ty Hamilton (6-3, 250) is in the unique position of having his older brother, current Ohio State defensive tackle Davon Hamilton,

being able to relay what it's like to play for the Buckeyes.

And with that, the elder Hamilton was recently asked by reporters about the advice he's given his younger brother, who committed to the Buckeyes in mid-June.

"Just prepare to work as hard as you've ever worked before," Davon said. "Obviously, it's not easy. I feel like it's hard for high school players to understand how

hard it is to come here and play."

A fifth-year senior and key contributor along the defensive line this fall, Davon also came to Ohio State as a three-star prospect from Pickerington (Ohio) Central.

Ty has a slightly better 247Sports composite ranking coming out of high school, though – .8635 to .8457.

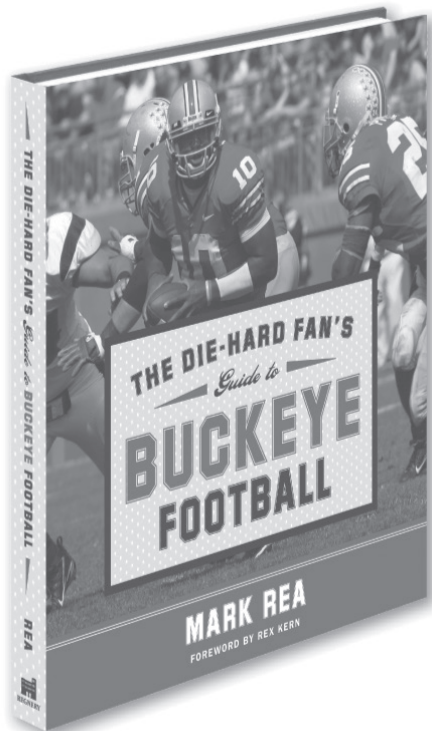
"I always wanted him to do better than me," Davon said. "I feel like with

any little brother, big brother thing, if you can come in here and do better than me, I'm going to be proud of him."

There will be no print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin the week of Oct. 13 due to Ohio State's off week. To keep up on any breaking Ohio State recruiting news, be sure to check the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB prints subscribers, daily.

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Monday, October 28th

Doors at the Schottenstein Center will open at 4:45pm. Team practice will take place until 5:45pm. Food and refreshments along with a live and silent auction items will be available after 6pm. Afterwards, you can have your photo signed by the team.

The price of admission is \$75 per person and \$35 for children 13 and under.

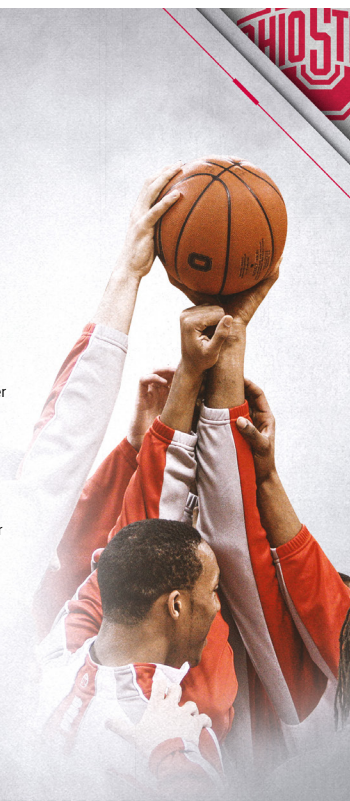
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All tickets will be held in will call and can be picked up the night of the event. Reservations are accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Should you have any questions please contact Phil Pini at 614-581-4768 or by e-mail at ppini@aol.com.

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Big Ten Commissioner Opposes Paying Players

Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany took the lectern at basketball's Big Ten Media Days on Oct. 3 and publicly proclaimed he is fundamentally against the idea of student-athletes being allowed to profit off their names, images and likenesses.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"I really don't see much difference, myself, between name, image and likeness payments by a corporate sponsor or pay-for-play," Delany said. "So, it's a belief system I have. ... I think the law of unintended consequences and the law of slippery slope apply here."

Delany proceeded to disparage California's Senate Bill No. 206, which will make it illegal for the NCAA to punish student-athletes who profit off their names, images and likenesses starting in January 2023.

After Delany spoke, the Big Ten's 14 men's basketball head coaches spoke to the media, and none of them followed their commissioner's strong stance against name, image and likeness rights.

Some of the coaches expressed concern about what the system might lead to if it goes unregulated. And most of them conceded that it could lead to unintended consequences.

The consensus of the coaches seemed to be that Division I men's basketball generates a large profit, and those in charge should adapt and allow student-athletes to get what they are worth.

Spartan Running Back Enters Transfer Portal

For the second straight week, a Michigan State football player entered his name in the NCAA transfer portal.

Junior running back Connor Heyward,



MICHIGAN STATE FOOTBALL/TWITTER

ON THE MOVE – Former Michigan State tailback Connor Heyward, left, scored a touchdown in the season-opening win over Tulsa on Aug. 30 but has since entered his name into the transfer portal.

who is the younger brother of former Buckeye defensive end Cameron Heyward, is in the portal and looking for a new school.

Connor Heyward follows junior line-backer Brandon Bouyer-Randle, who entered the transfer portal Sept. 25.

Michigan State head coach Mark Dantonio was asked Sept. 24 if he anticipated anyone leaving the program with the new NCAA transfer portal rules.

"I don't anticipate it," Dantonio said.

"It may happen. You know, I'm sure that today's society, anything's possible, I guess. But I've not heard of that yet.

"But I could see things happening like that as you go through the course of a year. And how you address it, you've got to get your young guys ready to play if something like that happens with a veteran guy."

Last season, Connor Heyward was named honorable-mention All-Big Ten as a kick returner and entered 2019 as the Spartans' No. 1 running back.

He did not dress for Michigan State's 40-31 victory against Indiana Sept. 28. Because he played in only four games this season, he can take a redshirt season, allowing him to maintain two years of eligibility at another school.

In his best game as a sophomore, Heyward posted 157 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 15 carries at Maryland.

His versatility as a runner, receiver and returner should help him draw interest from other schools looking for playmakers.

Push For B1G Men's Basketball Tourney At Little Caesars Arena

There is interest in having Little Caesars Arena host the Big Ten men's basketball tournament.

While the Horizon League basketball tournaments failed to work out at Little Caesars Arena, with the attendance too low for either party to justify bringing it back to Detroit for the fifth year of the contract, it may not be an issue with the venue.

Tom Wilson, president and CEO of Olympia Entertainment, insists "this is such a huge college basketball market" and expressed how he will work hard

to bring marquee events to downtown Detroit.

Wilson's commitment became clearer when Michigan State and Oakland renewed their rivalry with a six-year deal that calls for every other year to be played at Little Caesars Arena, and the other years to be played at Breslin Center in East Lansing, Mich., home of the Spartans.

But Wilson said Olympia is not content with a series between MSU and Oakland, confirming his group and the Big Ten have had early discussions about the future of the Big Ten tournament.

"Well, they're locked up for the next few years, but we've had some conversations," Wilson said before being asked if those conversations were strictly internal or external, too.

"External, with their people, as well," Wilson answered. "You have to start making sure you're at least on their radar."

The Big Ten men's basketball tournament is under contract for Indianapolis (Bankers Life Fieldhouse) in 2020 and 2022 and Chicago (United Center) in 2021.

The Big Ten has held its tournament in Indianapolis and Chicago every year but two, and those two outliers were not very well-received – in Washington, D.C., in 2017 and in Madison Square Garden in 2018, as the conference attempted to appeal to its new television markets, after Maryland and Rutgers had joined the conference.

But Detroit is quite different from D.C. or New York City, as it is not far from two major Big Ten schools, particularly in men's basketball, in Michigan and Michigan State.

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BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (6-0, 3-0)

Aug. 31 FLORIDA ATLANTIC, W 45-21.
Sept. 7 CINCINNATI, W 42-0; **14** at Indiana, W 51-10; **21** MIAMI (OHIO), W 76-5; **28** at Nebraska, W 48-7.

Oct. 5 MICHIGAN STATE, W 34-10; **18** at Northwestern, 8:30 p.m.; **26** WISCONSIN.

Nov. 9 MARYLAND; **16** at Rutgers; **23** PENN STATE; **30** at Michigan, 12 p.m..

Dec. 7 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis, 8 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Oct. 30 CEDARVILLE (exhibition).

Nov. 6 CINCINNATI, 8:30 p.m.; **10** UMASS-LOWELL, 4 p.m.; **13** VILLANOVA, 7 p.m.; **18** STETSON, 8:30 p.m.; **22** PURDUE FORT WAYNE; **25** KENT STATE, 6:30 p.m.; **29** MORGAN STATE, 9 p.m..

Dec. 4 North Carolina; **7** PENN STATE; **15** Minnesota, 6:30 p.m.; **17** SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE, 7 p.m.; **21** Kentucky at Las Vegas, 5:15 p.m.; **29** West Virginia at Cleveland, 12 p.m.

Jan. 3 WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **7** Maryland, 7 p.m.; **11** Indiana, 12 p.m.; **14** NEBRASKA, 6:30 p.m.; **18** Penn State, 12 p.m.; **23** MINNESOTA, 6:30 p.m.; **26** Northwestern, 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 1 INDIANA, 12 p.m.; **4** Michigan, 7 p.m.; **9** Wisconsin, 1 p.m.; **12** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.; **15** PURDUE 12 p.m.; **20** Iowa, 7 p.m.; **23** MARYLAND, 4 p.m.; **27** NEBRASKA, 9 p.m.

March 1 MICHIGAN, 4 p.m.; **5** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **8** Michigan State, 4:30 p.m. **11-15** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Nov. 3 Urbana (exhibition); **10** Valparaiso in Springfield, Ohio; **13** Cincinnati; **17** OHIO, 2 p.m.; **21** Kent State; **24** UCONN, 3 p.m.; **29** South Dakota in Las Vegas; **30** Northern Iowa in Las Vegas.

Dec. 5 LOUISVILLE, 8 p.m.; **8** RADFORD, 2 p.m.; **15** Stanford; **17** Sacramento State, 10:05 p.m.; **28** PURDUE; **31** Minnesota.

Jan. 6 Maryland; **9** MICHIGAN, 6 p.m.; **12** PENN STATE, 2 p.m.; **16** Michigan State, 6 p.m.; **19** ILLINOIS, 2 p.m.; **23** Iowa, 8 p.m.; **30** MARYLAND, 6:30 p.m.

Feb. 2 Nebraska; **6** Illinois, 8 p.m.; **9** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **13** MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **16** Indiana; **19** NEBRASKA, 7 p.m.; **22** Rutgers; **25** NORTHWESTERN, 6 p.m.; **29** Purdue.

March 4-8 Big Ten Tournament in Indianapolis.

CROSS COUNTRY

Aug. 30 Miami (Ohio) at Oxford, Ohio, Men 2/5; Women 1/5.

Sept. 14 Commodore Classic at Nashville, Tenn., Men 7/15, Women 2/20; **28** Ohio State Invitational at Columbus, Ohio, 4/8.

Oct. 18 Wisconsin Invitational at Madison, Wisc.;

Nov. 3 Big Ten Championships at Columbus, Ohio; **15** NCAA Regional Championships at Madison, Wisc.; **23** NCAA Championships at Terre Haute, Ind.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

Oct. 6 WESTERN, W 5-2; **11** Western Michigan at Toledo, 5 p.m.; **12** Bowling Green or RIT at Toledo; **18** OMAHA, 7 p.m.; **19** OMAHA, 5 p.m.; **25-26** Mercyhurst, 7 p.m.

Nov. 1 MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.; **2** MICHIGAN, 5 p.m.; **8-9** Notre Dame; **22-23** Penn State; **30** MICHIGAN STATE, 5 p.m.

Dec. 1 MICHIGAN STATE, 2:30 p.m.; **6** MINNESOTA, TBA; **7** MINNESOTA, 8 p.m.; **27** COLGATE, 7 p.m.; **28** COLGATE, 5 p.m.

Jan. 3 Cornell at Las Vegas; **4** Army at Las Vegas; **10-11** Wisconsin; **17** NOTRE DAME, 6 p.m.; **18** NOTRE DAME, 5 p.m.; **24-25** Minnesota; **31** Michigan.

Feb. 1 Michigan; **7** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **8** PENN STATE, 5 p.m.; **21-22** Michigan State; **28** WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **29** WISCONSIN, 8 p.m.

March 6-8 Big Ten Tournament First Round; **14** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals; **21** Big Ten Tournament Championship.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (4-0, 2-0)

Sept. 27-28 ST. LAWRENCE, W 4-1; W 3-2.

Oct. 4 St. Cloud State, W 5-2; **5** St. Cloud State, W 6-2; **11-12** WISCONSIN; **18-19** Minnesota State; **25-26** MINNESOTA.

Nov. 1-2 Bemidji State; **15-16** MINNESOTA DULUTH; **22-23** Colgate; **29-30** CORNELL.

Dec. 14-15 Princeton at Las Vegas;

Jan. 10-11 MINNESOTA STATE; **17-18** Minnesota; **24-25** QUINNIPIAC; **31** BEMIDJI STATE.

Feb. 1 BEMIDJI STATE; **7-8** Minnesota Duluth; **15-16** Wisconsin; **21-22** ST. CLOUD STATE; **28-29** WCHA First Round.

March 1 WCHA First Round; **7-8** WCHA Final Faceoff; **14** NCAA Quarterfinal; **20** NCAA Frozen Four; **22** NCAA Championship.

FIELD HOCKEY (6-4, 1-2)

Aug. 17 OHIO (exhibition); **25** at

Michigan (exhibition); **30** UMASS, W 7-0.

Sept. 2 BOSTON, W 3-2; **6** at James Madison, W 3-0; **8** at Virginia, L 2-1; **13** CENTRAL MICHIGAN, W 11-0.; **15** LOUISVILLE, L 2-1; **20** NORTHWESTERN, L 4-1; **27** at Iowa, L 3-1; **29** at Indiana, W 6-2.

Oct. 6 at Ohio, W 6-1; **11** MICHIGAN, 4 p.m.; **13** STANFORD, 3 p.m.; **18** RUTGERS, 3 p.m.; **20** MARYLAND, Noon; **25** at Penn State, 6 p.m.; **27** at Kent State, 1 p.m.

Nov. 2 at Michigan State, 1 p.m.; **7** Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinals at Penn State, TBA; **8** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals at Penn State, TBA; **10** Big Ten Tournament Championship at Penn State, TBA.

MEN'S SOCCER (6-4-1, 1-2-1)

Aug. 17 XAVIER (exhibition), T 1-1; **20** MT. VERNON NAZARENE (exhibition), W 7-1; **24** at Butler (exhibition), L 2-1; **30** WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. CSUN, L 4-3.

Sept. 1 WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. UIC, W 1-0; **6** Dayton Classic vs. Dayton, W 1-0; **8** Dayton Classic vs. EIU, W 3-2; **13** at Bowling Green, W 2-1; **17** at South Florida, W 2-0; **21** PENN STATE, L 2-1; **24** WEST VIRGINIA, L 4-1.; **27** at Northwestern, T 0-0.

Oct. 2 MICHIGAN, L 2-0.; **6** at Rutgers, W 1-0; **12** CLEVELAND STATE, 7 p.m.; **16** at Kentucky, 7 p.m.; **19** at Michigan State, 7 p.m.; **25** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **29** at Indiana, 7 p.m.

Nov. 3 WISCONSIN, 3 p.m.; **9** Big Ten Tournament Play in Game, TBA; **10** Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinals, TBA; **15** Big Ten Semifinals, TBA; **17** Big Ten Tournament Final, TBA.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (4-7-1, 2-3-1)

Aug. 22 LOUISVILLE, L 2-1; **25** MISSOURI, L 3-1; **28** at UCF, T 1-1.

Sept. 1 at South Florida, Cancelled; **6** at Texas A&M, L 1-0; **8** at TCU, L 3-2; **13** MIAMI (OH), W 1-0; **15** OHIO, W 3-1; **19** MICHIGAN STATE, W 1-0; **22** MICHIGAN, L 2-1; **27** at Wisconsin, postponed; **29** at Minnesota, L 1-0.

Oct. 3 MARYLAND, W 1-0; **6** PENN STATE, L 3-2; **10** at Purdue, 8 p.m.; **13** at Indiana, Noon; **17** NORTHWESTERN, 7 p.m.; **20** ILLINOIS, 2 p.m.; **27** at Iowa, 2 p.m.

SWIMMING & DIVING

Oct. 18 Texas A&M, 6 p.m.; **19** Louisville at College Station, Texas.

Nov. 1 Virginia Tech at State College,

Pa.; **2** Penn State; **8** KENYON & AKRON, 6 p.m.; **15** DENISON, 6 p.m.; **21-23** OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL.

Dec. 4-7 AT&T Winter National Championship at Atlanta.

Jan. 3-4 KENTUCKY; **18** MICHIGAN; **24-25** Shamrock Invitational at South Bend, Ind.; **31** Pittsburgh.

Feb. 14-16 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL; 19-22 Women's Big Ten Championship at Iowa City, Iowa **26-29** Men's Big Ten Championship at Bloomington, Ind.

March 1 LAST CHANCE MEET (women's); **8** LAST CHANCE MEET (men's); **14-16** CSCAA National Invitational at Cleveland & NCAA Zone Diving at West Lafayette, Ind.; **19-21** NCAA Championships (women's); **25-28** NCAA Championships (men's).

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (8-8, 1-3)

Aug. 30 LEHIGH, W 3-0; TEXAS TECH, L 3-2; **31** VCU, 3-1.

Sept. 6 at Pittsburgh, L 0-3; **7** vs. Duquesne at Pittsburgh, Pa., W 3-0; vs. Green Bay at Pittsburgh, Penn., L 3-1; **13** vs. Tulane at Bowling Green, Kent., L 3-1 2 p.m.; vs. Western Kentucky at Bowling Green, Kent., L 3-0.; **14** vs. Bowling Green at Bowling Green, Kent., W 3-1.; **19** MIAMI (OH), W 3-0; **20** ILLINOIS STATE, W 3-0; DAYTON, W 3-1; **25** at Maryland, W 3-1; **29** at Michigan, L 3-0.

Oct. 4 MICHIGAN STATE, L 3-0.; **6** MICHIGAN, L 3-0; **11** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **12** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; **16** IOWA, 8 p.m.; **19** PURDUE, 7 p.m.; **23** RUTGERS, 6 p.m.; **26** at Illinois, 6 p.m.; **30** at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

Nov. 2 MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **8** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **10** MINNESOTA, Noon; **15** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **16** at Indiana, 7 p.m.; **22** NORTHWESTERN, 7 p.m.; **24** ILLINOIS, 1 p.m.; **29** at Iowa, 8 p.m.; **30** at Nebraska, TBA.

WRESTLING

Nov. 2 Michigan State; **10** STANFORD; **15** Pittsburgh; **17** VIRGINIA TECH.

Dec. 1 CORNELL; **6-7** C.K. Invitational at Las Vegas.

Jan 3-5 ARIZONA STATE; **10** RUTGERS; **17** Wisconsin; **19** ILLINOIS; **24** Iowa; **26** Minnesota; **31** MARYLAND.

Feb. 2 Nebraska; **9** NORTHWESTERN; **15** Penn State.

March 7-8 Big Ten Championship; **19-21** NCAA Championship.

said Wilson. "Even people outside the market, we're getting people more interested in what's happening down here."

Michigan State coach Tom Izzo has long said he hopes to see the Big Ten tournament eventually move to Detroit.

Something of interest may be the changing of commissioners in the conference, with Kevin Warren taking over for Jim Delany on Jan. 1, 2020.

Delany has been commissioner longer than the Big Ten tournament has been in existence, while Warren has ties to Detroit, having worked in the NFL Lions' business department from 2001-03.

For now, it's just Michigan State-Oakland that's officially on the schedule, which may not seem like a big deal, but it has proved to be a big draw.

Although the Spartans are unbeaten in the series, Oakland brings its A-game to take on the in-state foe. In the first year of the arena (2017), Michigan-Detroit Mercy and Michigan State-Oakland played a doubleheader there, and while Michigan-Detroit Mercy was sparsely attended; the

nightcap was near capacity.

"They've played some wonderful games," Wilson said of Oakland, noting that the 2015 game at The Palace went to overtime before No. 1 Michigan State hung on.

"For whatever reason, they raise their game. It's good for college basketball."

Top Performers Across The Big Ten Conference

Minnesota senior running back Rodney Smith was the top performer in the conference, amassing 211 rushing yards on 24 carries and one touchdown in the Golden Gophers' 40-17 victory against Illinois on Oct. 5.

Wisconsin junior running back Jonathan Taylor posted 186 yards and four touchdowns on 19 carries in the Badgers' 48-0 demolition of Kent State. The Heisman hopeful also hauled in three receptions for 29 yards and another score, giving him five TDs on the day.

Penn State sophomore quarterback Sean Clifford completed 20 of 29 passes

(69.0 percent) for 264 yards and three touchdowns with one interception in the Nittany Lions' 35-7 dismantling of injury-ridden Purdue.

The sophomore signal caller from Cincinnati also added 33 rushing yards on 11 tries with a rushing score.

4 B1G Schools Remain Undefeated

Four Big Ten football programs – Minnesota, Ohio State, Penn State and Wisconsin – remain unbeaten on the season after an exciting weekend of conference play that saw Iowa lose its first game to Michigan, 10-3. Minnesota smacked Illinois, 40-17, and Ohio State handled Michigan State, 34-10. Penn State blew out Purdue, 35-7, and Wisconsin rolled Kent State, 48-0.

Huskers Women's Volleyball Breaks BTN Record

The recent volleyball match between No. 1 Nebraska and No. 2 Stanford was the most-watched volleyball match in Big Ten

Network history, according to Nielsen. The Cardinal bested the Cornhuskers, 3-1, on Sept. 18. The rematch of the 2019 national championship averaged 226,765 viewers, eclipsing a mark previously set by the Nebraska-Minnesota match in October 2018.

In addition to the television broadcast, the Fox Sports app live stream brought in over 718,000 minutes of total consumption, which also broke a record for the most-watched BTN volleyball stream of all time.

B1G Announces Three New Staff Members

The Big Ten announced the hiring of three new staff members. Kaylah Hughes will serve as assistant director, football and basketball operations; Leah Jenk assumes the role of assistant director, branding, and Logan Young has been selected as assistant director, sports administration. All three staff members will be based at the Big Ten headquarters in Rosemont, Ill.

Holtmann Predicts Big Ten Will Be Even Tougher

Chris Holtmann was at the Big Ten media day in Chicago on Oct. 2, so his answer to how tough the conference has been and will be must be taken in context of the surroundings. But he is basing his knowledge on two years of running the gantlet since becoming head coach of the Ohio State men's basketball team.

much respect for the quality. It's clearly in my mind the deepest league in country. It's arguable there are other leagues you could consider along those lines, but the depth of it is what makes it special, and I don't see it changing anytime soon. I think it's going to be as deep or deeper than it was last year."

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

What he knows firsthand is there are few easy games in a conference that prides itself on physical play and competitive balance. He saw that last season when his team entered January with a 12-1 record built on a softer-than-expected preseason schedule and two early-December conferences wins.

Once the meat and potatoes of the Big Ten schedule began, the Buckeyes were overwhelmed at times due to their inexperience. It's an unforgiving conference, and those who hesitate will be handed a loss.

Even though the Buckeyes finished tied for seventh in the conference with an 8-12 record, they still earned a bid to the NCAA Tournament for the second straight season.

Holtmann said the parity in the league is off the charts.

"Last year was the youngest team I've ever coached, and this year we might be even younger with over half the roster freshmen or sophomores. So to go through that with a young group, it taught me a lot of lessons," he said. "We got beat up, quite honestly. We got beat up. I have so

Special K

The Big Ten doesn't do a preseason ranking of teams anymore, but it still conducts a media poll to predict who the top players will be.

Ohio State junior forward Kaleb Wesson was a unanimous choice for the preseason All-Big Ten team. He led the Buckeyes in scoring (14.6 avg.) and rebounds (6.9) last season.

In this offseason, he shed 34 pounds to 255 and is working toward a big season and possible early entry to the NBA draft.

"Kaleb obviously took a significant jump from his freshman to sophomore year, and he deserves a lot of credit for that," Holtmann said. "I think the next step is more consistency, both in practice – obviously it begins there – and then his play, and then beginning to adjust as to how teams are playing him.

"His biggest issue even as good a year as he had last year was he has to play smarter in terms of his fouls. We've got to help him with that as a coaching staff. He's got to take the next step there. And we're anxious to see if he will."

Wesson is 2 for 2 in his career as far as playing in the NCAA Tournament. Why change now?

"That's the expectation, not a goal," he said. "As a culture that's what we're building for."

Although he's had several discipline issues, including being suspended three games last season for university policy violations, he is being counted on to be more of a leader than in the past.

"We've got a lot of people who can talk,

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

a lot of people who can step up," he said. "That's what makes us a good team, having good teammates and being held accountable by everybody."

In addition to Wesson, Michigan State senior guard Cassius Winston and Maryland senior guard Anthony Cowan Jr. were the other unanimous selections.

Also voted to the team were Illinois sophomore guard Ayo Dosunmu, Iowa sophomore guard Joe Wieskamp, Maryland sophomore forward Jalen Smith, Michigan senior guard Xavier Simpson, Michigan State junior forward Xavier Tillman, Penn State senior forward Lamar Stevens and Purdue junior guard Nojel Eastern.

Winston, the 2018-19 Big Ten Player of the Year while helping the Spartans reach the Final Four, is the first reigning POY to be chosen the preseason player of the year the following season since MSU's Kalin Lucas, who was the preseason pick for the 2009-10 season after his award the previous season.

Team To Beat

As mentioned earlier, there are no league-driven preseason team rankings, so The Athletic and The Columbus Dispatch polled 28 conference beat writers for an

unofficial prediction.

It was no surprise that Michigan State received 27 of 28 first-place votes and totaled 391 points (14 for 1st, 13 for second, etc.). Maryland, with one first, was second with 349 followed by the Buckeyes (336), Purdue (311), Michigan (255), Wisconsin (241) and Illinois (239) to round out the top half of the league.

The next seven were Iowa (174), Penn State (164), Indiana (155), Minnesota (127), Rutgers (95), Nebraska (69) and Northwestern (34).

On The Mend

Holtmann at his media session in Chicago gave updates on the injuries to junior guard Musa Jallow, sophomore forward Justin Ahrens and freshman forward E.J. Liddell.

Ahrens herniated two disks while weightlifting in the summer while the other two have undisclosed leg injuries.

"Justin and E.J. have had limited work in noncontact drills," Holtmann said. "Musa Jallow is out and will remain out probably for certainly the next week or two.

"So, obviously we want to get those guys back as quickly as we can. I believe that E.J. and Justin will begin to go full practice here in the next few days, as long as their test results come back positive."

Quotable

Holtmann was asked if he had any advice for new Michigan coach Juwan Howard, part of the "Fab Five" for the Wolverines who played in the 1992 and '93 championship games. Howard went on to play in the NBA from 1994-2013.

"He doesn't need any advice from me. At all," Holtmann joked. "And can an Ohio State guy give a Michigan guy advice?"

Name Game

So, the Buckeyes have a C.J. (Walker), D.J. (Carton) and E.J. (Liddell). Is there any confusion during practice in a noisy gym?

"I feel like it's harder on the coaches. It's like, 'E... C... Somebody,'" Walker said. "(Holtmann's) going to yell at you for that one situation so you kind of know who he's talking to."

He said his teammates might call him "Walk" and Carton may hear his first name (Desi).

"Sometimes E.J. is E," Walker said.

Jallow said there occasionally is chaos.

"They all sound the same, especially when you're running around the court," he said. "We've also got Justin (Ahrens) and Justice (Sueing), and that's a mess."

Jallow said it would be better if the initiated players had nicknames.

"It's like my dad when I was younger," he said. "He would literally go down the list of all my siblings until he gets the right name."

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Commit Meechie Johnson Stays Hungry, Humble

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Meechie Johnson, a talented 2021 combo guard from Cleveland, committed to the Ohio State men's basketball team on Aug. 13.

Johnson had not even entered his junior year of high school yet and surely had more offers heading his way. However, Ohio State fulfilled what he was looking for in a college hoops program.

"Honestly, it was just being trusted by the coach," Johnson told Buckeye Sports Bulletin, "knowing that the coach can trust me to make plays, to lead the team as a point guard and be able to have the opportunity to play. It wasn't about the names, really, or who offered, or who was coming in. It was really just about my relationship with the coaches and feeling like home."

Johnson, whose given name is Demetrius, tore his ACL as a sophomore, and the persistence of Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann and assistant coach Ryan Pedon in his recruitment and willingness to accept him, injury or not, proved critical for the point guard.

"It was very important," Johnson said. "Because Coach Pedon and Coach Holtmann were always checking in. Coach Holtmann had called me one time on his break. He had like a 30-minute break, and he had called me while he was on that break. For 15 minutes we talked. Coach Pedon was constantly asking about me. It's not that other schools weren't, but just the consistency with them and talks with them were constantly the same since I had been hurt as before I had got injured."

Johnson said he had known Pedon and assistant coach Terry Johnson for a long time, because they had both crossed paths with his father, also Demetrius, during his playing career at Kent State and Indiana-Purdue of Fort Wayne.

As a freshman at Garfield Heights, Johnson gained national renown by scoring 50 points to defeat fourth-ranked Benedictine. Most of the attention came from a congratulatory tweet Johnson received from three-time NBA champion LeBron James, who referred to the freshman as "nephew," given his closeness with the elder Johnson, who grew up playing basketball with the Los Angeles Lakers star.

In addition to James, Johnson has developed a relationship with many NBA stars, including another three-time NBA champ, Dwyane Wade. Johnson turns to Wade for advice about his development and how to be the best he can be.

Following his ACL injury, Johnson's status dropped considerably on scouting websites. But with a commitment to Ohio State already confirmed, he only uses it as motivation.

This summer, Johnson transferred from Garfield Heights to the International Sports Academy (ISA) at Andrews Osborne in Willoughby, Ohio, which schedules some of the best prep schools in the country. Although he will use this season to recover from injury and get back to 100 percent, Johnson is eager to face some tougher competition when he returns.

"It just gives me that edge to know that you're one of the best guards in the coun-



COURTESY OF MEECHIE JOHNSON

CHANGE OF SCENERY – Ohio State commit Meechie Johnson transferred from Garfield Heights (Ohio) High school to Andrews Osborne Academy in Willoughby prior to his junior year.

try and you're about to compete and go up against the best guards in the country, and just knowing that, it's fun and exciting," Johnson said. "I've got nothing but time to get back on the court. AAU starts in April, so it's just fun to know that it's going to be a fun summer.

"I'm going to really get to show – I don't think people really got to see my whole game and what I can do. I think I'm going to really shock a lot of people on how I come back to play."

Johnson said he thinks most people see him as just a scorer, but he believes his game encompasses a lot more than putting the ball in the hoop.

"I don't think a lot of people have seen my passing abilities, the way I can pass, the way I can get others involved, being a better defender when I come back," Johnson said. "I don't think a lot of people have seen that part of my game."

"A lot of people know me, a lot of people don't, but a lot of people don't know the way I compete, the way I win, the way I hate losing. It's going to be very fun to be back on the court and for people to be able to watch me play again."

Highly competitive in nature, Johnson frequently played with older kids when growing up, even though he was quite lean. He thinks that helped give him an edge, which he carries with him to this day.

"My toughness really came from me growing up, playing backyard basketball against older people," Johnson said. "I was always in my grandma's back yard playing against older people like Frankie Hughes, who is at Duquesne right now, and all his brothers and all the neighborhood friends. I always played up, and I always was a competitor. That's where I really learned my competitiveness that

carried me on a long way to now. And now, I just hate to lose."

Although Johnson is only a junior at ISA, he carries himself like someone who is much older and wiser. This may have something to do with his upbringing.

"Both my grandmas were a big influence on me," Johnson said. "The way that they raised me as a young man, not that my parents didn't, but just being with them and them being around, it was amazing. They taught me humility, the right decision to make. They let me be a kid, but they were still there to guide me and give me the right answers. It was just a blessing to be able to have them both."

Recruiting websites list Johnson at 5-11, which is small for a Division I guard with NBA aspirations. However, as teenagers tend to do, Johnson has continued to grow.

"It's going to be really scary when I come back," Johnson said. "The last time I played I was about 6-0, 6-1 as a guard. Without my shoes, I'm 6-2, and with shoes I'm 6-3. Now, I'm just putting on weight, not fat, but body muscle. I got stronger and it's going to be amazing. People are going to be very surprised, and they'll be happy to see me play. It's going to be fun."

Johnson is excited to use his size and length to his advantage, while also trying to become stronger with his larger frame. So what has Johnson been doing to solidify his somewhat lanky frame?

"To be honest, here at the prep school, I'm just eating a lot more and just doing a lot more body weight stuff," Johnson said. "Upper body, lower body, everything I'm doing is ridiculous. I've been doing a lot of that – three to four meals a day here. Our coaches have me on a plan and I'm following it, and my body feels way better."

Johnson is expected to be cleared in December to ramp up his training and conditioning, with the hopes of progressing to one-on-one drills in January. He expects to be able to run full court by February and then be fully ready to play come AAU season.

In the meantime, Johnson has been finding ways to improve with limited mobility.

"I watch tons of film every day," Johnson said. "A lot of shots. My jumper is looking honestly beautiful right now, just the form and the release, everything is looking great. I'm really working on my passing, stationary passing, left and right; floaters, light floaters on both hands; and really, just layups around the hoop, not moving, just standing there, learning different angles, getting a feel. Just doing whatever I can, to be honest. Whatever my therapist, whatever my trainer tells me, that's what I'm doing and I'm going from there."

Johnson is especially excited to take part in rivalry games. He got his own taste of a high-school rivalry with Shaker Heights when he was at Garfield Heights.

"Growing up, being around the people I was around, rivalries are big," Johnson said. "When I started at Garfield, our rivalry was Shaker. And that game when we played was a rivalry game we didn't want to lose. We didn't want to be embarrassed. It was a sold-out game. Everybody was getting excited, everybody was there and we didn't want to embarrass."

The competitive guard from Cleveland relishes the opportunity to play against the Buckeyes' archrival Michigan. He's not just looking forward to playing and winning but taking it to the next level.

"Beating Michigan when I'm at Ohio State is a big thing for me," Johnson said. "That's our rival. We don't lose to them. We don't want to be embarrassed. The game is on national TV, sold-out crowd, nothing else you can ask for. Like I told Coach Holtmann, I'd rather play Michigan at Michigan, beat them in their own house and make them feel ashamed for losing in their own house. That's how I was raised, and that's how I am."

Johnson doesn't lack confidence, which comes in part from his relentless preparation and diligence during workouts. But his confidence pushes him to work harder, not get cocky and complacent.

Even though he is just a high school junior, Johnson maintains a much broader perspective than the typical 16-year-old player.

"I stay humble because I haven't made it yet," Johnson said. "I haven't reached the things I want to do. I haven't made the NBA. I'm not making millions of dollars. My dad still works and my mom still works, and they're doing the best they can, but I want them to be doing better. And I haven't got to that point where I can say, 'I made it.'"

"I've got a lot of work to do. I haven't even gotten to college yet, so I just stay humble. I know there's a lot more work to be done, especially me coming back from an injury. It's a bigger chip on my shoulder, also, because me being a ranked player and I'm hurt, and me being committed. So, me coming back, I feel like I have a bigger chip on my shoulder. And me just knowing that keeps me humble, keeps me stable, working hard and grounded."

Harris Ready For Major Comeback At Ohio State

By the time she was in the fifth grade, Rikki Harris had to overcome adversity.

Three years after starting basketball at the age of 3, Harris was playing basketball in an organized setting – on an all-boys team.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

Four years later, she was the star player on her team, beating opponents of strictly the male variety so badly that the parents of the opponents Harris was dominating wanted her out of the league.

They wanted her out enough that they forced a rule change to mandate that teams be made up of only boys. It was a ban that forced a fifth-grade Harris to stay away from all-male teams from there on out.

"It was at the tournament and we had played this team probably a couple weeks before, and we had blown them out and I played pretty good," Harris told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "They protested for me not to play, and I was real young so I was really hurt, because I wanted to play badly, so I never wanted to feel that way again."

Fifth grade was not the last time Harris faced adversity, not by a long shot.

Harris, now a freshman for Ohio State women's basketball team who comes in as the second-highest rated recruit in the class, has had enough adversity within basketball to fill the entire roster.

But none of that mattered to a basketball player who has strived for greatness her entire life.

"At a young age they could see the potential I feel like by me getting kicked out," Harris said. "That just showed my potential then, and I feel like it hasn't changed yet."

One of the challenges came before her freshman season at North Central High School in Indianapolis, when Harris tore her ACL. She was unable to completely get her footing that season even after recovery but still managed to become a starter by season's end.

Harris' sophomore year was her healthiest, and it showed with North Central's 27-1 record and her team-leading 17.4 points per game.

But even when it is not her own health at play, the injury bug has found a way to plague Harris' career in a different way.

"We lost in the divisional (tournament)," Harris said. "One of our players had broken her bone in her foot, and that was the game changer. We had a 10-point lead, and that changed the whole game."

Following her sophomore year, Harris said she hit a low point with her basketball career due to pressures coming both internally and externally, mainly from her parents. All of it caused her to take a step back and realize why she wanted to continue with a sport she has loved all her life.

"It has always been my passion. There have been times where I was like, 'I don't want to play anymore,'" she said. "I took a couple-week break, and I'm like, 'OK, I'm ready to get back into it,' but without a doubt, basketball's the only thing I've ever wanted to do."

Harris managed to up her point total to 17.8 points per game, but it came in only 12 games as her junior season was also bogged down by a trapped nerve in her foot that required surgery early on, followed by a second torn ACL that ended her year.

The season was not one that Harris wanted to have, but in the middle of it came her commitment to the Buckeyes in December 2017, just a few weeks before the second ACL tear.

The decision was not a particularly hard one for Harris – she said that her desire to come to Ohio State came from an immediate connection and family feel from the coaches and players – but the choice meant going against the top pick of her biggest fan.

Harris' grandmother Theresa Whitley Jones was an alum of Indiana University and a die-hard fan of the Hoosiers. So, naturally, Rikki's grandmother was rooting for Indiana to win out in her granddaughter's heart but was not against whatever Harris ended up deciding.

"Every Christmas you either got an IU coat or a shirt, that was just a regular," Harris said. "She already told me whatever school I went to that was going to be her school, but growing up it was like, 'IU, IU, IU, IU' to me ... I'm like, 'Uh

no, Ohio State, Ohio State.'"

Whitley Jones was an avid supporter of Harris' biggest passion, showing up to high school games with a hat on that featured a button of Rikki whenever her illnesses allowed her to go. She even made her way to what Harris called her best game of her freshman season.

But Whitley Jones' illness did not allow her to go to any games after that.

She passed away from lung cancer in February 2016 after Harris' team was eliminated in the second round.

"She was my biggest fan without a doubt," Harris said. "I was hurt that we lost, and at the same time I was happy because I would not have been able to play my best for my team if we would have won because she was gone and that was just too much on me."

Harris did not go with her grandmother's No. 1 selection, but she didn't stray too far away from it in her mind.

"I'm like 'Grandma, I've still got your colors, I still got the red and the white going for you,'" Harris said. "I think she'd be proud, and she would be happy to switch the teams over for me."

Harris' senior year found the Ohio State commit limited from prior injuries, which was not helped by playing without being fully recovered.

But all the injuries aside, and there were plenty of them, Harris has made her way to Columbus, and while Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said that injury history is accounted for, he just saw so much he liked about Harris' game from seeing her as early as her freshman year that it did not matter.

"I saw her at a young enough age and was able to kind of really look at the attributes that she had that I love which is her toughness, her intelligence as a basketball player, being a great teammate and really just making other people around her better," McGuff told BSB. "I just saw something in her that I thought was really special, and even if she got hurt, she always seemed to bounce back."

Harris isn't out of the woods just yet. She rehabbed both her knees and dislocated her shoulder during this summer with the Buckeyes, an injury she had to both shoulders during her high school career.

But she said that she is currently ready to get back to practicing fully.

"Really no knee pain at all ... hopefully I can start contact again on Monday (Oct. 7)," Harris said. "I'm a fast healer. With both of my ACLs, it's taken me four to five months at the max."

"I feel like whatever happens, I've been through the worst. I feel like nothing can get any worse than what it already has, so I already know whatever happens, I can come back from it better."

Harris' personal expectations revolve around, not surprisingly, maintaining her health throughout the season. But even with a bevy of freshman players leading the charge, the first-year guard has her team goals high and thinks there could be something special with the program earlier than most expect.

The top goal for Harris is winning the Big Ten tournament, something made a larger goal for her due to the location of the event: Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

"Everybody wants to win the championship, but the Big Ten (tournament) is in my hometown, at Bankers Life," she said. "That's where all my family and close friends will be able to go there and see the game. I definitely want to win that. That's like my top (goal), and then once we win that, we can move forward."

"I feel like people don't see our full potential, we're underrated, and we have a statement to make, and we are going to make it."

McGuff labeled Harris, who was a five-star recruit despite her troubles, as really tough.

That toughness has been put on display for nearly a decade for Harris, as a female making parents of an all-male team change the rules, in fighting through the loss of her biggest supporter, in fighting through the struggles of the mental game and in finding a way to fight through a wide variety of long-term injuries that could have derailed the lifelong dreams of someone less dedicated.

Instead, Harris is here, and some of her hardest challenges are already in the rearview mirror.

"I've had some minor setbacks," she said, "but I'm ready to make a major comeback."

The Fresh Seven is a seven-part series on the seven freshman players joining the Ohio State women's basketball team in the upcoming season.

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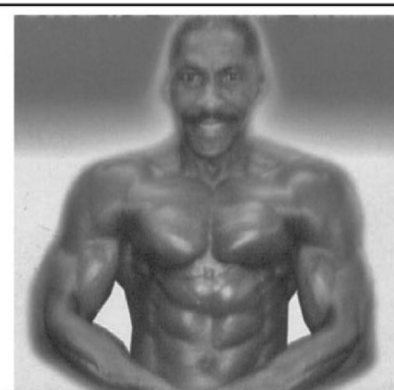



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Laczynski, Buckeyes Want To Prove Critics Wrong

What's the next step for the Ohio State men's hockey team?

Backward, according to the Big Ten preseason coaches' poll, which placed the Buckeyes fourth among the seven teams after OSU won the regular-season title last season.

A combination of graduating players such

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

as forward Mason Jobst and goalie Sean Romeo and other teams having more returnees led to Ohio State being voted behind Penn State, Notre Dame and Wisconsin.

"That's a preseason ranking," said OSU senior alternate captain and forward Tanner Laczynski. "It doesn't mean jack squat when it comes to the actual season. It's more important where we finish the season."

Although the Buckeyes might feel some disrespect after tying the program record from 2003-05 by qualifying for the NCAA tournament last season for a third straight year, last season's prediction for the Buckeyes was spot-on when they were picked by the coaches to win the conference.

Not only did OSU (20-11-5, 13-7-4-3 Big Ten) win the title by nine points over Notre Dame, they were ranked No. 1 in the nation at the start of the season for the first time since holding the top spot for three weeks in the fall of 1983.

The expectations this season from the outside might be lower, but not within the Buckeyes' circle.

"Last year we had the No. 1 spot and people were picking us to win the conference," senior defenseman Wyatt Ege said. "We've handled the expectations well and we've made the tournament every year, so it's only right we do this year too."

Laczynski said Ohio State is back to a familiar role.

"We're looked at as a little bit more of an underdog," he said. "It's a rallying point to do better than last year and prove some people wrong."

The statement "better than last year" is a major emphasis for the Buckeyes. Despite their first conference regular-season title since winning the inaugural Central Collegiate Hockey Association crown in 1972, a chance for more hardware evaporated in stunning fashion.

Ohio State went from No. 2 nationally in mid-February to a 1-6-1 finish that included being upset 5-1 at home by Penn State in the conference tournament semifinal and a 2-0 defeat to Denver in the West Regional semifinal.

Injuries to Laczynski, forward Gustaf Westlund and defenseman Sasha Larocque as well as a late-season suspension to forward Dakota Joshua robbed the Buckeyes of their momentum and confidence.

Senior forward Carson Meyer said the Buckeyes didn't handle prosperity as well as they should have.

"It happened around the time we were really close to clinching the Big Ten regular season," he said. "I think we got a little complacent because we thought we've got this championship in the bag and we took our foot off the gas, which we can't do."

"After that, as far as the (NCAA) tourna-

ment in my opinion, we had a first-round bye in the Big Ten, so we had two weeks until a game. We played one game (vs. Penn State), lost and then two more weeks off. It almost felt like the season was over because we played one game in a month leading up to the tournament."

The collapse was a source of inspiration during the many offseason workouts.

"It's a big motivation," Meyer said. "We had such a great season, then things went the wrong way for us at the end there. The worst time for that to happen obviously. We have to bounce back from that and build on the progress we did make last year."

Coach Steve Rohlik enters his seventh season optimistic that this is a reload and not a rebuild, even though he's added nine freshmen to a core that doesn't know what it's like to miss the NCAA tournament.

"We did so many things last year – winning the Big Ten championship, getting into the NCAA tournament," Rohlik said. "We're disappointed we didn't go on and play on the last night, but that's something you've got to build on."

"We talk about it every year. This is a different group, a different personality, but certainly the guys before us have set the table and set the bar high and we've got to work hard to get back there."

That charge for the Buckeyes, ranked 12th in the USCHO preseason poll, will be led by Laczynski. He is the second-leading returning scorer in the nation with 109 career points in 102 games and leads the top 10 returning scorers with 1.07 points per game. He is second nationally with 72 assists and ninth with 37 goals.

Yet the sixth-round pick (No. 169) in the 2016 NHL draft by the Philadelphia Flyers had a subpar junior season. He was hoping to repeat his sophomore year when he was an All-American, but he sustained a shoulder injury at Penn State in mid-January.

He missed nine games and did not find his form.

"I was pretty much good to go, but it was tough to miss all those games and work my way back and get into game shape," he said. "There was obviously some discomfort. It was tough but also good to get through it mentally with all the adversity."

He finished second on the team in points to Jobst with 30 (10 goals, 20 assists) in 27 games. Laczynski leads all returning players nationally with 10 game-winning goals.

What Was Lost

Before looking ahead, it's important to honor the past that has sent the program in the right direction.

Last season's senior class of Jobst, Larocque, Romeo, Freddy Gerard, Dakota Joshua, Brendon Kearney, Tommy Parran and John Wiitala were a part of 81 wins, three straight 20-win seasons, three NCAA appearances plus the first Frozen Four since the program's other appearance in 1998.

"It used to be, 'Maybe we'll make the (NCAA) tournament,'" Ege said. "Now it's, 'We're going to make the tournament.' We have to. It's the expectations of this program, and when kids come in, they see that."

Jobst was a second-team All-American in 2019, as he was in 2017, and is the 13th-leading scorer in OSU history with 164 points (69 goals, 95 assists).

Larocque was the Big Ten's 2019 Defensive Player of the Year, and Romeo and Tommy Nappier evenly split the 34 regular-season games in net for 2018-19 before the then-soph-

omore Nappier played in the two postseason losses. Romeo was the 2018 NCAA Midwest Regional Most Outstanding Player in helping the Buckeyes advance to the Frozen Four.

What Was Gained

Rohlik is adding eight true freshmen and redshirt freshman forward Kamil Sadlocha (5-11, 185).

The newcomers include goalie Ryan Snowden (6-3, 205); defensemen Layton Ahac (6-2, 195), James Marooney (5-9, 165) and C.J. Regula (6-3, 205); and forwards Michael Gildon (6-2, 196), Jaedon Leslie (6-1, 187), Dalton Messina (5-11, 195) and Tate Singleton (5-9, 177).

Ahac is considered the gem of the group. A late bloomer, he was drafted in the third round (86th) by the Vegas Golden Knights after two seasons with the Prince George Spruce Kings of the British Columbia Hockey League.

"What he did the second half of the season and the playoffs with Prince George turned a lot of heads," Rohlik said. "He's a big, strong kid. He loves the game, loves to train. You'll see a lot of him. He's not going to wow you with big moves, but eventually he's a 25- to 30-minute guy."

"James Marooney is smaller in stature but a great competitor, great feet. Regula is bigger, a right-handed shot which you need. He has a lot of potential."

Singleton and Gildon could be immediate contributors among the new forwards.

Gildon played for the prestigious U.S. National Team Development Program the past two years and had 76 points (31-45) in 87 games last season. Singleton had 37 points (22-15) in 53 games for Central Illinois in the United States Hockey League in 2018-19.

"Those are two offensive guys who have put up some good numbers the past few years and have a lot of skill," Rohlik said. "Jaedon and Messina are defining their roles right now. Who knows where they'll fit in the lineup? They'll find a way over time."

"As for all the freshmen, I just need them to come in and compete. I don't need any of them to come in and try to be Mason Jobst or Sasha Larocque. I expect all to be big contributors as the season goes along here."

The Returnees

Rohlik is not concerned that Nappier, the 2019 Big Ten Goalie of the Year, doesn't have Romeo to compete against as was the case his first two seasons.

Nappier (6-3, 220) played only four games as a freshman, but entering his junior year he has a 16-4-3 record, a 1.76 career goals-against average and a .938 save percentage, and his five shutouts (four last season) are fifth in OSU history.

"He's going to play the same way," Rohlik

said. "He's calm. He's confident."

It will help that the defense is experienced. Ege (5-11, 174), Matt Miller (6-1, 209) and Gordi Myer (5-10, 179) are seniors. Grant Gabriele (6-2, 197) is a junior, and Ryan O'Connell (6-1, 185) is a sophomore.

"We're mobile. A lot of times they get overlooked, but that's OK," Rohlik said. "We've got some guys who've played a lot of games, and we've got three freshmen who could all step in and play at some point."

After Laczynski, the next leading scorer to return is Meyer, who had 22 points (nine goals, 13 assists) in his first season after transferring from Miami (Ohio).

Meyer (5-11, 185) was severely limited by illness his final season with the RedHawks, and the Columbus Blue Jackets pick struggled at times for the Buckeyes.

"Last year it was important to get back to enjoying the game and believing in myself," he said. "Last year had some ups and downs. Having that under my belt, I know what I'm capable of."

Senior captain Ronnie Hein (6-0, 188) had 21 points (11-10) last season.

"He's scored some important goals for us, got some big points for us, and I expect he'll do the same," Rohlik said.

One player to keep an eye on is Swedish sophomore Gustaf Westlund (6-0, 175). He was beginning to come into his own after the Christmas break before being injured, and he finished with 19 points (5-14) in only 25 games.

"He brings you out of your seat in practice sometimes, he's that capable," Rohlik said. "That really hurt us last year when he was injured."

The Schedule

OSU opens the regular season in the Ice Breaker Tournament at the Huntington Center in Toledo. OSU plays Oct. 11 vs. Western Michigan at 5 p.m. Host Bowling Green faces RIT at 8 p.m. The winners and losers play the next day with Bowling Green playing the late game no matter what.

The first home games are Oct. 18 (7 p.m.) and the 19th (5 p.m.) vs. Omaha.

After playing at Mercyhurst Oct. 25-26, the Big Ten schedule gets going when the Buckeyes host Michigan on Nov. 1 (7 p.m.) and Nov. 2 (5 p.m.).

A highlight is playing in the Fortress Invitational at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas to start the new year. OSU plays Cornell at 11:30 p.m. on Jan. 3 and will play the next night against either Army or Providence following an afternoon game between the Golden Knights and the Stanley Cup champion St. Louis Blues.

"My parents are more excited than I am because they've already booked their tickets for that trip," Meyer said. "It will be fun, a nice break from the cold in January."

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Rivalry With Michigan Transcends Football

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

If it weren't for the designs on the field or the rules of the game, the Ohio State men's soccer team's 2-0 loss to Michigan on Oct. 2 could have been taken for the latest rendition of The Game. In quite a few ways, it was the latest rendition, because just as the Buckeyes and Wolverines do in football, this game had been marked in red for Ohio State and Michigan for months. There's no love lost between the two, regardless of sport.

Nowhere was that more obvious than in the actual style of play that the two teams put forth during their battle. It was as physical a game as Ohio State will play this year, unless the Buckeyes face off with the Wolverines again in the Big Ten tournament early in November. As midfielder Jack Holland noted after the game, that's exactly what the Buckeyes wanted.

"That (physicality) was definitely one of our things," Holland said. "We know Michigan is a scrappy, physical team, they've got a lot of athletic guys, so it was huge for us to match that. We didn't want to come out scared, punch them in the mouth first, and I think we did a good job with that overall. It's always going to get chippy – it's Ohio State vs. Michigan – but I think we kept our heads well."

Every loose ball was a battle. Every run was challenged by shoving and jersey grabs that went unseen by the officiating staff. There was an especially brutal play near

midfield just about 15 minutes into the match that saw Michigan defender Umar Farouk Osman sink his cleat into the back of Ohio State midfielder Joshua Jackson-Ketchup's ankle, knocking Jackson-Ketchup to the field. Jackson-Ketchup returned to his feet with no trouble, but the side judge decided that no booking was necessary.

Ohio State's Xavier Green returned the favor with his own rough penalty just a few minutes later, deep in the attacking zone, though he also avoided any serious punishment.

The first real blow came with 18 minutes to play, when Holland went down with what looked like a cramp after a hard slide tackle into another loose ball. The physicality really wasn't just a piece of the game, nor was it a sideshow to something larger. It was the game. It was a war of attrition, a consistent scrum of defense, pushing and moves designed to disrupt while still avoiding penalty. Both teams were able to capture that strategy perfectly, putting together a convincing representation of just how much these two dislike each other.

The teams, however, were unable to capture the kind of offensive firepower to really make an impact on the scoreboard. A 0-0 first half saw significantly more penalties and even more uncalled transgressions than it did shots on target. Neither team showed much interest in a consistent build-up, though more often than not the struggles were results of great defense rather than lackluster offense. A last-second shot by Brayden Durbin nearly broke the tie for the

Buckeyes with just seconds to play in the half, but Michigan keeper Andrew Verdi pushed it wide and the rebound soared over the net.

The second half had a similarly brutal tint to it. Michigan opened the physicality back up in the 50th minute with a tough yellow card from defender Jackson Ragen, somehow just the first of the game. Seven minutes later, the Wolverines were finally able to cut through the middle third – where much of the game had stagnated – and find the first goal, off a corner kick, with Christian Pulselli cracking a strike off a volley into the top corner.

About 15 minutes later, the penalties returned in emphatic fashion, with a Michigan yellow card after Marc Ybarra grabbed and yanked hard on the arm of a Buckeye with possession, spinning him around, sparking some chatter on the field and some less-than-welcoming words from the home crowd of just over 1,200.

A Holland slide tackle that seemed to ding up Michigan's Joel Harrison drew yet another yellow card and very nearly inspired a fight after one of Harrison's teammates got into it with Holland. From the penalties to the defensive, conservative styles to the near fights, this was in every way an accurate portrayal of the rivalry.

Unlike recent renditions of Ohio State vs. Michigan on the football field, this soccer game had no real good fortune for the Buckeyes. With about five minutes to play, Michigan found the back of the net again, taking a 2-0 lead and putting an end to any comeback hopes for the Buckeyes.

Ultimately, Ohio State's loss to the Wolverines showed two things. First, the Buckeyes are still very much rebuilding. After a year with just two wins, a winless streak that stretched for more than a calendar year and just one year under head coach Brian Maisonneuve's belt, to be improving at all is a good sign. To win a few Big Ten games this season would be a good sign. However, wins are gravy for the Buckeyes right now. This is still very much a work in progress, no matter how frustrating the losses are. In times like this, Maisonneuve

makes sure to refocus his team, and the only way to do that is to reflect on the struggles.

"Right now, we're missing the details," Maisonneuve said. "We talk about it all the time, you give up two set piece goals, it's disappointing. Right now, we're just missing those details. We had a couple good chances in the first half that, with those details again, we have to put away."

"We have to start second halves better. The territory battle in the second half in the last couple games, we haven't been the better team in territory in the second half."

Secondly, this game was a sign of what Ohio State is right now and, perhaps, what the ideal program looks like under Maisonneuve. The Buckeyes held possession in midfield for most of the game, played physically and created serious chances on counterattacks. Without elite speed, that's pretty much the option Ohio State has right now. Nothing else would work. However, Maisonneuve, a former defensive midfielder himself, sees a way forward for that style of soccer at Ohio State.

"We have to continue to match (the physicality)," the head coach said after the game. "All the Big Ten games are going to be physical. Michigan is an athletic, physical team, and most of the Big Ten games are going to be similar."

Whether Ohio State does stick to that grind-it-out style under Maisonneuve is yet to be seen. The personnel simply isn't there for the Buckeyes to truly establish an identity, and games like the loss to Michigan show that. The Wolverines aren't an elite squad, but they've had the same head coach (Chaka Daley) in Ann Arbor establishing a culture for eight years and Michigan is deep and balanced, while Ohio State is in the very early stages of a rebuild.

Maisonneuve knows that, and he knows that the only way to fix that is with time. Culture building takes time, and it takes a steady hand. It could be only a matter of time before Ohio State turns physical losses against Michigan into physical, program-changing victories.

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California Law Would Destroy College Sports

On Sept. 30, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed the "Fair Pay to Play Act" which allows collegiate athletes to make money off of their name, images and likenesses just as professional athletes have done for decades.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

For example, a jersey with the athlete's name on the back, their pictures or images on a promotional poster, or video-game likenesses are things which the student-athlete can make royalties from according to this new law.

The problem with the legislation is that it is in direct conflict with the amateurism status of the college athlete as set by NCAA rules and standards. The law, which goes into effect in January of 2023, would have a major effect on every aspect of college sports in terms of financing and recruiting.

One thing is for sure: The NCAA will use all means necessary to fight or at least modify this legislation before it goes into effect or the face of college athletics will change forever and the NCAA as a governing body may not even survive.

Historical Perspective

It wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that athletics and the sport of football, in particular, started being regulated. These regulations did not come from an athletic governing body but from the federal government. Primarily due to the rugged nature of the sport of football and the large number of injuries, Congress passed legislation to make the game safer.

President Theodore Roosevelt had a true love for the game, and in 1906 the

International Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was formed in order to make uniform rules for the sport of football that all teams had to follow. In 1910 the IAAUS changed its name to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA started out as a rule-development and enforcement body, but as time went on, its overall scope of influence grew and grew in relation to the sport.

The NCAA expanded into areas of recruiting, academic eligibility standards, scholarship limits and financial aid along with its initial areas of concern regarding rules and safety policies. The philosophy was that the NCAA would "even the playing field" in terms of all aspects of collegiate sports.

Many changes have taken place in college athletics since the initiation of the NCAA. Technological advancements such as radio, television and the Internet have had huge influences in the world of athletics.

These influences have made collegiate sports also a business and a way of life. The NCAA has dealt with these changes by becoming even more involved in terms of monitoring and regulating the various aspects of intercollegiate athletics.

The rules and policies established by the NCAA are constantly changing and being modified, but these changes are usually slow in implementation.

The California law is like a tornado completely destroying the central foundation of that basic philosophy of making sure college athletic teams are on as fair and equal a playing field as possible.

The NCAA often makes rulings and policy decisions that are questionable. College coaches and administrators have butted heads with the organization over the years, and I have often said the NCAA stands for "No Clue At All," but in reality, it has lived up to its purpose as a governing body for college athletics.

Financial Concerns For Athletes

It is true that there needs to be better

compensation for the college athlete who is working out, practicing and constantly developing his or her particular skills in order to compete at the highest level possible.

The allowances set by the NCAA need to be modified and increased to a reasonable but not exorbitant amount.

Scholarship athletes are getting their education paid for, and that needs to be considered when determining the particular amount of the allowance, but they also are committed to their sport 12 months of the year and do not have time to work.

Student-athletes are regulated in terms of how many hours of supervised time they can spend with their coaches in and out of season, but in reality, it's the extra time they put in on their own that helps them excel or just earn a starting spot.

The collegiate athlete is often held to a higher academic standard than the normal student and must maintain a certain GPA to stay eligible and stay on scholarship. There are many things to be considered when determining how much compensation an athlete needs to be given.

Potential Problems

There are many more negatives than positives with the new California law as written. Other assemblies will be pressured to pass similar legislation prior to 2023, and the NCAA sees a locomotive gathering speed as it heads directly at them with a major collision ready to take place. At the same time, colleges and universities need to try to figure out how they are going to handle their own finances if the law goes into effect.

Monies brought into a university from its major sports programs, especially football, go to fund many aspects of the entire athletic department. The sport itself retains only a portion of the profits. Funds go to other sports programs, academic facilities and even to the general fund, just to mention a few earmarks for the monies brought in. There is no

doubt other programs and projects will be affected in a negative way if the new law is adopted.

Recruiting will be impossible to remain "fair and equal" when only certain states decide to pay royalties to their athletes or allow players to sign individual contracts with sporting companies.

The top-rated high school recruits will go to those schools that give them the opportunity to make the most money. The NCAA, if it's still around, will then have the option to declare those schools ineligible for tournament or postseason play.

There's No "I" In Team

In team sports, coaches preach "the name on the front of the jersey is more important than the name on the back of the jersey." In other words, the team takes priority over the individual. If different players on the team make more money than others or have their own endorsement contracts, the idea of "team" goes out the window.

Petty jealousies will become the norm, not the exception in the locker room.

Governor Newsom has created a monster of a situation for college athletics. I suspect one of his reasons for supporting the new law is to turn around and tax the students for the money they will make from their endorsements.

Whatever the reasons, the ramifications of the California Fair Pay to Play Act prove it was ill thought out.

If the law is adopted throughout the country, one thing is for certain: The amateurism status of the college athlete is over for good, and the whole fabric of college sports will suffer.

Known as one of the top recruiters in college football, Bill Conley was 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. His column will appear throughout the season in BSB.

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Buckeyes Will Be Recharged For Rest Of Schedule

Who would have thought back on Aug. 31 when Ohio State dispatched Florida Atlantic, 45-21, that no Buckeye opponent would get any closer than that 24-point margin through the first half of the season?

That really speaks to how Ohio State steam-

rolled to the midpoint without being contested. not close. Buckeye fans frustrated with the slow start should keep that in mind.

The 34 points Ohio State scored against Michigan State were the most against the Spartans in nearly two years. You have to go back to Ohio State's 48-3 rout of MSU on Nov. 11, 2017, to find a time when Michigan State gave up more points.

The thing that is scary about the place the Buckeyes have put themselves in at this point is that they have two open dates the rest of the way. Off weeks can help teams get healthy. That doesn't seem to be an issue for OSU.

What the rest of the Big Ten should really be concerned about is that the off weeks will give Ryan Day more time to continue to expand his offense. Day has added new wrinkles each week, working a first-year Buckeye quarterback into a more complicated role. I would expect OSU to add more dimensions when given two weeks between games, twice the rest of the season.

Fields Or Haskins?

Here's a question to ponder.

Is Ohio State better off because Dwayne Haskins left OSU in turning pro a year early? I ask not to criticize Haskins in any way. He is the most prolific passer in the history of Ohio State football.

But Haskins was a one-threat quarterback – a great passer. Justin Fields' dual-threat ability has allowed Day to open up the offense.

I don't know the answer to my question, but it's interesting to think about. But we do already know whom to plan on as the 2020 starting quarterback at Ohio State: Justin

Fields, of course. Haskins would have been gone in 2020, even if he did stick around for this season.

What Not To Like

Three cautionary notes are worth raising after the latest win:

- **Slow starts:** It happened against Miami and it happened against Michigan State. Why did an OSU team do so much better than Michigan State over the final three quarters struggle so during the first quarter? Two quick fumbles by MSU gave the Buckeyes an early chance to blow the game open. It didn't happen. Ohio State had such a wide talent difference over Michigan State that it didn't matter in the end. That might not be the case against better teams in the future.

- **Too much talk:** Ohio State got flagged for one unsportsmanlike conduct for talking too much and could have been flagged for another. Trash talk does not help the end goal of winning. Let your play do the talking. The jawing penalty on Marcus Hooker after a kickoff fair catch (How can a fair catch lead to trash talking?) allowed MSU to start at the 45-yard-line instead of the 30.

- **Some defensive holes:** It's tough to complain too much about a defense that held Michigan State to 10 points and 285 yards, but when you're contending for a national championship, the grading curve is tough. It seemed like too many times MSU found big plays for first downs. In fact, despite the lopsided nature of the game overall, MSU had nearly as many first downs (18) as Ohio State (22). I had watched MSU's game against Arizona State and wasn't impressed by the Spartans' offense that scored seven points and totaled 404 yards. So I expected fewer yards than the 285 out of MSU against Ohio State. OSU entered the game allowing 224 yards a game.

What To Like

On the upside, there was a lot to like about OSU's win over Michigan State. Here are three:

- **J.K. Dobbins' speed:** More impressive than Dobbins' 172 yards rushing was the speed he displayed on his 67-yard TD run. The way he split the defenders near the line of scrimmage, blowing past Spartans who had the angle on him, was reminiscent of Ezekiel Elliott's runs during the 2014 national championship campaign. In the NFL this year, they've been making a big deal about how fast some players move – in miles per hour. The Browns' Odell Beckham hit 21 mph on an 89-yard TD reception against the Jets, and against the Ravens, Cleveland's Nick Chubb was just slightly below 22 mph on an 88-yard run said to be the top speed on a TD run in the NFL this season. I'd love to know the speed Dobbins hits.

- **Justin Fields on the run:** Fields has been showing us his flash speed on runs all year, starting with the 51-yard TD in the opener. But he might have been at his best as a runner against the solid Michigan State defense. Fields' final stat line gave him a net of 61 yards rushing, but that included losses on quarterback sacks (something the NFL, unlike college, does not count as running yards). Fields covered 84 yards on runs in which he wasn't tackled behind the line of scrimmage on eight carries.

- **296 in second quarter:** OSU had an incredible 296 yards during the 24-point second quarter against an MSU team that entered the game ranked 14th in the country for points allowed, just 15.0 a game. The variety of ways OSU scored in the second quarter illustrated why the Buckeyes are so tough to defend. There

was an explosive play by a wideout (Binjimen Victor's 60-yard catch and run), a hard-nosed play by a tight end bulling his way into the end zone (Luke Farrell's 21-yard reception) and an explosive burst by a running back (the 67-yard run by Dobbins).

Rooting For Joe

Pleased again to see former Buckeye Joe Burrow have another big game for LSU. His five TD passes against Utah State give him 22 touchdown passes in five games for the 5-0 Tigers.

Add to that two rushing TDs and Burrow has been in on 24 touchdowns through five games. Those are Fields-like numbers. Fields was in on 23 TDs through the first five games (16 passing and seven rushing) and added three more against MSU (two passing, one rushing) to give him 26 for the season.

It would be great to see LSU run the table and win the SEC and Burrow face his old team, Ohio State, in the playoffs. LSU has a big test in its next game against undefeated Florida.

Michigan Watching

Michigan's 10-3 victory over Iowa cost the Buckeyes some insurance. A loss would have been Michigan's second in Big Ten play. Why is that so important to OSU? It would have meant that if U-M handed OSU its only loss, OSU still would have advanced to the Big Ten title game.

But there are a lot of big games left to go for the Big Ten East race.

My Top 10

Still waiting to let more results on the field sort things nationally, but based on what we know so far, here's my top 10.

1. Alabama (5-0) – the first big test doesn't come until Nov. 9 against LSU.
2. Ohio State (6-0) – Wisconsin, Penn State games on Oct. 26 and Nov. 23 are the big ones before Michigan.
3. Georgia (5-0) – The win over Notre Dame looks solid, but don't count me in the crowd that thinks Georgia should be considered for the playoffs even without winning the SEC. Florida on Nov. 2 is the next test.
4. Oklahoma (5-0) – The Sooners have been sailing so far, and the only Big 12 team that may be capable of stopping them is Texas, on Oct. 12.
5. Florida (6-0) – Coming off a win over Auburn, Florida is at home against LSU on Oct. 12.
6. Wisconsin (5-0) – The Badgers' destruction of Michigan looks even better after U-M's win over Iowa. The key date for Wisconsin is Oct. 26 in Columbus.
7. Clemson (5-0) – A two-point conversion away from a loss to unranked North Carolina is the worst win for the top teams so far this season. The next time Clemson plays a ranked team is Nov. 16 against No. 19 Wake Forest.
8. LSU (5-0) – Perfect now, this team will be ranked a lot higher if it's still unbeaten in a month, after games against Florida on Oct. 12, Auburn on Oct. 26 and Alabama on Nov. 9.
9. Penn State (5-0) – Penn State's only close game was to Pitt, which has been playing pretty well since then. Penn State the next three weeks plays Iowa, Michigan and Michigan State, giving us a better read.
10. Notre Dame (4-1) – I'm not sure the last time I would have said Notre Dame was the best one-loss team in the country. The Irish deserve this spot at this point. However, there is little opportunity left to impress, with just one team remaining on the schedule (Michigan) that was in last week's AP top 25. This might be as high as Notre Dame should go.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

rolled to the midpoint without being contested.

Two and maybe three serious tests loom in the regular season with Wisconsin, Penn State and Michigan (the maybe) left on the schedule. OSU may indeed stumble, yet. But what the first half tells us is that Ohio State should take a 12-0 record to the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 7 in Indianapolis.

As good as Wisconsin and Penn State appear to be – and that's very good – this Ohio State team is the favorite and will be installed as the favorite by oddsmakers until at least a possible national playoff semifinal.

Was it ugly against Michigan State, which managed to match FAU by hanging within 24 points of the Buckeyes in the final tally? Yes, at times. But that's a product of Mark Dantonio football. MSU wins ugly. And even in losing the Spartans tend to make their opponents look ugly as well.

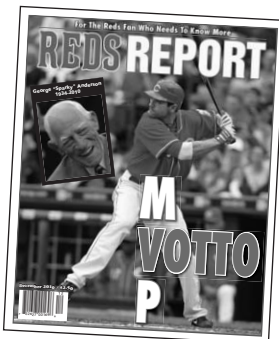
In the end, however, the game really was

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Black Uniforms Aside, Buckeyes Looking Good

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

I think we saw Justin Fields come of age in Ohio State's 34-10 victory over Michigan State on Oct. 5. In fact, we may have seen the whole Buckeye team come of age. I know, Ohio State entered the game with a 5-0 record, and no team had come any closer than 24 points against the Buckeyes. But no team had really tested Fields or his mates this season.

I'm not talking about "Miami going up 5-0" tested. Everyone knew it was only a matter of time before the far superior Buckeyes broke loose against the RedHawks, and break loose they did, scoring 76 consecutive points to wipe out the visitors. I'm talking about Michigan State tested, with the Buckeyes slugging it out – in the first quarter in particular – against a rough-and-tumble Spartan team, and really for much of the game.

Every time Ohio State would seem to take charge or the Spartans seemed like they were going to self-destruct, Mark Dantonio's squad would come fighting back. This was easily the best team the Buckeyes had faced all season – sorry, Nebraska and all your preseason hype – and certainly the grittiest.

But after Ohio State's slow start, Fields and the Buckeyes continually showed that not only were they the better team but they were also equal to the Spartans in toughness. That's where I felt Ohio State came of age. The good teams aren't going to fold like a lousy poker hand, and if the previously untested Buckeyes were truly going to challenge for the national title, they needed to prove that they could not just survive but prosper under adverse conditions.

I'm not sure why anyone should be surprised that Michigan State ended up being a handful. Since Ohio State's dysfunctional 2011 season, only a pair teams have defeated the Buckeyes twice – MSU and perennial national contender Clemson. That puts the Spartans in some lofty company. Dantonio, an obvious Jim Tressel protégé, has shown a knack for taking lesser recruits and molding them into a unit that can compete in the challenging Big Ten East with recruiting blue bloods such as Ohio State, Michigan and Penn State through hard-nosed football.

The Spartans opened the game with a pair of fumbles on their first two drives that gave the Buckeyes the ball on the MSU 27 and 22, respectively. The best Ohio State could do with those gifts was take a 3-0 lead that stood until 12:12 of the second period, and the Spartans completely bottled up the vaunted Buckeye run game. Ohio State had zero net rushing yards on 10 carries in the first 15 minutes.

Having touted the growth of the OSU offensive line since its disappointing performance to start the season against Florida Atlantic, I was left wondering if I hadn't been mining fool's gold with the big guys up front, watching them blow open holes or build pass-blocking fortresses against less-than-championship-caliber defenses.

My faith in the offensive line was quickly restored in the second quarter when Ohio State erupted for 163 rushing yards and 296 total yards to take a 27-10 lead to the locker room, though the Spartans, who were set to take the second-half kick, did not appear ready to throw in the towel.

Obviously, Binjimen Victor's 60-yard reception for Ohio State's first touchdown – boy was he wide-open – helped get the Buckeye offense untracked, but the Spartans quickly answered with a TD of their own.

It was a play by Fields on Ohio State's drive to answer that score that I felt was one of the key plays in the game.

The Buckeye rushing game was still strug-

gling and junior running back J.K. Dobbins ran for three yards then tallied only two yards on a pass reception, leaving Fields looking at a third-and-5 at the OSU 30. A three-and-out might have left Ohio State demoralized and left the Spartans with a chance to take the lead. Instead, Fields ran for 35 yards to the MSU 35. Three plays later he had a 13-yard run to set up his 21-yard scoring pass to Luke Farrell to put the Buckeyes back up, 17-7, with 8:09 to go before the break. Farrell looked like the prototypical tight end on the play, bulling his way the final seven or eight yards.

Fans will probably most remember Dobbins' 67-yard run to make the score 24-10 and his 112 rushing yards for the quarter on 10 carries, but Fields' 35-yard bolt and 51 yards on three tries in the period, good for a 17.0 average, were just as critical in keeping the Spartans at bay. Combined, Fields and Dobbins averaged 12.5 yards a carry in that pivotal quarter.

Fields would later throw his first interception of the season and lose a fumble, but Ohio State was leading 27-10 and 34-10, respectively, at the time of the miscues and the Buckeye defense had taken control, so I'm going to give Fields those gaffes because he had already put his team in a position to win.

Michigan State never gave up, but there was a defensive sequence I believe finally sealed the victory for the home team.

Still trailing by only 17 points near the end of the third quarter, MSU took over at its own 34. Spartan quarterback Brian Lewerke, who played better in the game than I anticipated, quickly drove his team to a first down at the OSU 47.

On first down, Tuf Borland, who I am sure to no one's surprise had one of his better games against MSU's more traditional offense, stopped Cody White for a three-yard loss. On second down, Cameron Brown, playing for an injured Damon Arnette, stopped Darrell Stewart on a short pass for another yard loss. And on third-and-14, Baron Browning sacked Lewerke for nine more negative yards and a fourth-and-23.

Michigan State was forced to punt, and Fields led the Buckeyes on a 11-play, 80-yard drive to bring the game to its final 34-10 margin with 10:41 left. After that the Buckeye defense just pinned its ears back and rushed Lewerke relentlessly. The Spartans would gain only 33 yards in the final quarter. Meanwhile, Fields and Ohio State turned to their battering ram, Master Teague, to eat up fourth-quarter clock, and he responded, gaining 79 yards on 10 carries in the final 15 minutes.

Ohio State still has such ranked teams as Wisconsin, Penn State and Michigan on the schedule, but I doubt those teams will display the spunk of the Spartans. If they do, Fields and Ohio State will have learned through experience that they have the heart and the skill to beat them.

The Good Old Days

Ohio State's win over MSU marked the second of three straight night games for the Buckeyes. Playing under the lights has become commonplace for college football teams, but it obviously wasn't always that way. While looking for something else, I came across a quote from then-Ohio State athletic director Rick Bay in 1985.

That season the Buckeyes played their first night game ever in Ohio Stadium, beating

Pitt, 10-7, in the season opener. I found Bay's comments quaint, some 34 years and dozens of night games later.

"I heard from a lot of fans who were concerned about safety issues in and around the stadium," Bay told BSB of that first game under the lights. "But what they were really concerned about was tradition. They were uncomfortable about the disruption in their traditional routine of an afternoon game."

"Before I got here, virtually every home game started at 1:30 p.m., and the night contest against Pitt was playing mind games with the fans. I reminded them that plenty of other events – movies, concerts, even high school football games – were held at night, and nearly every other conference in the nation had begun scheduling night games. As things turned out, the fans were up for the challenge and everything worked out fine."

I thought that was a good point about high school games being played at night, and I also thought it was a good point about Buckeye fans being concerned about tradition. The tradition now is that there is no tradition when it comes to kickoff times. In the first six games this season there have already been three different start times.

Obviously night games – and the TV revenue they generate – are a way of football life now. Personally, I liked it the way it was when Ohio State first started playing games at night. Have a big game or two under the lights each season. Make it a big deal. When you are playing Rutgers at night, something is out of whack.

Despite Bay's dismissal of safety issues more than 30 years ago, I still worry about that. The chances of someone falling, especially someone in one of the more remote parking lots, is always there. I worry even more about people driving home to the far corners of Ohio after a lengthy day of tailgating – even those who don't drink, but are simply tired.

Football today is what it is, and I guess I just need to embrace it.

One other question crossed my mind while remembering that first night game. What ever happened to scheduling Pitt for nonleague games? The Panthers used to be a staple on the Buckeye slate. In fact, Ohio State has played only Ohio Wesleyan (29) and Oberlin (26) more times than Pitt (25). It's hard to believe they haven't played each other since 1996, a 72-0 beatdown by the host Buckeyes.

The Buckeyes and Panthers first hooked up in 1929 with Pitt prevailing, 18-2, at home. Host Ohio State returned the favor the following year, winning 16-7.

The teams met three times in the '30s, every year in the '40s and four times in the '50s, the last coming in Ohio State's national championship season of 1954, when the Buckeyes beat Pitt, 26-0. The two teams did not hook up again until the Fiesta Bowl following the 1983 season, when the Buckeyes won 28-23. The teams also met two more times that decade and four times in the 1990s.

Pitt has played Ohio State more times than any team still playing Division I football, or whatever that division is called now. USC is next at 24 (seven in the Rose Bowl, one in the Cotton Bowl). Ohio State holds a commanding 19-5-1 edge over the Panthers.

My Tradition

OK. So back in 1985, people were worried

about losing the tradition of a 1:30 start. I frankly don't recall what my thought about night games was 34 years ago. But I know how I feel about alternate uniforms today. I checked all over and as best I can tell, Ohio State's colors are scarlet and gray. I have seen nothing about black.

I have said this here before – and I know the young guys in the office generally disagree with me – but if you are flipping channels on the TV and you come across a game and you can't immediately identify that one of the participants is Ohio State, you have wasted over 100 years of branding. A Black Out? What's the matter with a Scarlet Out? Is this about forcing fans to buy another piece of Buckeye gear? There's already enough Buckeye stuff out there for people to buy.

Is this about impressing recruits? If a kid is going to choose Ohio State based on a black uniform worn upon rare occasions, then he is not the type of player that I want to build around.

In full disclosure, The Columbus Dispatch ran an article noting that Jeff Okudah, a player I am happy to have on the team, said the black uniforms were a reason he chose the Buckeyes.

"It was something I wanted to wear," he said.

As I always say when this comes up, gimmicks are for wannabes. Tradition is for perennial powers.

Up Close And Personal

Here's your chance to get an early and intimate look at the Ohio State men's basketball team. The Sportsmanship Club of Columbus will be holding the 13th annual Tip-Off Event on Monday, Oct. 28.

Fans will be able to watch practice, hear from coach Chris Holtmann and meet the team. They will also enjoy hors d'oeuvres and dessert and receive a team picture that they can have autographed by the team that night. There will be both live and silent auctions.

Admission is \$75 per person and just \$35 for those 13 and under so don't forget to bring the kids! Fans can purchase tickets online at sportsmanshipclub.com or mail your credit card information or check made payable to The Sportsmanship Club of Columbus to 436 Fallis Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43214. Tickets can be picked up the night of the event. Doors open a 4:45 p.m., with practice running until 5:45 and refreshments and the rest of the program beginning at 6:00.

All proceeds go to the men's basketball program. For more information call (614) 581-4768.

No BSB Until Oct. 22

Due to Ohio State's off week, there will be no print issue of BSB mailed on Oct. 15. The next issue of BSB will be mailed on Oct. 22 with coverage of the Northwestern game.

You can still follow all the Buckeye sports news on our electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers. If you are not already enjoying this service, see the simple instructions on page 4 of this issue. Subscribers can also discuss the hot Buckeye topics of the day on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum.

Don't forget that the complete issue of each BSB is posted Mondays during football season and Tuesdays the rest of the year. This provides quick access to BSB, especially for those who have been experiencing mail problems.

Those with sluggish mail service may also consider upgrading to first-class mail in an envelope for just \$20 through the end of football season or \$30 through football recruiting in February. Just give us a call at (614) 486-2202 with your credit card information and we will get you upgraded right away, or send your check or credit card info to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212.



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