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Double Trouble

Dobbins, Young Lead Ohio State Past Wisconsin

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Although he entered Ohio State's Oct. 26 game against No. 13 Wisconsin as the nation's fourth-leading rusher, running back J.K. Dobbins had a rather large chip on his shoulder.

He had been mostly overshadowed this season by another Big Ten running back, Jonathan Taylor, whose 15 touchdowns had him in the thick of the Heisman Trophy conversation. But when the two shared the same field, it was Dobbins who made the biggest impact in the Buckeyes' 38-7 win over the Badgers.

"J.K. ran with an edge all day," head coach Ryan Day said after the game. "I think he's the best running back in the country. When you see him run at the second level, when you see him run with his pads down, taking care of the football, out of the backfield, he's very versatile in everything he can do and he's running with an edge. When you combine that with our offensive line, I think that's why you're seeing special things out of him."

Dobbins carried the ball 20 times for 163 yards and two touchdowns, averaging 8.2 yards per carry against Wisconsin's No. 1-ranked nationally rush defense. He also surpassed the 1,000-yard mark, becoming the first player in school history to reach that mark during his freshman, sophomore and junior seasons.

"Has it always been perfect for J.K.?" No," Day said. "But as he got into the third year, now you're a veteran on the team and you understand how things work and you understand the consequences of each game and the discipline it takes to prepare yourself to play each week, taking care of your body, preparing, ball security and things like that."

With 3,566 career yards on the ground, Dobbins passed Tim Spencer (1979-82) for fourth on the school rushing list.

Taylor, on the other hand, was held to a season-low 52 yards on 20 carries after averaging 136.7 yards per game coming in.

"We were messing with J.K. the whole week, talking about how the best running back in the Big Ten is coming to the 'Shoe,' quarterback Justin Fields said after the game. "J.K. is a great running back, of course, and I thought he played very well today in the passing



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STATEMENT MADE – Ohio State running back J.K. Dobbins rushed for 163 yards and two touchdowns while Wisconsin's Jonathan Taylor was held to a season-low 52 yards on 20 carries.

ANDREW LIND

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State started slow but came out with a resounding 31-point win against No. 13 Wisconsin that gives the Buckeyes a true statement victory.

Here are the players who stood out to the members of the BSB Staff, as well as to those on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum.

Wyatt Crosher, BSB: There are plenty of great picks to take from this game, but I am going with wide receiver Chris Olave.

Olave finished the game with seven receptions for 93 yards and two touchdowns, catching more passes and earning more receiving yards than all other players on Ohio State combined.

While the Buckeyes relied more on the run than plays through the air, Olave was the safety net for Justin Fields all day and made some pivotal catches down the stretch to keep important drives going.

Olave scored the first touchdown of the day on either side, and the only touchdown of the first half, and was a crucial piece of the starting ground that allowed Ohio State to blow the game open.

Joe Dempsey, BSB: J.K. Dobbins deserves a Buckeye leaf for his dominant performance in Ohio State's 38-7 thrashing of Wisconsin in a rainy Ohio Stadium.

Despite facing the nation's No. 1 rush defense, which entered the game allowing just 58.4 yards per game, Dobbins had an incredible game against the stout Badger front.

The junior captain maneuvered his way to 221 yards from scrimmage, with 163 coming on the ground and 58 through the air. The La Grange, Texas, native averaged 8.2 yards per carry, displaying both elusiveness and power with jukes and broken tackles throughout the rain-filled affair.

Dobbins also scored two touchdowns in a game where he surpassed 1,000 yards rushing for the season, making him the first Buckeye to rush for more than 1,000 yards in his freshman, sophomore and junior seasons. Archie Griffin is the only other Ohio State back with three 1,000-yard seasons, altogether.

Dobbins' day was one for the books.

Andrew Lind, BSB: Defensive end Chase Young won't win the Heisman Trophy – after all, it's an award typically reserved for an offensive skill player – but he should.

Young continues to be the most dominant player in the country on either side of the ball, and his six tackles, five tackles for loss, four sacks and two forced fumbles against Wisconsin may have been the best single-game performance this season.

That stat line is even more impressive when you consider that Wisconsin's offense doesn't give him many opportunities to rush the passer. He also had to face double-teams and multiple tight end formations throughout the course of the game.

Young's constant presence in the offensive backfield was a key reason the Buckeyes limited Badgers running back Jonathan Taylor to a season-low 52 yards on 20 carries.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: Ohio State's offensive attack has been predicated on success and domination up front all

season long. The Buckeyes are a run first, physical football team that only really struggles when they can't get halfback J.K. Dobbins going, which doesn't happen very often.

Early on against Wisconsin, the Buckeyes found themselves in that exact situation. Dobbins wasn't exactly struggling, but he – and the rest of the offense – wasn't really able to string together multiple positive plays in the first quarter.

Once the line got going in the second and third quarters however, Ohio State was off to the races. Because of that domination up front of an outstanding Wisconsin front seven, the Buckeye offensive line gets a collective Buckeye leaf this week. The Buckeyes rushed for a combined 264 yards on 50 carries, on a defense that came into the game allowing 58.4 yards on the ground per game. That starts up front, and Ohio State would have been nowhere near as dominant if it weren't for the big men up front taking control of the game in the second half.

BSB Subscribers

The two Buckeye No. 2s, the best in the country at their positions, Chris Olave for spectacular play as in the TTUN game last year, The Silver Bullet linebackers – Pete Werner, Malik Harrison and Tuf Borland – for actively bottling up a great Badger running back, Blake Haubeil for becoming a potential game-winning weapon in a close game and the two Buckeye lines for winning the battle so convincingly against very good Badger lines! A+ for the coaching too!

– AnthonyBuckeye

No. 2.

– Poster That Harley Built



From The Message Board

Following Ohio State's 38-7 win over Wisconsin on Oct. 26, Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as staff members, where they think junior defensive end Chase Young ranks among the program's all-time great defenders. Here are some of the responses:

"Just to name a few: Mike Vrabel, Joey Bosa, Vernon Gholston and John Simon. Chase could be the best!"

– Terry Crider

"He's No. 1 for me for my lifetime. I used to think no one would ever be better than Joey Bosa but I now have Chase firmly at No. 1."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"I think these types of questions need to be answered with time for reflection. Right now, we are in the euphoria of one of the greatest performances in Ohio State defensive history. I am sure there were games where he played so well that we were ranking Alonzo Spellman among OSU's all-time greats. I am sure history will treat Chase Young's career in Columbus kindly, but like a fine wine, let's let his career age a little bit before we try and start ranking him."

– Poster That Harley Built

"Agree it's premature. Also very difficult to rank players of different eras. Two names come immediately to mind: Tatum and Spielman."

– Terrier Buck

"Randy Gradishar, Marcus Marek, Big Daddy – all the way back to Bill Willis. The list goes on and on."

– Mrbigbux

"It's very difficult to rank players from different eras and from a football program with such a long history of producing great players. Chase has to be approaching the top ten. He came to OSU with loads of expectations and he has met and likely exceeded them all."

– BRENT A GREATHOUSE

"We were talking in the press box about Chase Young being the most dominant

college football player we've seen live, and I really do stand by that even now, removed from the moment of him racking up four sacks against a top-15 team with a very good offensive line. Young is as dominant a player as anyone in the country. Looking at the history of the program, it's so hard to narrow down to a list of some of the best defenders, but I think Young has to be approaching the top 10, not for total career stats but for pure football ability and dominance. It's hard to find any sort of comparison, because he's just such a unique athlete, though he does seem to be having the kind of impact that players like Will Smith, Mike Vrabel and Joey Bosa had for their teams."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

"I wouldn't even try on this one. You are talking about a list that includes Jack Tatum, Jim Stillwagon, Chris Spielman, Randy Gradishar, Shawn Springs, Antoine Winfield, Mike Doss, James Laurinaitis, the Bosas and on and on and on. One of the greats, no question, but among a football program of greats. I don't want to rank him, I want to enjoy him."

– Frank Moskowitz, BSB

"For me, Chase Young is the most impressive defender that I have seen live at the college level. I also have seen less players overall than some, sure, but the way that Young just dominates every single time he is on the field is like nothing I have truly ever seen in person. There are other great moments from defenders that stand out in my shorter Ohio State history, but the consistency that Young has showed outshines even the best of what the Bosas have done, or even what maybe a Malik Hooker or Marshon Lattimore could have done in terms of totally taking over a game."

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB

"Chase Young is the most disruptive D-linemen I have seen at OSU. Other impactful defensive players include Mike Doss, Malcolm Jenkins, James Laurinaitis, Will Smith, John Simon and Malik Hooker."

– Joe Dempsey, BSB

Message Delivered In Blowout Of Badgers



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Statement game. Statement made. Neither wind, nor rain, nor even big, bad Wisconsin and the nation's top-ranked defense could prevent third-ranked Ohio State from making its appointed rounds as the Buckeyes delivered a powerful message to the rest of college football with their 38-7 pounding of the No. 13 Badgers.

That message? Regardless of rankings, Ohio State is playing the best football of any college team in the country right now, and outside of Tuscaloosa or Baton Rouge, that is a fact no longer up for debate.

The Buckeyes worked through some self-inflicted problems early in the game as well as a rare special teams gaffe to open the second half before bullying the Badgers, a team that prides itself on being the biggest, baddest team on the block while daring you to prove otherwise.

Defensively, OSU set the tone during Wisconsin's first possession when junior linebacker Tuf Borland shot through a gap on a third-and-3 play and fellow linebacker Malik Harrison stopped Badgers star running back Jonathan Taylor well short of the line to gain.

What followed was a virtuoso performance by a unit that has improved so much within the span of less than a year that it almost defies explanation. Most of the defensive assistants have changed, as have many of the schemes, but the majority of the players on the Ohio State defense are the same as the ones who made a habit of giving up chunk plays last season, and they have simply elevated their game to a new level.

Through the first eight games of the 2018 season, the OSU defense had already allowed 26 plays that gained 30 yards or more, and 10 of those plays had gone for touchdowns. This year through eight games, the defense has allowed the opposition only five such plays, and only one of those – a 49-yard pass by Indiana when the Hoosiers were trailing 30-3 – has gone for a touchdown.

Taylor entered the game as the nation's No. 3 running back, averaging 136.7 yards per game, and he managed only 52 yards on 20 carries with 13 of those attempts resulting in gains of 2 yards or less. You might excuse Wisconsin's junior running back if he never wants to see Ohio State again. In two career games against the Buckeyes, he has averaged 46.5 yards while over the other 33 games during his career, Taylor's average is 154.2 yards per game.

Leading the charge against Taylor and his massive offensive line was the Ohio State wrecking crew led by master demolition expert Chase Young. Since the Badgers typically dominate the line of scrimmage, it was perhaps no surprise they attempted to handle Young on a man-to-man basis. That strategy blew up in their faces as OSU's junior defensive end had the kind of performance on national television about which most defensive players can only dream.

Young recorded six solo tackles, five of which were for loss, and four of those were sacks. The four sacks matched an OSU single-game record, pushed Young into the No. 1 spot in the nation this season with 13½ sacks, and also jumped him into a tie for second place on Ohio State's career sacks list with 27½.

I know Young has nearly no chance to win the Heisman Trophy. No defensive lineman has placed among the top three in the Heisman balloting since 1980 when Pitt defensive end Hugh Green finished second to South Carolina running back George Rogers. But if there is a more dominant player in college football this year than Young, I haven't seen him.

Young's performance against Wisconsin helped the Buckeyes to limit the Badgers to

191 total yards, a season low for an offense that had been averaging 443.7 yards over its first seven games.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Additionally, Wisconsin was held to seven points when it had been averaging 39.7 per game. It marked the first time the Badgers had failed to score in double figures since a 14-7 loss at Michigan in 2016 – a span of 44 games – and was the seventh straight game this season in which the OSU defense had limited an opponent to 10 points or fewer, the longest such streak for the Buckeyes since 1974.

Slow Start, Quick Finish

While the Ohio State defense wasted no time establishing itself in the game, it took a little while for the offense to find its footing amid the steady, cold rain that fell from the late October sky.

The first two possessions for the Buckeyes fizzled due in equal parts to a sound defensive game plan employed by Wisconsin and Ohio State shooting itself in the foot. Miscommunication between QB Justin Fields and center Josh Myers led directly to a second-down sack on OSU's first possession, and Fields mishandled a high third-down snap from Myers on the next possession, leading to another punt.

The fact of the matter is that Ohio State's offense looked tentative during the early going. The Buckeyes ran 11 plays before Fields attempted his first pass, a rather ugly throw that sailed well over the head of intended receiver Binjimen Victor.

Things really didn't begin to come together on offense until the final possession of the first half, a possession that began with just 2:37 remaining before the break.

At that point, Ohio State was clinging to a 3-0 lead courtesy of kicker Blake Haubeil's 49-yard field goal at the 6:52 mark of the second quarter, but the offense was stuck in first gear. It had been shut out in the first quarter of a game for the first time since the 31-16 home loss to Oklahoma in 2017 and had been limited to just 95 total yards by Wisconsin.

Fields, appearing a bit unnerved for the first time all season, had completed only 5 of 10 passes for 59 yards and had already been sacked three times, while running back J.K. Dobbins was finding slow going against the Badgers with just 34 yards on 10 carries.

But then the Buckeyes emerged from their collective shell. Dobbins got things started with a 17-yard burst over right guard before Fields took over. He connected on back-to-back passes to Chris Olave and K.J. Hill worth a combined 23 yards and followed that with a 21-yard scramble down the left side of the field against a Badgers defense that had overloaded the other way.

Three plays later, faced with a third-and-13 at the Wisconsin 27 and only 48 seconds remaining in the half, OSU head coach Ryan Day called timeout, during which he came up with a masterstroke. Out of a bunched formation with three wide receivers lined up to the right, Olave came around behind his two teammates with Badgers cornerback Faion Hicks trailing from the boundary and desperately trying to catch up.

Fields delivered on the money, Olave tucked the ball away well ahead of Hicks, and the

Buckeyes had moved 85 yards in less than two minutes to take a 10-0 lead at the break.

Things got a little dicey at the beginning of the second half when the Buckeyes went three-and-out and then Wisconsin converted a blocked punt into a touchdown to make it 10-7 at the 12:08 mark of the third quarter.

But Ohio State had the immediate answer when it marched 75 yards on the ensuing possession, a drive punctuated by Fields' 10-yard touchdown run. There was still 9:34 remaining in the third quarter, but for all intents and purposes, the game was over at that point.

The Buckeyes tacked on three more touchdowns, including a 4-yard pass from Fields to Olave midway through the fourth quarter. That gave Fields his 24th touchdown pass of the season – already good enough for a tie for the eight-highest total in a single season in OSU history.

But the fact that Fields went on to complete 12 of 22 passes for 167 yards and two scores, and add another 28 yards and a touchdown on the ground despite playing with what appeared to be a lower back injury, let Ohio State fans know something about their sophomore quarterback that perhaps they didn't already know. In addition to being extremely talented, Fields is also a gritty competitor.

Meanwhile, after the blocked punt to open the third quarter, Wisconsin managed to dent OSU territory only twice more in the second half, and each drive ended with disastrous results. Young finished both possessions with strip sacks of Badgers QB Jack Coan, while junior linebacker Pete Werner bounced on each of the fumbles to record the first recoveries of his career.

Heisman Hopeful

If Heisman Trophy voters can't (or won't) get behind the candidacy of a defensive player, they might want to focus on Dobbins, who blasted his way to 163 yards and a pair of touchdowns against what had been the nation's No. 1 rush defense.

Dobbins now has 15 career games of 100 yards or more, and only Archie Griffin (34, 1972-75), Ezekiel Elliott (22, 2013-15), Eddie George (20, 1992-95), Keith Byars (17, 1982-85) and Chris "Beanie" Wells (17, 2006-08) have more in an Ohio State uniform.

Perhaps even more impressive was that Dobbins eclipsed the 1,000-yard mark for the third season in a row, a feat previously accomplished at Ohio State only by Griffin.

Dobbins also jumped another spot on OSU's all-time rushing list, moving past Tim Spencer (3,553, 1979-82) into the No. 4 position in program history. Unless Dobbins (3,566) returns for his senior season in 2020, Griffin is out of reach as the career leader with 5,589 yards, but Elliott (3,961) and George (3,768) appear to be very much in play.

There are two other phases to Dobbins' game that make him an elite running back – maybe not to Heisman voters, but they will be obvious to NFL scouts. Dobbins is perhaps the best blocking back I have seen since Elliott, and he could be the best pass-catcher the Buckeyes have had out of the backfield in nearly a quarter-century.

Dobbins caught three balls for 58 yards against Wisconsin, pushing his career totals in the receiving department to 61 catches for 530 yards and five touchdowns. Those are the best totals for an OSU running back since George finished his career with 63 receptions for 534 yards and one touchdown.

Before that, you'd have to go back another decade to Byars, who totaled 73 catches for 902 yards and three scores while playing for the Buckeyes.



There were no new additions to the injury list outside of those two, while Thayer Munford and Baron Browning (one tackle) returned to the healthy ranks after Munford was a game-time decision against Northwestern and Browning was out.

Buckeyes Remain Steady In Both Major Polls

Despite a 38-7 win over a top-25 foe in Wisconsin on Oct. 26, Ohio State saw no change in either major poll. The Buckeyes sit at No. 3 in the AP poll and No. 4 in the coaches poll.

There was a significant change in the AP poll that could impact the Buckeyes down the road, as LSU jumped over Alabama into the No. 1 spot following its 23-20 win over Auburn. Both SEC teams have an open week on Nov. 2, as do the Buckeyes, so the top three will likely remain intact for Nov. 9, when the Tigers and Crimson Tide face off in Tuscaloosa.

Behind the Buckeyes in the AP poll, Clemson checks in at No. 4, followed by Penn State, Florida, Oregon, Georgia, Utah and Oklahoma. The Sooners dropped from No. 5 after their 48-41 loss to Kansas State, while Notre Dame fell from No. 8 to No. 16 following a 45-14 loss against Michigan.

The Big Ten has six representatives in the AP poll behind the Buckeyes and Nittany Lions, led by Minnesota at No. 13, No. 14 Michigan, No. 18 Wisconsin and No. 19 Iowa. Indiana received four votes after a 38-31 win over Nebraska put the Hoosiers up to 6-2 on the season.

The coaches still have Ohio State sitting behind Clemson, who plays Wofford on Nov. 2. Penn State, Florida, Georgia, Oregon, Oklahoma and Utah close out the top 10 behind Ohio State. The Big Ten placed the same six in this poll too, with Minnesota at No. 13, Michigan at No. 15, No. 17 Wisconsin and No. 19 Iowa. Indiana picked up 18 votes.

Day Says Jones Unlikely To Redshirt

Ohio State true freshman Dawand Jones has turned heads this season because of his whopping 6-8, 360-pound frame. It was his play on the field against Northwestern that drew attention most recently however, as he cleared a massive hole on Master Teague's 73-yard touchdown run. The Indiana native

Cooper, Mack Miss Win Over Wisconsin

Ohio State was without two starters for its game with Wisconsin, as defensive end Jonathon Cooper and wide receiver Austin Mack were listed as game-time decisions on the weekly status report prior to being seen in street clothes on the sidelines before kickoff. Ohio State doesn't release injury information, but Cooper looked to come up lame during warmups.

Cooper already missed Ohio State's first four games of the season with an ankle injury that required surgery and has played just three games on the year. If his new injury is major in any way, he could be a candidate to sit out the remainder of the year to maintain redshirt status, because he will exhaust his eligibility if he plays in five games on the season.

Mack's injury is new, though he did struggle with a foot injury at the end of the 2018 season and was limited through a lot of fall camp with an undisclosed injury unrelated to the one he suffered near the end of last season.

Cooper's playing time went primarily to Tyreke Smith, who had just one tackle in the game. Mack was replaced in the starting lineup by Chris Olave, who led the team in every receiving category, snagging seven catches for 93 yards and two touchdowns. Ohio State has not released any information on when the duo could return, though game-time decisions usually indicate minor injuries.

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

| Date | Opponent | Result/Time (ET) | TV | 2019 Record |
|----------|------------------------|------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Aug. 31 | FLORIDA ATLANTIC | W, 45-21 | FOX | 5-3 (3-1 Conference USA) |
| Sept. 7 | CINCINNATI* | W, 42-0 | ABC | 6-1 (3-0 American Athletic) |
| Sept. 14 | at Indiana | W, 51-10. | FOX | 6-2 (3-2 Big Ten) |
| Sept. 21 | MIAMI (OHIO) | W, 76-5 | BTN | 4-4 (3-1 Mid-American) |
| Sept. 28 | at Nebraska | W, 48-7 | ABC | 4-4 (2-3 Big Ten) |
| Oct. 5 | MICHIGAN STATE* | W, 34-10 | ABC/ESPN | 4-4 (2-3 Big Ten) |
| Oct. 18 | at Northwestern* | W, 52-3 | BTN | 1-6 (0-5 Big Ten) |
| Oct. 26 | WISCONSIN* | W, 38-7 | FOX | 6-2 (3-2 Big Ten) |
| Nov. 9 | MARYLAND | TBA | TBA | 3-5 (1-4 Big Ten) |
| Nov. 16 | at Rutgers | TBA | TBA | 2-6 (0-5 Big Ten) |
| Nov. 23 | PENN STATE* | TBA | TBA | 8-0 (5-0 Big Ten) |
| Nov. 30 | at Michigan* | 12 p.m. | FOX | 6-2 (3-2 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 Nov. 4

There will be no print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin the week of Nov. 4 due to Ohio State's off week. The next issue of BSB will be mailed on Nov. 12. 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. Staffers Joe Dempsey (45-17) and Andrew Lind (41-13) were the closest to Ohio State's 31-point margin of victory over Wisconsin at 28 points each, but did not see the Buckeyes holding the Badgers to just seven points.

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.

was expected to be a bit of a project and had been an assumed redshirt candidate for months. In a press conference on Oct. 22, head coach Ryan Day spoke to the contrary of that assumption.

"He'll probably go more than four (games) just because he is very talented," Day said of Jones. "We want to get him in

some of these games when we can. His ceiling is very high. We want his development to continue.

"We're going to play him, if it makes sense. We also don't want to be foolish."

Day went on, singling out Steele Chambers, Noah Potter and Cade Stover as players who have seen action in three

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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Ohio State athletic director Rick Bay told BSB in October that he didn't feel Ohio State was in need of a larger football stadium, citing the desire for demand and scarcity.

"My only feeling is that we have a stadium that's about the right size for this community because tickets are at a premium, people for the most part do want to get in and there's a wait-list for season tickets."

Bay went on to say that he didn't think Ohio State would be able to create that kind of hype with a larger stadium.

"If your stadium is too big, then the premium on seats in the stadium becomes not as great. Let us say Ohio Stadium seated 120,000 people. Maybe on one game or two you could get 120,000 people, but I doubt you would have 120,000 people for certain teams – maybe Northwestern, Minnesota or some of the less attractive teams."

30 Years Ago – 1989

Ohio State's electrifying resurrection from the dead against Minnesota was an instant classic, among the Ohio State greats like the 1935 game with Notre Dame, the Snow Bowl, the 1969 Rose Bowl, Archie Griffin's first game and Keith Byars' five-touchdown performance against Illinois.

The Buckeyes made every mistake in the book in the first half against the Gophers, falling into a 31-0 hole with 4:29 left in the second quarter. The team that had struggled with toughness all year responded and made the second-biggest comeback in major-college football history at the time, putting up a final tally of 41-37.

"I guarantee I've never been more proud of a football team than I am of this one today," Ohio State coach John Cooper said. "They never gave up. They kept fighting back and fighting back."

25 Years Ago – 1994

Quarterback Bobby Hoying had been criticized for several subpar games in a row, games in which he appeared tentative at times and too willing to throw into tight coverage on other occasions.

The OSU quarterback responded by throwing for five touchdowns against Purdue, equaling a school record that had stood since 1952, and leading the Buckeyes to a surprisingly easy 48-14 win over the Boilermakers.

"It's been tough the last couple of weeks," Hoying admitted after the game, "but I tried hard not to lose faith in myself. My teammates have been great, always trying to keep me up and keep me focused."

20 Years Ago – 1999

In many ways, Ohio State's trip to Minnesota was the 1999 season's "swing game."

The Buckeyes, had they lost, would have had to win three of their last four games just to avoid missing post-season play for the first time since 1988.

But OSU finally showed glimpses of what many thought was its true potential, rallying from behind to take a narrow 20-17 win over the Gophers in Minneapolis.

"You're looking at a happy football coach," Cooper said. "I am so proud of this football team. Obviously, we are a long way from being a great football team, but I don't know how you could ask any more of a football team than what they gave us today."

15 Years Ago – 2004

A new starting quarterback and a new star at tailback produced a decidedly different kind of outcome for Ohio State as the Buckeyes snapped a three-game losing streak and rolled to a 30-7 homecoming win over Indiana.

Sophomore Troy Smith relieved injured starter Justin Zwick at quarterback and freshman Antonio Pittman filled in for suspended tailback Lydell Ross, and each was an instrumental part in the team's first conference victory of the season.

Smith passed and ran for 219 yards while Pittman added a career-high 144 yards as the Buckeyes racked up their highest point output since the season-opening 27-6 win over Cincinnati.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Terrelle Pryor proved to be a prophet, at least for one autumn Saturday in Ohio Stadium as No. 18 Ohio State crushed Minnesota 38-7 on homecoming.

The Ohio State quarterback had endured a personal nightmare of a game one week earlier in an upset loss at Purdue, 26-18, then had to hear from a chorus of critics. But he looked and talked like a new man as the Buckeyes prepared for the Golden Gophers to come to town, and he said he intended to play like one too.

"I've just been calm this week," he said prior to the game. "I feel real calm. When I started relaxing this week, everything came with me, and now I'm just taking what the defense gives me, and eventually it's going to lead to big plays and maybe we can put together some drives and get this thing exciting again."

With 239 yards passing and 104 rushing, Pryor delivered the type of performance college football followers had been awaiting since his game against an over-matched Toledo squad roughly a month earlier, when he led the Buckeyes to a 38-0 win.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Ohio State's lowest rankings of the week came in the most important poll. Despite a No. 11 spot in the coaches poll and No. 13 in the AP poll, the Buckeyes came in at No. 16 in the first-ever College Football Playoff committee rankings.

The rankings, decided by a 12-member selection committee made up mostly of current and former college administrators, were released in a half-hour show on ESPN with Mississippi State claiming the top spot.

It appeared the committee emphasized wins against quality opposition in its initial rankings, and committee chair Jeff Long said the Buckeyes would have a chance to move up as the season progressed.

"I wouldn't call (the Virginia Tech loss) an albatross, but it was not a good loss," said Long, who was Arkansas' director of athletics. "Ohio State has opportunities on its schedule to play up, as many of these teams do. We're still early in this process. While I wouldn't get that excited about Ohio State's placement, we do think based on the other teams they have played to this point, this is where they deserve to be ranked."

One Year Ago – 2018

Ohio State had a perfect record, a No. 2 ranking and a Heisman Trophy candidate at quarterback, but the Buckeyes already knew things weren't perfect. For weeks leading into an Oct. 20 road game at Purdue, Ohio State's rush offense had been floundering, the team had struggled to score in the red zone and the defense seemingly gave up big play after big play while committing costly penalties at inopportune times. Those problems had been identified, and the coaching staff had insisted that they would be emphasized until they were fixed.

As soon as the Ross-Ade Stadium clock struck zero, though, the black-clad fans stormed the field and the visitors were sent packing with a 49-20 loss and more questions than answers. The issues were the same as they had been for weeks – except they might have been even worse.

Ohio State rushed for just 76 yards on 25 carries against the Boilermakers while scoring points just twice in five red-zone tries: two field goals, zero touchdowns.

"The glaring shortcomings we have ... were exposed," head coach Urban Meyer said after the game. "The No. 1 (issue) off the top of my head is our red-zone offense. You go down there three times – two field goals, one missed field goal. You've got to score points. We've never had this issue, so we're going to get a real thorough evaluation of that and the big plays on defense."

games and could go over the four-game redshirt limit.

"Same thing, we'll look at the game plan and see if it makes sense to get them in there to help us win," Day said of Chambers and Stover. "If that's the case, well definitely do that. We don't just want to put guys in there and take a bunch of reps that will be a waste of a season."

Jones saw brief action against Wisconsin on Oct. 26, putting him at four games on the season. If he sees time in one more game, he'll burn his redshirt.

So far, Marcus Crowley, Zach Harrison, Harry Miller, Jameson Williams, Garrett Wilson and Craig Young have already burned their redshirts.

Okudah Named Thorpe Award Semifinalist

Ohio State cornerback Jeff Okudah has been recognized by many draft and TV analysts as one of the nation's top cornerbacks and overall players, but he had yet to find himself garnering the award hype that some of his teammates had accumulated. That changed on Oct. 21, when he was named one of 15 Thorpe Award semifinalists. The Thorpe award honors

Continued On Page 6



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INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

the nation's best defensive back.

Okudah is the lone Big Ten representative on the list. He would be the third Buckeye to win the award, joining Antoine Winfield in 1998 and Malcolm Jenkins in 2008. The junior cornerback leads Ohio State in interceptions through eight games with three, two of which came against Nebraska. He has 21 tackles – one for a loss – and three pass breakups.

The winner will be announced on Dec. 12 at the College Football Awards Show, broadcast on ESPN.

Ohio State Is Fourth On BTN's Most Watched Games

Ohio State draws a significant viewership no matter the day, so it was no surprise that OSU's Oct. 18 win over Northwestern drew significant ratings numbers. What is surprising is just how many views the Buckeyes did manage to bring in on a Friday rather than a Saturday, and on a quick channel change because of a baseball delay.

According to a release from the Big Ten Network, Ohio State's 52-3 win drew a peak of 2.19 million viewers and an average of 1.64 million, making it the fourth most-watched game in the 12-year history of the network. It helps that this is the first time BTN has been rated nationally rather than in just 12 markets, but the figure is still quite impressive for a matchup with a one-win team.

The BTN showing was still the lowest of the season for Ohio State that was rated, trailing 6.68 million against Michigan State, 6.14 million against Nebraska, 3.05 million for Indiana, 2.94 million for Cincinnati and 2.62 for FAU. The other BTN game, against Miami (Ohio), did not chart high enough to report ratings.

Ohio State's 38-7 win over Wisconsin on Oct. 26, meanwhile, was the highest-rated game of the weekend with a 4.6 Nielsen overnight rating.

Ohio State Pushing For Gambling Ban

A report from Randy Ludlow of The

Columbus Dispatch indicates Ohio State is opposed to the legalization of sports gambling and is reaching out to state legislators to prohibit gambling on football and collegiate sports.

"The Ohio State University is opposed to collegiate sports wagering in the state of Ohio," university spokesman Ben Johnson told the Dispatch. "Permitting wagering on collegiate sports poses risks of increased incidents of problem gambling and threats to the mental and financial well-being of our student populations and the integrity of university athletic programs."

While Ohio State and a number of other collegiate representatives – including Bruce E. Johnson, the president of the Inter-University council that represents the public colleges in the state – have come out against gambling in the state, House Bill 194 (a bill that would legalize and standardize sports gambling in Ohio) appears to have bipartisan support. It has drawn praise from House Speaker Larry Householder and acknowledgement from Governor Mike DeWine, who said he is reserving judgment until he speaks to the colleges.

Aaron Craft To Retire From Basketball

After years of saying that he had plans to return to Ohio State to become a doctor, it appears that former Buckeye point guard Aaron Craft is ready to hang up the sneakers and make good on his promise. Craft has spent the past four years bouncing around teams overseas from Szolnoki Olaj in Hungary to Buducnost Voli in Montenegro, AS Monaco in France and now Aquila Basket Trento in Italy. He told his current home newspaper, Corriere Della Sera, that he was planning to retire after this upcoming season.

"The passion for medicine is something that I cultivated as a child because I loved math and science," Craft told the paper on Oct. 21. "Now it fascinates me that it requires combining talent and dedication. At the end of my life I hope I was more than a player who dives to retrieve a ball. My goal is to help others and better serve the society in which I live. There are different ways to do it, of course, but the path of medicine is the one that suits me best and can offer me the opportunity to live an existence that is not only focused on myself."

This decision comes on the heels of the birth of Craft's first child, Owen, back in January, so it makes sense that the Buckeye legend may want to return to his home state and settle down.

Over his five-year professional career, Craft has won a number of accolades, from Pro A Best Defender in 2018 to NABC Best Defender back in 2014. He won an NBA G-League title with the Santa Cruz Warriors in 2015 and a French Leaders Cup with Aquila Basket Trento in 2018.

Conley Traded From Raiders To Texans

A former Buckeye is on the move and will be joining two familiar faces in his new home. 2017

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

"Those who can afford to do so can help those who are less fortunate but share the same passion for Buckeye Sports Bulletin," Moskowitz said.

With the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in the annual Football Preview issue and the Michigan issue as supporters of BSB. Those who add \$100 to their subscription will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB Scarlet patrons. Those who donate \$125 or more will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue.

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first-round draft pick Gareon Conley was traded on Oct. 22 from the Oakland Raiders, who drafted him 24th overall just two years ago, to the Houston Texans. The Texans will pair him with another former Buckeye defensive back in Bradley Roby, who has had a resurgent 2019 campaign. Running back Carlos Hyde will also be part of the Buckeye welcoming committee.

For Conley, the change is a welcome one. He's had a challenging season through six games in 2019, picking up 23 tackles and just one interception. He was beaten badly against the Green Bay Packers in week seven on the way to a 42-24 loss that had Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers toss for 429 yards and five touchdowns. Conley never really fit in new head coach Jon Gruden's zone-heavy defense, and Gruden wasn't around when he was drafted, so Houston's man-coverage looks may suit Conley better.

Miller Added To Panthers' Practice Squad

Another Buckeye in the NFL is on the

move, though in the case of Braxton Miller, the former quarterback turned receiver is looking for a place to catch on rather than a place to start fresh. The four-year NFL vet signed with the Carolina Panthers' practice squad on Oct. 22, his fourth team in as many years.

This comes after an injury to cornerback Natrell Jamerson sent practice-squad wideout DeAndrew White to the main roster, freeing up a spot for Miller. Jamerson was placed on injured reserve, which means that Miller could possibly have a home for at least the rest of the season. The same couldn't be said of Miller's last landing spot, Cleveland, where he lasted for just the preseason before being cut. Miller spent all of 2018 on the Philadelphia practice squad.

His last actual NFL action came back in 2017, when he recorded 19 receptions for 162 yards and a score for the Houston Texans. Miller was waived by the Texans prior to the start of the 2018 season.

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- Oct 26 - Wisconsin Badgers
- Nov 2 - Second Bye Week
- Nov 9 - Maryland Terrapins
- Nov 16 - at Rutgers Scarlet Knights
- Nov 23 - Penn State Nittany Lions
- Nov 30 - at TTUN
- Dec 7 - Big 10 Championship
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Young Ties Multiple School Single-Game Records

Continued From Page 1

game and running game, also. He was a big help in winning this game.”

As Fields pointed out, Dobbins played a key role in the passing game, as well. He converted a pair of third-and-long situations when nobody was open downfield, one of which ultimately allowed Ohio State to march down the field for its first points of the game, and finished the game with a career-high 221 yards from scrimmage, which included 58 yards receiving.

“Coach Day was telling us earlier in the week that big-time players make plays in big-time games,” Fields said. “I think all the big-time players on this team definitely stepped up and played a great game today.”

Record Day

Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young undoubtedly played the best game of his career against Wisconsin, finishing the day with six tackles, five tackles for loss, four sacks and two forced fumbles – both of which were recovered by linebacker Pete Werner.

Young’s five tackles for loss tied the school record set by linebacker Ryan Shazier against Indiana in 2013 while his four sacks put him alongside linebacker Bobby Carpenter (2005 vs Michigan State), Vernon Gholston (2007 vs Wisconsin) and John Simon (2012 at Wisconsin) atop the program record book.

“His impact was felt throughout the

game, and he’s probably the most dominant player in all of college football now,” Day said. “His impact in a game like this goes to show his versatility. This was not just a passing game where you go after the quarterback. You had to play tough and gritty inside.”

Young has recorded 13½ sacks this year, which means he’ll most certainly shatter the school single-season mark of 14 set by Gholston in 2007. And after registering 10½ sacks last fall, he’s now joined defensive end Mike Vrabel as the only Buckeyes to ever record back-to-back seasons with 10 or more sacks.

“In practice, he can get back there pretty much whenever he wants,” Fields said of Young. “Chase is a great player, everybody knows that. He’s probably the best defensive player in the country, so I’m just glad he’s on my team.”

Young is currently averaging 1.69 sacks per game, which puts him on pace to finish the regular season with roughly 20 sacks. The NCAA Division I single-season record is 24, set by Arizona State linebacker Terrell Suggs in 2004.

Tack on a trip to the Big Ten Championship Game and, potentially, the College Football Playoff semifinal and national championship, and another record may soon fall.

“He’s the best I’ve ever been around,” Day said. “I had a chance to see Nick Bosa last year, and I coached in the NFL. I saw some really good players at different times, but he is as good as I’ve been



ANDREW LIND

RECORD CHASER – Defensive end Chase Young recorded four sacks against Wisconsin, bringing his season total to 13½. He needs just one more sack to break the school record.



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around because he's so versatile.

"This was a game that was set up for him to kind of get eaten up with double teams and kind of get lost in the run game, but he dominated. I think it goes to show you how tough he is. His leadership has been off the charts. His energy – he's the one who's driving and pushing those guys up front. I really can't say enough good things about him."

Meyer Back On Sidelines

Former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer – who, in addition to his duties as the school's assistant athletic director of athletics initiatives and relations, is a television analyst for FOX Sports – was back in Ohio Stadium for the game against Wisconsin as part of the network's Big Noon Kickoff.

Meyer, who retired after the 2018 season, appeared emotional as the game drew near, wiping his eyes while grinning from ear to ear as the sound of the campus chimes began to play and the student section directly above swayed back and forth while singing the alma mater, "Carmen Ohio."

Meyer remained mostly out of sight during the game but returned to field level afterward to conduct an interview – and share a quick embrace – with Day.

"That was a really cool moment for me," Day said. "I owe everything to him and Shelley (Meyer's wife) for the opportunity that he gave me and my family to be here. I just wanted to make him proud and go out there and play really, really hard and really, really tough and represent the Buckeyes the way he did when he was here."

So far, Day has done just that.

Including his time as acting head coach in the wake of Meyer's three-game suspension last fall, Day has started his career 11-0. Only Meyer (24 wins from 2012-13) and Carroll Widdoes (12 wins from 1944-45) began their tenures with longer winning streaks.

"Boy, it's hard to follow up a guy who is one of the best college football coaches in the history of the game," Day said. "It just is. But I try not to worry about that and try to just make everybody in Buckeye Nation – and obviously Coach Meyer – proud."



ANDREW LIND

FAMILIAR FACE – Former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer, now an analyst for FOX Sports, returned to Ohio Stadium as part of the network's Big Noon Kickoff.



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Buckeyes Overcome Rainy Weather, Beat Badgers

Steady rain poured down throughout Ohio State's matchup with Wisconsin, affecting both teams but not deterring the Buckeyes from a dominant 38-7 victory at Ohio Stadium.

GAME NOTEBOOK Joe Dempsey

Coming off an upset loss against Illinois, Wisconsin came to Columbus fired up, boasting the No. 1 defense in the country. The stage was set for a back-and-forth battle between stalwarts.

"They were 13th in the country coming in, but we knew they were a very good team and coming off a loss," said Ohio State head

coach Ryan Day. "And it was raining. It was all those things combined.

"And it was one of those games where you felt like it was getting set up where all of a sudden, you're in the fourth quarter it's going to be a hard game. We knew that. We talked to our team about it. We challenged them, and big-time players step up in big-time games. And a lot of big-time players did. You look at our guys, they played really good in this game."

The Buckeyes did not enjoy the start they may have wanted, failing to score through the first 15-minute frame. The rough weather conditions may have played a hand in the slow start.

"The weather affected us more in the first quarter, so we just had to get adjusted to that a little bit," Fields said. "Overall, I think we handled it well toward the second quarter and the rest of the game. That was kind of a big thing Coach wanted to focus on, just playing through it, because they had to play

through it too."

Day and the offensive staff became more conservative with the offensive calls than usual because of the inclement weather. The Buckeyes resorted to safer running plays early in the game – including the first 10 plays, all of which were runs – instead of testing the rainy conditions.

"It was raining sideways," Day said of the difficult conditions. "It was hard early on. It was a mess out there. In a game like this, you can't be foolish and you can't take chances early in the game. The defense is playing well. You can't let your ego get in the way.

"And I tried not to do that. Even that first drive, it's third-and-whatever, we just hand the ball off and punt. Trust me, it's harder for me to do that than anybody in the country. I hate doing that. But I just knew that you can't all of a sudden throw an interception now. You'll put yourself behind the eight ball.

"We hung in there. We knew it was going to be that way. And the rain let up a little bit,

and we were able to get the pass game going and it opened up things for us."

Ohio State outgained Wisconsin 431-191, with 264 yards on the ground and 167 through the air. The Buckeyes also won the turnover battle by recovering two fumbles and holding onto the football themselves. Maintaining possession, particularly in the pouring rain, is a critical element of the Scarlet and Gray's success.

"Our motto as an offense is nobody can stop us except us," Fields said. "We knew what we had to do out there. We just had to go out there and actually execute it, so we weren't worried at all. We just had to go out and execute the play and just everybody do their job."

While 431 yards and 38 points both signal solid offensive production, Fields and Co. felt the shoddy weather held them back from unleashing their full arsenal on the Badgers.

"In all honesty, we could have put up 50," Fields said. "I think if the weather was differ-

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Game Analysis

ent, we could have thrown the ball more and put up way more points than we did. Overall, I'm just glad we got the win and we're 8-0."

Fields Shows Fortitude

Through seven games, Fields made highlight-reel plays and padded the stat book at a record pace, but with the Buckeyes blowing out their opponents, the quarterback's toughness had not been tested much. That changed against the Badgers and their No. 1 defense.

"I thought that it was going to be a tough game," Day said. "I thought that noon kick and a little cooler out, the rain, the whole thing, I thought it played to Wisconsin a little bit more. And under center, they're a ball-control team. So we had to be tough. We had to come out and play gritty."

"We knew it was going to be like this. I thought the kids answered it. I thought the defense played really well in the first half. They kept giving us at bats. And I thought Justin Fields was really gritty early on, had to run the ball, make big plays, got the big throw at the end of the half. He played gritty, got knocked around in there. He played really well."

Despite the rainy weather making it difficult in the passing game, Fields completed 12 of 22 passes for 167 yards and two touchdowns against Wisconsin. In addition to his passing, Fields gained 28 yards on 13 attempts and one touchdown on the ground.

"I tell you what, I thought he played a tough game," Day said of Fields. "It may not show statistically that he had as gritty a game as anybody on our team. He got banged out there. He had to make tough runs against one of the best rushing defenses in America. He did early on. And then he cracked and got that two-minute drive going and threw the ball to (Chris) Olave. In the second half, he kept doing the same thing."

"When we couldn't get things going, we had to run him a little bit. And he did it. And he was physical. He was powerful. He kept third downs alive. I thought he played really well in this game and he played tough, and I'm proud of the way he performed."

Olave Shines In Rain

The Ohio State wide receivers struggled early in the game with the rainy conditions, uncharacteristically dropping passes. Overall, only four different Buckeyes caught passes, and just two caught more than one pass: junior running back J.K. Dobbins and sophomore wideout Chris Olave.

While Dobbins snagged three receptions for 58 yards, the star of the receiving game was Olave, who set career highs with seven receptions and 93 yards and tied his high with two touchdowns.

Olave posted his fourth two-touchdown game in scarlet and gray and the second in as many weeks, but he deflected the praise by indicating he just got lucky Fields targeted him.

"We've got so many weapons on this team," Olave said. "It could have been my game today, but in two weeks, it could be Austin Mack's or Ben Victor's or anybody else's game. I try to just do my best, run my routes and try to get open for him."

Through eight games, Olave has eight receiving touchdowns. The San Marcos, Calif., native has tallied 11 touchdowns in his past 10 games, dating back to last year. He has not only become the go-to guy in the Buckeye offense, but one of the best pass catchers in the country.

Despite the standout stats, Olave, who also plays on special teams, keeps his focus on the success of the team.

"I didn't really have self-goals," Olave said. "I just wanted to help my team. I just wanted

What Worked Well

The Ohio State rushing attack stood out against the stout Wisconsin defensive front. The Badgers entered the game ranked No. 1 in the nation in run defense, allowing only 58.4 yards per game, but that did not deter J.K. Dobbins and the Ohio State offense. The Buckeyes gained 264 yards on 50 carries against Wisconsin, which was better than four times more than the season average against the Badgers.

The Scarlet and Gray averaged 5.3 yards per carry against Wisconsin, which was significantly more than the 2.2 yards-per-carry average that the Badgers had allowed entering the contest. Wisconsin also had allowed only two rushing touchdowns through seven games, and Ohio State scored three times via the ground game.

Dobbins amassed 163 yards and two scores on 20 carries (8.2 avg.), etching his name in Ohio State history with his third straight 1,000-yard rushing season. Master Teague complemented Dobbins with 76 yards on 13 tries, while Justin Fields added 28 yards and a score on 13 attempts of his own. Overall, the Ohio State run offense faced its biggest test of the season and performed best when it mattered most.

What Didn't Work

It is difficult to nitpick a 38-7 victory against a top-tier opponent for what went wrong, but the Buckeyes certainly could have started the game better against the Badgers. After losing 8 yards during a three-and-out series, Ohio State punted on its first possession. Then, the Buckeyes moved the ball 39 yards on their second drive but punted again after stalling out near midfield. After gaining just 13 yards on their third drive, the Scarlet and Gray punted once again early in the second frame after a scoreless first quarter.

On its fourth drive, Ohio State appeared to be driving toward the end zone, but the Wisconsin defense dug in and did not fold. Fields

and Co. lined up at the Wisconsin 27 for a first-and-10 snap, where Fields took a 5-yard sack and lost his helmet, forcing him to come out for a play. Then a holding penalty moved the Buckeyes back to the Wisconsin 42, before Fields gained nine on a rush to set up third-and-16. Dobbins rushed for 1 yard, setting up a long field-goal attempt. Ohio State was able to get on the scoreboard with a 49-yard field goal from Blake Haubeil, ending the scoreless affair.

Play Of The Game

With Ohio State holding a narrow 10-7 lead, it regained possession at its own 25-yard line with 12:08 left in the third quarter after a Wisconsin touchdown. A punt or turnover would give the Badgers the ball back with an opportunity to tie the game or take the lead. Instead, the Buckeyes drove down the length of the field and asserted their dominance.

After working their way to the Wisconsin 38-yard line, the Buckeyes came through with the play of the game. Facing second-and-10 following an incompleteness to K.J. Hill, Ohio State turned to Dobbins for the spark it needed.

Dobbins took a shotgun handoff to his left and received an excellent block on the back side by a diving Jeremy Ruckert. The tailback worked his way off tackle, where Thayer Munford and Jonah Jackson opened a crease with kick-out blocks on the edge. The trio of Josh Myers, Wyatt Davis and Branden Bowen worked their way to the left, sealing off the hole for Dobbins.

Dobbins burst into the second level of the defense, where he shook Badger safety Eric Burrell out of his shoes. Then, he made contact with linebacker Leo Chenal, whom he dragged 5 yards to the Wisconsin 10 for a 28-yard gain, setting up a Justin Fields touchdown run to increase Ohio State's lead to 17-7.

— Joe Dempsey

to do what's best for the team to help us win. I believe that's what I'm doing."

Fields, who has found Olave for each of his eight touchdowns this season, had nothing but praise for the sophomore wide receiver.

"Chris is a hard worker," Fields said. "He does everything right on and off the field. He's one of the hardest workers I've seen. He's always doing the right thing, never doing anything wrong. He's a great leader, and he just puts his head down and works."

Hilliard Steps Up

Ohio State fifth-year senior linebacker Justin Hilliard tore his Achilles tendon in late March, and it looked like he might never play football again.

"The day I tore it was probably one of the toughest days of my life," Hilliard said. "I didn't know if I was going to come back for my fifth year, or even if it was possible to come back for the season. Me and (physical therapist Adam Stewart), we sat down and orchestrated a plan so I could come back in 6½ months."

Hilliard returned from the injury and regained his role as one of the Buckeyes' primary special teams players, without much sign of him earning snaps on defense.

Then, surprisingly, Hilliard took the field with the Ohio State starting defense, which aligned in a 4-4 front to stop the powerful Wisconsin rushing attack led by Heisman hopeful Jonathan Taylor.

Hilliard said he found out he was starting about five days before the game but didn't tell a soul. He was proud of how he worked his way back from injury, but the Cincinnati native didn't want to reveal the Buckeyes' game plan.

"It meant so much," Hilliard said. "We were just going over some of the times I've had when I didn't know I was coming back for the fifth year. Just being out there with the guys, being able to make some plays, it means so much."

Hilliard made only one tackle in the game, but it was a big-time play. With the game still at 0-0, the Badgers faced second-and-10 from

their 45-yard line. Wisconsin went to Taylor on an outside run, hoping he'd get outside the Ohio State defense and make a big play.

Instead, Hilliard shot into the backfield and brought down the highly touted back for a 6-yard loss, setting up third-and-16. The next play, Chase Young recorded a sack 8 yards in the backfield, forcing the Badgers to punt and leading to the Buckeyes' first points.

Staying attentive to details in defensive meetings and film study helped Hilliard be ready for the moment.

"Our coaches do such a good job preparing us, and we knew some of the tendencies with the formations that they were in," Hilliard said. "I knew my job on that play, and then I had a chance, so I shot it."

Ohio State co-defensive coordinator Jeff

Hafley raved about Hilliard's diligence in his return from a serious injury.

"Incredible," Hafley said of Hilliard. "You look at a guy who came back from an Achilles injury as fast as he did. He waited his time because we haven't had to use this package yet. He waited his time and was able to get in the game and play as well as he did with this many snaps, it's a credit to him. I'm so proud and happy for him, because he really deserves that."

Hilliard shared some insight into just how great it felt for him to make a critical play in Ohio Stadium, inciting a roar from the Buckeye faithful.

"It's the best feeling ever," Hilliard said. "The whole process of me coming back from injuries, it meant so much."

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Buckeyes Better Badgers In 38-7 Beatdown

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Wisconsin presented a stout challenge with its daunting defense and running back/Heisman Trophy candidate Jonathan Taylor.

Add persistent, sometimes driving, rain and the odds seemed to get better for the No. 13 Badgers and their ball-control offense that wanted to keep Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields and his 22 touchdown passes off the field as much as possible.

For one quarter the strategy and elements worked for the Badgers before a drenched announced crowd of 102,998 in Ohio Stadium on Oct. 26. Then the No. 3 Buckeyes got rolling.

Junior J.K. Dobbins ripped through the nation's best rushing defense for 163 yards and two touchdowns, and junior defensive end Chase Young tied a school record with four sacks and had two forced fumbles in the 38-7 win.

The Buckeyes (8-0, 5-0 Big Ten) led 10-0 at the half before taking a 24-7 lead into the fourth quarter.

Dobbins had 221 total yards from the line of scrimmage, including three catches for 58 yards.

Sophomore quarterback Justin Fields was 12 of 22 for 167 yards and two TDs to sophomore Chris Olave, who set career bests with seven catches for 93 yards.

Jonathan Taylor of Wisconsin (6-2, 3-2) had 52 yards on 20 rushes. He had been averaging 136.7 rushing yards per game.

No Ground Given

Both teams failed to move the chains on their first possession. The Badgers came up a yard short at their 34 while the Buckeyes lost a total of 8 yards after a 7-yard sack of Fields and Dobbins being stuffed for minus-2 on second and third downs, respectively, to force a fourth-and-18.

OSU's second drive went from its 13 to the Wisconsin 48 – Dobbins had the big play with a 12-yard rush – but on third-and-5 Fields was in the shotgun, bobbled the snap and ran for no yards.

Ohio State was shut out at home in the first quarter for the first time since the Sept. 9, 2017, loss to Oklahoma.

On Wisconsin's fourth series, a third-down completion of 13 yards to Quintez Cephus to its 45 looked to put the Badgers in position to score, but senior linebacker Justin Hilliard tackled Taylor for a 6-yard loss and Young followed with his second sack for 8 yards back to the 31.

The Buckeyes got the ball from the punt and marched from their 27 to the UW 27 with the help of a third-down Fields scramble and pass of 20 yards to Dobbins to the OSU 47. Olave later had a catch for 9 yards to the 27, but Fields lost 5 yards on a sack during which his helmet came off and he had to leave for one play.

Chris Chugunov came in, and junior left tackle Thayer Munford was called for holding, putting the ball on the 42. That led to a 49-yard field goal by junior Blake Haubeil at 6:52 of the second quarter. Ohio State had the ball for 12 plays, 4:35 and totaled 41 yards.



JOSH WINSLOW

CAREER GAME – Running back J.K. Dobbins' 221 yards from scrimmage (163 rushing and 58 receiving) against Wisconsin were a career high.

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OHIO STATE VS. WISCONSIN

Ohio State finally got the breakthrough it had been looking for on its last drive of the first half beginning with 2:37 remaining, going 85 yards in eight plays and 1:54 for the 10-0 lead on a 27-yard, third-down touchdown pass to Olave with 43 seconds left.

The Buckeyes chunked their way down the field. Dobbins had a 17-yard run to the 32. Olave had a catch for 12, and fifth-year senior K.J. Hill made an 11-yard reception.

Fields then ran left for 21 to the UW 24. Olave gained a yard on a reverse, but a QB sack pushed OSU back to the 27 on third-and-13 before Fields spotted Olave down the middle.

Ohio State has outscored the opposition 168-20 in the second quarter.

It was no surprise that points were hard to come by in the first half. The Badgers entered the game first in the nation in scoring defense (7.6 points) and total defense (193.9 yards) while the Buckeyes were second in each category (8.0, 229.0) while offensively being No. 3 in scoring (49.7).

Dobbins Leads Surge

On OSU's first series of the second half, Dobbins rushed for 4 yards to become the first Buckeye to rush for 1,000 yards as a freshman, sophomore and junior.

There was no time to celebrate because junior Drue Chrisman's punt from the 17, after a fifth sack for 12 yards, was partially blocked by Alexander Smith and traveled 13 yards to the 30.

Facing third-and-6, Badger quarterback Jack Coan found A.J. Taylor for the 26-yard TD to make it 10-7 at 12:08. Wisconsin used 1:28 and three plays.

Fields immediately engineered a 75-yard, eight-play, 2:34 response, rushing for a 10-yard score for a 17-7 lead at 9:34 of the third. His run came one play after Dobbins raced through the left side of the line for 28 yards. Olave had two grabs for 33 yards in the drive.

The Buckeyes juiced and battered their way to a 24-7 lead with 6:28 remaining in the third quarter.

Starting at the OSU 47, Dobbins ran for 3, Fields made a spin move for a 7-yarder, and Dobbins came back with a bull rush of 34 to the 9 then ran up the gut for a 9-yard score to finish the four-play, 53-yard, 1:47 drive.

The field position had been set up by a 23-yard punt return by freshman Garrett Wilson of a 46-yard punt.

Dobbins had 92 yards rushing in the third quarter against a defense that was giving up 58.4 yards on the ground per game.

He said he wasn't motivated to better Taylor, whom some considered the best back not only in the Big Ten but in the country.

"I just wanted to get the win," Dobbins said. "I wasn't worried about any of that side distractions or any of that."

Wisconsin's next series moved to a third-and-3 at the OSU 32, but after a Buckeye timeout, the ball slipped out of the center's hand for a 5-yard false start penalty. Young followed with a strip sack of Coan, and it was recovered by junior linebacker Pete Werner at the Ohio State 45.

The punishment to the Badgers continued into the fourth quarter. Dobbins took a pass in the flat and gained 21 yards to the UW 20. He chewed up 6 more then rushed for a 14-yard TD and a 31-7 advantage at 13:40 in a tidy 55 yards in five plays and 2:20.

Young and Werner combined again at the 11:50 mark after UW reached the OSU 21 on a Coan-to-Cephus 35-yard pass. Young had the strip sack, and Werner returned the fumble 31 yards to the Badger 45.

Master Teague had five carries for 21 yards, and pass interference placed the ball on the 9. Teague gained five more, and Fields tossed 4 yards to Olave to make it 38-7 with 7:29 left. The drive was eight plays, 45 yards in 4:10.

OSU last got the ball with 5:34 left at its 20 and ran out the clock, finishing at the UW 34 with two victory knees. Teague had 50 yards on six carries to help eat up the remaining time.

Numbers

The game was played in a swift, by today's standards, 2:56, and the temperature at kickoff was 52 degrees. ... The Buckeyes had 431 total yards (264 rushing, 167 passing); the Badgers had 191 (108 passing, 83 rushing). ... Teague had 76 yards on 13 carries. ... UW QB Jack Coan was 10 for 17 for 108 yards. ... Ohio State had five sacks for 30 yards; UW five for 36. ... Junior cornerback Damon Arnette led the Buckeyes with seven tackles (five solo). Five of Young's six tackles (all solos) were for losses. ... He has 13½ sacks for the season. He's tied with Joey Bosa (2014) for second on the OSU season list to Vernon Gholston's 14 in 2007. ... Young's five tackles for loss tied the school record.

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October 26, 2019 (7:06 pm) In Football, Patrick Mayhorn

Highlights: Ohio State Makes A Statement Against Wisconsin

It's hard to believe that Ohio State was able to generate yet another blowout against Wisconsin given the quality of the Badgers, but that's exactly what happened on Saturday afternoon... [READ MORE →](#)

October 26, 2019 (5:22 pm) In Football, Wyatt Crosher

Buckeye Leaves For Ohio State's 38-7 Statement Win Against Wisconsin

Ohio State started slow, but came out and earned a resounding 31-point win against No. 13 Wisconsin. Here are the four players that stood

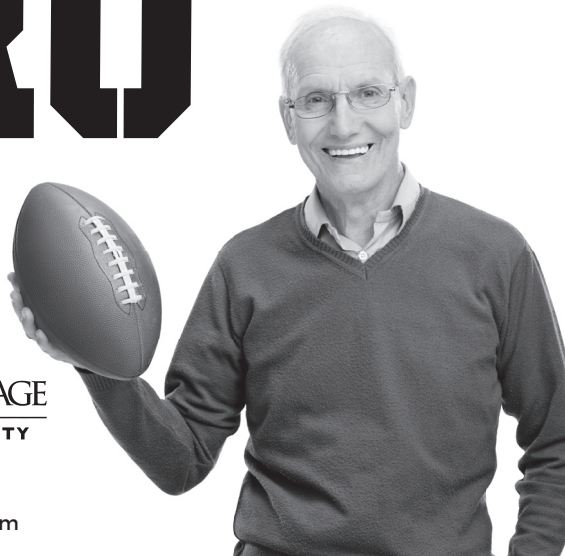
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Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on how he will keep his team focused following such a dominant win: "I think you challenge them by saying how tough are you, because I think these guys are competitive and they like challenges. And if you are as tough as you think you are, you say you are, or we're as good as we think we are, then we don't get distracted by anybody and we just get locked in one game at a time, one week at a time. And if we let all the noise get in our head, we can't do that."

Day on if he likes the position of Ohio State's second off week in four weeks: "I don't know. The schedule is the way it is. And from the beginning we talked to our team about the way the schedule played out. So they've expected this. We knew where we wanted to be at this point. And we know we come up for air and talk about that final stretch of four games there. And hopefully we'll go from there. But again, staying locked in on that and November is the final run. This is where all the memories are made. This is what it all comes down to. But, again, not trying to look too far ahead, just trying to do a great job getting healthy in a bye week and talk about the plan and what we want to do in terms of expectations for next week, and be ready to make the last run."

Ohio State sophomore quarterback Justin Fields on what made the difference in gaining momentum during the game: "Just kind of getting in the rhythm. I think we were doing pretty good at the beginning, but it would be like one play, it would be a big loss. So, I think that kind of affected the overall drive. But I think in the second quarter we kind of got it together and we played well."

Fields on what a win like this will do for Ohio State moving forward: "I think the team definitely has more confidence now, but we can't get complacent at all. We have to keep working because we know there can be one week where we can slip up. And of course nobody wants that to happen so we just keep on rolling and just keep on practicing."

Fields on what statement the Buckeyes made with this win: "Of course, every time we play we want to make a statement. Of course, the teams hear that we're tough, they hear that we're good, but we want to prove it and go out on the field and prove it to them."

Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young on what breaking the Ohio State single-season sack record of 14 would mean to him: "Going into the season you want to play the best, you want to break every record, but right now, I can't really be worried about a sack record. I just have to keep on trying to perfect my craft and do what I do, and those other things will come."

Ohio State junior running back J.K. Dobbins on if he wanted to prove himself as the better running back against Wisconsin junior running back Jonathan Taylor: "All the Jonathan Taylor stuff, he's a great player, but I'm here to win games."

Ohio State fifth-year senior cornerback Damon Arnette on what people should think of Dobbins following his performance against Wisconsin: "That he's the best back in college football. Easy."

Arnette on how the team feels after beating a high-level team such as Wisconsin: "They were just hyping the game up. If they were to ask me before the game what I thought was going to happen, I would have said exactly what happened."

Arnette on how the team feels after playing its last game before the first College Football Playoff rankings: "I feel like until we have three rings on our fingers, nobody's going to be satisfied. They could have us at four, three, two or one, we're going to keep attacking until this thing is over. So all of the accolades and everything is good, but we're not asking for that. We want the championship."

Wisconsin head coach Paul Chryst on attempting to stop Young's historic performance: "Well he's obviously a really, really good player, and what makes it tough is that they've got other players around him. So you can't put all the attention on him, but you're trying to have protections that give whoever's with him or on him, responsible for him, some form of help, and a couple times we had it we weren't successful in taking care of that. And then there's sometimes they can force it to where he still ends up being in a one on one. He's a heck of a football player."

Chryst on if the defensive schemes Ohio State implemented allowed Young to perform the way he did: "Yeah, early in the game they had him going (at linebacker), but I think if we look back at it, he was probably most effective when he was on that edge."

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Hill Strives To Leave Lasting Legacy At OSU

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

K.J. Hill could have left Ohio State for the NFL following his junior season, when he posted 70 receptions for 885 yards and six touchdowns for the 13-1 Rose Bowl champion Buckeyes. Instead, he returned for his fifth-year senior season after receiving advice from Ohio State and NFL Hall of Famer Cris Carter.

Hill was asked what Carter told him to help convince him to stay in Columbus for one more season.

"Leave a legacy," Hill said. "I've got a chance to leave my legacy, being a veteran guy, the oldest guy in the room, being a leader and a captain. He was saying, leaving a legacy at Ohio State is a big thing, and I feel like I'm trying to do that."

Becoming a captain of the Buckeyes represented one of Hill's primary goals when he returned to school, as well as graduating. In addition to earning the honor of captain by the voting of his teammates, the Little Rock, Ark., native received a degree in communications.

He continued the recent trend of Ohio State receivers serving as captains along with fellow fifth-year H-back C.J. Saunders. Before taking the torch from last year's trio of receiver captains – Parris Campbell, Terry McLaurin and Johnnie Dixon – Hill took to their leadership.

"I learned from them being vocal at the right times," Hill said of the trio, "(not just) when we're winning and everything is going well, but when it's bad or something is not going right. You've still got to be the same person, leading the team through the rough patches during the season."

In addition to wanting to become a captain, Hill also had a highlight-filled senior campaign in his mind when contemplating a return vs. a departure for the NFL. Following a Buckeye victory in the Big Ten Championship Game last season, Hill was asked about his future beyond the upcoming Rose Bowl.

"I feel I had a great season this season. If I was to leave, I would be leaving on a good note," Hill said. "Then again, if I did come back next year, a lot can happen with more touches on the ball, being in the offense as a leader, potential captain. There's a lot that comes with it. There's

a lot of potential."

Through the first eight games of his final season in scarlet and gray, Hill has not enjoyed a ton of targets and his stats have not lived up to the high expectations for a receiver who nearly reached 1,000 yards as a junior. Part of the reason for a downtick in production for Hill, who caught 30 passes for 305 yards and four touchdowns through eight games, stems from defenses scheming against him better.

Hill and Campbell, who snagged a program-record 90 receptions for 1,063 yards and nine touchdowns in 2018, routinely tormented defenses on crossing patterns underneath the defense for the past two seasons, so the opposing teams finally began to catch on.

"They weren't letting us run those shallow crosses," Hill said Sept. 10, following a 42-0 win against Cincinnati. "They knew what would have happened to them. It's a lot of zoning off. When we get in those formations, you can see that if they see me coming across the middle, they're going to zone it off or try to get their hands on me, because they know we did damage over the two years with the shallow crosses. We still have the same offense, it's just that people are prepared for those things, so we're just adjusting to it."

Hill, who had a season-high eight receptions for 57 yards and a score against the Bearcats, was asked if it was frustrating for him as a slot receiver that opposing defenses were taking away underneath routes that had been "easy money" in the past.

"It definitely is," Hill responded, "but I've just got to find more money other ways."

The former four-star recruit, who was the No. 1 prospect in Arkansas for 2015, found money in the end zone in four straight games against Cincy, Indiana, Miami (Ohio) and Nebraska.

While Hill continues to etch his name in the Ohio State history book — passing Michael Jenkins and Cris Carter for second on the all-time receptions list — his individual output still hasn't been up to par with his dynamic junior campaign.

Another reason for a slip in Hill's stats is the Buckeyes' reliance on formations with multiple tight ends, often in place of the H-back, where Hill lines up. Ohio State boasts its deepest and most talented tight end group in a long time, and the abilities of the tight ends as blockers have led to more 12 personnel, which consists

of one running back, two tight ends and two wide receivers.

Fewer snaps might frustrate a senior receiver, but Hill is actually glad to be spelled by his bigger and more physical teammates.

"With the 12 personnel, it really kind of helped me because I didn't have to block big linebackers, 250-pound guys like that," Hill told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "You just add another tight end because we've got depth at tight end. All of them are veteran guys, so it helped the run game when we run a lot of 12 personnel."

When asked directly if fewer snaps led to frustration for the talented wideout, his answer was short and sincere.

"No, it was really a break for me," Hill said with a smile.

Even with a selfless approach, the humblest of athletes can grow frustrated when their production doesn't meet their expectations, especially if they're chasing records. After adding two receptions against Northwestern and one against Wisconsin, Hill's 174 catches trailed David Boston's school record by 17 receptions, while his 3.7 catches per game ranked fifth and his 2,001 yards were ninth among all-time Buckeyes. He also has hauled in a catch in 42 straight games, six shy of Gary Williams' program record, which Hill could surpass with a reception in every game of an Ohio State national title run.

Hill has stayed levelheaded through the ups and downs, crediting wide receivers coach Brian Hartline, who was a former Buckeye standout, for helping maintain focus.

"I feel like what makes him good is he did it before," Hill said of Hartline. "He wouldn't put us in a position that he knew when he was player that he didn't want to be in. I feel like we all follow him, and he helps us prepare the right way, as a pro. He takes a pro approach to everything."

"Me being a leader in the room with Austin (Mack) and Ben (Victor) and C.J. (Saunders), he puts that on us and then we bring the young guys with us. It's just a stage of preparation, game planning, on the field during the games on how to approach a game. When you're going through a phase when you haven't touched the ball, knowing mentally you've got to stay positive all the time. He taught us that because he had been through it before."

Hartline can relate to Hill because he played alongside talented wideouts such as Ted Ginn Jr. and Anthony Gonzalez while he was a player for Ohio State. Speaking of tremendous receivers, Hartline raved about Hill when asked about him.

"He's just a stud," Hartline said. "He just does a phenomenal job playing football. He understands zones. He has some of the surest hands on the team, and we really lean on him. Him being a captain, you can see that guys have similar respect for him. He's a mainstay in our room, and I can't say enough about him."

"He's a really good football player. He's always in the right space, he attacks the football, he catches with his hands. He does a lot of really good things."

Naturally, Ohio State players and coaches will rave about one of their senior captains. Don't just take it from them. At Big Ten media days in July, Maryland senior safety Antoine Brooks was asked an innocuous question about a rematch with Ohio State. Unprompted, Brooks brought up Hill.

"They got that good receiver, No. 14, I like him as a receiver," Brooks said of Hill. "I just like him as a receiver. He's a real good receiver, and he can make a lot of plays happen."

Making plays happen has been the signature of Hill's career. Often when it seems like the quarterback cannot find anywhere to throw the ball, Hill will emerge with a catch, frequently resulting in an Ohio State first down.

Ohio State sophomore signal caller Justin Fields has found a solid safety valve in the H-back from Little Rock.

"K.J., he's definitely easy to read, his body language," Fields said. "I worked with him a lot in the summer and in the offseason, so I definitely know where he's going to be at all times."

"He's very smart. I think he's one of the smarter receivers we have. And when it comes to finding those zones or finding those places where the defenders aren't – he's really good at doing that and he's really good at route running, so he's just a really good all-around receiver."

Despite the praise from teammates, coaches and opponents alike, the targets have not been abundant for Hill in what is his final audition for the NFL.

Hill was asked point blank if the lack of targets was frustrating, to which he answered genuinely.

"It's kind of frustrating, just being the competitor that I am," Hill said. "But I can't let that get to me, because when that play comes, I've got to be mentally ready for it. It can be in the fourth quarter or in the first. You've just got to be ready for it at all times mentally."

Fortunately for the Buckeyes, Hill does more than just talk about staying ready. He puts his words into action.

Ohio State found itself facing third-and-15, backed up to its own 30-yard line for what would be the final play of the first quarter of a then 7-3 game at Northwestern.

Fields dropped back to pass but couldn't locate an open target with the Wildcat rush forcing him out of the pocket. After avoiding multiple Northwestern sack attempts, Fields fired a bullet down the field to none other than Hill, who was just staying ready.

Hill gained 20 yards for the Buckeyes, moving the chains and keeping the drive alive. The Buckeyes would score six plays later and never look back, winning 52-3 in Evanston, Ill.

Hill does not just see a pass from Fields as an opportunity to make a play, but as a responsibility to leave his legacy.

"I just feel like I have to make that play," Hill said. "If I don't make that play, we don't score on that drive. I feel like I have to do those things to put the team in that position."

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Teague Masters Role Of Backup Running Back

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Heading into this season, there was no true answer to who would be the backup running back behind the clear starter in junior J.K. Dobbins for Ohio State.

Many of the signs pointed to another junior in Demario McCall winning out the position after redshirt freshman Master Teague battled injuries in the offseason and Marcus Crowley and Steele Chambers, both true freshmen, continued to learn the offense.

But by the end of the opener against Florida Atlantic, it appeared that it was actually Teague who had begun to solidify himself as the No. 2 back. Against the Owls, Teague rushed eight times for 49 yards while McCall found the ball on the ground only twice for 11 yards.

Since the first game of the season, Teague has done more than solidify his position. The redshirt freshman running back has not finished a game with less than 50 total yards since week one and still managed to rank fifth in the Big Ten in rushing yards through eight games despite not starting.

Head coach Ryan Day said that Teague has more than filled the role that has been asked of him in giving the run game another consistent, unique look to complement Dobbins.

"We didn't have a lot of expectations other than getting him healthy and seeing what he could do," Day said. "He is a good change of pace. He's done a good job of when he goes in there running with his pads down. When he gets in the open field, he's done a good job of pulling away."

While Dobbins clearly leads the way with 154 carries for 1,110 yards, Teague has carved out his own role in the backfield, putting up 588 yards on 86 carries, many of which have come with the game still in balance for the Buckeyes.

What makes that more impressive, though, is that the majority of Teague's runs, including his touchdown runs of 40 and 73 yards against Indiana and Northwestern, respectively, came during a time when the defense was consistently expecting runs while the Buckeyes chewed up the clock.

That didn't matter, as Teague has managed

to still rush for 6.8 yards per carry through eight games.

Back in September, before Teague had a real breakout game for Ohio State, running backs coach Tony Alford knew what the former four-star running back was able to bring to Ohio State's offense once he got his opportunity.

"He runs really hard," Alford said. "He does a great job. The kid is a powerful kid. He can run. He's big and strong. He attacks defenders when he makes a decision. I think we're becoming more and more comfortable every single day with him."

Teague said he hasn't always been the power back that he has become for the Buckeyes this season, but he said that the tenacity and the physicality came from practicing and achieving a new mind-set while at Ohio State.

Though Dobbins will continue to get the primary carries for as long as he is here, Teague knows his role as the secondary back is important for more than just racking up numbers with the game already in the balance.

"I know J.K. is an able guy, but I feel like sometimes guys need breaks, so they need somebody to step in," Teague said. "Here, we have competitive excellence, so if your number is called, you want to be just as good as the guy that just got out. So whatever the way they want me to contribute, I'll do that to help the team."

Day had the same thoughts as his running back about how Teague fits into Ohio State's game. The head coach said that with the increased practicing following his hamstring injury and the improved focus on holding on to the ball, Teague has become a key part of a dominant one-two combo in Ohio State's backfield.

"I think he's running hard, and I think he's downhill," Day said the week following Ohio State's win against Nebraska. "When he sees it, he's rolling, and so the different schemes that we're doing I think fit his style really well. And he may not be pretty, but he's pouring them in there."

"He's a great change-up to J.K.," Day added. "He's different. I think that matters in a game."

Also involved in the run game is sophomore quarterback Justin Fields, who through eight games has rushed for 319 yards on 76

carries.

The Georgia transfer said the success from both Teague and Dobbins is not a surprise at all and that the team sees it often from the duo in practices.

All of this supposedly unsurprising success has led Ohio State to the No. 4 ranking in the country in rushing yards per game, and Fields has had nothing but compliments to say about Teague thus far in the season.

"He's a downhill runner. He runs hard, he's big, he's physical," Fields said. "He definitely creates. He's a big, powerful running back. J.K. is a big powerful running back too, but we need another guy as well."

"I think Master opens up the running game. He's fast, he's elusive, he can really run through guys, so I think he definitely opens up the offense."

The primary back whom Teague is splitting carries with, Dobbins, also has high praise for what the second-year player has been able to do in his first year as a major contributor.

"I'm very proud of him," Dobbins said. "He's been working hard. He's going to keep getting better and better, so he's going to be a guy to look out for."

This isn't the first time Teague has put in any contributions, however. Teague took a redshirt last season after playing in four games last season, which is the maximum amount of games the NCAA allows before a redshirt is no long possible.

In those games, Teague rushed 17 times for 106 yards and a touchdown. But with both Dobbins and Mike Weber in the backfield, there was no need for Teague to blow a year of

eligibility in the eyes of the Ohio State coaches.

Teague said he looks back at last season as both a tough time, but one that he now appreciates for where it brought him this year.

"I'm glad that all took place," Teague said. "It made me stronger as far as a player and mentally, just handling every day being an Ohio State Buckeye."

Dobbins likely has only one season left with Ohio State as the junior back is putting up impressive numbers, already surpassing 1,000 rushing yards just eight games into the season.

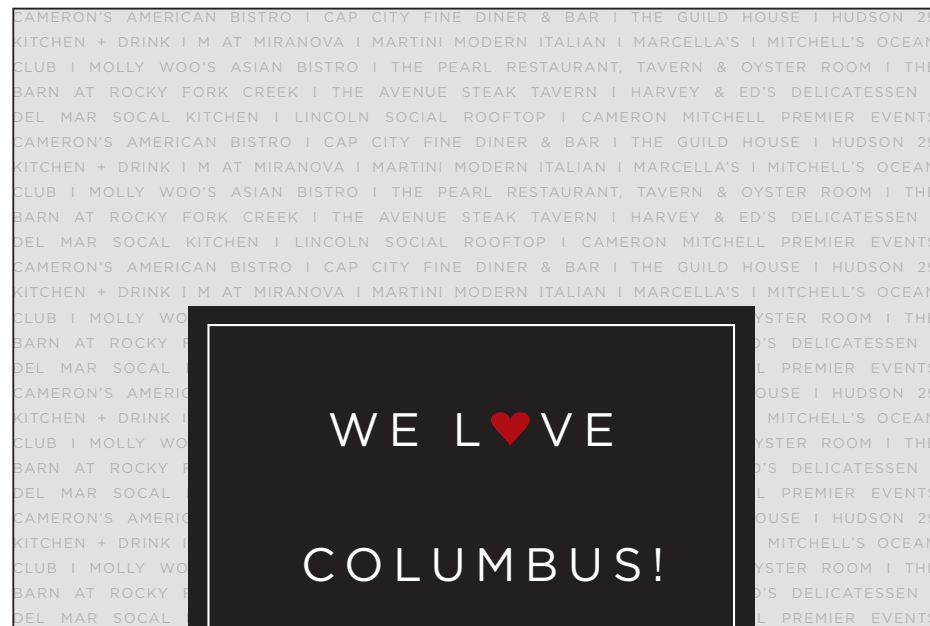
Teague admits that he has thought about the potential of becoming Ohio State's No. 1 running back in 2020, but he also knows that the priority must be on continuing to play his role this season.

Regardless of what Teague is able to do next season – Dobbins here or not – the redshirt freshman has proved himself as the No. 2 back in a big way and can be expected to continue to impress in flashes as the season continues on.

Teague said he still has places where his game can improve and that he is centered on helping the team this year in any way he can.

By becoming the key second running back for the Buckeyes, he has done more than help the team figure out the run game beyond Dobbins.

"I know that I can improve in a lot of things, so I'm not there yet either," he said. "I'm not surprised, but I'm grateful for the opportunities that I've gotten. But I know I've got a long way to go. I've just been praying I continue to have the fire to be the best and help the team whatever way I can."



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Ohio State's Stout Run Defense Sets The Tone

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State is ninth in the nation, allowing only 91.5 yards per game on the ground. Perhaps more importantly, the Buckeyes surrender only 2.54 yards per rush, which is third in the country.

The stout Scarlet and Gray run defense represents a drastic turnaround from a year ago, when the Buckeyes were No. 56 against the run, allowing 158.2 yards per game.

Opposing teams gashed Ohio State for 4.5 yards per carry and 26 touchdowns during the 2018 campaign, so when Ryan Day became head coach, he knew that was a major area of concern.

Day hired Greg Mattison and Jeff Hafley as co-defensive coordinators following his promotion in January, and through eight games, the duo has worked wonders with the Ohio State defense.

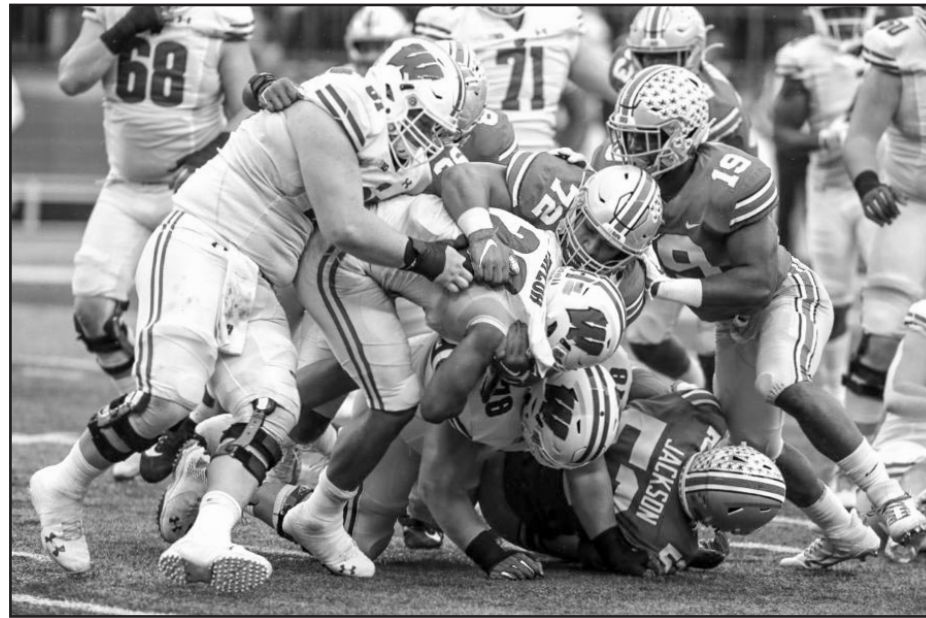
The Buckeyes have been strong against the pass, but what has been even more paramount to their success has been one of the stingiest rush defenses in the country.

Through seven games, Ohio State dominated its opposition on both sides of the ball in essentially every aspect of the game but had not been tested by a top-tier team. Then Wisconsin came to Columbus with its potent rushing attack led by Heisman Trophy candidate Jonathan Taylor at tailback.

The Badgers had scored 24 touchdowns on the ground, while the Buckeyes had allowed only two rushing touchdowns, which was tied for second fewest in the country. Day knew the heavyweight matchup with Wisconsin would show what the Silver Bullets were made of and how they would respond to tough competition.

"I know this is going to be the biggest challenge of the year," Day said prior to the Wisconsin matchup. "It's a major challenge for the guys up front, the front seven, and the secondary. These guys are big, strong, physical. They're going to try to move us off the ball. Obviously, Taylor is as good as there is in the country.

"We'll find out after Saturday, find out where we're at with this thing. I think we've done a



JOSH WINSLOW

STUFFED – The Buckeyes held Badgers running back Jonathan Taylor to 52 yards, well below his season average of 136.7 yards per game.

good job of defeating blocks, winning the line of scrimmage. This will be the ultimate test when you play Wisconsin."

The Buckeyes rose to the challenge against the ultra-athletic Taylor, limiting the Heisman Trophy-hopeful back to just 52 yards on 20 tries for a pedestrian 2.6 yards per carry.

A large reason Ohio State was able to stop the high-powered rushing attack of Wisconsin was the group of defensive linemen who set the tone at the line of scrimmage. Mattison emphasized the importance of the big men up front when it comes to stopping the run.

"Tremendous, it's everything," Mattison told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "You can't stop the run unless you have a great defensive line. I don't care how good your linebackers are, I don't care how good your secondary is – you want to stop the run, you better be good up front. And you better be good up front more than four guys. You better be good up front with guys to rotate. That's what (defensive line coach) Larry (Johnson) does a great job with, and we've done a good job."

Johnson rotates fifth-year defensive tackles Jashon Cornell, Davon Hamilton and Robert "B.B." Landers with junior Haskell Garrett and sophomore Tommy Togiai across the interior of the Buckeye front. Hamilton and Togiai stood out against the Badgers, recording three solo stops each, including an impressive sack by Hamilton. Each of the defensive tackles named serves as one of the unsung heroes of the Ohio State defense, playing a pivotal role in stopping the run.

Two-time captain Tuf Borland, a junior linebacker, appreciates the dirty work done by the defensive linemen in front of him, taking on offensive linemen and freeing him up to make tackles.

"Anytime you play behind a great defensive line like that, it makes your job easier," Borland said. "They're always in the backfield being disruptive, knocking the line back. And they're awesome."

Prior to the game against Wisconsin, the Buckeyes were aware how important stopping the run would be to their potential success.

Landers was asked of the importance of the defensive linemen to stopping the run but deflected the attention to linebackers as well.

"Honestly, we're very important, but it's going to be the whole front seven," Landers said. "We're going to need them, from us to Tuf (Borland) and Baron Browning and Malik (Harrison), the whole front seven as a whole, we're going to have to play our game."

Togiai (6-2, 300) expressed his excitement for a more physical game against a team that would surely test the Buckeye front.

"I think it's a game for the D-line and linebackers, especially," Togiai said. "This will be a big test for us this season of stopping the run game and stopping Jonathan Taylor and seeing physical play up front, so it will be a really physical game."

Junior linebacker Pete Werner shared Borland's sentiment that the excellent play of the defensive line makes the linebackers play better.

"It makes our job easy," Werner said. "What they do in front of us opens up the gaps for us to fill and make tackles. We complement each other."

The linebackers stepped up their game against Wisconsin, sticking to their assignments and making plays. Werner recorded six tackles (one solo) with two fumble recoveries, while Harrison (four solo) and Borland (two solo) both contributed four tackles.

The linebackers are not the only players who have displayed vastly improved play during the Buckeyes' dominant 8-0 start.

When asked about the contributions of Cornell, who has five tackles for loss and 2½ sacks, Mattison praised the St. Paul, Minn., native for his production at three-technique.

"Really important," Mattison said of Cornell. "And all of them are. But he is a very good athlete. He can run for a guy his size (6-3, 285), and him playing at a high level is very important to us."

Cornell has shown vast improvement under the tutelage of Johnson, and recently Mattison, but that is not a new concept among Ohio State defensive linemen.

Togiai discussed the importance of coaching and understanding the fundamentals when asked about his elite strength (Togiai said he

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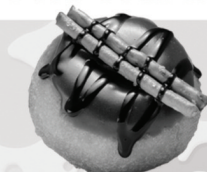
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repped 225 pounds on the bench press 36 times).
 “You can have all the attributes in the world, but if your technique is not good with what we’ve been taught here with Coach J, then you’re not going to be a successful player,” Togiaï said. “Technique is probably more important than anything and more important than if you have great attributes.”

Mattison has taken notice of Togiaï’s improvements, raving about his work ethic and desire to learn under the direction of Johnson.

“Tommy is one of them that practices extremely hard every snap,” Mattison said of Togiaï. “And when you practice like that, and you’re taught by Coach Johnson like you’re being taught, and then you get the opportunity to play, that’s what happens. And we’re really, really proud of him, I mean, really proud of him because here’s a young man that continually works as hard as he can, keeps his mouth shut. If he plays seven plays or he plays 18, 20, 25 plays, goes as hard as he can go. And

that’s kind of the stereotype of the guys on our defense that it’s fun to coach.”

Togiaï and Cornell are not the only Buckeye defenders to have shown drastic improvement. Each of the interior D-linemen have played much better in 2019, as well as the ends, ‘backers and secondary.

Mattison credits their daily preparation and relentless and consistent effort for their success, which has been a stark contrast from the struggles of last season.

The Buckeyes answered their biggest test of the year against Wisconsin, stifling one of the nation’s best rushing offenses and allowing only 83 yards on 34 carries (2.4 yards per carry).

“All of the defensive line, all of the linebackers, all of the secondary guys – the way they practice and that’s very important,” Mattison said. “If you came out and watched our guys the way they practice, they’re going to get better.”



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Linebackers Elevate Play

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

There was a lot of talk about the improvement from the linebacker room heading into the 2019 season.

After a 2018 to forget – when the Buckeyes put up historically bad defensive numbers for the program, much of which led to fingers pointing at the linebackers as the main culprits – the entire linebacker core returned for another season looking for redemption.

But there were some who did not return. That included linebackers coach Bill Davis and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano, both of whom were gone when Urban Meyer's tenure as Ohio State head coach was over.

With Ryan Day came Al Washington and Greg Mattison to take over as linebackers coach and co-defensive coordinator, respectively, along with Jeff Hafley, who holds the position of co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach. Washington and Mattison both took over after coming from Ohio State's bitter rival, Michigan, and both certainly saw what Ohio State's defense looked like a season ago.

But both didn't care. Before the season started, Mattison and Washington both echoed the same idea that all they know is the talent that is on the defensive side of the ball heading into 2019, and that held especially true with the linebackers.

"I really don't know what happened

before," Mattison said. "I didn't care. What I did see when I walked in the very first day, I saw a group of guys that worked unbelievably hard every single day in that weight room and every day in the spring and every meeting in camp. You saw a group of defensive guys that loved each other and wanted to become as good as they could be, that respected each other and know that they've just scratched it right now.

"I don't know what it was before, it doesn't matter. I know what I see every day I come into that meeting, and every day we have a chance to be with them, you're really proud and you're excited."

Washington, who joined the Buckeyes in January, had much of the same things to say about the defensive group after a tough 2018 for the unit as a whole.

"All you can judge them on right now for me is how are they now compared to January," Washington said during fall camp. "When they're in the weight room with (sport performance coach Mickey Marotti), they work their tails off. In the meeting they take notes. They get out here in practice and they work. If something's wrong, they get it fixed.

"I'm proud of that, but we have to play, (and) everything is leading up to that."

Well, the Buckeyes have played, and they have played with dramatic improvements on the defensive side of the ball.

Through eight games, Ohio State has the No. 1 scoring defense (7.9 points allowed per game), No. 9 rush defense (91.5 yards per game), No. 1 pass defense (132.8 ypg)



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and No. 2 total defense (224.3 ypg) in the country.

A lot of that defensive turnaround can be attributed to the improved play of linebackers such as Pete Werner, Tuf Borland, Malik Harrison and Baron Browning, who are thriving under Mattison, Washington and Hafley.

Borland agrees, and he said following the Buckeyes' first win against a ranked opponent, a dominant 34-10 victory against then-No. 25 Michigan State, that he feels a drastic change from last season to this year.

"It's night and day. I feel a huge difference," Borland said. "You're on the biggest stage. People are going to come at you. People are going to say things. It's part of the job."

And people did go at them.

Finishing No. 53 in scoring defense and No. 72 in total defense after three straight seasons of finishing in the top 15 in both of those categories resulted in plenty of backlash last season, with the linebackers facing the brunt of the flak for often being out of position due to stacking the line of scrimmage.

That resulted in big plays allowed – a lot of them.

Ohio State tied for 12th-most plays allowed of 30 yards or more with 39, tied for ninth-most plays of giving up 40 yards or more with 23 and allowed four plays for 80 yards or more, tied for the most in the NCAA with Virginia Tech.

Of those four 80-plus yard plays, three were runs. Of those plays, two broke the program record for most yards allowed on a single play at Ohio State, with a Trace McSorley 93-yard touchdown pass for Penn State and a Darius Anderson 93-yard touchdown run for TCU now living in infamy.

But as Mattison and Washington said, those numbers that put Ohio State's defensive struggles on display have been left behind.

Now, the Buckeyes have only five plays of 30 yards or more, the fewest in the country, and have not given up a single play of 60 yards or more through eight games this season.

Washington said the improvements in not just avoiding big plays, but in the defense as a whole, come down to how the players perform in practice as well as where they are not just physically, but mentally in preparing for games.

"Every day when you take the field, you have a purpose," Washington said following the Michigan State game. "Every day that you go to work, you should have the goal to do it better than the day before. So, when you look at last year for each player, we approach it every day like we've got to improve, we've got to do what we know we can do mentally. That's their mind-set. That's our mind-set. It's been that since day one."

That mind-set has resulted in improved play from all of the major contributors in the linebacker room.

Harrison is tied with senior safety Jordan Fuller for the team lead in tackles with 41 and has the second-most tackles for loss (9½) and sacks (3½), trailing only defensive end Chase Young – who has 15½ tackles for loss and 13½ sacks – in both categories. The senior linebacker has also recovered two fumbles on the year.

Werner is third on the team with 32 tackles and has four tackles for loss as well as two fumble recoveries, both coming against Wisconsin on Young strip sacks. Werner has also been impressive enough to keep the bullet position off the field, as the junior linebacker has managed to be versatile and

agile enough to fit Mattison, Hafley and Washington's system.

His success comes after Washington raved that Werner had a very impressive fall camp.

"Pete Werner, this camp, has probably had one of the best camps that I've seen a guy have, and I'm not just saying that," Washington said before the season. "That guy is a warrior, and I have a ton of respect for him the way he goes about his business."

Borland has accounted for 24 tackles, two of which have been for loss, and an interception that he returned for 42 yards against Cincinnati.

After the now-redshirt junior linebacker and two-time captain received criticism for his performances in 2018, Mattison was quick to defend his middle linebacker prior to the start of the 2019 season.

"I like everything about Tuf Borland's game," Mattison said. "Tuf Borland is another one that comes out to practice every day, extremely intelligent. He takes great pride in getting the front lined up."

After earning the majority of snaps last season, Borland has found his snaps much more split this season with Browning. As a result, Browning's numbers have increased. After 24 total tackles in 2018, he has matched that total with 24 tackles to go along with five tackles for loss and 2½ sacks in seven games of action, missing the game against Northwestern due to injury.

Browning has seen his role increased from a season ago, something that Mattison said comes down to the toughness the junior linebacker plays with, as well as the pure athleticism that he brings to the table.

"Baron Browning is an outstanding athlete," Mattison said. "He's very, very strong, he's got experience, he plays extremely hard, and he does what a great linebacker or a very good linebacker's expected to do, and he's a very big part of our defense."

Individually, the members of the linebacker room have improved, but it is the scheme and the defensive plan as a whole that have helped the same core from 2018 become a key piece in a defense that has allowed the fewest points per game in college football.

The Buckeyes have not allowed more than 10 points since the first week of the season and have won every game by 24 points or more. Ohio State is the No. 3 team in the country in the polls and put itself in the driver's seat to be firmly located within the top four when the first College Football Playoff poll comes out the Tuesday after the Buckeyes' off week.

There are areas that have been improved throughout Ohio State's game, but for the linebackers to go from the most criticized unit on either side of the ball a year ago to a secure defensive unit that makes plays and has limited opposing teams to the fewest chunk plays of 30-plus yards in the nation, they may be one of the key factors in the change in the Buckeyes between seasons.

But, as Washington and Mattison preached plenty of times before the season began, nothing from 2018 matters. What matters now is what happens in 2019, and if the first eight games mean anything, that just shows that the linebackers have found a way to right the wrongs that haunted the unit not that long ago.

"When I got here in the winter, they were in offseason workouts, so I just wanted to get to know them through that," Washington said. "That was my mind-set coming here. Last year was last year, and this year has to be (better)."

So far, it certainly has been.

Chasing History

Ohio State players are gaining ground on program records following a 38-7 victory against Wisconsin. With an off week before going into the final four games of the regular season, here are where some of those players stand.

- Chase Young went from inching toward a record to being right on its doorstep within four quarters of play. Young recorded four sacks against Wisconsin, putting him at 13½ sacks on the season, tying Joey Bosa for second most in program history. He sits just one sack away from passing Vernon Gholston's school record of 14 sacks set in 2007.

Young also went from tied for No. 5 in program history with Tyquan Lewis in career sacks at the start of the game to a tie for second with Jason Simmons, who has 27½. Young passed Joey Bosa and Matt Finkes, who had 26 and 25 sacks, respectively, in their Ohio State careers. Young needs nine more sacks to pass Mike Vrabel's number of 36 sacks and earn the top spot in Ohio State history. The four single-game sacks for Young tied Bobby Carpenter, Gholston and John Simon for the most in Ohio State history, while his five tackles for loss tied Ryan Shazier, John Simon, Andy Katzenmoyer, Jayson Gwinn and Judah Herman for the most the program has ever seen in one game.

- J.K. Dobbins put up 163 rushing yards, enough to push the junior running back past 1,000 yards for the third straight season. He joins Archie Griffin as the only other Ohio State back to accomplish that feat, but he is the first to do so in his freshman, sophomore and junior seasons. Dobbins also passed Tim Spencer (3,553 yards) for No. 4 on Ohio State's all-time career rushing list. He now has 3,566 yards for his collegiate career and is 203 yards away from surpassing Eddie George and moving into No. 3 on the all-time list.

With 1,110 rushing yards so far this year, Dobbins needs 818 yards for the rest of the season to pass George for the most yards on the ground in a single season in Ohio State history. The 1,110 yards through eight games already ranks No. 29 in program history.

- He may have had only one reception, but that is all K.J. Hill needed to extend his streak of consecutive games with a catch to 42 games. He needs a catch in six more games to tie Gary Williams' program record. Hill's lone catch gives him 174 for his career, which is 18 away from passing David Boston's record for most catches in Ohio State history.

- Justin Fields now has 24 touchdown passes through eight games, which is already tied for No. 8 in Ohio State history for a single season. Fields is 12 away from moving into No. 2 on the all-time list, a spot currently held by J.T. Barrett with 35 touchdown throws. But the sophomore quarterback would need to pick up his pace to catch No. 1 Dwayne Haskins, who holds that record after throwing 50 touchdown passes in 2018.

Ryan Day tied Earle Bruce for the third-best start by a head coach at Ohio State with his 11th win. With a win against Maryland, Day would tie Carroll Widdoes for the second-best start, but he still needs 13 wins to match Urban Meyer's start of 24 straight wins.



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Petit-Frere Starts At NU

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Breaking in a new starter at left tackle in a prime-time game on the road is not exactly an ideal situation. But with junior Thayer Munford nursing a sore ankle and fifth-year senior Joshua Alabi out with an undisclosed injury, Ohio State was forced to turn to sophomore Nicholas Petit-Frere to protect quarterback Justin Fields' blind side when the team traveled to Northwestern on Oct. 18.

"It went well," Petit-Frere said of his performance after the Buckeyes' 52-3 win over the Wildcats, though he did face his share of ups and downs throughout the course of the game.

On Ohio State's second drive of the evening, Petit-Frere – a former five-star prospect from Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley Prep – missed an assignment on third down that sent Fields scrambling under pressure. And on the subsequent possession, he was called for a hold that put the Buckeyes in a first-and-20 situation early in the drive.

The penalty ultimately wasn't a factor, as Fields marched the team down the field for a touchdown and a 14-3 lead, but offensive line coach Greg Studrawa had seen enough by that point. He chewed out Petit-Frere on the sidelines and called upon the hobbled Munford to finish the second quarter.

On the first play of his first drive, Munford made a key block that sprang running back J.K. Dobbins for a 68-yard run to the Northwestern 5-yard line. Dobbins then scored on the next play to put Ohio State ahead 21-3.

Petit-Frere kept his composure on the sideline despite the rather short leash and returned to the lineup to open the second half. He played until the Buckeyes pulled the starters at the beginning of the fourth quarter, leading 38-3.

"The coaches kept telling me to keep working hard and that there are going to be some bumps and bruises along the way, especially your first start and stuff like that," Petit-Frere said. "But for the most part, the coaches came up to me after the game and said, 'Nick, you did a really good job. We're really proud of you.' I'm very thankful for them, and I'm thankful for them giving me the opportunity."

Fifth-year senior Branden Bowen, who battled Petit-Frere for the starting right tackle spot throughout spring practices and fall camp, lauded his teammate for his performance – noting how difficult it is to move positions, especially in the span of a week or two.

"That's one of the toughest things you can do," said Bowen, a converted guard. "It's more of a mind game. People think, 'Oh, you can just flip your feet and it's all good.' It's totally different. Next, you're changing which hand you punch with in pass protection. All of your techniques have just flipped, especially when you have that muscle memory locked in."

"It's a tough move, but I think he did well. Of course, you have your nerves. It was his first start – his first real, meaningful reps – and to see him go in there and play like he did, I was really excited."

Munford returned to the starting lineup for Ohio State's 38-7 win over Wisconsin on Oct. 26 and helped pave the way for Dobbins to rush for 163 yards and two touchdowns. But if an injury happens to pop up down the road at either tackle spot, Petit-Frere has proved he can not only fill in but hold his own.

"That (shows) we've built depth there," head coach Ryan Day said after the Northwestern game. "He didn't have a perfect game and didn't grade a champion. He was competing the best he could. Building depth from day one was going to be critical. It was good to see Nick step up."

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Friday Night Game Bad News For High Schools

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

There was chatter about the possible impact that Ohio State's Oct. 18 matchup with Northwestern, set on a Friday night, could have on local high schools in the Buckeye State. Friday is historically the day for high school football teams to shine during the fall, and the presence of the biggest football draw in the state, even for a road game, was considered a possible threat to those high schools.

As the Buckeyes ran over, around and through the Wildcats on the way to a 52-3 victory, those fears about the impact on high school football came to fruition. Attendance dropped across the state, which doesn't just make a for a lesser environment for those games. It has a severe impact on the revenue those schools can bring in. For most of the state, football game revenue is a significant amount of the athletics budget. Dropping that money can have serious consequences for not just the football program, but other programs that depend on it to exist.

BSB reached out to athletic directors across the state to learn just how drastic a difference the Buckeye game had on their Oct. 18 home games, both for attendance and for revenue. While the totals obviously vary based on the size of the school, each response brought with it a similar drop and a similar sentiment against the new Big Ten Friday night games.

The most significant loss for the group

contacted came at Perrysburg High School for its matchup with Napoleon. Located just a few miles outside Toledo, Perrysburg is one of the biggest draws in the region, a Division II stalwart and a state final four participant back in 2015. Sitting at 5-2, the matchup with Napoleon was expected to be a large draw for the Yellow Jackets.

According to athletic director Chuck Jaco, Perrysburg averages about \$15,000 worth of sales at the front gate, with a high end from \$17,000-\$20,000 (where this game likely would have been) and a low end around \$13,000. On Oct. 18, Perrysburg brought in \$8,500 at the gate.

Jaco said it was the lowest total in his five years as the athletic director and that these numbers are despite the matchup with Napoleon serving as Perrysburg's final home game and senior night. On the impact the Buckeye game had on these numbers, Jaco did not mince words.

"Safe to say it had a huge negative impact on our gate and will continue to have a trickle-down effect for the rest of the athletic year budget since we lost at least \$4,500, if not more."

On the south side of the state, one of the biggest annual matchups in Cincinnati faced similar issues. Entering at 6-1, St. Xavier, firmly inside the MaxPreps national top 100 at No. 84, played host to 6-1 La Salle, rated a borderline top-100 team nationally. A game of such magnitude could be expected to draw a massive crowd, especially as the two teams hold state title aspirations, but athletic director Brian Reinhart said that the Bombers had

no such turnout.

BSB wasn't provided exact numbers, but Reinhart claimed a 15-20 percent drop in attendance. For St. Xavier, this isn't the first time college football has gotten in the way. On Oct. 4, Cincinnati took on UCF on a Friday night during a St. Xavier home bout with another top team in Elder. Like Jaco, Reinhart sees a direct correlation.

"We are very disappointed anytime there is a college football game on Friday nights in the fall," Jaco said. "This year there was a home UC game on a Friday night and then the Ohio State game. Both games had an impact on our attendance as we anticipate around a 15-20 percent reduction in expected attendance. This not only impacts ticket sales but also concessions and other areas that support our school."

Columbus schools may have been hit the hardest, given the concentration of Buckeye fans in central Ohio and the interest level in a conference game. According to the Big Ten Network, Ohio State-Northwestern drew an average view-

ership of 1.64 million, with a good portion of that viewership coming from Columbus. While those fans were watching the game, schools such as Sunbury Big Walnut saw even more significant drops than their northern and southern counterparts.

According to Big Walnut athletic director Brian Shelton, the Golden Eagles drew 1,653 fans for a rivalry game against New Albany. Shelton estimates that a game in similar weather against a similar caliber of opponent would usually draw about 2,600. With tickets selling for six dollars, Shelton's estimation indicates a loss of nearly \$6,000 in revenue for Big Walnut, not including possible concessions sales.

Some schools were hit harder than others, like Perrysburg, but the bottom line for schools across the state was most likely similar and bleak. Ohio State's Friday night game created a noticeable drop-off in attendance and, in turn, a noticeable drop-off in revenue generated for high schools that depend on consistent revenue from a major money maker like football.

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Terps Seek To Recapture Early-Season Spark

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

It's hard to start a season much better than Maryland started the 2019 season. Fresh off a 5-7 campaign under interim head coach Matt Canada, the Terrapins had a new head coach in Mike Locksley and a new quarterback in Virginia Tech transfer Josh Jackson, and they jumped out to two massive wins. The first, a 79-0 drubbing of FCS Howard, was far less impressive than an eye-opening 63-20 beat-down of a then-ranked Syracuse team.

With the early momentum of two big wins behind them, Maryland traveled to Temple, ranked in the AP poll for the first time since week five of 2013, and immediately dropped a game, 20-17, to the Owls. From there, the Terrapins have looked just as they have for the last five years: middling at best. They've managed just one win since that great start, a 48-7 blowout over Rutgers, and dropped games to Penn State, Purdue, Indiana and Minnesota, falling to 3-5 on the season.

Part of that can certainly be chalked up to quarterback play, but not all of it. Jackson started the season well and never looked truly bad, though he did complete 50.4 percent of his passes through the first five games before suffering an ankle injury against Rutgers. Tyrrell Pigrome has taken the majority of snaps since that injury, completing 59.8 percent of his 102 passes for 642 yards.

While Pigrome seems like the more likely starter against the Buckeyes, both players are dinged up, so Ohio State will likely need to prepare for both. Pigrome, Jackson and third-stringer Tyler Desue all took snaps against Minnesota, though the Terrapins have yet to announce a starter for Ohio State.

Unlike the passing game, there are no questions surrounding the rushing attack. Maryland has one of the most explosive run games in the country, led by a true power back in Anthony McFarland and a big-play threat in Javon Leake. The two split carries nearly 50-50, with Leake leading the team with 543 yards on 66 totes and McFarland totaling 378 yards on 76 carries. In Locksley's RPO heavy offense that likes to lean on the run, the starting quarterback really may

not matter as much as the rushing attack and the offensive line. So far, the running backs have been very good. The offensive line has struggled with holding up its side of the deal.

Those troubles up front seem to come primarily from the edges, where Maryland starts a redshirt freshman in Jaelyn Duncan and a sophomore in Marcus Minor. Against such players as Chase Young, Tyreke Smith, Jonathon Cooper and Zach Harrison, those tackles could be the key to keeping Maryland's offense on track, and in the past few weeks, they really haven't been able to do that.

While the offense has its issues, it is still putting up 32.4 points per game and pretty decent yardage, especially on the ground with 191.1 a game. The real weak point on this team and the primary reason for that 3-5 record is the defense, just as it was in 2018.

A lot of those defensive issues come, just as they do on the offensive line, from inexperience. Maryland has seven senior starters on defense, including the entire front four, but of the four who aren't seniors, two are true sophomores and two, both in the backfield, are true freshmen.

Because of that, it's really no surprise that the Terrapins give up as many passing yards as they do. They're allowing 273.6 passing yards per game on the season because there really isn't a scheme that can cover up a true freshman cornerback (Deonte Banks) and a true freshman safety (Nick Cross) in the same backfield with two seniors in Antoine Brooks Jr. and Marcus Lewis who have never really broken through. The backfield has struggled for a couple of years now, and in a defense that runs a lot of man defense, it's very challenging for Maryland to hide those struggles.

The only way that the defense has been able to cover those weaknesses has been with pressure, and Ohio State should expect a lot of it. The defensive line is anchored by two very good edge rushers in Brett Kulka and Shaq Smith, though that isn't where Maryland generally looks to generate its pressure.

Maryland's sacks usually come from its linebackers, the best unit on the team, led by arguably the best player on the team: Ohio State transfer Keandre Jones. Jones has put up a gaudy stat line through eight games, racking

Get To Know ... Maryland

About Maryland

- **2019 record:** 3-5 (1-4).
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 5, Defense 3, Specialists 1.
- **Head Coach:** Mike Locksley, 4-10 in 2 years at Maryland (1-5 as interim in 2015), 2-26 in three years at New Mexico
- **Series History:** 6th meeting, Ohio State leads 5-0-0.
- **School Facts:** Location – College Park, MD; Enrollment – 40,521; Nickname – Terrapins; Color – Red; Conference – Big Ten (East Division); Stadium – Maryland Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 51,802).

Top Offensive Returners

| Rushing | Att. | Net | Avg. | TD |
|-------------------|------|-----|------|----|
| Javon Leake | 66 | 543 | 8.2 | 7 |
| Anthony McFarland | 76 | 378 | 5.0 | 7 |
| Tayon Fleet-Davis | 48 | 200 | 4.2 | 1 |

| Passing | Comp.-Att. | Pct. | Yds. | TD-INT |
|-----------------|------------|------|------|--------|
| Josh Jackson | 70-139 | 50.4 | 968 | 10-4 |
| Tyrrell Pigrome | 61-102 | 59.8 | 642 | 3-5 |

| Receiving | Rec. | Net | Avg. | TD |
|-------------------|------|-----|------|----|
| Dontay Demus | 31 | 487 | 15.7 | 4 |
| Tayon Fleet-Davis | 172 | 172 | 13.2 | 2 |

Team Offensive Stats

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Points Per Game | – 32.4 |
| Rushing Yards Per Game | – 191.1 |
| Passing Yards Per Game | – 212.3 |
| Total Offense Avg. Per Game | – 403.4 |

2019 Schedule

| Date | Opponent | Time/Result (ET) |
|----------|----------------------|------------------|
| Aug. 31 | HOWARD | W, 79-0 |
| Sept. 7 | SYRACUSE | W, 63-20 |
| Sept. 14 | at Temple | L, 20-17 |
| Sept. 27 | PENN STATE | L, 59-0 |
| Oct. 5 | at Rutgers | W, 48-7 |
| Oct. 12 | at Purdue | L, 40-14 |
| Oct. 19 | INDIANA | L, 34-28 |
| Oct. 26 | at Minnesota | L, 52-10 |
| Nov. 2 | MICHIGAN | 12 p.m. |
| Nov. 9 | at Ohio State | TBA |
| Nov. 23 | NEBRASKA | TBA |
| Nov. 30 | at Michigan State | TBA |
| Dec. 7 | Big Ten Championship | 8 p.m. |

Top Defensive Returners

| Def. Leaders | Solo-Ast. | Tot. | TFL-Yds. | Sacks |
|-----------------|-----------|------|----------|-------|
| Ayinde Eley | 36-25 | 61 | 4.0-11 | 0.5-0 |
| Antonie Brooks | 47-5 | 52 | 5.0-11 | 0-0 |
| Chance Campbell | 32-10 | 42 | 4.5-5 | 0-0 |

| Interceptions | No. | Yds | Avg | TD | Long |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|----|------|
| Marcus Lewis | 1 | 40 | 40.0 | 0 | 40 |
| Ayinde Eley | 1 | 39 | 39.0 | 0 | 39 |
| Jordan Mosley | 1 | 13 | 13.0 | 0 | 13 |

Team Defensive Stats

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Points Per Game Allowed | – 29.0 |
| Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed | – 151.3 |
| Passing Yards Per Game Allowed | – 273.6 |
| Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed | – 424.9 |

up 39 tackles, 10 for a loss and six sacks, while serving as the primary pass rusher for the Terrapins. He'll be fired up to play against his old team, and he'll likely spend the majority of the game as a pass rusher.

Players To Watch

If he plays, Jackson is at least worth thinking about. He is a serviceable game manager and a decent runner, and he has a strong enough arm to test Ohio State's defense vertically. He could cause at least a few issues for the Buckeyes.

The stars of the offense are at halfback with McFarland and Leake, who could be tasked with upwards of 40 carries against the Buckeye front.

Dontay Demus Jr. is easily the top Maryland receiver with 31 receptions and 487

yards on the season. His size (6-3, 200 pounds) makes him a solid test for Jeff Okudah and the Buckeye backfield, but he isn't the kind of speedy slot receiver who tends to give zone defenses like Ohio State's a lot of problems. If he does have a big game, it will be on play-action passes because the running game was able to get going.

Up front, guard Sean Christie is the most experienced starter and will be the lead blocker on most of Maryland's rushing attempts.

Defensively, most of the star power is at linebacker, but defensive end hybrid Smith is worth mentioning up front. He has 20 tackles on the season, and his rare blend of athletic ability and size (6-2, 251) could test Ohio State's hobbled tackles, though probably not enough to seriously challenge the Buckeye offense.

At linebacker, Jones is, as mentioned, the star of the team. Where he goes, the defense will follow, which means that he'll need to have a big game to keep the Terrapins competitive, given Ohio State's propensity for blowouts. Sophomore Ayinde Eley on at the other outside linebacker spot isn't as dangerous a pass rusher, but he's their best coverage linebacker and the steadiest tackler on the team with 61 tackles.

Middle linebacker Chance Campbell is similarly consistent, though he is the least flashy of the bunch, with 42 tackles but only five tackles for loss.

In the backfield, Brooks is the anchor, though there may be a bit too much reliance on him, because he has 52 tackles from the safety spot, coming up to help with run stuffing more than a defense generally wants from their safety. Backup safety Jordan Mosley plays a decent amount too when the Terrapins want either a fifth defensive back or a better tackler than Cross, who mostly plays a deep zone. He has 31 tackles on the season and could serve as Maryland's attempt at an answer for the Buckeye running game.

Defensive coordinator Jon Hoke (the brother of ex-Michigan coach Brady) is tasked with the nearly impossible job of slowing down the Buckeye offense. He has shown a confidence in the blitz in the past and could look to go all out against the Buckeyes in an attempt to rattle Justin Fields and throw Ohio State off its rhythm.



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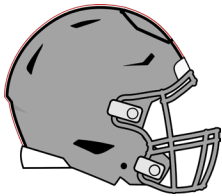
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How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. MARYLAND RUSH DEFENSE

The open date of Nov. 2 comes at a perfect time for Ohio State. After a physical battle against Wisconsin turned into a 38-7 rout, the Buckeyes can devote full attention to finding ways to stop the Maryland juggernaut that storms into Ohio Stadium on Nov. 9. OK, who are we kidding? The biggest challenge for OSU is not being complacent against the not-so-good Terrapins.

Maryland will be overmatched in nearly all phases, including trying to stop the run game. Wisconsin was yielding 58.4 rushing yards a game until J.K. Dobbins (163 yards, 20 carries) and Co. shredded the vaunted Badgers defense for 264 ground yards. There is simply no stopping the Buckeyes when they lug the ball. Quarterback Justin Fields had a 21-yard run against the Badgers, and Master Teague had 76 yards on 13 carries in second-half mop-up duty but will likely have his number called in the first half against Maryland. In Maryland's 52-10 drubbing by Minnesota on Oct. 26, the Golden Gophers ran for 321 yards on a 5.9-yard average. The Buckeyes' O-line has a Heisman hopeful in Dobbins so they will not allow him to have a bad game against Maryland.

EDGE: EVEN

MARYLAND RUSH OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Now here's a category that Maryland needs to be given some respect. They have 11 rushes for more than 30 yards, which puts them among the best in the country. Five of those chunk plays have gone for more than 50 yards, which is second nationally to that big school in Columbus. Javon Leake has scored on three of those long gainers (64 yards vs. Syracuse, 42 at Rutgers and 60 against Indiana). Anthony McFarland Jr. has one 50-plus score (80 at Rutgers), and QB Tyrrell Pigrome had a 61-yard TD at Purdue.

In last season's game against the historically bad OSU defense, McFarland rushed for 298 yards on 21 carries with TDs of 81 and 75 yards in the first six minutes in helping nearly pull off the Terrapin upset before losing 52-51 in overtime at Maryland. McFarland returned from injury against the Gophers and had 38 yards on 10 carries. The Terrapins had just 79 yards on a 3.4-yard average in the game. All you need to know about the Ohio State rush defense this season is that Wisconsin's Jonathan Taylor came in averaging 137 yards and had 52 on 20 carries.

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. MARYLAND PASS DEFENSE

Fields battled the Badgers' rush and the rain and was 12 of 22 for 167 yards. But he did throw two TD passes to Chris Olave to give him 24 for the season against one interception. Maryland's defensive line won't pose the same threat as Wisconsin's, but the Buckeye O-line will be licking their wounds after conceding five Badger sacks and several more hurries. Linebacker and former Buckeye Keandre Jones leads Maryland with six sacks. What Maryland has going for it is a secondary that has a takeaway in 20 straight games, the second-longest streak in the nation. The Terps have seven interceptions this season.

MARYLAND PASS OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

The lone advantage for Maryland is that OSU won't know which quarterback it will face since Pigrome, Josh Jackson and Tyler DeSue each took at least one snap against the Gophers. It didn't help against Minnesota because the Terps had 210 total yards. The QBs were 10 of 23 with two picks for 131 yards, 59 of those yards coming on a late TD pass by DeSue after Pigrome was injured. The Buckeyes will counter with Chase Young, who is a half-sack shy of tying the school record of 14 in a season. The rest of the pass defense is pretty good too, by the way.

SPECIAL TEAMS

This is one spot where Maryland is dangerous. Leake had a 100-yard kickoff return vs. Rutgers earlier this season for his second career KO return. Leake had five KO returns for 136 yards (27.2 average) against the Gophers. D.J. Turner had a punt return TD in the opener vs. Howard. The Buckeyes got a spark by Garrett Wilson's 23-yard punt return vs. the Badgers, and Blake Haubeil is kicking the stuffing out of the ball with a 49-yard field goal after a career-long 55-yarder the previous game vs. Northwestern.

INTANGIBLES

Maryland has lost three straight heading into its Nov. 2 home game vs. Michigan since beating Rutgers. The Terps will try to reason with themselves that they almost pulled off a miracle last season and the Buckeyes are vulnerable. They aren't. Maryland has some talented players, just not enough of them to be competitive now. The Buckeyes will be rested and hungry.

STAFF PREDICTION

There is little cause to believe the Buckeyes will have a slip-up, and by that we mean not having another blowout, even though once they get by Maryland and Rutgers the showdown in the 'Shoe with Penn State looms on Nov. 23.

OHIO STATE, 56-7

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...

3 NICK CROSS, 6-1, 212, FR.
18 Jordan Mosley, 6-1, 210, So.

16 AYINDE ELEY, 6-3, 226, SO.
23 Fa'Najae Gotay, 5-10, 221, R-Fr.

4 CHANCE CAMPBELL, 6-3, 225, SO.
OR **22 ISAIAH DAVIS, 6-2, 234, SR.**

4 KEANDRE JONES, 6-3, 220, 5TH-SR.
5 Shaq Smith, 6-2, 251, 5th-Sr.

25 ANTOINE BROOKS JR., 5-11, 215, SR.
14 Deon Jones, 6-0, 197, So.

5 SHAQ SMITH, 6-2, 251, 5TH-SR.
27 Bryce Brand, 5-11, 248, Jr.

52 OLUWASEUN OLUWATIMI, 6-1, 294, SR.
98 Brandon Gaddy, 6-3, 311, So.

8 MARCUS LEWIS, 6-1, 197, SR.
37 Lavonte Gater, 5-10, 168, Fr.

33 DEONTE BANKS, 6-1, 192, FR.
12 Vincent Flythe, 5-11, 179, R-Fr.

96 BRETT KULKA, 6-4, 258, SR.
95 Lawtez Rogers, 6-4, 268, So.

59 KEIRON HOWARD, 6-3, 278, SR.
97 Sam Okuyinonu, 6-1, 285, Jr.

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.
78 Nicholas Petit-Frere, 6-5, 295, R-Fr.

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.

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.

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.

95 BLAKE HAUBEIL, 6-4, 225, Jr.

WHEN MARYLAND HAS THE BALL...

25 BRENDON WHITE, 6-2, 215, JR.
23 Jahsen Wint, 5-11, 200, Jr.

32 TUF BORLAND, 6-1, 232, JR.
OR **5 BARON BROWNING, 6-3, 248, JR.**

4 JORDAN FULLER, 6-2, 205, SR.
41 Josh Proctor, 6-2, 205, So.

24 SHAUN WADE, 6-1, 194, SO.
10 Amir Riep, 6-0, 195, Jr.

1 JEFF OKUDAH, 6-1, 200, JR.
12 Sevyn Banks, 6-1, 200, So.

53 DAVON HAMILTON, 6-4, 310, 5TH-SR.
67 Robert Landers, 6-1, 285, 5th-Sr.

18 JONATHON COOPER, 6-4, 257, SR.
54 Tyler Friday, 6-3, 260, Fr.

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.

71 JAELYN DUNCAN, 6-6, 323, R-FR.
54 Spencer Anderson, 6-5, 318, R-Fr.

73 JOHNNY JORDAN, 6-1, 305, JR.
55 Austin Fontaine, 6-3, 320, R-Fr.

72 MARCUS MINOR, 6-4, 298, SO.
54 Spencer Anderson, 6-5, 318, R-Fr.

21 DARRYL JONES, 6-2, 192, SO.
83 Carlos Carriere, 6-5, 196, So.

70 SEAN CHRISTIE, 6-4, 294, 5TH-SR.
52 Evan Gregory, 6-4, 308, R-Fr.

68 ELLIS MCKENNIE, 6-3, 310, SR.
55 Austin Fontaine, 6-3, 320, R-Fr.

7 DONTAY DEMUS JR., 6-3, 200, SO.
82 Isaiah Hazel, 6-1, 203, Fr.

98 ANTHONY PECORELLA, 6-2, 192, FR.
OR **99 COLTON SPANGLER, 6-1, 169 FR.**

17 JOSH JACKSON, 6-2, 218, JR.
3 Tyrrell Pigrome, 5-10, 209, Jr.

81 TYLER MABRY, 6-4, 248, 5TH-SR.
9 Chigoziem Okonkwo, 6-2, 244, So.

5 ANTHONY MCFARLAND, 5-8, 193, SO.
20 Javon Leake, 6-0, 206, Jr.

15 BRIAN COBBS, 6-2, 202, SO.
OR **29 SEAN SAVOY, 5-9, 184, JR.**

27 JOSEPH PETRINO, 5-11, 182, SO.
38 Paul Inzerillo, 5-7, 181, Jr.

- Depth charts compiled by Andrew Lind and Patrick Mayhorn

Cornerback Moore Accepts Walk-On Offer

As currently constructed, Ohio State's 125-man roster consists of 14 five-star prospects, 45 four-stars, 22 three-stars and 44 unranked walk-ons. So, for every highlight play made by quarterback Justin Fields or defensive end Chase Young on game day, one could make an argument the contributions of walk-on players in practice have been just as important to the Buckeyes' undefeated start.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

In many of those cases, the chance to play at a school like Ohio State far outweighed scholarship offers elsewhere. And the same can be said of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, cornerback Andrew Moore, who committed to the Buckeyes as a preferred walk-on on Oct. 20.

"To be able to have the opportunity to play for Ohio State, which is such an historic program and the team I grew up watching, is such a huge accomplishment for me," Moore told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "I just feel so honored to have the opportunity to play here. To receive a great education from one of the best colleges in the country was a huge plus, as well."

The 5-11, 190-pound Moore – who is not ranked by any major recruiting sites but was honorable-mention all-state in 2018 – chose the walk-on opportunity with the Buckeyes over a scholarship offer from Lake Erie College and walk-on offers from Akron and Cincinnati.

"It was just a chance I could not pass up," he said.

Moore is a multisport athlete who plays football, soccer, basketball and baseball, swims and runs track. And that versatility – in addition to the overall athleticism and speed he showed during Ohio State's one-day camp in June – was a big reason that head coach Ryan Day and co-defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley invited him back to campus for an unofficial visit for the Buckeyes' 76-5 win over Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 21.

The staff extended the preferred walk-on offer following his visit and asked him to return for the Michigan State game on Oct. 5. It was then that Moore, who was sitting in the front row for the 34-10 win over the Spartans, decided he wanted to be a Buckeye. Moore told the staff about his decision that evening and waited to announce it until Oct. 20, his father's birthday.

"They both understand that I'm still new to football and know that I'll be coachable and learn quickly," Moore said of the Buckeye coaches. "Coach Hafley is going to coach me like any other player to get the best out of me, and that's all I want. He's the best in the country."

Moore hails from the same high school as Ohio State junior wide receiver Jaylen Harris and sophomore defensive end Tyreke Smith. He leaned on them for advice throughout the recruiting process, and they were excited he decided to join them in Columbus.

"They just told me when I come to work hard and show the coaches what you can do," Moore said.

Like other walk-on prospects, Moore will

join the team for summer workouts next June. And given the turnover expected at cornerback this offseason – with Damon Arnette graduating and Jeff Okudah and Shaun Wade likely to head to the NFL early – he hopes to make an early impact and climb the depth chart.

"I'm someone who will work extremely hard," Moore said. "I'm going to come into camp ready to learn so they can get the best out of me and so I can help the team no matter what."

Buckeyes Welcome Numerous Recruits

Despite the threat of heavy rain throughout the game, Ohio State welcomed a long list of visitors to campus for the 38-7 win over Wisconsin.

The most notable visitor was 2020 Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star quarterback Jack Miller, who has been committed to the Buckeyes since July 2018. He was joined on his official visit by his parents and sisters.

Other commits in attendance included 2020 Cincinnati Princeton five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson; 2020 Beech Grove, Ind., three-star offensive tackle Josh Fryar; 2020 Warren (Mich.) De La Salle Collegiate three-star offensive guard Grant Toutant; 2020 Norwalk, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Trey Leroux; 2020 Cincinnati La Salle three-star kicker Jake Seibert; 2021 Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer; and 2021 Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard.

There were several top-rated underclassmen on hand, as well, including 2021 Steilacoom, Wash., five-star athlete Emeka Egbuka; 2021 Matthews (N.C.) Weddington five-star all-purpose back Will Shipley; 2021 Belleville, Mich., four-star defensive tackle Damon Payne; 2021 Solon, Ohio, four-star defensive end Najee Story; 2021 Camden, N.J., four-star cornerback Duce Chestnut; 2021 Katy, Texas, four-star cornerback Hunter Washington; 2021 Valrico (Fla.) Armwood four-star athlete Charles Montgomery; 2021 Massillon Washington three-star wide receiver Andrew Wilson-Lamp; 2021 Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett three-star cornerback Jordan Hancock; 2021 Livonia (Mich.) Detroit County Day three-star offensive tackle Caleb Tiernan; and 2022 Westerville (Ohio) South athlete Kaden Saunders.

A similar turnout is expected for Ohio State's final home game of the year on Nov. 23 against Penn State.

Ohio State Among Egbuka's Top Schools

The aforementioned Egbuka on Oct. 16 trimmed his list of nearly three dozen scholarship offers to 10 schools, listing Ohio State alongside Alabama, Clemson, LSU, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Oregon, Stanford, USC and Washington.

The 6-1, 190-pound Egbuka is considered the top-rated athlete and No. 9 prospect overall in the class of 2021. And while some schools are recruiting him as a defensive back, most coaches – including Day and wide receivers coach Brian Hartline – see his 4.42-second 40-yard dash and 35.1-inch vertical leap as potential assets on the offensive side of the ball.

Egbuka, who is a close friend of 2020 four-star wide receiver commit and fellow Washingtonian Gee Scott, plans to take all



COURTESY OF ANDREW MOORE

UP NEXT – Cleveland Heights, Ohio, cornerback Andrew Moore hopes to be the next great defensive back at Ohio State.

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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

| Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Stars | High School |
|--------------------|------|------|-----|-------|--|
| Paris Johnson | OT | 6-8 | 295 | ★★★★★ | Cincinnati Princeton |
| Jack Miller | QB | 6-4 | 210 | ★★★★ | Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral |
| Luke Wypler | OC | 6-4 | 285 | ★★★★ | Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional |
| Jaxon Smith-Njigba | WR | 6-1 | 188 | ★★★★ | Rockwall, Texas |
| Gee Scott Jr. | WR | 6-3 | 207 | ★★★★ | Sammamish (Wa.) Eastside Catholic |
| Jakob James | OG | 6-5 | 275 | ★★★ | Cincinnati Elder |
| Trey Leroux | OT | 6-8 | 355 | ★★★ | Norwalk, Ohio |
| Lejond Cavazos | CB | 6-1 | 190 | ★★★★ | Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy |
| Julian Fleming | WR | 6-2 | 199 | ★★★★★ | Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia |
| Jake Seibert | K | 6-1 | 190 | ★★★ | Cincinnati La Salle |
| Grant Toutant | OT | 6-7 | 320 | ★★★ | Warren (Mich.) De La Salle |
| Ty Hamilton | DE | 6-3 | 250 | ★★★ | Pickerington (Ohio) Central |
| Clark Phillips | CB | 5-11 | 178 | ★★★★ | La Habra, Calif. |
| Cody Simon | OLB | 6-1 | 218 | ★★★★ | Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep |
| Darrion Henry | DT | 6-5 | 279 | ★★★★ | Cincinnati Princeton |
| Joe Royer | TE | 6-5 | 225 | ★★★ | Cincinnati Elder |
| Mitchell Melton | OLB | 6-3 | 235 | ★★★ | Olney (Md.) Good Counsel |
| Cameron Martinez | ATH | 6-0 | 183 | ★★★ | Muskegon, Mich. |
| Josh Fryar | OL | 6-6 | 305 | ★★★ | Beech Grove, Ind. |
| Mookie Cooper | WR | 5-9 | 193 | ★★★★ | St. Louis Trinity Catholic |
| Lathan Ransom | S | 6-1 | 193 | ★★★★ | Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic |
| Kourt Williams | ATH | 6-1 | 216 | ★★★★ | Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco |
| Jacolbe Cowan | DT | 6-5 | 262 | ★★★★ | Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day School |
| Ryan Watts | CB | 6-3 | 187 | ★★★★ | Little Elm, Texas |

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) |

Continued On Page 28

ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler

Ohio State already holds commitments from three cornerbacks this cycle in La Habra, Calif., four-star Clark Phillips; Little Elm, Texas, four-star Ryan Watts; and Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star Lejond Cavazos. But with Damon Arnette graduating and Jeff Okudah and Shaun Wade eligible to enter the NFL draft after this season, the room could be a little thin moving forward.

Is there a chance the Buckeyes target one more player this cycle, and who could that be?

"As far as true corners go, I generally think the Buckeyes are finished there unless they can pull off a surprise like Cavazos' teammate at IMG Academy, LSU five-star commit Elias Ricks (6-2, 192). They are still keeping tabs on Columbus Walnut Ridge three-star athlete Qian Magwood (6-0, 185), who could potentially slot in just about anywhere in the secondary but has not yet been offered.

"I also think the transfer portal could be a potential option to give a more immediate impact if both Okudah and Wade do leave for the NFL, which is likely."

Ohio State recently offered a scholarship to a two-star prospect in wide receiver Kyle McNamara (5-9, 170).

Seeing as his only other offer is from Central Michigan and the Buckeyes already hold commitments from four wide receivers in the current cycle in Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia five-star Julian Fleming; Rockwall, Texas, four-star Jaxon Smith-Njigba; Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star Gee Scott; and Maryland Heights (Mo.) Pattonville Senior four-star Mookie Cooper, this offer seems a bit odd.

Can you offer a glimpse into what head coach Ryan Day and wide receivers coach Brian Hartline are thinking? For example, are they worried about a potential decommitment?

"I don't see things going much further with McNamara. He's probably an under-recruited kid, but I think the Buckeyes are pretty set at receiver at this point and don't see any decommitments coming. There is a relationship there with the staff and McNamara's head coach Trent Dilfer, a former NFL quarterback, which I think helped things there."

As things stand now, Clemson is on the verge of signing three five-star defensive linemen in Damascus, Md., defensive tackle Bryan Bresee; Powder Springs (Ga.) Hillgrove defensive end Myles Murphy; and IMG Academy defensive tackle Demonte Capehart.

The hope, for Ohio State, is to have a similar haul in 2021, with Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer already in the fold and several other highly touted defensive linemen with significant interest in the program.

What do you think of the Buckeyes' chances in adding players like Katy (Texas) Tompkins five-star defensive end Tunmise Adeleye and Eastside Catholic five-star defensive tackle J.T. Tuimoloau, or someone like Belleville, Mich., four-star defensive tackle Damon Payne, a high four-star prospect who could eventually develop into a five-star talent?

"I think they have a great chance currently for Payne, who returned to campus for win over Wisconsin on Oct. 26.

"Adeleye is another guy that I think the Buckeyes

are right at or near the top for, though recruiting the Houston area over the years has been volatile and early leads can mean very little.

"Tuimoloau could be a tough pull from Washington, and while I believe the Buckeyes are right at the top after the Huskies, he needs to visit before people get too excited there. I personally think he's going to end up staying home.

"That said, there is no question they are in on a lot of very talented guys and will swing for the fences on a player like Corona, Calif., five-star defensive end Corey Foreman.

"Brooklyn (N.Y.) Erasmus Hall four-star defensive end Jahzion Harris, who is a very intriguing speed rusher, is still out there, too."

When Ohio State offers an in-state prospect early in the cycle, a commitment typically soon follows.

That's not been the case for Cincinnati La Salle four-star safety Jaylen Johnson, whom the Buckeyes offered following a one-day camp in June but recently announced he won't make his college decision until July 29, 2020.

Why is Johnson in no rush to make a decision, and who do you believe are the biggest threats to Ohio State's chances?

"I think the Buckeyes definitely lead for Johnson and will be tough to beat. Penn State is probably the team I would watch for the most in terms of competition for Jaylen, but I really think Ohio State is in a good spot there.

"Ultimately he wants to be able to take his official visits in the spring, but I don't see much reason for concern there on the Buckeyes' end."

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Ohio State Among Top Choices For 5-Star Athlete

Continued From Page 26

five of his official visits next spring and summer before he makes a final decision on his future. Most prognosticators believe this to be a two-team battle between the Buckeyes and the Huskies, with the Cardinal and Fighting Irish also hoping to make an outside push for Egbuka, who holds a 4.0 grade-point average.

Academics Become Selling Point For Buckeyes

In recent years, Ohio State has found itself in tight battles with academic powerhouses such as Notre Dame and Stanford. And while the Buckeyes have historically lost out on those kinds of prospects, players such as freshman center Harry Miller and 2020 Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional four-star center Luke Wypler have seen the value of a degree from Ohio State and the network provided by its vast alumni base.

With a number of similar recruiting battles taking shape this cycle, Day was asked during his Oct. 14 press conference about the Buckeyes' improved perception when it comes to academics.

"Well, I think the best thing about Ohio State when you're recruiting right now is not only that we can recruit throughout the country on the reputation that we have on the field, but also off the field and what we're doing academically," he said. "What's happened is that we have opened up our recruiting to really everybody. We're competing against some of the top academic schools, year in and year out, for some of the best student-athletes."

"I think what everyone is finding out is not only the networking, the reach that Ohio State has and the power of our alumni, but also what a great academic school Ohio State is and all the different things and majors and different areas that guys can come in and do a great job. We're competing at the highest level (on the field) but also then competing at the highest level in the classroom. That really has

opened up a lot of doors for us and a lot of opportunities recruiting different people."

OSU Offer Changed Carroll's Recruitment

When Ohio State offered a scholarship to Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star running back Lovesea Carroll on Aug. 25, he was committed to South Carolina. He reopened his recruitment a few weeks later, though, citing the interest from the Buckeyes as a key factor in his decision.

Fast-forward two months, and Carroll – the eighth-ranked running back and No. 135 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – has once again started the process of finding a new home, listing Ohio State in his top eight on Oct. 8 alongside Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi State, Penn State and Tennessee.

Carroll, who is one of six junior running backs with an offer from the Buckeyes, has never been to campus but plans to make his first trip to Columbus next summer. He's formed a strong bond with running backs coach Tony Alford from afar and is no doubt being recruited by Lejond Cavazos, his teammate at IMG and current Ohio State commit.

Toutant Goes Under The Knife

The above-mentioned Toutant suffered a shoulder injury in De La Salle's 16-14 loss to Orchard Lake (Mich.) St. Mary's on Sept. 27 and underwent surgery last week to repair a damaged labrum, which is why he was walking around Ohio Stadium with his arm in a sling.

The 6-7, 320-pound Toutant – who is considered the 33rd-best offensive tackle and No. 453 prospect overall in the class of 2020 – missed the final five games of his senior season as a result of the injury, but he's expected to make a full recovery by the time he enrolls in classes next June.

The previously mentioned Wypler and Ohio State starting center Josh Myers have suffered similar injuries during their respective playing careers, but both



ANDREW LIND

TRENDING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION – Steilacoom, Wash., five-star athlete Emeka Egbuka named Ohio State among his top schools and subsequently attended the Buckeyes' win over Wisconsin on Oct. 26.

returned to full health following a short rehabilitation process.

Lone Star State Of Mind

Ohio State has landed a handful of top-rated prospects from the state of Texas in recent years, including five-star cornerback Jeff Okudah, five-star linebacker Baron Browning, four-star running back J.K. Dobbins and three-

star wide receiver Elijah Gardiner in 2017; three-star quarterback Matthew Baldwin in 2018; and five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson in 2019.

The Buckeyes have once again gone back to the well in the 2020 recruiting cycle, nabbing commitments from Rockwell four-star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Little Elm four-star cornerback Ryan Watts. They're also among the top schools for Dallas Jesuit four-



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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

Standing 6-4, weighing 221 pounds and having state championship speed, Yellow Springs, Ohio, product Jon Roberts clearly had the potential to be a sideline-to-sideline playing linebacker for a Division I football team. That's why he had interest from Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame and Ohio State.

"I do have some favorites – Ohio State, Michigan, Notre Dame – schools like that are close so my parents can come watch me," Roberts told BSB. "But I am not eliminating anyone."

His parents, Ted and Ann, were both active in his recruitment, and it would have been very difficult for him to depart for some of the other schools that were recruiting him, like Mississippi, Southern Methodist, Georgia Tech and Tennessee.

Roberts was rated one of the best defensive players in Ohio by recruiting expert Tom Lemming.

"He is a tremendous defender with quick feet and good instincts. He shows great pursuit and big-play capabilities. He is a super talent."

25 Years Ago – 1994

NCAA member schools were prepared to vote to relax some restrictions on Proposition 48.

The NCAA Presidents Council proposed that incoming freshmen who did not meet all of the academic requirements to play in their first year could be allowed to still receive scholarship money and participate in team practices.

Under Prop 48, players who either did not maintain at least a 2.00 grade-point average in a specified core curriculum or score at least 17 on the ACT or 700 on the SAT could not play or practice and had to pay their own way to school for their freshman year.

"I think it would be a tremendous help for the players," said OSU recruiting coordinator Bill Conley. "I think it helps the young man get better acclimated to the college life that he will be facing in his four or five years."

20 Years Ago – 1999

Darrion Scott — a 6-3, 246-pound hybrid recruit — ran a 4.65 40-yard dash, liked to run with the football on offense and punish people on defense, and looked a lot like a combination of Andy

Katzenmoyer and Eddie George.

Scott was not only regarded as one of the best players in West Virginia, but as one of the top college prospects in the country. It's that talent that drew interest from Ohio State and ultimately led to a commitment from Scott to the Buckeyes.

"I contend that he's the best player in the state of West Virginia right now," Jerry Townson, the head coach at Charleston's Capital High School, where Scott was a star, told BSB in October. "I think he's an outstanding football player, and I think there are probably several positions he can play in college."

Scott admitted to having a love affair with the OSU football program for quite a while prior to his pledge.

"It all started about in the eighth and ninth grades in junior high," he said. "I started out playing video games and watching the Buckeyes on TV, seeing guys like Eddie George and things like that. It was the only team I ever watched, the only team I've ever seen on TV for some reason."

15 Years Ago – 2004

Coming off a three-game losing streak and facing a lowly Indiana team, it would have been understandable if the sidelines at Ohio Stadium had been sparsely populated by local recruits.

That wasn't the case, however, as several recruits made the trip to take in the gameday festivities.

Topping that list was Chino, Calif., safety Shawn Oatis, who had recently made a move up the national recruiting rankings, Florida offensive lineman Ronnie Wilson, Ohio athlete Alex Daniels and a number of commitments including Andre Amos, Jim Cordle, Todd Denlinger and Brian Hartline.

Oatis shared his thoughts on the visit with Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

"It was great," Oatis said upon his return home. "I had a very good time."

10 Years Ago – 2009

In Roderick Smith's mind, his record-setting career got off to an inauspicious start, but his high school head coach remembered it differently in an October interview with BSB.

When Smith's freshman season at Fort Wayne (Ind.) Paul Harding got under way, the running back's first taste of varsity action came during a preseason scrimmage. As a 14-year-old

playing against high school seniors, Smith said he performed so poorly that the coaches considered moving him down to the junior varsity level to start the season.

Instead, Smith went on to become a key piece of a state championship winning team. A few years later, in July of 2009, Smith issued his commitment to Ohio State.

"He actually ran very hard, and we knew that he was going to be OK," Harding head coach Sherwood Haydock told BSB. "One of his first carries – not the first carry but probably his third carry – he broke a 26-yard touchdown against a state-ranked opponent. I knew then we had this special guy that everybody said he was going to be."

Five Years Ago – 2014

Ohio State was still all in on top defensive tackle target Neville Gallimore, but the Buckeyes had developed a backup plan if the Canadian native went elsewhere.

Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star defensive tackle Davon Hamilton (6-4, 285), a Pitt commit, looked to be in play for the Buckeyes.

"My coach said Ohio State was in the school and also calling him, and they've been asking about me," Hamilton said. "Coach (Luke) Fickell is recruiting me for Ohio State. If they wanted me to visit I would definitely do that, and Ohio State would get serious consideration from me."

"They have all my film and they have my transcript, so I'm just sitting back and waiting to see what might happen from here."

One Year Ago – 2018

In an Oct. 19 showdown between two of Arizona's top high school teams, Scottsdale Chaparral took on Phoenix Pinnacle without Jack Miller. The four-star quarterback, who had committed to Ohio State a few months prior, suffered a high-grade medial collateral knee sprain the week prior.

According to the Arizona Republic, Miller was expected to be out for three weeks with an expected return of Nov. 2 for the start of the 2018 Arizona playoffs. The quarterback remained in the game in which he sustained his injury, throwing for 267 yards and three scores in a 42-24 defeat.

star running back E.J. Smith and Lancaster four-star running back Kevontre Bradford.

So why do these players leave their home state to play their college ball when Power Five programs such as Baylor, Texas, Texas A&M and TCU – among others – are nearby? Because they see players like Okudah having both individual and team success after making a similar decision to attend Ohio State.

"I guess I play the role of making them see that it's possible," Okudah said during his media availability on Oct. 15. "A lot of guys might get nervous about making a move from the South or from the West all the way to Columbus. They just see that it's possible. You see guys from Florida or Texas making plays on the field, you know you're not too far

from home. This team is really diverse as far as where the guys come from. You'll find the guys to hang around and the comfortable fit in the locker room."

Commits Earn Postseason Honor

The high school football season may be drawing to a close, but several Ohio State commits are guaranteed at least one final game to end their respective careers, it was learned recently.

Muskegon, Mich., three-star athlete Cameron Martinez will play in the Pro Football Hall of Fame World Bowl in Mexico City on Dec. 21; Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia five-star wide receiver Julian

Fleming will play in the Under Armour All-American Game in Orlando, Fla., on Jan. 2, 2020; and Cincinnati Elder three-star tight end Joe Royer will play in the Polynesian Bowl in Honolulu on Jan. 18, 2020.

Philadelphia St. Joseph's four-star quarterback Kyle McCord also recently announced he'll conclude his playing career at the 2021 All-American Bowl in San Antonio, though he still has his entire

senior season ahead of him.

The Buckeyes are typically well-represented at the nation's premier postseason all-star games, as evidenced by the fact that 13 of their 24 commits for the class of 2020 will play in the All-America Game, All-American Bowl and/or Polynesian Bowl this winter. It's worth noting, though, that Martinez will be the program's first participant at the World Bowl.

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Michigan State Guard Suffers Major Injury Setback

Joshua Langford's college basketball career could be over after the latest injury to his foot.

At the minimum, it appears the Michigan State senior guard will miss a year of game action while recovering. Langford insists he's not frustrated and has a positive outlook despite suffering another setback just as it seemed he was fully healthy again and ready to return to Michigan State's starting lineup. The injury is similar to the one he suffered in December 2018, which required surgery and forced him to miss the remainder of his junior season.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"I'm a big believer that all things work together for the good of those who love God and in accordance with his purpose," Langford said. "Everything that God allows, it's always something on the other end of it. I'm just taking it in stride and making sure I remain in my faith."

The former five-star recruit from Madison, Ala., is scheduled to be re-evaluated in January for a possible return late in the season.

"Who knows?" Langford said. "Whatever God's plan is for me, it will happen. If I do, if I don't, I'm still going to be thankful and grateful."

Regardless of whether he can return or not, Langford said this season will be his last in East Lansing, Mich. He had already made the decision not to seek a medical redshirt for a fifth year of eligibility earlier this year and said his latest setback has not changed his decision.

After undergoing surgery in February to repair his foot, Langford underwent a seven-month rehab process which Spartans head coach Tom Izzo said was taken slowly to avoid reinjury.

He was cleared to start fully practicing last month and said he had a brief period when he was able to play with some typical discomfort, but no pain. The Spartans planned to bring him back slowly sometime during their tough early-season schedule.

Unfortunately for Langford and Michigan State, the pain returned, and the guard had to sit out of practice and have his foot evaluated once again.

Despite the pain, Langford said the news that he had endured another stress reaction in his foot still came as a shock.

"It just kind of came out of nowhere," Langford said.

While Langford expressed his positive attitude, his teammates and coaches felt sorry for the talented guard they had seen working for seven months to return to the court, only to see that opportunity taken from him.

"We felt bad for him," Spartans point guard Cassius Winston said. "That's a good guy, a great teammate and all-around person. To come back after that long and then seeing that you have to be out some more time, that's always tough."

Heroic Holder Has Emotional Moment For Golden Gophers

An extra-point kick typically does not make headlines.

The point Minnesota added to increase its lead to 28-0 in the fourth quarter against Rutgers on Oct. 19 was not an ordinary extra point, however.

The kick marked the first college football action for Casey O'Brien, a redshirt sophomore holder for the Gophers. O'Brien's debut is significant because he is a four-time cancer survivor who has held onto his role on the Minnesota football team despite multiple rounds of chemotherapy and 14 surgeries.

The emotions of the moment caused O'Brien's teammates to react the way they did after a simple extra point. Gophers head coach P.J. Fleck was overcome with emotion on the sidelines and greeted O'Brien with a massive embrace.

"The whole team mobbed him on the field after the game," Fleck said. "He found a way to make his dream happen, to keep working and working and working until it did. I know it's a hold, but that's pretty important. He's the biggest motivator we have on this team."

O'Brien was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, which is a rare form of bone cancer, as a freshman in high school. He has been cancer-free for more than a year.

After his diagnosis, he was told football would not be a part of his life. O'Brien was awarded special teams player of the week for his heartwarming debut against Rutgers.

"When I was first diagnosed with cancer, I was told that I wouldn't play football again," O'Brien said. "And I knew that I needed football in my life, that had been something that had been there my whole life, and I just wasn't ready to give it up. So, I kind of had a back and forth with the doctors, like there's got to be a way that I can still play."

"I ended up talking them into letting me move from quarterback to placeholder. This was after nine months of chemotherapy, and 8½-hour knee surgery, they were like, you can't take a hit. I was like, OK, I can either be a punter or I could be a placeholder. I can't punt at all, so that narrowed it down to one position."

Husker Standout Mercurio Named Woman of the Year

Nebraska track and field student-athlete Angela Mercurio was named 2019 NCAA Woman of the Year.

Mercurio is only the second student from a current Big Ten Conference school to be named NCAA Woman of the Year and the first since Nebraska volleyball standout Billie Winsett-Fletcher received the award in 1996.

"I'm really grateful to be here," Mercurio said. "Thank you to the NCAA for allowing us women to stand on a stage like this and to share our voices and share our stories. This is very amazing. Thank you to the representatives from Nebraska, and to Nebraska in general. They truly give us so much, and there is no place like Nebraska. I say that confidently."

Mercurio was chosen as the NCAA Woman of the Year by the NCAA committee on women's athletics from among a group of nine finalists, which included three from each of the three NCAA divisions. The NCAA Woman of the Year award has been presented annually since 1991 and recognizes the nation's top senior female student-athlete who has excelled in the award's four pillars of academics, athletics, service and leadership.

A native of Kitchener, Ontario, Mercurio

BIG 2019 Standings

East Division

| | Conf. | | | All | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | W | L | Pct. | W | L | Pct. |
| Ohio State | 5 | 0 | 1.000 | 8 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Penn State | 5 | 0 | 1.000 | 8 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Indiana | 3 | 2 | .600 | 6 | 2 | .750 |
| Michigan | 3 | 2 | .600 | 6 | 2 | .750 |
| Michigan State | 2 | 3 | .400 | 4 | 4 | .500 |
| Maryland | 1 | 4 | .200 | 3 | 5 | .350 |
| Rutgers | 0 | 5 | .000 | 2 | 6 | .250 |

West Division

| | Conf. | | | All | | |
|--------------|-------|---|-------|-----|---|-------|
| | W | L | Pct. | W | L | Pct. |
| Minnesota | 5 | 0 | 1.000 | 8 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Iowa | 3 | 2 | .600 | 6 | 2 | .750 |
| Wisconsin | 3 | 2 | .600 | 6 | 2 | .750 |
| Nebraska | 2 | 3 | .400 | 4 | 4 | .500 |
| Illinois | 2 | 3 | .400 | 4 | 4 | .500 |
| Purdue | 1 | 4 | .200 | 2 | 6 | .250 |
| Northwestern | 0 | 5 | .000 | 1 | 6 | .143 |

Oct. 26 Scores

Illinois 24, Purdue 6
Rutgers 44, Liberty 34
Iowa 20, Northwestern 0
Ohio State 38, Wisconsin 7
Indiana 38, Nebraska 31
Minnesota 52, Maryland 10
Penn State 28, Michigan State 7
Michigan 45, Notre Dame 14

Nov. 2 Games

Nebraska at Purdue, 12 p.m.
Michigan at Maryland, 12 p.m.
Rutgers at Illinois, 3:30 p.m.
Northwestern at Indiana, 7 p.m.

was a two-time Google Cloud Academic All-America second-team selection, as well as a three-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar, four-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree, five-time United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Academic choice and three-time Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar Award selection.

Mercurio graduated from Nebraska in May with a 3.99 GPA with a double major in biochemistry and women's and gender studies, culminating with a 300-hour research project about the effect of cellular kinases VRK1 and VRK2 on foreign DNA transfection and BAF localization.

Also serving her school and community, Mercurio was a four-year team representative on the Nebraska Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and worked as a teaching assistant in biochemistry and microbiology. She also interned at the YWCA, where she assisted in planning curriculum for science, technology, engineering and math programs for girls.

Mercurio also volunteered abroad in India at a medical clinic and at a local free medical clinic. In recognition of her academic achievement, mentoring and leadership, she received the Sam Foltz 27 Hero Leadership Award.

Athletically, Mercurio was a four-year letter winner and two-time captain on the Nebraska track and field team. She was a three-time second-team All-American in the triple jump. She also earned the conference title in the event at the 2019 Big Ten indoor championships before going on to place ninth in the triple jump at the 2019 NCAA indoor championships.

"From virtually the day she arrived at Nebraska, Angela has been someone who has been so special to our program," said Nebraska track and field head coach Gary Pepin. "She was not only a terrific athlete, she was a great leader, a captain and a tremen-

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BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (8-0, 5-0)

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, W 52-3; **26** WISCONSIN, W 38-7.
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), 7:30 p.m.
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, 7 p.m.; **25** KENT STATE, 6:30 p.m.; **29** MORGAN STATE, 9 p.m..
Dec. 4 North Carolina, 9:30 p.m.; **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), 2 p.m.; **10** Valparaiso in Springfield, Ohio, 2 p.m.; **13** Cincinnati, 7 p.m.; **17** OHIO, 2 p.m.; **21** Kent State, 7:30 p.m.; **24** UCONN, 3 p.m.; **29** South Dakota in Las Vegas, 6:30 p.m.; **30** Northern Iowa in Las Vegas, 8:45 p.m.
Dec. 5 LOUISVILLE, 8 p.m.; **8** RADFORD, 2 p.m.; **15** Stanford, 8:30 p.m.; **17** Sacramento State, 10:05 p.m.; **28** PURDUE, 12 p.m.; **31** Minnesota, 5 p.m.
Jan. 6 Maryland, 7 p.m.; **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, 3 p.m.; **6** Illinois, 8 p.m.; **9** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **13** MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **16** Indiana, 2 p.m.; **19** NEBRASKA, 7 p.m.; **22** Rutgers, TBA; **25** NORTHWESTERN, 6 p.m.; **29** Purdue, 4 p.m.

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., Men 4/8; Women 13/36.
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 (4-1-1)

Oct. 6 WESTERN (exhibition), W 5-2; **11** Western Michigan at Toledo, T 2-2; **12** RIT at Toledo, W 3-1; **18** OMAHA, W 3-2; **19** OMAHA, L 2-1; **25** Mercyhurst, W 7-2; **26** Mercyhurst, W 3-1.
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, 8 p.m.; **7** MINNESOTA, 8 p.m.; **27** COLGATE, 7 p.m.; **28** COLGATE, 5 p.m.
Jan. 3 Cornell at Las Vegas, 11 p.m.; **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 (5-3-2, 3-3-2)

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** WISCONSIN, L 3-0; **12** WISCONSIN, L 3-1; **18** Minnesota State, T 1-1; **19** Minnesota State, T 3-3; **25** MINNESOTA, W 4-3; **26** MINNESOTA, L 4-2.
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 (8-8, 2-5)

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, L 2-1 (OT); **13** STANFORD, L 3-1; **18** RUTGERS, L 1-0; **20** MARYLAND, L 3-0; **25** at Penn State, W 2-1; **27** at Kent State, W 4-0.
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 (6-8-1, 1-4-1)

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, L 3-2; **16** at Kentucky, L 1-0; **19** at Michigan State, T 1-1; **25** MARYLAND, L 2-0; **29** at Indiana, 8 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 (4-9-4, 2-5-3)

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, T 0-0; **13** at Indiana, L 1-0; **17** NORTHWESTERN, T 1-1; **20** ILLINOIS, T 0-0; **27** at Iowa, L 2-1 (OT); **30** at Wisconsin, 4 p.m.
SWIMMING & DIVING
Oct. 18-19 Texas A&M, Men, L 153-147; Women, L 174-124.
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 (11-11, 4-6)

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, W 3-0; **12** at Penn State, L 3-0; **16** IOWA, W 3-0; **19** PURDUE, L 3-2; **23** RUTGERS, W 3-1; **26** at Illinois, L 3-0; **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, 5 p.m.; **22** NORTHWESTERN, 7 p.m.; **24** ILLINOIS, 1 p.m.; **29** at Iowa, 8 p.m.; **30** at Nebraska, 8 p.m.

WRESTLING

Nov. 2 Michigan State, 9:30 a.m.; **10** STANFORD, 7 p.m.; **15** Pittsburgh, 3 p.m.; **17** VIRGINIA TECH, 12 p.m.
Dec. 1 CORNELL, 2 p.m.; **6-7** C.K. Invitational at Las Vegas.
Jan 3-5 ARIZONA STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.; **17** Wisconsin, 9 p.m.; **19** ILLINOIS, 1 p.m.; **24** Iowa, 9 p.m.; **26** Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.; **31** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.
Feb. 2 Nebraska; **9** NORTHWESTERN, 2 p.m.; **15** Penn State, 7:30 p.m.
March 7-8 Big Ten Championship; **19-21** NCAA Championship.

dous student, and she was wonderful to work with. We're very, very proud of her, and she has earned everything that she's received."

Top Performers From Across The Conference

Rutgers redshirt freshman quarterback Johnny Langan was one of the Big Ten's top performers for games of Oct. 26, leading the Scarlet Knights to a 44-34 win against Liberty. He completed 15 of 21 passes for 192 yards and two touchdowns while adding 118 yards and a touchdown on 21 rushing attempts.

Penn State sophomore quarterback Sean Clifford picked apart the Michigan State defense for 189 yards and four touchdowns in the Nittany Lions' 28-7 victory. The Cincinnati native added 11 yards on the ground for the undefeated Lions.

Michigan running backs Hassan Haskins and Zach Charbonnet excelled in the Wolverines' 45-14 dismantling of Notre Dame. Haskins, a sophomore, ran for 149 yards on 29 carries, while Charbonnet, a freshman, added 74 yards and two scores on 15 carries.

Other Big Ten running backs also enjoyed big weeks. Illinois senior running back Dre Brown ran for 131 yards on 18 carries in the Illini's 24-6 victory at Purdue, while Minnesota fifth-year senior tailback Rodney Smith rushed for 103 yards and one touchdown on 17 carries in the Golden Gophers' 52-10 beatdown of Maryland.

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

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Andre Wesson Eyes Leadership Role In Final Season

Heading into his senior season, forward Andre Wesson knows this could be the last go-around with his younger brother, Kaleb.

Of course, Andre thought the same thing his final season at Westerville South High School in suburban Columbus. At the time, Kaleb was a highly sought recruit who would eventually commit to the Buckeyes, where their father, Keith, played from 1983-87.

"This is definitely something we've envisioned doing," he said. "It's going to be a challenge, so every day we get a chance on this court we have to make the most of it. That's the only way things like that are going to happen.

"I don't have a ring, and that's something that I really want, whether that's Big Ten regular season, tournament. That's definitely been in the back of my mind."

As a freshman, Wesson (6-6, 220), averaged 2.3 points and 1.2 rebounds per game in 29 games. The next season his numbers were 2.9 and 1.8, respectively, in 34 games but it was his junior season when Holtmann began to rely on him more and more. Wesson played all 35 games, starting all but one, and ranked third on the team in points (8.6) and rebounds (4.1) and second in minutes (30.0).

A highlight was making the game-winning dunk at Indiana with 20 seconds left on Feb. 10.

"He took a jump last year," Holtmann said. "If he didn't take a jump, if some of our returning guys didn't take a jump, we have no chance to make the NCAA Tournament. He was a big part of what we did, particularly how we finished.

"Like all of our guys he's got to make improvements. He's got to be more efficient. He's got to be able to stay out of foul trouble a little bit more than what he did. His shooting has to get a little more consistent."

Wesson is the lone scholarship senior, and as such he has been given the task of being a leader more than at any point in his OSU career.

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 |

"Andre is balancing right now the responsibility he has being a senior and what comes with that and wanting to leave a legacy that's an impactful one as well as continue to grow his game and his ability to impact things on the floor," Holtmann said.

Wesson got a taste of what was expected on and off the court last season when Kaleb was suspended for three games during the stretch run. Andre had to deal with being there for his brother but also was forced at times to play in the paint because the Buckeyes lacked depth in the post.

The Buckeyes did just enough to earn a spot in the NCAA Tournament before losing to Houston in the second round, and Andre felt the adversity made the players stronger.

"Going through what Kaleb went through, that helped us as a team last year and for this year for some of the guys who are returning," he said.

Putting those moments to good use will be Wesson's job, something he admits he is still getting used to.

"I need to be a more vocal leader," he said. "I'm kind of a laid-back guy and showing guys how to work. That's the best way I know how to lead.

"You have to get out of your comfort zone. If you want to win that championship we're talking about, it's not going to be easy, but anytime you can make yourself better and your teammates better, that's what I'm going to do."

Fortunately, former Buckeye teammates such as Jae'Sean Tate and C.J. Jackson set good examples for Wesson. He's also studied others.

"Coach has done a good job bringing in speakers, and I wrote notes to learn a little bit from them to become a better leader," Wesson said. "I'm trying to pick up things from everybody."

Poll Potpourri

The Buckeyes rated well in two of the major preseason outlooks: 16th in the USA Today coaches poll, and 18th in the Associated Press voting.

While the rankings are a testament to the efforts of Holtmann to build the national recognition of the program, he has bigger goals than what spot the Buckeyes occupy now.

"I think relevancy comes as much as anything from accomplishment," Holtmann said. "I want to be relevant at the end of the year. I want it to be based on our accomplishment and not any other type of predictions or talk."

Michigan State topped both polls, but the news was tempered for the Spartans when coach Tom Izzo announced Oct. 21 that starting shooting guard Joshua Langford would be out at until at least January with recurring foot and ankle issues that limited the senior to 13 games last season.

Other Big Ten schools in the USA Today top 25 are Maryland (8) and Purdue

(22). Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois also received votes.

As for the AP balloting, Maryland was seventh and Purdue 23rd. Illinois and Michigan got votes.

Stepping In

Former Ohio State assistant coach Greg Paulus was named interim coach at Niagara University on Oct. 24 after the sudden resignation of Patrick Beilein, who stepped down after seven months.

"Personal reasons I can no longer take lightly have led me to step away from my dream job," Beilein said in a statement. "Going forward, I must give singular focus to dealing with these issues, so that I can become the man that I strive to be."

Beilein, 36, is the son of former Michigan coach John Beilein, who is in his first season as coach of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Paulus, 33, was an assistant for Thad Matta from 2013-17 after being the program's video coordinator from 2011-13. He showed himself to be a good recruiter, helping the Buckeyes sign top-10 classes in 2014 and '15.

Paulus played four seasons of basketball at Duke (2005-09) and the 2009 season as a graduate transfer quarterback at Syracuse.

Recruiting News

Holtmann and his staff are eyeing Fort Wayne (Ind.) Blackhawk Christian School 2021 four-star forward Caleb Furst. He took an unofficial visit to Columbus the weekend of Oct. 26.

Furst (6-8, 215) was offered by the Buckeyes on Sept. 22, and a bevy of other schools have offered as well, including Butler, Indiana, Iowa, Louisville, Michigan State, Purdue and Virginia.

He is being recruited by assistant coach Terry Johnson. Furst is ranked 29th overall and No. 7 at power forward nationally by 247Sports and is rated the No. 2 player in Indiana for his class.

Also, Omaha (Neb.) Millard North 2021 four-star guard Hunter Sallis (6-3, 165) received an OSU offer on Oct. 22 after excelling at the recent USA Basketball junior national team camp in Colorado. Big Ten schools Iowa and Nebraska are among those that have offered.

Sallis is 43rd nationally, No. 5 at combo guard and the top player in the state.

The Buckeyes have two scholarships available for the 2021 cycle.

Staff Hands Out Offer

The Buckeyes extended an offer Oct. 26 to South Bend (Ind.) Riley shooting guard Blake Wesley (6-4, 170). The 2021 four-star is ranked 85th nationally, 17th at his position and sixth in Indiana. Butler, Cincinnati, Indiana, Notre Dame, Purdue, Xavier and others have offered.

COURT REPORT

Craig Merz

Andre wasn't sure what his post-prep plans were but had offers too, including one from Butler coach Chris Holtmann. As it turned out, the Wesson brothers led Westerville South to the 2016 Division I state title, and Andre pledged to Ohio State and coach Thad Matta.

After Matta was fired following Andre's freshman season, Holtmann was hired, and the Buckeyes have reached the NCAA Tournament the past two seasons.

"It is kind of crazy thinking about it," Andre Wesson said. "It's gone fast. I've enjoyed my three years so far here, and I'm looking forward to the fourth."

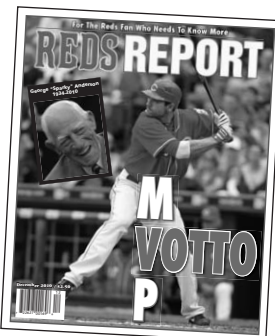
Now, it's déjà vu for Andre, who would love to replicate his previous senior season and win a championship with his brother.

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Wone Aranaz Adds To OSU's European Frontcourt

Aixa Wone Aranaz was supposed to have this story written about her last season. The three-star forward out of Pamplona, Spain was committed to Ohio State a year ago and was ready to travel to a new continent and continue her basketball career there.

Instead, due to issues with forms and paperwork, Wone Aranaz was forced to wait a full season to make the move to Columbus.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

"Originally we recruited her that she would be a sophomore now, but just sometimes with international recruiting, it takes a while to get everything," Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "We ended up pushing it back a year, and so it's been a long process, but we're really happy to have her right now."

Wone Aranaz said the year of extra time she had in Spain was difficult but also was helpful in getting her ready to make such a big leap into moving across the globe.

"At first it was hard because I had in my mind that next year I'm going to Ohio State," she said, "but it also was like I have one year for preparing myself to say, 'OK, I'm going, and it will be better, and I have more time to prepare for this year.'"

Now that she's here, Ohio State is bringing in a player who has been on Spain's FIBA World Championship teams since before she was a teenager, when Wone Aranaz made the U13 squad.

But it was only shortly before that happened that Wone Aranaz seriously picked up the sport in the first place.

"I think that started when I was 10 years old," Wone Aranaz said. "I wanted to do a sport, but I didn't know what sport, so they told me 'You're tall, you can try basketball.' So I said, 'OK, we will try basketball,' and I loved it."

Wone Aranaz, now 19 years old, won the FIBA championship in 2016 on her U16 team, earned a silver last year and got a bronze this season on the U20 group.

The third-place result this season came with Wone Aranaz's 8.7 points, 6.4 rebounds and two assists per game, which included a pair of 14-point games, all while shooting 39.3 percent from the field (24 of 61) and 47.4 percent from three-point range (9 of 19).

She said that even though this year was not the best finish she has had in her FIBA career, it is the experience from the 2019 team that will go down as her favorite one yet.

"I think the feeling that we have with each other, the coaches helped a lot," Wone Aranaz said of reasons that this year's FIBA group stood out. "I think that we were a real team - we felt like a real team."

Wone Aranaz decided it was in her best interest to leave Europe and play basketball at the collegiate level in the United States, which came down to wanting to get the college experience and get a solid education to go along with the basketball side of it.

"I had the option to stay in Spain and play pro, but the bad thing of staying in Spain was that I didn't have the chance to

study, and I think that the studies are very important to me because you never know what can happen with you," Wone Aranaz said. "I chose to come here because you can study and play basketball at the same time."

Eventually, that led her to Ohio State after an official visit in May 2017 that she said helped make her decision. What also helped was an atmosphere the Buckeyes had with their coaching that Wone Aranaz thought would improve her game.

The addition of Hungarian forward Dorka Juhasz also helped the Spanish forward get accustomed to life outside of Europe.

"I didn't have any Spanish girls here, so it was like, 'OK, one European can help me because she will understand how the game in Europe is and how the transition is,'" Wone Aranaz said. "It's so helpful because she really knows how you feel in some situations and she can tell you: 'It's not that bad, it will be better,' or, 'You can do this.'"

McGuff echoed that sentiment, saying that having Juhasz on the roster has helped with both Wone Aranaz as well as freshman forward Rebeka Mikulasikova, who came in from Slovakia.

"I think it is just a level of comfort that when other students then come that they know that we're conscious of what they go through to come from another continent and that we are aware of that and ready to embrace that and make sure they're comfortable and successful," McGuff said. "I mean it's probably as much off the court as anything. They really support each other knowing that they're going through a different thing than the rest of the players."

"It's hard. I mean they're young kids and they come a long way to go to school and they don't get to go home a lot, so I think it's probably more off the court where they really support each other in those areas."

Wone Aranaz said that the game in the States is more physical and requires more physical excellence in order to have success, and this season she is focused on adapting her game for these new changes.

According to her head coach, she has

the type of play that will work well within both the team Ohio State has, as well as in general for games at the college level.

"She plays really hard, she runs the floor, she plays with toughness, she defends, she rebounds," McGuff said. "I just really, really liked her intensity and how hard she played."

As far as her outlook on the season goes, Wone Aranaz said she doesn't want to make any predictions before seeing what any of her collegiate opponents look like.

"I think that it will be hard because we are new people, new faces, and we really don't know how the competition is," Wone Aranaz said. "I think that at first, it will be hard, but if we work hard and we are a real team or we're good teammates, then we can do a lot."

"We should be the best that we can be, because I really don't know the competition, so I can't tell you it's going to be like this or that."

Waterman Becomes Student Coach

After five years with the program as a player, Ohio State's Makayla Waterman has moved up to an official coach.

Waterman was granted a waiver by the NCAA to move up from student manager to student coach heading into the 2019-20 season.

Becoming a student coach instead of a manager allows her to "coach and instruct the players both during practice and in the games and provide film breakdown and film study off the court," according to the press release.

"Coach McGuff really wants me to be sort of a translator for him with the eight new players and coaches we have in our system this year," Waterman said. "I've been around him for five years now, and I have a good feel for when he wants something done a certain way and I can help with that. It will be good for me to connect with the players in that way, and I can help them through the tough times this year."

Waterman is in her second year of graduate school, working on her master's degree in

sport coaching.

Last season, Waterman was the only Ohio State player to have been with the program from her freshman to senior seasons. She became a leader for the group and started 24 of her 27 games played, while averaging 7.6 points and 5.3 rebounds per game, both career highs.

"I'm excited to help fill the voids in practice and in drills while the new players are getting familiar with his offensive and defensive schemes," Waterman said. "I will be able to step in and demonstrate like I could last year as a player. That just comes natural for me."

Juhasz Earns Preseason Honors

There are plenty of unknowns about the Ohio State women's basketball team heading into the 2019-20 season, and that was put on display when both the coaches and the media left the Buckeyes out of their preseason conference top five lists.


Instead, Maryland was ranked No. 1 in both polls, with Michigan State, Michigan and Indiana also showing up in both polls. Purdue ranked No. 5 for the coaches, and Minnesota was the fifth team that rounded out the list for the media.

Ohio State did get a player to land on the coaches' picks for their preseason All-Big Ten team, with Juhasz making that list, but not on the media's selections.

Juhasz led Ohio State in both scoring (11.7 points per game) and rebounding (9.0 rebounds per game) in her true freshman season.

Maryland's Kaila Charles was a unanimous selection on both lists and was the pick for preseason Player of the Year by both media and coaches alike. Other picks included Indiana's Ali Patberg, Iowa's Kathleen Doyle, Maryland's Taylor Mikesell, Michigan's Naz Hillmon, Michigan State's Shay Colley, Northwestern's Lindsey Pulliam and two Purdue players in Ae'Rianna Harris and Karissa McLaughlin, who were each selected to both preseason teams.

Juhasz was the only player selected to only one of the teams.




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Hein Doing Fine In First Season As Captain

The direction of the Ohio State men's hockey team will be determined by the leadership of its veterans.

Veer off course and it will be a disappointing end for the careers of the seniors, who have made the NCAA tournament in each of their first three seasons. Stay on the same page and provide guidance to the younger players and the Buckeyes' success will continue.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

"Their communication, what they're doing on the ice, what they're doing in the room, is important," coach Steve Rohlik said. "Leadership isn't always about saying things all the time. It's about doing things, and to me that's the most important thing. You can talk about it all you want, but you have to go out and do it."

Of the eight seniors, three are captains. Forward Ronnie Hein is a captain while defenseman Gordi Myer and forward Tanner Laczynski, along with junior forward Austin Pooley, are alternates.

Hein (rhymes with line) has taken to his role in the locker room and showed the way on the ice during the championship game of the Ice Breaker Tournament in Toledo on Oct. 12 when he scored twice in a 3-1 win against Rochester Institute of Technology.

"It's not just about scoring goals or getting points," he said. "It's my job to help the team in any way possible. That night, it happened to be two goals to kind of get us going and get everyone else rolling."

The Buckeyes struggled out of the gate against RIT and the previous night in the season opener vs. Western Michigan in a 2-2 tie but persevered.

"We have a good group of guys in the room, and everybody stayed really positive," Hein said. "We are going to face a lot more adversity throughout the year. It's kind of good to face it now in the beginning and see what your team is like and its character and personality. We did a good job of fighting back, and the captains did a good job of rallying them."

He knows that wearing the C brings added responsibilities.

"Here at Ohio State it's a very big honor, a lot of big shoes to fill," he said. "It's been a joy, a lot of fun. We've got three other guys. That helps a lot. I'm not the only one that leads."

"You pick up things from them and the rest of the team that can help you. This year's team is different than last year's personality. It helps to learn from the guys and how they go about their business."

Hein feels he had the attributes needed to be a good leader.

"You have to speak up a little bit more in the room," he said. "It's not just leading on ice. You have to do a little more talking and motivate guys and keep them on track."

"It's a long season. Your job is to keep everybody on the same path and same goal and keep moving forward."

The No. 15 Buckeyes faced more challenges their second weekend of the season at home against Omaha. They beat the Mavericks 3-2 the first night but in the rematch lost a couple of players to injury due to illegal hits and lost the game, 2-1, on Oct. 19.

Rohlik liked how the players responded two days later when they hit the ice again. "I like our practice habits right now,"

he said. "Our guys came back at it on Monday. I love our work ethic. They want to be better."

Myer said it was important not to dwell on the negatives from the game.

"It was business as usual," he said. "I've learned over the last four years that's how it is. You play Friday, you play Saturday then Monday rolls around and the weekend's in the past and you do whatever you can to get ready for the next Friday night."

Rohlik is not surprised his core of veterans make sure the team stays on an even keel. He first saw that the opening weekend in Toledo.

"I think it's the response when things don't go great," he explained. "It's easy when things are going well in practice or you're winning hockey games. It's easy to coach and easy to be leaders. The true test of a leader is when things don't go as planned. I don't think things went as planned in the first period vs. Western Michigan and again in the first period the next night. Our leaders are the ones who said this is the direction we need to go. That's really what you look for in good leadership."

"I learned we have good leadership. You saw that from our seniors and our captains. We were kind of resilient."

Ohio State is going to need that bounce-back attitude throughout the season. They had a strong senior class last season as well to go along with more proven scorers than this season's bunch.

Goals have been hard to come but not through a lack of effort.

"I like our compete," Rohlik said. "The guys show up every day and want to be better. That's all you can ask."

Hein, from Chelsea, Mich., has been one of those who has progressed every season, reaching career highs in goals (11), assists (10) and points (21) as a

junior.

"Ronnie makes everyone around him better," Rohlik said. "He's not the fastest skater, the prettiest skater, the strongest guy on the ice, the hardest shot, but he's a really good hockey player. That's the most important thing."

Through six games this season, Hein has four points (two goals, two assists).

No Mercy

Ohio State scored at opportune times and continued its solid defensive play when the No. 15 Buckeyes beat Mercyhurst 3-1 at the Mercyhurst Ice Arena in Erie, Pa., on Oct. 26 to complete the sweep following a 7-2 win the previous night.

Junior goalie Tommy Nappier stopped 44 of 47 shots (.936 save percentage) in the series for the Buckeyes (4-1-1), who have yet to allow more than two goals in a game this season.

Sophomore Gustaf Westlund had five points (two goals each night plus an assist in the first game), but the real surprise was senior defenseman Wyatt Ege. He entered the weekend with two goals in 80 career games but had three goals in the final 26 minutes in the first game and had an assist in the second game.

His hat trick was the first for a Buckeye since David Gust at Connecticut on Nov. 11, 2016, and the first for an OSU defenseman since at least 1998.

Senior Carson Meyer had a goal and three assists in the two games, and the Buckeyes' penalty kill was 9 for 10 in the series. OSU scored four power-play goals in the opener.

Next

The Buckeyes open Big Ten play by hosting Michigan (3-2-1) at Value City Arena at 7 p.m. on Nov. 1 and 5 p.m. on Nov. 2.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series at Mercyhurst go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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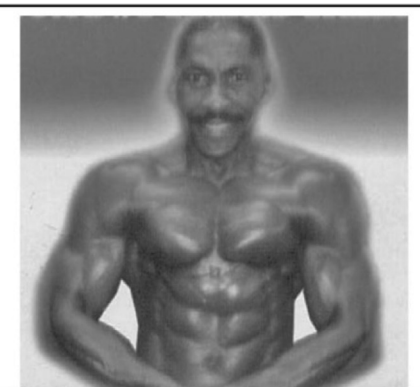
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Tennis Success Runs In The Family For McNally

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

On Oct. 21, Ohio State junior tennis player John McNally won the singles title at the ITA Midwest Regionals in Columbus in a hard-fought battle with Buckeye teammate Kyle Seelig. His victory secured a berth for McNally at the ITA Fall Championships in Newport Beach, Calif., from Nov. 6-10. It wasn't his only victory of the day, as he, with freshman Robert Cash, took down Michigan's Andrew Fenty and Mattis Siimar in the doubles portion of the tournament. The Buckeye duo will compete at the championships, just as McNally, freshman Cannon Kingsley and Seelig will in singles.

Four days earlier on Oct. 17, McNally's sister, Catherine, paired with rising superstar Coco Gauff, pulled off a massive upset at the Luxemburg Open, knocking off the No. 4-ranked doubles team of Anno Blinkova and Miyu Kato in straight sets. A day later, they won again, over the top international team, Kristýna Plíšková and Renata Voráčová. On Oct. 19, the United States teen duo completed their stunning run with a victory over the No. 2 team of Kaitlyn Christian and Alexa Guarachi to win the open.

For the McNally family, tennis seems to just come naturally. As John tells it, they've always been competitive, and a large part of that comes from just how good the duo is at their shared love.

"It's a competitive family," John McNally said. "Growing up with her, not just in tennis, it's just in everything we do. It motivates me. She has a better work ethic than I do, already. She's 17, she takes things way more professionally, and it's very impressive. It motivates me to try to be like that one day, but I just have to worry about myself and worry about doing the best that I can in school and for Ohio State that I can while I'm still here and see what I have after college."

While McNally says that he's motivated by his sister's success, just as she certainly is by his, there's no sibling rivalry between the young stars.

"It's kind of impossible to keep up with her at this point," he said. "She's doing amazing things. There's no rivalry. I'm so happy for her and always proud of what she does on and off the court. She's an amazing person, and hopefully she continues on the path she's on. She's already done some pretty amazing things at 17, things I could only dream of doing in my tennis career going forward. No rivalry, just all love and respect for her."

Rivalry or not, it was a very big week for the McNally family. While the stage was certainly larger for Catherine than it was for John, it was John's victory that may have meant more for the winner, because of what it came on the heels of. Entering his junior season, McNally was expected to serve as a leader for Ohio State and assume the role as one of the team's top players. Earlier in October, however, McNally fell short of his own expectations at the ITA All-American Championships in Tulsa, losing to Georgia's Phillip Henning in straight sets short of the finals. While McNally was disappointed, the loss likely wasn't entirely on him.

"Tulsa was very, very tough," Tucker said. "Over 400 players there, only a few indoor courts and it rained for three straight days. You're not getting prepared to play indoors, outdoors, 30-mile-per-hour winds when he lost outside in Tulsa. It was tough. We tried to let him know that it was tough conditions and it didn't go well for him that match against the player from Georgia, but he got to come home and get three matches under his belt before the quarterfinals to get some confidence back. He ended up playing Justin Boulais, a freshman for us, and it was a pretty tight match that he won."

"He was tested a little bit every match but found a way to come through."

Regardless, the loss in Tulsa created a now-or-never situation for McNally. To qualify for the championships, he would need to impress at the Midwest Regionals, and impress he did. For McNally, the turnaround was sparked by confidence, coaching and returning to a healthy mind-set.

"After Tulsa, I just tried to stay positive," he said. "It was pretty tough. I was not in

the best place mentally, but with Coach Ty (Tucker), Coach (Justin) Kronauge and Coach (David) Schilling, they helped me get through it and get through some tough matches in the early part of regionals, not playing my best, and then I started to play better as the tournament went on and just happened to all fall right into place."

While he may couch excitement for his own success in statements about the success of the team and while he always looks to credit others, McNally couldn't help but smile when asked about his singles title. With it being one of his first titles, there was certainly more significance for the Cincinnati native than just qualification for the next level.

"It was nice. Just growing up, I had a lot of success in the juniors, and as you get older, you start playing more pro stuff and it gets harder to win tournaments. I haven't really won a tournament. I've lost in the finals of a couple tournaments. I lost in the finals of a pro tournament this summer, but it's the first time I've won a tournament in a very long time, so it felt good to put five matches together and win a tournament. It felt really nice."

As mentioned, it wasn't just a successful individual tournament for McNally. The doubles win sends Robert Cash to the championships as well, an honor that McNally says young players usually don't get to experience.

"It's nice to get Robert to qualify," he said. "I was really happy about that. Giving him the opportunity to play that as a freshman is a pretty big deal. Not a lot of freshmen get to play in that."

With two freshmen in Cash and Kingsley heading to the championships, Tucker sees a responsibility for his upperclassmen McNally and Seelig to lead and to set a good example for their younger counterparts.

That isn't just a theme for the upcoming tournament. The longtime head coach preaches leadership from his older players and relishes when his veterans can lead not just with their words but with their actions.

"We talk to John all the time about how (leadership) is what we need the most,"

Tucker said. "We're a team right now with three guys with a very good amount of experience and six guys that have next to no college experience."

That tournament in Newport Beach could present similar challenges for the Buckeyes as Tulsa did, with the possibility not just for strong winds but possible rain and chilly temperatures on the horizon out west. To prepare its qualifiers for anything, Ohio State has been practicing in essentially every condition, though that can only help so much.

For McNally and, by extension, the Buckeyes to succeed in Newport Beach, it will likely take an extension of the confidence gained from this past tournament. McNally told BSB that he wasn't in a great place mentally during that tournament in Tulsa. That's no longer an issue. He's as confident as ever, and the Buckeyes will likely go as far as McNally does. For what he says is basically the first time in his career, McNally has extremely high expectations and lofty goals.

"This year is the first year I've had really high expectations on myself to perform really well individually," he said. "I'm in a little bit of a bigger role this year. We lost some really good players, so I know I'm going to have to step up a lot this year."

While it isn't quite the Luxemburg Open, the fall championships are a big deal for Ohio State and for McNally. The spring season is when team action begins, but a successful individual fall can predict success in the spring, and for a program constantly in the hunt for titles, any chance to prove itself is a chance worth taking.

With the monkey off his back and a title in his pocket, McNally has the chance to not just earn more hardware, but perhaps some much-needed family bragging rights.

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



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Wisconsin No Match For Powerful Buckeyes

The Ohio State Buckeyes knew they had a tough task in front of them Oct. 26 at kickoff. To remain undefeated, stay in front of the pack in the Big Ten East along with Penn State, and maintain a potential spot in the national playoff picture, they had to take on a Wisconsin Badger team that had been upset the week prior by a much inferior Illinois squad. Whether they took the Illini lightly or just made too mistakes down the stretch didn't matter. They were going to take out their frustration and anger on the Buckeyes.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

As for Ohio State, the Buckeyes knew they would get Wisconsin's best shot and had to be ready on both sides of the football for the best team they would face so far this season. After all, Wisconsin had the nation's No. 1 defense and, on offense, a true Heisman Trophy candidate in running back Jonathan Taylor. The battle lines were drawn, and this game was expected to be a true heavyweight fight, especially in the trenches, between two outstanding football teams.

Football fans were not left disappointed in the quality of football Saturday afternoon. Both teams came ready to play, and the only thing that was ugly was the weather.

Dobbins Vs. Taylor

Only 10 yards separated the two talented runners before Saturday. Whoever put up the best performance would establish himself as the leading rusher in the Big Ten Conference. J.K. Dobbins had won the first encounter in the head-to-head matchup in 2017 when he rushed for 174 yards to Taylor's 41 in Lucas Oil Stadium in the Big Ten Championship Game.

The Wisconsin faithful thought 2019 would be different with Taylor already surpassing 5,000 career yards and fast approaching another 1,000 for the season. Taylor was being compared to other Wisconsin great backs such as Ron Dayne and Montee Ball. Only the Ohio State defense stood in Taylor's way of staying at the top of the Big Ten rushing lead and a possible trip to New York in December.

The stout Buckeye defense did their job in limiting Taylor to just 52 yards on 20 carries, and he never crossed the Ohio State goal line. Dobbins smelled Badger blood in the water and saw his chance to take the lead in the Big Ten rushing title. J.K. responded by putting up 163 yards in the same amount of carries as Taylor along with scoring two touchdowns.

Besides his obvious talents as a rusher, Dobbins has also shown his versatility as a receiver. Even though a long shot for the Heisman Trophy, Dobbins has proved to be the best back in the conference at this point, and maybe, just maybe, he will get an invite to the "Big Apple" himself.

Young Vs. The World

The one-man wrecking crew of Chase Young showed up to Ohio Stadium ready to take on any and every player the Wisconsin offense might use to try to keep him out of the Badger backfield. During the game Wisconsin head coach Paul Chryst and offensive coordinator Joe Rudolph attempted a variety of combinations of blockers to restrain Young and keep him off quarterback Jack Coan.

It quickly became apparent that Badger left tackle Cole Van Lanen couldn't handle Young all by himself. As General George Patton would say, Young ran through him like "crap through a goose." In reality, Young ran through, over, and around Van Lanen at will, becoming Van Lanen's instant nightmare. Even attempts by the Wisconsin coaching staff to assign a running back or tight end to help Van Lanen protect Coan from the onrushing Young proved to be fruitless.

Wisconsin found out, like every other Ohio State opponent, that Young is unstoppable. Saturday Young not only was in the face or coming from the blind side of Coan for four quarters, but he often brought Wisconsin blockers along with him. Young made sure Coan left Ohio Stadium shell-shocked from the persistent pressure put on the junior quarterback.

Young's superhuman dominance Saturday has finally drawn the attention of football analysts from around the country. There is no doubt Young is the best defensive football player in all of college football and, as many are starting to think, the very best college football player in the country. He may indeed get that special invite to New York. One thing is for certain, some Buckeye wearing jersey No. 2 deserves to be there.

OSU O-Line Vs. Badger 'Backers

The biggest challenge for Ohio State offensively Saturday afternoon was to find a way to both establish running lanes for Dobbins and protect Justin Fields against a relentless and physical Wisconsin defense that had established itself as the nation's best. The Buckeye offensive front would have to contend with the heated pass rush of the Badger defensive front seven led by perhaps the strongest linebacking corps in the Big Ten. Going into the game Saturday, Wisconsin linebackers Chris Orr, Jack Sanborn, and Zack Baun led their team in tackles and sacks.

Orr and Baun were also No. 2 and 4, respectively, in the Big Ten in sacks behind

league leader Young. For the Buckeye offensive line to be successful in moving the chains and putting points on the board, they would have to pick up a variety of blitzes and defensive schemes by the Wisconsin front led by that group of linebackers.

The Badgers had success early in stopping both the running and passing attack of the Buckeyes. Wisconsin held Ohio State to just 40 net yards in the first quarter of play. As a matter of fact, the only completed pass of the first quarter for Ohio State was a 17-yarder to Dobbins.

The second quarter of play, however, was a different story for the Buckeyes. Due to adjustments by the Ohio State coaching staff and offensive front, the Buckeye offense started to roll. In the second quarter Ohio State would put up 140 more yards and lead the Badgers by a 10-point margin at halftime.

As the game wore on, the Buckeye coaches did an excellent job of using certain formations that didn't allow the Badgers to keep all their linebackers in the box, thus eliminating some of the stunts and blitzes they had used early in the game.

To add to the second-half dominance by the Buckeyes was the dialed-up tempo leading to sustained drives which resulted in the wearing down of the Wisconsin defense, which didn't have enough depth to counter the Buckeye offensive onslaught.

What's Next

The Buckeyes head to another off week, and whatever the formula was prior to Northwestern needs to be repeated. The concentration on film study, individual technique improvement, physical practices, conditioning, along with plenty of treatment in the training room will be the method of operation the next couple of weeks.

Heavy concentration on the next opponent by the players along with a peek at Penn State and Michigan by the coaching staff will probably be part of the recipe for the November run toward a Big Ten championship. At the same time, major emphasis on 3-5 Maryland must be the priority. The Buckeyes do not need a Purdue moment in 2019. This team is on a roll, and it will be hard to stop anytime soon.

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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"Your Head to Toe Buckeye Source"

Buckeyes Continue To Roll At Historic Pace

If the 2019 Buckeyes could play the national champion 2014 Buckeyes, who would be favored?

Of course, we have only an eight-game body of work to judge this year's team, but it sure looks like the 2019 Buckeyes would be the favorite.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

Even against the postseason version of the 2014 team – superior to the regular-season 2014 team – the 2019 Buckeyes may very well be the favorite, no worse than a pick 'em.

That's how good Ohio State has looked in rolling to 8-0 to start to the season, not only winning but fully dominating every opponent along the way. I'm hard-pressed to come up with any Ohio State team in my memory going back to the mid-1970s that has been this dominating.

The Buckeyes' play is reminiscent of the way the 2014 Buckeyes closed out the season, dispatching Wisconsin, 59-0, in the Big Ten title game and then Alabama, 42-35, and Oregon, 42-20, in the playoffs.

But that 2014 team struggled early, losing to Virginia Tech, 35-21, and was in several closer games than anything the 2019 team has faced. Ohio State's closest games this year have been 24-point wins over Florida Atlantic and Michigan State. The Buckeyes' average margin of victory is 40.4 points, the product of outscoring their opponents 386-63.

The 2014 Buckeyes during the regular season not only had a loss, they had several closer wins – by 17 points over Navy, by 15 over Indiana, by 14 over Michigan, by 12 over Michigan State, by 7 over Minnesota, and they went to overtime tied against Penn State before winning by 7.

To date, this year's team is the high-

est-scoring team in school history, averaging 48.3 points a game. That number surely will go down with tougher games ahead, but the record of 45.5 points a game set in 2013 certainly is in jeopardy.

The offenses are close; the defenses are not.

The 2019 team's 48.3 points a game ranks third in the country for scoring with its 386 points, behind only Oklahoma (394) and Alabama (389). The 2014 team averaged 44.8 points a game, ranking fifth nationally.

The 2019 team is No. 1 in the country for defense, allowing 7.9 points a game. The 2014 team ranked just 26th nationally, allowing an average of 22 points a game.

As for individuals, consider the stars.

In 2014, Ezekiel Elliott averaged 125.2 yards a game, 12th best in the country. J.T. Barrett was second in the country for passing efficiency, and combining the work of Cardale Jones and others, the team ranked second for passing efficiency as well.

In 2019, J.K. Dobbins is averaging 138.8 yards a game, second in the country. Justin Fields is fourth nationally for passing efficiency.

And on defense, talk is percolating that Chase Young could be a Heisman finalist this year because of the way he has disrupted quarterbacks, including with 13½ sacks through eight games.

Joey Bosa led the defensive front in 2014, with 13½ sacks for the entire 15-game season.

Chase Young for Heisman?

The Fox broadcast team sure promoted Young's Heisman chances as he was manhandling the Wisconsin offense. Young even drew praise on Twitter from none other than Wisconsin grad and five-time All-Pro defensive end J.J. Watt.

But can Young really be a serious Heisman candidate when so much attention is paid to quarterbacks?

Flipped the channel to the LSU-Auburn game later in the day, and the answer is no. The Heisman update during that game focused on the quarterbacks, including Fields. Joe Burrow, Jalen Hurts and Tua Tagovailoa will probably have to tail off to

give Young any realistic chance.

A more solid bet is that Young's rookie NFL contract will be worth more than the first contract for any of those quarterbacks – because Young likely will be picked higher.

Dobbins' 3K

Not only has Dobbins now rushed for at least 1,000 yards in each of his first three seasons, he almost certainly will finish the season with more career yards rushing than any OSU back ever – including Archie Griffin – in his first three years.

Dobbins now has 3,566 yards. Elliott had 3,961 yards in his three years at OSU. Griffin had 4,139 yards in his first three years en route to a school-record 5,589 over four seasons.

A Perfect Day

Ryan Day has now matched Earle Bruce for winning his first 11 games as the Buckeyes coach. That includes three wins last year. Bruce, of course, led the Buckeyes to an 11-0 regular season in 1979 after replacing Woody Hayes. The streak came to an end with a 17-16 loss to USC in the Rose Bowl.

But Day has a way to go to equal Urban Meyer's start. Meyer won his first 24 games as the Buckeyes' coach, going 12-0 in 2012 and sweeping the regular season in 2013 before losing the Big Ten Championship Game to Michigan State.

As for other Buckeye coaches:

- Jim Tressel lost his second game to UCLA and finished the 2001 season 7-5.
- John Cooper lost his second game to Pitt and finished the 1988 season 4-6-1.
- Woody Hayes lost his second game to Michigan State and finished the 1951 season 4-3-2.

Big Ten Defense

The latest national ranking for scoring defense is dominated by the Big Ten.

After No. 1 Ohio State (7.9 ppg), Penn State is second at 9.6, Iowa third at 10.1, Wisconsin sixth at 11.4 and Michigan 16th at 18.4.

Polling

The first set of college football playoff committee ratings won't be released until Nov. 5, but if it were this week, I would expect Ohio State to be No. 1. The Buckeyes have controlled every game, start to finish, which has been an important criterion for previous committees.

True, LSU has some wins against teams better than what Ohio State has faced – Florida (sixth in the AP Poll), Auburn (11th) and Texas (which dropped out of the rankings following a loss to TCU).

But Ohio State's schedule hasn't been

as weak as some would lead you to believe. The Buckeyes have wins over teams that were ranked 18th (Wisconsin) and 17th (Cincinnati). And Indiana, now sitting at 6-2 overall, could sneak into the rankings sooner rather than later.

Playoff Handicapping

Going undefeated for any major-conference team is a playoff guarantee again this year now that there can be no more than three – potential undefeated champions of the ACC, Big Ten, Big XII and SEC.

More important to watch is the dwindling number of teams that could finish with no more than one loss from these conferences. The count is down to 13 – with seven undefeated teams and six one-loss teams.

No two-loss team has made the playoffs in the five-year history of the playoffs.

All six undefeated teams have made the playoffs.

Fourteen of the 20 one-loss teams from the Power Five conferences (plus Notre Dame) have made the playoffs. Unfortunately for the Buckeyes, they account for two of those misses – not making the playoffs with one loss both in 2015 and 2018.

The more teams that lose, the more of a chance one-loss teams will have. There were just five one-loss or undefeated teams to pick from in 2018 and 2017, four in 2016, and six each in 2015 and 2014.

My Top 10

1. Ohio State (8-0) – College football's best and most complete team.
2. LSU (8-0) – Best collection of victories; is ranked just 22nd nationally in defense at 20.0 points per game.
3. Alabama (8-0) – Still probably the team to beat.
4. Penn State (8-0) – Overall, the Nittany Lions have looked better than Clemson. Unlike Clemson, PSU will have more tests ahead.
5. Clemson (8-0) – Because of a weak schedule, the team with the best chance of going undefeated.
6. Florida (7-1) – Still uncertainty about this team; only loss was to LSU.
7. Georgia (6-1) – Now that Michigan has shown Notre Dame isn't very good, Georgia doesn't yet have any big wins. Previously, the Bulldogs' victory over ND was counted in that category.
8. (tie) Minnesota (8-0) and Baylor (7-0) – I have to give credit to any Power Five conference school that is unbeaten this late in the season, regardless of their schedules to date.
10. Oregon (7-1) – Winner of seven straight after dropping opener to Auburn. This gives Oregon the edge over Utah (7-1) for the 10th spot.

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Dobbins And Young Two Of A (Heisman) Kind

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

A game between Ohio State and Wisconsin – particularly good Ohio State and Wisconsin teams and especially in a game played in the rain – is going to be won in the trenches. The Buckeyes dominated both sides of that equation, with the offensive linemen opening up holes for J.K. Dobbins and Co. to gain 264 rushing yards against a team that came into the game allowing just 58.4 on the ground per contest and the defense holding Jonathan Taylor, one of the most highly touted backs in the country, to just 52 yards and sacking Badgers quarterback Jack Coan five times in the 38-7 OSU victory.

That's my segue to Chase Young, because I had to work him into this column as quickly as possible. Is this guy great or what? He has been great – and consistent – all season, but this game is right up there with the best defensive performances I have seen from a Buckeye, and I have been on the beat for over 40 years now.

Young played really well in the first seven games, but sometimes his performance wasn't reflected completely on the stat sheet. Against Wisconsin, the best team Ohio State has played this season, his numbers were right there in black and white and preserved for history, not just for a fleeting appearance on "SportsCenter." He made six stops, all solos; five of them were for loss, four were sacks for a total of 25 yards. For good measure he forced two fumbles, and you know his presence – and Wisconsin's need to account for him – allowed other defenders to have strong games as well.

The dynamic 2-uo, as I call them, of Young and J.K. Dobbins both firmly thrust themselves into the Heisman Trophy conversation with their showings on Fox's Big Noon Saturday. Dobbins made his mark on the stat sheet as well, rushing for 163 yards on 20 carries for two scores and an 8.2-yard average against a championship-caliber defense while adding three catches for 58 yards at critical times.

The Buckeye most frequently mentioned in Heisman talk this season, Justin Fields, was a little like Young had been in the early going. Fields' contributions to the big Buckeye victory aren't completely reflected on the stat sheet. His modest passing line of 12 for 22 for 167 yards doesn't demonstrate the significance of his completions.

He threw just two passes in the scoreless first quarter with a 17-yard completion to Dobbins out of the backfield to show for it. When his arm loosened up in the second quarter, it loosened up the Badger offense. Fields was 7 of 12 in the second 15 minutes for 92 yards and an important 27-yard scoring strike to Chris Olave inside the final minute of the half.

Meanwhile, the rushing attack that had gained 23 net yards on 12 carries in the first quarter tacked on 48 yards on nine carries in the second.

It is also in the rushing stats that Fields' impact isn't shown.

One of the few areas where the Badger defense was able to excel against the Buckeyes was with their pass rush. They sacked Fields five times for 36 yards, leaving him with a weak rushing line of 13 carries for 28 net yards and a 2.2-yard average. Very misleading. If you take those sacks away he had eight carries for 64 yards and an 8.0-yard average with a long of 21 and a critical 10-yard touchdown run. It should be noted that the Badger defense sacked Fields only once in the second half.

By the way, despite the sloppy track, Fields

and the Buckeyes did not have a turnover.

As every Buckeye fan knows by now, the second quarter has been the game-changer for Ohio State this season. The Buckeyes came into the game outscoring opponents 158-20 in the stanza. Ohio State outscored the Badgers by a much more modest 10-0 in this second quarter, but it was still a pivotal 15 minutes. The teams slugged it out in the first quarter the way quality Big Ten teams slug it out in the rain, playing to a 0-0 tie at the end of the period. It was shaping up to be a low-scoring slugfest.

If one of the teams was going to break things open, it had to draw first blood. That proved to be Ohio State. Blake Haubeil made his mark for the second week in a row, connecting from 49 yards, and then Fields connected with Olave for their 27-yard touchdown before the break.

While the mini Buckeye outburst in the second quarter put Ohio State in the early driver's seat, the turning point in the game – the point that turned a tightly fought game into a Buckeye blowout – came early in the third quarter. Call it the Badgers' last stand.

Ohio State received the kick to start the half, and with a 12-yard sack of Fields – the last time he would be sacked – Wisconsin forced a three-and out. Alexander Smith got just enough of his fingers on a Drue Chrisman punt to put the Badgers in business at the OSU 30. Three plays later Coan hit A.J. Taylor for a 26-yard touchdown pass, and Wisconsin was within three, 10-7, with momentum clearly in its favor.

All the Buckeyes did was respond with an eight-play, 75-yard drive featuring 22- and 11-yard passes to Olave and a 28-yard run by Dobbins to set up the 10-yard scoring run by Fields. Big Mo rejoined the Buckeyes, and that was pretty much all she wrote, with the Buckeyes outscoring Wisconsin 21-0 the rest of the way.

I have said in this space before that one of the things that has made Fields so effective this season is the fact that his favorite receiver is the one who is open. Thus he has been spreading the wealth with six Buckeyes catching 13 passes or more so far.

But you can slowly but steadily see him developing a chemistry with Olave, who set career highs with seven catches for 93 yards against Wisconsin, scoring twice. The sophomore is now second to K.J. Hill on the team with 28 receptions and first with 411 yards and eight touchdowns.

One other player I wanted to make note of is senior linebacker Justin Hilliard. He has been recovering from a torn Achilles tendon but got the start against the Badgers when the Buckeyes started four defensive linemen and four linebackers to try to slow the Wisconsin ground attack.

Hilliard made only one tackle in the game, but it was a big one. With the game still scoreless, he took Taylor down for a 6-yard loss to help force a punt that led to OSU's first scoring drive.

"It's the best feeling ever," Hilliard said of his big play. "The whole process of me coming back from injuries, it meant so much."

Hilliard came to Ohio State as a highly regarded recruit and has been slowed by injuries for much of his career. It was fun to see him contributing to his team's success, and he

served as a reminder of how much talent the Buckeyes have stockpiled.

Young For Heisman?

Those of us who follow the Buckeyes on a regular basis are well aware of how dominant Young has been. But a defensive player has a tough way to go to win the Heisman Trophy. Charles Woodson of Michigan is the only player from that side of the ball to win college football's most prestigious award, and that's with an asterisk because he had the benefit of playing offense in 1997, as well.

Woodson had an excellent season on the defensive side of the ball, picking off eight passes while recording 44 tackles, five for loss and a sack. But he had plenty of other highlights to add to his résumé that season. He caught 12 passes for 238 yards to average 19.8 per catch with two touchdowns, including a 37-yarder against Penn State. He rushed five times for 21 yards, with a 33-yard scoring jaunt.

And the play that may have sealed Woodson's victory over Peyton Manning in the 1997 Heisman race was a 78-yard punt return for a score against Ohio State to help the Wolverines secure a 20-14 win over their rivals. To add to his last-game push for the Trophy, he also had a 37-yard reception and an interception in that contest.

While Young might match or surpass Woodson's performance on defense, the Wolverine from Ohio had a lot of extracurricular activity, while Young, to date, has only a blocked field goal to add to his Heisman résumé.

With high-profile games against Penn State and Michigan still on the schedule, Young still has opportunities to wow the voters. I'll gladly take performances like the one he had against Wisconsin in those games against the Nittany Lions and Wolverines, Heisman or not.

While the Heisman Trophy is now considered a quarterbacks' award, the voting was much more diverse in the '90s, when Woodson took home his statue.

In addition to Woodson, primarily a cornerback, a receiver in Michigan's Desmond Howard won in 1991. Four running backs – Rashaan Salaam (Colorado, 1994), Eddie George (OSU, 1995), Ricky Williams (Texas, 1998) and Ron Dayne (Wisconsin, 1999) – were winners. And of course there were quarterbacks: Ty Detmer (BYU, 1990), Gino Torretta (Miami, 1992), Charlie Ward (Florida State, 1993) and Danny Wuerffel (Florida, 1996).

Maybe someday the Heisman Trophy will start going to the most deserving player, regardless of position.

Badger Busts

Wisconsin is famous for its big offensive linemen leading the way for dynamic running backs such as Taylor. However, dating back to the national championship year of 2014, Ohio State has had tremendous success stopping this Badger offensive staple.

When the Buckeyes started their magical championship run in '14 against Wisconsin in Indianapolis, they held Melvin Gordon, who rushed for 2,587 yards that season with 29 touchdowns, to 76 yards on 26 carries for a 2.9-yard average with a long of 13 and without a score.

Three years later the two rivals were back in Indy with Taylor in the midst of a 1,977-yard freshman rushing campaign. The Buckeyes held him to 41 yards on 15 tries for a 2.7-yard

average, no scores and a long of seven. And we saw what happened this year, with Taylor carrying 20 times for his 52 yards for a 2.6-yard average with no scores and a long of 14.

That means that in three games Ohio State held the elite combination of Gordon and Taylor to 169 yards on 61 carries for a 2.8-yard average and no scores.

By the way, Gordon's 2,587 yards is the second most in history, trailing only Barry Sanders' 2,628 for Oklahoma State in 1988.

Stadium Expansion Revisited

Any regular reader of this column knows how much I enjoy our "From the Pages of BSB" feature. There are always things there which I find fascinating with the benefit of up to 35 years of hindsight.

In this issue, former athletic director Rick Bay is minimizing the idea of Ohio Stadium expansion back in 1984.

"My only feeling is that we have a stadium that's about the right size for this community because tickets are at a premium, people for the most part do want to get in and there's a wait list for season tickets," Bay told a much younger Rich Exner, who still pounds the keyboard for BSB today.

"If your stadium is too big, then the premium on seats in the stadium becomes not as great. Let us say Ohio Stadium seated 120,000 people. Maybe on one game or two you could get 120,000 people, but I doubt you would have 120,000 people for certain teams – maybe Northwestern, Minnesota or some of the less attractive teams."

I think we are starting see some of that supply and demand come into play at Ohio Stadium today. In 1984, Ohio Stadium's capacity was listed at 85,290 and the Buckeyes averaged 89,449 in six home games.

With the various expansions and renovations, the capacity is now listed at 104,944. The closest Ohio State has come to that figure this season is 104,797 against Michigan State.

In a quote from the interview not found in "From the Pages of BSB" (on page 5 of this issue), Bay goes on to say: "What I don't want to get into is people knowing that there are tickets available virtually anytime they want to go so they can wake up on a Saturday morning, check the weather, decide the importance of the game and then decide to go at that point."

Bay clearly foresaw the 2019 game with Wisconsin, but he didn't factor in improved meteorology. By midweek forecasters were already calling for (accurately it proved) heavy rain on Saturday. A couple of the ticket brokers I spoke to, who were doing a brisk business in Buckeye-Badger tickets, said that business immediately dried up with that forecast.

For the biggest game of the season, Ohio State drew the dreaded "announced" crowd of 102,998, the lowest crowd of the season for the season's biggest game to date.

I am going to run Exner's complete interview with Bay as part of our Reprint Thursdays at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com. It is fascinating as the U.S. Supreme Court had just banned the previously existing college football television restrictions, allowing for more games on TV moving forward. None of us could have predicted then how many televised games that would ultimately mean, and Bay laments the loss of revenue at the gate, having no idea of the size of future television contracts.

I'm not sure the editors of the Ohio State Football Media Guide would survive my wrath, as I just found another reference to the current capacity being 102,082 in the same media guide as the 104,797. Either way, Bay's comments remain relevant.

FROM ONE GROUP OF SENIORS TO ANOTHER

SENIOR STRONGSM

To all Buckeye seniors,

When stepping out onto the field this season, take a moment to stand quietly and look out into the crowd, look to your teammates, to your coaches and to your fellow seniors. Remember the way these moments make you feel, as these are memories you will treasure for the rest of your life.

From the men and women living in Spectrum Retirement Communities around the Columbus area.
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