

Up To The Challenge

Buckeyes Face Adversity Vs. PSU, Respond To Clinch Big Ten East Title

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

Ohio State cruised through its first 10 games of the season with such ease that head coach Ryan Day had all but pleaded in recent weeks for an opponent to test his team. He finally got his wish on Nov. 23 against Penn State, as the Buckeyes jumped out to a 21-0 lead but watched it almost slip out of their hands in an instant in the pouring rain.

The Nittany Lions scored 17 unanswered points in the third quarter thanks to fumbles by quarterback Justin Fields and running back J.K. Dobbins on consecutive drives, and Penn State entered the fourth quarter within one score.

For a team such as Ohio State, which had been outscoring opponents 515-98, it signaled the first true dose of adversity the Buckeyes had faced on the field all season. That's when Day gathered both the offense and defense to deliver one final message.

"Typically, you don't have an opportunity to do that in the game, but it was a timeout on the field," Day said. "We talked about going into a big, heavyweight match and how you're going to take shots. One of the things about playing in a game like this is you have to be willing to take punches and not flinch when it happens. That was a great example."

"That was the first time we really were taking shots, and I'm not proud of that because we literally gave it to them. We handed them the ball. We're going to get that fixed. But then to see the response of everybody involved, see the guys make some big plays, and then to see the defense impose their will, it was unbelievable to see their response."



JOSH WINSLOW

REUNITED AND IT FEELS SO GOOD – Defensive line coach Larry Johnson, left, and defensive end Chase Young embrace after Ohio State's 28-17 win over Penn State. Young returned from a two-game suspension to record three sacks in the victory.

Ohio State marched 44 yards down the field on its opening drive of the fourth quarter as Fields connected with sophomore receiver Chris Olave for a leaping touchdown that extended the lead to 28-17. Penn State, meanwhile, mustered just 65 of total offense in the frame, turning the ball over twice on downs and throwing an inter-

ception on its only trip past mid-field that quarter.

"Our backs were up against the wall," Day said. "To win a game that was not clean shows the toughness that we have. You walk out of that game thinking, 'Oh, we probably could have won a lot bigger than that.' But Penn State's a great team. They did a really good job."

"At the end of the day, we've got to take care of the ball. And I said it to one of the coaches, maybe it's been a little too easy at times. This was hard today. We learned some lessons, and hopefully we can go from there."

With the win, Ohio State (11-0, 8-0 in the Big Ten) has punched its ticket to Indianapolis for the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 7. But first, the Buckeyes must travel to Ann Arbor for their annual rivalry game against Michigan.

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BSB'S 2019 MICHIGAN MEMORIES ISSUE

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Buckeye Leaves

Despite facing adversity, Ohio State prevailed 28-17 against Penn State. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff, as well as subscribers on the BuckeyeSports.com forum, distributed Buckeye Leaves to the deserving players who stood out at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 23.

Wyatt Crosher, BSB: It wasn't a perfect game, but junior running back J.K. Dobbins again dominated on the ground and was one of the main reasons for Ohio State's success on the offensive side of the ball.

Dobbins finished the game with a season-high 36 carries for 157 yards and two touchdowns, while also hauling in one catch for 11 yards. He also lost a fumble which ended up becoming a touchdown for Penn State, making it a very impressive performance that will go down with a flaw.

Regardless, Dobbins set the tone time and time again in the rushing game for Ohio State and was able to more than double the amount of rushing yards Penn State had given up on average per game (75.9 yards) heading into the matchup.

Against the No. 4 rush defense in the country, Dobbins found success on multiple occasions and was a major factor in the Ohio State victory.

Joe Dempsey, BSB: Chase Young deserves a Buckeye Leaf for his dominant performance against the Nittany Lions. The junior co-captain returned from a two-game suspension with a vengeance.

Young recorded a career-high nine tackles (five solo), including four tackles for loss and three sacks. Throughout the entire game, the standout defensive end pressured Penn State's quarterbacks, forcing quick throws and making highlight stops.

His relentless pursuit set the tone for the Buckeyes, helping lead them to an 11-point victory against the talented Nittany Lions.

The Hyattsville (Md.) Dematha Catholic product's three sacks give him the Ohio State single-season sack record with 16½ quarterback takedowns, passing Vernon Gholston, who had 14.

Andrew Lind, BSB: Fifth-year senior linebacker Justin Hilliard has fought through his fair share of adversity at Ohio State, having missed most of the 2015 and 2016 seasons with separate biceps injuries and then suffering an Achilles injury this last spring.

Many felt Hilliard's career might be over at that point, yet he's worked his way back from the latest injury to become a key contributor for the Buckeyes this season.

With Penn State trailing 28-17 and driving deep in Ohio State territory, Hilliard made arguably the biggest play of his career when he stepped in front of Will Levis' pass to give the Buckeyes the ball back at their own 20-yard line and halt the Nittany Lions' momentum.

I'm not sure there's another player in college football who deserves that moment more than Hilliard. And to think he might even get one more year with the Buckeyes if the NCAA approves his waiver for a sixth season.

Patrick Mayhorn BSB: Chris Olave may have only reeled in two receptions for 44 yards in Ohio State's 28-17 win over Penn State, but the stats don't accurately portray how important he was.

Much of that importance came not from Olave's production, but from the level of attention he demands from a defense. Penn State was dedicating a cornerback and a safety to him on every play, freeing up space for other receivers. On top of that, Olave was open on several occasions but couldn't quite pull in a catch on under thrown balls, through no fault of his own.

With that said, the catches he did pull in are certainly worth

mentioning. He had a pretty 16-yard sideline reception in the first half, and his 28-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter served as the moment that seemed to put the Nittany Lions away.

Ohio State's passing attack wasn't anything spectacular against Penn State, but it was enough to get the win, due in large part to Olave.

BSB Subscribers

Pete Werner and Malik Harrison seemed to be all over the field and involved in every tackle.

– kybuck

Chase Young. They could not block him and held about every play.

– mrbigbux

Definitely Chase Young. Came up big when we needed stops.

– TiffinBuckeye

How about Justin Hilliard, just because.

– Poster That Harley Built

Chase Young and the whole defensive line's domination was a sight to behold for posterity! Shaun Wade and Pete Werner for containing K.J. Hamler and Pat Freiermuth to only 40-45 yards each. Malik Harrison, Baron Browning and Tuf Borland for tackles all afternoon. Chris Olave for the game-winning spectacular catch. J.K. Dobbins the warrior and the defensive coaching adjustments after the third quarter!

– AnthonyBuck



From The Message Board

Following Ohio State's 28-17 win over Penn State on Nov. 23, Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as the staff members, for their thoughts on what was learned about the Buckeyes after their first real test of the season. Here are some of the responses:

"I don't think we learned much from the game. In my biased view, OSU would be more likely to win another game vs. PSU on a neutral field 28-0 than 28-17. Maybe I learned one thing? We can run the ball against any defense. Same thing we saw in Wisconsin game."

– Terrier Buck

"It would have been 35-7 as Penn State did drive the field with its first possession of the second half. But establishing the run early was a key. Made Penn State keep its linebackers close to the line opening up the passing game."

– mrbigbux

"I think we learned that the Buckeyes are talented enough and tough enough to overcome some considerable adversity and still beat a good team by a somewhat comfortable margin. This was the first game this season that the Buckeyes were challenged late and they responded in a big way!"

– BRENT A GREATHOUSE

"There has been no real competition over the last month. We won two games with some easy play. There was no edge in those games. The competition was scout-team caliber. Playing PSU, players were bigger, faster, hit harder, and capitalized on our mistakes. Back to basics, hold onto the ball, wrap and tackle down field."

– John Lanning

"Agree with Terrier Buck. Take away the three fumbles and this would have been a 35-0 shutout. I think this game will help us prepare for Harbaugh's team."

– kybuck

"I think we learned that Ohio State may be the best team on the planet (outside of the NFL, of course – no Browns or Bengals jokes please). We also learned that it's hard to win championships if you don't hang on to the football!"

– Poster That Harley Built

"We eventually adjusted to the change of PSU's QB, who seemed much livelier than their starter. I think Urban's staff would have been slower to make any changes. We showed we could survive weather and a team with a very strong defense. Call the Bucks unstoppable!"

– PeyoteBuck

"I think this is a good lessons-learned game for Justin Fields and the offensive coaches. The first set of mistakes for this ultra-talented young QB would help him make the needed adjustments. I hope the coaches take a good look at how not to make the play calling become predictable, so they exploit the talent differences."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"I think that this was an important step in the maturation of the team. Ohio State needed to be challenged late into a game and it was, fumbles or not. The defense responded brilliantly to a quarterback change and a couple bad turnovers, and the offense was able to grind out yards when it needed to.

"This will be valuable when the Buckeyes are playing top teams over the next month or so."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

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Bucks Nearly Beat Themselves Vs. Penn State

More than once this season, I have heard fans and pundits alike posit the theory that the only team that could beat Ohio State was Ohio State itself.

The second-ranked Buckeyes put that theory to the ultimate test Nov. 23, committing three turnovers and leaving at least a couple of touchdowns on the table before finally flexing their collective muscles and claiming a 28-17 victory against No. 8 Penn State.

Despite former head coach Urban Meyer's postgame protestations about references to the game being "an ugly win," it was indeed just that.

Ohio State enjoyed a 21-0 lead at the 11:31 mark of the third quarter, but it was an advantage that could have been much larger. Sophomore quarterback Justin Fields fumbled before crossing the goal line late in the first quarter to negate one touchdown, and Fields put too much air under what could have been a 34-yard scoring pass to a wide-open Chris Olave just before halftime.

At the time early in the third quarter when Fields connected with fifth-year senior K.J. Hill on a 24-yard touchdown pass to make it 21-0, the Buckeyes held a 330-64 advantage in total yardage. But after that, the No. 2 team in the nation seemed to lose focus and began playing like No. 102 for much of the third quarter.

Penn State was forced to change quarterbacks after starter Sean Clifford was injured, switching to redshirt freshman Will Levis, who appeared to operate nothing more than a glorified high school-type attack. Whether that was out of necessity or a master stroke of strategy from Nittany Lions head coach James Franklin, the OSU defense – practically impenetrable to that point – suddenly looked mortal.

Using a simplistic zone-read attack, Levis helped to finish a nine-play, 75-yard scoring drive that featured six runs by the Nittany Lions worth 51 yards. The final two accounted for 27 yards, courtesy of running back Journey Brown and more than a handful of missed tackles by an OSU defense that had entered the game with the fewest missed tackles in all of college football.

Then, Christmas came a month early for Penn State. Within a span of 66 seconds on the game clock, running back J.K. Dobbins and Fields each fumbled in their own territory to gift-wrap 10 more points for the Nittany Lions.

Suddenly, things had gone from a blowout in the making to a too-close-for-comfort, four-point game at 21-17 with 4:22 remaining in the third quarter.

The Buckeyes squandered what might have been a chance for more points on their next possession when Fields made a misread on a third-and-4 play. Rather than take advantage of a Penn State defense crashing down toward the middle of the field, Fields opted to give the ball to Dobbins rather than keep it with what appeared to be a lot of real estate down the right sideline.

Dobbins was swallowed up for only a 2-yard gain, and Ohio State was forced to punt.

As long as we're on the subject of questionable third-down plays, it seemed that after nearly two years of going for the opponents' jugular by chucking the ball downfield, OSU head coach Ryan Day reverted to the old J.T. Barrett offense against the Nittany Lions. Fields established a new career-high with 21 carries (eight more than his previous high of 13 against Wisconsin), and the sophomore quarterback was able to gash Penn State a couple of times with his legs.

During Ohio State's initial possession of the game, for example, Fields executed third-down gains of 14 and 17 yards on quarterback draws to sustain the drive that ultimately resulted in

the first of Dobbins' two rushing touchdowns. Later in the first half, the QB rambled 22 yards on a fourth-and-5 keeper that kept alive his team's second touchdown drive.

After that initial success, however, Fields was decidedly less effective with his legs. While the three carries mentioned averaged 17.7 yards per attempt, his other 18 carries in the game were worth only 15 yards, an average of less than a yard a carry. The normally sure-handed Fields also fumbled three times and lost two of them.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Meanwhile, the Buckeyes rushed on 10 of their 13 third-down plays in the game and, with only a few notable exceptions, elected to try to match power for power with the Nittany Lions. In the end, Ohio State did wind up with 229 yards on the ground against a Penn State defense that had been giving up only 75.9 per game.

But it seemed just a bit mysterious why the Buckeyes didn't try to exploit a Lions secondary that had given up more than 300 passing yards on three occasions this year, including each of the previous two weeks. Hill had four catches for 46 yards and a touchdown – none of that in the final 26½ minutes of the game – and Olave made a spectacular grab for a 28-yard score early in the fourth quarter to give Ohio State some breathing room at 28-17.

But of the 22 passes attempted by Fields, the only two that would qualify as downfield shots were the touchdown catches by Hill and Olave. The next-longest pass plays were 16-yarders – one to freshman receiver Garrett Wilson that was a sideline route during the Buckeyes' second possession of the game, and the other that Olave caught early in the second quarter, again along the sideline.

Most of the time, Day and the offensive coaching staff appeared perfectly content to rely on their running game. They also appeared perfectly content with becoming predictable, especially on first down.

The Buckeyes ran the ball on 27 of 37 first-down plays during the game with 19 of those first-down runs gaining 3 yards or less. What's more, the fumbles committed by Dobbins and Fields each came on first-down plays.

The money down for the Buckeyes against Penn State was second down. Ohio State mixed things up a little more on that down, featuring 21 runs and nine passes with 13 of those 30 plays resulting in first downs. Three of the team's touchdowns were also scored on second-down plays.

How efficient was Ohio State on second down? After running the ball nearly 75 percent of the time and averaging just 3.3 yards per play on first down during the game, the Buckeyes more than doubled that output on second down, averaging 7.1 yards. One might think (hope) a change in first-down philosophy might be forthcoming in the weeks to come.

A Physical Mismatch

If the national rankings are to be trusted, and Penn State was really the eighth-best team in the country, then Ohio State must be really good – and I mean really and truly good to make the number of mistakes it did and still come out victorious.

I don't care whether you give credit to the Nittany Lions for making adjustments or being

opportunistic in the second half. The game was the kind of physical mismatch on both sides of the ball that should have resulted in more of a blowout than even the Las Vegas oddsmakers foresaw by installing OSU as 20-point favorites.

Had they played a clean game, the Buckeyes would have held at least a 28-0 halftime lead, and that advantage might have been even more if not for the ticky-tackiest of holding penalties called on left tackle Thayer Munford while OSU was driving deep into Penn State territory early in the second quarter.

Throw in the temporary loss of focus on both sides of the ball that essentially led to all of the Nittany Lions' scoring, and Ohio State might easily have kept its streak intact of outscoring every opponent this season by 24 or more points.

As it was, the Buckeyes emerged with a double-digit victory against an upstart opponent that was simply outgunned.

That was never more apparent than as Penn State repeatedly asked veteran right tackle Will Fries – a 6-6, 313-pound junior making his 31st career start – to try to handle OSU defensive end Chase Young on his own. Fries is one of the better offensive linemen in the Big Ten, but the result of his one-on-one encounters with Young usually meant carnage in the Penn State backfield.

Young finished the game with nine tackles, including three sacks, which pushed him to the head of the class in terms of single-season sacks at Ohio State. His 16½ sacks this season (in only nine games) breaks the record set by Vernon Gholston, who took 13 games in 2007 to amass 14 sacks.

Young now has the fourth-highest sack total in Big Ten history, and the most by any conference player since Wisconsin defensive end Tom Burke set the league record with 22 in 1998.

Better yet, Young saved his best performance for the most critical part of the game. After Penn State had pulled to within four points at 21-17 during the latter stages of the third quarter, Young collected three tackles down the stretch – each of them for losses.

Even when the 6-5, 265-pound rolling ball of thunder wasn't sacking the Penn State quarterback, he was a disruptive force such as when he and fellow defensive end Tyler Friday applied enough pressure to force Levis into making a fourth-quarter throw more quickly than he wanted, resulting in a backbreaking interception by fifth-year senior linebacker Justin Hilliard at the OSU 20.

The Nittany Lions had two more possessions in the game, but they never again crossed midfield.

Young wasn't the only star of the game for Ohio State.

Dobbins rushed for 157 yards and a pair of touchdowns on 36 carries. The yardage pushed his career total to 3,902, placing him third all-time at Ohio State behind only Archie Griffin (5,589, 1972-75) and Ezekiel Elliott (3,961, 2013-15). The performance also represented the 16th career game of 100 yards or more for Dobbins, and the Buckeyes are a perfect 16-0 in those games.

Meanwhile, Ohio State clinched its eighth consecutive division championship or co-championship and is headed to its third straight Big Ten Championship Game, an unprecedented feat in the nine-year history of the conference title game.

The Buckeyes also set a new program record with their seventh straight win against top-10 opponents, a streak that began with a 39-38 win against No. 2 Penn State in 2017. The previous streak of six was established between 1957 and 1960.



Jonathon Cooper Will Redshirt

According to an Ohio State spokesman, defensive end Jonathon Cooper will redshirt this season, meaning that he could be eligible to return to Ohio State in 2020 as a fifth-year senior. Cooper struggled with injuries all season and was unable to get fully healthy in time for Ohio State's battle with Penn State.

Because of new redshirt rules that allow players to participate in four games and still redshirt, Cooper would be eligible to play in one more game this season, though Ohio State does not have a game in mind for Cooper's return. The senior end did not suit up against the Nittany Lions on Nov. 23.

Ohio State has filled the void left by its senior end with a rotation of young players through its first 10 games. Freshman Zach Harrison, redshirt freshman Javontae Jean-

Baptiste, sophomore Tyler Friday and fifth-year senior Jashon Cornell have all filled in at defensive end while Cooper has fought through his injuries.

Cooper has 49 total tackles during his four years at Ohio State, including 5½ sacks and 10½ tackles for loss. He started 12 games for the Buckeyes as a junior in 2018, recording 25 tackles, 2½ sacks and 6½ tackles for loss. He was expected to start opposite junior Chase Young entering the season. He has just three tackles in 2019.

Cooper was named a captain back in August and was looking to turn a corner this season.

"My career so far has been good, but I know I can bring a lot more to the table," Cooper said at Big Ten Media Days in July. "I know I can be a much better player than I've shown, and I've taken the necessary steps to do that. I've worked extremely hard to improve my game, and I'm pretty sure this season I will show not only myself but my teammates and my Rushmen the player I'm supposed to be."

His coaches have praised him at every turn this season, for both his leadership and his ability to stay positive through adversity.

"Jonathon Cooper, all he does is everything the right way," head coach Ryan Day said after Cooper was named a captain. "I'm really proud of him. He was just raised the right way. He comes to work every day, has a smile on his face. He's tough. He will be a great captain as well."

Day Saw Equal Talent On Penn State's Roster

Entering Ohio State's Nov. 23 win over Penn State, Day had a feeling that the

2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2019 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	W, 45-21	FOX	8-3 (6-1 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	W, 42-0	ABC	10-1 (7-0 American Athletic)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	W, 51-10.	FOX	7-4 (4-4 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)	W, 76-5	BTN	7-4 (6-1 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	W, 48-7	ABC	5-6 (3-5 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	W, 34-10	ABC/ESPN	5-6 (3-5 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	W, 52-3	BTN	2-9 (0-8 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	W, 38-7	FOX	9-2 (6-2 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	W, 73-14	FOX	3-8 (1-7 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	W, 56-21	BTN	2-9 (0-8 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	W, 28-17	FOX	9-2 (6-2 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	12 p.m.	FOX	9-2 (6-2 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

* 2018 bowl team

** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

Buckeyes could be in for a new experience. After several months of historic dominance that didn't see Ohio State beat anyone by fewer than 24 points, Penn State presented a unique and new challenge for the Buckeyes.

As a top-10 team entering the game, led by a high-powered offense and a tough defense, the Nittany Lions had shown their talent all season. As Day saw it, Penn State served as equals to the Buckeyes.

"This is a talent-equated game," Day said on Nov. 19. "We all know we have been in some games that we have had more talent than some of the other teams we have played. This is a team that talent equates. So when that happens it goes back to discipline, it goes back to fundamentals, it goes back to toughness, all of those things that come into play when your talent no longer matters. So those are the things and we've got to do a good job putting a good game plan together, let the guys play, and then prepare them to go and then the team that's more prepared will win the game."

In the win, Ohio State looked more pressured than it had through much of the season. A lot of that can be chalked up to some of the stars whom Day mentioned by name at his press conference prior to the game.

"I think (quarterback Sean) Clifford's playing really well, and (wide receiver K.J.) Hamler is one of the more dynamic players in the country. I think (Jahan) Dotson is as good a wide receiver as there is in the Big Ten, and (tight end Pat) Freiermuth and some of those other guys are really talented as well.

"And then on defense (linebacker) Micah Parsons is as talented as there is again in the conference. They do a good job up front with their front. They mix those guys in.

"And then really those guys that played a

lot of football, I mean (safety John) Reid has played a lot of football, there's a lot of guys in the back end who have some experience there. So when you combine the experience with the good coaching and the fundamentally sound schemes, they pose a major problem for us, and so it's going to be a big challenge."

Day wasn't the only coach involved in the game to praise his opponent. Penn State head coach James Franklin was complimentary of the Buckeyes heading into the matchup.

"Obviously it's a great challenge going on the road in a venue that holds over 100,000," Franklin said of traveling to Ohio State. "We obviously know home-field advantage that comes from those type of environments. That's probably the most talented roster we've watched on tape definitely this year, maybe since we've been here."

Franklin's praise was not just for the team as a whole. He also singled out star defensive end Chase Young, making his return from a two-game suspension.

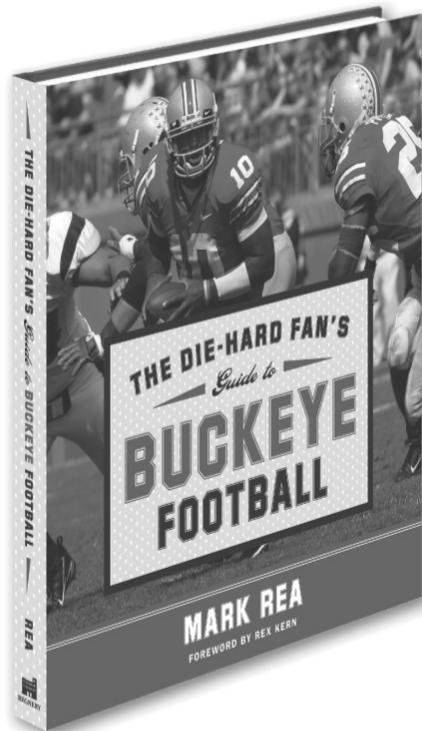
"Obviously Chase Young is back just in time for good old Penn State," Franklin said. "Obviously we're very impressed with him. I have known Chase, know his uncle, known Chase for a long time. Obviously he is as impressive of a player on tape as there is in the country. Before the games he missed, people were talking about him for the Heisman and things like that. He jumps off the tape at you."

Buckeyes Looking To Pass More

Ohio State was a bit more pass heavy in its Nov. 16, 56-21 win over Rutgers. The Buckeyes dialed up 34 passes in the game, though just 19 for starting quarterback Justin Fields, who played one series in the second half before being subbed out for Chris

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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1984

Ohio State took advantage of three fumble recoveries and some poor Northwestern punting to score a 52-3 victory over the Wildcats at Evanston on Nov. 10. The win, coupled with a Michigan State win over Iowa and a Wisconsin win against Purdue, lifted the Buckeyes back into first place in the Big Ten.

Ohio State was led by a record-tying performance by freshman receiver Cris Carter and 151 yards and two scores from star tailback Keith Byars. Carter found the end zone twice, from 31 and 29 yards out, his only receptions of the day. However, that was enough to tie Doug Donley's single-season record for touchdown catches with seven.

"Overall, I feel like I've done an all right job," Carter said after the Northwestern game. "I could have caught a few more passes, but that's only speculation. I've never been in this situation before (to judge)."

30 Years Ago – 1989

Keeping with a tradition that was started long before Ohio State head coach John Cooper held the position, Ohio State announced that practices would be closed during Michigan week.

"We thought it was a good way to help the players stay focused on the business at hand," Cooper said. "We just wanted to make sure there are no distractions for them."

Defensive coordinator Bill Young said the move was prompted by the assistant coaches.

"We asked (Cooper) to go ahead and close them up," Young said. "It makes it a little easier for the coaches if there aren't so many other people running around at practice."

However, offensive coordinator Jim Colletto claimed it didn't matter to him one way or another.

"I don't care about those things," Colletto said. "Open practices, closed practices, it doesn't matter. We concentrate on what needs to be done either way."

25 Years Ago – 1994

Problems with gambling had Art Schlichter in trouble again, landing him in jail in Las Vegas.

Schlichter pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court Nov. 10 to one count of bank fraud for writing \$175,000 worth of bad checks. Most were cashed in Nevada casinos from May through August 1994.

Led away by federal marshals in handcuffs and shackles, Schlichter was ordered jailed until his sentencing on the federal conviction, set for Jan. 27.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Ohio State's season from hell became even more of a

nightmare Nov. 13 at Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes, needing a win over Illinois to clinch a bowl berth, fell behind the visiting Fighting Illini 19-0 and, after committing a host of costly errors, never figured in a stunning 46-20 defeat.

As if the loss – OSU's worst home defeat in 32 years – weren't bad enough, the Buckeyes then faced the prospect of going to Michigan the next week needing a win to qualify for a bowl game. A loss to Michigan, ranked 10th nationally after a come-from-behind win at Penn State, would have snapped OSU's string of appearances at 10 years.

"We're not playing very good football right now, and we're doing an awful job of handling adversity," Cooper said after the defeat.

15 Years Ago – 2004

Jim O'Brien had kept a very low profile since being fired as Ohio State men's basketball coach on June 8, 2004. He said his goodbyes, gathered his things, moved back to Boston and basically hadn't said more than a few things publicly since that fateful day.

On Nov. 10, more than five months after OSU athletic director Andy Geiger announced O'Brien was "terminated for cause," the seven-year OSU coach slapped the university with a lawsuit that claimed he could have been due as much as \$6 million in potential future earnings.

An investigation into improper behavior with regard to former Buckeye Slobodan Savovic and ex-OSU signee Aleksandar Radojevic had forced the decision from Ohio State to move on from O'Brien.

O'Brien's representatives, however, claimed that Ohio State was hasty in its action, despite a 45-day grace period from Geiger following the original notice of allegations, prior to official findings.

O'Brien's lawyer, Joseph F. Murray, told The Columbus Dispatch that it was O'Brien's contention that he should not have been fired until after the NCAA investigation had been completed.

"(O'Brien's contract) states that he can only be terminated in the event of an NCAA finding that he violated a bylaw or committed a major infraction," Murray claimed in defense of the coach. "Well, clearly on June 8 there was no finding of NCAA wrongdoing. It's mid-November and there still isn't a finding."

10 Years Ago – 2009

Tresselball needed a reboot before all was said and done, but at the end, a boot from one of the most unlikely heroes sent Ohio State to the Rose Bowl for the first time in more than a decade.

Devin Barclay, a 26-year-old walk-on and former

professional soccer player who was not even the 10th-ranked Buckeyes' No. 1 kicker until one week earlier, made a 39-yard field goal to provide the winning points in overtime to conclude a 27-24 win on Nov. 14 against No. 15 Iowa.

The kick gave Ohio State at least a share of the Big Ten title for the fifth season in a row and erased an ugly finish to regulation, but Buckeyes such as senior captain Austin Spitler were not in the mood to quibble about style points afterward.

"We got the win," Spitler said with a smile. "We're off to Pasadena. We've got Michigan this week, and we're excited about that. It's the best week of the season."

Five Years Ago – 2014

Visiting Indiana entered Ohio Stadium on Nov. 22 as a big underdog and winless in Big Ten play.

That didn't seem to matter, as Ohio State allowed 20 consecutive points and trailed 20-14 late in the third quarter before redshirt freshman Jalin Marshall scored four consecutive touchdowns to help the sixth-ranked Buckeyes emerge with a 42-27 win.

"I felt like I silenced the doubters that they had in me, and I felt satisfied that people could see how I could really go out there and play," Marshall said after the game.

"I think we need to recruit four more guys like that," Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer said of Marshall's big day at the "H" position. "If you know guys that have big numbers at H – to answer your question that's what we look for at that position."

One Year Ago – 2018

With the game on the line in overtime, tied 45-45 on fourth-and-1 at the Maryland 16-yard line, Ohio State put all of its hope in Rashod Berry, and the junior tight end came through with an 11-yard first-down reception.

Less than two years ago this reality would seem much more like a fantasy, considering Berry was taking backup reps at defensive end behind perhaps the best defensive line in Ohio State history, featuring ends Tyquan Lewis, Sam Hubbard, Jalyn Holmes and Nick Bosa.

When he was recruited to Ohio State in 2015, the Buckeyes were unsure of where Berry would ultimately land.

"I got recruited as an athlete," Berry said. "They just put me at tight end and I wasn't doing so hot, and I played defense in high school, so they moved me to defense. I was doing well at it and we had a whole bunch of great players, and then they needed some help on the offense, so I was just doing whatever to help the team, and I just stuck with it."

Chugunov, who threw 14 of the final 15 passes. With that higher workload, the Buckeyes racked up 377 passing yards, a season high. It was a career high for Fields as well, who tossed for 305 yards and four scores.

Some Buckeye fans and media guessed that the ramp up in the passing attack against Rutgers could have been part of a larger plan in preparation for Penn State. Day, however, shot that down at his press conference.

"No, not really," Day said when asked if the passing was designed not just for Rutgers, but for the rest of the schedule. "No, it was just something that was a focus coming off the bye week as we just wanted to do a little bit better job throwing and catching the ball and also in some of those games we want to get the throws in a little bit earlier in the game, if we think it's going to go the way it's been the last couple weeks. So, typically, in games that get a little lopsided we have to run the ball a little bit more in the second half. And so when you look back on those games you want to make sure that guys like K.J. (Hill) and guys like (Binjimen Victor) and those guys are getting touches, so that's a little bit calculated going into those games."

With the focus on an improved passing attack, Day also said that he's been impressed

with Fields in recent weeks.

"I think every week he gets a little better in each area," Day said of his star quarterback. "So it goes all the way from in the run game identifying where he's going to go with the ball, because you have to make a decision on just about every play in the run game. And in passing it's protections, it's identifying coverage, it's going through protections, it's understanding down and distance, throwing it away, anticipation, all of the above."

Fields threw for 188 yards and two scores against Penn State.

Ohio State Proposes 2020 Ticket Prices

Ohio State is set to keep ticket prices steady in 2020 according to a proposal from the university to the board of trustees on Nov. 19.

As established by the proposal, season tickets would remain at \$702 in 2020, as would box/club seats (\$851), student (\$238) and faculty (\$659). Single-game student tickets would stay at \$34 for the seventh straight season.

The most expensive game of the season would be the home bout with Michigan, at \$220 for a reserved seat and \$245 for box/

club seats. That's the only increase on the proposal, as Ohio State's highest priced home game in 2019 was against Penn State, at \$198/\$223.

That's a slight raise from the 2018 game against Michigan, too, which checked in at \$197/\$222.

Iowa and Nebraska followed the Michigan game at \$150/\$175 each, while the cheapest game of the season would be against Buffalo, with tickets running \$63/\$88.

Bowling Green would check in at \$70/\$95, Rutgers at \$80/\$105 and Indiana at \$90/\$115. The proposal was approved by the board of trustees on Nov. 21.

This comes on the heels of a season that saw non-student season ticket sales down 4.3 percent from last season. Ohio State attendance was down in 2018 as well, at 101,947, the lowest since 2000, according to a Columbus Dispatch report.

President Michael Drake Set To Retire In 2020

After a six-year tenure that started in June of 2014, Ohio State University president Michael Drake is set to retire in 2020. He will continue to serve in the role through at least the end of the 2019-2020 season.

"I'm really proud of the position that the Ohio State University has achieved nationally in these years," Drake said. "I'm proud of it and I'm also humbled by the incredible work of the entire team – our students, our faculty, our staff – the people who make all these things happen."

According to the Dispatch report, Drake will remain on the faculty, likely as a teacher of his class on the music of the civil-rights movement.

"It's the double-edged sword of being excited to do something a little different, to kind of go back to a faculty position that I enjoyed so much for so many years, but we really love our work with the university, so I'm, you know, feeling that," he said. "And so, it has that bittersweet ring of really loving what we do, but it also feels like it's time for change."

Drake's tenure was a mixed bag for Ohio State. The university saw record graduation and retention rates but also saw several scandals, including major issues ranging from those involving former OSU doctor Richard M. Strauss to an investigation of former band director Jon Waters and domestic violence

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allegations against former wide receivers coach Zach Smith.

When Drake was hired, BSB asked current athletic director Gene Smith about his new university president.

"A little bit," Smith said when asked if he had yet talked to Drake about athletics. "I had a formal meeting with him for about 90 minutes or so. It was a great conversation. He gets athletics and its value in higher education and in society.

"I think he's not going to have any challenge with the transition here. I think the magnitude of what we do is different, but he's an experienced professional at 63 years old so that adjustment really won't be that hard. He gets it. That's really good. I'm anxious to get him here, get him started, learn from him. He has a lot of other issues to focus on besides us, so he'll be pretty busy. I'll just be lucky to catch him when I can."

Ohio State will launch a search for the next president led by trustee Lewis Von Thaeer.

Ohio State Award Roundup

Despite the two-game suspension during an investigation into a loan that he had received prior to Ohio State's trip to the Rose Bowl during his sophomore season, star defensive end Chase Young found himself as an award finalist in the week headed into Ohio State's matchup with Penn State.

Young was named one of the five finalists for the Bronko Nagurski award on Nov. 20, given to the nation's top defensive player, as voted on by the Football Writers Association of America. Young was named alongside Auburn defensive tackle Derrick Brown, Clemson linebacker Isaiah Simmons, Georgia safety J.R. Reed and Minnesota safety Antoine Winfield Jr. Winfield is the son of the former Buckeye safety of the same name.

With 16½ sacks on the season, Young was able to set the school single-season record for sacks, as he put up three against Penn State.

Young wasn't alone as a Buckeye finding himself on an award list. Halfback J.K. Dobbins was one of 10 running backs named

as a Doak Walker Award semifinalist, in recognition of his 1,446 yards and 15 scores on 219 carries. Dobbins is one of two running backs on the list from the Big Ten, along with Wisconsin's Jonathan Taylor.

Liam McCullough was included on the Pat Mannelly award semifinalist list, given to the nation's best long snapper. He's started every game for the Buckeyes and has yet to have a missed snap, with just one partially blocked punt on the year.

Lastly, the entire offensive line was included on the Joe Moore award semifinalist list, given to the best starting offensive line unit in the nation. The Buckeyes up front are joined by Wisconsin on the list as the two Big Ten schools nominated. Ohio State has rushed for 282.1 yards per game on the year, fourth best in the country, behind three service academies that run the triple option.

Buckeyes Remain Steady In Polls

For the third straight week, Ohio State checked in at second in both major polls, and for the third straight week, the LSU Tigers were the lone team ahead of the Buckeyes. The polls shared the same top five as well, with Clemson, Georgia and Alabama rounding it out behind the undefeated Buckeyes.

Utah is No. 6 in both after a 35-7 win against Arizona, followed by Oklahoma after a 28-24 win against TCU, Florida (open week) and Minnesota, which knocked off Northwestern, 38-22. The only difference between the two polls in the top 10 comes at No. 10, where Ohio State's next opponent, Michigan, fills in with the AP voters, but Baylor slips in for the coaches poll, with the Wolverines 11th.

Both polls place six Big Ten teams in the top 25. Ohio State, Minnesota and Michigan lead the way in both, following by Penn State at a consensus No. 12, Wisconsin (No. 13 in AP, No. 14 in coaches) and Iowa (No. 19 in AP, No. 20 in coaches).

There are two top-25 matchups in the conference on Nov. 30, between Ohio State and Michigan, and Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Ohio State has three wins against ranked teams in both polls, against Penn State, Wisconsin and Cincinnati, who checked in at No. 18 in the AP poll but No. 17 in the coaches Poll after a 15-13 win against Temple to move to 10-1 on the year.

Buckeyes Still No. 2 In CFP Poll

Ohio State remained at No. 2 behind LSU in the College Football Playoff rankings released on Nov. 19. With the Tigers surviving an upset bid against Ole Miss, 58-37, and Ohio State knocking off Rutgers, the committee saw no reason for change at the top.

However, behind those two, there was some movement in the top 10. Minnesota dropped from No. 8 to No. 10 after a

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"I want to thank the many subscribers from all over the state and country who have elected to participate in the VIP program," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "Your support is quite humbling.

"These contributions are key to us holding the line on subscription rates while continuing to provide a quality publication. This becomes more and more important as more and more of our readers find themselves on fixed incomes with each passing year.

"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.

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

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23-19 loss to Iowa, while Penn State and Oklahoma both moved up because of that fall. The Buckeyes are followed by Clemson, Georgia, Alabama, Oregon, Utah, Penn State, Oklahoma and the Golden Gophers.

There are six Big Ten teams in the rankings, led by the three that found their way into the top 10.

Outside of those three, Wisconsin checks in at No. 12, with Michigan a spot behind at No. 13. No. 17 Iowa rounds out the Big Ten.

With Ohio State's 28-17 win against Penn State, the committee will have to decide if that was enough to leapfrog the Buckeyes over an LSU team that bludgeoned Arkansas, 56-20. LSU has beaten No. 5 Alabama, No. 11 Florida and No. 15 Auburn.

Rea Earns National FWAA Writing Award

BSB managing editor emeritus Mark Rea was recently awarded an honorable mention for best column in the Football Writers Association of America's 2019 Best Writing Contest.

Rea was honored for his column "We Never Should Have Gotten To This Point," covering the investigation and subsequent three-game suspension of former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer. The column appeared in the August 2018 issue of BSB.

This is the second national FWAA writing award for Rea. He won a 2009 honorable mention in the feature writing category for a story about the 30th anniversary of Art Schlichter's first game as Ohio State quarterback.

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Young Breaks School Record For Sacks In A Season

Continued From Page 1

“The Team Up North is something that we talk about every single day,” Day said. “And the best way to respect a rivalry is to work it every day. And we do. This was a hard-fought win, a top-10 team, really well coached, but quickly we transition to that rivalry game, which means everything to us.”

Young Dominates In Return

In his first game back from a two-game suspension for receiving an impermissible benefit, Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young set a new school record for sacks in a single season during the win over Penn State.

“Oh my gosh, I just think Chase Young deserves to be in New York (for the Heisman Trophy ceremony on Dec. 14),” Day said. “How dominant of a player is Chase Young? The impact he has on the game is unbelievable.”

It didn't take long for Young – who entered the game with 13.5 sacks – to make his presence felt against the Nittany Lions, as he recorded a tackle for loss and half-sack on consecutive plays midway through the first quarter with the Buckeyes leading 7-0. That tied him with Vernon Gholston's single-season mark of 14 sacks RECAP SAYS 13.5, which was set in 2007.

Young added another half-sack in the third quarter after Penn State cut the lead to 21-14 and was driving deep in Ohio



ANDREW LIND

STUFFED – Linebacker Baron Browning, left, and defensive end Chase Young combined to sack Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford in the first quarter, which tied Young for the school single-season record for sacks at 14.



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State territory. He and fifth-year senior defensive tackle Jashon Cornell met at quarterback Will Levis on third-and-16 to force a field-goal attempt and give him the school's single-season record.

"You know, they might have thought I lost a step maybe or everything might have taken me out of my mind-set, messed up my mentality," Young said after the game. "But I just tried to show everybody that it didn't."

Young finished the game with nine tackles, four tackles for loss, three sacks and two forced fumbles, bringing his season total to 16½ sacks.

His 28 career sacks also put him second on the Buckeyes' career list, trailing only former defensive lineman Mike Vrabel, who recorded 36 sacks during his time in Columbus (1993-96).

"If there's a more dominant player on defense, bring me the tape," said first-year co-defensive coordinator and secondary coach Jeff Hafley. "We can watch it together."

Fields Fine After Injury Scare

Ohio State fans collectively held their breath late in the fourth quarter when Fields lay on the turf for several minutes with an apparent injury.

Holding a 28-17 lead with 2:17 left to play, the Buckeyes were looking to convert a fourth-and-5 from Penn State's 27-yard line. Fields dropped back, couldn't find anybody open, felt pressure from Nittany Lions safety Lamont Wade and tried to evade to his left but was sacked from behind.

As Fields went to the ground, he fumbled and got his left leg caught awkwardly beneath Wade.

That anxiety was short-lived, however, as Fields got up under his own power and jogged to the sideline to a loud ovation from the crowd of 104,355. Although backup Chris Chugunov warmed up briefly on the sidelines, Fields returned on the subsequent drive and knelt the ball twice to run out the clock.

"He's good," Day said after the game. "He's a warrior, I'm telling you. He's tough. He ran the ball (well) today. He extended

plays on third down. He's got the heart of a lion. I love that kid."

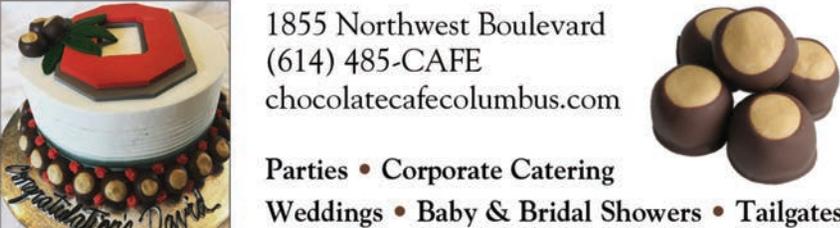
Fields, who is typically made available to reporters after the game but was absent following the win, finished the game 16 of 22 passing for 188 yards and two scores. He also rushed a season-high 21 times for 68 yards but lost a pair of fumbles, including one as he dived into the end zone in the first quarter that would have given the Buckeyes

a 14-0 lead just two drives in.

Regardless, Day was complimentary of his star quarterback.

"Justin was up for the challenge," Day said. "Some quarterbacks look at you sideways when you have that conversation (about running the ball more). He doesn't. He looked back (at me and said), 'Whatever it takes, Coach.' You talk about a tough kid. He is tough."

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Defense Comes Up Big Against Nittany Lions

After a pair of games against teams at the bottom of the Big Ten, the Ohio State defense came in allowing the most points in consecutive games that it had all year, primarily due to the defense bringing in loads of backups by halftime.

But following those 14- and 21-point showings against Maryland and Rutgers, respectively, it was time for the top-ranked Ohio State defense to go up against a worthy opponent and to make crucial stops

GAME NOTEBOOK Wyatt Crosher

that helped maintain a lead throughout the Buckeyes' closest game of the season.

Ohio State held Penn State to 17 points – tied for the fewest points the Nittany Lions have scored all season – and 227 yards of total offense in the 28-17 victory, even with the Buckeyes committing three turnovers.

When asked about the performance by his defense, head coach Ryan Day was quick to praise a wide variety of players on their efforts in the victory.

"I thought Shaun Wade did a tremendous job on (K.J.) Hamler. He's a really good player. I thought (Jeff) Okudah and (Damon) Arnette were excellent. Pete Werner had the matchup against

(Pat) Freiermuth all day. I thought he did a good job with those guys. We did a good job up front," Day said. "I thought Baron Browning flashed at times. Malik (Harrison) was fighting. They were all in there, really working hard, and they won the line of scrimmage."

Wade held Penn State's top receiver in Hamler to three catches for 45 yards, while Werner did a lot of the coverage on Freiermuth, the Nittany Lions' star tight end, who had six receptions but for just 40 yards.

"I've been thinking about that all week," co-defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley said on the decision to have Werner cover Freiermuth. "Pete was doing a good job. I mean we weren't going to worry about a quick out route. They threw the one go ball on him. I have total confidence in Pete. A couple times we switched it up, just to give them a different look, and put Shaun on them but just based on down and distance and tendencies.

"Kind of like Hamler. He has 40-45 yards. He's a good player, but I believe we eliminated most of the explosives in the pass game, and that's what we talk about. You can't get frustrated with a 5-yard catch or a slant."

The defense was pushed more than it has been all season due to a pair of turnovers by sophomore quarterback Justin Fields as well as one by junior running back J.K. Dobbins. Those turnovers amounted to 10 points for the Nittany Lions.

But Ohio State held tough and ultimately allowed only 3.5 yards per play to Penn State on the game and forced a turnover of its own with a fourth-quarter interception from fifth-year senior Justin Hilliard.

"It was gritty," Day said. "When you look at the game at halftime, looking at the statistics, we were 250 total yards offense, maybe 60 yards total offense on the other side. They had four first downs and it's only 14-0. Like, my God. You can get in those games and it can be so frustrating, but you just have to keep swinging, and it's not going to be perfect and that's life."

Fourth-Down Plays Pivotal For OSU

Through 10 games, Ohio State's fourth-down offense was not a major part of the game plan. Coming into the game against Penn State, the Buckeyes had attempted only five fourth-down conversions, the fewest in college football, even with being successful on three of them.

But against the Nittany Lions, Day played aggressive and went for it on a trio of fourth downs, converting on two of them.

The two he succeeded on were on the same drive in the second quarter. Up 7-0, Day sent the offense out on a fourth-and-5 from the Penn State 26-yard line and ran a designed quarterback draw that Fields picked up 22 yards on to set up first-and-goal.

"It was a play that we had for sec-

ond-and-long or third-down situations like that," Day said. "To see the execution level on that was pretty good. It was not always that easy on the draws, but we haven't really shown that all year. I thought it was a really good job executing."

Then on fourth-and-goal from the Penn State 1, a simple Dobbins run to the right broke into the end zone to put the Buckeyes up 14.

"I just felt like we were rolling pretty good at that point," Day said. "I felt we were moving the ball well. I just felt there's times to be aggressive in the game and those are four-down territories, and with our offense we should convert in those moments."

Day said that it was not an easy decision to make that initial fourth-down call instead of sending junior kicker Blake Haubeil out to make it a 10-0 game.

"I try not to second-guess in those moments," he said. "Trust your instinct and go. And you know what? If it doesn't work, you're going to get second-guessed. I thought the look was right. We got them in man-to-man coverage. Everything about it was right. If I didn't get the right look, I was probably going to bang a timeout and think about kicking a field goal, but it was good. The backer ran out of the box. They're up the field. We hit it, and it was a huge play of the game."

The final attempt on fourth down came late in the fourth quarter. With Ohio State attempting to kill clock, Day decided to go for it from the Penn State 27 on fourth-

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Game Analysis

What Worked Well

Ohio State's defense withstood three turnovers from its offense and managed to allow only 17 points to a Penn State team that came in averaging 36.8 points per game, No. 15 in the NCAA. The Buckeyes held the Nittany Lions to 128 yards passing and 99 yards on the ground on 3.5 yards per play and came up big with a shutout fourth quarter after allowing 17 in the quarter before.

Junior defensive end Chase Young returned following a two-game suspension and immediately made a difference, finishing with nine tackles, four of which were for loss, including three sacks, which put him atop the Ohio State record books with 16½ sacks for the season.

Junior linebacker Pete Werner was also important in the victory, finishing with a team-high 10 tackles, eight of which were solo tackles, and two pass breakups while covering tight end Pat Freiermuth.

The Buckeyes also forced a turnover, with fifth-year senior Justin Hilliard snagging a pass from Will Levis in the fourth quarter.

Offensively, Justin Fields was not asked to throw often but still connected on 16 of his 22 attempts for a respectable 188 yards and two scores. The Buckeyes instead decided to rush the ball 61 times against the No. 4 rush defense in the nation and found mostly success, totaling 229 yards and two touchdowns on the ground.

What Didn't Work

The Buckeyes struggled to hold onto the ball and fumbled four times, losing three times that led to 10 of Penn State's 17 points on the night and costing Ohio State a sure six on offense.

Fields fumbled three times in the game, losing two of them, including one at the goal line that prevented Ohio State from scoring a touchdown to make it a 14-0 game early.

The other lost fumble by Fields came in the third quarter and gave the Nittany Lions the ball at the Ohio State 35, which resulted in a field goal. Fields' third fumble came on a failed fourth-down conversion in the fourth quarter, but the sophomore quarterback recovered it. All three of Fields' fumbles were forced by safety Lamont Wade.

The fourth fumble came from Dobbins, who coughed it up at his own 22, and the ball was recovered by Wade at the 12-yard line. This fumble was forced by sophomore Micah Parsons.

Play Of The Game

Up only four and without a score since 11:31 in the third quarter, Ohio State got the ball at the Penn State 44-yard line and quickly went on a five-play, 95-second drive that was capped off with the highlight of the day.

On second-and-8 from the Lions 28, Fields looked to throw deep and threw a jump ball to sophomore wide receiver Chris Olave, who was streaking down the right side of the field.

Olave, with two Nittany Lions around him, jumped over fifth-year senior cornerback John Reid, with junior safety Jaquan Brisker in the vicinity as well. Olave came down with the ball for the 28-yard score, giving the Buckeyes an 11-point lead that would hold for the rest of the game.

The sophomore wideout finished the game with two catches for 44 yards, including the highlight score.

– Wyatt Crosher

and-5. This time though, Fields went back in the pocket looking for a pass and instead was sacked for a 13-yard loss, and he came up slow on the play.

Fields ended up finishing the game and did not seem hampered by injury, but Day explained the attempt as the best decision in an effort to bury Penn State.

"It was fourth-and-5," he explained. "We didn't want to kick a field goal at that time and have a low-trajectory field goal get blocked at that point. I didn't think it was smart. It was a chance to shoot the ball in the end zone. They came on a blitz. They did a really good job with it. We didn't pick it up. I would have liked Justin to throw it away, not take the hit. He was trying to make the play. Those are things that happen."

Even with the added aggressiveness put in by Day to go for more first downs instead of taking three points or punting, the Ohio State head coach did decide to do the latter in a spot where going for it wouldn't have been a surprise.

Late in the third quarter, with Penn State having scored 17 unanswered points to make it a four-point game, Day was faced with a decision after Dobbins was stopped short at the Ohio State 49-yard line on a third-and-4 attempt.

Basically at midfield with a fourth-and-2, Day elected to trust his special teams unit and bring out junior punter Drue Chrisman to make the punt.

"I felt the defense was playing great. It was fourth-and-short," Day said. "I knew if we could pin them in, play the field-position game, we'd be OK."

Chrisman ended up with a 40-yard punt that pinned the Nittany Lions at the Penn State 11.

Along with the belief in his defense – that did make a stop with a three-and-out – Day said it was the noise of the home crowd that helped him make a decision, as Chrisman was punting in the direction of the OSU student section.

"I don't know how many false starts we got today with the noise, but that was great," he said. "We asked Buckeye Nation to be loud in this game, and they were exactly that. They were a factor in this game. I can't give them enough credit. I know how the team appreciates

everybody coming out early and being loud. That means everything to us. So, thank you."

Switch At QB Forces Ohio State Adjustment

On Penn State's first drive of the third quarter, starting quarterback Sean Clifford went down for the Nittany Lions and did not return. He finished his day completing 10 of 17 passes for 71 yards, while rushing six times for zero net yards.

While Penn State could not find much success under its usual starting quarterback, redshirt freshman quarterback Will Levis came in and immediately brought something new that had instant success.

Running the majority of offense out of the option, Levis took the ball the rest of

the 43 yards following the Clifford injury, setting up an 18-yard touchdown run by Journey Brown to get Penn State on the board.

Levis would lead two more scoring drives on his next two times on the field, both coming off Ohio State fumbles that brought the game as close as it would get since both teams were scoreless.

"They kind of leaned on some of those quarterback runs, and they were pounding it in there and got a little rhythm going," Day said. "I think they were feeding off the defense who bought those two couple of turnovers on us, and it was kind of part of that momentum. And then once we put our foot in the ground and stopped it, we kind of got it under control."

After a 17-point third quarter, the Buckeyes shut out the Levis-led offense of

Penn State in the fourth.

Overall, Levis completed 6 of 11 passes for 57 yards while rushing 19 times for 34 yards after being sacked five times. He was held in check thanks to a defensive scheme change by the coaching staff on that side of the ball.

"I can't give enough credit to our defensive staff: Jeff Hafley and Greg Mattison and Al Washington and Matt Barnes and obviously Larry Johnson," Day said. "These guys have done an unbelievable job on defense. They have great relationships with the players. The scheme is off the charts. They put guys in a great situation. They make great adjustments, and they motivate these guys at a high level. To see those guys play the way they did today, they get all the credit in the world."



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OSU Fumbles And Stumbles But Holds Off PSU

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State coach Ryan Day called the 28-17 win over Penn State in the Big Ten showdown on Nov. 23 ugly, but the result was that the No. 2 Buckeyes remained firmly in line for a College Football Playoff berth.

By defeating the eighth-ranked Nittany Lions (9-2, 6-2 Big Ten) before 104,355 in Ohio Stadium the Buckeyes (11-0, 8-0) clinched their third straight spot in the conference title game and can devote full attention to facing Michigan in Ann Arbor on Nov. 30.

But first, the Buckeyes will review how they allowed Penn State to rally from a 21-0 third-quarter deficit thanks to the second and third lost fumbles in the game. The Nittany Lions scored 17 points in 3:57, including TDs 25 seconds apart before sophomore QB Justin Fields had a 28-yard TD pass to sophomore Chris Olave for the final margin.

Fields was 16 of 22 for 188 yards and two TDs. He added 68 yards on a career-high 21 carries but lost two fumbles.

Junior J.K. Dobbins rushed for 157 yards on a career-high 36 carries and two TDs for the Buckeyes but also lost a fumble.

Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young returned after serving a two-game suspension for accepting an improper loan. He had three sacks among his nine tackles to set the OSU single-season sack record of 16½, breaking the mark of 14 Vernon Gholston in 2007.

Penn State backup quarterback Will Levis, a redshirt freshman, replaced the injured Sean Clifford in the third quarter and was 6 of 11 for 57 yards with an interception and had 19 runs for 34 yards, but he was sacked five times.



JOSH WINSLOW

SO CLOSE – With Ohio State leading 7-0 and threatening to score again in the first quarter, quarterback Justin Fields fumbled on the goal line resulting in the Buckeyes' first turnover of the game.

OSU outgained the Nittany Lions 417-227. The Buckeyes led in rushing yards (229-99), passing yards (188-128) and first downs (27-15), but it was the turnovers that kept the game close.

"We were pushed, but we made a lot of

mistakes and it was on us," Dobbins said. "Credit to them, they did a good job, but we messed up a lot."

Dominant First Half

After a Penn State punt to the 9 on its first

drive, the Buckeyes methodically moved 91 yards – all on the ground – for the 7-0 lead at 7:08 when Dobbins carried would-be tacklers into the end zone with him. The Buckeyes chewed up 5:04 off the clock and had just one pass among the 13 plays, an incompleteness to Olave. Dobbins had eight carries for 56 yards and Fields four for 35.

Dobbins gained 22 on the first play from scrimmage for breathing room. On third-and-5 from the 36, Fields raced up the middle for 14. Three plays later when facing 12 yards for a first, Fields ran for 17 to the PSU 35.

Later, on second-and-7 from the 22, Dobbins rushed 15 yards to the 7. After his carry to the 4, he scored on the next play.

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OHIO STATE VS. PENN STATE

The Buckeyes were marching again, going 45 yards in eight plays after the second Penn State punt, but from the Penn State 5 Fields tried to run it in. He was hit at the goal line by Lamont Wade, and the fumble was recovered by Cam Brown. The play was initially called a touchdown but was overturned upon review.

Ohio State's third possession also breeched PSU territory, but from the Lions 36, a holding penalty on Thayer Munford and a sack of six yards helped forced a punt.

After a PSU punt and a 7-yard return by freshman Garrett Wilson to the Penn State 48, Fields led the Buckeyes on a time-sucking (5:29), 11-play drive that featured two riverboat gambler calls by coach Ryan Day.

The first was on fourth down needing 5 yards from the PSU 26. Fields used a draw to run 22 yards to the 4. Dobbins was stuffed for no yards, Fields went to the 3, then Dobbins was stopped at the 1, setting up the pivotal fourth down.

After a Penn State timeout, Dobbins went over right tackle for the 14-0 lead with 2:00 left.

Crazy Second Half

The Buckeyes got the ball to start the second half, and it was more of the same as Fields tossed a 24-yard TD to fifth-year senior K.J. Hill on a skillfully thrown ball to the outside shoulder to make it 21-0 at 11:31.

OSU used 10 plays and went 75 yards in 3:29. Dobbins had six carries for 35 yards, including runs of 16 and 10, and senior Binjimen Victor had an 11-yard catch which started the drive.

The Nittany Lions responded by going 75 yards to make it 21-7 at 8:19 despite losing Clifford midway through the nine-play, 3:12 drive. He was injured after completing a 12-yard pass to Nick Bowers to the OSU 43.

On third-and-4 from the 37, Levis powered his way for 10. Journey Brown followed with runs of 9 and 18 for the score.

The Nittany Lions stunned the Buckeyes with a second TD 25 seconds later thanks to a turnover. Dobbins lost 3 yards from the 25, and Micah Parsons caused a fumble that Wade recovered at the 12.

Levis hit Pat Freiermuth for 11, and the QB took it in from the 1 for a 21-14 score with 7:54 remaining.

After the kickoff, the Buckeyes gave the ball back again when Fields was stripped by Wade and Parsons recovered at the OSU 35.

Levis had three runs totaling 20 yards to help get the Nittany Lions to a first down at the 11, but the Buckeyes stiffened. Journey Brown lost a yard running; after an incompleteness and a false start, Levis suffered a 7-yard sack by fifth-year senior Jashon Cornell and Young to the 24, and Jake Pinegar made a 42-yard field goal with 4:22 left in the third. The drive was eight plays, 11 yards and 2:42 used.

Ohio State made it 28-17 at 13:18 of the fourth quarter when Fields found Olave for a 28-yard TD at the end of a five-play 44-yard, 1:35 series. The Buckeyes had begun at the PSU 44 after a 40-yard punt. Second-year freshman running back Master Teague had a 5-yard reception and a run of 8 to the 30. After a false start, Dobbins rushed 7 yards to the 28 to set up the touchdown.

The Nittany Lions then drove to the OSU 27, but fifth-year senior linebacker Justin Hilliard made an interception at the 20 with 10:16 to play.

"Penn State's a great team," Young said. "They're going to make plays too. It's all about how we come back from those plays."

Penn State later had a fourth-and-2 from its 42, but the Nittany Lions had two false

starts and sophomore corner Shaun Wade broke up a pass to give the Buckeyes the ball with 3:08 left.

The Buckeyes tried to run out the clock, but on fourth-and-5 from the PSU 27, Fields was forced out of the pocket and sacked for a 13-yard loss. He was on the ground for several minutes before a hushed crowd but ran off the field under his own power.

The Nittany Lions' last drive ended on

downs at their 31-yard linewith 1:00 left, and the Buckeyes took two knees to end the game.

Numbers

Hill had four catches for 46 yards and a score. Olave caught two passes for 44 yards and a score. ...Clifford was 10 of 17 for 71 yards before his departure. ... Journey Brown gained 64 yards on 11 carries for the Lions.

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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 28, Penn State 17

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on the significance of beating Penn State and the performance of fifth-year senior linebacker Justin Hilliard: "I think they all know how much football is ahead of us. But it is a huge feat for this team to get a shot to go to Indy. And some of those guys played great today. How about Justin Hilliard, somebody who spent a lot of time in this program, put his heart and soul into it. And to have the play of the game with that interception, I couldn't be happier for him. We had a lot of guys who made a lot of great plays in this game, but he was one that really stuck out to me."

Day on the touchdown receptions by sophomore wide receiver Chris Olave and fifth-year senior H-back K.J. Hill: "Unbelievable. I thought he and K.J., those two big throws and catches were huge in this game. We're looking for explosives in that area and a huge play. I thought that K.J. did a great job creating separation on that route. And then Chris just going up, and just the heart of somebody to go up and get a ball like that. I thought Justin (Fields) threw two really good balls there. But in big moments, those are clutch throws, the things you think about five years from now. You go back, those are the plays. But to see Chris go up and get that ball and battle for that ball, what an unbelievable play."

Day asked of the importance of fifth-year seniors such as Hilliard, Jashon Cornell and DaVon Hamilton: "I couldn't put them to words. There's so much that goes into what you just said, and it was a great question because Justin Hilliard and Jashon Cornell are two guys in our program and to have maturity like guys like that, 22-year-old men in the same room with 18-year-old guys coming out of high school, there's such a different maturity level. And to have guys like that that keep fighting and swinging, their journey might be different. "Davon Hamilton is another guy, his journey was different. As you grow up, start to work through some adversity, you work through injuries and different things and you get calloused and tougher and you learn about yourself and you get what you saw today, which was unbelievable plays by both of those guys. And that was a huge reason why we won today."

Ohio State sophomore center Josh Myers on what sophomore quarterback Justin Fields proved against Penn State: "We already knew it. The rest of the country may not have known it, but he's just so tough. He's so poised. The way he was in that game was the same he was last week at Rutgers. There was no difference, and that's what you want out of a quarterback. And that's what he's given us."

"I can't say enough about how good of a job he's done. We've been working this whole season taking it a step at a time. We haven't hit our peak. You can see today."

Myers when asked if he thought Day would go for it on fourth-and-5 from the Penn State 26-yard line while leading 7-0 instead of attempting a 43-yard field goal: "I was pretty sure, because I know Coach Day. He's an aggressive coach, and he has faith in us. He has faith in the game plan and the prep that we did, so I figured we would."

Hill when asked if he was nervous when the Nittany Lions cut the Buckeye lead to 21-17: "This senior class – we've been through some games. When we went up and they came back and made it a one-score game, we just stayed the same, we stay poised. We knew what we had to do. We had two turnovers, and we went to the sideline and talked about it as an offense. They were reviewing a play and the offense and defense were off the field and Coach Day called us up and said, 'We're in a dogfight. We talked about how this was going to happen one time this season when somebody swings back, and we just have to keep swinging till they fall off.' And that's what we did as a team."

Ohio State junior linebacker Baron Browning on handling emotions and persevering in a hard-fought victory: "That's why you come to a school like Ohio State where everything is on the line. We worked hard all year for moments like this."

Ohio State co-defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley on sophomore cornerback Shaun Wade playing through injury: "Shaun got banged up at one point, and I could tell he was hurting. And he was on K.J. Hamler all day who

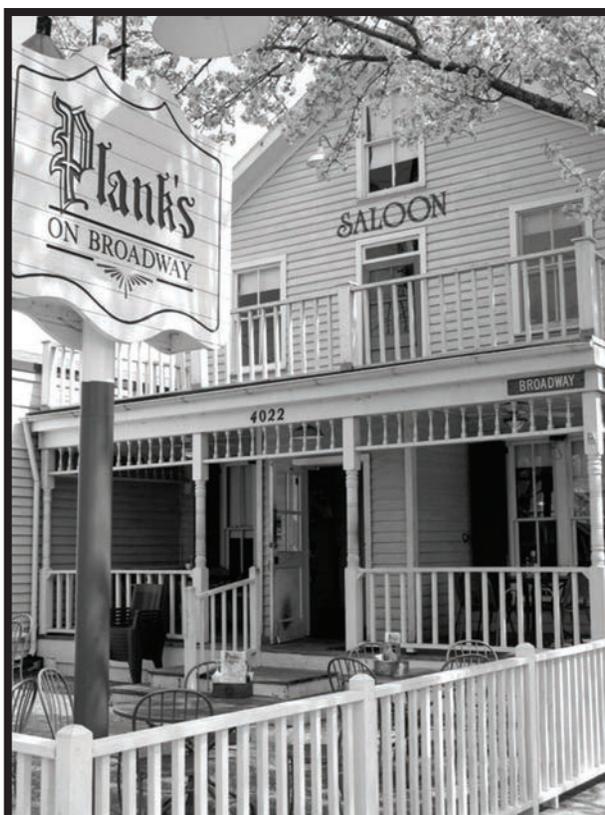
had 45 yards, so he was battling all game. For him to go back in the game and finish the game, knowing who he was going to cover, taught me more about Shaun Wade than I had known about him since I've been here. That guy will fight for us, and he won't let us down."

Hafley on the defensive line coming up with a big stop on Penn State's final possession: "At the end of the game it was finally to the point where we knew they had to drop back and throw the ball. And at that point, we were rushing three. It might have looked like we were pressuring, but we weren't – that was a three-man rush. So, for them to finish off the game like they did, that whole series was impressive."

Ohio State junior defensive end Chase Young on the difficulties of serving a two-game suspension: "I don't even know what to say, for real. You know, hit the lowest of the low. That's probably the biggest moment of adversity I've faced in my life, and I'm actually kind of glad it happened because it tested me and my mentality, tested me as a man. I think I handled it pretty well going through it. To be honest, I didn't know what was going to happen, and that's really why I was stressing. It was the unknown. When you don't know what's going to happen, that's stress. I didn't know what they were going to say, for real. But I'm just thanking God right now that I had another chance to be out on the field and go out there with my brothers."

Young on the upcoming matchup with archrival Michigan: "If you can't get hyped for this, then you're just not that type of dude."

Senior wide receiver Austin Mack on the rivalry with Michigan: "I don't care how good they are, I don't care how bad they are, depending on the year – it's always different and always means so much. You can have a great season like we are right now, and you could lose that game, and no one cares, because you just lost to That Team Up North. It's just different. That's the one game you always want to win that's circled on the calendar every single year."



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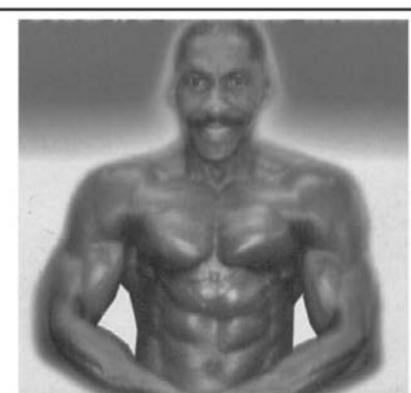
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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 28, Penn State 17

Nov. 23, 2019 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, OH.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
PENN STATE (9-2, 6-2)	0	0	17	0	17
OHIO STATE (11-0, 8-0)	7	7	7	7	28

First Quarter

OSU – Dobbins, 4 yard rush (Haubeil kick), 7:08; 13 plays, 91 yards, 5:04 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU – Dobbins, 1 yard rush (Haubeil kick), 2:00; 11 plays, 48 yards, 5:29 TOP.

Third Quarter

OSU – Hill, 24 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 11:31; 10 plays, 75 yards, 3:29 TOP.

PSU – Brown, 18 yard rush (Pinegar kick), 8:19; 9 plays, 75 yards, 3:12 TOP.

PSU – Levis, 1 yard rush (Pinegar kick), 7:54; 2 plays, 12 yards, 0:16 TOP.

PSU – Pinegar, 42 yard field goal, 4:22; 8 plays, 11 yards, 2:42 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Olave, 28 yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 13:18; 5 plays, 44 yards, 1:35 TOP.

Att. – 104,355

Weather – 42 degrees, mostly cloudy; wind E 7 mph.

Team Statistics

	PSU	OSU
First Downs	15	27
Rushing	9	16
Passing	6	10
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Yards	36-99	61-229
Passing Yards	128	188
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	16-28-1	16-22-0
Offensive Plays	64	83
Total Net Yards	227	417
Third Down Efficiency	6-15	7-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-2	2-3
Punts-Avg.	6-34.0	3-41.3
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	4-3
Penalties	5-32	4-25
Time of Possession	25:45	34:15

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – PSU: Brown 11-64; Levis 18-34; Cain 1-1; Clifford 6-0. OSU: Dobbins 36-157; Fields 21-68; Teague 2-7; TEAMS 2-(-3).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – PSU: Clifford 10-17-0-71-0; Levis 6-11-1-57-0. OSU: Fields 16-22-0-188-2.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – PSU: Freiermuth 6-40; Hamler 3-45; Shorter 3-28; Brown 2-(-3); Bowers 1-12; Dotson 1-6. OSU: Hill 4-46; Olave 2-44; Mack 2-27; Wilson 2-21; Victor 2-21; Ruckert 2-13; Dobbins 1-11; Teague 1-5.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – PSU: Gillikin 6-34.0-40. OSU: Chrisman 3-41.3-43.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: Hamler 1-7. OSU: Wilson 2-7.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: Hamler 2-39. OSU: None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – PSU: None. OSU: None.

FORCED FUMBLES – PSU: Wade (3); Parsons. OSU: Young (2).

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – PSU: Wade 1-0; Parsons 1-0; Brown 1-0. OSU: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: None. OSU: Hilliard 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: Gross-Matos 2.0-15; Wade 1.0-13. OSU: Young 3.0-22; Browning 1.5-6; Cornell 0.5-4.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: Gross-Matos 3.5-17; Wade 2.0-15; Parsons 2.0-8; Smith 1.0-1; Taylor 0.5-1; Johnson 0.5-1; Brooks 0.5-1. OSU: Young 4.0-24; Browning 2.5-7; M. Harrison 2.0-5; Cornell 0.5-4.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – PSU: Taylor 6-7-13; Wade 8-2-10; Parsons 5-5-10; Gross-Matos 5-4-9; Johnson 4-3-7; Brown 0-6-6; Mustipher 1-4-5; Reid 4-0-4; Brooks 1-3-4; Toney 0-4-4; Oweh 2-1-3; Brisker 2-1-3; Windsor 1-2-3; Castro-Fields 1-1-2; Wilson 1-0-1; Smith 1-0-1; Shelton 0-1-1; Luketa 0-1-1; Hansard 0-1-1. OSU: Werner 8-2-10; Young 5-4-9; M. Harrison 4-5-9; Browning 4-3-7; Borland 3-4-7; Z. Harrison 3-1-4; Wade 1-3-4; Fuller 2-1-3; Cornell 1-2-3; Brown 2-0-2; Okudah 2-0-2; Hilliard 0-2-2; mHaubeil 1-0-1; Banks 1-0-1; Togiai 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – PSU: Offense, Walker, Gonzalez, Menet, Miranda, Fries, Clifford, Brown, Hamler, Dotson, Chisena, Freiermuth, Defense, Toney, Windsor, Shelton, Gross-Matos, Parsons, Johnson, Brown, Castro-Fields, Taylor, Reid, Wade, Reserves, Smith, Shorter, Ellis, Brisker, Levis, Wilson, Stoll, Hippenhammer, Brooks, Gordon, Isaac, Cain, Sutherland, Oweh, Simmons, Hartlaub, Luketa, Katshir, Joseph, Hansard, Thorpe, Holmes, Culpepper, Kuntz, Bowers, Lutz, Pinegar, Gillikin, Mustipher, Stout. OSU: Offense, Fields, Dobbins, Victor, Mack, Ruckert, Farrell, Munford, Jackson, Myers, Davis, Bowen. Defense, Young, Hamilton, Cornell, Smith, Werner, Borland, Harrison, Arnette, Okudah, Wade, Fuller. Reserves, Olave, Berry, Teague, McCall, McCullough, Browning, Wilson, Williams, Johnson, Mitchell, Jean-Baptiste, Riep, Banks, Hill, Harris, Gant, Wint, Brown, Hooker, Harrison, Rossi, Pope, Young, Kacherski, Hilliard, Jackson, Friday, Woidke, Landers, Togiai, Miller, Jones, Hausmann, Chrisman, Metzger, Haubeil.

Season Statistics

2019-20 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Aug. 31	(5)FLORIDA ATLANTIC	45-21	103,228
Sept. 7	(5)CINCINNATI	42-0	104,089
Sept. 14	(6)at Indiana	51-10	47,945
Sept. 21	(6)MIAMI (OHIO)	76-5	103,190
Sept. 28	(5)at Nebraska	48-7	89,379
Oct. 5	(4)MICHIGAN STATE (25)	34-10	104,797
Oct. 18	(4)at Northwestern	52-3	47,330
Oct. 26	(3)WISCONSIN (13)	38-7	102,998
Nov. 9	(3)MARYLAND	73-14	101,022
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	56-21	33,528
Nov. 23	PENN STATE (8)	28-17	104,355
Nov. 30	at Michigan (10)	12 p.m.	

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

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	313	152
Rushing	161	77
Passing	128	55
Penalty	24	20
Average Per Game/Rush	282.1	91.2
Average Per Game/Pass	248.3	126.2
Total Offense	5834	2391
Total Plays	829	680
Average Per Game	530.4	217.4
Average Per Play	7.0	3.5
Penalties-Yards	62-587	61-539
Fumbles-Lost	18-11	19-9
Third Down Efficiency	79-136	46-164
Percentage	58%	28%
Fourth Down Efficiency	5-8	6-15
Percentage	62%	40%
Sacks-Yards	47-302	25-157
Time Of Possession Avg.	31:12	28:19

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	122	210	111	100	0	543	49.4
Opponents	18	20	48	29	0	115	10.5

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	219	1446	6.6	15	68
Master Teague	116	751	6.5	4	73
Justin Fields	105	445	4.2	10	51
Marcus Crowley	25	237	9.5	1	53
Steele Chambers	19	135	7.1	1	15
Demario McCall	18	122	6.8	2	32
Amari McMahon	1	10	10.0	0	10
Chris Olave	2	5	2.5	0	4
K.J. Hill	1	1	1.0	0	1
Gunnar Hoak	4	-6	-1.5	0	3
Chris Chugunov	4	-10	-2.5	0	0
TEAM	14	-33	-2.4	0	0
OSU Totals	528	3103	5.9	33	73
OPP Totals	397	1003	2.5	7	56

Passing

	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Justin Fields	175	252	69.4	2352	33-1	190.3
Chris Chugunov	25	41	61.0	275	6-0	165.6
Gunnar Hoak	6	6	100.0	104	1-0	300.2
TEAM	0	2	0	0	0-0	0
OSU Totals	206	301	68.4	2731	40-1	187.8
OPP Totals	147	283	51.9	1388	6-14	90.2

Receiving

	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
K.J. Hill	42	469	11.2	7	53
Chris Olave	39	637	16.3	10	58
Binjimen Victor	29	480	16.6	6	60
Garrett Wilson	21	250	11.9	4	38
Austin Mack	17	234	13.8	2	38
J.K. Dobbins	15	151	10.1	2	21
Jeremy Ruckert	11	116	10.5	3	25
Jameson Williams	6	112	18.7	1	61
Jaalen Gill	6	51	8.5	1	32
Luke Farrell	4	73	18.3	2	21
Master Teague	4	60	15.0	0	28
Demario McCall	4	28	7.0	0	11
Jake Hausmann	2	13	6.5	1	9
Rashod Berry	1	16	16.0	0	16
Sam Wuglusz	1	11	11.0	0	11
Elijah Gardiner	1	10	10.0	0	10
Mitch Rossi	1	8	8.0	0	8
Marcus Crowley	1	7	7.0	1	7
Jaylen Harris	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	206	2731	13.3	40	61
OPP Totals	147	1388	9.4	6	49

Scoring

	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
J.K. Dobbins	17	-	-	-	-	102
Blake Haubeil	-	71-71	-	-	8-10	95
Chris Olave	10	-	-	-	-	62
Justin Fields	10	-	-	-	-	60
K.J. Hill	7	-	-	-	-	42
Binjimen Victor	6	-	-	-	-	36
Master Teague	4	-	-	-	-	24
Garrett Wilson	4	-	-	-	-	24
Jeremy Ruckert	3	-	-	-	-	18
Austin Mack	2	-	-	-	-	12
Demario McCall	2	-	-	-	-	12
Luke Farrell	2	-	-	-	-	12
Marcus Crowley	2	-	-	-	-	12
Damon Arnette	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jameson Williams	1	-	-	-	-	6
Steele Chambers	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jake Hausmann	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jaalen Gill	1	-	-	-	-	6
D. DiMaccio	0	2-3	-	-	-	2
OSU Totals	74	73-74	-	-	8-10	543
OPP Totals	13	12-12	-	-	1-1 7-9	115

FG Distance

	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Blake Haubeil	2-2	2-4	3-3	1-1	8-10
OSU Totals	2-2	2-4	3-3	1-1	8-10
OPP Totals	4-5	2-3	1-1	0-0	7-9

Punting

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	34	1498	44.0	0	59
TEAM	1	13	13.0	1	13
OSU Totals	35	1511	43.1	1	59
OPP Totals	86	3456	40.2	2	70

Interceptions

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Jeff Okudah	3	0	0.0	0	0
Jordan Fuller	2	26	13.0	0	26
K'Vaughan Pope	2	4	2.0	0	3
Damon Arnette	1	96	96.0	1	96
Tuf Borland	1	42	42.0	0	0
Josh Proctor	1	0	0.0	0	0
Amir Riep	1	0	0.0	0	0
Sevyn Banks	1	0	0.0	0	0
Shaun Wade	1	0	0.0	0	0
Justin Hilliard	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	14	168	12.0	1	96
OPP Totals	1	34	34.0	0	34

Punt Returns

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	10	82	8.2	0	52
Demario McCall	8	65	8.1	0	35
K.J. Hill	5	38	7.6	0	16
Chris Olave	1	18	18.0	0	18
Sevyn Banks	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	25	208	8.3	0	52
OPP Totals	8	30	3.8	0	7

Kickoff Returns

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Demario McCall	10	232	23.2	0	38
Xavier Johnson	1	19	19.0	0	19
Marcus Crowley	1	17	17.0	0	17
Chris Olave	1	15	15.0	0	15
OSU Totals	13	283	21.8	0	38
OPP Totals	36	646	17.9	0	70

'Misfit' 2015 Class Plays Final Game At 'Shoe

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State's 2015 class – when it was all said and done – was ranked No. 7 in the country and No. 1 in the Big Ten and, on paper, seemed ready to help keep the Buckeyes as a title contender following a national championship run the year prior.

But two years after that class made its way to campus, in the spring of 2017, then-head coach Urban Meyer was ready to call the recruiting class a letdown, even with progress being made by the end of their second season.

"That was not a good class, and the good thing is they're allowed to change and they're starting to change," Meyer said. "That class – that was a misfit class – is starting to buy in, and they better."

Meyer's words were not ones a head coach speaks often, and with the successes in recruiting for much of his tenure, it was a key moment for the 2015 group, one that now has six players drafted by NFL teams and 10 players of the group of 26 left on Ohio State's roster as fifth-year seniors who played their final game in Ohio Stadium against Penn State.

One of those "misfits" is defensive tackle Robert Landers. He said the group certainly had its fair share of struggles, but it made them a tight collective that will always be together.

"It's been a unique journey to play it down a little bit," Landers said. "It's been fun, it's been interesting. I feel like as a whole within the 2015 class, we really got close through a lot of trials and tribulations that we had to go through in those seasons. We kind of put ourselves in some positions that we really didn't want to be in. We were young, dumb and we made some mistakes, and Coach made sure he took care of it properly, and I feel like that's one of the things that's made us so close."

Since joining the Buckeyes in 2015, the current fifth-year seniors have had 59 wins, two Big Ten titles and three victories in bowl games. But for wide receiver K.J. Hill, it is some of the six losses, including only one trip to the playoff, that sticks in his memory.

"It's been a lot of success with having that because we've been here since 2015, and then some players have been here since 2016, so you

know, we were the group that lost to Michigan State in the rain and cold (17-14), and then went to the Fiesta Bowl, and then this 2016 group is the Clemson game (31-0)," Hill said. "We have a lot of experience on the team, and I feel like with experience and showing the young guys, telling them how it's going to be and the combination of that, it's just why we're at a high level as a team on both sides of the ball."

Branden Bowen is another member from the 2015 class who played his final game at The 'Shoe against the Nittany Lions.

For Bowen, a player who has bounced back from major injuries in order to win the starting job in his last season as a Buckeye, there are personal memories that come with his departure from Ohio State. The fifth-year right tackle had his fiancée, son and mother walk with him on senior day, all of whom are incredibly connected with his time in Columbus.

"Ohio State is the reason I have my son and the reason I have my fiancée, so it's definitely super, I guess heavy, you could say," Bowen said. "Then my mother was the whole reason I'm probably here. I mean she was the one who told me, 'No, you can't pass up this opportunity.' So, definitely very thankful for both of them."

Joining Landers, Hill and Bowen for the final time in Ohio Stadium was offensive tackle Josh Alabi, who was recruited as a defensive tackle; tight end Rashod Berry, who also played defensive end in high school and at times this season; cornerback Damon Arnette; defensive tackle/end Jashon Cornell; defensive tackle DaVon Hamilton; and long snapper Liam McCullough.

While there are 10 fifth years who are members of the 2015 class still on the team, its lone five-star commit, linebacker Justin Hilliard, is actively seeking a medical grayshirt for his injuries in order to play a sixth season.

These players have not only played a healthy amount of snaps between them in their final seasons but have become a backbone for the most successful Ohio State team since the rag-tag group came to campus, something of which head coach Ryan Day is fully aware.

"I think the maturity level is off the charts," Day said of the fifth-year seniors. "The approach, they're almost like player coaches and they know what's right and they're around the team and the young guys more than we are. There's a self-police going on right there, and those guys

mentor the younger guys and want to leave a legacy behind. I heard that several times from many of the players.

"Having maturity like that is important because you can tell guys until you're blue in the face about 'If we don't show up this week, here's what can happen.' But guys who have been through it before and have those scars, it's a little bit more real."

The leadership and veteran presence have been especially important for the defensive line, according to Landers. He said with the injury to fellow senior Jonathon Cooper, as well as others, and the suspension to junior Chase Young for two games, the veterans Hamilton, Cornell and Landers himself had to step up and keep the unit together and working to fill the gaps.

"I feel like it was extremely important just because we are three guys that have been here five years, which is outrageous," Landers said. "We've been around the block a few times. We've been in those four-quarter games. We've been in those overtime games. We know what it's supposed to look like, what it's supposed to feel like, and we've had to handle adversity over the course of our five years here, individually and together."

"That was one of those moments where our room was tested, we had some adversity with losing guys. And at the end of the day, one thing Coach (Larry) Johnson preaches a lot is 'next man up,' and it's our job to make sure that message and that standard is relayed throughout the whole room, and I felt like we did a phenomenal job with that."

It may have been each of their final games in Ohio Stadium, but Landers and Bowen each were not focused on anything except preparing for the Nittany Lions. Landers said it hadn't hit him yet that it would be the last time and that it likely wouldn't hit him until the clock hit zero. Bowen seemed to have forgotten it was his last game until a question about it was asked.

"It completely slipped my mind that it was," Bowen said. "I didn't think it was going to be as emotional as what I think now. It's definitely going to be crazy. It's been a long journey, so I guess we'll have to see."

In the 28-17 win against Penn State, some fifth-year seniors played a crucial role. Hilliard brought in his first collegiate interception in the fourth quarter to help seal the win, and Cornell tallied half a sack as part of his three tackles. Hill made a team-high four catches for a 46 yards and a score in the victory.

Meyer came out and called his 2015 commits "not a good class" and a "misfit class." Now, 10 of those misfits are in prime position to lead Ohio State to a Big Ten title for the third time, a bowl win for the fourth time and a national title for the first time since the group arrived.

For Bowen, this year has been the one he hoped for, and much more.

"It's been amazing, I couldn't have dreamed of a better senior year so far," he said. "I've never been around a group of guys that have been so fun to be around. I mean on the field, some people can see it, but some people can't. A lot of the time we're smiling, we're laughing, we're having fun no matter what's happening."

"We never fight, we talk things through, and it's been fun to get around those guys and develop that sense of brotherhood that even I've never felt through my five years here."

The Departed

Of the 16 members of Ohio State's class of 2015 no longer on the team, six were selected in the NFL draft, five as Buckeyes.

Cornerback Denzel Ward was the highest selected of the group, going No. 4 overall to the Cleveland Browns in 2018. Linebacker Jerome

Baker also went in the 2018 draft, No. 73 overall to the Miami Dolphins in the third round.

The other four draftees went in the 2019 draft. Defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones went at No. 71 to the Denver Broncos, while cornerback Jamel Dean – a member of the 2015 class who transferred to Auburn after being medically disqualified to participate in Ohio State's spring practices – went No. 94 overall to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Offensive tackle Isaiah Prince joined Baker in Miami after being selected by the Dolphins with the No. 202 pick and running back Mike Weber joined another Ohio State back in Ezekiel Elliott after being picked by the Dallas Cowboys with pick No. 218.

The other 10 members of the class had a wide variety of outcomes, all of which left them off Ohio State's current roster.

Tight end A.J. Alexander left Ohio State in 2017 to play for Slippery Rock University, a Division-II school that is 11-0 this season and ranked No. 8 in the country. Then, as a graduate transfer this offseason, Alexander went to play for Gardner-Webb, where he has 16 receptions for 155 yards and a touchdown this season.

Quarterback Joe Burrow transferred from Ohio State in May of 2018 after it appeared that the Buckeyes would be going with Dwayne Haskins for the starting job.

Burrow ended up choosing LSU for his landing destination as a graduate transfer, and now in his second season with the Tigers, he has 4,014 yards passing, 239 yards rushing and 44 total touchdowns with only six interceptions. The former Buckeye has led LSU to an 11-0 record and is widely considered the front-runner to win the Heisman Trophy.

Offensive guard Matthew Burrell transferred to Sam Houston State in May 2018. The Bearkats are an FCS team that is 7-5 on the season.

Four-star inside linebacker Nick Conner was medically disqualified by Ohio State in 2018 after a pair of severe knee injuries in his three seasons with the Buckeyes. He made three tackles in Ohio State's season opener against Bowling Green in 2016.

Offensive lineman Kevin Feder left Ohio State to transfer to Kansas in May of 2018, where he currently plays.

Torrance Gibson, a four-star athlete who came to the Buckeyes ready to play quarterback, was switched to wide receiver in his first year and redshirted that opening season. He was then suspended for the fall semester in 2016 for violating Ohio State's code of conduct.

After initial thoughts of transferring to Cincinnati, Gibson eventually ended up at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, where he played both quarterback and receiver before signing with the CFL's Edmonton Eskimos in 2018.

Cornerback Eric Glover-Williams is the second member of the 2015 class to have transferred to Slippery Rock. He has 23 tackles, 10 passes defended and an interception through 11 games.

Another cornerback in Josh Norwood transferred from Ohio State to Northwest Mississippi Community College before ultimately ending up at West Virginia where he was an All-Big 12 honorable mention in 2018. He has 64 tackles for the Mountaineers this season.

Offensive line prospect Grant Schmidt transferred in 2016 to Cincinnati but eventually moved from the Bearcats to South Dakota State a year later. The Jackrabbits are 8-4 on the season with Schmidt on the roster.

Wide receiver Alex Stump transferred out of Ohio State to Vanderbilt in 2017. Stump played for the Commodores in the 2018 season but did not register a catch, playing mostly on special teams. He is not listed on the roster for this year.

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Michigan Looks To End OSU's Perfect Season

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

There's no bigger game on Ohio State's schedule each season than the final one. Regardless of record, talent or the stakes, Ohio State's annual battle with Michigan is not just the most important game on the schedule for both teams; it's the most historic and important rivalry in college football. There's no kingmaker quite like Ohio State-Michigan, and the 11-0 Buckeyes have one final test to pass to complete a perfect regular season.

It won't be easy, because it never is. Rivalry games, especially this one, always have a little extra fire that can help level the playing field. But that fire just makes the battles between two good teams that much more significant. Despite a slow start to the season that saw a blowout loss to Wisconsin, 35-14, and a 28-21 defeat at the hands of Penn State, Michigan has rounded into a very good team, as it nears re-entry into the top 10.

"I've just seen continued improvement from our team," head coach Jim Harbaugh said following Michigan's 44-10 win over Michigan State on Nov. 16. "What I've seen is tremendous effort by our team. When you get that, you can get everything else. I've seen continuous development, improvement by the team. Everybody wants to talk about, was it this since the Penn State game, since the second half, why is your team better, what's the biggest thing?"

"The team's just been improving, getting

better. You can't plant potatoes one day and expect to eat potato salad the next day. You need some time to develop."

With the time of the season, Michigan certainly has developed. A disastrous and sloppy offense at the beginning of the season has averaged 41.5 points per game in the four games since, a stretch that included a battle with a ranked Notre Dame team and a nearly ranked Indiana team. The Wolverines won both, largely because of a passing game that has found its stride.

Defensively, Michigan is doing much of the same. Allowing 21, 35 and 28 points against Army, Wisconsin and Penn State, respectively, indicated that defensive coordinator Don Brown's unit may have taken a step back. But like the offense, the defense has been lights-out in the second half of the season. The personnel is different from last year after the loss of key stars such as Chase Winovich and Devin Bush, but the result has been the same, with the Wolverines allowing 16.2 points per game for the season.

Players To Watch

The turnaround of the passing game can be largely attributed to offensive coordinator Josh Gattis. In his first year in the position, Gattis has looked to modernize Michigan's offense. After some early struggles and some quick adjustments to make the change a bit less drastic, his system has caught on in the back half of the season.

Nowhere is that more evident than in the passing game, with senior quarterback Shea Patterson. The oft-maligned Ole Miss trans-

Get To Know ... Michigan

About Michigan

- **2019 record:** 9-2 (6-2).
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 7, Defense 4, Specialists 1.
- **Head Coach:** Jim Harbaugh, 47-16 in five years at Michigan, 76-37 in 9 years overall.
- **Series History:** 115th meeting, Michigan leads 58-50-6.
- **School Facts:** Location – Ann Arbor, MI; Enrollment – 44,718; Nickname – Wolverines; Color – Maize; Conference – Big Ten (East Division); Stadium – Michigan Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 107,601).

Top Offensive Returners

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Zach Charbonnet	132	635	4.8	11
Hassan Haskins	91	483	5.3	3
Tru Wilson	44	221	5.0	1

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Shea Patterson	179-301	59.5	2523	21-5

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Ronnie Bell	38	627	16.5	1
Nico Collins	31	649	20.9	7
Donovan Peoples-Jones	30	335	11.2	5

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 33.6
Rushing Yards Per Game – 155.1
Passing Yards Per Game – 247.6
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 402.6

2019 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Aug. 31	MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE	W, 40-21
Sept. 7	ARMY	W, 24-21
Sept. 21	at Wisconsin	L, 35-14
Sept. 28	RUTGERS	W, 52-0
Oct. 5	IOWA	W, 10-3
Oct. 12	at Illinois	W, 42-25
Oct. 19	at Penn State	L, 28-21
Oct. 26	NOTRE DAME	W, 45-14
Nov. 2	at Maryland	W, 38-7
Nov. 16	MICHIGAN STATE	W, 44-10
Nov. 23	at Indiana	W, 39-14
Nov. 30	OHIO STATE	12 p.m.
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Returners

Def. Leaders	Solo-Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Khaleke Hudson	41-47	88	3.0-16	1.5-14
Jordan Glasgow	38-34	72	5.0-48	4.5-32
Josh Metellus	33-22	55	3.5-9	0-0

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Lavert Hill	3	25	8.3	0	20
Ambry Thomas	3	6	2.0	0	4
Josh Metellus	2	0	0.0	0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 16.2
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 105.9
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 161.1
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 267.0

fer's completion percentage is down slightly from years past, from 64.6 in 2018 to 59.5 in 2019, but overall, the Michigan passing attack is much more dangerous and vertical. Patterson has 2,523 yards on the season for 21 touchdowns.

Patterson's receivers have done him plenty of favors. The Wolverines have five receivers with more than 20 receptions, but Ronnie Bell (38 receptions, 627 yards), Donovan Peoples-Jones (30 receptions, 335 yards) and Nico Collins (31 receptions, 649 yards) are as good a receiving group as Ohio State has seen. Collins serves as the primary deep threat, averaging 20.9 yards per catch, while Peoples-Jones is the most consistent threat underneath. Peoples-Jones and Collins will both be tasked with beating Ohio State's zone coverage, and that matchup will be the biggest of the game when Michigan has the football.

While the passing game catches on, the rushing attack is still sputtering, though it has also shown improvement. A breakout 12-carry, 125-yard game against Illinois on Oct. 12 by sophomore Hassan Haskins (91 carries, 483 yards) gave the Wolverines a shot in the arm, and he has essentially claimed the starting role since then. Freshman Zach Charbonnet (132 rushes, 635 yards) sees carries too, but his time has dwindled in recent weeks after the rise of Haskins.

Defensively, the strengths have changed from 2018. After fielding an elite front seven a year ago, Michigan's biggest strength defensively in 2019 is almost certainly in the backfield. Nickelback Khaleke Hudson has had a resurgent year after struggling last season and will play in a similar role to the way Ohio State uses Shaun Wade. Hudson has 88 tackles on the season, though his coverage skills at 220 pounds play a large role in what makes him so unique. He has three deflections on the season.

Jordan Glasgow plays a similar role, though he's a bit more of a true safety than Hudson is and will play usually as the high safety in Michigan's 4-3/4-2-5 hybrid defense, similar, again, to what Ohio State is running. Glasgow has 72 tackles on the season.

Unlike Ohio State, Michigan's defense is primarily centered around man coverage, which means that the cornerbacks have to be good. They are this season, as they have been in the past, and they're led by some of the nation's best. Lavert Hill has 13 tackles and three interceptions on the season and will likely be Michigan's top man coverage corner.

Ambry Thomas isn't quite on Hill's level of coverage, but he's a sure tackler (32 tackles) and is capable of covering No. 2 receivers. Josh Metellus had a challenging game last season against Ohio State, but he's been much better this season as a safety/cornerback hybrid. He has 55 tackles on the year.

The front seven has taken a step back, but it's still one of the better groups Ohio State will play this year. Cameron McGrone has been the most efficient linebacker, racking up 51 tackles. He isn't the most athletic linebacker in the world, but he's great against the run. Ohio State will likely look to isolate him in the passing and option game to take advantage of his lack of true speed.

Josh Uche is a similar player, though he may be the best pass rusher on the roster, with 33 tackles and 8½ sacks.

Up front, Michigan is much bigger than usual and lacks the typical edge rusher who could be expected in a Don Brown defense. That spot has been filled mostly by Uche, but Kwity Paye has done a solid job creating pressure up front with 43 tackles and 6½ sacks, second on the team behind Uche.

Aidan Hutchinson (53 tackles) and Carlo Kemp (36 tackles) have both been good, but they're more easily described as run stuffers than anything else. Ohio State will have to avoid them to run up the middle successfully, but the Buckeye offensive line has yet to struggle with big defensive tackles this season.

If the game comes down to the final plays, as it so often has in the history of the rivalry, the advantage goes to Ohio State. Michigan is without a consistent kicking game, because neither Quinn Nordin (5 of 8 on field goals) nor Jake Moody (6 of 9) has been particularly good with field goals this season.

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Projected Depth Charts

How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. MICHIGAN RUSH DEFENSE

The Game is here, and now the one-game season begins ... followed by another in the Big Ten title game and, if all goes well for the Buckeyes in Indianapolis, at least one more in a College Football Playoff semifinal. Michigan, as it has been so many times in the past, has only one role in The Game, and that's to be the spoiler.

For the Buckeyes to secure another set of gold pants, they are going to have to run the ball. Penn State's defense was No. 4 in rush defense nationally before losing 28-17 to the Buckeyes in Columbus on Nov. 23. OSU jammed 91 yards rushing down the Nittany Lions' throats during its opening scoring drive. The Buckeyes finished with a Woody-like 61 carries with J.K. Dobbins gaining 157 yards on 36 carries and quarterback Justin Fields adding 68 on a J.T. Barrett-like 21 totes. U-M has a rush defense that's nearly equal to the Buckeyes as both rank in the top 15 nationally. The Wolverines allowed 97 rushing yards to Indiana during their 39-14 win at Indiana on Nov. 23, about nine yards below what U-M is allowing per game. OSU lost three fumbles – one by Dobbins, the other by Fields – so ball security is paramount. **EDGE: EVEN**

MICHIGAN RUSH OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

U-M coach Jim Harbaugh has moved away from the running game with the emergence of quarterback Shea Patterson as a legitimate passer over the past month. The Wolverines ran 29 times for 87 yards vs. the Hoosiers and have become a pass-first team. The Buckeyes yielded 99 yards on 37 carries (2.7 per carry) to the Nittany Lions, about eight above OSU's season average, and gave up an 18-yard TD run to Journey Brown. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. MICHIGAN PASS DEFENSE

The Buckeyes allowed three sacks of Fields against Penn State, and several of his career-high run attempts were scrambles for dear life. If the line holds, it's clear that Fields can make the defense pay. He had eye-catching TD passes to K.J. Hill and Chris Olave vs. PSU. Because OSU was so run-dominant against the Nittany Lions, Fields was an effective 16 of 22 for 188 yards. Michigan's pass defense is solid, and the Wolverines have 35 sacks, but they are vulnerable to the deep ball so the Buckeye O-line will look to provide enough time for their QB. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MICHIGAN PASS OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

For those who laughed at Harbaugh while counting the days until his firing while watching Penn State roll to a 21-0 lead on U-M on Oct. 19, here's some news: There is a very good and dangerous offense brewing in Ann Arbor. The Wolverines totaled 453 yards against Indiana, and Patterson was 20 of 32 for 366 yards, five touchdowns and an interception. He has nine TD passes and threw for more than 300 yards in the past two games. In Nico Collins and Donovan Peoples-Jones, he's got receivers who can match OSU's in talent. Collins had 165 yards and three touchdowns against Indiana, including a 76-yard catch-and-run. Penn State went with slants and quick-release passes to try to avoid the fierce OSU rush led by Chase Young, who had three sacks. The Wolverines have more weapons and are using speedy Giles Jackson in a variety of formations, including jet sweeps and a wheel route that went for 50 yards against the Hoosiers. A month ago, this category was dominated by the Buckeyes. Not so much now. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Buckeyes are putting their faith in true freshman Garrett Wilson that he can handle the punt-return duties. It will be an awesome responsibility in Michigan Stadium. If it comes down to field position, the Buckeyes will rely on Druce Chrisman in big-time pressure moments. U-M punter Will Hart had punts of 31 and 24 yards in the first half vs. Indiana, and the Buckeyes had a key block in last year's game. Jackson had three kickoff returns for 81 yards, including a 38-yarder. **EDGE: EVEN**

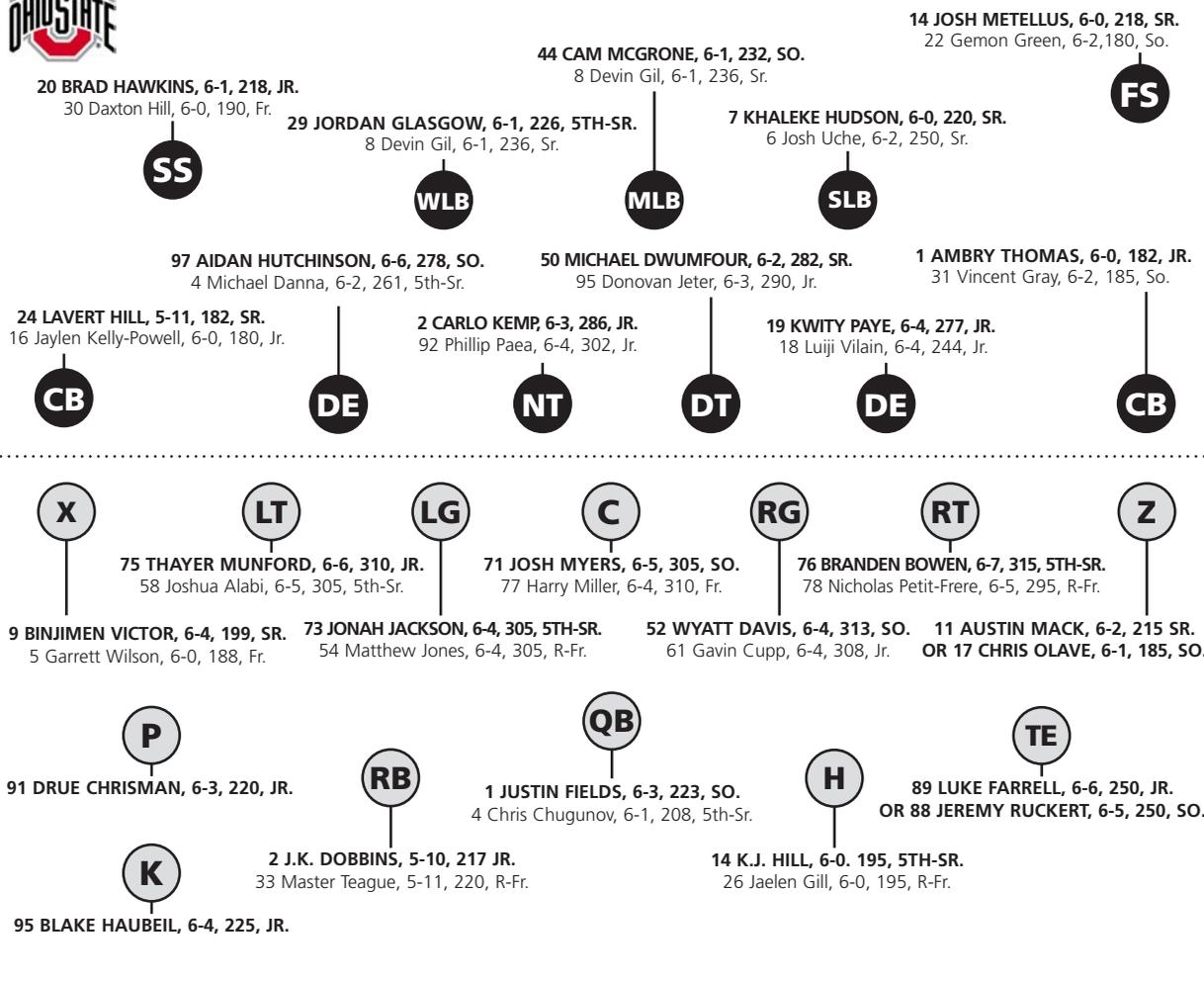
INTANGIBLES

Michigan's season can be divided into two parts: to near the end of the first half of the Penn State game when the Wolverines were down three TDs and since the revival that began at the end of the half. Although their rally fell short, they've won four straight since, and the team that in the preseason was picked to win the conference has emerged. The Wolverines will have confidence and the home crowd. The Buckeyes should be leery after nearly giving away their game vs. Penn State by coughing up the ball, but coach Ryan Day will turn that into a positive by pointing out how his team overcame adversity to win. **EDGE: MICHIGAN**

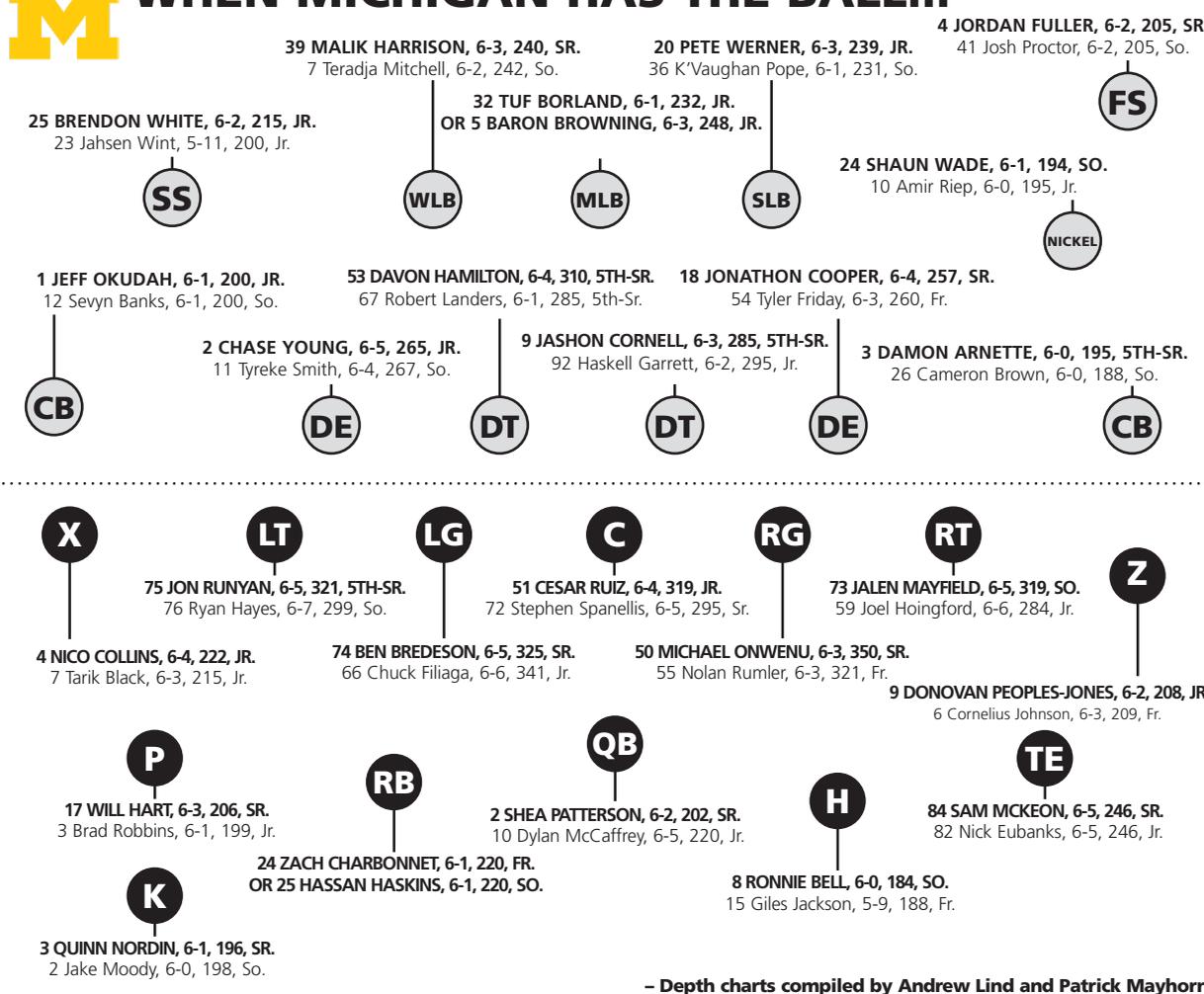
STAFF PREDICTION

The Buckeyes finally played a four-quarter game, and that experience will help them. Simply put, if they play to their standards of excellence, they can't lose. **OHIO STATE, 31-23**

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN MICHIGAN HAS THE BALL...



- Depth charts compiled by Andrew Lind and Patrick Mayhorn

Ginn Has Bragging Rights Over U-M Alumni

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Just two years removed from winning the national championship, Ohio State entered the 2004 matchup with Michigan at 6-4 overall and 3-4 in the Big Ten.

The Wolverines were heavily favored and would have clinched an outright conference title and trip to the Rose Bowl with a win. But the Buckeyes and wide receiver and returner Ted Ginn had other plans that afternoon.

The game was close for two quarters, with Ohio State holding a 20-14 lead at halftime. But midway through the third, Ginn fielded a punt at his own 18-yard line, broke a tackle, ran toward a wall of three defenders, cut the opposite way and raced down the sideline past the outstretched arm of Michigan's punter for a touchdown.

The 37-21 rout was on, and the rivalry hasn't been the same since.

"It was one of my favorite plays ever in my life," Ginn, who tied the NCAA record that afternoon with his fourth punt-return touchdown of the season, told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "I was always told when you go to Ohio State to make a name for yourself by doing big things in the Michigan game."

"For me to pop off like that and have the opportunity to change the outcome of the game, that was just one of those fond memories that I'll always cherish because it put my name on the map. I knew I was scoring, and I wasn't about to let that punter tackle me."

The roles were reversed in 2005 when Ohio State traveled to Michigan with at least a share of the Big Ten title on the line. The Buckeyes trailed 18-12 entering the fourth quarter, when quarterback Troy Smith led two scoring drives – including the 12-play, 88-yard game-winner

that left just 24 seconds on the clock.

"You're up there in the Big House for the last game of the season, and we knew they had a little bit of a bad taste in their mouth from the year before," Ginn said. "We knew we were going to have to go through them to win the Big Ten. We went in there and played our hearts out until the last drive."

Ginn recalled the final drive, which gave Ohio State the 25-21 lead, in exacting detail, noting how he finished the afternoon with a game-high nine receptions for 89 yards, including three catches for 26 yards on the final drive alone.

"It was something I'll never forget," Ginn said. "When you play college football and you play in those rivalry games, you don't ever really think about Super Bowls, being a first-round draft pick or anything like that. You just think about that moment. We were all brothers out there for one common goal, and that was to win

Ginn Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
2004/Fr.	Columbus	W, 37-21
2005/So.	Ann Arbor	W, 25-21
2006/Jr.	Columbus	W, 42-39

for the state of Ohio. That's what we did."

The stakes were even higher in 2006, as both Ohio State and Michigan entered The Game at 11-0 overall and 7-0 in the Big Ten. It was the first time in the 103-year history of the rivalry that the teams were ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in the nation, and the winner would not only be crowned conference champion but would clinch a spot in the national championship.

"We knew these guys were coming in undefeated and playing at a high level," Ginn said, pointing out several players on the Michigan roster who were drafted in the following years. "We knew it was going to be a dogfight. It was going to be one of the best games we played all year. We were confident because we had them in our house."

The Wolverines took an early 7-0 lead, but Smith and the Buckeyes responded with a score of their own on the ensuing possession. The teams traded possessions for the duration of the first quarter before Michigan went three and out on its first drive of the second. Ohio State took its first lead two plays later when freshman running back Chris "Beanie" Wells broke free for a 52-yard touchdown.

On their next possession, the Buckeyes faced a second-and-1 from the Michigan 39-yard line. They hurried to the line, where Ginn lined up with his hand in the dirt as a tight end on the right side. Smith snapped the ball, faked to Wells up the middle and hit Ginn in stride for a touchdown to extend the lead to 21-7.

"It was an off-balance situation where you would think we would run a power-type play," Ginn said. "It was a great fake by Troy, who kept the ball behind his back, Beanie dove over the top, I got behind No. 19 (safety Willis Barringer)

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MICHIGAN MEMORIES

and No. 29 (cornerback Leon Hall) and caught one over the top.”

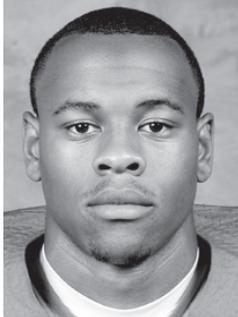
Michigan made a push in the second half behind quarterback Chad Henne (267 yards and two touchdowns) and running back Mike Hart (142 yards and three scores), cutting it to 42-39 late in the fourth quarter. But Ginn recovered an onside kick attempt, which sealed the victory for Ohio State.

After the game, many believed there should be a rematch in the BCS National Championship Game. Florida passed Michigan in the final standings, however, thanks to its win over Arkansas in the SEC Championship Game two weeks later.

Smith won the Heisman Trophy in a landslide, and the Buckeyes were considered heavy favorites in the title game as a result. But aside from Ginn’s 93-yard touchdown on the opening kickoff, the Gators – lead by head coach Urban Meyer – dominated in every facet

of the game on their way to a 41-14 win.

“I really thought we should have come back and played Michigan again in the national championship,” Ginn said. “We went out there and got smoked by Florida, so it is what it is. But I thought Michigan was the better team than them.”



Ted Ginn

The last image of Ginn in an Ohio State uniform includes him on crutches and his foot in a boot, after teammate Roy Hall jumped on his back and Ginn twisted his ankle while celebrating the long touchdown. He opted to leave school early and was selected by the Miami Dolphins in the first round (ninth overall pick) of the 2007 NFL draft after racking up 1,943 receiving yards and

15 touchdowns as well as 900 punt return yards and six more scores during his time in Columbus.

“You just don’t know how things happen and how timing works,” Ginn said. “You can’t win them all, and you can’t lose them all. It was

a great deal, regardless. I enjoyed my games against Michigan, I enjoyed my championships, I enjoyed my bowl games. Playing at Ohio State was one of the best experiences that I ever had, and it prepared me for what was next. Without Ohio State, I wouldn’t be in the NFL right now.”

Now in his 13th season in the league, Ginn has played for the Dolphins, Carolina Panthers, San Francisco 49ers, Arizona Cardinals and

New Orleans Saints. He’s appeared in two Super Bowls (XLVII and L), too, but his three wins over Michigan will forever be the highlight of his career.

“To this day, I can still walk around and say that I never lost to Michigan,” Ginn said, noting that it gave him bragging rights over Michigan alumni in the NFL. “It gives you a lot of fighting power when you get into these locker rooms.”

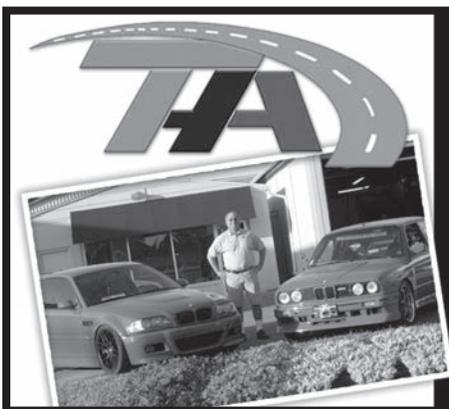
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Hawk Remembers 3-1 Run Against TTUN

By Joe Dempsey
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

A.J. Hawk is one of the most decorated Buckeyes ever, winning a BCS national championship and earning two unanimous All-America selections along with the Lombardi Award.

Growing up 90 miles from Columbus in Centerville, Ohio, Hawk bled scarlet and gray long before strapping up the pads for Ohio State.

"When I was a kid, I don't really remember specific games, but I just remember it was always Michigan week," Hawk told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "Each day of school you'd wear different Ohio State gear, and each day it ramped up and got bigger and bigger. I remember that going back to first grade."

One of Hawk's memories of the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry came while he was still at Centerville High School and then-Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel was recruiting the three-star recruit who would become an all-time great linebacker.

"Coach Tressel came to my high school once, and all the teachers were going crazy and the students wanted to see him," Hawk recalled. "He would be walking down the hallway of my high school, and a teacher would yell at him, 'You going to beat Michigan this year?' And he's so classy; he'd have the perfect answer all the time and be funny. It feels like it's always on anyone's mind in Ohio."

As an Ohio native and lifelong Buckeye fan, Hawk thought he had a good idea about the significance of the rivalry with the team that Buckeye fans call "The Team Up North." It turned out that the standout linebacker had no clue just how much emphasis the Tressel-led team put on the battle between the Buckeyes and the Wolverines.

"There are so many awesome traditions that we had with Coach Tressel," Hawk said. "The scout team had its helmets taped up to look like Michigan the week of The Game. The whole week in practice, we were practicing against those Michigan helmets."

Practicing against the scout team wearing Michigan helmets fired up the team, but Hawk didn't realize quite how significant the rivalry was until the marching band became involved. On the Sunday after Ohio State's 23-16 overtime victory at Illinois on Nov. 16, 2002, Tressel had the team watch the entire game film from the Michigan matchup of the prior season. Generally, after late-night film sessions, the team would call it a night, but not during Michigan week.

"He said, 'Go into the Woody Hayes indoor facility,'" Hawk said of Tressel, "and you go out there and the whole marching band is out there. You take an instrument and traditionally you walk Script Ohio with them holding an instrument. I was like, 'Wow.' I didn't know about it at all. It was a surprise to me, and I realized, 'OK, yeah, this is a pretty special thing to be a part of.'"

The Buckeyes entered The Game with a 13-0 record in 2002, needing a victory to secure their spot in the BCS national champi-

onship. Ohio State held on at home, keeping its perfect season intact with a 14-9 victory at Ohio Stadium, where enthusiastic fans flooded the field.

"We knew winning that one we were going to get a chance to play for it all," Hawk said. "I just remember after that game it seemed like everyone in the stands rushed the field and you couldn't even move. Trying to get back to the locker room was almost impossible. Out of nowhere, I actually ran into my mom and one of my brothers in the middle of the field after that game."

Hawk backed up standout linebacker Cie Grant during the 2002 campaign and saw action against Michigan when Grant went to the sidelines for a minor injury. A true freshman, Hawk made two tackles against the Wolverines, including one tackle for loss.

Coming off their national title, the 2003 Buckeyes were the team to beat in the Football Bowl Subdivision (then known as Division I-A). They entered The Game with a 10-1 ledger, with the only blemish coming from a 17-10 loss at Wisconsin.

No. 4 Ohio State fell 35-21 at No. 5 Michigan, spoiling what could have been an excellent season for the Buckeyes. Hawk recorded eight tackles (three solo) with one pass breakup as a sophomore starter, but solid stats did not lighten the lingering sting of losing to the archrival Wolverines.

"That one was tough," Hawk recalled. "That was my only loss to Michigan. We went up there and it was one of those days where we didn't play very well, especially defensively, and they played really well.

Hawk Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
2002/Fr.	Columbus	W, 14-9
2003/So.	Ann Arbor	L, 35-21
2004/Jr.	Columbus	W, 37-21
2005/Sr.	Ann Arbor	W, 25-21

Their offense was kind of on fire, and that was brutal. Everything was out in front of us again, and then we dropped that game.

"You don't ever get over them. I guess it makes you appreciate the wins. Guys now don't know what it's like to lose to Michigan, and that's a good thing. It wasn't always this one-sided."

The Scarlet and Gray have won 14 of the last 15 games in the rivalry. The 2004 Buckeyes helped turn the tide of the rivalry after a disappointing season.

"That year was crazy," Hawk said. "I came in and went 14-0 in my first year. I was like, 'Man, we're going to go to the national championship every year. We're not going to lose a game.' And then I realized how difficult it really is.

"Leading up to that Michigan game, we didn't have to talk about it a whole lot. I do remember Coach Tressel leading up to that talking about - 'Let's send the seniors off right.' Every senior class obviously wants to go out with a win against Michigan. I remember talking about that, and that resonated with us - it definitely did."

Ohio State was 6-4, unranked and coming off a brutal 24-17 loss at Purdue on Nov. 13, 2004, while Michigan entered as the nation's

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MICHIGAN MEMORIES

seventh-ranked team at 9-1 on an eight-game winning streak.

"They were very good," Hawk said. "It was a weird opportunity to kind of be a spoiler to them. Our season hadn't gone that well, especially with Ohio State's standards. Luckily for us, we played well against a good Michigan team and beat them at home, and that kind of propelled us through our bowl game and even in the offseason. That whole season didn't go very well for us, but at least winning that game at home when I don't think a lot of people expected us to win, I think that went a long way for the next couple years."

Hawk, who earned his first unanimous All-America selection that season, made a team-high 11 tackles (four solo) and broke up one pass in a convincing 37-21 Ohio State victory. The Buckeyes took out their season-long frustrations and somewhat salvaged a lost season with the taste of revenge.

"We kind of knew our backs were up against it going into that game, but you feel how big The Game is," Hawk said. "No matter what really happens the rest of that year, good or bad, it doesn't really matter that much if you can find a way to beat Michigan. If you go undefeated but then you lose your last game to Michigan, that can still put a damper on the whole season and everything you did. Likewise, if you're not playing that great and don't have as many wins as you want, and then you go and you beat Michigan, especially a game like that, where they were the favorites in it, it can really help you out."

The Hawk-led Buckeyes carried their momentum into the Alamo Bowl, where

they demolished Oklahoma State, 33-7. In 2005, Ohio State did not enjoy the start it wanted, with a three-point loss to Texas and a seven-point loss at Penn State putting the ledger at 3-2. But the ninth-ranked Buckeyes found their groove in Hawk's senior season, winning five straight before a showdown with the No. 17 Wolverines in Ann Arbor.

"It was a battle," Hawk recalled of his final matchup with Michigan. "It was back and forth. I know a lot of people I talk to, family and friends, they were a little nervous in that game. Their offense played well, and we tried to hold up as much as we could on defense. Ultimately, (there was) Troy Smith and his iconic pass to Tony Gonzalez down there by the goal line that I always remember when I think of that game. What a battle."

"I definitely remember being in that game thinking, 'You don't want to go out like this. You don't want your last game against Michigan, at Michigan, to end on a sour note and you lose to them.' It's hard to ever forget those. You never truly do. It turned into one of those really special wins for myself and all of my buddies, especially all of us guys that that was our last year."

Hawk helped assure he and his classmates would go out victorious against their archrival, with seven tackles (five solo), including one TFL. Once again, Ohio State carried its momentum from topping Michigan into a bowl game, besting Notre Dame, 34-20, in the Fiesta Bowl.

In their big bowl victory, the Buckeyes were led by Hawk against his soon-to-be brother-in-law Brady Quinn, who was the quarterback for the Fighting Irish. Hawk

posted a game-high 12 tackles (nine solo), including 3½ TFL and two sacks against a guy who would become family.

"Looking back, I've got four kids with Brady's sister, and we actually got engaged shortly after that game," Hawk said. "It was kind of weird going into it. I wasn't really sure going into it how to handle it and didn't really want to bring any light to it. But somehow it kind of got out there, and people ran with it."

"And then we played the game, and I found out afterwards that they showed my wife multiple times and she was horrified. She doesn't want any part of that, that's for sure. We were so young and naive. We had no idea. We didn't really think of anything of it. It's crazy how it worked out though. That's my last game at Ohio State and I got to play against Brady, who is my brother-in-law and close friend now. It's pretty amazing."

Hawk and his wife, Laura, have four kids, and each one of them shares a name with a rock star: Lennon, Hendrix, Axel and Vedder. A busy father of four, Hawk also

hosts a podcast called "The HawkCast," in addition to doing various SiriusXM radio shows.

Since he experienced the highs and lows of both beating the Wolverines and losing to them, he knows how much it hurts to drop a game to an archrival. While he likes good competition, Hawk remembers when Michigan dominated the matchup for most of his childhood.

"I'm fine with winning every year," Hawk said. "I think anybody would be. But it's good for everybody for Michigan to be good, for the Big Ten as a whole to be good. That's why it's good this season that Michigan's turned it around and they look a lot better now. And they're playing so much better now than they were before."

"It's tough for people who are new to it, they think, 'Well, how is it a rivalry? Ohio State has won seven in a row and 14 out of the last 15.' I'm 35, I understand what the rivalry is. I played in it. It's not always this one-sided. Why not? Let's keep the streak alive."

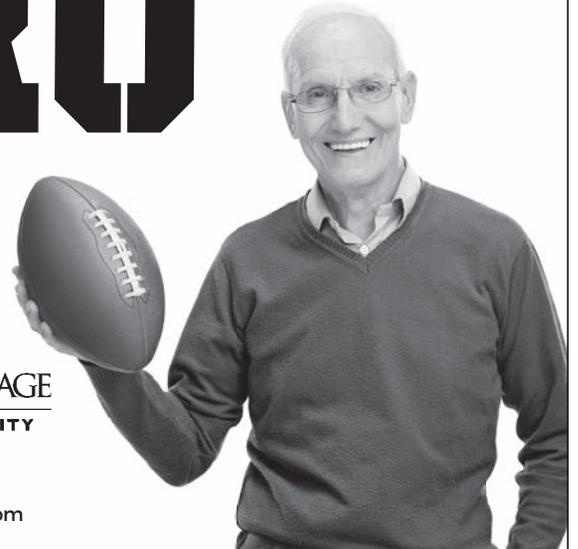
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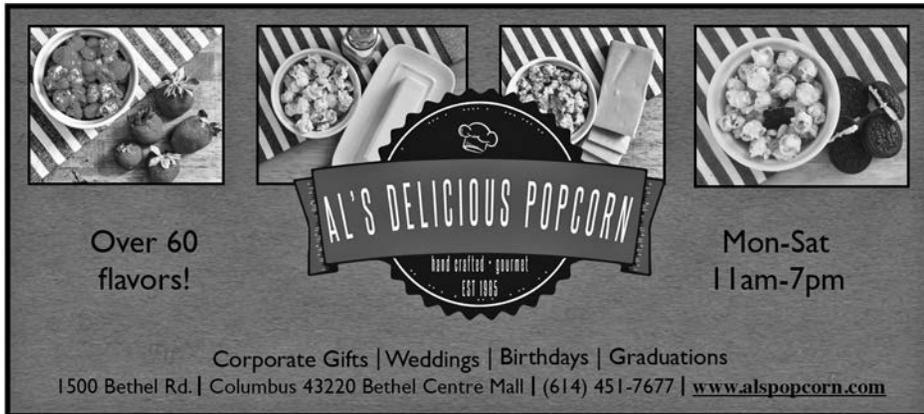


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Isaman Earned Gold Pants, Golden Gloves

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

"I'm playing no matter what."
That's what Derek Isaman said when doctors advised him not to suit up for his final matchup with Michigan as a senior in 1989 because he had shattered his thumb.
"Throw a rubber cast on it – whatever you've got to do – I'm playing with it," Isaman said. "The thumb was extremely sore of course. It was shattered, they put a plate in it, and they had a hard cast on it, so they put a rubber cast on it. And the doctor said, 'I don't think that's going to protect you.' I said, 'I'm playing,' and they agreed with me, so I went with it."

Although the Buckeyes lost 28-18 to the archrival Wolverines, Isaman made plays all over the field, recording 10 tackles (seven solo), including one tackle for loss. The Ohio State linebacker remarkably had an impact despite playing through excruciating pain.

"In the fourth quarter they had just scored a touchdown, and I was laying down, I couldn't even get up," Isaman said. "It was rough. It was a tough game, but we lost."

It's not surprising that a senior linebacker for Ohio State in the late '80s would do whatever it took to beat Michigan, but Isaman's journey to that point was far from ordinary.

BSB asked Isaman what marked his first memory of the Ohio State-Michigan

rivalry, and the Fremont, Ohio, native was somewhat taken aback by the weight of that question. He answered, though, and it was a response that would make Earle Bruce, who had recruited him to Columbus, proud.

"I just wanted to kick their hiney every time," Isaman told BSB.

"I grew up in Fremont, and I was a Michigan fan when I was younger actually," Isaman said. "I went through the recruiting process and chose Ohio State, and then I hated Michigan of course. I always wanted to beat them. We only beat them one out of the four years, and it was the year that Coach Bruce got fired."

Bruce was fired before the 1987 Ohio State-Michigan game when Isaman was a junior, but the fiery coach was permitted to lead his team for one final rivalry game. Isaman served as a reserve 'backer in '87 after starting as a sophomore, but when it came to the last game, Bruce made a switch.

"It was funny; I remember Earle Bruce looking at me when we were in 7-on-7 at the start of Monday practice," Isaman recalled about the beginning of Michigan week 1987. "He pointed his finger at me and smiled, and that was pretty cool. I didn't play at all that year, but I had the determination and wanted to beat Michigan."

After playing nearly all of his first three seasons at outside linebacker, Bruce moved Isaman next to Chris Spielman at inside 'backer for The Game. Isaman answered the call with seven tackles (six solo), including

one for a loss in a 23-20 Ohio State victory.
"That's with me for the rest of my life," Isaman said of the win. "We won one time. That was the best game of my college career."

"It was definitely good to be sending Coach Bruce out on a win against Michigan, our biggest enemy up north. Sending him out with a win was extremely rewarding for the whole team. It was quite exciting in the locker room after that game."

Following his junior year, Isaman made the decision to step away from football and Ohio State to pursue a career in boxing. The multitasking young man from Fremont thrived in the ring in 1988, becoming the National Golden Gloves Heavyweight champion.

Perhaps Isaman's most interesting bout came a few years earlier in a National Golden Gloves semifinal match against a well-known heavyweight in St. Louis.

"I'm looking at the bracket, I'm seeing that, 'Oh shoot, if I win this fight then I'm fighting Tyson,'" Isaman recalled. "So, I win the fight, and Tyson's next. We go to put the gloves on, he elbows me as he's walking over, trying to move me over, trying to intimidate me."

"I fought three rounds. I was the only one to go three rounds, but I ran from him the whole three rounds. I was moving a little bit here and there, and there were a couple of times I exchanged some punches, but I came out alive. He didn't bite my ear off or anything."

There may be Buckeyes who won more than one pair of gold pants, but how many of them can say they went three rounds with a heavyweight champion of the world?

Following his Golden Gloves title in '87, Isaman faced the decision to continue to pursue a professional boxing career or return to Ohio State to complete his degree. With some persuasion from second-year head coach John Cooper, Isaman elected to return to Columbus, although he knew staying in the ring would be best for a fighting career.

"Coach Cooper called me a couple times and sent me some letters," Isaman said. "I

Isaman Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1985/Fr.	Ann Arbor	L, 27-17
1986/So.	Columbus	L, 26-24
1987/Jr.	Ann Arbor	W, 23-20
1989/Sr.	Ann Arbor	L, 28-18

just wanted to come back to Ohio State. If I would have went and did the boxing, it probably would have been better for me. But I didn't do that, and I was glad that I came back and got closer to my teammates and degree. I chose football over boxing."

Returning in 1989 for his senior season after taking a year off from football might have been more of a challenge for a lesser man than Isaman, but he reacclimated himself seamlessly. After all, this was a man who had won a Golden Gloves championship and went the distance with "Iron" Mike.

"I was voted a captain, and that really surprised me," Isaman said of his senior season. "I was the team MVP and most inspirational guy that year. I'm certainly glad I came back for all those accolades. It was a good choice, and I don't regret it at all."

During his senior season, the Buckeyes traveled to Los Angeles to play USC for the second game of the season. While the game was a forgettable one for Ohio State, Isaman got a little taste of Hollywood on the trip.

"I got a phone call from some guy when I was in a hotel near USC, and he says, 'Sylvester Stallone wants me to interview you for 'Rocky V.' ' And I'm like, 'What?'"

A bewildered Isaman did the interview and became excited when it went well.

"He said, 'You did a great job, I'm going to send this on to Sylvester and then the director (John G. Avildsen),' " Isaman recalled. "We ended up playing the game, got whopped and went home. I got a phone call from the director of 'Rocky V,' and he asked if I could come to his penthouse in New York. He would fly me up there, and I'd read. I said, 'Well sure, I'll do that,' and I flew up to Manhattan."

Another real-life boxer auditioning for the role was Tommy Morrison, who ultimately got the part. Isaman remembers not

MICHIGAN MEMORIES

seeing him as much competition because of what had happened when they met in the ring in '88.

"I fought him about a year before at the National Golden Gloves," Isaman said. "I beat him, and I thought I could beat him again, like 'I'll whup that dude.'"

On the gridiron and in the ring, Isaman moved with conviction and power. He didn't feel that same confidence in the realm of theater.

"He had me read, and I was so nervous," Isaman recalled. "One thing I did – I was just a real jack wagon – I put toilet paper in my shoes so it would make me taller. First thing they told me when I walked in the door is 'Take your shoes off.' How about that? What a jack wagon. I walked in with no shoes and I read; I did a terrible job. Once I walked out, I said, 'I guess I'm not an actor.'"

While acting may not have been in the cards for Isaman, he still aspired to box at the pro level following his football career. Though he drastically downplays his boxing career, Isaman had success in the ring. In fact, he finished his career with a 15-1 record, including nine knockouts and his only loss coming from a split decision.

Isaman is content that his boxing career never materialized when compared to someone like Tyson, hanging up the gloves after three straight wins and focusing on raising a family.

The hard-nosed linebacker and boxer and his wife, Cam, are raising their six children: Avery, Jake, Davis, Sam, Ella and Chloe.

Isaman has experienced so much in his life, from football to boxing to acting, highlighted by raising a family. There is no doubt, however, that growing up in

Fremont and playing in the greatest rivalry in all of sport is a big part of who he is.

"It was the most important game of your season," Isaman said. "We started with Michigan at the beginning of the season just to keep in the back of your head. Obviously, it's the biggest game of the year every year. I think that everyone will tell you that, if you put on Ohio State or Michigan pads.

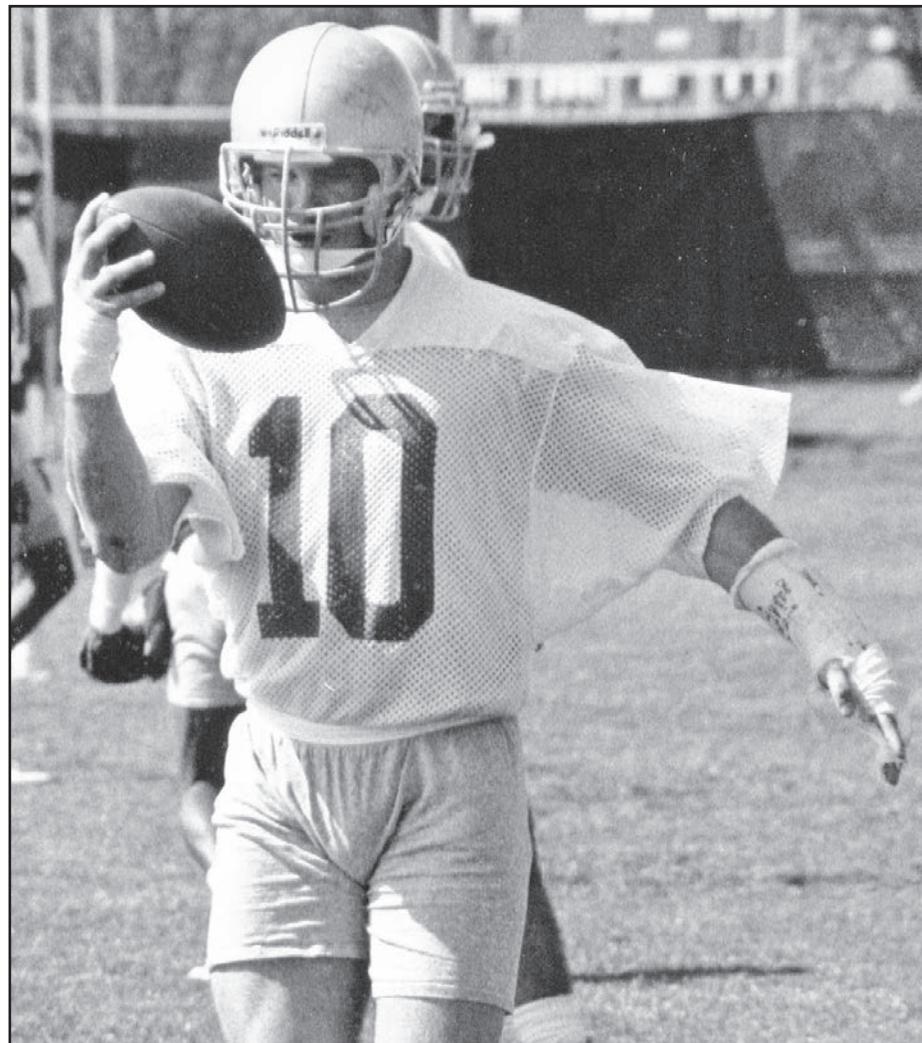
"If your ass doesn't know as a football player that you're going to beat Michigan that year, no ifs, ands or buts about it – that was our No. 1 goal. Especially me being from up there by the border of Michigan, it was a top priority. It was already built inside me that it was going to be my best game of the year.

"It was one of those things where you drop everything and you look at the film, you're studying the film. Any extra time that you have, get to the film room, study what they're doing and be prepared."

It's clear Isaman's family is the most important thing to him, but a different passion can be heard in his voice when he talks about the desire to beat The Team Up North.

Isaman was asked if he would rather have more competitive games between Ohio State and Michigan nowadays or if he's content with the Scarlet and Gray dominating the series. His answer was not surprising for someone who had proved he would do whatever it took to beat the Maize and Blue, and Coach Bruce would be proud.

"Being on the side that beat them one in four, I would love to see them keep dominating The Game," Isaman said. "It's still going to be a competitive game and our determining game. At the end of the season, when you beat Michigan, man, it makes that whole season so much better."



FILE PHOTO

BATTLE-TESTED – Linebacker Derek Isaman started three games against Michigan, recording 25 tackles, including two tackles for loss.

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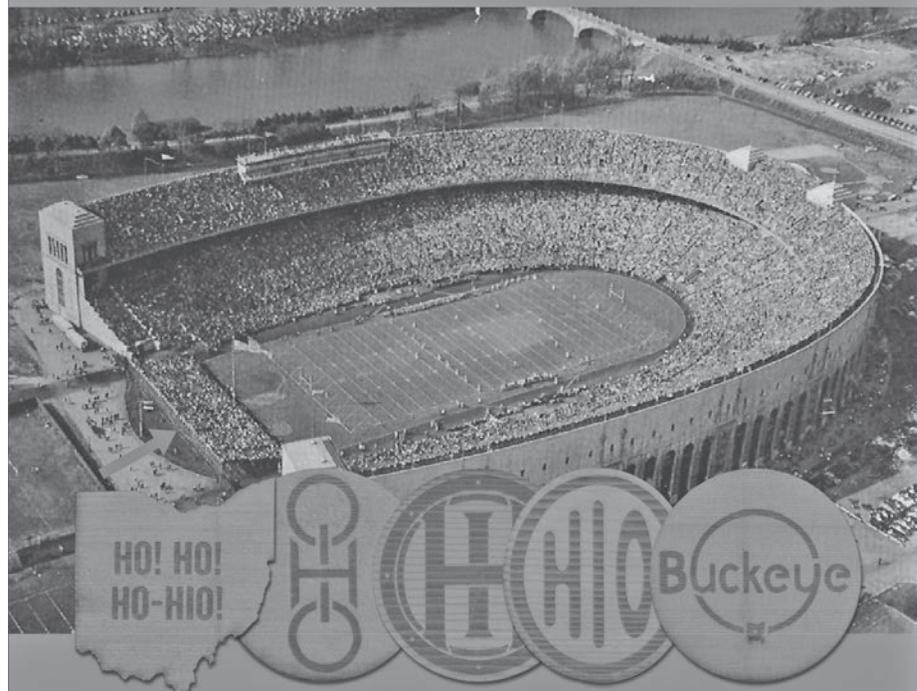
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Jemison Treated The Game Like Any Other

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Thad Jemison never expected to end up at Ohio State.

In his first three years at Cincinnati Princeton High School, he felt he didn't do enough at cornerback to garner significant attention from colleges. At that point in his high school tenure, Jemison was prepared to go into the Army.

After a breakout senior season as team captain, playing both as a wide receiver and safety, Jemison became a Parade Magazine All-American and played well enough to make his way to Columbus as a receiver.

"I was the first one in my family to go to college," Jemison told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "All that was new, all that was new to me."

Jemison's first season playing for Ohio State came in the 1980 season, when he had just one catch for 13 yards. That year, the No. 5 Buckeyes fell to No. 10 Michigan 9-3, giving the Wolverines their fourth win in five games against their biggest rival.

From year one, Jemison knew that the Michigan game was different, simply in the preparation Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce put into it.

"One of the biggest things I remember

is we practiced maybe 10 days, almost 12 days for Michigan," Jemison said. "Whoever we played before Michigan, we practiced a couple days on them, and we started Michigan week before it was Michigan."

In Jemison's time, those matchups the week before were against Iowa his freshman season and then three straight matchups against Northwestern. The Buckeyes won those games with an average margin of 39.5 points per contest.

But the same levels of success did not come against the opponent Ohio State prepared for ahead of time.

In Jemison's four seasons, the Buckeyes went 2-2 against rival Michigan, with the wins coming in the 1981 and 1982 seasons. The former was a 14-9 victory against the Wolverines that was powered by a pair of touchdown runs by quarterback Art Schlichter, including the game-winner with 2:50 to go in the fourth quarter. In 1982, the Buckeyes pulled out a 24-14 victory on 10 unanswered points in the fourth quarter.

But Jemison said, even in the wins, that the weight of the rivalry may have had a negative impact on both teams.

"I think what happened, to be honest, I think the coaches got tight," Jemison explained. "You know they made the game bigger than it was, and they got tight. Don't get me wrong, Michigan was

good and we were good, but I think on both sides, they coach differently in those games, probably because of the rivalry, and made it bigger than it was, and then the outcome of the score was the outcome of all of that moving forward.

"I think if you give too much credence to who you're playing, you forget what you're supposed to be doing, and then of course the mistakes happen, and you just get tighter."

Jemison had 16 total receptions during his first three seasons for 344 yards and a lone touchdown, but he pretty much doubled that output in his senior year alone. Jemison had 35 catches for 558 yards and three touchdowns in his 1983 season, including his best game against Michigan with a four-catch, 62-yard performance.

Those were Jemison's only four receptions against the Wolverines, but they weren't enough to come up with the victory. In a game where both teams surpassed 400 total yards, No. 8 Michigan defeated No. 10 Ohio State 24-21, giving the Buckeyes their third loss of the season, helping move Ohio State to its fourth 9-3 season in Jemison's time with the program.

That 1983 loss to Michigan came partially from an unusual source.

Early in the fourth quarter, with Michigan up 17-14, Ohio State was driving down the field with relative ease before a Mike Tomczak incompletion. Following the incompletion, Bruce attempted to get tricky.

Jemison Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1980/Fr.	Columbus	L, 9-3
1981/So.	Ann Arbor	W, 14-9
1982/Jr.	Columbus	W, 24-14
1983/Sr.	Ann Arbor	L, 24-21

The "fumblerooski," as it has been called since at least 1930, is a play where the ball is intentionally fumbled so that another player, often an offensive lineman, can sneakily pick up the ball and catch the defense off guard.

Ohio State called on the "fumblerooski" on its most crucial drive of the game, and it did not work. Tomczak fumbled the ball, but the center was pushed back, the ball was moved around and no Buckeye was able to recover the ball. Michigan ended up recovering the fumble and scored on the following drive to take a 10-point lead it would not give up.

Jemison said that instead of the "fumblerooski," Ohio State should have used a different trick play that was constantly practiced that season.

"We also had a double pass where they would throw the ball to me and I was supposed to throw it to Cedric (Anderson), and every time in practice it worked," Jemison said. "Because what happened with the 'fumblerooski,' somebody kicked it or something and it didn't work. But we had another trick play, but I don't know

Continued On Page 28

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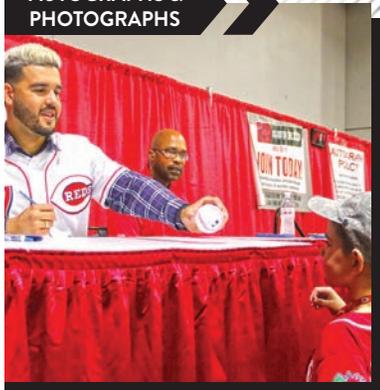
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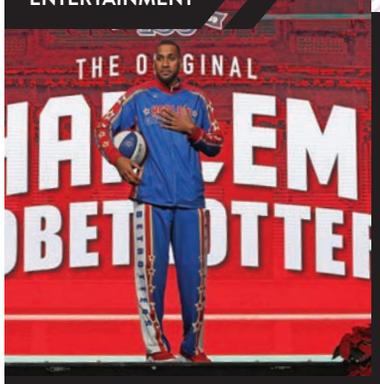
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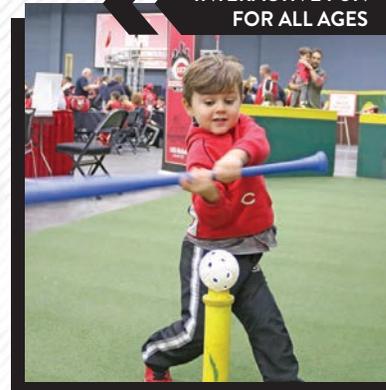
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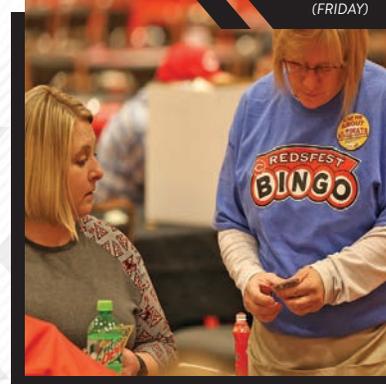
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Jemison Predicted Fiesta Bowl Touchdown

Continued From Page 26

why he didn't call my number then.

"We always had a trick play that we would practice the whole year just for that game, but for some reason Earle wouldn't call them or he'd use the wrong one."

Those two defeats to the Wolverines stung less to Jemison than to most other fans and teammates. To Jemison, it as just another loss to another team, not a crushing defeat to his biggest enemy.

"People say, 'Well how was the Michigan game?' It was a game, because I was never a rah-rah kind of guy, but you know I guess some people like really hate Michigan. I'm like, 'All right, they cool.' I mean I say the word, I'm not like that," Jemison said. "It's Michigan week. Well, I thought it was just game 10. You know I remember my first year, 'Oh, it's Michigan week.' 'OK, well what's going to be different?'"

With every game being just a game for Jemison, it meant that his highlight moment could have taken place anywhere. And for the former Buckeye wideout, that moment just happened to be in his final game in scarlet and gray.

Following the 10-point loss to Michigan, Ohio State played against Pitt in the Fiesta Bowl. Jemison pulled in eight catches for 131 yards and a touchdown, a touchdown that came with 39 seconds left in the game.

"It's supposed to be a speed out to

Cedric to get us in field-goal position," Jemison explained. "But they rolled the coverage to him, if I'm not mistaken, so Tomczak came off of that, I went down the sideline, (tight end John) Frank went down the middle, and (running back Keith) Byars split the difference on both of us," Jemison said. "(Pitt defensive back Melvin Dean) turned to Byars and I was wide open, and it seemed like, to be honest, man, it took forever for that ball to come down."

But eventually that ball came down, and Jemison's catch gave the Buckeyes the 28-23 victory.

"It was surreal, just the game, and what I tell people is I actually went blank, I didn't hear anything until I caught the ball, and then you hear everybody cheering," he said. "That game was the best game I had. It was just one of those games, I think, when people talk about being in the zone. As I got older, everything they threw to me I caught. I mean it just felt like, 'Yo, this is different.'"

Today, Jemison is back in Cincinnati and has his own remodeling company after some coaching stints at Kent State and his former high school. Back in high school, Jemison never could have predicted he would have ended up at Ohio State.

He likely thought the last time he would be in red going up against a rival team in blue and yellow would be his days at Princeton when he played against Cincinnati Moeller.

"It's kind of similar. Scarlet and gray were Princeton colors, Moeller's



FILE PHOTO

JUST ANOTHER WEEK – Former Ohio State wide receiver Thad Jemison never put too much stock in Michigan week.

were blue and gold just like Michigan," Jemison said. "I remember every time it was Moeller week, it was like, 'Oh man, everything's different,' but really, it's not. As you get older and you think about it, really it's not different, so I think coaches make it different."

His future collegiate career with the Buckeyes may have been a total surprise, but according to Jemison, there was nothing surprising about the most important catch he ever made.

He predicted it at the breakfast before the Fiesta Bowl with Anderson and then-wide receivers coach Jim Tressel.

"We were eating breakfast, and you ate with your group. So of course I'd be with

receivers and Tressel at the table, and I was talking to Cedric," Jemison said. "I said, 'I'm going to catch the winning touchdown pass, and I'm going to throw the ball in the stands.' And Tressel heard me, and he said, 'Shhh.' I said, 'Coach, I just feel it man, I'm going to catch the winning touchdown pass and throw the ball in the stands.' This is a true story. I actually said that, and it actually happened."

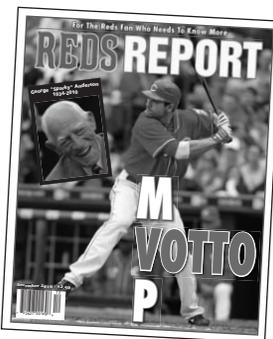
Jemison ended his Ohio State career on the highest of notes, and even for someone who looked at every game the same, that moment remains a special one for the former Buckeye.

"I remember that play as if it was yesterday," he said.

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Herron Reflects On Lone Season, Michigan Win

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Although he grew up in Willoughby, Ohio, Kendall Herron had no intention of going to Ohio State. He actually planned to go to Purdue and major in engineering until longtime assistant coach Ernie Godfrey (1929-1961) was directed by legendary head coach Paul Brown to recruit him to play center and linebacker for the Buckeyes.

"Godfrey, who was the offensive line coach at the time, came to my high school," Herron said. "He, shall I say, won me over. It didn't take much. The words 'Paul Brown' didn't take much, either."

Interestingly enough, Herron never played for Brown, who enlisted in the United States Navy before Herron's freshman season and subsequently served as the head coach of the Great Lakes Navy Bluejackets football team.

Upon his departure in April 1944, Brown appointed assistant Carroll Widdoes to be his successor with the understanding that Brown would serve his country before returning to the sidelines in Columbus at the conclusion of World War II. The Buckeyes won their first eight games under Widdoes in convincing fashion, including a 26-6 victory over Brown's Great Lakes squad, and entered the late-November matchup with sixth-ranked Michigan at No. 3 in the country behind only Army and Navy.

The Wolverines – led by flashy freshman halfback and Defiance, Ohio, native Gene Derricotte – had been outscoring opponents 190-73 that season. But Derricotte was injured on his first carry of the game, and the offense stalled without its leading rusher.

"He was bent over backwards by Dick Flanagan," Herron said, noting, "That started the game off in a nice fashion. Flanagan just erupted him."

The game was a back-and-forth affair with Michigan taking a 14-12 lead midway through the fourth quarter. Ohio State got the ball back at its 48-yard line, though, when the Wolverines shanked the ensuing kickoff, and the Buckeyes drove 52 yards for the game-winning score with 3:16 remaining. It was the second touchdown of the afternoon for halfback Les Horvath, who went on to win the Heisman Trophy that season after rushing for 924 yards and 12 touchdowns in nine games.

"We were down several points, and Les Horvath succeeded in scoring the winning touchdown," Herron said. "The war was going on, but Columbus celebrated that day like the armistice was just signed. People went wild."

Ohio State clinched its second undefeated season and seventh conference title that afternoon, but the Buckeyes were denied a trip to the Rose Bowl by the Big Ten, which did not allow teams to play in the postseason.

Both Army West Point and Ohio State finished the year with unblemished records, but the Cadets were named national champions by The Associated Press after knocking off Navy in the regular-season finale. The Buckeyes, meanwhile, were considered the nation's top team by the National Championship Foundation, but the university does not claim that title.

"The boys at Army were draft dodgers," Herron joked, noting many outlets referred to Ohio State as the civilian national champions.

Herron, who was quick to call himself a nobody next to the likes of Horvath and team cap-

tain Gordon Appleby, played in every game for the Buckeyes that fall. But his time in Columbus came to a close when the U.S. Army came calling shortly after the victory over Michigan.

"I enlisted before I turned 18 and went through Fort Hayes just before we went to Wisconsin (on Oct. 14)," Herron said. "We kind of had an arrangement I wasn't put into active duty until after the season. The officer that paraded me through there allowed me to stay home until after the Michigan game."

Herron served for 2½ years as a second lieutenant in the infantry, seeing action in the Battle of Luzon in the Philippines in addition to relieving high pointers in Korea when the war was over under the Adjusted Service Rating Score, a system by which soldiers who had served the longest were returned home for discharge first.

Upon returning home, Herron enrolled at Case Institute of Technology (now Case

Herron Vs. Michigan		
Year/Class	Location	Result
1944/Fr.	Columbus	W, 18-14

Western Reserve) in Cleveland. He played football for the Rough Riders (now Spartans) and was an All-Star center in 1947, teaming up with former Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel's father and former Baldwin-Wallace fullback Lee Tressel in that postseason exhibition game.

Despite graduating from Case, Herron – now 93 – remains a staunch supporter of Ohio State to this day. He was a season ticket holder for more than 60 years, proudly sitting at the 30-yard line in Ohio Stadium's D-deck until his health prevented him from attending games in recent years.

"They were the only school that wanted me," Herron said.

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Cook's Fond Memories

By CRAIG MERZ
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Cook Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1955/So.	Ann Arbor	W, 17-0
1956/Jr.	Columbus	L, 19-0
1957/Sr.	Ann Arbor	W, 31-14

Ron Cook often reflects on his four years of football at Ohio State from 1954-57 and has no regrets even though he was a backup tackle who did not play a starring role.

He got to play for Woody Hayes, was a teammate of 1955 Heisman Trophy winner Howard "Hopalong" Cassady and played a part in two national titles (more on that later).

Cook, who retired two years ago as a consultant in the oil and gas industry at age 80, also played in The Game against rival Michigan.

"I was pretty blessed to be able to play at that time," Cook said.

Cook was a freshman in 1954 when the Buckeyes won the national title, an unexpected one since they were picked for fifth in the Big Ten following a disappointing end to the previous season.

The Buckeyes were 6-2 heading into the 1953 finale at Michigan but were upset 21-0. The loss dropped Hayes' record to 16-9-2 over a three-year span, so the heat was on him.

OSU started 1954 at 4-0, the same record as Wisconsin when the Badgers came to Ohio Stadium. An 88-yard interception return for a touchdown by Cassady sparked a 31-14 win, and the Buckeyes were 8-0 when the Wolverines came to town.

In one of the most iconic moments in program history, the Buckeyes were tied 7-7 when Michigan took four cracks at the end zone from the 4.

The Wolverines were stopped just shy of the goal line on fourth down, and the Buckeyes marched 99 yards for the go-ahead score in the 21-7 win.

OSU defeated Southern Cal 20-7 to win the Rose Bowl.

Although Cook was a member of the program, he wasn't really part of that championship team. Freshmen were ineligible at the time, so he and the other first-year players were the scout teams, mimicking the plays of the upcoming opponent.

Cook, who played both ways like most players of that era, said the freshman team was called the Hamburger Squad by the varsity.

"They'd ground you like meat patties," he said.

He felt the freshmen deserved more credit for helping the Buckeyes to the title.

"One of the years I called one of the guys on the '54 team planning the

Continued On Page 40



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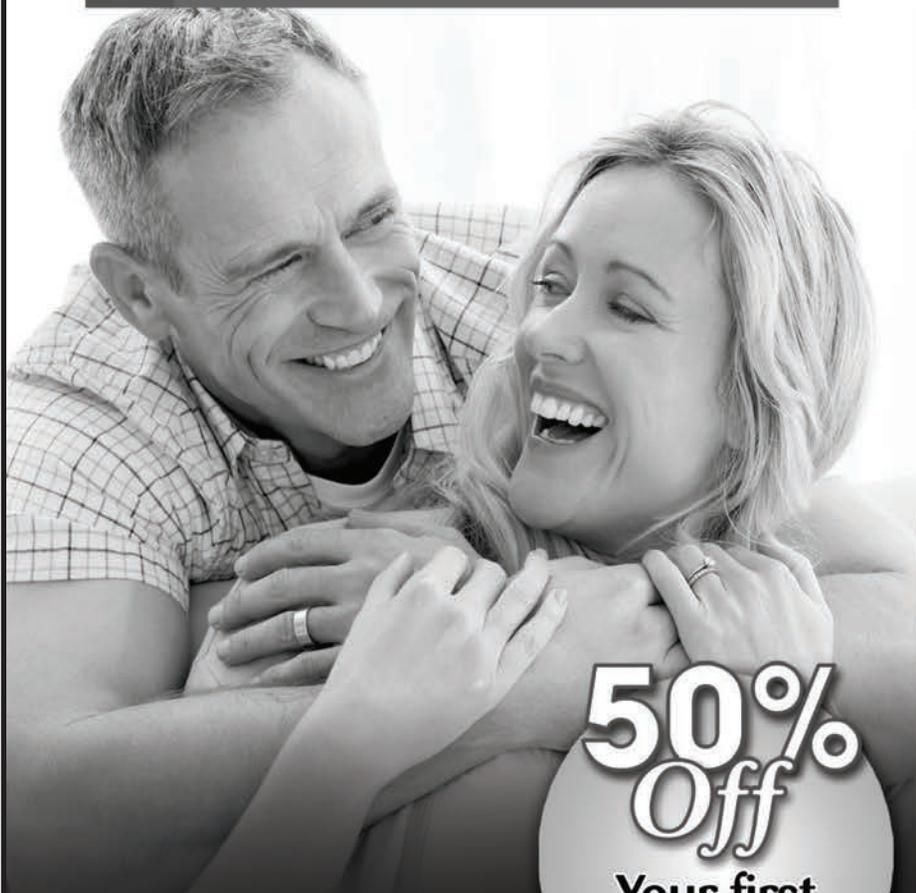
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Cook Was Part Of Famous Shutout In 1955

Continued From Page 38

reunion," Cook said. "I told him, 'You know, you ought to invite the freshman team because we must have done a heck of a job setting up the plays for you.' He said you're right, and we got invited to the next reunion."

As a freshman he had a viral infection around the sac of his heart and thought his playing days were over.

As he lay in the hospital bed, his first visitors were Hayes and tackle coach Bill Hess, and Hayes assured him his scholarship was safe for four years.

In 1955, a healthy Cook was on the varsity but saw limited playing time.

"I never did start at tackle," he said. "We had Moose Machinsky and Jim Marshall and Dick Schafrath. They were all tackles. I had a stiff competition, so I was a backup tackle and got in some games."

The Buckeyes went 7-2 and won the Big Ten, capping the season with a 17-0 win at Michigan, the first triumph in Ann Arbor since 1937.

"We had a lot of talent that year on both sides of the ball," Cook said. "We went up there and you could say right from the start we knocked them out of the game. They didn't take politely to that."

Cook isn't the first and won't be the last player under Hayes to talk about his obsession with beating That Team Up North.

"The Michigan game was always the game we pointed to every year," he said. "The very first day of practice, Woody would start preparing for the Michigan game. He'd come up with a couple plays for the gamesmanship from the first day of practice all the way up to the game."

"Not every day but he'd take the team out there and see how these new plays



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HOLD THE LINE – Offensive tackle Ron Cook (No. 77) throws a block as Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy (No. 40) looks to throw a rare halfback pass in 1955.



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MICHIGAN MEMORIES

would work.”

The following season was a down one for the Buckeyes, whose 6-3 record included a 19-0 home loss to Michigan. Cook had to be reminded of the score.

“No wonder I can’t remember it,” he said. “We lost.”

He can’t forget 1957, although it started with a surprising 18-14 loss to TCU.

“The next week we played out in Seattle against the University of Washington. They didn’t have a very good team, but at the half we were tied 7-7,” he recalled. “At halftime Woody came in and he was mad. Boy, was he mad. He threw chairs. He busted the blackboard and cussed us up one side and down the other.

“We go out in the second half and score 28 points and won 35-7. After that game, we never lost another game.”

Down 14-10 at the half in Ann Arbor, OSU roared back for a 31-14 victory.

“Even though we lost that first game we came back strong,” Cook said. “We played against some good players. There

was a big defensive end (Michigan) had, and after hitting him a few times he realized he wasn’t as big as he thought he was.

“I always looked forward to playing them.”

The Buckeyes then defeated Oregon 10-7 in the Rose Bowl and were declared national champions by United Press International while they were second to Auburn (10-0) in the Associated Press poll.

Cook, who hailed from Lima (Ohio) Central Catholic, has another reason to look back fondly on the Rose Bowl.

Oregon and Ohio State were honored at a banquet prior to the game, and master of ceremonies Bob Hope called Hayes to the stage and asked him to select one of his players to receive a kiss from blonde bombshell movie star Jayne Mansfield.

Cook was the lucky one, and after some playful bantering, he planted a

long smooch on Mansfield to the howls of his teammates. The moment lives on via YouTube.

Hope’s signature song was “Thanks for the Memories,” and Cook has plenty from the Michigan games.

“It was a respectful rivalry,” he said. “Both teams recognized that we had good football players on both sides. The fans, they hated each other.

“As players, we recognized they’re kind of like the rest of us, that they’re on scholarship, love to play the game and loved the rivalry they had.”

After graduating with a degree in petroleum engineering, Cook weighed some offers from the NFL but opted not to pursue them.

“They didn’t pay players like they do today,” he said. “Even though I may have liked to try out, my playing weight was 210 pounds. They had players in the NFL

235, 240. I don’t know if I would do very well at all, but it would have been fun to try out.

“Woody liked the guys who took difficult courses like engineering. We had a couple in dentistry, a couple in premed. He liked smart football players, not that the others were dumb.”

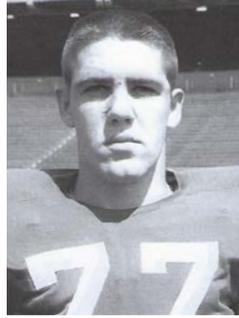
His professional career began in Kansas, but he’s retired now back in Lima where he keeps his memorabilia, including two gold pants pendants for beating Michigan.

“My wife (Nancy) wears those to all the games. She wears the gold pants. ... along with the pants in the family,” he joked.

The 1957 national championship ring is all his.

“I’m proud of that ring,” he said. “A lot of blood, sweat and tears went into it, and I wouldn’t trade any of it. I really enjoyed it.

“A great group of guys to play with. Then to play for Woody Hayes, who’s a legend, is even greater. You know, I couldn’t ask for anything more.”



Ron Cook

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Game In '55 Most Memorable For Cassady

To note the passing of Heisman Trophy winner and Ohio State legend Howard "Hopalong" Cassady on Sept. 20, we are reprinting his Michigan Memories, originally published in the Nov. 21, 1992, edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

By JEFF RAPP
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

These are a few of Howard "Hopalong" Cassady's favorite things: gold pants, Senior Tackles, Rose Bowl berths, hard-fought battles and tests of pride.

What do all of these things have in common? The Michigan game, of course.

Cassady, a Buckeye from 1952-55, played in some of the most memorable clashes in the series, especially in his junior and senior seasons when he was Ohio State's top player on both sides of the ball.

"They were all great games. Just about every time we played them it had something to do with the Rose Bowl," Cassady said of his

encounters with the Maize and Blue.

Many longtime followers of OSU, including historian Jack Park, consider Ohio State's 21-7 win over Michigan in 1954 to be one of the greatest wins in OSU history. The victory included a historic goal-line stand and subsequent game-clinching scoring drive of some 99 2/3 yards. Fans rocked Ohio Stadium as the Buckeyes sewed up an undefeated regular season, went on to the team's first Rose Bowl under coach Woody Hayes, then won the national championship with a 20-7 defeat of USC.

But even after experiencing all of that euphoria, Cassady said the 1955 meeting with the Wolverines is etched deeper in his mind.

"There's no doubt '54 was a great win for us because we earned a trip to the Rose Bowl and went on to a national championship," he said. "But I'd have to say '55 was the most memorable because it was my senior year and we shut them out 17-0. They never crossed midfield."

Actually, Michigan did move into OSU territory for one brief play because of a penalty, but Jim Parker tackled a Wolverine runner for a loss on the next play and Michigan never got

closer to a score the rest of the game.

As both an offensive and defensive half-back, Cassady took as much pride in the shutout as he did in an offensive performance that included 146 yards on the ground, several key kick returns and a 2-yard, over-the-top touchdown plunge.

The game sparked interest all over the country for several reasons. Michigan would have earned a trip to Pasadena with a win, but a Buckeye victory put Michigan State in the Rose Bowl since OSU, the defending Big Ten champ, fell victim to the "no-repeat rule." Michigan State had already wrapped up its conference play and was engaging in a meaningless nonconference game the same afternoon, so the Spartans sent one of their cheerleaders to Ann Arbor to work with the OSU cheerleaders.

Cassady was also a major drawing card as he was the front-runner for the Heisman Trophy. Meanwhile, the Wolverines had one of their most talented teams ever.

"I believe 15 of their players went in the (NFL) draft," Cassady said. "They had guys like Ron Kramer, Terry Barr, Tom Maentz. They were supposed to beat us and go on to the Rose Bowl, but it just didn't happen. I still believe it was one of Woody's best-coached games of all time."

OSU dominated in every way, outgaining its nemesis convincingly in total yards (337-109) and piling up a huge 20-5 advantage in first downs. But before the Buckeyes could celebrate the school's first win at Michigan Stadium since 1937, there was this matter of getting off the field in one piece.

Cassady Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1952/Fr.	Columbus	W, 27-7
1953/So.	Ann Arbor	L, 20-0
1954/Jr.	Columbus	W, 21-7
1955/Sr.	Ann Arbor	W, 17-0

The game turned ugly with several late penalties, and Kramer was ejected in the final moments for supposedly swinging at Cassady, but "I don't think he was trying to punch me," Cassady said. The final seconds proved interesting, too, as fans moved unrestricted toward the field.

"The Ann Arbor police department was on strike at the time, so there was some concern about the game getting out of hand," Cassady remembered. "We had people throwing snowballs at us, and there were some fights in the stands, but it was pretty much under control."

"Anyone coming down on that field looking for trouble had to be a little goofy."

Cassady became Ohio State's third Heisman recipient after the season, following in the footsteps of Les Horvath and Vic Janowicz, but he said he never felt the award was clinched after his strong showing in his final college game.

"I never thought about the Heisman that whole day," he said. "Of course, that award is a lot more hyped now, which is why you saw (former Michigan receiver Desmond) Howard make his little pose in the end zone last year."

"But to me, the Michigan game was a game that you simply concentrated on winning the ballgame, no matter how. It was a game of pride and great tradition, and you always played hard to the very end."

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Readers Share Fond Memories Of Cassady

Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked readers to share their memories of Ohio State great Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, who passed away on Sept. 20. The following is a sample of the responses:

As a child, I remember every Saturday in the fall my father, an OSU grad, would listen to Ohio State football on the radio. Prior to 1952, when I was 9 years old, I paid no attention and had no interest in listening to the games.

That all changed when Hopalong Cassady, my favorite cowboy movie star, began playing for the Buckeyes. At 9 years of age, I was confused as to why my hero, Hoppy, would want to play football. Shouldn't he be out looking for rustlers or other bad guys?

I still remember how excited the guy on the radio would get when my hero would make a great play. I guess it was about midseason of that year when I asked my dad about all of the excitement. He then explained it wasn't the cowboy but a great football player for Ohio State nicknamed Hopalong.

At 9 years of age, I fell in love with Hoppy and began my obsession with college football. I will always be grateful for Hopalong Cassady and the excited Ohio State announcers for introducing me to a lifetime love of college football.

– Al Taylor
Johns Creek, Ga.

I was in a dive bar in Davis Islands near Tampa, Fla., when someone I knew said, "I know you are an Ohio State fan. I think you might be interested in meeting someone." It was Hop Cassady. I couldn't believe I was with one of my grandfather's idols. I told him how my grandfather bought me a painting with the Ohio State Heisman Trophy winners one Christmas.

We shared a drink and a lot of amazing stories of what it was like to play for the Buckeyes in his era. I'm so thankful to be able to have a picture of that night together and have the opportunity to chat with a true Buckeye legend.

– Chris McCormick
Findlay, Ohio

I was 12 years old when Hop won the Heisman. I was fortunate to be able to see him play in a couple of games. It filled a young boy with a lot of pride to be a Buckeye.

– Dan Marvin
Columbus

Back in 1955 when I was being recruited by OSU (I was a halfback out of Grandview, Ohio), Woody took my mother and I to dinner at the Faculty Club. Hop joined us. Needless to say, I was suitably impressed. Woody made a point that local boys could do well at Ohio State. Hop did pretty well!

– David Zuhars
Louisville, Ky.

Growing up in northeast Ohio in 1954, I was a big Cleveland Browns fan and didn't even know the Buckeyes existed.

Then one Saturday, with some older relatives, they were watching Ohio State with Hopalong in the starring role, and I instantly

became a fan for a lifetime. The Buckeyes have been my No. 1 team ever since.

– Ed Lewis
Girard, Ohio

When I was 10 years old I started out listening to OSU on the radio with my dad on the front porch on Saturdays. I've been a fan ever since. Hop was my favorite player, and I still remember when playing Wisconsin and being behind with a minute to go Hop either ran or caught a pass and went 80 yds to win the game.

– Fred Lamon
Lima, Ohio

I attribute Hop Cassady with making me a Buckeye fan for life when, at the age of 12 in 1954, I recall sitting in my high school's modest library paging through a Collier's (I think) magazine and ran across a full-page color picture of Hop Cassady.

I was fascinated with the name, having watched a lot of black and white movies and TV shows of Hop's cowboy namesake.

Although I didn't attend Ohio State, I jumped on the Buckeye bandwagon and have been a loyal fan, 40-year season ticket holder and President's Club member.

– Gerald Von Deylen
Cincinnati

I so enjoyed watching Cassady play, especially against the great Wisconsin team with Alan Ameche. I traveled to the Rose Bowl to watch our Buckeyes beat USC.

– James Roberts
Covington, Ohio

I met Hop Cassady when he was the first-base coach for the Clippers. The Clippers were in Indianapolis, and being a huge Buckeye fan, I wore OSU gear to the game and sat in the first row behind third base. He saw me and came over to talk to me after every half inning. He signed several items for me, and I felt honored he would talk to me. It was surreal.

I went to several games after that, and he always came over to say hello. I will never forget that. I feel like I lost a close friend.

– Jim Higdon
Franklin, Ind.

The first Ohio State game I ever saw was October of 1955. I was 11 years old and had just moved to Columbus. Hop Cassady had a great day, and the Buckeyes beat Northwestern, 49-0. It's been a lifelong love affair for the Buckeyes largely because of Hopalong's exploits in those years.

– Larry Follansbee
Lakewood, Colo.

My memory of Hop Cassady centered around great food. In 1954, as a freshman at Ohio State, I was assigned to the Ohio Stadium dorms. The residents of the stadium dorms ate their meals at Mrs. Miller's cafeteria in the stadium, which also fed the football team. Accordingly, the residents of the stadium dorms ate with the football team and dined on the best damn food served on campus. On many occasions, I found myself at the same table as Hop Cassady. He was down to earth, most pleasant and a real pleasure to chat with. He was a true gentleman.

– Tom Dix
Moscow, Ohio

I remember in my senior year my girlfriend, and future wife, and I went to Ann Arbor in Hop's final game. It was cold and our seats were in the end zone.

We won the game, but we were lamenting the fact that Hoppy had what we thought was a terrible game. Since our seats were in the end zone, we had no depth to his carries. We won the game but we kept saying it was too bad Hoppy didn't close out his career with a better game.

Imagine our surprise when we saw in the morning paper he got 154 yards! Those were great years to be at The Ohio State University

– Ron Kegarise
Franklin, Tenn.

My casual friendship with Hop Cassady began when we were seated side by side in an anatomy class at OSU. I had already seen him in action not only on the gridiron but as an excellent infielder on the varsity baseball team.

My most vivid recollection of Hop came at the Wisconsin game in 1954. Let me set the stage. A high school buddy came to me with a problem. He wanted to bring his high school sweetheart up for Homecoming, but her parents wouldn't let her come unless she was accompanied by another girl. If I would invite a girl I had dated from our hometown, he would pay all the expenses. What a deal!

The day was one of those classic late October Ohio days. It looked as though the Badgers were about to go to a two-score lead and a season of dreams was about to be shattered when Hop stepped in front of an intended receiver and sprinted 85 yards for the score. It was the play that defined the game, the undefeated national championship season, a Heisman Trophy and perhaps the much maligned, at that time, Woody Hayes' career at Ohio State.

My date looked great in her formal as we danced to Woody Herman at the Union and closed the evening at a Parsons Avenue Club listening to Rusty Bryant wailing on his sax. All that was fine, but I couldn't keep my mind from running a steady replay of a scarlet-clad No. 40 sprinting into immortality. Sixty-five years later I have short-term memory lapses, but Hop's interception and run is as vivid as it was on the late October day in 1954.

As an aside, my cheap date for homecoming that day and I celebrated our 63rd wedding anniversary this past July. Maybe Hop might have helped that championship along as well.

– Myron C. Cline
Findlay, Ohio

If you would like to share your personal memories of Howard "Hopalong" Cassady for potential publication in a future edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, please send them to tosubscriptions@buckeyesports.com.

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Williams Flips From Iowa State To Ohio State

Just hours after his unofficial visit for the 28-17 win over Penn State on Nov. 23 concluded, Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star running back Miyan Williams flipped his pledge from Iowa State to Ohio State.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

"I would like to thank God for giving me the talent to play football," Williams wrote in a message he posted to Twitter. "I also want to thank all of the coaching staff at Iowa State, especially Coach (Matt) Campbell. I will always have respect for Iowa State, but I would like to announce that I am decommitting and will be going to The Ohio State University."

The 5-10, 210-pound Williams is considered the 43rd-best running back and No. 618 prospect overall in the class of 2020, as he's rushed for 5,823 yards and 68 touchdowns in his three-year varsity career with the Warriors. He was the 2018 Ohio Mr. Football runner-up and was recently named the 2019 Ohio Prep Sportswriters Association Southwest District Division II Offensive Player of the Year.

Williams has been committed to the Cyclones since July, but an offer from the Buckeyes on Sept. 21 turned the tide in his recruitment. From there, it was considered by many experts only a matter of time before he visited Ohio State and flipped his pledge.

Williams becomes the 25th member – but first running back – in Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class after the Buckeyes missed out on several higher-rated prospects this summer, including Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic five-star Bijan Robinson and Deerfield Beach, Fla., four-star Jaylan Knighton.

Running backs coach Tony Alford hopes to bring on one more running back this cycle, though, with Dalton, Ga., four-star and Georgia Tech commit Jahmyr Gibbs being his top priority at this point in time.

Ohio State Welcomes Long List Of Visitors

Serving as a de facto Big Ten East Division, Ohio State's game against Penn State doubled as the biggest recruiting weekend of the year.

The Buckeyes hosted several commits from the class of 2020, including Catawissa (Pa.) Southern Columbia five-star wide receiver Julian Fleming; Cincinnati Princeton five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson; La Habra, Calif., four-star cornerback Clark Phillips; Maryland Heights (Mo.) Pattonville Senior four-star wide receiver Mookie Cooper; Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day four-star defensive lineman Jacolbe Cowan; Cincinnati Princeton four-star defensive lineman Darrion Henry; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star cornerback Lejond Cavazos; Little Elm, Texas, four-star cornerback Ryan Watts; Beech Grove, Ind., three-star offensive tackle Josh Fryar; Warren (Mich.) De La Salle three-star offensive tackle Grant Toutant; Cincinnati Elder three-star tight end Joe Royer; Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star defensive end Ty Hamilton; Cincinnati Elder three-star offensive guard Jakob James; Norwalk, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Trey Leroux; and Cincinnati La Salle three-star kicker Jake Seibert.

Cavazos, James and Leroux were on their official visits, while the other nine of Ohio State's 25 total commits from the 2020 class had playoff games Friday night or Saturday afternoon and were unable to make the trip as a result.

Other notable visitors from the class of 2020 included Draper (Utah) Juan Diego Catholic four-star defensive end Xavier Carlton and the previously mentioned Williams.

Switching over to the class of 2021, Ohio State hosted three of its six commitments from that cycle in Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer; Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star offensive tackle Ben Christman; and Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard. The three other pledges from that class also had playoff games Friday night or Saturday afternoon.

The Buckeyes also played host to juniors such as Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star defensive tackle Tywone Malone; Clarkston, Mich., four-star offensive tackle Rocco Spindler; Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal four-star offensive tackle Donovan Jackson; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star

Continued On Page 46



COURTESY OF MIYAN WILLIAMS

BUCKEYES' NEXT BIG BACK – At 5-10 and 210 pounds, Ohio State three-star running back commit Miyan Williams fills a need in the 2020 recruiting class.

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2020 who have issued a verbal commitment 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	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
Miyan Williams	RB	5-10	210	★★★	Cincinnati Winton Woods

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 Prep
Jayden Ballard	WR	6-2	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Reid Carrico	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Ironton, Ohio
Marvin Harrison	WR	6-4	184	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's

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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1989

According to national recruiting expert Tom Lemming, Ohio State looked to be prepared for a repeat performance of its top-five recruiting class the year prior.

"I think they're going to have another good year," Lemming said in early November. "They've had a real good season on the field this year, probably better than anyone expected from them."

"And just from the number of blue-chip prospects they are in on, Ohio State should have another pretty good recruiting season."

Of that group, three in-state prospects were running backs – Ricky Powers of Akron Buchtel, Robert Smith of Euclid and Jeff Hill of Cincinnati Mount Healthy – while three more were quarterbacks – Preston Harrison of Columbus South, Joe Pickens of Cleveland St. Ignatius and Johnny Mattress of Cincinnati Princeton.

25 Years Ago – 1994

A star quarterback at McDonogh High School near Baltimore, Bobby Sabelhaus didn't seem like the type who would be interested in Ohio State. He was, after all, a classic drop-back quarterback, considered one of the nation's best, with interest from passing powerhouses such as Florida, Florida State and Notre Dame.

Despite Ohio State's rush-heavy offense that generally didn't attract elite passers, Sabelhaus expressed serious interest in the Buckeyes.

"I've known about Ohio State football all my life," Sabelhaus told BSB. "I know about the tradition and the spirit and the excitement that goes along with that program. Plus, I know they are throwing more and it would be a challenge for me."

An Ohio native, Sabelhaus was scheduled to visit Columbus on Nov. 19 for Ohio State's matchup with Michigan.

20 Years Ago – 1999

Findlay, Ohio, quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was offered a scholarship by Ohio State in the week heading up to Ohio State's Nov. 13 matchup with Illinois.

His Findlay team was ousted from the Division I playoffs a

few days later on Nov. 20, ending his senior season with 4,138 total yards and 54 touchdowns.

"I give all the credit to my teammates," Roethlisberger told BSB. "They really helped me reach these goals. Without them I couldn't have done it. It was a team effort."

Roethlisberger said he was moved when OSU coach John Cooper called him and offered him a scholarship.

"He said they had seen me on film and they liked what they saw," Roethlisberger said. "They sent a coach (assistant Chuck Stobart) to see me play, and he said they thought they could use me. That made me feel really good to hear that."

15 Years Ago – 2004

Ohio State was taking full advantage of playing host to one of the nation's most heralded rivalry games on Nov. 20 against Michigan. The Buckeyes were set to bring in a large list of recruits on visits for the weekend.

Among those BSB was able to confirm would be at the game, three were considered to be top-100 players in the nation.

Running back Maurice Wells from Jacksonville (Fla.) Sandalwood topped the list at No. 65 overall, with a top four of Georgia Tech, Maryland, Ohio State and USC.

"It's going to be exciting," he said of his Columbus trip. "It's a big game and a big rivalry. I'm sure I'll have a good time."

Along with Wells, Ohio State was set to host outside linebacker Travis Beckum of Oak Creek, Wis., considered to be the No. 67 player in the class, and College Park (Ga.) Banneker wideout Carlos Thomas, rated the nation's No. 75 player.

10 Years Ago – 2009

Spots were at a premium in Ohio State's class of 2010, but Verlon Reed was hoping there would be room for him.

The 6-2, 185-pound athlete from Columbus Marion-Franklin had helped lead his team to the Division II, region 7 finals and held offers from Bowling Green, Toledo, Kent State and Syracuse. He had been in contact with Ohio State early in November.

"Ohio State has been in contact a lot more in the past few

weeks," Reed said. "I'm being recruited by (safeties coach) Paul Haynes, and we have a good relationship. I call him once in a while, and we talk about the situation at Ohio State."

Reed was being recruited by OSU as an athlete, despite throwing for more than 200 yards in his team's first playoff win against previously undefeated Louisville.

Five Years Ago – 2014

Ohio State added a third commitment on the offensive line in its 2015 class, to go along with Grant Schmidt and Kevin Feder.

The news came on Nov. 23, when Draper (Utah) Corner Canyon three-star offensive tackle Branden Bowen committed to OSU. Bowen was rated the No. 55 player at his position but measured in at 6-7 and 320 pounds. He visited Ohio State for its game against Illinois and decommitted from Utah before giving his pledge to head coach Urban Meyer.

"My trip over there really opened my eyes to a lot of things," Bowen said after making his decision. "That coaching staff is the best of the best. They know what it takes to win national championships and really do a good job preparing guys for the next level. I want to be a part of something special, and that's what Ohio State is."

One Year Ago – 2018

Ohio State loaded up a massive recruiting weekend in preparation for its Nov. 24 battle with Michigan.

Among the visitors were a number of players Ohio State had made recent offers to, in hopes of a late commitment as the December Early Signing Period approached, led by defensive tackle Caven Butler, linebacker Tommy Eichenberg, defensive tackle D'Von Ellis, cornerback Renardo Green and linebacker Jestin Jacobs.

Leading that group was Eichenberg, whom Ohio State had offered on Sept. 26. Despite that offer, the Cleveland St. Ignatius athlete had held steady with his commitment to Boston College.

Eichenberg was rated the 247Sports composite No. 358 overall player and No. 13 player in Ohio for 2019.

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Top-Rated Defensive End Sets Announcement Date

Continued From Page 44

offensive tackle J.C. Latham; Charlotte (N.C.) William Amos Hough four-star running back Evan Pryor; Fort Washington (Md.) National Christian Academy four-star defensive end Monkell Goodwine; Blairstown (N.J.) Blair Academy four-star defensive end Aaron Armitage; Fairfax (Va.) Robinson Secondary four-star offensive tackle Tristan Leigh; Lexington (Ky.) Frederick Douglass four-star offensive guard Jager Burton; Gaithersburg (Md.) Quince Orchard four-star defensive tackle Marcus Bradley; Needham (Mass.) St. Sebastian's four-star tight end Louis Hansen; Nashville (Tenn.) Ensworth four-star cornerback Andre Turrentine; and Fort Collins (Colo.) Fossil Ridge four-star offensive tackle Trey Zuhn.

Also present were Bowling Green, Ky., four-star tight end Jordan Dingle; Oak Park, Mich., four-star offensive tackle Rayshaun Benny; Streetsboro, Ohio, four-star defensive tackle Michael Hall; Clintwood (Va.) Ridgeview four-star athlete Trenton Adkins; Detroit Cass Tech three-star cornerback Kalen King; Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail three-star tight end Sam Hart; Warwick (R.I.) Bishop Hendricken three-star defensive end Jason Onye; Alexandria (Va.) Episcopal three-star athlete Bryce Steele; Spanish Fort, Ala., three-star tight end Christian Burkhalter; Cincinnati La Salle three-star cornerback Devonta Smith; and Bowling Green (Ky.) South Warren three-star athlete Jantzen Dunn.

Ohio State also welcomed a handful

of prospects from the class of 2022, with Marysville, Ohio, linebacker Gabe Powers; Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter athlete C.J. Hicks; West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West offensive tackle Tegra Tshabola; and Portland (Ore.) Westview wide receiver Darius Clemons making their way to Ohio Stadium for the highly anticipated game.

Big Game Means Less Time With Staff

While early-season blowouts offer Ohio State's staff the opportunity to mingle with recruits before and after the game, high-stakes matchups such as the game against Penn State are exactly the opposite.

In fact, the Buckeyes' coaching staff is so focused on its opponents in big games that it leaves little time for interaction with prospects and their families.

"For a game like this, it's very difficult to spend a lot of time with those guys," head coach Ryan Day said during his weekly press conference on Nov. 19. "There's just so much at stake, and I think most recruits understand that.

"They want to come and feel the atmosphere, they want to see what it's like to be here for a big game and feel that. That's what they're looking for, in my opinion, on a visit like this. They're not looking for a lot of one-on-one time with the coach or to learn about our Real Life Wednesday program or anything like that. That's not what this visit is. Every visit, you're looking to check off a box, and this is a box to check off on what it's going to be like playing for the Big Ten

championship."

Of course, Day and his staff must set those expectations before a prospect and his family spend their hard-earned money to travel to and from Columbus.

"I think that's on their position coaches to let them know," Day said. "We've also drafted up a letter to send to the people that are coming. It's November. It's one of the biggest games of the entire year, so we actually wrote that down and sent a letter to some of the guys."

With the coaching staff placing most of their attention on the Nittany Lions, Day instead relied on director of player personnel Mark Pantoni, director of on-campus recruiting Tori Magers and the rest of the recruiting staff to pick up the slack.

"Mark and our recruiting staff have got their hands full," Day said. "We've got a lot of people coming in, and they're going to have to be really organized and do a great job. (Recruits) are just not going to get much face time (with coaches) because we're just so focused on this game.

"I have a hard time before games really focusing on talking to recruits and their families when there's such a big game like this. It's just the way it is. And I'll hang with them all night afterwards, but that's just kind of the way it goes."

Tennessee Defensive End Sets Announcement Date

Knoxville (Tenn.) Catholic four-star defensive end Tyler Baron will announce his college decision on Dec. 18, the first day of college football's early signing period.

The 6-4, 252-pound Baron – who is considered the fourth-best strongside defensive end and No. 108 prospect overall in the class of 2020 after he recorded 103 tackles, 16½ tackles for loss, 4½ sacks, three forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries in 11 games for the Fighting Irish this fall – will choose among Kentucky, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Oregon and Tennessee.

The Buckeyes have made a significant push in Baron's recruitment in recent months, hosting him for an official visit during the 34-10 win over Michigan State

on Oct. 5. But the Volunteers are widely expected to land his pledge thanks to several connections to the program, including the fact that his father, Patrick Abernathy, is the director of player development in Knoxville.

Furthermore, four-star center Cooper Mays, Baron's teammate, has been committed to Tennessee since June, while his quarterback, Kaden Martin, is the son of Volunteers wide receivers coach Tee Martin.

Decision Looms For Texas Defensive End

One of Ohio State defensive line coach Larry Johnson's top targets is set to make a decision on his future as Katy (Texas) Thompson five-star defensive end Tunmise Adeyeye recently announced a commitment date of Jan. 8, 2020, which is his father's birthday.

Adeyeye – who pronounces his name Too-mee-shay Ahh-day-lay-yay – is considered the third-best strongside defensive end and No. 26 prospect overall in the class of 2021, as he's recorded 47 tackles, three sacks and one forced fumble in 11 games for the Falcons this season. He included Ohio State in his top 10 back in July alongside Alabama, Auburn, Florida State, Florida, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oklahoma and Texas A&M, but he has since picked up offers from Illinois and Penn State, as well.

Adeyeye has been to campus just once since he landed an offer from Johnson in May, attending the program's first-ever Buckeye Bash and Barbecue on June 21. He was set to return for the game against the Nittany Lions on Nov. 23, but Thompson's playoff game the night before a noon kickoff made attending the game almost impossible.

There's still time for Adeyeye to make it to Columbus before he makes a decision, however, and Ohio State hopes he'll make it for an unofficial visit in December while the team prepares for a potential trip to the College Football Playoff or other premier bowl game. Given his relationship with Johnson, though, the Buckeyes could very well land his commitment without another visit anyway.

Martinez Among Mr. Football Finalists

Ohio State three-star athlete commit Cameron Martinez is one of five finalists for Michigan's High School Football Player of the Year award.

The 5-11, 183-pound Martinez has rushed for 2,016 yards and 35 touchdowns and thrown for 1,258 yards and 11 scores in 13 games for Muskegon this season, including 281 yards rushing, 136 yards passing and four total touchdowns in a 28-21 win over DeWitt in the state semifinals on Nov. 23.

With that victory, Martinez hopes to end his career with back-to-back state titles when the Big Red take on River Rouge on Nov. 30 at Detroit's Ford Field.

Other finalists for the award include Walled Lake Western three-star wide receiver and Northwestern commit Abdur-Rahmaan Yaseen; Milan three-star quarterback and Eastern Michigan pledge Tristen Hines; Schoolcraft running back Kobe Clark; and Clinton Township Chippewa Valley running back Myren Harris.

Coaches and media members will vote on the award with the winner to be

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham

Does freshman Cade Stover's recent play at defensive end change the recruiting approach of Ohio State and defensive line coach Larry Johnson at the position in the 2020 recruiting cycle, especially with Cincinnati Princeton four-star Darrion Henry; Charlotte (N.C.) Providence Day four-star Jacob Cowan; and Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star Ty Hamilton already in the fold?

"I think it could, but I don't think it has to. What it does is gives Ohio State some flexibility and a little comfort knowing that if things don't work out with guys like Knoxville (Tenn.) Catholic four-star Tyler Baron or Draper (Utah) Juan Diego Catholic four-star Xavier Carlton. I believe they'd be glad to have an additional commit at the position regardless of the plans for Stover's future, which will almost certainly be at defensive end."

Ohio State already holds six commitments along the offensive line for the class of 2020 in Cincinnati Princeton five-star tackle Paris Johnson; Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph's Regional four-star center Luke Wypler; Beech Grove, Ind., three-star tackle Josh Fryar; Warren

(Mich.) De La Salle three-star tackle Grant Toutant; Cincinnati Elder three-star guard Jakob James; and Norwalk, Ohio, three-star tackle Trey Leroux. Do you believe the Buckeyes could add another for depth purposes, though?

"At this point, the answer is no. There's certainly a discussion worth having, however, because the talk about starting tackle Thayer Munford, guard Wyatt Davis and center Josh Myers potentially departing for the NFL is being validated every single week as that group dominates for the Buckeyes."

"That said, it's more likely that the Buckeyes will turn to the transfer portal again this offseason if the roster turns over a bit more than expected heading into the season."

Ohio State hosted 2021 Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal four-star offensive tackle Donovan Jackson for an unofficial visit for the Penn State game on Nov. 23. With family ties to the state and several trips to Columbus under his belt already, do you think the Buckeyes can unseat heavily favored Texas A&M in his recruitment?

"I think the Buckeyes can, and there aren't many programs out there that can say that. His family ties

notwithstanding, Jackson is a player who is eager to play in big-time games in college with a chance to win championships.

"Jackson has now been to Columbus four different times for unofficial visits. That's a player with serious interest, and as more NFL success comes for Ohio State linemen, the sell becomes even easier."

Ohio State recently offered a pair of in-state prospects from the class of 2022 in Marysville linebacker Gabe Powers and West Chester Lakota West offensive tackle Tegra Tshabola. How do you see their respective recruitments unfolding?

"I think it's probably safe to assume each will end up playing their college ball at Ohio State, so long as they develop over the next two years as the Buckeyes' coaching staff expects them to."

"So many kids these days suggest they want to 'take their time' with a decision, but sometimes it's hard to hold back from an early commitment when your longtime dream school gives you an opportunity this early. It would be an upset if both Powers and Tshabola aren't committed to Ohio State by next summer."

announced during the state championship games on Nov. 29-30.

Carolina Athlete Lists OSU Among Top Schools

Mount Holly (N.C.) Mountain Island Charter four-star athlete Gabe Stephens included Ohio State in his top 12 on Nov. 18 alongside Charlotte, Florida, Louisville,

Nebraska, North Carolina, Penn State, South Carolina, Syracuse, Vanderbilt, Virginia Tech and Wake Forest.

The 6-3, 195-pound Stephens is considered the 17th-best athlete and No. 202 prospect overall in the class of 2021, recording 60 tackles, nine sacks, three quarterback hurries and one blocked kick in 12 games for the Raptors this season.

Ohio State offensive coordinator, tight ends coach and area recruiter Kevin Wilson extended an offer to Stephens in May, though he has yet to make his way to Columbus in the months since.

Gabe is the son of former South Carolina offensive lineman Calvin Stephens, which is why the Gamecocks are considered the favorite in his recruitment at this time.

Due to Buckeye Sports Bulletin's print schedule, the primary coverage of college football's early signing period will be online at BuckeyeSports.com. Those who have not already signed up for this 24/7/365 service, free with your BSB print subscription, should do so in advance of signing day to get comfortable with the site and enjoy our coverage leading up to the big day.



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Blowouts Helping Young Players Gain Experience

Fans of the Ohio State men's basketball team don't like comparisons to their football brethren who garner umpteen times the attention and force the basketball program to defend itself against claims that OSU is "just a football school."

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

Buckeye football rightly has its place in the pantheon of American sports, but the in-the-know people understand that the hardcourt Buckeyes have a rich and proud tradition, albeit with less hardware than the footballers.

Which brings it to this point (sorry, hoopsters): The basketball team is steam-rolling opponents in the same manner as the footballers are doing. With an average winning margin of 25.4 points through the 85-46 win against Purdue Fort Wayne on Nov. 22, coach Chris Holtmann has had ample opportunities to experiment with different combinations.

"You're looking at rotations," he said. "You're being mindful of not showing too much offensively. At the same time, trying to work on some of your execution stuff. As a coach, you very rarely feel like the game's in hand, but once you do feel like

it's in hand, you don't want to show too much."

The Buckeyes' margin is impressive because it includes a 64-56 win over Cincinnati to skew the stat downward. Notably, the 76-51 rout of then-No. 10 Villanova falls in line with victories over Massachusetts Lowell, Stetson and Purdue Fort Wayne.

Sure, Holtmann has been able to clear the bench with walk-ons Harrison Hookfin (three games, two points in 15 minutes) and Danny Hummer (four games, three points in 21 minutes), but there are also stretches earlier during the blowouts when his four freshmen gained valuable experience.

D.J. Carton and E.J. Liddell have settled in nicely in the rotation that Holtmann alluded to earlier while Alonzo Gaffney has struggled and Ibrahima Diallo is a work in progress.

Carton's 11.2 points per game are second on the team to the 11.8 average for Kaleb Wesson. Carton is playing 22.2 minutes per game, Wesson 27.0.

Liddell checks in with 6.6 points in 15.2 minutes. Neither he nor Carton has made a start.

Diallo and Gaffney did not get into the game against Cincinnati, a particularly cruel blow for the latter because his father, Kevin, is a former UC basketball player.

"The nature of the game, I was hoping to get a couple more guys in," Holtmann said. "It was hard to do it."

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commits

Players in the class of 2020 who have signed a letter of intent 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

It's been easier since then, but Gaffney has seemed a step slow in his transition to the college game. Against Stetson, he fouled out while playing less than nine minutes, twice picking up a pair of fouls within 40 seconds of each other.

Meanwhile, Diallo saw action in the first half of that game and finished with six points and five rebounds in 14 minutes in his most extensive court time.

Holtmann said Diallo (6-10, 220) earned it.

"What I was trying to do with Ibrahima in particular was reward the fact that he's had pretty consistent practice habits," Holtmann said after the game. "And if you don't have consistent practice habits and you're young, I'm sorry, I'm not going to play you. Now, he has got to perform and do some things better, but what I was hoping to do with him is he hasn't missed a day of practice. He's been consistent. His attitude's been pretty good. I wanted to reward that with giving him some early time tonight."

Holtmann added that being at practice doesn't mean a player has really practiced.

"I think guys sometimes, young guys, you feel like practice is just practice. It's extremely important," he said. "We're evaluating it every single minute we are in between the lines, and we're making determinations on who we can trust based on their effort and their habits in practice. I think we've got some guys that have to continue to understand that."

The message has gotten through to the players in their second years and beyond.

Here's what sophomore Duane Washington Jr. had to say about the Buckeyes' stifling defense through the first five games, which has not allowed any of the first five opponents to shoot better than 33 percent from the floor.

"The same approach every single day," Washington said. "We're all serious-minded guys right now. In practice, we've been locked in on the details and the little things, and that's one of the reasons we're playing the way we are."

Back At It

Senior Andre Wesson had six points in 21 minutes against Stetson on Nov. 18 in his first game back after sustaining an eye socket injury against Cincinnati that caused him to miss two contests.

"If you had a chance to look at him, his eye is still pretty bloodied up," Holtmann said following the Stetson game. "He's such a tough kid and has an incredibly high pain tolerance. I want to bring him back slowly. I want him to get back in a rhythm of playing."

Wesson played 18 minutes four days later against Purdue Fort Wayne, but the

forward did not return to his usual starting position. Holtmann opted to continue using a three-guard system at the onset in sophomores Luther Muhammad and Washington and junior C.J. Walker.

Young The Giant

Junior forward Kyle Young stood out in the Buckeyes' win over Stetson by scoring a career-high 15 points plus 10 rebounds while playing only 17 minutes. He was 5 for 5 from the floor.

Hatters coach Donnie Jones, a former Florida assistant, praised Young.

"When I was at Florida, we had a guy named Joakim Noah who was a little taller, but that's what he did," Jones said, in comparing Young to the former NBA player and two-time national champion with the Gators. "(Young) knows his role. He knows who he is. You know what you're getting from him every night. He's a winner, competitor. He just impacts winning. And when you bring those kind of guys on your team, those guys give you a chance in March to go very far."

Young in the next game against Purdue Fort Wayne totaled six points, three rebounds and four assists in 19 minutes.

Finding The Right Fit

With three-star power forward Zed Key and four-star shooting guard Eugene Brown III signed to fill the two spots for the 2020 class, Holtmann gave his thoughts on recruiting in his media session on Nov. 15.

"We're always really trying to look for unselfish guys that are going to embrace the fact that they're playing for Ohio State," Holtmann said. "That doesn't mean they won't go through some growing pains as they go from being the best player on their team to a role their freshman year in college. That's a hard transition for everybody. We're looking for guys that can adjust."

His criteria for making an offer vary according to need, but he and his staff are always looking for in-state talent.

"Last year's class was, in a lot of ways, regional. It was Midwest-centered," he said.

Gaffney is an Ohioan. Carton is from Iowa, and Liddell is an Illinois native. In contrast, Key is from New York, and Brown calls Georgia home.

"This (class) was a little bit unique and a little bit more national," Holtmann said. "We just fell in love with these two guys and their families and the needs that we felt. We just felt really strongly about them. The consistent part of our recruiting will be in our breadbasket of these states and surrounding states, but certainly we've gone out of that and gotten guys."

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Ohio State Spreads Wealth In Blowout Of Stetson

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State roared to a 38-6 start against an overmatched Stetson squad and never looked back, winning 86-51 in front of 9,774 fans at Value City Arena on Nov. 18.

The Scarlet and Gray were led in the frontcourt by junior big man Kaleb Wesson with 13 points, eight rebounds and three blocks and junior forward Kyle Young with 15 points and 10 boards on a perfect 5-of-5 shooting. Young credited the team's day-in, day-out dedication for the success.

"Our approach, Coach is getting us ready," Young said. "Our preparation every day in practice - we're coming in, we're making each other better. We're going at each other, and we're competing every day. That's really made a difference for us defensively and offensively."

Leading the backcourt, freshman D.J. Carton scored 10 points and dished out five assists. Junior guard C.J. Walker added five points and five assists, while sophomore guard Duane Washington scored nine points on three triples and pitched in two helpers.

Head coach Chris Holtmann, who is notoriously tough on his point guards, expressed how pleased he was with his point guard tandem of Carton and Walker.

"They've done a good job taking care of the ball, sharing the ball, finding guys and being intentional about finding guys," Holtmann said. "They've really done a good job of looking to find guys, find shooters. I've been pleased with both guys. And when they play together, they've done a good job of that, too."

The play of the game came with Ohio State leading 22-3. Walker dribbled the ball on the left wing, surveying the floor until Carton darted toward the rim on the backside. The Florida State transfer lofted a perfect lob to Carton, and the freshman standout slammed the ball through the hoop, bringing Buckeye fans to their feet.

"It was a great cut by D.J. and great vision by C.J.," Holtmann said after admitting he didn't draw up the play. "We tried to move some guys around their zone a little bit. We've got to continue to play those guys together and multiple combinations on the perimeter together just to get more comfortable in situations like that."

The Buckeyes thoroughly dominated the Hatters on both ends of the floor, tripling their score with a 42-14 halftime lead. Visiting Stetson made only four field goals on 28 shots in the first frame (including an accidentally banked three-pointer) to go with 3 of 8 made on free throws.

Although the Buckeyes were barely challenged by the Hatters, the lopsided victory allowed numerous players to see more playing time than usual.

Freshman big man Ibrahima Diallo scored his first collegiate basket on a smooth left-handed hook off the glass in the first half. The freshman from Saly, Senegal, added a powerful dunk and drew a foul on another bucket in the second half but missed the foul shot.

"Sitting on the bench, you can see a lot of things like good spacing, all the tendencies," Diallo, who finished with six points and five boards, said. "I've been learning a lot. I stay ready, so when Coach calls my name, I just go in and compete."

The Ohio State bench erupted when Diallo, a fan and team favorite, made the first basket.

"I feel like they love me," Diallo said of his teammates. "We're really tight. They know I've been working hard for them, so that's why when I scored, everybody got so excited."

Walk-on Harrison Hookfin, a native of Lebanon, Ohio, also scored his first collegiate basket, finishing strong after grabbing an offensive rebound.

Sophomore wing Justin Ahrens scored his first points of the season as well after having been limited due to an injured back. The left-handed sharpshooter from Versailles, Ohio, connected



SONNY BROCKWAY

DEEP THREAT - Sophomore guard Duane Washington leads Ohio State in three-point makes (11) and percentage (61.1).

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Ohio State 86, Stetson 51
Nov. 18, 2019
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio

	1	2	F
Stetson (2-2)	14	37	51
Ohio State (4-0)	42	44	86

Stetson	Total	FG	FT	Reb.	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Kambima	21	1-6	0-2	1-4	0	1	2				
Diawara	21	2-6	5-6	4-0	0	5	9				
Jones	31	3-5	1-2	2-1	1	1	9				
Perry	36	5-14	3-4	4-4	1	1	17				
Aninye	14	1-4	0-0	1-0	0	1	2				
Panzo	21	2-5	0-0	1-3	0	2	6				
Ivery	7	0-2	0-0	0-1	1	0	0				
Rawley	22	2-5	1-3	0-3	2	0	5				
Griffith	8	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	2	0				
Ionesco	2	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0				
Crutchfield	4	0-0	1-2	1-0	0	0	1				
Foucart	13	0-9	0-0	0-1	0	2	0				
Totals	200	16-57	11-19	16-21	5	15	51				

Percentages: FG: 28.1%. FT: 57.9%. **3-point goals:** 8-22 (Kabimba 0-2, Jones 2-3, Perry 4-7, Aninye 0-1, Panzo 2-5, Foucart 0-4). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Rawley). **Turnovers:** 17 (Diawara 3, Jones 3, Ivery 2, Kabimba 2, Perry 2, Rawley 2, Aninye, Crutchfield, TEAM). **Steals:** 4 (Rawley 3, Jones).

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Young	17	5-5	4-5	3-7	1	0	15				
K. Wesson	17	3-8	7-8	4-4	1	3	13				
Muhammad	18	1-5	0-0	0-2	0	1	3				
Washington	14	3-5	0-0	0-0	2	0	9				
Walker	20	2-4	1-1	0-3	5	0	5				
Gaffney	9	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	5	0				
Carton	20	4-6	2-2	0-2	5	0	10				
Ahrens	17	3-7	0-0	0-4	0	1	9				
Diallo	14	3-6	0-1	3-2	0	4	6				
A. Wesson	21	2-6	0-0	0-2	3	2	6				
Liddell	19	3-10	2-2	1-4	0	1	8				
Hummer	8	0-1	0-0	0-1	2	1	0				
Hookfin	6	1-3	0-0	2-0	0	0	2				
Totals	200	30-66	16-19	16-32	19	18	86				

Percentages: FG: 45.5%. FT: 84.2%. **3-point goals:** 10-27 (Young 1-1, K. Wesson 0-1, Muhammad 1-3, Washington 3-4, Walker 0-1, Carton 0-1 Ahrens 3-7, A. Wesson 2-5, Liddell 0-3, Hummer 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 9 (Liddell 4, K. Wesson 3, Young, Diallo). **Turnovers:** 9 (Carton 2, Hookfin 2, Walker, Gaffney, Diallo, A. Wesson, TEAM). **Steals:** 5 (Young, Carton, A. Wesson, Liddell, Hummer). **Officials:** Carr, Ek, Simpson. **Attendance:** 9,774

Ohio State 85, Purdue FW 46
Nov. 22, 2019
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio

	1	2	F
Purdue Fort Wayne (2-5)	25	21	46
Ohio State (5-0)	42	43	85

Purdue FW	Total	FG	FT	Reb.	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Carl	25	1-4	1-2	0-5	4	2	4				
Holba	27	0-5	0-0	0-1	0	2	0				
Godfrey	37	2-11	2-2	1-2	3	1	6				
Patrick	30	5-14	0-0	0-3	0	1	13				
DeBerry	26	6-7	1-2	1-1	0	0	16				
Rollins	6	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	3				
Billups	20	0-4	0-0	0-3	3	3	0				
Black	13	0-2	0-0	2-0	0	1	0				
Benford	16	2-5	0-0	3-2	0	4	4				
Totals	200	17-54	4-6	9-18	10	15	46				

Percentages: FG: 31.5%. FT: 66.7%. **3-point goals:** 8-21 (Carl 1-2, Holba 0-2, Godfrey 0-3, Patrick 3-7, DeBerry 3-4, Rollins, 1-2, Black 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Holba). **Turnovers:** 19 (Holba 5, Godfrey 4, Patrick 3, Billups 2, Carl, DeBerry, Black, Benford, TEAM). **Steals:** 2 (Patrick, Benford).

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Young	19	3-6	0-0	2-1	4	1	6				
K. Wesson	22	4-9	4-4	0-7	0	1	15				
Muhammad	27	2-4	1-2	1-3	1	1	5				
Washington	17	3-5	0-0	0-0	5	1	8				
Walker	20	4-6	0-0	1-2	3	0	11				
Gaffney	14	1-3	1-2	0-3	1	1	3				
Carton	18	5-7	2-4	1-2	1	1	13				
Ahrens	8	3-3	0-0	0-3	0	2	9				
Diallo	8	0-2	0-0	1-1	0	0	0				
A. Wesson	18	1-5	2-2	1-2	1	0	4				
Liddell	16	4-6	0-0	1-4	2	2	8				
Hummer	8	1-1	0-0	1-0	2	1	3				
Hookfin	5	0-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	0				
Totals	200	31-58	10-14	11-28	20	11	85				

Percentages: FG: 53.4%. FT: 71.4%. **3-point goals:** 13-30 (Young 0-1, K. Wesson 3-7, Muhammad 0-1, Washington 2-3, Walker 3-4, Gaffney 0-2, Carton 1-3, Ahrens 3-3, A. Wesson 0-4, Liddell 0-1, Hummer 1-1). **Team rebounds:** 1. **Blocked shots:** 5 (Young, K. Wesson, Diallo, A. Wesson, Liddell). **Turnovers:** 11 (Muhammad 4, K. Wesson 2, Walker 2, Gaffney, Hummer, Hookfin). **Steals:** 9 (Walker 4, Liddell 2, K. Wesson, Muhammad, A. Wesson). **Officials:** McCarthy, Garrison, Beaver. **Attendance:** 11,609

on a trio of triples for nine points.

Ohio State senior wing Andre Wesson made his return after a two-game absence from a fractured eye socket, checking in off the bench at 15:46 in the first half and finishing with six points, two rebounds and three assists.

Overall, Ohio State held Stetson to just 28.1 percent (16 of 57) from the field, while shooting 45.5 percent (30 of 66) on the other end. The Buckeyes shot well from the perimeter and free-throw line, knocking down 10 of 27 triples (37.0 percent) and 16 of 19 foul shots (84.2).

OSU Rolls To 5-0 With Win Over Purdue Fort Wayne

Ohio State remained unbeaten in convincing fashion, dominating Purdue Fort Wayne, 85-46, at Value City Arena.

Wesson led the way for the Buckeyes, scoring 15 points and grabbing seven rebounds. Carton contributed 13 points on 5-of-7 shooting off the bench.

Starting guards Walker and Washington Jr. played well in the Buckeye backcourt. Walker, a junior, posted 11 points, three boards, three assists and four steals, while Washington, a sophomore, scored eight points and dished five helpers.

"I was just taking what the defense was giving me, being aggressive as always," Washington said. "If somebody helps up, it's a drop-off. And they're a big close-it-in team - that's what we talked about during the week. You get to the paint, all five of their guys crash the paint as well, so just finding guys, kicking it out and knowing the game plan."

Holtmann was impressed by the play of Walker and even more pleased with his ability to guide the young Buckeyes.

"His leadership has been phenomenal from day one with this group," Holtmann said of

Walker. "He struggled early, probably still will at times, getting back after sitting a year out. His leadership has been great."

After Purdue Fort Wayne fifth-year senior guard Marcus DeBerry nailed a three-pointer to cut Ohio State's lead to 9-7 at the 16:36 mark of the first half, the Buckeyes answered with a tone-setting run. The Scarlet and Gray scored 16 straight points, and their stifling defense put them in front of the Mastodons, 25-7, with 9:25 to go before the break.

One of the game's most exciting plays later came on a sophomore-to-freshman alley-oop. Washington tossed up a picture-perfect pass to high-flying freshman forward Alonzo Gaffney, who grabbed the lob and threw down a ferocious dunk to make it 29-12, bringing the home crowd of 11,609 to a roar with 7:46 on the first-half clock.

Later in the half, Purdue Fort Wayne cut the Ohio State lead to 33-19 with a jumper from sophomore guard Jarred Godfrey. The Buckeyes answered with a quick 7-0 run, capped by a layup by Luther Muhammad that came off an Andre Wesson assist following an E.J. Liddell steal.

Ohio State led Purdue Fort Wayne, 42-25, at halftime, shooting 48.5 percent (16 of 33) from the field and 7 of 9 from the free-throw line (77.8 percent). The Mastodons shot just 29.0 percent (9 of 31) from the floor in the first frame.

The Buckeyes opened the second half on a 14-4 run, highlighted by a pair of triples by both Kaleb Wesson and Walker, who added a layup as well. Purdue Fort Wayne's leading scorer, Brian Patrick, knocked down a triple to end the run, but Ohio State did not waver.

The Scarlet and Gray responded by ripping off a 13-0 run, highlighted by eight points from Carton in under two minutes of play, pushing the lead to 69-32 at the 9:27 mark. Liddell, a



KEVIN DYE

TRUSTED POINT GUARD – Freshman D.J. Carton is averaging 11.2 points, 3.6 rebounds and 3.4 assists per game for Ohio State this season.

freshman forward who notched eight points, five rebounds, two assists, two steals and one block, shared why Ohio State had so much success coming out of the intermission.

"They were making us shoot a lot of threes, and half of our shots were threes in the first half," Liddell said of Holtmann's halftime message. "We just wanted to focus on keep touching the paint and keep playing together and everybody's going to shine. So, that's what we did, and that's how we got off to a great start in the second half."

With the game out of reach, the Buckeyes emptied their bench. Ahrens scored nine points in eight minutes, all in the second stanza.

Overall, Ohio State shot 53.4 percent (31

of 58) from the field, 43.3 percent (13 of 30) from three-point range and 71.4 percent (10 of 14) from the foul line. On the other end, the Buckeyes held the Mastodons to 31.5 percent (17 of 54) shooting and 38.1 percent (8 of 21) from beyond the arc.

The Buckeyes were able to hold off the Mastodons by sticking to their core principles of sharing the ball and playing team defense with consistency.

"We just know that in the game of basketball there are runs," Washington said. "One team is going to make a good run, and the other team is going to make a good run. So, just consistently putting it into each other's brains, 'Play the right way the whole game all the time.'"



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Five-Star Freshmen Key To Ohio State's Success

During Ohio State's first defeat of the season on Nov. 17, a 74-68 loss to Ohio University, the Buckeyes showed the struggles that a team so young may encounter. But they also showed what all the flash and potential could be about during a 5½-minute span in the fourth quarter.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

Down 63-51 to the Bobcats, Ohio State scored 17 of the next 22 points, including a 9-0 run to tie the game at 68 with 2:20 to

play. The scoring was split across five players, but freshman guard Kierstan Bell led the charge with six points and three steals during the run.

The freshman guard benefited from Ohio State switching to a press defense in order to try to force turnovers against OU, and the result brought the Buckeyes all the way back to a tie before the Bobcats scored six straight points to end the game.

Bell finished the game with 12 points on 6-of-15 shooting with five steals, but all 12 points came in the second half after starting the game 0 for 5 from the field.

"It was a little rough in the beginning," she said. "My shots weren't falling, but I wasn't really tripping on my shot. I was just worried about defense and knowing their personnel and not letting their people score. In the second half, I had to focus in

a little bit more to help the team, and the steals helped a lot, helped catch us back up to 68-68. We fell a little short at the end, but it's all about learning and getting better every day."

Of those nine shots missed by Bell, seven came from three-point distance, where she failed to hit one. The same struggles were found by the other five-star guard active from the 2019 class. Jacy Sheldon shot 1 of 9 overall in the game and was 1 of 8 from behind the arc in 23 minutes of game time.

But for Bell and Sheldon, it is not like this is the norm for two of the best shooters each of their respective high schools has ever seen.

Sheldon broke Dublin (Ohio) Coffman's record for three-pointers made with 211 and shot 59 percent from the field overall

in her senior season. Bell shot 52.7 percent in her junior year and averaged 33.3 points per game with the combination of a deep shot with her ability to drive and hit contested jumpers.

Early on in their college careers, the shots have not come as easy for the duo. After a combined 1-for-15 shooting day from deep against Ohio, Sheldon (3 of 14) and Bell (3 of 16) were shooting a combined 6 of 30 from three on the season.

Bell said her struggles against the Bobcats came from her lack of experience on her home court.

"We usually don't practice on the main court until the day before on the home games," Bell said. "I was a little rough, so it's just about getting in the gym and getting better."

Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff isn't too worried about it. He said the early troubles are just the two star freshmen getting used to the change to the collegiate level and that he has no problems with the number of shots the pair are taking.

"I think just the speed of the game, it speeds up a little bit and you just kind of have to find your rhythm out there," McGuff said of the step up from high school. "As long as they just continue to focus on taking good shots, they're going to be just fine."

Regardless of the early struggles from deep, Bell showed what the potential was all about in her second-half burst that helped lead the comeback effort.

She said that defense is what has come first in practices and that making those steals happen and covering the opponent correctly take priority over what she can do on the offensive end.

"I'm focusing on defense because I have to get better on that and guarding the ball, and that's what my coach wants me to do," Bell said. "He doesn't really care about my offense because he knows it can come with me, but he's just worried about my defense and being able to guard."

Sheldon showed her potential with a 25-point, five-steal effort in the exhibition against Urbana but went into the matchup against Kent State on Nov. 21 looking for her first breakout game as a freshman.

Sheldon managed to break through against the Golden Flashes, putting in 11 points on a perfect 3-of-3 shooting from behind the arc.

Bell's shooting struggles continued, shooting 3 of 13 and 1 of 5 from three, finishing with seven points. She found her stroke in the 11-point loss to UConn, however. Against the No. 4 Huskies, Bell hit 6 of 12 shots and 3 of 8 from behind the arc for a team-high 16 points.

Juhasz Misses Kent State Game

Sophomore forward Dorka Juhasz, the team's leader in points and rebounds per game, missed the practice on Nov. 19 leading up to the Kent State game.

Juhasz missed time last season due to an ankle injury and previously had a knee injury. With all that in mind, McGuff decided to let her have the day off two days before the game against the Golden Flashes.

"It was just kind of maintenance," McGuff said. "She got a little banged up. But she should be OK by (Nov. 21)."

Even so, Juhasz did not play in the Kent State game, with Aixa Wone and

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SONNY BROCKWAY

MAKING THE JUMP – Although Jacy Sheldon broke her high school's three-point record, she's struggled from beyond the arc in her young OSU career.

Aaliyah Patty starting in the forward spots in her place. She returned for the game against UConn, adding eight points and 11 rebounds in the defeat.

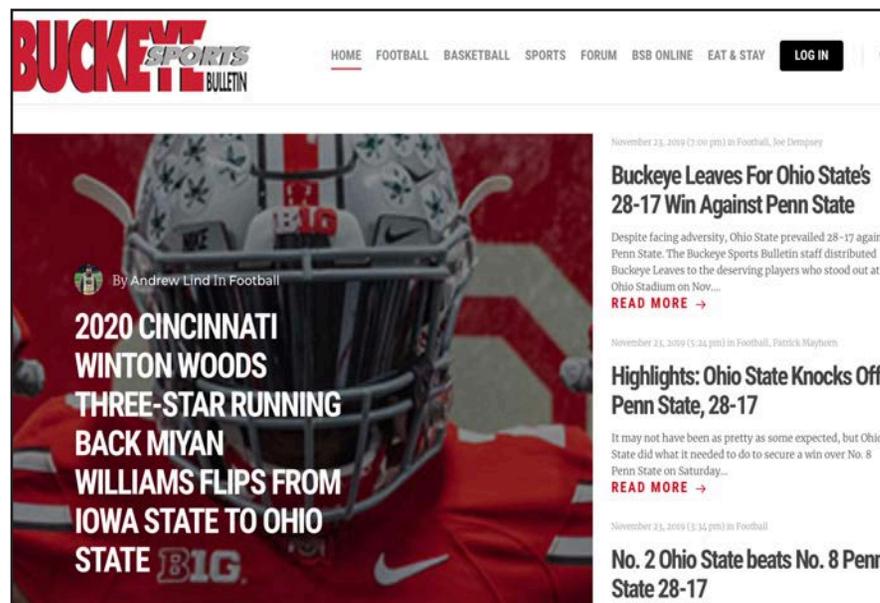
The sophomore forward had a career day on the glass against Ohio, tallying 16 rebounds, which matched her collegiate high. But Juhasz could not get her shooting going, making only 4 of 13 attempts from the field and going 1 for 7 from the free-throw line in the loss.

McGuff was not concerned that the rough game for Juhasz was anything more than a fluke.

"She's a great player, she really is," he said. "She's extremely talented, she's very bright. I think she's better when she's really confident, and for whatever reason she missed a couple shots early, I think it shook her confidence a little bit, but she's a great player and I think that was more of an anomaly than a trend."

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Ohio State Handles Kent State, Falls To UConn

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Following its first loss of the season, a 74-68 defeat to Ohio University, Ohio State came back and handily defeated Kent State 75-65 for the team's second road win of the season in front of a crowd of 4,272 at the M.A.C. Center.

The Buckeyes were led by a perfect 7-of-7 shooting night from freshman forward Rebeka Mikulasikova, who finished with 14 points and six rebounds. Mikulasikova stepped up for an injured Dorka Juhasz, Ohio State's leading scorer and rebounder coming into the game, who missed the Kent matchup with a leg injury.

"I kind of wanted to get her in early, especially with Dorka being out," said Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff. "She had some great minutes and she played really well, and I think you can see what her talent level is."

Ohio State led 8-5 halfway through the first quarter. After Kent State tied it on a three by Lindsey Thall, Ohio State broke it open with an 11-1 run to end the opening quarter for a 19-9 lead, and the Buckeyes never trailed after that.

This came partly from an absolute domination by Ohio State in bench points. While the Buckeyes scored 33 of their points from players off the bench, the Golden Flashes did not manage a single point from the bench until a Mariah Modkins three with 19 seconds to play.

"That's one of the luxuries of this team," McGuff said. "We have a lot of depth and can play a lot of people, so it was really good."

Another Ohio State freshman in guard Jacy Sheldon stepped up from a shaky shooting performance against OU, hitting all three of her three-point attempts for 11 points on the night.

Janai Crooms earned her second double-double of both the season and her collegiate career, finishing with 11 points and a career-high 11 rebounds as well as seven assists.

Oklahoma State transfer guard Braxtin Miller also had another strong game, making 6 of 10 from the field for 14 points to go with six rebounds and four assists.

Ohio State outrebounded Kent State 43-30 while shooting 54.2 percent from the field (32 of 59). The Golden Flashes shot 30.8 percent (20 of 65) on the night.

"We are at our best when we're moving," McGuff said. "We had 22 assists, so I

really liked the way we moved the ball and made the extra pass."

Kent's leading scorer coming into the game, Asiah Dingle, was held without a field goal in the game, shooting 0 for 5 and ending the game with three points. Katie Shumate, the Golden Flashes' No. 2 scorer, shot 1 for 15 in the game for five points. Kent State instead relied on Thall, who buried 8 of 13 attempts from deep for a career-high 32 points, scoring nearly half of the Golden Flashes' points on the evening.



Kevin McGuff

The Buckeyes led by as much as 25 points, the last time coming with 1:10 left in the third period when a Sheldon three made it 63-38. But Thall's 19-point fourth quarter, with 5 of 6 from beyond the arc, helped cut the lead to the eventual 10-point win.

"I thought we played well for three quarters," McGuff said. "On both ends of the floor we did pretty good, and then the fourth quarter was really bad. I think it's just the sign of a young and immature team that they got out of what we were doing and got away from the processes of what we were doing, and they made us pay for it."

Buckeyes Upset Dreams Come Up Short Against UConn

In a game that was expected to be the team's second loss of the season, Ohio State put up more than a fight against the No. 4 UConn Huskies.

After an 85-53 defeat to UConn a season ago, Ohio State trailed by only two at halftime. From there, the Buckeyes continued to battle but could not come up with the victory, falling to the Huskies 73-62 on Nov. 24 at Value City Arena in front of 8,909.

"Obviously they're a different team," UConn head coach Geno Auriemma said of the Buckeyes. "So are we. I think the talent level's probably higher now than it was last year. They're much more difficult to play against this year than they were last year, for sure."

No team led by more than single digits for the first 36:47 of the game until a Megan Walker shot made it 65-54. That was part of a 9-4 UConn run to put the Huskies up 67-56 with 2:53 to go, but a Kierstan Bell three and a Miller steal setting up a Sheldon layup made it a six-point game with 2:24 to play.

Bell said 6-5 UConn forward Olivia Nelson-Ododa made the game plan shift for the Buckeyes in order to take more chances from outside.

Ohio State 75, Kent State 65

Nov. 22, 2019 M.A.C. Center • Kent, Ohio										
	1	2	3	4	F					
Ohio State (3-1)	19	20	24	12	75					
Kent State (3-2)	9	14	17	25	65					
Ohio State	Total FG FT		Reb.							
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Wone	17	1-2	2-4	1-1	0	2	4			
Patty	20	3-5	0-1	1-8	0	2	6			
Crooms	33	4-6	2-2	1-10	7	3	11			
Miller	27	6-10	0-0	1-5	4	2	14			
Bell	20	3-13	0-2	0-2	2	3	7			
Sheldon	23	4-7	0-0	1-0	2	2	11			
Mikulasikova	20	7-7	0-0	2-4	0	4	14			
Satterfield	22	3-6	0-0	0-2	2	2	6			
Greene	17	1-3	0-2	0-0	5	1	2			
Totals	200	32-59	4-11	8-35	22	21	75			
Percentages:	FG: 54.2%	FT: 36.4%	Three-point field goals: 7-18 (Wone 0-1, Patty 0-1, Crooms 1-3, Miller 2-4, Bell 1-5, Sheldon 3-3, Greene 0-1). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 3 (Crooms 1, Miller 1, Mikulasikova 1). Turnovers: 16 (Crooms 3, Bell 3, Sheldon 2, Mikulasikova 4, Satterfield 4). Steals: 8 (Crooms 2, Bell 3, Sheldon 2, Greene 1).							
Kent State	Total FG FT		Reb.							
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Blackford	28	4-9	0-2	3-2	0	1	9			
Thall	38	9-18	6-6	2-3	1	2	32			
Dingle	20	0-5	3-6	2-1	3	4	3			
Shumate	36	1-15	3-6	1-2	2	2	5			
Carter	36	5-16	0-0	0-3	3	1	13			
Poole	5	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0			
Young	17	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	0	0			
Brinlee	10	0-0	0-0	1-4	1	0	0			
Modkins	3	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	2	3			
Kelly	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Pavlansky	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Smith	1	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0			
Eibel	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Totals	200	20-65	12-20	12-18	12	12	65			
Percentages:	FG: 30.8%	FT: 60.0%	Three-point field goals: 13-30 (Blackford 1-3, Thall 8-13, Shumate 0-4, Carter 3-8, Poole 0-1, Modkins 1-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 2 (Shumate 2). Turnovers: 10 (Blackford 2, Thall 2, Dingle 2, Shumate 1, Carter 2, Pavlansky 1). Steals: 7 (Dingle 2, Shumate 2, Carter 1, Poole 1, Young 1). Officials: Maxey, Brooks, Baker. Attendance: 4,272.							

UConn 73, Ohio State 62

Nov. 24, 2019 Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio										
	1	2	3	4	F					
UConn (5-0)	15	18	19	21	73					
Ohio State (3-2)	14	17	15	16	62					
UConn	Total FG FT		Reb.							
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Walker	40	7-16	4-4	0-8	4	2	19			
Nelson-Ododa	38	3-7	0-0	6-6	3	4	6			
Dangerfield	40	8-15	3-4	0-6	6	0	23			
Williams	40	9-15	0-0	1-7	4	2	20			
Makurat	14	0-4	0-0	0-1	1	0	0			
Griffin	7	1-3	0-0	1-1	0	0	2			
Irwin	19	1-1	0-0	0-2	1	1	3			
Bent	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0			
Totals	200	29-61	7-8	9-34	19	9	73			
Percentages:	FG: 47.5%	FT: 87.5%	Three-point field goals: 8-21 (Walker 1-5, Dangerfield 4-8, Williams 2-4, Makurat 0-3, Irwin 1-1). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 4 (Nelson-Ododa 4). Turnovers: 14 (Walker 3, Nelson-Ododa 3, Dangerfield 3, Williams 2, Makurat 2, Irwin 1). Steals: 7 (Walker 1, Nelson-Ododa 2, Dangerfield 2, Makurat 1, Griffin 1).							
Ohio State	Total FG FT		Reb.							
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.			
Juhasz	32	4-14	0-1	3-8	2	2	8			
Patty	24	4-10	0-2	0-4	1	2	11			
Crooms	32	2-7	3-4	0-2	4	4	7			
Miller	33	3-10	1-2	4-2	3	0	9			
Bell	23	6-12	1-2	2-2	1	0	16			
Wone	11	2-4	0-2	2-0	0	0	4			
Satterfield	8	1-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	2			
Mikulasikova	11	1-5	0-0	0-1	0	2	3			
Greene	14	0-1	0-0	0-2	1	1	0			
Sheldon	13	1-2	0-0	0-1	2	2	2			
Totals	200	24-68	5-13	14-23	14	13	62			
Percentages:	FG: 35.3%	FT: 38.5%	Three-point field goals: 9-30 (Juhasz 0-5, Patty 3-5, Crooms 0-3, Miller 2-3, Bell 3-8, Wone 0-1, Satterfield 0-1, Mikulasikova 1-3, Sheldon 0-1). Team rebounds: 4. Turnovers: 12 (Crooms 5, Bell 1, Wone 1, Satterfield 1, Mikulasikova 1, Greene 3). Steals: 9 (Juhasz 1, Patty 1, Crooms 3, Miller 1, Bell 2, Wone 1). Officials: Roberts, Pethel, Cruise. Attendance: 8,909.							

hitting only five of their 13 attempts.

UConn held a 33-31 lead going into halftime behind a team-high 11 points from sophomore guard Christyn Williams. The Huskies outrebounded Ohio State 26-19 in the opening half and shot 40.0 percent (14 of 35) from the field.

Williams finished the game with 20 points, eight rebounds and four assists.

"I was happy with how we competed," McGuff said. "I mean I think that's half the battle. They've got such a storied program and people can be back on their heels from the tip, but I thought we started the game with great energy, great intensity and we gave ourselves a chance today."

The Buckeyes shot only 35.3 percent from the floor (24 of 68), while UConn shot 47.5 percent (29 of 61), including hitting seven of its 10 attempts from the field in the fourth quarter.

"I think we locked in on what they did best really well and defended really well according to that," Miller said. "They had some good shots at the buzzer at the end, and we can only give them credit for that, but defensively I think we did a lot of great things."

Ohio State moves on to face South Dakota on Nov. 29 in Las Vegas as part of the Thanksgiving Shootout.

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MSU's Izzo Resigns From NABC Board Of Directors

Tom Izzo resigned from the board of directors of the National Association of Basketball Coaches after 18 years.

The Michigan State head men's basketball coach has expressed his displeasure with the inconsistencies of the NCAA numerous times in the past. The last straw came when the NCAA denied Marquette transfer Joey Hauser a waiver so he could play for the Spartans this season.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"What Tom Izzo is going to do from here on out is he's going to worry about his team, his family, his Spartan family, and if there is an apology to be made I'll make it," he said on Nov. 21, "but I'm not going to worry about everybody else right now. ... I'm going to be selfish."

Izzo's major issue with the process is the inconsistency regarding who is granted immediate eligibility and who is not when transferring.

"I don't really appreciate (it)," Izzo said. "The consistency and the guidelines for this seem absurd."

The Green and White's leader on the hardwood said the men's basketball team will carry on without Hauser and that the transfer from Marquette would be fine, too. Izzo said he could not talk about why Hauser was denied but expressed his distaste with who makes those decisions.

"What bothers me the most is they're being made by individuals who don't really understand our game," Izzo said.

"These committees, panels, cabinets, I'm sure there's a lot of good people on them, but not people who deal with these kids on a daily basis. That's why I have a big problem."

The inconsistency of transfer rulings and the lack of coaches in the decision-making process pushed Izzo past his limit.

He said he was tired of beating his head against the wall only to "have other people try to tell me what's going on in my profession. The NABC - I believe in the coaches; I believe in everybody there. But I just don't believe that I want to be dealing with these problems."

Izzo has been outspoken about student-athletes transferring and the rules regarding switching schools. The Hall of Fame coach has argued that allowing players to transfer without sitting a year teaches them not to persevere.

"I've never been in favor of the (immediate) transfer," Izzo said. "I've never been in favor of the (transfer) portal."

The transfer portal is an online database where student-athletes looking to move on to another school can enter their names, making them available to discuss transferring with compliance officers and athletic programs about transferring.

Izzo does not like the transfer portal because he thinks it makes student-athletes more likely to want to depart from their school on a whim. The Spartans coach thinks players would be better prepared for life if they stick it out when they aren't enjoying their time at a program.

"I don't think (student-athletes) should be able to go freely because I think it will hurt the guys in the end," Izzo said. "But, in saying that, Joey didn't come here because he thought he was going to be able to play. But as waivers started to pile up as the summer went

on, Joey and his family thought he had a strong case."

Many coaches and administrators have shared their opinions on the NCAA transfer process, including Michigan football coach Jim Harbaugh, who argues that players should be allowed to transfer one time without having to sit out.

While it's unlikely Izzo will refrain from speaking up for what he believes in, the NCAA and the NABC lost an important voice with his resignation.

"I was a guy that battled with them every day," Izzo said. "I did everything I could do. I gave my time, my energy. I stayed on the board longer than most. I've done some things for NCAA presidents. I just think things have gotten crazy."

Penn State's Sandusky Resentenced To 30-60 Years

Former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was resentenced to 30 to 60 years, which is the same duration from his original trial for sexually abusing children.

Sandusky, 75, was convicted in 2012 of 45 counts of child sexual abuse involving 10 boys through his youth charity, The Second Mile.

The hearing for Sandusky was ordered by a state appeals court after it ruled mandatory minimum sentences were improperly applied against him. The court, however, refused to order a new trial.

Sandusky smiled as he was escorted into Centre County Court in Bellefonte, Pa. When asked by a reporter if he maintains his innocence, he responded, "Absolutely."

At the hearing, Sandusky also declared his innocence, choking up multiple times in brief remarks to the judge and telling his supporters he loves them. The former Nittany Lions assistant is serving his sentence at the State Correctional Institution at Laurel Highlands.

Penn State University has paid more than \$109 million to settle Sandusky

BIG 2019 Standings

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Ohio State	8	0	1.000	11	0	1.000
Michigan	6	2	.750	9	2	.818
Penn State	6	2	.750	9	2	.818
Indiana	4	4	.500	7	4	.636
Michigan State	3	5	.375	5	6	.455
Maryland	1	7	.125	3	8	.273
Rutgers	0	8	.000	2	9	.182

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Minnesota	7	1	.875	10	1	.909
Wisconsin	6	2	.750	9	2	.818
Iowa	5	3	.625	8	3	.727
Illinois	4	4	.500	6	5	.545
Nebraska	3	5	.375	5	6	.455
Purdue	3	5	.375	4	7	.364
Northwestern	0	8	.000	2	9	.182

Nov. 23 Scores
Ohio State 28, Penn State 17
 Minnesota 38, Northwestern 22
 Wisconsin 45, Purdue 24
 Michigan 39, Indiana 14
 Iowa 19, Illinois 10
 Michigan State 27, Rutgers 0
 Nebraska 54, Maryland 7

Nov. 29 Game
 Iowa at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m.

Nov. 30 Games
Ohio State at Michigan, 12 p.m.
 Northwestern at Illinois, 12 p.m.
 Indiana at Purdue, 12 p.m.
 Rutgers at Penn State, 3:30 p.m.
 Wisconsin at Minnesota, 3:30 p.m.
 Maryland at Michigan State, 3:30 p.m.



Tom Izzo

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BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (11-0, 8-0)

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, W 73-14; **16** at Rutgers, W 56-21; **23** PENN STATE, W 28-17; **30** at Michigan, 12 p.m..
Dec. 7 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis, 8 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL (5-0, 0-0)

Oct. 30 CEDARVILLE (exhibition), W 95-52.
Nov. 6 CINCINNATI, W 64-56; **10** UMASS-LOWELL, W 76-56; **13** VILLANOVA, W 76-51; **18** STETSON, W 86-51; **22** PURDUE FORT WAYNE, W 85-46; **25** KENT STATE, 6:30 p.m.; **29** MORGAN STATE, 9 p.m..
Dec. 4 North Carolina, 9:30 p.m.; **7** PENN STATE, 12 p.m.; **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 (3-2, 0-0)

Nov. 3 Urbana (exhibition), W 131-50;
10 Valparaiso in Springfield, Ohio, W 89-38; **13** Cincinnati, W 78-73 (OT); **17** OHIO, L 74-68; **21** Kent State, W 75-65; **24** UCONN, L 73-62; **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, Men 11/12, Women 5/14; **15** NCAA Regional Championships at Madison, Wisc., Men 9/29, Women 4/31; **23** Women's NCAA Championships at Terre Haute, Ind., Women's 23/31.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (7-4-1, 3-3-0)

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, W 3-2; **2** MICHIGAN, W 2-1; **8** Notre Dame, L 3-2 (OT); **9** Notre Dame, L 2-1; **22** Penn State, L 5-4; **23** Penn State, W 4-3; **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 (9-3-4, 6-3-3)

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 Bemidji State, W 4-3 (OT); **2** Bemidji State, W 3-1; **15** MINNESOTA DULUTH, W 3-1; **16** MINNESOTA DULUTH, T 1-1; **22** Colgate, W 6-2; **23** Colgate, T 1-1; **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 (9-9, 3-6)

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, W 3-0; **7** Big Ten Tournament Quarterfinals vs Iowa at State College, Pa., L 4-1.

MEN'S SOCCER (7-11-1, 1-6-1)

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. EU, 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, L 5-1.
Nov. 3 WISCONSIN, L 1-0; **9** Big Ten Tournament Play-In Game vs Rutgers at Bloomington, Ind., W 1-0; **10** Big Ten Tournament vs Indiana at Bloomington, Ind., L 2-0.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (4-10-4, 2-6-3)

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, L 2-1.
SWIMMING & DIVING
Oct. 18-19 Texas A&M, Men, L 153-147; Women, L 174-124.
Nov. 1 Virginia Tech & Penn State at State College, Pa., Men L 97-70, W 91.70-74.50; Women L 174-124, L 102-65; **2** Virginia Tech & Penn State at State College, Pa., Men L 185-168, W 193.50-158.50; Women W 247-106, W 198-155; **8** KENYON, Men,

W 207-87 **8** KENYON & AKRON, Women W 213-85, W 254-40; **15** DENISON, Men, W 215-80.5; Women, W 214.5-78; **21-23** OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL, Men 1/5; Women 1/9.

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 (14-16, 7-11)

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, L 3-2.

Nov. 2 MARYLAND, W 3-0; **8** WISCONSIN, W 3-1; **10** MINNESOTA, L 3-0; **15** at Purdue, L 3-1; **16** at Indiana, W 3-1; **22** NORTHWESTERN, L 3-0; **24** ILLINOIS, L 3-1; **29** at Iowa, 8 p.m.; **30** at Nebraska, 8 p.m.

WRESTLING (2-1)

Nov. 2 Michigan State, NTS; **10** STANFORD, W 29-6; **15** Pittsburgh, W 23-12; **17** VIRGINIA TECH, L 21-15.
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.

welfare of Sandusky's child victims."

Freeh said it was reasonable to conclude university leaders concealed Sandusky's activities to avoid negative publicity due to "a culture of reverence for the football program" among other reasons.

'ESPN College GameDay' Heads To Minnesota

"ESPN College GameDay" is heading to No. 9 Minnesota for its matchup with No. 13 Wisconsin, which will determine the winner of the Big Ten West Division. The college football pregame show will be on the Golden Gophers' campus ahead of the 3:30 p.m. eastern kickoff on ABC at TCF Bank Stadium.

The show will air at 9 a.m. in its first trip to the University of Minnesota for the longest uninterrupted rivalry in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

Whoever wins the highly anticipated showdown will play East Division winner Ohio State in the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 7 in Indianapolis.

Through 128 games, the all-time series between the Gophers and the Badgers is tied at 60-60-8.

Wisconsin had won 14 straight matchups since 2003 until Minnesota bested the Badgers, 37-15, on the road last season to reclaim Paul Bunyan's Axe, which is awarded to the winner each season.

Top Performers From Across The Conference

Wisconsin senior kicker Zach Hintze highlighted this week's top performances in the Big Ten, drilling his first career field goal in the form of a 62-yard boot in the Badgers' 45-24 victory against Purdue.

Wisconsin standout running back Jonathan Taylor gained 222 yards and scored one touchdown on 28 carries in the win.

Michigan quarterback Shea Patterson tossed five touchdowns to one interception along with 366 yards on 20-of-32 passing in the 39-14 victory at Indiana. His favorite target, Nico Collins, hauled in six catches for 165 yards and three scores.

Michigan State wideout Cody White caught 11 passes for 136 yards and three touchdowns in the Spartans' 27-0 blowout of Rutgers.

Minnesota wide receiver Rashod Bateman snagged seven receptions for 78 yards and three scores in the Golden Gophers' 38-22 triumph over Northwestern.

Penn State safety Lamont Wade deserves credit for his performance in the Nittany Lions' 28-17 loss at Ohio State. The 5-9 junior safety was a force against the Buckeyes, recording 10 tackles, including a team-high eight solo stops, two tackles for loss, one sack and three forced fumbles, with one recovery.

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Quiet Wyatt Transfers Knowledge To Teammates

Ohio State defenseman Wyatt Ege was in a "transfer portal" before most knew there was such a term. Now it's commonplace, particularly in college football, for players to transfer for a chance to play and – in some instances, such as OSU quarterback Justin Fields – get instant eligibility.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

Ege took the old-fashioned route. He enrolled at OSU in the fall of 2016 after playing one season at Alaska Anchorage. Per NCAA rules, he sat a season before his redshirt sophomore year for the Buckeyes.

"Every situation is different," Ege said. "Maybe you're not in the right system or the coaches change. You're unhappy where you're at.

"In my situation when I had to sit out a year when I transferred, I used it to get better. You hear stories about transfers that when they leave, they lose a step sitting out, then they try to get back to where they were. That wasn't me.

"The players welcomed me. The coaching staff was great. They put me in all the situations in practice. They did a good job of keeping me involved.

"Some places you might go, they'd push you off to the side for a year then expect you to be there for the next year. (Coach Steve Rohlik) and the coaching staff did not do that."

Ege made good use of his downtime to enhance another of his passions – coaching. He's spent his offseasons at home in Elk River, Minn., coaching the summer program for youth and high-school level players.

"It's something I've always been around, especially youth hockey," he said. "Anything I can do to stick with it would

be awesome."

During the time he was ineligible, he had opportunities to watch games and think like a coach. But more importantly, he wanted to learn what others who play his position were doing.

"I especially watched in the Big Ten because there are guys that are really good on the other teams," Ege said. "I'd watch them the whole game and I'd be able to pick up a few things."

Since Ege couldn't play, he was not allowed to travel with the team.

Fortunately, during the 2016-17 season he wasn't alone in sitting out because goalie Sean Romeo had transferred after two seasons at Maine and was also unable to play for a season.

"When the team was away for the weekend, we would do some fun things like play racquetball or basketball, things you wouldn't do during the season because you'd get scared of getting injured," Ege said.

Ohio State has had success with transfers in recent seasons with Ege and senior forward Carson Meyer, formerly of Miami (Ohio), being major contributors this season.

Romeo, who is in his first pro season playing for Cincinnati of the ECHL, was a 2018 semifinalist for the 2018 Mike Richter Award as college hockey's top goalie. He ranks fourth in OSU history with a 2.22 career goals-against average and helped the Buckeyes reach the 2018 Frozen Four.

Before that, goalie Brady Hjelle was named an All-American for the 2012-13 season. He played for two seasons for the Buckeyes after two seasons at Minnesota Duluth.

Ege is not a vocal leader but has assumed a mentoring role in the locker room with the Buckeyes having three freshman defensemen on the roster this season.

"He says to stick with it," freshman

defenseman Layton Ahac said. "The freshman year can be tough. You learn a lot by watching him every day.

"He's super poised. He's not the biggest or the strongest guy, but he's definitely one of the best players. He does many of the little details you need to be successful. You can tell he's a senior how he plays and is calm with the puck."

Ege said it's important for the rookies to play their game.

"They don't need to adapt because they see me or some of the older guys doing something," he said. "Bring what you bring to the table.

"It's important to always, always do what you do best. That's why you're here, that's why you got recruited here."

Ege is enjoying his final season as a Buckeye, especially because he earned a degree in family resource management in the spring and now takes night courses Monday through Wednesday nights. The schedule frees him for the weekend games and allows him to focus on hockey.

"It's great," he said. "You have to recover or work on things. I might spend more time in the shooting room, stuff like that."

Double Nit

A few hours after the OSU football team beat Penn State in Columbus, the hockey Buckeyes made it a two-fer against the Nittany Lions at Pegula Ice Arena in University Park, Penn., on Nov. 23.

It was a badly needed win for the No. 11 Buckeyes (7-4-1, 3-3-0 Big Ten), who had lost three straight games by a goal, including 5-4 to the No. 6 Nittany Lions (10-3-0, 6-2-0) the previous night.

The victory came at a cost, though. Junior goalie Tommy Nappier had played every minute this season but sustained an undisclosed injury at the end of the second period with the score tied 3-3.

Freshman Ryan Snowden made his OSU debut, and all he did in the third

period was stop all 15 shots against the NCAA's second highest-scoring team (4.82 goals per game).

"This was a huge, gutty win for us," said OSU forward Tanner Laczynski. "To lose the last three games by one goal, it was tough. But the resiliency in the locker room to overcome adversity tonight and rally behind Snowden in the third is a big step in the right direction."

Sophomore Gustaf Westlund scored the winner at 13:04 of the third with Laczynski getting the primary assist before a crowd of 5,213.

Laczynski in the first period tied it 1-1. In the second, Nappier had the lone assist on sophomore Quinn Preston's goal to make it 2-2, and senior defenseman Gordi Myer scored for a 3-2 lead before the Nittany Lions got the equalizer.

In the series opener, the Buckeyes got two goals in the final two minutes of the game but could not get another in the defeat played before 5,739 fans. Meyer, Westlund, sophomore Matthew Jennings (first career goal) and Laczynski scored.

Numbers

OSU's last six games have been decided by a goal, going 3-3. The Buckeyes are 4-4 this season in one-goal games. ... Laczynski (four goals, nine assists) and Westlund (seven goals, six assists) are tied for the team lead with 13 points. ... Ege picked up his 50th career point with an assist on the Laczynski goal in the second game vs. PSU.

Next

The Buckeyes are home for two weekend series to close the first half of the schedule.

They host Michigan State on Nov. 30 at 5 p.m. and the next afternoon at 2:30 p.m. Then Minnesota visits Value City Arena for a pair of 8 p.m. games on Dec. 6 and 7.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series against Penn State go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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Cuban Connection Drove Echemendia To OSU

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

As one of Cuba's most promising young wrestlers, Anthony Echemendia headed to Guatemala for a training camp in the summer of 2018 in preparation for what was expected to be a long and fruitful career. Echemendia had Olympic aspirations, and Cuba has produced its fair share of elite wrestlers. He was set to be the next.

After 30 days at the camp, Echemendia was gone. He left in the night, without a word, because he knew his parents would worry if he told them of his plans. The 18-year-old was defecting from Cuba and wanted to seek political asylum in America. He wanted to wrestle the best, and he knew the best were in America.

"I knew that I could not say anything to my parents because they are overprotective of me and they would not agree with my decision," Echemendia said, in a Twitter thread explaining his journey.

With enough money to get by, Echemendia headed for the southern border of the United States. He traveled, with the help of two wrestling fans familiar with him, to Peten, a Guatemalan state that borders Belize. After reconnecting with some family to get extra money for admittance into Belize, Echemendia continued his journey, catching on with a family that was traveling to a river on the Belize-Mexico border.

"I was waiting for a day because there was a line to cross the river and I had to pay a man who was going to take me on his small boat to Quintana Roo State of Mexico."

Once in Mexico, Echemendia spent five days with family friends in Cancun before making his way to the border, where he requested political asylum at El Paso, Texas. For nearly three months, his request remained in flux. While it did, Echemendia was kept in detention. In October 2018, Echemendia's four-month journey to America was complete. He was granted asylum and met up with a familiar face, wrestling coach Fernando Villaescusa, whom Echemendia knew through a connection with his dad.

The same month, Echemendia enrolled at Sunnyside High School in Tucson, Ariz. Sunnyside is one of the top high school wrestling programs in the country and happens to employ Villaescusa as an assistant. Echemendia's senior year certainly wasn't traditional, but it was legal and legitimate and, most importantly, allowed him to wrestle competitively for the first time since his departure from Guatemala.

The time off didn't impact Echemendia. Wrestling at 152 pounds, the senior went 22-0 for Sunnyside and easily won an Arizona state title. He kept winning. At the Junior National Championships in July, he went 14-0 wrestling in both the Greco-Roman and freestyle tournaments on his way to a double junior championship. It was his first Greco-Roman tournament.

His combined 139-10 score at the tournament drew attention. He started receiving calls from schools all over the country, though just one truly drew his eyes: Iowa State. After a visit to the campus in early September, Echemendia ended his recruitment before it ever really began, committing to the Cyclones on Sept. 20. Shortly after, he showed off his talent again, at "Who's Number One," a yearly event put on by FloWrestling. Echemendia won the 65kg division with a 10-0 tech fall victory over the nation's No. 8 recruit, Cornell commit Joshua Saunders.

That's when Ohio State reached out. Or, at least, when the call went through.

"We reached out to him initially and didn't get a response," Ohio State head coach Tom Ryan

told BSB. "That's because, probably, our correspondence didn't get to him, what we thought was reaching out to him. I saw he was committed, I was like 'wow,' we didn't know if he was eligible to wrestle or not, we didn't know the scenario. So I reached out to Coach (Anthony) Leon at Sunnyside. He said he had committed to Iowa State."

After initial conversations yielded little to no return for the Buckeyes and with just a month until the Nov. 13 National Signing Day, Ryan knew he needed to act quickly to get involved with the Cuban. More importantly, he would need to get creative. Enter Casimiro Suarez.

An assistant with the Ohio State men's gymnastics team for the last eight seasons, Suarez is a well-known face around campus. He's gregarious and passionate and has a strong relationship with Ryan. More importantly, Suarez has something few on campus could claim: He's Cuban.

"We started the conversation, and I think what really broke the ice in the relationship was our men's assistant gymnastics coach. He's a Cuban," Ryan explained. "So I went to him, because I was trying to build trust. (Echemendia) was hearing a lot of things from a lot of people who had a stake in the game. But you go to a guy who had no stake in the game, he's from Cuba, he understands what this guy grew up with, I think he really opened the door to, 'Hey these guys here are going to take care of you.' So that was big for us, that relationship was really important, and we've got a really great relationship with Cas."

To start that connection, Ryan didn't do anything extravagant. He just gave the gymnastics coach who had left Cuba in 1996 a phone number, with a request to give Echemendia a call.

After Suarez introduced himself, the Buckeyes were in. Echemendia was familiar with the coach's success as a gymnast in Cuba and had grown up reading about him.

"Of course," Suarez told BSB, when asked if the two connected quickly. "Because I am from Cuba, and then I introduced to him my name. I said, 'I am Casimiro Suarez. I was a very famous gymnast in Cuba, one of the best in the country.'"

Suarez explained that Ryan had given him the phone number and that he wasn't looking to sell Ohio State, just that he wanted him to give advice to someone following a similar path to the one he had taken more than 20 years prior.

"I want to be honest with you on the situation that you are in now," Suarez told Echemendia over their first phone call, "that I think is not going to be right for you. You know I am from Cuba, I want to help you. I want to say the truth. I know how hard the process is."

For Suarez, this was more than a tie to his home country. While his Cuban heritage heavily inspires him and helped create the bond between the two, Suarez sees some of himself in Echemendia. He sees values that guide him.

"We have the appreciation for the people helping us and doing something for us," Suarez said of his Cuban heritage. He wanted to give the help to Echemendia that he didn't receive when he arrived in America.

"Now for that reason, as soon as I find out this about him," Suarez said of the chance to help Echemendia, "I went on to talk to him and to explain to him the opportunity that is open for him. Especially at this university. Because for me, this university made my life complete, made my dream come true. And it's a nice place when everybody involved in the athletic department wants to take care of you."

Aside from the Cuban connection, Suarez has a strong belief in the ability of Ohio State to put a young man like Echemendia on the right path, just as it did for him.

"I didn't only explain to him what the school offered for him," he said. "I talked to him, told him, 'It's your life. I want the best thing for you because you are a Cuban. And in this country, it's a wonderful county, but it's a hard country for the immigrant. You need to understand, I know every school is going to try to recruit you. All you need to think, what is going to be the best thing for you? What are your priorities? Your priority is what? To compete? To be doing wrestling? To be a champion? Or to also have education? To be with people that want to take care of you?'"

"Then I told him, 'Coach Ryan and his whole coaching staff, they love you. They want you.' And I told him that 'every school wants you too. Because you, you're amazing. You are a very good wrestling guy, but you need to see a little bit more far forward. What are you going to do after that? You're not going to be wrestling for all your life. That can be 10 more years, can be 20, but then the rest of your life is going to depend on what you are doing. You have the opportunity to start it in one of the best schools in the country, in the United States. And also, you've got people around here that are going to help you. I am going to be around you, and I'm going to help you.'"

Shortly after the call, Echemendia started to show more interest in Ohio State. Ryan took visits to Arizona to meet with him, where the two bonded and built trust over a shared love for hiking. Echemendia took a trip to Columbus on Oct. 26 to meet with his potential future teammates.

"So that opened the door," Ryan said of that first phone call. "Once he came here and saw the place and we got to know each other better – I've been flying out to Colorado Springs (where he is training) every week – I was allowed to see him three times, three contacts, I saw him three times, spent time with him, hiked with him, spent a lot of time with him, got to know him really well."

A few weeks after his visit to Columbus, Echemendia signed with Ohio State on Nov. 13, marking the end of his recruitment.

Echemendia is set to enroll in January, when, according to Ryan, he may actually be eligible to wrestle for the Buckeyes immediately.

"We know he's eligible, we just don't know how many years he has," Ryan said. "He just graduated from high school, so we're still working on that. The main thing was deciding what school to go to, and now it's our compliance office working with the NCAA. We're looking into a bunch of things right now. How many years does he have? I think he's a freshman. He's 20, he just turned 20, so the thought is, he's a freshman."

"He can redshirt, he can wrestle, but what's really important to him as well is citizenship. There's a lot of pieces, a lot of layers to this with him. It's not as simple as it is with an American recruit. We're still working through all that. Step one, before we can really dive into anything and get all the answers, you can't promise anything until he commits. Once he commits, now you can start to work with him on citizenship and green card, all the things that you can't use as enticement during the recruiting process. We're digging into it now."

On the citizenship question, Echemendia's legality in America will come from the Cuban Adjustment Act, which he has already applied for. The CAA states that once an immigrant from Cuba has been in America for one year and one day, he can qualify as a permanent resident. Echemendia reaches the requirements and will likely be approved. As for wrestling, as Ryan alludes to, there are still quite a few questions. Even if everything else goes perfectly, Echemendia would still need a weight to wrestle at, and his expected weight of 149 pounds is

currently filled by a potential All-American in redshirt freshman Sammy Sasso.

"I don't know," Ryan said, laughing, of where Echemendia would wrestle. "I know he's strong enough to wrestle heavyweight. That I know. I know he'll compete against anybody, anytime. He loves to compete. I know he has Olympic aspirations. He was a standout in Cuba, and they're great at wrestling."

"He was an elite-level wrestler in Cuba at the freestyle level. There will be a little transition on bottom I suppose, although his coach has said he didn't have any problems in high school against high school wrestlers on bottom, but he's a little more of a freestyle expert. So there will be a little transition, but we don't know yet where he's going to end up, what weight, what year he is, but we know this: We know we love him. I'm excited about him being a part of the program."

"I think he brings a lot of things, Echemendia. I think a lot of the top schools in the country wanted him, but I think what he brings, as much as anything – besides his talent level and his love of the sport, his toughness – he brings a gratitude. He's from an area where you're just not given much, so anything he gets he's so grateful for, and that's an attitude that we want to run rampant here."

That final sentiment is the strongest, from all parties involved. The wrestling program is delighted to have him aboard. Echemendia feels that he's found the place that fits him, as he told USA Wrestling that he "chose Ohio State because they are honest people." Suarez, however, put it as concisely as he could.

"It's great," he said of Echemendia choosing Ohio State. "I've got my own son starting over here in the university (his son is a freshman at Ohio State). It's a happy family. I feel like I am in Cuba. Over here, it's amazing. I don't have any problems. For that reason, I am happy. I am very happy. I'm happy now."

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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Buckeyes Conquer First Bout With Adversity

Woody Hayes used to say, "There is no team that can beat us, we can only beat ourselves." Those haunting words echoed through my mind in the third quarter of the Penn State game on Saturday. What could have been another dominating win for the Buckeyes ended up being too much of a nail-biter for about a quarter in the second half of play.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

It wasn't until Justin Fields hit Chris Olave with a 28-yard touchdown strike followed by a Justin Hilliard interception that Buckeye fans could take a deep sigh of relief that this game was in the books.

It would be the first time all season the team would truly face the "adversity test." The Buckeyes would beat another rival and a storied football program in Penn State once more. J.K. Dobbins would take another huge step toward breaking various rushing records, Justin Fields would again establish himself as one of the very best quarterbacks in the game, and Chase Young would surpass Vernon Gholston as the single-season sack leader in Ohio State football history.

It wasn't a perfect game for the Buckeyes but one they will take against a Nittany Lion team that is always talented, physical and tough to beat anywhere, any season.

Out Fast

Once again, the mighty Buckeyes came out of the gates like Secretariat. After the Ohio

State defense forced Penn State to punt on the opening drive, it took just five minutes for Justin Fields and Co. to drive the ball 91 yards, all on the ground, to give the Buckeyes a lead they wouldn't relinquish. This first Ohio State drive would amass more yards rushing than the 79 yards the Nittany Lion defense was accustomed to giving up in an entire game.

After a three-and-out by Penn State on the very next series, the Buckeyes would again move the football the length of the field for what appeared to be a Justin Fields touchdown, but the officials ruled he had fumbled the football just inches before getting into the end zone. Even though the Buckeye offense put another touchdown on the board in the second quarter, after what statistically looked like complete Ohio State domination, the score was only 14-0 at halftime.

Led by the return of Chase Young, the Buckeye defense shut down Sean Clifford and the Penn State offense the first two quarters of play. The Nittany Lion offense would put up only 11 total rushing yards the entire half.

The Buckeyes went into the locker room with a completely lopsided advantage in terms of total yards and time of possession.

Sloppy Second Half

The Buckeyes would take the opening possession of the second half and march 75 yards in 10 plays for another touchdown and a 21-0 lead. Penn State would mount a touchdown drive led by backup quarterback Will Levis when Clifford went down with an injury, but the Buckeyes still seemed to be in control of the game since the Penn State defense hadn't been able to stop the Buckeye offense all day.

But it was then the ghostly words of Woody swept across the Olentangy and into Ohio Stadium, "Fumbling is an act of God, a God darn fool!" That is exactly what happened. Dobbins

would fumble, giving up the ball on his own 12-yard line, and Penn State would score in just two plays, cutting the lead to 21-14.

On the very next series, Fields would fumble in Ohio State territory, leading to a Nittany Lions field goal and a score of Ohio State 21, Penn State 17. A day that had started out like an Ohio State domination of the guys from Happy Valley, looked like a Buckeye melt-down.

Even though Ohio State would put the Lions away with that final pass to Olave, it wasn't the efficient and nearly mistake-proof offensive performance the Buckeye faithful have been accustomed to in the 2019 season. Buckeye Nation has been spoiled this year by a team that will go down as one of very best ever in the proud heritage of Ohio State football.

The victory over Penn State did seal up the Big Ten East, a trip to the Big Ten Championship Game in Indianapolis, and a secure spot for another week in the College Football Playoff rankings. Woody Hayes demanded excellence, and Ryan Day and his team is living up to those expectations.

Next week in Ann Arbor, the Buckeyes need to take the next step toward a perfect season by eliminating mistakes and concentrating on ball security. Remembering "not beating ourselves" is the key to victory.

Chase Is Back In The Chase

The two-game suspension for Chase Young seemed to have knocked him out of any chance of winning the Heisman Trophy. Saturday, Chase showed everyone you can't keep a good man down.

Penn State, like other Ohio State opponents, found out Young is unstoppable. Chase plays the game with great intensity and confidence. He is as intimidating to the opposition as he looks. No matter what schemes offensive coordinators come up with to try to block Chase, they simply can't find a way to keep him out of their backfield.

Young's three sacks, career-high nine tackles, four tackles for loss and two forced fumbles against Penn State proved he was a man on a mission and that mission was accomplished. Chase has rightfully been praised by many football analysts and coaches as the most dominant

player in all of college football this season.

No opponent warrants more attention and more preparation than Young. Every defensive game plan has to account for his presence on the field, and that's what makes him special. Opposing offensive tackles know "to be the man, you must beat the man," and as yet nobody has been able to beat him. Chase Young is the very best player in the college game today and should not only be a finalist for the ultimate prize but should proudly hoist the Heisman Trophy above his head in New York City this December if the Downtown Athletic Club truly wants to reward the best collegiate player.

What to Expect

Ohio State and Michigan will face off for the 114th time next week up north. Even though the Buckeyes have won seven in a row, they know they will get the Wolverines' best shot. The Michigan team is playing their best football of the season coming off its fourth win in a row.

Anyone who has played in, coached in or closely follows the series realizes the Michigan game is a season in itself and the current records don't mean a thing. Of course, there is a ton of pressure on Jim Harbaugh because he has never beaten his archrivals. But don't think Ryan Day will not feel the pressure in keeping the win streak alive and in attempting to win his first pair of gold pants as a head coach.

As crucial as the game seems for both head coaches, it is still a players' game. As a coach, it's the easiest coaching week of the year. The players motivate themselves and will spend extra hours in the film room without being told. To truly understand the importance of this great rivalry, one simply has to watch the energy, enthusiasm and effort the players put forth on Nov. 30. Great players play their very best in this game, and this one should be no exception.

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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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.

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Even On Subpar Day, Bucks Still Big Ten's Best

It's easy to say now and it will sound like bragging, but it's true: There wasn't much worry heading into this year's Penn State game.

The Nittany Lions have been a good, solid team with an impressive defense. But the offense hasn't been good enough consistently enough to really instill fear into anyone. The question all week was how was Penn State going to score? I even went on social media and said, "Short of OSU turning the ball over or the Nittany Lions getting a defensive score, it will be hard to manufacture points."

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

And what happened? Ohio State gifted Penn State 10 points off a pair of fumbles. Add in the fumble by Justin Fields at the six-inch line and it's easy to see that the Buckeyes were in firm control for nearly the entire game. Were there a couple of anxious moments? Sure, because we've seen OSU-PSU games go sideways. But Penn State was struggling to average even three yards per play, and that's a formula for defeat nearly every time.

The Buckeyes weren't their sharpest – the previously mentioned three lost fumbles, barely over 50 percent conversions on third down for a team leading the country in that category, Fields taking too many sacks and not being at his best throwing the ball. Yet they still won comfortably, and the best thing is that they have now faced some adversity and come through it unscathed.

"That was the first time we were taking shots there, 14 straight points," Buckeyes coach Ryan Day said. "I'm not proud of that because we literally gave it to them. We handed them the ball. And we're going to get that fixed. But then to see the response of everybody involved, see the guys make some big plays, the big catch by (Chris) Olave on offense, and to see the defense impose their will – it was unbelievable to see their response."

On a day when Ohio State decided to attack Penn State's strength – stopping the run – two players stepped forward. Fields ran it more than he has in a game this season, 21 times, and picked up 68 yards. It wasn't always pretty, but it was almost always crucial. Many were on third down, and a couple even came when the Nittany Lions had committed to spying Fields, but he simply was too elusive in the open field. And then there was J.K. Dobbins.

The more I see this kid, the more I like him. I liked him a lot as a freshman, mostly because of his ability to stay on balance and make crazy, sideways jumps and jukes yet still

maintain top speed. That went away last year in favor of more heft, but it limited his explosiveness. The "old" Dobbins is back, and he was a man against Penn State – a workhorse with 36 totes, 157 yards and two touchdowns. He was at his best on stretch plays outside the tackles, where he could cut on a dime and explode upfield.

Ohio State ran for 229 yards against a team allowing less than 80 yards per contest. The first scoring drive covered 91 yards, all of it on the ground. That struck an immediate blow to the heart and psyche of the visitors, and even though Penn State adjusted and made the Buckeyes work for whatever they got the rest of the way, the die had already been cast.

Penn State isn't geared to play from behind, not with a quarterback who completes less than 60 percent of his passes. Maybe the best thing to happen to the Nittany Lions was the insertion of Will Levis at quarterback after Sean Clifford went out with an injury. Levis, 6-3 and 229 pounds, seemed to provide a spark, and was especially tough on the quarterback run. But the explosive passing game Penn State has had in previous games just wasn't there, as Jeff Okudah and Co. shut down the outside throws.

It was a team effort, though one player stood above the rest – and you know who it is. More about him a little later.

Impressive in his effort was Pete Werner, who broke up a couple of passes and was all over the place on the way to leading the team in tackles with 10. He made a couple of nifty stops in space and really looked at home grabbing Penn State ball carriers before they got going. I have never really noticed Werner that much, but he was very good against Penn State, and he's the kind of player that every defense needs – not an elite talent, but someone who knows his responsibility and who is where he should be.

Chasing The Heisman

It's likely that the two-game suspension thwarted any real chance Chase Young had of winning the Heisman.

But it was easy to see that Young was the best player on the field, for either team, on either side of the ball. I wish I was good enough at anything to walk around knowing I was simply better than everybody else, because that's what Young is. He has a quiet confidence that belies an ability that is elite, and to see how teams game plan around him – a defensive end – is nothing short of amazing.

Young's numbers were wondrous – nine tackles, four tackles for loss, three sacks and a pair of forced fumbles. You'd think that by now teams would have learned that you cannot single-block the guy, but there was Penn State, leaving the tight end and running back to the opposite side on its second series of the game. And what did Young do? Barrel in for a sack. And it wasn't the last time Penn State used one

man to block him, either.

Young also forced at least two false-start penalties and saved his biggest plays for third down. Two of his sacks came on third down, including one that pushed Penn State out of going for it and into settling for a field goal after the second fumble recovery. The other was on first down during Penn State's last gasp, where he forced a fumble that was ultimately recovered by Penn State, which was looking at second-and-18.

Fox Sports' Joel Klatt, the analyst to Gus Johnson's play-by-play call, said that Young is the most dominant player he has ever covered and said numerous times during the broadcast that he is the best player in college football.

Day echoes that sentiment.

"Oh my gosh, I just think Chase deserves to be in New York (for the Heisman ceremony)," the coach said. "How dominant of a player is Chase Young? The impact he has on a game is unbelievable."

There aren't too many players who make me watch them from snap to the finish of the play, but Young is one. I mentioned a few times during the game that it just looks so easy for him, that he is playing the game at a different speed than the rest of the players.

It was great to see him break the school's single-season sack record – with two games to go – and to just see him out on the field wreaking havoc. It would have been easy to shut it down after the suspension and start training for the NFL. But Young is a team guy, and he wants to be part of a championship. If he keeps playing at this level, are you going to be the one who tells him it's not possible?

Flipping The Page

Rivalry week is always fun, and it's nice to watch the Iron Bowl and Bedlam and the Egg Bowl and the Apple Cup, but nothing – nothing – compares to Ohio State-Michigan, especially when the stakes are high. While there isn't as much riding on it for the Wolverines – they can't play in the Big Ten title game nor make the CFP – you can bet Jim Harbaugh is telling his troops that this is their chance to ruin Ohio State's dreams, to saddle the Buckeyes with a demoralizing defeat that leaves them shaking their heads and wondering "what if?"

If people have been paying attention, they will know that Michigan has actually rebounded quite nicely from the loss at Penn State. A case can be made that the Wolverines played better than PSU in the second half and were it not for a dropped pass in the end zone, we could have had a different result. Michigan has found itself defensively, which isn't surprising given Don Brown's credentials, and has finally found an offensive identity – a team that prefers the power game but that can also hit you downfield. There at least seems to be some consistency with the offense, which means the Buckeyes could be in for a challenge. And that's when The Game is the most fun.

Here's a little secret: Last year's game was sort of boring.

Sure, it was great to win and put up big numbers, but I'm one of those people who revels in close contests, who likes when it's undecided in the final moments. That's why 2016 was so enthralling – overtime, big plays, chances seized and missed.

Michigan will be ready, and we have to assume the Buckeyes will be, too. Day has shown that he knows how to tap into the mental component of this team, and there have been very few occasions when they have looked unprepared or uninterested.

Will the Buckeyes win for the 17th time in the last 19 meetings? Or will Michigan continue its momentum and pull the upset? We will know very shortly.

Dandy Dozen

I was tempted to push Ohio State above LSU, but given the relatively underwhelming final score of the Buckeyes' win over Penn State, it can wait a week. The Buckeyes are better in nearly every efficiency metric, have a better opponents winning percentage (.609 to .563), and haven't played an FCS foe. But this was Ohio State's first good win in over a month, and it's my belief that LSU has a slightly better résumé. But I believe OSU would be favored on a neutral field and would win head to head. Maybe we get a chance to find out.

If OSU beats Michigan and whomever it plays in the Big Ten Championship Game, it will be ranked No. 1 by the committee. It may not take as long for me to put the Buckeyes at the top.

1. LSU (11-0)
2. Ohio State (11-0)
3. Clemson (11-0)
4. Georgia (10-1)
5. Utah (10-1)
6. Alabama (10-1)
7. Oklahoma (10-1)
8. Minnesota (10-1)
9. Florida (9-2)
10. Baylor (10-1)
11. Penn State (9-2)
12. Michigan (9-2)

Utah looks to be in pretty good position to make the CFP if it wins the Pac-12 championship. I know there is some cynicism out there, people thinking that the committee will find a way to shoehorn Alabama into something it has no business being in. I might agree in most years, but this year it is easy to see that the Tide simply don't belong – they have zero ranked wins and one of the worst opponent winning percentages in the country.

Are they one of the four "best" teams? Maybe. But it's telling that they lost to the best team they faced, at home, in a game that wasn't as close as the score indicated. If the committee does indeed shock people and take Alabama over Utah, then the entire system needs blown up.



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OSU Can't Let Chance At Greatness Slip Away

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Every year Bill Gue is gracious enough to invite me to a reception he hosts for the Atlanta area alumni attending the final home football game of each season. Every other year, of course, it is before The Game. This year it was in advance of the much-anticipated matchup with Penn State.

Bill allows me to say a few words at each of the gatherings, and I understand that I am just a warmup act for the heavy hitters to come, including '79 Michigan game hero Jim Laughlin, Ohio State historian Jack Park and BSB's own coach Bill Conley. For many years all of us were the opening acts for Earle Bruce, who would really get wound up, especially on nights before The Game. Of course all of us miss Earle, though the events seem a bit shorter now, as once Earle got wound up, there was no stopping him.

On this particular night, with the No. 8 Nittany Lions in town and Ohio State's archrival following quickly behind, I told the gathering how I believed that there was only one team in the Big Ten that could beat Ohio State and that was Ohio State itself. We got a little proof of that come the game, with Ohio State – after looking as if it could dominate Penn State like all the other opponents this season – losing three fumbles to allow the Lions to make a game of it, at least for the third quarter.

But defense wins championships, and the Buckeye defenders righted their half of the ship and stalled the Penn State upset bid while covering up for the offense's flurry of fumbling failings.

That was the other point I tried to make to the Atlanta gathering. You've got to close the deal, just as the Buckeyes did against PSU.

I noted that this version of the Buckeyes might be one of the greatest Ohio State teams of all time, but they have to close the deal. The team I offered up as a possible contender for the greatest Buckeye team was the famed 1968 team that, led by the Super Sophs, won the national championship. That team's greatness was cemented when they went out to the Rose Bowl and defeated O.J. Simpson and his USC Trojans. They closed the deal.

I pointed out that the 1969 and '70 teams would presumably have been better than even the '68 team but couldn't close the deal, ending each of those seasons with a loss – first the famed upset by the Wolverines in Bo Schembechler's first year in Ann Arbor and then the loss to Stanford in the Rose Bowl following the 1970 season. I was later corrected by Park, who said that the 1969 team might have been better than the champions of the year before, but the 1970 Buckeyes probably were not. I'm not one to argue with Jack Park!

I think even Jack would agree, however, that the current team has the talent, the coaching, the depth and the chemistry to be one of the greatest Ohio State teams of all time. But they have to close the deal. The win over Penn State was just one step in that quest.

Bring on the hated Wolverines.

And speaking of closing the deal, the Nittany Lions under James Franklin caused a bit of a stir when they upset Ohio State back in 2016. Many thought Franklin and his Lions had established themselves as Big Ten East and national contenders.

I have always maintained that game was a bit of a fluke, turning on two blocked kicks. I am not taking the blocks or the victory away from Penn State. But in the big picture, how many times are you going to block two kicks against Ohio State, which has been obsessed with special teams play dating back to the start of the Jim Tressel era?

In the three games between the two teams

since then, Penn State has challenged, but it has been unable to close the deal, falling by a combined two points in 2017 and 2018 before losing by 11 this time around.

Thanks again to the Atlanta group and Gue for his always gracious hospitality, and a special shout-out to Kirby Laughlin, Jim's dad, with whom I had the pleasure of sitting. He is a true gentleman and obviously quite proud of his son, who made a name for himself in the Atlanta area while playing with the Falcons. A shout-out, also, to Buckeye baseball great and Ohio State Hall of Famer Ray Shoup, a loyal BSB subscriber and friend who also attends each year.

It's A Man's Game

The Buckeyes proved from the get-go that they were ready and able to go toe to toe with the Nittany Lions. PSU had entered the game fourth in the country in rushing defense, giving up just 75.9 yards on the ground per game.

So did the Buckeyes try to steer away from that Lion strength? No. On their first possession they marched 91 yards, all on the ground, to take an early 7-0 lead, bettering Penn State's average ground yield by more than 15 yards on their first drive. "That's your best and we can beat you there," was the message the Buckeyes seemed to be sending.

In the end, Ohio State ground out 229 yards rushing for the game, with J.K. Dobbins carrying the mail a man-like 36 times for 157 yards. Justin Fields carried his end of the load as well, rushing 21 times for a net of 68, lowered by 28 negative sack yards.

As the game unfolded, I was impressed by the quarterback's toughness, and after the game, head coach Ryan Day seemed to agree.

"He's a warrior, I'm telling you. He's tough," Day said of his quarterback. "He ran the ball (well) today. He extended plays on third down. He's got the heart of a lion. I love that kid."

But warrior or not, oh those fumbles.

Turnovers gave the Lions that glimmer of hope in the third period, and maybe a brief scare to Buckeye fans.

But, as mentioned, defense wins championships, and talk about men. The Ohio State defense is loaded with them. While some may have been antsy, I never felt Penn State was going to score consistently against that defense unless the Buckeyes continued their sloppy ball-handling ways, creating short fields for the visitors.

Once Fields connected with Chris Olave to put the Buckeyes up by 11, I never felt the Lions would overcome a two-score deficit.

I thought the defense started the turn when they limited the Lions to just a field goal after Fields gave them the ball at the OSU 35. No surprise here. Chase Young was in on a sack to stall the drive and force the three-pointer. A PSU TD there and the complexion of the game might have really become different.

On their next drive, the Lions moved backwards, losing 7 yards. On Penn State's next possession, the Nittany Lions, now trailing 28-17, moved all the way to the OSU 27 when Justin Hilliard – let's hear it for this forgotten Buckeye – thwarted what was pretty much PSU's last gasp with an interception.

Ohio State really could have dominated this game. It did dominate it, with 417 yards

to 227, 34:15 of possession time to 25:45 and 27 first downs to just 15 for PSU. But Hilliard's pick was Ohio State's only takeaway, while Penn State got 17 points off Buckeye turnovers if you count the sure seven that Fields gave away while crossing the goal line. In the first half, when the Buckeyes could have blown the game open, Ohio State outgained Penn State 255-64, holding the Nittany Lions to just 11 yards rushing on 10 carries.

"It was gritty," Day said. "When you look at the game at halftime, looking at the statistics, we were 250 total yards offense (actually 255), maybe 60 yards total offense (64) on the other side. They had four first downs and it's only 14-0. Like, my God. You can get in those games and it can be so frustrating, but you just have to keep swinging, and it's not going to be perfect and that's life."

News flash to the Buckeyes: Michigan games often turn on turnovers. Hang onto the football!!! But I like Day's attitude heading into The Game after the mistake-plagued game with the Lions.

"We handed them the ball. We're going to get that fixed."

Can History Repeat Itself?

As mentioned previously, Ohio State's 1969 team, with the Super Sophs a year older, had the potential to be even better than the '68 national champions, and this year's Buckeye team has a chance to be ranked right up there with those great squads. Ironically, and as a warning to the Buckeyes, this is the 50th anniversary of Michigan's monumental upset of the defending national champions (though Jack Park told the Atlanta group that Schembechler never considered it an upset. He knew his team's ability).

As part of our Reprint Thursdays at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, we will be running reprints of Michigan Memories from some of the greatest of the Buckeye greats from that era, recalling that loss, as well as Ohio State's impressive, 50-14, win over the Wolverines the year before to earn the trip to Pasadena, Calif., for the Rose Bowl.

Look for memories from the likes of John Brockington, Rex Kern, Ron Maciejowski, Jim Otis, Jim Stillwagon, Jack Tatum and more. BuckeyeSports.com is free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers. If you are not already enjoying this service, look for simple signup instructions on page 4 of this issue. Don't forget that, due to BSB's print schedule, the primary coverage of the Big Ten Championship Game and, more importantly for recruiting junkies, primary coverage of the early national signing period will be online at BuckeyeSports.com.

Michigan Memories

In this issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, we present a new batch of Michigan Memories. This is always one of my favorite issues of the year, and as always we have a varied batch of Buckeyes sharing their thoughts and recollections of The Game.

Special thanks to Kendall Herron for his still sharp recollections of his one brush with the Wolverines back in 1944. And longtime BSB supporter Ron Cook also took the time to share with us his experiences with That Team Up North, along with Thad Jemison, Derek Isaman, A.J. Hawk and Ted Ginn Jr.

Cook demonstrated his far-superior computer skills than mine when he was able to scan and email us a classic picture from Collier's magazine with Cook blocking for Heisman Trophy winner Hop Cassady when he threw a halfback pass, something that, according to Cook, Cassady rarely did.

In the nearly 30 years we have been doing Michigan Memories, Jemison may have been the first Buckeye to say that the Ohio State-Michigan game might be overhyped, leading to the teams being too tight.

"I think what happened, to be honest, I think the coaches got tight," Jemison explained. "You know they made the game bigger than it was, and they got tight. Don't get me wrong, Michigan was good and we were good, but I think on both sides, they coach differently in those games, probably because of the rivalry, and made it bigger than it was."

"I think if you give too much credence to who you're playing, you forget what you're supposed to be doing, and then of course the mistakes happen, and you just get tighter."

I admire Jemison's candor, and I think this was certainly the case in the John Cooper years in Columbus and the same may be going on in Ann Arbor right now.

But Hawk does a nice job of summing up what the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry means to both the teams and their fans.

"No matter what really happens the rest of that year, good or bad, it doesn't really matter that much if you can find a way to beat Michigan," Hawk said. "If you go undefeated but then you lose your last game to Michigan, that can still put a damper on the whole season and everything you did. Likewise, if you're not playing that great and don't have as many wins as you want, and then you go and you beat Michigan, especially a game like that (a Buckeye upset in 2004), where they were the favorites in it, it can really help you out."

This statement could have been made by players from either team. Just remember that this should serve as a warning to this year's Buckeyes. There is no Big Ten Championship Game or CFP playoff berth on the line for the Wolverines, the Big Ten preseason favorites this year. The best way they can salvage their season and maybe even save Jim Harbaugh's job (if that's what they want to do) is to derail the No. 2-ranked Buckeyes.

We Are Family

One of the reasons I feel confident that this year's team can make a run at the playoffs and national crown is the obvious chemistry this club has. I worked closely with members of the 1960 Ohio State basketball, 1966 baseball and 1968 football national champions while helping them with reunions, and one thing that was common to all three was their obvious chemistry.

Fifth-year senior tackle Branden Bowen summed up his feelings about his teammates and team elsewhere in this issue.

"It's been amazing, I couldn't have dreamed of a better senior year so far," Bowen said. "I've never been around a group of guys that have been so fun to be around. I mean on the field, some people can see it, but some people can't. A lot of the time we're smiling, we're laughing, we're having fun no matter what's happening."

"We never fight, we talk things through, and it's been fun to get around those guys and develop that sense of brotherhood that even I've never felt through my five years here."

You can see it all the way from C Deck, Branden.



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