

Uncharted Territory



ANDREW LIND

WAITING GAME – Despite welcoming 14 early enrollees, including five-star wide receiver Julian Fleming (4), Ohio State head coach Ryan Day will be unable to conduct spring practice until at least April 6 amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Ohio State's Spring Practice Impacted By Coronavirus

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ryan Day has been through a lot during his tenure as offensive coordinator or head coach at Ohio State.

He's navigated numerous quarterback battles, filled in for and replaced one of the greatest college football coaches of all time, and led the Buckeyes to a Big Ten title and the College Football Playoff in his first season at the helm. But this spring, he faces a unique and unprecedented challenge – leading the program through a pandemic.

Ohio State held just three practices in early March before the coronavirus outbreak forced the Big Ten to suspend all organized team activities through at least April 6. The

Buckeyes also canceled their annual spring game, scheduled for April 11, and closed all athletic facilities in an attempt to help prevent the spread of the virus leading to respiratory disease.

It's unclear how long it will be before the team is allowed to return to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center for workouts or if they will be able to conduct another spring practice. Athletic director Gene Smith indicated the WHAC and other facilities would need to be "disease-bombed," i.e. disinfected and fumigated. But every program in the country is dealing with the same situation.

And when things get back to normal, Smith is confident Day and his staff will have the team prepared for the Sept. 5 season opener against Bowling Green – even if getting

**BSB'S 2020
SPRING
PREVIEW**

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Buckeyes Can Only Wonder What Might Have Been

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

There have been instances throughout the history of Ohio State athletics of "what if" situations that leave fans pondering what the outcome would have been under different circumstances.

What if wide receiver Chris Olave hadn't broken his route and instead caught a touchdown pass from quarterback Justin Fields in the waning seconds of the College Football Playoff semifinal against Clemson on Dec. 28? Maybe the Buckeyes would have gone on to win the national title.

What if the 2012 football team, the first coached by Urban Meyer, hadn't played under a school-imposed postseason ban for violations under former coach Jim Tressel? OSU went 12-0 that season but never had a chance to compete for the Big Ten or national championships.

There certainly have been others significant examples over the years, but a new entry that would rank near the top was added March 12 when the NCAA men's basketball tournament was canceled before it could even start because of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic that caused an almost universal suspension or cancellation of sporting events.

There would be no third straight NCAA Tournament for third-year coach Chris Holtmann. No opportunity to advance past the second round, where Ohio State had been knocked out the past two seasons.

"You think about the schools that are in it the first time or the first time in a while, Rutgers in our league was going to be in the tournament for the first time in a while," Holtmann said. "You think about all the small schools, whether it's a Robert Morris that clinched their berth. You'd love to be able to see those teams play in what I think is the most suspenseful, greatest sporting event around."

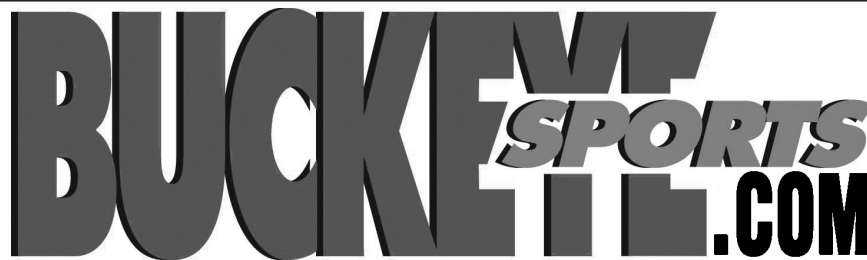
There was no chance to win the Big Ten tournament, which had been scuttled hours before the NCAA's blanket stoppage that covered all winter and spring cham-



Chris Holtmann

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From The Message Board

Following the release of Ohio State's spring roster, which included some notable jersey number changes, Buckeye Sports Bulletin asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as staff members, which jersey number they believe is the most notable or significant in program history.

Here are some of the responses:

"Short list for No. 45. Archie Griffin and the Big Kat (Andy Katzenmoyer)."

– **mrbigbux**

"I was gonna go with No. 7 myself, mainly for Chris Gamble and Ted Ginn."

– **Tiffin Buckeye**

"How about hard hitting No. 36? Chris Spielman, Tom Cousineau and Marcus Marek."

– **Mcarr**

"I'm going to have to agree with No. 2. The list is just too extensive to ignore, with so many memorable players that make the number so special, at least to me with a lot of the players coming in recent memory. The duo of Dobbins and Young has to go down as one of the best for a number in the program's history (Justin Fields and Jeff Okudah at No. 1 ain't bad, either)."

– **Wyatt Crosher, BSB**

"My answer is No. 2. Cris Carter, Mike Doss, Malcolm Jenkins, Terrelle Pryor, Marshon Lattimore, Chase Young and J.K. Dobbins, with Chris Olave possibly adding to the legacy in the coming years. I would have said No. 7 before last year, though, with Cornelius Greene, Joe Germaine, Joey Galloway, Chris Gamble, Ted Ginn and Dwayne Haskins."

– **Andrew Lind, BSB**

"I'll add in No. 10 for Troy Smith, Rex Kern, Art Schlichter and Ryan Shazier."

– **Patrick Mayhorn, BSB**

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1985

Two things happened on the night of March 1.

First, the Ohio State women's basketball team drew 9,753 people to St. John Arena, and secondly, the Lady Bucks smashed their nearest rival in the Big Ten, Iowa, 64-41.

The win gave the nationally seventh-ranked Lady Bucks (24-2) 16 straight wins on the season and 23 straight Big Ten wins going back three years. In three years of women's round-robin play in the Big Ten, Ohio State had never lost a conference game at home.

30 Years Ago – 1990

The Ohio State men's basketball team's NCAA Tournament hopes survived a crucial road test at Northwestern March 3 as the Buckeyes prevailed 95-86 at Welsh-Ryan Arena.

Junior center Perry Carter led the Buckeyes (15-11, 9-7) with 21 points, 14 rebounds and four blocked shots, while freshman guard Alex Davis came off the bench and ended a five-game slump with a 20-point showing.

It was a return to form for Davis, who had averaged 12.2 points in Ohio State's first 20 games but scored just 14 points in his last five games combined.

"I'm really pleased for Alex," said OSU head coach Randy Ayers. "He's been working a little harder and doing some extra shooting. Today, he made some shots that kept up in the game down the stretch."

25 Years Ago – 1995

When the losses were mounting in a school-record fashion for the Ohio State men's basketball team, Ayers tried to find sanity through simplicity.

"The last month we've tried to do a lot more teaching and a lot more fundamental effort type drills, so from that standpoint it's been fun because it's been a lot like October and November," Ayers said during one of the final practices of the season.

"But, you know, you always want to win, and I'm going to be honest with you, it's been extremely frustrating."

The frustration continued in the season capper March 11. OSU went scoreless for the first 4:55 of play and fell 82-63 to Big Ten rival Illinois. The loss dropped the Buckeyes to 6-22, giving them the most losses and worst winning percentage (.214) in school history.

OSU's 16 league losses, compared to just two wins, tied for the most in school history.

20 Years Ago – 2000

Ohio State had spent a significant portion of its season falling into the victim-of-its-own-success category. An NCAA Final Four berth the year prior paired with several key contributors returning got the expectation machine pumping. The Buckeyes were winning but weren't impressing in the way that had been expected.

But OSU fooled its followers a bit in the season, because as fans and prognosticators looked forward to the NCAA Tournament and worried about those close outcomes, the Buckeyes put the finishing touches on two workmanlike wins on the road in the final week of the regular season to claim a share of the Big Ten championship.

The Buckeyes (22-5, 13-3) disposed of Penn State by six March 1 and Minnesota by 10 March 4 to split the title with Michigan State, which had looked more dominant but won the same share of the title despite it.

15 Years Ago – 2005

Ohio State hired Gene Smith, director of athletics at Arizona State, to the same position in Columbus.

"I'm excited to be here," the 49-year-old Cleveland native said at his formal introduction March 5. "I'm excited to be a Buckeye. It's great to be home."

One day later, Smith and many across the nation watched Ohio State ruin Illinois' bid for a perfect men's basketball regular season with a thrilling 65-64 upset of the top-ranked Fighting Illini. Senior Matt Sylvester's late three-pointer gave the Buckeyes the win.

"It feels like a dream," Sylvester said afterward. "I feel like I'm going to wake up all of a sudden and it's all going to be over."

10 Years Ago – 2010

Thad Matta kicked off Ohio State's run in the Big Dance by performing a little one of his own.

His top-seeded Buckeyes had just completed a three-game run through the Big Ten tournament and captured the league's automatic postseason bid. The Buckeyes were already assured of a high NCAA seed, but the victory removed any doubt about whether OSU was one of the best teams in college basketball. While on a makeshift stage to receive the tournament trophy,

Matta performed a jig before accepting the hardware.

For its performance, Ohio State was awarded a two seed in that upcoming tournament and a trip to Milwaukee to take on UC Santa Barbara.

"We're excited," junior center Dallas Lauderdale said. "We got the two seed and we've got Santa Barbara. We're getting excited. We're excited to go to Wisconsin."

Five Years Ago – 2015

Ohio State women's hockey head coach Nate Handrahan resigned March 9 in lieu of termination after an Ohio State report accused him of inappropriate comments and sexual innuendo, unprofessional and intimidating conduct, and retaliation.

The investigation was launched after a player on the team told a faculty member that Handrahan made sexually explicit comments to many of the girls on the team, at which point the faculty member submitted an anonymous complaint.

After interviewing 11 student-athletes, Ohio State was able to compile multiple instances of "unwanted and inappropriate" comments by Handrahan, 37, toward student-athletes, including jokes about their sex lives and a comment that players needed to show more aggression by "getting horny for the puck."

One Year Ago – 2019

Urban Meyer was no longer Ohio State's head coach, but the former leader of the Buckeyes would be back around college football for the 2019 season. Meyer, who had retired after the Rose Bowl, was hired by Fox as a college football studio analyst.

Fox announced that it would be bringing on Meyer and former Southern California running back Reggie Bush (2003-05) for a Saturday morning pregame show to air at 11 a.m. on network television in the fall.

Fox confirmed the one-hour show, set to start in week one of the college football season.

"With a head coach that won three national titles in 10 years, two of the most successful college quarterbacks (Matt Leinart and Brady Quinn) in recent memory and one of the sport's most electric running backs, our new college football pregame show has the game covered from all angles," said Fox Sports National Networks president Mark Silverman.

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OPINION

Lack Of Sports Underscores Their Importance

My father, God rest his soul, was the smartest man I have ever met. And that wasn't just because he was a schoolteacher by trade. My dad was a salt-of-the-earth man, raised by salt-of-the-earth parents, who had a common-sense approach to even the most complex of problems.

My dad also had a way of putting most things into simple perspective.

One day, when I brought home a newspaper and asked him to read a column of which I was particularly proud, he quickly obliged. After reading the column, he nodded and then, without saying a word, turned the page.

"Well?" I asked after a couple of minutes. "What did you think?"

He folded the newspaper, put it in his lap and replied, "It was good."

"Good? That's it? Just good?"

I then proceeded to pontificate on the importance of good sports journalism and how this particular column would stimulate thought, introspection and discussion among my readers – how the lessons I enumerated and pointed out so carefully might parallel life itself and contribute to a greater good amongst my fellow man.

My dad looked at me as he sometimes did when his youngest son got a little too full of himself, breathed a small sigh, and said, "We're talking about sports here. It's nothing more than entertainment. It's like the movies or television. It's a pleasant little diversion – no more, no less."

With that, he got up from his chair and walked away, leaving me with my mouth agape in wonderment about how my father could be so out of touch with reality. In time, of course, I realized he was right.

I have had the great fortune to spend most of my life as a chronicler of games – something Webster describes as "an activity engaged in for diversion or amusement" – as well as the people who play those games. But ever since that encounter with my father all those many years ago, I try not to take myself or what I do too seriously.

That said, I also realize the importance of the role that sports plays in the lives of people as well as the void those people feel when sports are taken away.

In the immediate wake of the cancellation of Ohio high school winter sports tournaments as well as the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments, stories were plentiful regarding players whose prep or college careers were going to abruptly end with no chance to experience what the marketing wizards of March Madness have always called "One Shining Moment."

No blowouts, no buzzer-beaters, no Cinderellas. No glorious jubilation from the winners, no bitter tears from the ones who fall just short.

Then again, who really cares? It's just entertainment, right?

Regarding the universal shutdown of sports in the country, I have had some people ask me, "What does it matter?"

Ask that question to my friends in Dayton, who have now received a double gut-punch over the past eight months. Led by dunking machine Obi Toppin, the third-ranked Flyers had a 29-2 record, were on a 20-game winning streak, and seemed almost a lock to make this year's Final Four for the first time since finishing as tournament runners-up in 1967. What a needed catharsis that would have been for a city still grieving for the victims of a mass shooting in August in its popular downtown Oregon District.

Who cares, indeed.

Perhaps sports is as Webster says – just

a pleasant "diversion or amusement." But I would contend that we, as a society in 2020, need diversion and amusement. And the more pleasant the diversion and amusement, the better.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

As I write this, there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel in which we suddenly find ourselves. So, while we adjust to life without sports, and wonder how long that adjustment will last, maybe it's finally time to focus upon what brings us together – Ohio State athletics, as an example – rather than what divides us.

Other Pleasant Diversions

In the temporary absence of live sports available to watch, I compiled a list (in no particular order) of my favorite sports movies. If there are any on this list you haven't seen, check them out. For the ones you have seen, they're worth watching again.

- "The Greatest Game Ever Played" (2005) – The main story is about 20-year-old golfer Francis Ouimet winning the 1913 U.S. Open as an amateur. But the backstories are plentiful, and there is a scene near the end of the movie with Ouimet and his no-nonsense father that ... well, let's just say you might want to have a tissue or two on hand. Fun fact: The film was directed by actor Bill Paxton.

- "A League Of Their Own" (1992) – Directed by Penny Marshall, it's a love letter to the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that played from 1943 to 1954. Unlike many baseball movies, it is loaded with fully developed characters, including drunken manager Jimmy Dugan, played by Tom Hanks, who utters one of the most famous movie lines in history: "There's no crying in baseball."

- "Caddyshack" (1980) – Perhaps the most quotable sports movie in history. Chevy Chase was supposed to be the star, but the improvisation of Bill Murray and Rodney Dangerfield steals the show while Ted Knight, who tried his best to play it straight, makes for the perfect comic foil.

- "Major League" (1989) – Almost as many quotable lines as "Caddyshack." Yeah, it has a bunch of cartoonish characters and some of the lamest crowd shots in the history of sports cinema. But it has gravel-voiced James Gammon as manager Lou Brown and Bob Uecker essentially playing Bob Uecker. It doesn't get much better than that.

- "Rudy" (1993) – I know, I know. It's predictable, over-the-top sappy in spots, and it glorifies Notre Dame football. But it's the classic underdog story, and that stuff always resonates with me. Another plus for the movie is its musical score, provided by Jerry Goldsmith, the same guy who scored such other films as "Patton" and most of the original "Star Trek" and "Star Trek: The Next Generation" series.

- "Cinderella Man" (2005) – Another underdog story although this one is a riches-to-rags-back-to-riches type story. The acting is brilliant, and even though director Ron Howard took huge liberties with the characters, the final heavyweight championship fight keeps you on the edge of your seat.

- "Seabiscuit" (2003) – The magnificent book written by Laura Hillenbrand was turned into an equally magnificent movie about a grieving owner, an eccentric trainer, a broken-down jockey and an ill-tempered horse,

and how that horse somehow became a hero during the Great Depression. Also, if you like the background music in "Seabiscuit," thank Goldsmith. He scored this one, too.

- "Rocky" (1976) – I'm sure everyone has their favorite from the franchise, but I went with the original since it was fresh at the time and introduced the world to everybody's favorite palooka. Special dispensation to "Rocky III" because Mr. T as Clubber Lang is provided with one of the franchise's best lines. Asked for a prediction regarding his upcoming fight with Rocky, Lang looks directly into the camera and replies, "Prediction? Pain."

- "Creed" (2015) – I was totally prepared to hate this movie when it came out, mostly because I thought every last drop had been squeezed from the "Rocky" franchise. Boy, was I wrong. It's great storytelling by writer/director Ryan Coogler, and the acting is fresh and faithful to the original backstory. And as unbelievable as this might sound, the fact that Sylvester Stallone didn't win an Oscar for best supporting actor is a travesty. Go back and watch when Rocky is told he has cancer. No words are spoken by the character, but we understand the devastation of the diagnosis. To witness that snippet of raw emotion is one of the reasons I go to the movies in the first place.

- "Field Of Dreams" (1989) – With full understanding of its many flaws, this is far and away the best of Kevin Costner's baseball trilogy that includes the enjoyable-but-uneven "Bull Durham" and the insufferable "For Love of the Game." If you don't know the premise by now, I won't spoil it for you. I'll just sum it up this way: Dads and baseball. Tough to improve on that.

- "Hoosiers" (1986) – Perhaps the perfect sports movie. It's supposed to be a story about overachieving underdogs, but at the core, it's a story of redemption. Gene Hackman is great, but Dennis Hopper is even greater in a supporting role. (Extra credit if you know Shooter's real first name is Wilbur.) One reviewer wrote, "This film's very lack of surprise and sophistication accounts for a lot of its considerable charm." Couldn't have said it any better myself. One more note: Goldsmith also provided the score for "Hoosiers."

Not Making The Cut

No doubt, you have noticed some iconic sports films that are missing from my list. That is because cinematic art, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

I confess that I liked "The Pride of the Yankees" (1942) the first few times I watched it, but after several viewings, and having read several Lou Gehrig biographies, I can't get past the fact that the film is such a sanitized version of Gehrig's life. Add a stiff and stilted performance from a 41-year-old Gary Cooper, and it defies logic how "Pride" could have garnered 11 Oscar nominations.

The same holds true for "The Natural" (1984), which received four Academy Award nominations. Robert Redford is one of my favorite actors, and I would watch Robert Duvall read the back of a cereal box, but this movie takes so long to get to the climax (which is completely different from the book from which it was adapted) that I no longer care whether Roy Hobbs hits a home run or strikes out.

Additionally, I don't care for movies featuring an unsympathetic main character who needs to be hit in the back of the head with a shovel. Therefore, you won't find films such as "Tin Cup," "Cobb," "Foxcatcher," "For Love of the Game" or "Raging Bull" anywhere on my list.



Teague Out With Injury

Presumed starting running back Master Teague is going to be out indefinitely following an injury sustained in Ohio State's opening spring practice on March 2, though the injury wasn't confirmed until a day later. Reports have indicated that the injury is to his Achilles, though Ohio State has not officially confirmed that.

The injury is a crucial one for a running backs room that head coach Ryan Day expressed concern about prior to the news of Teague's injury.

"We're one injury away from a little bit of a crisis right now, but in the end, when it comes to September, we're going to be OK," Day said.

Teague served as J.K. Dobbins' primary backup in 2019 and was expected to step into a major role in 2020 as a sophomore with Dobbins off to the NFL. Teague carried the ball 135 times for 789 yards and four scores. He finished seventh in the Big Ten in total yards, as the lone back in the top 14.

His 5.8 yards per carry put him at fifth in that category, behind Maryland's Javon Leake and Penn State's Journey Brown, both of whom carried the ball fewer times than Teague, along with Dobbins and Wisconsin's Jonathan Taylor.

There's no official timeline on Teague's return, though if the injury is to his

Achilles, the outlook is not encouraging. Ohio State saw two linebackers – Justin Hilliard and Tuf Borland – suffer Achilles injuries in the past two springs. Both missed nearly the entire spring and summer, only to return just before the season. Both struggled with lateral movement even when healthy.

"I would think so," offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson said on if he thinks that Teague will return for the season. "But time will tell. I think the worst thing you can do, and for years I've said, when someone says it's a six-month injury, what happens if some guys just heal slower? And then all of a sudden, that kid or that family thinks he's behind. It's a two-week ankle injury and all of a sudden it takes four. Some guys just heal faster. Their bodies recover faster. Sometimes they get treatment better than others. Sometimes the injury's a little bit worse than you think."

If Ohio State does have to replace Teague for an extended period of time, Wilson has some ideas for how to do that, starting with packages for both senior wide receiver/running back Demario McCall and sophomore tight end/running back Mitch Rossi.

"We've wanted to expand a package for Demario that never has really taken off," Wilson said March 4. "I've actually wanted to do that with Mitch. I had a kid at Oklahoma, a couple of them, that were kind of fullbacks with Demarco Murray and all of a sudden, we moved Demarco out and the fullback was a running back, and then the next play was two-back. So there's a role for Mitch maybe. This gives Mitch an opportunity to play in the backfield a little bit, but he's still a tight end. It gives Demario (an opportunity to play)."

This would also give Ohio State the chance to take some pressure off of the new leader in the clubhouse for the starting job, redshirt freshman Steele Chambers.

"We'll just work through the reps," Wilson said. "The real deal is we just don't need to load up Steele Chambers."

While the news certainly isn't good for Ohio State, which now has just one fully healthy true running back on the roster in Chambers (Marcus Crowley is still recovering from an ACL tear, and freshman

April 4 Issue Of BSB Cancelled For Lack Of Content

With the bulk of the Ohio State sports activities on hold, Buckeye Sports Bulletin publisher Frank Moskowitz has announced that BSB will not be publishing the paper scheduled to be mailed on March 31, with a cover date of April 4. BSB is scheduled to return with the April 18 issue, scheduled to be mailed on April 14.

We suggest you keep up with any Buckeye activity at our website, BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB subscribers. The BSB staff will be ramping up their electronic recruiting coverage, coming up with interesting and entertaining story ideas, and adding more reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives to fill the Buckeye information void. Of course we will also be reporting on any changes in the Ohio State athletics situation.

Additionally, staff members will be manning the BuckeyeSports.com Forum, interacting with subscribers as we all get through this situation together.

If you are not already taking advantage of BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's 24/7 website, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send back simple instructions on how to access the site. Don't forget, subscriptions@buckeyesports.com is our email address, not the website. We will send you directions on how to access the site.

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

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

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

2020 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time (ET)	TV	2019 Record
Sept. 5	BOWLING GREEN	TBA	TBA	3-9 (2-6 Mid-American)
Sept. 12	at Oregon*	TBA	TBA	12-2 (8-1 Pac-12)
Sept. 19	BUFFALO*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-3 Mid-American)
Sept. 26	RUTGERS	TBA	TBA	2-10 (0-9 Big Ten)
Oct. 10	IOWA*	TBA	TBA	10-3 (6-3 Big Ten)
Oct. 17	at Michigan State*	TBA	TBA	7-6 (4-5 Big Ten)
Oct. 24	at Penn State*	TBA	TBA	11-2 (7-2 Big Ten)
Oct. 31	NEBRASKA	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-6 Big Ten)
Nov. 7	INDIANA*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-4 Big Ten)
Nov. 14	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	3-9 (1-8 Big Ten)
Nov. 21	at Illinois*	TBA	TBA	6-7 (4-5 Big Ten)
Nov. 28	MICHIGAN*	TBA	TBA	9-4 (6-3 Big Ten)
Dec. 5	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	TBA	

* 2019 bowl team

** at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

Wilson also sees some positives and the chance to grow.

"There's always going to be more guys up there than you can block," Wilson said of opposing defenses. "Justin (Fields) is going to throw it well, we've got good receivers, but they're going to have more guys than you can block. So you have to have backs that have the ability to make guys miss and take three and get five," Wilson said. "And so as we go through, (running backs coach Tony) Alford will do a phenomenal job. We're a little thin right now, but we'll be healthy, we'll be dynamic, we'll also have a chance to maybe evolve and have a few more tools in the toolbox as we go through spring.

"Necessity is sometimes the mother of learning. We'll have a chance out of necessity to learn and grow in this offense, develop some guys, and we'll be all right."

He also thinks that Teague can use this time to get some mental reps, though that may be a bit more difficult with Ohio State's spring practices canceled.

"As Master gets healthy, how can he cheat the system of getting healthy and also getting better?" Wilson said. "You want to become a better ball carrier without running the ball. You want to catch the ball better without running routes. So how do you cheat the system? You're growing mentally, you're growing the skills that you can. Maybe you're limited, but you can do a bunch of catching drills, whatever. So you have to cheat the system, because as a young player, he needs to get better, and that's what everyone on the team is doing right now."

Assistant Coaches Receive Pay Raises

Ohio State's football staff is going to be paid as one of the nation's best in 2020, according to a release from the university on March 9 announcing pay raises for returning coaches and salaries for new hires.

Leading the way is new defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs, entering his second stint in Columbus. Coombs is set to make \$1.4 million in 2020, the second-highest assistant salary in school history behind only Greg Schiano's 2018 figure of \$1.5 million. This marks a \$900,000 raise for Coombs from his last year in Columbus in 2017, when he was serving as a defensive backs coach.

Three other coaches join Coombs above the million-dollar mark, which puts Ohio State in a league of its own in the NCAA with regard to coaching salaries. Coombs' counterpart on the offensive side of the ball, Wilson, is going to be making \$1.2 million, a \$250,000 increase from 2019.

Back to the defense, co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison and defensive line coach Larry Johnson are both going to be making \$1.133 million, up from \$1.1 million in 2019 for Mattison and \$900,000 for Johnson.

Behind the top earners are offensive line coach Greg Studrawa, up \$100,000 from 2019 to \$700,000; running backs coach Tony Alford, up \$18,000 to \$618,000; wideouts coach Brian Hartline, up \$190,000 to \$550,000; linebackers coach Al Washington, up \$15,000 to \$515,000; special teams coordinator Matt Barnes, up \$100,000 to \$450,000; and quarter-



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backs coach Corey Dennis, who will be making \$300,000. Strength and coordinating director Mickey Marotti will make \$801,150.

"I couldn't have been more impressed with the performance of our coaching staff under the direction of Ryan Day in 2019," Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said in a statement. "What they accomplished both on the field and in the way they led and mentored our student-athletes was exemplary. We look forward to much of the same in 2020."

The assistants in total will be making almost exactly \$8 million in 2020, up \$750,000 from 2019. That total was enough for third last season, behind Alabama and Clemson, and the increases this season may give Ohio State the edge.

This comes on the heels of Day's recent extension and pay raise, which will keep him in Columbus through 2026 and see him making \$5.375 million in 2020.

"I think the person and the people that were the most excited about that were my kids, because they knew that they weren't going to be the new kid in school for a long time again, and that's the idea, is that we're here for a long time," Day said when asked about his new contract. "And I certainly couldn't be more grateful for the Board of Trustees, President Drake and obviously Gene Smith, who I owe everything to him, and obviously Urban Meyer, to be in this position, because that's a big deal."

"That changes our life as a family, and we don't take that lightly. But the number one thing that we're the most excited about as a family is we get to be in Columbus again for hopefully the next seven to 10 years, hopefully 20 years. We want to be here as long as we can. We love it here. The kids love the school system. They have a set of friends. Nina loves it here. And that's what's most exciting about this."

Bonuses for the staff remain the same this season.

A Big Ten East championship is worth 8.5 percent of a coach's salary; Big Ten Championship Game win is worth 4.25 percent; New Year's Six bowl berth is worth 17 percent; a non-CFP bowl game and at least nine wins is worth 4.25 per-

cent; a College Football Playoff berth is worth 21.25 percent; and a national championship berth is worth 25.5 percent.

All but three of the contracts – Alford's, Mattison's and Washington's – expire in 2022. Those three are up in 2021. Any coach who leaves Ohio State prior to the end of his contract will owe Ohio State 30 percent of his base salary, though that buyout is waived if he becomes a head coach.

Browning Eyeing Move Outside

With Pete Werner entrenched at the other outside linebacker spot and Tuf Borland filling the middle, the opening in the linebacker group is at Malik Harrison's weakside linebacker spot. Through early spring practices, the likely answer to fill that role appeared to be a familiar face: senior Baron Browning.

Browning came to Ohio State as a five-star recruit at the outside linebacker spot but was moved inside out of necessity as

a freshman and never found an opening to return to his natural position. With Harrison gone, and no other obvious replacement on the roster, Browning said that he's spending the majority of his time outside.

"I haven't really been in that inside," Browning said on March 4. "I've been kind of focusing on that outside role now."

While the shift to the outside is going to make for a slight change in Browning's approach to the game, he says that he's comfortable in the move.

"I feel like that's more my natural position I played in high school, so it's something I feel comfortable doing and I'm excited for it," Browning said.

He also thinks that playing as an attacker on the edge suits his style better than serving as the commander in the middle of the defense.

"It's just a different role, I feel like, being outside vs. the inside," Browning said. "I feel like when you're an inside, you've got to kind of make sure every-

body's in line. You get everybody set. You're the foundation of the defense. And outside, I feel like you're in your own world. They're just two different worlds. I feel like it's a big difference when you go outside to in or inside to out. It's just a big change, something we've got to get used to and just learn."

Browning also told reporters that he's taken some reps as an edge rusher off the line, which Ohio State experimented with late in the 2019 season, though he isn't being considered for a full-time move there.

"We'll definitely see," Browning said of playing on the edge. "I'm just not sure yet. I'm just working on it so when it comes time, I'll be ready."

Browning recorded 43 tackles for the Buckeyes as a junior, including 10 for a loss, splitting time as a middle linebacker and outside linebacker, primarily as the first player off the bench in pass-rushing

Continued On Page 6



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OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

situations. He also racked up five sacks and two quarterback hurries.

OSU Schedules Ball State, UConn

Ohio State announced a pair of additions to its future schedules for 2025 and 2026 on March 3.

The Buckeyes will host UConn, marking the first matchup between the two schools and completing the 2025 nonconference schedule. Ohio State already had home bouts with Texas and Washington on the docket for 2025.

Ohio State will pay the Huskies \$1.95 million, rather than making a return trip to play in Connecticut, according to a release.

The home bout with Ball State in 2026 will also be a first matchup between the two schools and gives Ohio State its second nonconference game for the season, along with a road trip to Texas.

The payout for Ball State will likely hit a similar figure, given that nearly \$2 million has been the going rate for buy-games for several years, but no official total has been released by either school.

Fields Named Sullivan Semifinalist

Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields was named one of 33 semifinalists for

the Amateur Athletic Union's James E. Sullivan award which is given to "the outstanding amateur athlete whose outstanding athletic accomplishments are complemented by qualities of leadership, character and sportsmanship," according to the award website.

The award can be given to any college athlete, and Fields, along with Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence, are the only nominees from college football.

The award has been handed out since 1930 and has gone to two Buckeyes in the last five years: running back Ezekiel Elliott in 2015 and wrestler Kyle Snyder in 2018.

Fields threw for 3,273 yards and 41 touchdowns with only three interceptions and ran for 484 yards and 10 touchdowns in his first year with the Buckeyes.

He was the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year and finished third in Heisman Trophy voting behind LSU's Joe Burrow and Oklahoma's Jalen Hurts.

Eight Players Named Most Improved

Marotti and his strength and conditioning staff named eight most improved players from winter conditioning on March 10, including three scholarship players.

The three – sophomore wide receiver Kamryn Babb, redshirt freshman offensive lineman Ryan Jacoby and sophomore defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste – were joined by sophomore walk-on quarterbacks J.P. Andrade and Jagger LaRoe, junior wide receiver and former club team member Chris Booker, junior linebacker Cade Kacherski and sophomore kicker Jack Deneher.

After two years of leg injuries derailed his start at Ohio State, Babb was healthy for the first time this winter, though he was still sidelined for spring practices. Marotti praised him prior to the start of spring ball.

"He's participating in all training," Marotti said of Babb. "And he's a great kid, great person. A great worker, great teammate. He's been so positive, and it's been awesome. He's the best of the best."

Marotti also spoke about Jean-Baptiste, citing him as a player who needed to bulk

up since arriving at Ohio State and he has done so successfully.

"When he was recruited – on his recruiting trip – he weighed 195 pounds when he stood on the scale," Marotti said. "I don't know about you, but you can't play defensive end in the Big Ten at 195 pounds. He

was a guy that reminded me of guys we used to have back when I was at Cincinnati (as head strength coach from 1990-98). Kind of development guys. Well, Javontae right now weighs 248 pounds. So, in a period of two years, we knew his frame would be able to put that kind of weight on."

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As most of you know, the newspaper business these days is challenging in the best of times. BSB is facing a double whammy with the recent events.

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"That's not even enough to pay for the annual postage to mail BSB," Buckeye Sports Bulletin publisher Frank Moskowitz said of the \$14.95 price, "but it is an investment in the future of Buckeye Sports Bulletin and of newspapers. Many young people have never experienced the joy of reading newspapers, nor the excitement of receiving something in the mail each week. We call on our loyal readers to introduce the experience of reading BSB to children, grandchildren or any young Buckeye

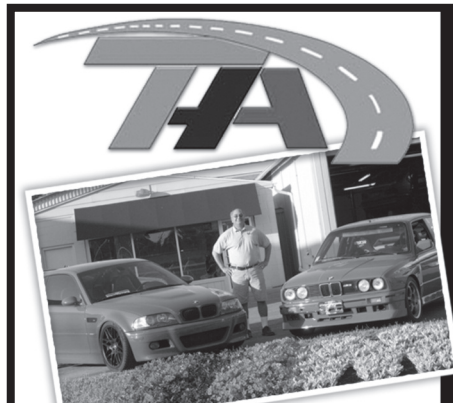
fan you know.

"But this special offers savings for almost every reader," Moskowitz pointed out. "If you are 80, you still save almost \$20 per year."

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SATURDAY // 2:10

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SUNDAY // 1:10

- **Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery - FAMILY OFFER***
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APRIL 6-7



MONDAY // 6:40

TUESDAY // 6:40

APRIL 9-12



THURSDAY // 6:40

FRIDAY // 7:10

SATURDAY // 4:10

- **Team Calendar, presented by Kroger** (first 20,000 fans)

SUNDAY // 1:10

- **Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery - FAMILY OFFER***
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- **Tucker Barnhart Fathead® Wall Decal presented by Texas Roadhouse** (kids 14 & younger)



APRIL 14-16



TUESDAY // 6:40

WEDNESDAY // 6:40

THURSDAY // 12:35

- **Senior Citizen Special, presented by Humana** - Fans 50 and older may purchase tickets at half-price* and get free same-day admission to the Reds Hall of Fame and Museum, presented by Dinsmore



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APRIL 24-26



FRIDAY // 7:10

SATURDAY // 4:10

- **Queen City Sluggers Triple Bobblehead, presented by St. Elizabeth Healthcare** (first 20,000 fans)

SUNDAY // 2:10

- **Reds Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, presented by PNC Bank**
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APRIL 27-29



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TUESDAY // 6:40

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Spring Practices Typically Reserved For Youth

Continued From Page 1

back to normal takes some time.

"Ryan's extremely talented, and he's got an experienced staff," Smith said on a 42-minute conference call with reporters on March 13. "We will have to come up with a strategy – particularly when we're allowed – to have team activities in the strength and conditioning space to make sure that we help our young men get back to where they were."

"Fortunately, we do have very mature players that know how to work out on their own and know the proper training techniques. I think at the end of the day, we will be able to get our guys back up on track and be competitive in the fall."

Additionally, the university's decision to suspend in-person classes for the remainder of spring semester means players will return home – whether that's to an off-campus apartment or several states away – and that poses a significant challenge for the Buckeye coaching staff, which now has to develop and evaluate players from afar.

"They'll continue to communicate with their student-athletes on a daily basis to make sure that they're all right," Smith said. "I think Ryan and his staff, like all of our coaches, will spend a great deal of time talking to our student-athletes digitally, trying to make sure they stay on track."

Rather than look too far into the future, Smith is taking everything day-by-day at this point. But if Ohio State is ultimately allowed to resume organized team activities after April 6, the Buckeyes will fall into another unexpected predicament.

NCAA rules stipulate all 15 spring practices must occur within a 34-day window, not including spring break, which would leave Ohio State just five days of practice time. But given the uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus, it could be months before Ohio State – or any college football team in the country, for that matter – hits the practice field.

"Obviously, this is uncharted territory for us as an institution, let alone an athletic department," Smith said. "I just want to make sure everyone understands that all the measures that are being implemented are to, hopefully, prevent a significant community burden on our healthcare system."

"Typically, we always think of a disease as it relates to an individual. What we need to do is think of it from a community perspective. This is a unique case."

Buckeyes Motivated By Loss

It had been 65 days since Ohio State's loss to Clemson in the Fiesta Bowl when the Buckeyes opened spring practice in March 2, yet it was abundantly clear that heartbreaking loss remains a motivating factor for Day, his staff and his players.

"Our program is built on fighting and competing every single day to be the best version of yourself, the best version of your unit and the best version of your team," Day said. "We know what the expectations are here. That's part of this thing. When you wake up every day, you know what it is. And we're hungry. We felt like we got a good foundation set underneath us this past season, but we didn't reach all our goals, so there's still a lot of work to be done."



JOSH WINSLOW

EARLY IMPACT – Former five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson, right, hopes to become the next freshman to start along the offensive line at Ohio State.

Ohio State must replace 13 starters from last year's squad, which finished one

game short of playing for a national title, including running back J.K. Dobbins, defensive end Chase Young and cornerback Jeff Okudah, who each opted to forgo their final season of eligibility to enter the NFL draft.

But the Buckeyes also return a number of talented players – most notably quarterback Justin Fields, wide receiver Chris Olave, defensive end Jonathon Cooper and cornerback Shaun Wade – whom Day expects to take on leadership roles this season.

"Every year is a new journey," Day said. "In college football, you have a new coaching staff, you have a new group of leaders and you have a new group of seniors, so that dynamic is different year-in and year-out."

"I think this time last year, when you look at Jeff and Chase and J.K., they were young players. But they had such an impact on the field and they became good leaders. I think there will be some guys like that this spring, as well."

Ohio State also welcomed 14 talented early enrollees in January, including five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson; five-star wide receivers Julian Fleming and Jaxon Smith-Njigba; and four-star quarterbacks Jack Miller and C.J. Stroud.

Day acknowledged the spring is about getting those youngsters up to speed as the program looks to reload for another shot at the Tigers, or whatever team the College Football Playoff might put in its path.

"They're talented," Day said of the early enrollees. "They really have a chance to play and be successful. Now they have a long way to go. But for day one, better than expected."

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OSU Seemed Poised To Make Deep NCAA Run

Continued From Page 1

pionships and effectively wiped out the seasons of thousands of student-athletes in numerous sports.

Of course, the men's basketball team is not alone in its pain and disappointment. The women's hockey team won its first Western College Hockey Association tournament and was gearing up to make a run at its second Frozen Four in three seasons. The men's hockey team was ready to play a Big Ten semifinal vs. Michigan and was poised to earn a fourth straight NCAA bid for the first time in program history.

Women's basketball made it to the Big Ten title game and was peaking at the right time.

Wrestlers, fencers, gymnasts, swimmers and divers were among those winter sports athletes whose seasons and, in some cases careers, came to an abrupt halt.

"Obviously this is uncharted territory for us as an institution, let alone as an athletic department," Ohio State athletics director Gene Smith said on March 13.

The sudden ending of the sporting life as we know it leaves time to consider what the men's basketball team might have done in the NCAA Tournament.

OSU (21-10) finished seventh in the conference with an 11-9 record and was set to face Purdue in the Big Ten tourney on March 12 with the winner playing Michigan State the following day.

Exemplifying the strength of the conference, many projections had the Buckeyes as a No. 5 seed in the NCAA Tournament. ESPN's Joe Lunardi placed Ohio State in the South Region with a first-round matchup in Tampa against Stephen F. Austin. The winner would meet Louisville or Vermont.

We'll never know, but after a top-sy-turvy season the Buckeyes seemed to be hitting their stride, regardless of losing the regular-season finale at Michigan State on March 8.

The 80-69 setback ended a four-game winning streak and was fueled by an emotionally charged Senior Day crowd in East Lansing, the type of unbridled partisanship that the Buckeyes would likely not face at neutral-site tournament games.

Still, it left in question how Ohio State would fare away from Value City

Arena, where it was 16-2 this season. The Buckeyes were 4-7 on the road and split two neutral-site games – beating then-No. 6 Kentucky 71-65 on Dec. 21 and losing 67-59 to No. 22 West Virginia eight days later in Cleveland.

How would the Buckeyes manage the tournament games?

"I think that's the question about us," Holtmann said on March 5. "That's a question we'll put in front of us, as a group. We've got to own that we've not always been good on the road. We've not always been tough-minded on the road."

That the Buckeyes started the season ranked 18th in the Associated Press poll and were 19th in the most recent one (March 9) would suggest a steady, even-keeled season.

Far from it. OSU skyrocketed to No. 2 nationally with an 11-1 record before the West Virginia loss with notable wins over Cincinnati, Villanova and North Carolina in addition to Kentucky. The Buckeyes then were 2-6 in conference play before defeating Northwestern 71-59 on Jan. 26 to spark a 9-3 run to end the season.

Senior forward Andre Wesson liked the direction the team was headed.

"I just think we stay committed," he said. "You're obviously going to have ups and downs during the season. I think the biggest thing is how you handle those downs, and I think we've handled it well in just keeping that confidence."

Unfortunately, the Michigan State game was likely his last unless the NCAA allows seniors in winter sports an extra season and he takes advantage of the waiver.

"It's just disappointing that we don't get to write that last chapter," Holtmann told Columbus station WBNS-FM on March 13.

The Buckeyes were optimistic of a long postseason based on the likely return of junior forward Kyle Young from an ankle sprain, the growth of freshman E.J. Liddell in Young's absence and the development of junior C.J. Walker after freshman guard D.J. Carton's personal leave since Jan. 30 to address mental health issues.

Young sat out the final four games, and his energy, toughness and play around

the rim were missed. He probably could have played against Purdue and certainly would have been ready for the NCAA Tournament.

"Everybody knows what Kyle brings to this team, whether it's offensively or defensively," Walker said prior to the scheduled game with the Boilermakers. "His effort is contagious. Everybody just kind of follows him when it comes to the effort type of things, so it would mean a lot having him back and be able to give us extra plays, whether it's on offense, defensive rebounding, no second-chance points, finishes around the rim, things like that."

Liddell's adjustment to college was no different from many first-year players, but getting added minutes and responsibilities with Young gone forced him to mature more quickly. He had a career-high five blocks against Nebraska in the first game without Young, and against Illinois he scored 17 points and grabbed 11 rebounds.

"I think he's done a great job kind of seizing that opportunity that's been there," Holtmann said.

Walker was running the offense after sitting a season following his transfer from Florida State. Like Liddell, he's taken advantage of the chance given to him with Carton sidelined indefinitely.

"I think maybe I underestimated some

of the transition period that was going to take place just in terms of understanding expectations and roles," Holtmann said of Walker. "But he's really embraced what we feel is really important to that position. And it helps that he's a really high-character kid."

Andre Wesson and his brother, junior post Kaleb, each made major contributions down the stretch, and sophomore guards Luther Muhammad and Duane Washington Jr. settled into their roles with more consistency.

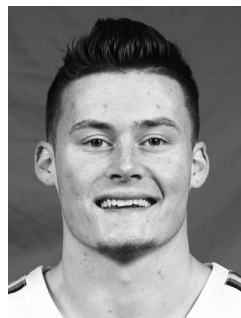
There were still unanswered questions when the season was canceled, such as could Young stay healthy and, if the Buckeyes played long enough, would Carton return?

"Obviously we know where the season is going in terms of what's left of the season, a matter of weeks," Holtmann said when asked about Carton before the shutdown. "I'll let you draw your own conclusions, but I wouldn't want to definitively say one way or the other right now."

What is clear is that a worldwide crisis has shattered the dreams of athletes everywhere.

"Being a champion, that's what we play for and what we work so hard for," Walker said. "You want to have a ring and end a season the right way, which I feel like we could have done with this team."

"We had a good February. Going into March, I feel like we were playing really well. That's what you prepare for. You want to be champions this time of year."



Kyle Young

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Quarterback Set But Spots Up For Grabs In Lineup

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State heads into the 2020 season with a key component returning for the first time since winning a national championship: its starting quarterback.

Justin Fields comes back for his junior season after finishing No. 3 in the Heisman Trophy race during his first year as a starter at the collegiate level and will be a big piece of the offense that is already decided.

"I'm proud of his development from where he was at this point last year to where he is right now in practice one," head coach Ryan Day said on March 2. "He's come a long way in the pocket, moving in the pocket, seeing things and drop-back protection. But we have a list of things that he's working on to get better at.

"A lot of it is just learning to play the position in terms of this past season. As time went along, he got more and more responsibility, and it's now kind of year two. So now we spend a lot of time talking about the intricacies of the position – protections, route progressions, coverages – things like that where we can get a little more involved and start to explain the playbook a little more."

Also mostly decided is an offensive line that was nominated for the Joe Moore Award that goes to the top line in the country. Wyatt Davis, Thayer Munford and Josh Myers, all starters and All-Big Ten members, have returned for another season and hope to build on the success the group had a season ago.

On the defensive side of the ball, Shaun Wade locked up one spot in the starting secondary when the cornerback announced he would return for his junior season, forgoing an opportunity in the NFL draft.

"I feel like we're going to have a great team next year, and I feel like we're going to be elite," Wade said. "I want to be part of it. It was tough, but at the end of the day I feel like I made the right decision for me."

These safety nets on both sides of the ball will be helpful for Ohio State with the Buckeyes, as well as teams across the country, losing valuable spring practice time due to the spread of the coronavirus. Ohio State will not resume practice until at least April 6, which was the time frame set by the Big Ten for suspending all team activities.

When Ohio State ultimately does return, it will not have every piece of its depth chart locked in, and some of those position battles are of crucial importance, both for the Buckeyes next season and moving forward into the future.

Here are some of the key and interesting position battles that Ohio State will hope to figure out once practices resume and before the 2020 season officially gets under way.

Backup Quarterback

Though Fields did start in all 14 games last season for Ohio State, those starts did not come without some scares.

Fields battled through an MCL sprain suffered in the game against Penn State that limited his running abilities in the final three games of the season. Fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov was the primary backup last year for the Buckeyes but was never forced into the lead position during a significant amount of big moments.

Chugunov is now gone, and the only other scholarship quarterback left from

a season ago is fifth-year senior Gunnar Hoak, a Kentucky transfer who played in five games and threw six passes, completing all of them for 104 yards and a touchdown.

If Hoak is going to want to move up into the main backup position, he is going to have to beat out a pair of four-star freshmen, both of whom have enrolled early.

Jack Miller was the second commitment in Ohio State's 2020 class, announcing the commitment on July 1, 2018, just three days after five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson made his announcement.

Miller was a highly touted prospect at the time and remained a four-star throughout the recruiting process, but his rankings lowered over time, much of which was due to his injury troubles at Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral. He is currently placed as the No. 333 prospect overall and No. 13 pro-style quarterback in his class.

Along with Hoak, Miller will be battling against C.J. Stroud, who comes from Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., and was the very last prospect to commit with Ohio State in 2020, doing so on Dec. 18. Like the nearly opposite commit dates, Stroud's recruiting process has been largely the inverse of Miller's. He rose late in the process and continued rising and is now the No. 41 overall prospect and No. 2 pro-style quarterback in the class.

After the first practice of the spring and before practices were canceled until at least April 6, Day said he expected this competition to go through the summer and into August.

"Both of those guys and Gunnar, they were kind of rolling reps with the twos. And as time goes on, they'll all start to roll reps with the ones as well," Day said. "We feel Justin has enough of his reps, but he still has some things to work on and improve on. But we'll let those guys compete for that backup role.

"Who knows what happens at the end of spring. My guess is those guys will just keep working at it and the competition will go into the preseason. And there's just a lot of growth to be had there."

The Ohio State head coach also made clear just how much work has to be done with not just the two incoming freshmen, but also with Hoak, who is still adapting following his transfer from the Wildcats.

"It's hard when Gunnar came in as a transfer and those other guys are coming from high school," Day said. "There's a lot of football to be learned."

The competition could get fierce, especially between the two first-year signal callers. But Miller and Stroud both downplayed the potential battle when asked earlier this year about fighting to become the No. 2 quarterback this season.

"I never really thought it was a big deal," Miller said. "I think we're both here for the same goal. We want to win a national championship here. That's going to be the goal, whatever it takes. And if he's the guy, if I'm the guy doesn't really matter. We're both going to just work our tails off and do whatever we can for the team."

"Me and Jack, we often hang out. We go out to eat all the time and we're brothers. Me and him, we compete every day, but it's all a brotherhood and love," Stroud said. "It's just kind of one of those things that you understand. There's no bad blood and nobody is mad at each other. We're doing it all out of love."



JOSH WINSLOW

UNPROVEN AND UNTESTED – Early enrollees Jack Miller (left) and C.J. Stroud (right) will battle fifth-year senior Gunnar Hoak into the fall to be junior Justin Fields' backup at quarterback.

Running Back

When Day spoke to the media after Ohio State's first official spring practice, he mentioned concern about the health of his running back room, specifically an injury to sophomore Marcus Crowley.

"We're going to get Marcus back before the season starts, and then we have Miyan (Williams) coming in," Day said. "Once we get to the summer, we'll be whole. But we're one injury away from a little bit of a crisis right now, but in the end when it comes to September, we're going to be OK."

The next day, that crisis came to fruition when it was announced that sophomore Master Teague would be out for the remainder of the spring with what has been reported as an Achilles injury.

With the cancellation of practices, it will not be seen who will be filling in while Crowley and Teague are both recovering, but redshirt freshman Steele Chambers now has an opportunity to step up. Chambers, the lone running back on scholarship who is currently active, played in four games in 2019 and rushed 19 times for 135 yards and a score.

Fifth-year senior Demario McCall also could find his way to some reps at running back, but he was recently moved to wide receiver on the official spring roster and was seen at the first spring practice making plays at that position.

"We're just starting him out at slot, and we can always bring him back," Day said. He has that skill set. It's something that we've always tried to find that role for him where he can be a running back and also be a matchup problem for teams."

As for Teague, his timetable is unknown, but offensive coordinator and tight ends coach Kevin Wilson said he expects the

sophomore back to return before the start of the season.

"I would think so," Wilson said. "But time will tell. I think the worst thing you can do, when someone says it's a six-month injury, what happens if some guys just heal slower? And then all of a sudden, that kid or that family thinks he's behind. It's a two-week ankle injury and all of a sudden it takes four."

"Some guys just heal faster. Their bodies recover faster. Sometimes they get treatment better than others. Sometimes the injury's a little bit worse than you think."

Defensive Line

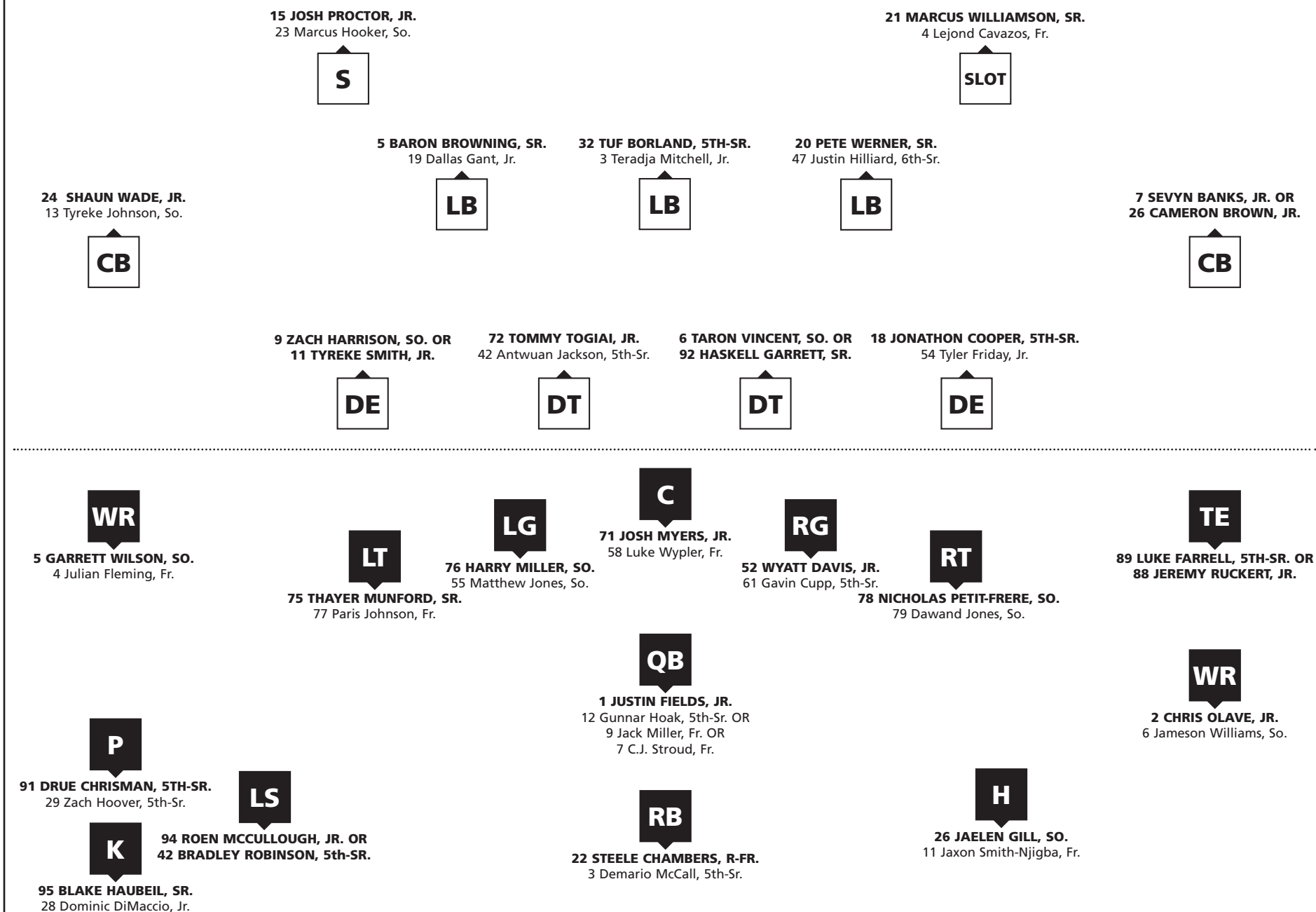
The defensive line that wreaked so much havoc in 2019 is losing its star, with Chase Young entering the NFL draft and likely becoming a top-three pick. But there were also some key veteran pieces lost on the line beyond Young, including fifth-year seniors Jashon Cornell, DaVon Hamilton and Robert Landers.

Day understands that the team is likely not to have another defensive end like Young, but he said that the focus is not simply on trying to mirror the program's single-season sack leader.

"I know our guys see that as the benchmark in terms of that's what we want to be at those positions," the coach explained. "But I don't think we spend a lot of time talking about that. It's more about maximizing yourself every day and maximizing our unit, playing with toughness, playing with effort, running to the football."

"There's a lot of areas we weren't perfect on defense last year. We got a lot better, did a lot of good things. But we weren't perfect as a unit. That's what the focus is. When we play well as a defense, all of a sudden guys get these accolades and have an opportuni-

PROJECTED 2020 SPRING TWO-DEEP DEPTH CHART



ty to go to New York and everything else. But it goes back to the group, and that's what the focus is going to be."

The Buckeyes do return a key veteran piece in defensive end Jonathon Cooper, who redshirted last season due to lingering injuries and will be back for his fifth year.

"Before I made my decision, I made sure that I was satisfied – whether I had a really great game or whether I didn't – that I'm going to stay committed to my decision," Cooper said. "I feel like what's best for me and also for the team and my family is to still redshirt."

Cooper, a captain in 2019, will be joined by a wide variety of talented defensive ends, most notably sophomore Zach Harrison. Harrison played the most defensive snaps (284) of any defensive end not named Young and did so in his freshman campaign. The former five-star finished his first season with the Buckeyes with 24 tackles, five TFL and 3½ sacks.

Juniors Tyreke Smith and Tyler Friday, as well as sophomore Javontae Jean-Baptiste, should be expected to earn a solid amount of snaps as defensive line coach Larry Johnson continues to rotate through his depth.

While the defensive end rotation remains deep with talented players, the defensive tackles will have more to prove heading into 2020. Junior Tommy Togiai's 250 snaps in

2019 is the highest of any returning defensive tackle, and he looks ready to make that jump into a primary starting role after finishing last season with 16 tackles and a pair of TFL.

Senior Haskell Garrett should be a veteran presence on the line and comes in with a strong amount of experience that should bolster what is an otherwise inexperienced group. Sophomore Taron Vincent, a former five-star commit, could also make a splash after missing all of last season due to injury.

Fifth-year senior Antwuan Jackson and junior Jerron Cage round out the returning defensive tackles who earned snaps last year. Jackson played in 12 games and finished with 13 tackles and 3½ TFL, while Cage earned just four tackles but recovered a fumble against Maryland.

Cornerback

The return of Wade is a massive boost to Ohio State's secondary, which is losing its three other primary starters in cornerbacks Damon Arnette and Jeff Okudah, as well as safety Jordan Fuller.

Before spring practices began, and before there was any off-field news to say differently, newly named defensive coordinator and secondary coach Kerry Coombs said he had all the confidence in the world that the remaining pieces of the defensive backfield would be more than enough to

continue the success in 2020.

"They're great players," Coombs said. "I've watched them. I recruited a bunch of them. I know who they are. I've watched them work out the last couple of days. I've watched their tape. These guys got to play a lot of ball last year, which is outstanding. I'm excited about that. But I've had a good chance to meet with these kids. I know what they're made of. A lot of them I've known from when they were in high school, and I'm very excited about them. Don't worry about them. We're going to be just fine."

But then the off-field news hit, and cornerback Amir Riep and safety/linebacker Jahsen Wint were removed from the Ohio State team due to charges of rape and kidnapping.

Riep was a lead nominee to take over as a starter in the upcoming season, and now, behind Wade, the depth has thinned in a secondary that finished 2019 with the No. 1 passing defense (156.0 yards per game) in the country.

Aside from Wade, there are no players in the Buckeyes' secondary who have started a game, but there are still some contenders for who will be jumping into that role for the first time.

Junior Sevy Banks made some impressive plays in the spring practice that was open to the media and could be the front-runner to start alongside Wade. Banks

played in all 14 games last season and totaled 170 snaps on defense while earning 11 tackles, 1½ TFL, three pass breakups and an interception.

Another junior in Cameron Brown has an opportunity to play a major role after playing in 254 defensive snaps, the most of any defensive back who didn't start. Brown had 14 tackles, two TFL and a pass breakup in 2019.

Senior Marcus Williamson also has an opportunity to find a role in the secondary, especially with Coombs, who prefers to rotate in defensive backs to keep his players fresh if he has the personnel. Also with an opportunity is sophomore Tyreke Johnson. The former five-star commit played on only 57 defensive snaps last season but possesses a lot of raw talent.

While it previously appeared that there would be no room for the two freshman cornerback commits to earn playing time, four-star recruits Ryan Watts and Lejond Cavazos both have an opportunity to impress and could make their way into sizable roles if they do.

"I'm just going to come in and compete, work my hardest," Watts said. "Anywhere possible I can get on the field and help the team win, I'm going to do that. Whether that's on special teams or being on defense getting a chance to play, I'll do anything to help my team."

Veteran Linebackers Bring Depth To Defense

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Everybody on a football team wants to play, and Al Washington knows that.

The Ohio State linebackers coach is well aware that each one of the players in his room has a desire to make an impact on the field, and while there aren't enough snaps for everybody, Washington said that there is a certain mentality with the linebackers that has each of them motivated to bring something extra to the defense.

"That question is answered with the culture of the team," Washington explained. "If we're a team, and we do support each other, we have to put ourselves on the back burner. All that being said, I played football. Everybody wants to play. I think we have to do a really good job of keeping them engaged."

After a much-talked-about 2018 season, and not in a good way, for Ohio State's linebacker room, 2019 was a strong step in the right direction in the first year for Washington's unit after the departure of former linebackers coach Bill Davis.

The unit, which was consistently blamed two seasons ago for allowing long plays, 39 of which went for 30 yards or more, gave up just 16 in 2019, tied for fifth fewest in college football.

The primary starters for the linebackers were senior Malik Harrison and juniors Tuf Borland and Pete Werner, but there were plenty of snaps given to more than those three linebackers during the 14 games from a season ago, and many were to players who will be returning in 2020.

Washington knows it takes much more than just three key starters to have a championship-winning linebacker group and having 11 players in the room take at least one defensive snap last season is invaluable.

"Last year, all those guys played, and it wasn't like they played in the fourth quarter when the game was over. They played in some critical moments," Washington said. "I think that piece of it helps. But it's a daily deal. It's a culture deal. And it's a brotherhood deal. And I think going through the season, if we want to win a national championship, our goal is a championship, it's a long year."

But before figuring out exactly the talent that can be swapped in and out, the linebacker unit must solve who will primarily fill the gap left in the room by Harrison, a likely future NFL draft pick

who led the defense with 75 tackles (49 solo) and was No. 2 with 16½ tackles for loss. Harrison also tallied 4½ sacks, four pass breakups and two fumble recoveries.

A likely candidate on the outside could be senior Baron Browning, a former five-star prospect who has spent most of his time with the Buckeyes on the inside splitting with Borland but has the athleticism to make a quick change, something that was seen in the lone practice open to the media before spring practices were canceled through at least April 6 due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Playing mostly in the middle, Browning finished 2019 with 43 tackles, 10 tackles for loss and five sacks.

"Potentially," Washington said about moving Browning outside. "He has a knack for rushing. That's well documented. He has a knack to play in a box as a 'backer. So, we just want to give him a chance to grow his skill set and just experience as much as he can."

Despite missing two games and playing just one snap against Maryland, Browning had only 47 fewer snaps than Borland, earning more snaps than him in five of the other 11 games.

But Borland, who enters his redshirt senior season and finished 2019 with 55 tackles, three TFL, a sack and an interception, remains extremely valuable as an interior linebacker in Washington's defense.

The former Michigan coach said that Borland, who is set to become the second three-time captain in Ohio State history (along with J.T. Barrett), brings important leadership and work ethic, and, above all else, trust.

"He's an extension of a coach, and so it's very comfortable because he's also a guy that can help lead and show young guys how to conduct their business because he has been there," Washington said of Borland. "I'm sure he was impacted by all the great linebackers that have come here in the past, so it's incredibly important to have Tuf Borland in our room and on our team."

"He was instrumental to us and our success, incredibly instrumental. He was one of the anchors. You talk about trust, I mean I trust him with my, dare I say, life. I mean I do. Out there on the field, I trust him tremendously. It's hard to put in words because I know his preparation."

Werner took over the Bullet position that was brought into the defense by Washington and co-defensive coordinator



ANDREW LIND

VERSATILITY – After playing mostly inside the last three seasons, senior linebacker Baron Browning could be moving outside following the departure of starter Malik Harrison.

Greg Mattison from Michigan, where it was called the "Viper," and he did well in the safety/linebacker spot, finishing with 64 tackles (second on the team), 5½ tackles for loss, three pass breakups and a pair of fumble recoveries.

But the senior linebacker has been seen playing on the inside at practice, though that is not something Werner is necessarily anticipating playing when the regular season starts back up.

"Not really much discussion about it," Werner said. "Coach told me to play a spot and I'm playing there. It could change tomorrow. It's kind of free-flowing and doing what the coaches told me to do."

Washington said he has liked Werner's game and sees enough talent to potentially make that move into the middle if needed.

"He had a whole year in spring at the outside 'backer position. He's shown the ability to help us in the box, and you know, as we move pieces around, we want him to

feel confident," Washington said. "He has experience, I think before we got here, I think he played a little bit in the box, too. So, we're trying to just get that experience, and we feel good about our guys' ability to get the job done."

Werner, Borland and Browning are the three linebackers who come back with the most in-game experience from the season prior, finishing 2019 with a combined 1,413 snaps played.

Only two other linebackers still in the room broke 100 total snaps: junior Dallas Gant (118) and sixth-year senior Justin Hilliard (106).

Gant, a former four-star recruit from Toledo St. John's Jesuit, recorded 21 tackles, three TFL and 1½ sacks while finding time in all 14 games last season, strong numbers considering the limited snap counts he earned in each game. If Browning does not make the full move to the outside, Gant could be in position to be



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a primary contributor for this linebacker room.

“He’s one of those guys that’s always going hard,” Hilliard said of Gant. “Ever since he’s been here, he’s one of those guys always doing things right outside in the classroom, especially just knowing exactly where to be. I think obviously, his time is coming. We have an old linebacker room, we are a deep linebacker room, (and) I think he’s going to be a big part of this year.”

Hilliard returns to the Buckeyes after being granted a sixth year by the NCAA due to struggles with injuries throughout much of his Ohio State career. But in his final season with the program, after 13 tackles, three TFL and an interception that sealed a victory against Penn State in 2019, he is ready to make the most out of his time left in Columbus.

“It’s kind of obvious injuries have taken some time away from my development,” Hilliard said. “I was telling somebody earlier, I’ve been here and this my sixth year, but this is technically my second spring, just because of various injuries and things like that. To be able to have that sixth year, I’m looking forward to just keep developing and honing on some of those skills.”

The most veteran member of the linebacker unit has earned the respect of his linebackers coach, who is expecting big things out of Hilliard’s final season due to the leadership and work ethic he puts out there.

“I see him as a leader of our room, and I think we’ll go as Justin goes,” Washington said. “His story, you can make a movie off of it. And the thing about him is he doesn’t carry any of that stuff from the past. I think you can learn a lot from a guy like him, the way he goes about his business. He’s always upbeat. He’s always eager to learn. And he’s always a guy that’s the first guy in line for any drill. I think he’s very talented, and this year will be a great opportunity for him to continue to grow and make the statement I know he wants to make on the field.

“That guy deserves everything you have. And you just have an unbelievable amount of respect for him. Like that guy is a leader. He doesn’t have to say a word. You respect him because of what he’s been through.”

Junior Teradja Mitchell finished with 99 snaps on defense in 2019 and used those snaps to earn 12 tackles, two of which were for loss. But 65 of those snaps came in the first four games. After that, Mitchell missed four straight games due to injury and was used in a smaller role when he finally did return.

Mitchell said he has looked to the play of a former teammate as inspiration on what to strive for this season.

“I learned a lot from Malik, especially when I was injured just watching him every day,” Mitchell said. “He’s an All-American, so just watching his every step, his first few steps, how he uses his hands, how aggressive he is, all that stuff.”

Mitchell, who was the No. 2 inside linebacker of the 2018 class, is highly anticipating the upcoming season and sees an opportunity to earn some playing time, potentially behind Borland in the middle.

“I’m very excited. I’ve been working for this all my life,” Mitchell said. “This is something I always wanted to do, play college football, so it’s very exciting that this opportunity is ahead of me and I’m going to take full advantage of it.”

Junior K’Vaughan Pope is the only other returning linebacker with more than

• **Redshirt freshman running back Steele Chambers:** After playing in just four games in 2019, Chambers (6-1, 220) maintained redshirt eligibility. The former four-star athlete rushed for 135 yards and one touchdown on 19 carries, highlighted by 63 yards against Miami (Ohio) and 56 yards against Rutgers. Ohio State recruited Chambers as a running back with a transition to linebacker, which he also played in high school, as a possibility. The Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic product found success as a runner, securing his spot in Tony Alford’s running back room.

Chambers entered the spring set to compete with sophomore back Marcus Crowley for backup reps behind presumed starter Master Teague, a sophomore. However, Crowley could not practice while recovering from injury, and Teague suffered an undisclosed injury, thrusting Chambers into a prominent role. With an excellent offseason, Chambers could become a key cog in the Buckeye backfield.

• **Sophomore wide receiver Jaelen Gill:** With the departure of Parris Campbell, it appeared Gill (6-0, 188) was poised to step into the slot receiver spot behind K.J. Hill. However, Ohio State opted to use more 12-personnel with two tight ends on the field instead of a slot receiver, and Hill took the snaps in three-receiver sets. Gill caught six passes for 51 yards and one touchdown in limited time as a redshirt freshman.

The Westerville South product flashed the playmaking ability that made him the nation’s No. 2 all-purpose back in 2018 against Rutgers. Gill snagged the ball on a bubble route and made multiple Scarlet Knight defenders miss with a cut to the sideline, then spun out of another tackle before carrying another defender into the end zone for a 32-yard score. With Hill off to the NFL, the slot position appears to be wide open. Gill will have to compete for snaps with five-star freshman Jaxon Smith-Njigba, junior Chris Olave and sophomore Garrett Wilson for snaps in the slot.

• **Sophomore cornerback Tyreke Johnson:** The Ohio State cornerback room has consistently produced NFL cornerbacks in recent years, including first-round picks Bradley Roby, Eli Apple, Gareon Conley, Marshon Lattimore and Denzel Ward, with Jeff Okudah projected as a top-five pick for 2020. When he committed to the Buckeyes as the No. 21 overall prospect in 2018, Johnson (6-1, 195) had the size, length and speed to project

as a top-end corner.

The former five-star recruit has appeared in just six games for the Scarlet and Gray, recording three tackles (one solo). With Okudah and fellow starter Damon Arnette off to the NFL, Johnson will be competing for playing time with juniors Sevn Banks and Cameron Brown, opposite junior Shaun Wade. An excellent fall camp could propel Johnson into defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs’ cornerback rotation.

• **Sophomore offensive tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere:** Before the Buckeyes secured the transfer of All-Big Ten offensive lineman Jonah Jackson, Petit-Frere was projected to start at right tackle, with Branden Bowen sliding to guard. Jackson’s arrival moved Bowen back to tackle, making Petit-Frere a backup. He was the No. 1 offensive tackle and No. 7 overall prospect in the 2018 class, but Petit-Frere has yet to live up to that lofty potential.

Head coach Ryan Day and offensive line coach Greg Studrawa have both lauded the development of the former five-star, but entering his third year in the program, it’s time for Petit-Frere to step up. After coming in at 6-5 and 271 pounds, Petit-Frere has bulked up to 305, very much looking like a D-I offensive tackle. With the return of two-year starter Thayer Munford at left tackle, the right tackle spot is up for grabs. Petit-Frere will have to fend off another five-star recruit in freshman Paris Johnson (6-6, 305), who was the No. 1 offensive tackle and No. 9 overall prospect for 2020.

• **Senior cornerback Marcus Williamson:** With Wade moving to an outside corner position, the slot corner spot became available with Amir Riep as the likely starter. Riep was dismissed from the team after being charged with rape and kidnapping, and so the competition at the position became more open. Williamson and freshman Lejond Cavazos are expected to compete for snaps at slot corner, while Wade can rotate inside if needed.

Williamson (5-10, 186) has been a solid special teams contributor throughout an injury-plagued Buckeye career, totaling 14 tackles (11 solo). As a junior, the Westerville native recorded seven tackles (five solo) along with one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. In his final season in Columbus, Williamson, who was a four-star recruit out of Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy, will look to make an impact at slot corner with his speed and athleticism.

– Joe Dempsey

15 defensive snaps (77) in 2019. Pope finished last season with 13 tackles, two pass breakups and a pair of interceptions.

Pope, Gant and Mitchell may not have significant in-game experience thus far in their respective Ohio State careers, but Washington looks at the trio as veterans of the room and knows that their experience from practices, as well as somewhat in games, will help to build the depth in the linebacker unit heading into 2020.

“Those are very good players, but even more so in character,” Washington said. “And that’s the thing we preach and we focus on: getting better at what we do. If I’m a backup, our focus isn’t on when I’m going to start, my focus is to get my feet right. My focus is running to the doggone ball. That’s our mentality, and it has got to be, and usually good things happen when you take that approach.

“They’re old guys, they’re juniors. They have bought in, and they work their tails off.”

Washington understands that juniors will want to have a sizable role in the defense, and he said that he commends the group he has on the defensive side of the ball for how much they have been willing to work as a team and to work on themselves without playing time taking over as the key factor.

“It’s hard to be at your best if you are in a negative state of mind,” Washington said. “They’re going to have issues. It’s part of it. You’re going to have times where you’re like, ‘Damn, I want to play,’ and that’s OK. That’s good. To me, I want a player to feel like that. However, let’s keep demanding the main thing, and the main thing is the team is performing at a high

level, the main thing is I’m getting better as a player.

“You are going to have a time when you’re out there, you’re all going to have your moment and if you’re not ready, it’s going to be on you. Each of these guys are going to have a moment. And when they’re out there, I want them to be ready. And that’s what we preach.”

Sophomore Craig Young (15 snaps), junior Ben Schmiesing (seven), redshirt freshman Tommy Eichenberg (five) and junior Cade Kacherski (one) are the other returning linebackers who earned a defensive snap in 2019.

And though the room remains loaded with experience for at least one more season, Washington said he does not worry about the potential of players leaving through the transfer portal, as he sees it as something that is mostly out of his control.

“I don’t even think about it,” Washington said. “If a young man wants to move on and he feels like, you know, however he feels about it, I mean, what can you do? I coach them like I will coach my son. I say here’s the deal. Here’s the truth. Here’s what you have to fix. Because you have to fix it here or there. It isn’t like you’re just going to go somewhere else and it’s fixed. No, you’re going to have to do the work at some point.”

This linebacker room might not be filled with the star power that previous rooms have had in Ohio State’s history. But after a complete turnaround season in 2019, and with much of the talent and experience making a return in 2020, there is plenty of optimism to be had about where the Buckeyes stand as far as their linebackers are concerned.

Washington feels that experience among his group. But he also feels a responsibility to make sure that he uses that amount of experience in the right way, utilizing the high level of juniors and seniors he has available to him.

“It’s our job to figure out how to keep guys engaged and give them roles and to give them the opportunity to contribute because we need them,” he said. “Just because we have depth doesn’t mean that we value the first team. I mean the way I look at it, the first two teams, those are all ones, so we have to do a really good job of trying to create roles, think outside maybe the conventional defense and put guys in roles so that they can do what they do best.”

Additionally, with the level of injuries some of his linebackers have faced in the past with Borland, Browning, Hilliard and Mitchell all dealing with their own various injuries throughout different seasons, having that depth and that added experience as a collective unit can help deal not only with players going down but with keeping players fresh, both in individual games and throughout a season that the linebackers coach is hoping ends in a national championship.

“We have depth. And I think that if we can develop their skill set to fit in different spots, it helps,” Washington said. “It helps with durability throughout the year. You can roll guys, but it also helps with injuries. And it just helps overall culturally, because everybody’s kind of feeling like ‘Hey, I have a knack for rushing the passer. They’re trying to help me do what I do best.’ And that’s kind of the goal that we’re trying to do.”

Williams Finds Home Away From Home In OSU

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Although Ohio State travels to all corners of the country in search of the nation's best prospects, convincing those players to leave their home states can oftentimes be difficult.

That was hardly the case for early enrollee Kourt Williams, though, who could not wait to leave his hometown of Harbor City, Calif., in search of new opportunities.

"I talked to my parents, and I knew I wanted to go far away," Williams told reporters gathered at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center during National Signing Day on Feb. 5. "Staying close to home wasn't really one of the biggest things for me. That's not a knock on the West Coast schools. I just wanted to have a different experience, so coming to a school like this was almost a no-brainer in terms of academics and how it is out here socially, as well as football wise. It just felt like the perfect decision."

The feeling is mutual from Ohio State's perspective, as well, as the 6-1 and 221-pound Williams – who was considered the 12th-best outside linebacker and No. 164 prospect overall in the class of 2020, according to the 247Sports composite rankings – appears to be an ideal fit for the Buckeyes' Bullet position.

"I think he fits like a glove," linebackers coach Al Washington said during his spring practice media availability on March 4. "You watch his high school tape, you see his body physically and he's got contact courage. He'll go up and hit, and he has no problem sticking his face and putting his body in there. He's a really good athlete. He can cover ground."

Williams played a similar hybrid linebacker/safety position at Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco, which the Braves' coaching staff referred to as the Star position. And that's a big reason that Washington and former co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley



ANDREW LIND

DIFFERENT APPROACH – Rather than stay close to home and attend UCLA or USC, Ohio State early enrollee linebacker/safety Kourt Williams sought a new experience.

made him a priority during the recruiting process.

"That was one of the biggest things they talked to me about, just in terms of the playing style and how the position is," Williams said. "It's kind of what I did in high school, so it's basically the perfect fit just in terms of my playing style."

Williams recorded 61 tackles, five tackles for loss, four pass deflections, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery and

one sack to help lead St. John Bosco to the California Interscholastic Federation Southern Section title and the MaxPreps Xcellent 25 national championship last season. He also participated in the All-American Bowl in January and was awarded the Watkins Award, which is presented annually to the nation's top African-American high school scholar athlete.

"I'll be surprised if he's not a team captain when he's here," Ohio State head

coach Ryan Day said during his early signing period press conference on Dec. 18. "I've told him and his parents that a million times. They're probably tired of hearing me say that. He comes from a great program, he's playing at a high level and he's got a lot of versatility."

It meant a lot for Williams, who arrived on campus in January, to hear Day sing his praises like that.

"I've always viewed myself as being a leader," Williams said. "I'm not a follower, so it means everything to hear that. I'm going to keep working hard and try to get there."

Williams is a close friend of Ohio State starting right guard Wyatt Davis, whom the Buckeyes pulled from St. John Bosco during the 2017 recruiting cycle and who has developed into an All-American at his position. That relationship gave Williams someone to lean on during the recruiting process, as well as early in his career.

"Just knowing that he was here, and he was a guy that I could really go to and show me everything, show me the ropes and all that, it meant a lot to me," Williams said. "Now that I'm here, I'm able to talk to him a lot more. He's had my back, and I'm appreciative of it."

Like Davis – who started as a red-shirt freshman after a late-season injury to Demetrius Knox – Williams might also see significant playing time earlier than expected following the departures of safeties Brendon White (transferred to Rutgers) and Jahsen Wint (dismissed following rape and kidnapping charges). They backed up outside linebacker Pete Werner at the Bullet last fall, and their absence leaves the Buckeyes thin at the position going into this season.

Fortunately for Ohio State, Williams believes he shares many of the traits that have allowed Werner to flourish in that spot.

"In certain situations, I could play man, I can guard tight ends or slots and I can fit in the run," Williams said. "I can also come up and tackle. I'm not afraid to hit. I'm not afraid to get my nose dirty."

Williams' overall athleticism is also reminiscent of Clemson hybrid linebacker/safety Isaiah Simmons, who intercepted Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields in the Fiesta Bowl and is expected to be an early first-round pick in April's NFL draft.

"Simmons is a little bit longer," Day said, noting the two-inch height difference between the two players. "Kourt is maybe a little bit more compact and bigger, but the same idea. They can do a lot of things with them, and those are the kinds of guys you want."

Williams ultimately picked the Buckeyes over scholarship offers from Alabama, Florida State, Georgia, Michigan, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee, Texas, Texas A&M, UCLA and USC, among others. It, of course, came with his parents' blessing, as they simply wanted him to find a place he could call home – even if it's 2,000 miles away from where he grew up.

"It's definitely hard as a parent to see your child go far, but they've been very supportive in this whole process," Williams said. "I'm really comfortable here. Just the fact the older guys were able to open their arms so much toward me so early – when they say brotherhood, it really is a brotherhood."

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Athens
740-566-1009

2020 OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School							
1	Justin Fields	QB	6-3	228	Jr.	Kennesaw, Ga./Georgia	50	Nathan Brock	OL	6-4	290	5th-Sr.	Powell, Ohio/Olentangy Liberty
2	Chris Olave	WR	6-1	188	Jr.	San Marcos, Calif./Mission Hills	51	Trayvon Wilburn	LB	5-11	222	So.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Mount Healthy
3	Teradja Mitchell	LB	6-2	242	Jr.	Virginia Beach, Va./Bishop Sullivan	51	Brett Novick	DT	6-1	275	So.	Katonah, N.Y./John Jay
3	Demario McCall	WR	5-9	195	5th-Sr.	North Ridgeville, Ohio/North Ridgeville	52	Antwuan Jackson	DT	6-2	295	5th-Sr.	Ellenwood, Ga./Blinn College
4	Julian Fleming	WR	6-2	200	Fr.	Catawissa, Pa./Southern Columbia	52	Wyatt Davis	OL	6-4	315	Jr.	Bellflower, Calif./St. John Bosco
4	Lejond Cavazos	CB	6-0	195	Fr.	San Antonio, Texas/IMG Academy	54	Tyler Friday	DE	6-3	265	Jr.	Ramsey, N.J./Don Bosco Prep
5	Garrett Wilson	WR	6-0	193	So.	Austin, Texas/Lake Travis	55	Matthew Jones	OL	6-4	310	So.	Brooklyn, N.Y./Erasmus Hall
5	Baron Browning	LB	6-3	240	Sr.	Fort Worth, Texas/Kennedale	55	Jerron Cage	DT	6-2	299	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH/Winton Woods
6	Jameson Williams	WR	6-2	188	So.	St. Louis, Mo./Cardinal Ritter College	56	Aaron Cox	DL	6-3	255	Jr.	Mantua, Ohio/Crestwood
6	Taron Vincent	DT	6-2	295	So.	Baltimore, Md./IMG Academy	57	Zaid Hamdan	DT	5-11	265	So.	Mason, Ohio/Mason
7	C.J. Stroud	QB	6-3	205	Fr.	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif./Rancho Cucamonga	58	Luke Wypler	OL	6-3	295	Fr.	Montvale, N.J./St. Joseph Regional
7	Kamryn Babb	WR	6-0	197	So.	St. Louis, Mo./Christian Brothers College	59	Darrion Henry-Young	DL	6-4	275	Fr.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Princeton
7	Sevyn Banks	CB	6-1	200	Jr.	Orlando, Fla./Jones	59	Zach Stevenson	OL	6-1	295	R-Fr.	Lewis Center, Ohio/Olentangy Orange
8	Javontae Jean-Baptiste	DE	6-5	250	So.	Oradell, N.J./Bergen Catholic	60	Ryan Smith	OL	6-1	285	R-Fr.	Valley City, Ohio/Buckeye
9	Zach Harrison	DE	6-6	265	So.	Lewis Center, Ohio/Olentangy Orange	61	Gavin Cupp	OL	6-4	308	5th-Sr.	Leipsic, Ohio/Leipsic
9	Jack Miller	QB	6-3	215	Fr.	Scottsdale, Ariz./Chaparral	62	Chris Kuhn	OL	6-5	305	So.	Sandusky, Ohio/St. Mary Central Catholic
10	Mookie Cooper	WR	5-10	195	Fr.	Maryland Heights, Mo./Pattonville Senior	64	Jack Jamieson	OL	6-1	285	So.	Lakewood, Ohio/St. Ignatius
11	Tyreke Smith	DE	6-4	267	Jr.	Cleveland, Ohio/Cleveland Heights	65	Phillip Thomas	LS	6-0	230	5th-Sr.	Louisville, Ohio/Louisville
11	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-0	196	Fr.	Rockwall, Texas/Rockwall	66	Enokk Vimahi	OL	6-4	305	R-Fr.	Kahuku, Hawaii/Kahuku
12	Gunnar Hoak	QB	6-4	215	5th-Sr.	Dublin, Ohio/Kentucky	68	Ryan Jacoby	OL	6-5	310	R-Fr.	Mentor, Ohio/Mentor
13	Gee Scott Jr.	WR	6-3	210	Fr.	Seattle, Wash./Eastside Catholic	69	Trey Leroux	OL	6-7	335	Fr.	Norwalk, Ohio/Norwalk
13	Tyreke Johnson	CB	6-1	195	So.	Jacksonville, Fla./Trinity Christian Academy	71	Josh Myers	OC	6-5	312	Jr.	Miamisburg, Ohio/Miamisburg
15	Jaylen Harris	WR	6-5	215	Sr.	Cleveland, Ohio/Cleveland Heights	72	Tommy Togiai	DT	6-2	300	Jr.	Pocatello, Idaho/Highland
15	Josh Proctor	SAF	6-2	202	Jr.	Owasso, Okla./Owasso	74	Max Wray	OL	6-7	308	So.	Franklin, Tenn./Franklin
16	Ryan Watts	CB	6-3	195	Fr.	Little Elm, Texas/Little Elm	75	Thayer Munford	OL	6-6	315	Sr.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Massillon Washington
16	Cade Stover	TE	6-4	255	R-Fr.	Mansfield, Ohio/Lexington	76	Harry Miller	OL	6-4	315	So.	Buford, Ga./Buford
17	Danny Vanatsky	QB	6-1	210	So.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Cincinnati Hills Christian Acad.	77	Paris Johnson	OL	6-6	305	Fr.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Princeton
17	Bryson Shaw	SAF	6-1	195	R-Fr.	Eldersburg, Md./Bullis School	78	Nicholas Petit-Frere	OT	6-5	305	So.	Tampa, Fla./Berkeley Prep
18	Jonathon Cooper	DE	6-4	257	5th-Sr.	Gahanna, Ohio/Lincoln	79	Dawand Jones	OL	6-8	359	So.	Indianapolis, Ind./Ben Davis
18	J.P. Andrade	QB	6-2	210	So.	La Verne, Calif./Bonita	80	C.J. Saunders	WR	5-10	190	6th-Sr.	Dublin, Ohio/Coffman
19	Dallas Gant	LB	6-3	232	Jr.	Toledo, Ohio/St. John's Jesuit	81	Jake Hausmann	TE	6-4	255	5th-Sr.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Archbishop Moeller
19	Jagger LaRoe	QB	6-3	220	So.	Colleyville, Texas/Texas A&M	82	Sam Wiglusz	WR	5-11	185	So.	Brecksville, Ohio/Brecksville-Broadview Heights
20	Pete Werner	LB	6-3	242	Sr.	Indianapolis, Ind./Cathedral	83	Cormontae Hamilton	DL	6-2	265	R-Fr.	Memphis, Tenn./Whitehaven
21	Marcus Williamson	CB	5-10	186	Sr.	Westerville, Ohio/IMG Academy	85	Austin Kutscher	WR	6-0	200	So.	Massillon, Ohio/Washington
22	Steele Chambers	RB	6-1	220	R-Fr.	Roswell, Ga./Blessed Trinity Catholic	86	Chris Booker	WR	6-0	185	Jr.	St. Louis/Dayton
23	Marcus Hooker	SAF	5-11	200	So.	New Castle, Pa./New Castle	87	Elijah Gardiner	WR	6-3	200	Jr.	Kemp, Texas/Kemp
24	Shaun Wade	CB	6-1	195	Jr.	Jacksonville, Fla./Trinity Christian Academy	88	Jeremy Ruckert	TE	6-5	253	Jr.	Lindenhurst, N.Y./Lindenhurst
24	Marcus Crowley	RB	6-1	205	So.	Jacksonville, Fla./Trinity Christian Academy	89	Luke Farrell	TE	6-6	258	5th-Sr.	Perry, Ohio/Perry
25	Xavier Johnson	RB	6-2	215	So.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Summit Country Day	90	Jaden McKenzie	DT	6-2	290	R-Fr.	Wake Forest, N.C./Wake Forest
26	Cameron Brown	CB	6-0	192	Jr.	St. Louis, Mo./Christian Brothers College	90	Jack Deneher	K	6-2	210	So.	Dover, Ohio/Dover
26	Jaelen Gill	WR	6-0	188	So.	Westerville, Ohio/Westerville South	91	Drue Chrisman	P	6-3	222	5th-Sr.	Lawrenceburg, Ind./Cincinnati LaSalle
28	Ronnie Hickman	SAF	6-1	205	R-Fr.	Wayne, N.J./DePaul Catholic	92	Haskell Garrett	DT	6-2	299	Sr.	Las Vegas, Nev./Bishop Gorman
28	Dominic DiMaggio	K	5-8	192	Jr.	Powell, Ohio/DeSales	93	Jacolbe Cowan	DL	6-4	275	Fr.	Charlotte, N.C./Providence Day School
29	Zach Hoover	P	6-2	200	5th-Sr.	Toledo, Ohio/Central Catholic	94	Roan McCullough	LS	6-1	230	So.	Columbus, Ohio/Worthington Kilbourne
29	Kourt Williams	SAF	6-1	221	Fr.	Harbor City, Calif./St. John Bosco	95	Blake Haubel	K	6-3	230	Sr.	Buffalo, N.Y./Canisius
30	Kevin Dever	SAF	6-0	195	Jr.	Cleveland, Ohio/St. Edward's	96	Michael O'Shaughnessy	P	6-3	200	R-Fr.	New Albany, Ohio/New Albany
32	Tuf Borland	LB	6-1	234	5th-Sr.	Bolingbrook, Ill./Bolingbrook	97	Noah Potter	DE	6-6	271	R-Fr.	Mentor, Ohio/Mentor
33	Master Teague	RB	5-11	225	So.	Murfreesboro, Tenn./Blackman							
34	Mitch Rossi	RB	6-0	245	Jr.	Franklin, Tenn./Franklin							
36	K'Vaughan Pope	LB	6-1	231	Jr.	Dinwiddie, Va./Dinwiddie							
37	Craig Young	LB	6-3	228	So.	Fort Wayne, Ind./Wayne							
41	Tommy Eichenberg	LB	6-2	238	R-Fr.	Cleveland, Ohio/St. Ignatius							
42	Bradley Robinson	LS	6-1	230	5th-Sr.	Troy, Mich./Athens							
42	Lloyd McFarquhar	CB	5-9	170	So.	Cleveland, Ohio/Brush							
43	Ryan Batsch	SAF	6-2	200	So.	Loveland, Ohio/Loveland							
43	Robert Cope	RB	5-9	198	So.	Dublin, Ohio/Jerome							
44	Ben Schmiesing	LB	6-1	225	So.	Piqua, Ohio/Piqua							
46	Cade Kacherski	LB	6-2	225	So.	Dublin, Ohio/Jerome							
47	Justin Hilliard	LB	6-1	231	6th-Sr.	Cincinnati, Ohio/St. Xavier							
48	Corey Rau	TE	6-4	260	5th-Sr.	Katy, Texas/SMU							
49	Darryl Sinclair	CB	5-9	180	Jr.	Solon, Ohio/Solon							

Coaching staff – Ryan Day, head coach; Larry Johnson, associate head coach/defensive line; Kerry Coombs, defensive coordinator; Greg Mattison, co-defensive coordinator; Al Washington, linebackers; Tony Alford, assistant head coach for offense/running backs; Kevin Wilson, offensive coordinator/tight ends; Brian Hartline, wide receivers; Greg Studrawa, offensive line; Corey Dennis, quarterbacks coach; Matt Barnes, special teams coordinator/assistant secondary. **Graduate assistants** – Kenny Anunike, defense; Billy Fessler, offense; Grayson Miller, defense. **Quality control** – Keenan Bailey, offense; Parker Fleming, special teams; Drew Christ, defense; Joe Bolden, defense. **Support staff** – Mickey Marotti, assistant AD/football sports performance; Diana Sabau, deputy director of athletics; Brian Voltolini, associate AD/GM; Quinn Tempel, director of operations; Shaun Barnhouse, head trainer; Dr. Jim Borchers, head team physician; Justin Kume, assistant AD/compliance; Mark Pantoni, assistant AD/player personnel; Ryan Stamper, assistant AD/player development; Kevin Ries, equipment manager; Joe Stanek, video coordinator; Tony Tucker, director of student well-being.

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NCAA Halts Recruiting Through April 15

In an effort to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, the NCAA on March 13 suspended on- and off-campus recruiting activities for all Division I sports through April 15. Contact between coaches and prospective student-athletes is still permitted through phone calls, text messages and written correspondence, however.

The football recruiting calendar is currently in a quiet period, which means prospects are normally allowed to take

unknowns when it comes to the virus, including how long it will impact the football program's recruiting efforts or the recruiting calendar as a whole. Some coaches and members of the media have suggested flipping the June 22-July 24 dead period into a new quiet period to make up for lost time.

The lack of on-campus visits over the next month would also suggest prospects who intended to make their college decisions throughout the spring and summer may hold off a little bit longer, thus creating a ripple effect that may impact the early signing period in December and adds a little more intrigue to National Signing Day in February.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

unofficial visits but coaches cannot make any contact off campus. That has changed, of course, as have the rules that would allow juniors to take official visits beginning on April 1.

If the suspension is lifted on April 15, the football recruiting calendar would go into an evaluation period as planned, when coaches can travel off campus to conduct in-person evaluations and schools can once again host official and unofficial visits.

Both the Dick's Sporting Goods Combine and Under Armour Camp Series have been postponed indefinitely, as well. The combine-style events host hundreds of the nation's top-rated prospects annually in multiple cities across the country, with a handful of players who attend ultimately selected to participate in The Opening Finals and Under Armour All-America Game, respectively.

"We cannot in good conscience bring together hundreds of kids from hundreds of different cities and school districts in a setting with shared equipment, exchanging high-fives and handshakes with bodies coming together and/or in close contact at this time," said Student Sports president Brian Stumpf, whose organization runs several camps including the Dick's Sporting Goods Combine and The Opening Finals. "(We) still believe we are doing what's best for the kids and their future well-being."

Ohio State and Michigan, meanwhile, were among the first football programs to take precautionary recruiting measures when they announced on March 11 that they were halting all official and unofficial visits to campus and canceling their respective spring games.

Head coach Ryan Day said on Twitter the Buckeyes' policy will run through April 20, while the Wolverines announced theirs will run through April 21. While a handful of programs and conferences – including the ACC, Big Ten, Pac-12 and SEC – followed suit in the days thereafter, the NCAA undoubtedly stepped in with its ruling to maintain a balanced playing field on the recruiting trail.

If no further action is taken by the NCAA and the evaluation period begins on April 15 as planned, it appears Ohio State will lose five days of recruiting opportunities compared to other programs who may hit the road or welcome prospects to campus as soon as the ban is lifted.

It goes without saying there are many

Four-Star Cornerback Commits To Ohio State

Despite the undeniable challenges associated with the NCAA-mandated recruiting dead period, Ohio State landed a commitment on March 15 from St. Louis DeSmet Jesuit four-star cornerback Jakailin Johnson.

The 6-0, 168-pound Johnson is considered the fourth-best cornerback and No. 59 prospect overall in the class of 2021, after recording 42 tackles and seven interceptions to help the Spartans to their second state title in school history. He picked the Buckeyes over finalists Clemson, Florida, Missouri, Oklahoma and USC.

Johnson – the cousin of Ohio State sophomore wide receiver Jameson Williams – landed an offer from the Buckeyes' last May and has made two trips to Columbus in the meantime, including the program's inaugural Buckeye Bash and BBQ in late June and the 34-10 win over Michigan State in early October. He was considered a heavy Notre Dame lean, however, until the sudden departure of cornerbacks coach Todd Light in December.

That allowed Ohio State to get back in the picture with Johnson, and the subsequent hiring of defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs seemingly pushed the Buckeyes to the forefront of his recruitment.

Coombs, wide receivers coach/area recruiter Brian Hartline and assistant secondary/special teams coach Matt Barnes each visited Johnson during the evaluation period in late January, and he then included Ohio State among his final schools in mid-February.

Johnson was set to visit Ohio State for the annual spring game on April 11, and most prognosticators expected him to commit that weekend or shortly thereafter. But with visits on hold for now, he instead chose his 17th birthday for his commitment date.

This marks the fourth consecutive cycle Ohio State has pulled a prospect from the St. Louis area, with Johnson joining Christian Brothers College four-star wide receivers Kamryn Babb and Cameron Brown in 2018, Cardinal Ritter College four-star wide receiver Williams in 2019 and Maryland Heights Pattonville Senior four-star Mookie Cooper in 2020.

Buckeyes Add Another Cornerback To Haul

Ohio State landed its second commitment in as many days when Cincinnati La Salle three-star cornerback Devonta Smith pledged his services to the Buckeyes on March 16.



COURTESY OF EVAN PRYOR

BIG-TIME BACK – After missing out on several top-rated running backs last cycle, Ohio State landed a commitment on March 16 from 2021 Cornelius (N.C.) William Amos Hough four-star Evan Pryor.

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jayden Ballard	WR	6-3	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Reid Carrico	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Ironton, Ohio
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Michael Hall	DT	6-3	290	★★★★	Streetsboro, Ohio
Marvin Harrison	WR	6-4	184	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep
Sam Hart	TE	6-5	225	★★★	Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail
Donovan Jackson	OT	6-4	308	★★★★	Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal
Jakailin Johnson	CB	6-0	168	★★★★	St. Louis De Smet Jesuit
Jaylen Johnson	S	6-1	205	★★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Kyle McCord	QB	6-3	204	★★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep
Evan Pryor	RB	5-10	190	★★★★	Cornelius (N.C.) W.A. Hough
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-5	220	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Devonta Smith	CB	6-0	185	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle

The 6-0, 185-pound Smith – the cousin and teammate of four-star safety commit Jaylen Johnson – is considered the 32nd-best cornerback and No. 428 prospect overall in the class of 2021. He recorded 92 total tackles, five interceptions and two forced fumbles to be named third-team all-state last season. He also returned six punts for touchdowns to help the Lancers to the state title.

Smith landed an offer from Coombs on March 12, which was a little earlier than expected since his scheduled March 28 unofficial visit was canceled amid the coronavirus concerns, though it's likely he would have committed during that visit.

Smith picked Ohio State over offers from Alabama, Cincinnati, Notre Dame, Michigan State, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee, Virginia Tech and West Virginia. He became the 12th member of the Buckeyes' 2021 recruiting class, joining the above-mentioned Jakailin Johnson at the cornerback position.

Ohio State is looking to add at least one more player at the position this cycle, with Marcus Williamson set to graduate and Shaun Wade, Sevn Banks and Cameron Brown all eligible to enter the NFL draft following the 2020 season. Other notable targets include Virginia Beach (Va.)

ASK AN ANALYST

With Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham

How does Ohio State's decision (which has since been mandated nationwide by the NCAA) to halt its recruiting efforts during the spring impact the staff's pursuit of several of the nation's top-rated prospects?

"I think it could impact things in two very different ways depending on where individual prospects are in their recruiting process. The guys that were making preliminary visits around the country in March and April are still going to have to make those visits at some point, but maybe it won't be until after their high school seasons. It could make the traditional National Signing Day in February much more interesting in 2021 than it has been in the last two years.

"For kids who have been close to a decision and likely know what they want to do in regards to picking a school, I imagine you'll see them end up pulling the trigger on commitments a bit earlier than before just to make sure they have the spot they want in their desired class amid the upcoming uncertainty."

On the other hand, could the decision have

any positive effects on the recruiting trail, whether with a specific prospect who visited recently or in the fact that the program and university were proactive in their efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus?

"The way that Ryan Day and Ohio State responded to the coronavirus pandemic was yet another sign of Day's advanced-for-his-years maturity and leadership ability. There's no doubt that kids around the country and – more importantly – their parents recognize that. If the program is able to put that on display while maintaining relationships with top recruits despite the lack of visits, there's no reason the Buckeyes' program should be at a detriment."

Do you believe there will be any adjustments to the college football recruiting calendar to make up for the lack of spring contact between coaches and prospects?

"Fortunately, the NCAA didn't allow for much dillydallying and quickly responded by instituting a nationwide dead period through April 15. Whether

or not they'll adjust the calendar to make up for that lost time remains to be seen, but there is a currently scheduled July dead period, which would make sense for an outright swap if the member schools wanted to do that. Coaches aren't going to be entirely thrilled to give up that last opportunity to be with their families before the season begins, however."

Ohio State had long been considered the favorite for Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett four-star cornerback Jordan Hancock, but he committed to Clemson on March 11. Do the Buckeyes still have a shot or has that ship now sailed?

"Clemson rarely loses a player once they've issued a commitment so the odds of Hancock, one of the top overall targets on the Buckeyes' recruiting board in 2021, flipping seem low. That said, the Ohio State staff has made it clear to him and his family that they're not going anywhere and will continue to grow their relationship as best they can and still hope to have Hancock on campus for an official visit in June, as previously planned."

Princess Anne five-star Tony Grimes; Nashville Ensworth four-star Andre Turrentine; and IMG Academy four-star Kamar Wilcoxson, a two-time Florida commit who is set to take an official visit to Ohio State on June 12-14.

Carolina Running Back Picks The Buckeyes

Ohio State's run of commitments continued when Cornelius (N.C.) William Amos Hough four-star running back Evan Pryor announced his decision just hours after Smith.

The 5-10, 190-pound Pryor – who is considered the sixth-best running back and No. 85 prospect overall in the class of 2021, having amassed 3,674 yards and 42 total touchdowns in his three-year varsity career – picked Ohio State over finalists Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Penn State and USC.

The Buckeyes are expected to take at least two running backs this cycle, and Pryor has been among the staff's top targets at the position since he landed an offer from assistant coach Tony Alford last February. The two worked together during an instructional camp in Columbus in mid-June and then caught up again when Pryor returned to campus for an unofficial visit for the 28-17 win over the Nittany Lions on Nov. 23.

Alford, Hartline and offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson also stopped by Pryor's high school on separate occasions during the January contact period, and those visits ended up being more significant than expected given Pryor's unofficial visit, set for March 18-20, was canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Ohio State also overcame a late push from the Tar Heels, as Pryor took several unofficial visits to Chapel Hill in the last few months given the campus' proximity to his hometown.

Moving forward, the staff will look to pair Pryor with either Garland (Texas) Lakeview Centennial five-star Camar Wheaton; Hopewell, Va., five-star TreVeyon Henderson; Matthews (N.C.) Weddington five-star Will Shipley; West Bloomfield, Mich., four-star Donovan Edwards; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star Lovasea Carroll; Lilburn (Ga.) Parkview four-star Cody Brown; or Cincinnati Roger Bacon four-star Corey Kiner.

Pryor becomes the 13th member of Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class, which extended its lead over Clemson for the nation's top-rated class with his commitment.

Michigan Running Back Among Final Spring Visitors

Ohio State hosted Edwards for a two-day unofficial visit on March 6-8.

While the 5-11, 190-pound Edwards – who is considered the third-best running back and No. 38 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – left Columbus without pledging his services to the Buckeyes, sources close to the program have shared their confidence in landing his pledge with Buckeye Sports Bulletin given his strong relationship with Day and Alford.

There's still a long way to go in Edwards' recruitment, as he plans to visit Georgia, LSU, Michigan and Oklahoma in the near future before making a decision over the summer, but the Buckeyes certainly rolled out the red carpet for him during this visit. He spent a considerable amount of time

with early enrollees such as quarterback C.J. Stroud, wide receivers Julian Fleming and Gee Scott, and offensive tackle Paris Johnson, and he even met with former cornerback Jeff Okudah, who was in the weight room preparing for Ohio State's March 25 Pro Day (which has since been postponed).

Edwards – who was joined on the trip by West Bloomfield head coach Ron Bellamy and 2022 running back Dillon Tatum – planned to return to campus with his father for the spring game, but that has obviously been canceled. The hope now is to welcome them back for an official visit once the recruiting restrictions are no longer in effect.

Oklahoma Running Back Enters Transfer Portal

With Ohio State sophomore running back Master Teague and Marcus Crowley out indefinitely with undisclosed injuries and only one healthy scholarship running back on the roster this spring in redshirt freshman Steele Chambers, the

Buckeyes may consider adding another player through the transfer portal for depth purposes.

A player to keep in mind is Oklahoma running back Trey Sermon, who on March 14 announced his intention to transfer.

Ohio State recruited Sermon as a four-star prospect from Marietta (Ga.) Sprayberry before landing a commitment from La Grange, Texas, four-star J.K. Dobbins. Sermon pledged his services to Oklahoma one month later.

In three seasons with the Sooners, Sermon rushed for 2,076 yards and 22 touchdowns. His junior season was cut short by a late-season knee injury, and he was supplanted in the starting lineup by junior Kennedy Brooks as a result.

If Sermon does choose to become a Buckeye, it won't be his first time in Ohio Stadium. He rushed for a team-leading 62 yards and pulled down a 10-yard touchdown pass in the Sooners' 31-16 win in 2017.

Continued On Page 18



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Heated Recruiting Battles With Clemson Continue

Continued From Page 17

Top Cornerback Target Commits To Clemson

Although he'd long been considered an Ohio State lean, Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett four-star cornerback Jordan Hancock committed to Clemson on March 11.

The 6-0, 170-pound Hancock is considered the sixth-best cornerback and No. 83 prospect overall in the class of 2021 and was arguably the Buckeyes' top target at the position heading into the spring. The Tigers surged following his unofficial visit for the program's Junior Day on March 7, though. He cited their proximity to home and overall focus on faith.

Hancock was expected to take an official visit to Ohio State in the coming months, and that trip is more than likely canceled following his announcement. But that won't stop Day, Coombs and linebackers coach/area recruiter Al Washington from trying their hardest to flip him from his pledge.

The Buckeyes are also heavily involved with Hancock's teammate, four-star linebacker Barrett Carter.

Four-Star Receiver Trims List To Two

Ohio State and Clemson are battling for several of the nation's top-rated prospects, including Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Cardinal Gibbons four-star wide receiver Troy Stellato, who listed the Buckeyes and Tigers as his final two schools on March 15.

The 6-0, 172-pound Stellato is considered the 25th-best wide receiver and No. 141 prospect overall in the class of 2021, having hauled in 42 catches for 727 yards and nine touchdowns for the Chiefs last season. He's one of the most sought-after prospects in the country, with 42 scholarship offers from programs such as Alabama, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Notre Dame, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee, Texas, Texas A&M, UCLA, USC, West Virginia and Wisconsin, among a long list of others.

Stellato has a strong relationship with Day, Hartline and offensive quality control coach Keenan Bailey, who is also a south Florida native. He's visited campus three times in the last year, including the previously mentioned win over Michigan State, and plans to make his decision in either June or July.

The Buckeyes already hold a pair of commitments at wide receiver in Philadelphia St. Joseph's four-star Marvin Harrison and Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star Jayden Ballard. The plan is to bring on a total of four players at the position, with Stellato and Steliacoom, Wash., five-star wide receiver Emeka Egbuka at the top of the priority chart.

Florida Linebacker Includes OSU Among Top Schools

Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star linebacker Dallas Turner included Ohio State in his top 10 on March 3 alongside Alabama, Florida, Florida State,

Georgia, Miami, Michigan, Oregon, Penn State and South Carolina.

The 6-4, 235-pound Turner is considered the 14th-best outside linebacker and No. 165 prospect overall in the class of 2021. He recorded 74 tackles, 18 tackles for loss and 15 sacks to help Fort Lauderdale American Heritage to the regional finals last fall. He transferred to St. Thomas Aquinas in January, joining a program that won the Class 7A state title and GEICO national championship one season ago.

The Buckeyes already hold a commitment from Ironton, Ohio, four-star linebacker Reid Carrico, while Jaylen Johnson is someone who could potentially develop into the Bullet position in the future, as well.

That allows the staff to be very selective if it chooses to bring on another player at the position, with Turner and the previously mentioned Carter, a four star out of Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett, at the top of the list.

Ohio State also views Turner as someone who could develop into a defensive end at the next level, which is why defensive line coach Larry Johnson is working hand in hand with Washington in his recruitment. Turner attended the Buckeyes' 73-14 win over Maryland last November and then landed an offer from Washington during the January contract period.

In-State Running Back Remains High On OSU

The aforementioned Kiner included Ohio State in his top 10 on March 6 alongside Cincinnati, Florida, Georgia, Louisville, LSU, Michigan, Penn State, Purdue and Texas A&M.

The 5-10, 205-pound Kiner is considered the 10th-best running back and No. 160 prospect overall in the class of 2021, after he rushed for 2,298 yards and 40 touchdowns to lead the Spartans to the regional semifinals last season. He also added nine receptions for 122 yards and another score, as well as 523 yards and three touchdowns as a punt and kick returner.

Alford extended a scholarship offer to Kiner last May, a few weeks after his unofficial visit for the annual spring game, while Day has also been involved in his recruitment in the months since. Both assistants stopped by Roger Bacon during the January contact period, at which time they explained the need for the Buckeyes to bring on two running backs in the current cycle.

Kiner does not appear to be close to making his college decision and will instead focus most of his attention this spring on track and field rather than recruiting. He's expected to return to campus for a game in the fall.

Kiner recently had a bit of fun with the recruiting process by revealing a list of his top five restaurants on Twitter before announcing his commitment to eat at Skyline Chili that evening.

Buckeyes Add In-State Walk-On

Glouster (Ohio) Trimble quarterback/defensive back Cameron Kittle announced on March 6 he has accepted a preferred walk-on opportunity at Ohio State.

The 6-0, 175-pound Kittle was a three-time all-state quarterback who led the Tomcats to the state playoffs in each of his three seasons as a starter. The Buckeyes already have seven quarterbacks on the roster, though, including starter Justin Fields; fifth-year senior Gunnar Hoak; early enrollees Jack Miller and C.J. Stroud; and walk-ons J.P. Andrade, Jagger LaRoe and Danny Vanatsky, so Kittle will begin his college career as a defensive back.

Kittle's relationship with the Ohio State staff dates back to last May when he was hosted on an unofficial visit by assistant director of player personnel Justin Perez, director of high school relations Ed Terwilliger and executive director for football relations Tim Hinton. He then returned for another unofficial visit for the Buckeyes' 42-0 win over Cincinnati in early September.

Other prospects set to join Ohio State

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A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1985

Ohio State fans expressed trepidation about Gahanna, Ohio, linebacker Karl Coles, a lineman who signed with the Buckeyes in the 1985 class. Without major recognition coming to Ohio State, Coles was buried a bit in Ohio State's class, but his high school coach warned against counting him out.

"He is the best we've ever coached at that position," Gahanna line coach Steve Morrison told BSB. "And the most impressive thing is that he hasn't reached his potential yet. I feel his better playing days are still ahead."

One characteristic that was not overlooked by recruiters from Michigan State, West Virginia, Kentucky and OSU was Coles' size. At 6-4 and 233 pounds, he had the physical attributes to play on both sides of the line.

"The OSU recruiters were telling me that I would play defensive tackle, but then some of the offensive people were telling me offense," Coles said. "I did play some offense in high school, and if they want me to play there I'll be happy. I just want to help out where I can."

30 Years Ago – 1990

Berwick (Pa.) High School's Sean Carden, recruited by Ohio State to play on the defensive line, was a throwback to the early days of football – from his crew cut right down to his black cleats.

Carden, who also played offensive tackle for the 14-1 Bulldogs, made no bones about what he liked to do on the football field.

"You put out the punishment more on defense," he told BSB after signing with the Buckeyes in February. "It's more aggressive. You're more laid-back as an offensive lineman."

The 6-2, 262-pound nose guard, a load for opposing offensive linemen his senior year, registered 68 tackles, seven quarterback sacks, one fumble recovery and a blocked punt despite being double- and triple-teamed throughout the season. He might have had even more tackles had he not missed two games due to a sprained ankle.

25 Years Ago – 1995

Eric "Big House" Smith was marked as a potential replacement for left tackle Korey Stringer following Stringer's decision to enter the NFL draft.

Smith, a 6-5, 310-pound, All-Ohio second-team offensive tackle out of Columbus Walnut Ridge High School, opted to stay close to home and spend his college years as a Buckeye.

Before committing to Ohio State, Smith considered Florida, Illinois, Minnesota and Kansas.

"Ohio State is very family-oriented, and I feel like I can succeed there both athletically and academically," Smith said shortly after signing with Ohio State. "I had my eyes on Florida

for a while, but I thought if I left here I would be the only one from Columbus on the team and I wouldn't be able to relate to anybody."

National recruiting expert Tom Lemming described Smith as a "big, massive offensive lineman with unusually quick feet for someone his size" and said that Smith had the chance to become a dominant player.

20 Years Ago – 2000

Ohio State accepted its third verbal commitment for the class of 2001 when Dayton Chaminade-Julienne junior defensive lineman Brandon McKinney committed to the Buckeyes on Feb. 28.

McKinney (6-4, 300) was considered one of Ohio's top 10 junior prospects. He joined two other Ohioans – Ironton linebacker Reggie Arden and Dublin Coffman center Adam Olds – in the burgeoning class.

"I was really honored that Ohio State offered me a scholarship this early," McKinney said. "I have always wanted to go to Ohio State. I've been to their camp the last three years, so I already know quite a bit about the school."

"I have a cousin, Christopher Perry, who lived with Michael Wiley and Mike told me a lot about it too."

15 Years Ago – 2005

Ever since taking over the helm of the Ohio State football team, Jim Tressel had made it known that his primary recruiting goal was to keep Ohio's top talent within the state's borders. Sometimes, though, his team's needs had to supersede his wishes.

Take the 2006 class, for instance. With three starting linebackers exhausting their eligibility following the 2005 season, Ohio State was in the market for linebackers, but Ohio's class wasn't especially deep at the position.

Ohio State had already landed a pledge from the state's top linebacker, Ross Homan of Coldwater. That meant that Tressel would have to look outside of the state, at players such as A.J. Edds of Greenwood, Ind. Edds included Ohio State along with Indiana, Michigan, Notre Dame, Purdue and Tennessee in his list of suitors and was eyeing a visit to Columbus.

"They're one of my top schools," Edds told BSB. "I get little handwritten notes from Coach Tressel once a week just checking in, and I'll call and e-mail him periodically to talk a little bit and keep the communication and the relationship going. I'd say for the most part they've been recruiting me pretty hard."

10 Years Ago – 2010

Ohio State broke a four-month dry spell for verbal commitments in the class of 2011 in mid-March when Ohio offensive linemen Chris Carter of Cleveland John F. Kennedy and

Antonio Underwood of Shaker Heights, Ohio, became the third and fourth members of the Buckeyes' recruiting class.

Both issued verbal commitments March 15 after taking unofficial visits to the OSU campus.

The 6-4, 325-pound Carter issued his commitment to Tressel in person and in the process received a surprise.

"I think he was the only person that was happier than me," Carter told BSB. "It was a great moment."

Five Years Ago – 2015

Ohio State's class of 2016 continued its pursuit of a No. 1 recruiting ranking with the addition of Washington (D.C.) St. John's College four-star defensive end Terrell Hall (6-5, 225 pounds).

The nation's No. 33 defensive end and No. 270 overall prospect made his announcement the evening of March 2 on Twitter. He said the other schools chasing him – a list that included Clemson, Iowa, Kentucky, LSU, Maryland, Michigan, Notre Dame, Penn State, Tennessee and UCLA – couldn't compare to the Buckeyes.

"I always had Ohio State at the top in my mind, but I wasn't sure how it would compare to other schools," Hall told Scout. "I started looking at other schools and they were telling me what they can do for me, and it wouldn't match up to what Ohio State can provide."

"It is basically the combination of what Ohio State offers on and off the field. It's not only on the field with what they can do for you, but what they can do for you if you don't make it to the next level. They can help provide you with a job and get your career moving."

One Year Ago – 2019

Three days after Ohio State offered Trey Leroux, the offensive tackle from Norwalk, Ohio, pulled the trigger.

The 6-8, 320-pounder picked up an offer March 8 from the Buckeyes during an unofficial visit for the team's second practice of spring camp. On March 11, Leroux took to Twitter as he announced his commitment to OSU.

"I am proud to announce that I have decided to continue my academic and athletic career at The Ohio State University," he said in a tweet. "Thank you Coach (Ryan) Day and staff for the opportunity."

Leroux was the seventh member of the 2020 recruiting class. He was the Buckeyes' fourth offensive lineman and the third from Ohio. He joined Cincinnati Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7, 285), Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional four-star offensive guard Luke Wypler (6-3, 285) and Cincinnati Elder offensive tackle Jakob James (6-5, 275) in the group.

this summer as preferred walk-ons include New Albany, Ohio, tight end Andrew Gurd; Austintown (Ohio) Fitch offensive tackle Kyle Moore; Lancaster, Ohio, offensive guard Quinton Burke; and Cleveland Heights, Ohio, cornerback Andrew Moore.

Recruiting Notes From Around The Country

• Ohio State five-star defensive end commit Jack Sawyer was seen warming up without restrictions prior to Pickerington (Ohio) North's Division I district basketball finals on March 7. He did not play a single game for the Panthers this season

after tearing his MCL in the state football playoffs last fall.

• Four-star defensive tackle commit Michael Hall announced on March 12 that he will play in the Under Armour All-America Game, which will take place in January 2021. Hall, who hails from Streetsboro, Ohio, pledged his services to the Buckeyes on Feb. 1.

• Ohio State extended a scholarship offer on March 4 to Bowling Green (Ky.) South Warren four-star athlete Jantzen Dunn. The Buckeyes have since picked up a pair of 247Sports crystal ball predictions for Dunn, who projects as a defensive back

in college.

• Grimes, the nation's top-rated cornerback, will announce his college decision on Dec. 1. He has narrowed his list of offers to Alabama, Clemson, LSU, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State, South Carolina, Texas, Texas A&M, Virginia and Virginia Tech.

• Egbuka told 247Sports reporter Brandon Huffman on March 10 that he's in the process of setting up official visits to Clemson, LSU, Ohio State and Oklahoma and an unofficial visit to Washington. The Huskies hold 50 percent of 247Sports' crys-

tal ball predictions, while the Buckeyes hold 25 percent. The other 25 percent is currently undecided.

• Wheaton, the running back out of Texas, took unofficial visits to Oklahoma and Texas on March 9 and 10, respectively. Ohio State has yet to receive a visit, though it's worth noting Day dropped by Wheaton's high school in late January.

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily.

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1960 Buckeyes Reflect On Lone National Title

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Sixty years.

That's how long it has been since Ohio State won a national championship in men's basketball.

John F. Kennedy had not yet been elected president. Muhammad Ali, who was still known as Cassius Clay, had not yet won a professional fight, and the Beatles had not yet stepped on U.S. soil the last time the Buckeyes were national champs on the hardwood.

The 1960 national champion Ohio State men's basketball team was honored at halftime of the final home game for the 2020 Buckeyes, which was a 71-63 comeback victory against Illinois on March 5.

Togetherness

The game has changed considerably in 60 years, but the team aspect of coming together as a unit is as important as ever.

"More than anything, when you see them play well with good chemistry – chemistry is something that you can't buy, it has to be between those young men," 1960 senior captain Joe Roberts said of the current Buckeyes. "In this case, now having so much to play for to hopefully have as a future. But when they can put that aside and just make sure they make the passes, those things that make guys feel great about being on that team with you, it makes a world of difference in

how effective they can be."

Jerry Lucas, who averaged 26.3 points and 16.4 rebounds on 63.7 percent shooting as a sophomore in 1960, immediately followed up Roberts' point by emphasizing the importance of having a strong bond in the locker room.

"That was a great asset for this group," Lucas said of his team. "I mean, we were friends. We were close. We played the game the way it should be played – there was no selfishness on our team."

"Everybody likes to shoot – Mel (Nowell) more than most people," Lucas joked. "But, I mean, we worked so well together and there was no selfishness on our team. And it was just fun to be associated with them. We've been friends for more than 60 years, and I'm sure we'll continue to be friends until they shut the lid on us."

The team's other senior captain, Dick Furry, expressed a similar message. The Columbus West product averaged 11.5 points and 10.7 rebounds as a junior but sacrificed his role for the sake of the team. With sophomores John Havlicek and Lucas stepping into prominent roles, Furry averaged 5.1 points and 3.3 boards as a senior for the national champion team.

"One of the things that our team had that any team, including the people playing for Chris (Holtmann), will need is we were good friends and got along well," Furry said. "We've had a ball yesterday and today. The stories that we've retold



KEVIN DYE

RAREFIED AIR – The Ohio State men's basketball program celebrated the 60th anniversary of its lone national championship on March 5.

are kind of unbelievable. That's one of the most important things that we had as a team, and any team coming along needs to have that."

Championship Expectations

Under head coach Chris Holtmann, Ohio State advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament in his first two seasons and was on its way to the 2020

tourney before it was canceled due to concerns regarding the coronavirus.

While Ohio State has exceeded expectations in each of Holtmann's first three seasons, the program has shown the potential for more. Lucas was asked what the goal should be for the modern-day Scarlet and Gray.

"The hope for any Ohio State team is to win the national championship," Lucas

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said. "Obviously, that hasn't happened in a while, but that has to be the hope. I know Coach Holtmann would like that to happen, and all the players would like to have that happen. I mean, this is a talented team. They have some good players, and they've done some great things. They've been a little iffy at times, but they have talent, especially defensively. When they clamp guys down defensively, they play well."

While the current Ohio State squad will have to wait until 2021 for its next chance to make a run for a national title, the last team to bring the No. 1 crown to Columbus shared some insight into the significance of that accomplishment.

"It's the realization that you've done something that very, very, very few people in life get the opportunity to do," Lucas said. "Winning a national championship is unique. It puts you in a very elite group of people. And this was an elite group of people before we ever won the national championship."

Lucas made a good point about how a national championship places a team in rarefied air, especially considering that Ohio State has not been able to duplicate the feat in 60 years. Some former players may like to boast about how great they were or how their team was the best ever. What stuck with the '60 Buckeyes were the relationships they formed and the confidence that their success gave them.

"Winning is not something that you brag about," Roberts said. "It just gives you a positive feeling. Anything you try to accomplish, you know you can do it. I wouldn't want to be a mathematician because I don't know math, but in my area, I just feel like I can do anything that anybody else in my area can do. It gives you an inwardly positive approach to life and knowing you can make it."

They may not have all been mathematicians or professional basketball players, but the 1960 championship team was filled with student-athletes who went on to accomplish quite a bit in their respective fields.

The champs went on to achieve much success in business, basketball, coaching and life, but the elation from winning a national championship always stood out. Nowell, who averaged 13.1 points in 1959-60, said he saw himself running around like a little kid when he watched the film of the final buzzer of the 75-55 victory against California in the championship game.

"It's something you carry within you and that has lasted in terms of what I feel about what we accomplished," Nowell said. "It was simply the best that you can feel."

Furry emphasized how the friendships built throughout the team made the Buckeyes a strong, unified group and how that closeness transcends winning.

"This group of guys is probably the closest group of friends that I have from that day," he said. "It's because of what we did together as a team and almost as a family. For this week we have two of the spouses of the deceased teammates (Havlicek and Larry Siegfried) here with us. They've always been invited, and I think it will always be that way as long as we're able to continue walking."

Freshman Eligibility

The Buckeyes' three leading scorers in 1960, Havlicek, Lucas and Nowell were sophomores in their first season of eligibility due to a rule that did not grant



OHIO STATE BASKETBALL/TWITTER

CHAMPS – The 1960 Ohio State men's basketball team celebrated the first and only national championship in program history following a 75-55 win over California on March 19, 1960.

freshmen eligibility.

"Things are so different today," Lucas said. "I mean, you know Joe and I were talking today, if we came out today, and in a few years, some of us might be making \$40 million a year. When I came into the NBA, I made \$30,000 a year, and that was a really good salary. I was the No. 1 draft choice, and that was big money in those days."

"Everything has changed, it's totally different. The rules change from various times throughout history, and there may be another one on the horizon that will change everything."

"I wish there was a rule that kept players in school for at least three years. That's the way it is in baseball, and football has that rule. I wish basketball had the same rule, but it's never going to change, I'm sure. If anything, they'll be allowed to leave (for the NBA) from high school, because of the circumstances and what's happened in the past."

Roberts agreed with Lucas that student-athletes should spend at least more than one year in college and cautioned against skipping postsecondary education, citing the importance of setting oneself up for life after basketball.

"That's the worst thing that can happen to a kid," Roberts said of going straight to the NBA out of high school. "He's not physically mature. As Charles Barkley would say, 'It's a grown man's league.' You take a kid 16, 17, coming out of high school, he's not ready for the physicality of NBA, nor mentally is he ready. And you're going to find a lot of these guys who are one-and-done, in three years they'll be done with their careers."

"They will have no education, no money, and they're just out there, because they have not prepared themselves for the future. Because basketball, at most, is going to last 10 years. These guys who are one-and-done, in three years they are going to be looking for something to do, and they're going to be disappointed."

Nowell expressed concerns regarding

the difficulties that accompany the transition from high school to college. He mentioned the fact that Ohio State freshman guard D.J. Carton took a leave of absence from the team to take care of his mental health, applauding Carton's courage to speak up.

"The coaches get the benefit of those who are mature enough, and some are, and some aren't," Nowell said. "And I think we've had that take place this year to show just how difficult it is to make this transition. And yet, the stakes are so high now. So, I think, as far as coaches playing freshmen, they need to be able to handle them in a way that recognizes they're freshmen, and they need to treat them off the court, as well as on the court (in a way) that helps their growth take place because it is a transition, there is no question, high school to playing at this level."

"I think the perfect example we all are dealing with now is this young man, D.J. Carton, who's an extremely good talent. I'm so happy that he's taking this time to make sure that he feels better about himself and what his future is going to be. And so I think the transition is so difficult that coaches have to be extremely capable and make sure the people that communicate with these young people are good at it, so that they don't harm them while they're going through such a difficult adjustment."

Remembering Hondo

An integral part of both the 1960 championship team and the history of Ohio State men's basketball, Havlicek passed away on April 25, 2019. Known as Hondo, he averaged 12.2 points and 7.3 rebounds per game for the national championship-bound Buckeyes as a sophomore in 1960.

Havlicek will always have a special place in the hearts of his teammates.

"John was a consummate team player," Roberts said of Havlicek. "He never cried, you never heard him say anything, but when he played, he had an abundance of energy. When he was growing up, he didn't have a bicycle, because he lived too close to the freeway and his parents didn't want him riding a bicycle because he would get injured, but his friends had bicycles. So, he would run, while his friends rode the bikes, and that's why he developed his endurance."

"We used to work out in St John Arena in the summertime. He would come from Canada after fishing for a whole month, and he would outrun all of us. Never worked out basketball-wise, but he just had that energy and endurance. And I told him one day, 'John, when you retire, I am going to become a surgeon. I'm going to cut your heart out, because I think you've got a motor in there. You're not real.' That's the kind of energy he had."



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Andre Wesson Leaves Legacy Of Resilience At OSU

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As a senior at Westerville (Ohio) South, Andre Wesson was an integral part of a D-I state championship team but had not yet received a coveted Ohio State offer.

Other programs were trying to persuade Wesson to commit, while an offer from Thad Matta and the Buckeyes seemed less and less likely as high-school graduation drew closer.

One of the programs that sought out Wesson was Butler, where Chris Holtmann was at the helm. With his heart set on a career in scarlet and gray, despite no offer, Wesson did not return Holtmann's text messages as he waited for an offer from the Buckeyes, which came on March 22, 2016.

Before Wesson's sophomore season in Columbus, Holtmann was hired to replace Matta on June 9, 2017. The soft-spoken wing from Westerville had some explaining to do.

"I was actually scared, really, because, I mean, that's your coach now," Wesson said. "Man, I definitely should have answered."

"It's been fun. Him recruiting me, and me not picking his school, but him ending up becoming my coach, it's been crazy really, but it's been fun."

During a postgame ceremony on the court following Wesson's senior night,

which was a 71-63 come-from-behind victory against Illinois, Holtmann grabbed the microphone to introduce his lone scholarship senior.

"There's not one day that went by that we, as a coaching staff, didn't say, you know what, maybe we didn't recruit him – we tried to recruit him to Butler – but maybe we didn't recruit him to Ohio State, but he's our guy from day one," Holtmann said. "We've loved coaching you."

When watching Ohio State, it quickly becomes obvious why Holtmann and his staff love coaching Wesson, whom his coach referred to as "one of the toughest players we've ever coached."

The vast improvement Wesson displayed during his Buckeye tenure demonstrates exactly why coaches are fond of the 6-6 wing, who prides himself on his defense.

As a freshman for Matta, Wesson played only 11.6 minutes per game for a 17-15 team that failed to make the NCAA Tournament. He averaged 2.3 points and 1.2 rebounds per contest while shooting 36.5 percent from the field.

His role expanded once Holtmann took over, but as a forward, Wesson took a back seat to starters Keita Bates-Diop and Jae'Sean Tate. Wesson averaged 2.9 points, 1.8 boards and 1.1 assists in 18.5 minutes per game, shooting just 37.9 percent from the floor and 28.6 percent from three for the 25-9 Buckeyes.

After recovering from a possible heart condition that cost him most of



KEVIN DYE

ROLE PLAYER – Forward Andre Wesson averaged 5.7 points, 2.8 rebounds and 1.3 assists in 127 games during his four-year career at Ohio State.

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OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

the offseason entering his sophomore season, Wesson struggled to find his shot throughout the season but earned minutes because of his excellent defense.

Following his first NCAA Tournament appearance and a healthier offseason, Wesson became an excellent two-way contributor for a 20-15 Ohio State team in 2018-19.

With increased minutes came a spike in production for Wesson as a junior. The former three-star recruit scored 8.6 points per game, grabbed 4.1 rebounds and dished 1.8 assists in 30.0 minutes per contest.

Wesson's field-goal percentage also increased from 37.9 percent to 43.0 percent, while his three-point rate jumped from 28.6 percent to 33.6 percent as a junior. He also elevated his scoring output against several tough Big Ten teams, dropping 22 on Purdue, scoring 16 against Minnesota and notching 15 against Penn State and Indiana in back-to-back games.

Holtmann was proud of the increased production and efficiency from his wing, but he tasked Wesson with taking his efficiency to the next level.

Wesson answered the bell, shooting 46.2 percent on field goals and 42.2 percent on three-pointers as a senior. He also provided a career-high 9.2 points per game with 3.9 boards and 1.9 assists in 30.9 minutes per contest for the 21-10 Scarlet and Gray.

The senior also boasted big scoring outings against Morgan State (19), Penn State (15) and Indiana (15). Perhaps most impressively, Wesson became a marksman from beyond the arc, knocking down 1.5 of 3.5 attempts per game.

"I tell our guys all the time, come watch him in shooting drills, his mechanics are impeccable," Holtmann said of Wesson following senior night. "There's a reason those numbers went from 29 percent as a sophomore to 42. And he's the reason – the work that he put in."

The resilience and hard work displayed by Wesson was not lost on his teammates. Junior guard C.J. Walker, who joined the team as a transfer prior to Wesson's junior season, witnessed how much he improved as an upperclassman.

"He's been through a lot you know into his college career and going through different coaching staffs, different teammates and things like that. He's like that survivor, I mean, kind of last-man-standing type of thing," Walker said. "He gives everything that he has. He's just willing to sacrifice his body for the team to win games. He stepped up plenty this season, making shots, defensively, guarding the best players and things like that, so he's just built for that moment. It's kind of self-explanatory, his actions show up."

After a skid where the Buckeyes dropped six of seven contests, they had to turn to their senior leader for guidance. The team took on Wesson's mentality of hard work and resilience, ripping off nine wins over its next 11 games.

After starting 2-6 in the Big Ten, Ohio State finished 11-9 in conference play. Wesson was asked what changed for the young squad.

"I don't really think anything changed, I just think we stayed committed," Wesson said. "Obviously, you're going to have ups and downs during the season. The biggest thing is how you handle the ups and downs. We've handled it well and kept that confidence."

Because of everything he's been through, Wesson said having so much

success as a senior means a lot to him.

"Obviously, I've been through a lot these four years, and not just injuries, so it's been a challenge," Wesson said. "But my guys, my teammates and coaches, they've all been there for me and pushed me to keep going every single day. I couldn't ask for a better four years here."

Winning games behind Wesson's leadership did not come as a surprise to his younger brother, junior big man Kaleb Wesson, who won the state title with Andre in high school.

"All the work Dre put in, and everything you see now, he's a survivor, like a warrior," Kaleb said of his brother. "He does all the little things for our team, and I feel like that's what helps teams win, a glue-guy like that."

When Andre committed to Ohio State on April 13, 2016, which became known as Mamba Day, it would have been difficult to envision the importance he would have on Buckeye basketball. That date became Mamba Day because Kobe Bryant a.k.a. Black Mamba, scored 60 points in his final NBA game, which was a 101-96 comeback victory against the Jazz.

Inspired by Bryant, Andre switched his jersey number from No. 5 to No. 24. Following his tragic death on Jan. 26, Andre said Bryant was still with him.

"He's one of the main reasons why I chose 24, committing on Mamba Day and everything," Wesson said. "He had a big impact on everybody in the basketball world for what he's done and the way he carried himself. That's definitely something I try to carry with me too."

Nearly four years since Andre committed to Ohio State, the program has undergone a complete turnaround. When he joined the Buckeyes, they were left out of the NCAA Tournament. As Andre departs, March Madness is once again an expectation for the team, although the Buckeyes, along with the rest of college basketball, will not be participating this year.

"It's been a lot of work, a lot of hard work and just committing, committing to the coaches, committing to the university that we want to put Ohio State back on the map. We want to put them back on the front page," he said. "And it's been fun and I'm glad we've been able to do that for sure."

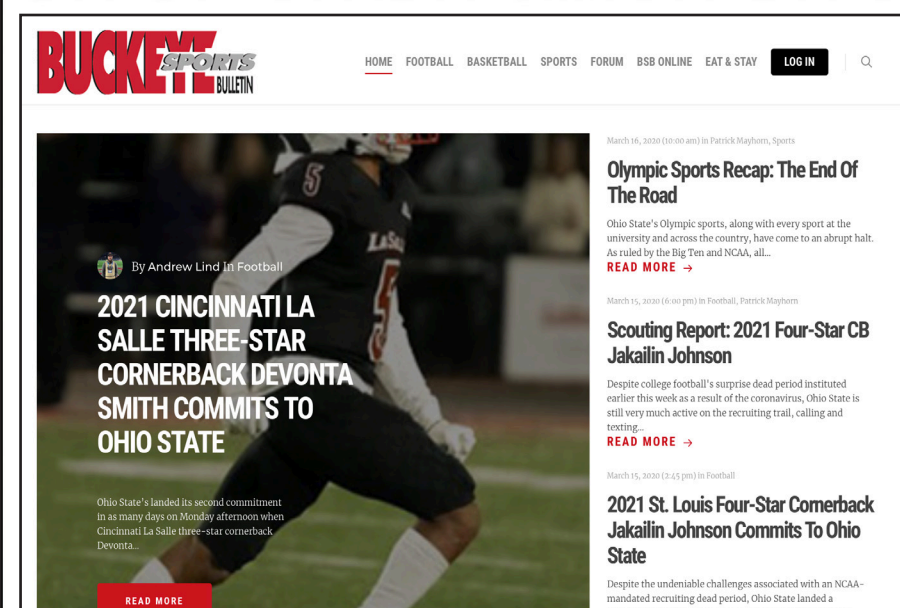
While Wesson is content in his decision to become a Buckeye, Holtmann could not be more grateful that he was able to coach the two-way wing, albeit in a roundabout way after Andre never responded to his texts at Butler.

"Andre, he's the ultimate team guy that can do a lot of different things and do a lot of different things well," Holtmann said. "He's an example of tremendous development and maturation as a player. You don't always see that. Just look at his numbers from year to year. They typify a guy who is really committed to developing and growing his game."

How will Andre Wesson be remembered at Ohio State? To some, as a survivor. To others, as a warrior. But perhaps, most of all, as a guy who got in the gym and went to work.

"I've definitely grown a lot over these four years. I'm always trying to get better, always trying to learn new things, get in the gym and try to become the best player that I can be," Wesson said. "That's just something that's really been instilled in me from a young age. I'm not the tallest guy, not the fastest, can't jump the highest, so I've just got to get in the gym and work."

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OSU Senior Walk-On Hummer Saves Best For Last

Danny Hummer made the most of his first collegiate start in what he didn't know at the time was his final game.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

The senior guard, six years removed from leading nearby Upper Arlington to the state final, made the opening basket on a drive against Illinois freshman standout Kofi Cockburn (7-0, 290) despite giving away a foot and 115 pounds.

"I got the opportunity. It was going up, glad it went in," Hummer said.

"He does work on our guys on scout team all the time. I'm glad he did it on somebody else," OSU coach Chris Holtmann said.

For Hummer, a walk-on, it was his only shot of the game.

He played the first four minutes in the home finale, a 71-63 victory for the No. 19 Buckeyes over the No. 23 Illini at Value City Arena on March 5.

"It was a war," Hummer joked afterward. "No, it was special to be out there with my guys. It's a great opportunity, and I'll remember it for a long time."

Holtmann starts his seniors in their last home games. It's especially poignant



HONORARY START – Senior walk-on Danny Hummer started and scored the first basket of Ohio State's 71-63 win over Illinois on March 5.

KEVIN DYE



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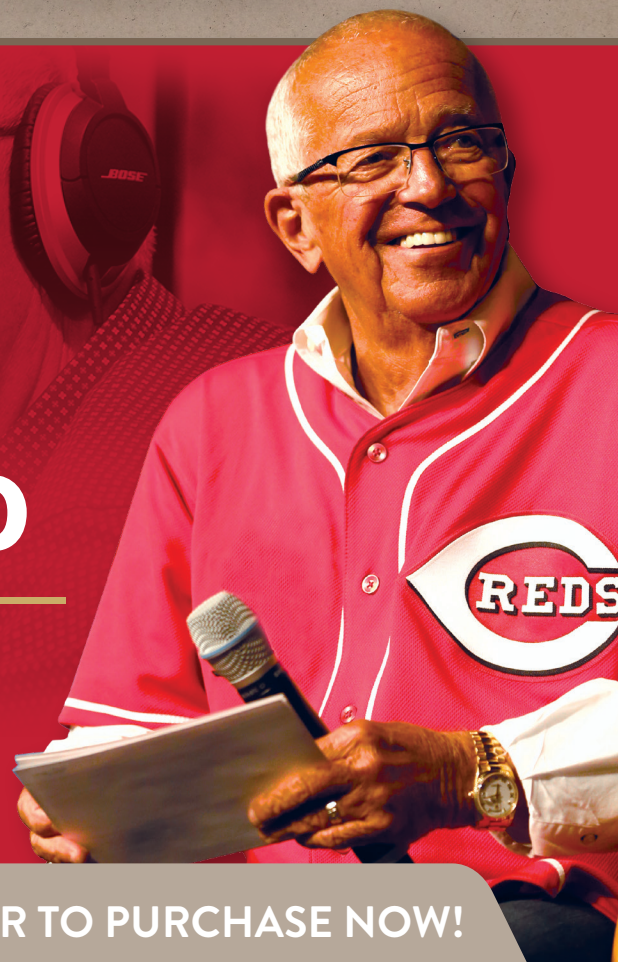
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2019-20 Ohio State Men's Basketball Statistics

21-10 Overall (11-9 Big Ten)
Statistics through games of March 8

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									O-D	T-Avg.						
Kaleb Wesson	31-31	915-29.5	136-305	.446	45-106	.425	117-160	.731	73-215	288-9.3	96-3	60	77	31	23	434-14.0
Duane Washington	28-15	697-24.9	108-268	.403	55-140	.393	50-60	.833	6-71	77-2.8	31-0	40	37	2	11	321-11.5
D.J. Carton	20-3	478-23.9	71-149	.477	24-60	.400	41-54	.759	10-46	56-2.8	38-0	59	52	8	13	207-10.4
Andre Wesson	29-23	895-30.9	90-195	.462	43-102	.422	44-55	.800	37-76	113-3.9	75-5	56	43	12	9	267-9.2
C.J. Walker	31-29	900-29.0	94-220	.427	27-84	.321	56-69	.812	9-87	96-3.1	77-1	107	54	2	40	271-8.7
Kyle Young	25-25	571-22.8	72-123	.585	2-13	.154	42-64	.656	51-93	144-5.8	48-0	23	14	13	8	188-7.5
Luther Muhammad	30-28	750-25.0	62-162	.383	34-98	.347	51-60	.850	14-54	68-2.3	54-1	39	32	2	30	209-7.0
E.J. Liddell	31-0	516-16.6	71-154	.461	5-26	.192	61-85	.718	35-82	117-3.8	59-0	14	29	29	13	208-6.7
Justin Ahrens	26-0	261-10.0	26-62	.419	23-57	.404	1-2	.500	8-27	35-1.3	22-0	6	11	1	2	76-2.9
Alonzo Gaffney	17-0	114-6.7	13-23	.565	1-6	.167	3-8	.375	5-19	24-1.4	21-1	2	12	4	1	30-1.8
Ibrahima Diallo	8-0	40-5.0	5-13	.385	0-0	.000	0-2	.000	8-7	15-1.9	6-0	0	4	3	0	10-1.3
Danny Hummer	13-1	42-3.2	4-11	.364	2-7	.286	1-2	.500	1-2	3-0.2	4-0	6	4	0	5	11-0.8
Harrison Hookfin	8-0	21-2.6	1-5	.200	0-1	.000	0-0	.000	3-2	5-0.6	0-0	0	5	0	1	2-0.3
TEAM									54-53	107				20		
Ohio State	31	6200	753-1690	.446	261-700	.373	467-621	.752	314-834	1148-37.0	531-11	412	394	107	156	2234-72.1
Opponents	31	6200	688-1733	.397	224-684	.327	351-508	.691	285-697	982-31.7	578-11	338	379	95	154	1951-62.9

for a mop-up player such as Hummer, who was joined by usual senior starter Andre Wesson on the court to start the game.

Last season, seniors C.J. Jackson and Keyshawn Woods were in the starting lineup alongside seldom-used Joey Lane, who opened the game by missing a three-pointer.

Another Holtmann tradition is addressing the seniors in front of the crowd after the game before allowing the seniors to speak.

He spoke fondly of coming to Ohio State at the same time as Hummer following the 2016-17 season. Holtmann arrived from Butler after Thad Matta was fired.

Hummer spent three seasons at Air Force after graduating from Upper Arlington. His first year was at the academy's prep school, and he played in only 10 games as a freshman and one the next for the Falcons before deciding to transfer.

"For those who know me, the hardest decision I had to make in my life was when I decided to leave the Air Force Academy and come to Ohio State," he said on-court after the Illinois game. "And the reason it was so hard was because I had to pick up and start all over from scratch.

"You know that ended up being the best decision I ever made because of those guys right here," he said, pointing to his teammates.

After redshirting the 2017-18 season to fulfill NCAA transfer rules, he averaged 2.3 minutes and 0.2 points in nine games last season. Hummer finished this season playing 42 minutes (3.2 average). He scored 11 points (0.8) and had three rebounds (0.2).

Holtmann praised Hummer's character.

"All of you know when we got here we were a little bit low on numbers, and one of the first names that we heard about was this guy named Danny Hummer who was at Air Force but played locally," the coach told the crowd. "I can't say enough about him. He has been the consummate team guy from day one. He leads our scout team. You saw the first four minutes. He's pretty dang good at doing it, isn't he?"

"I'm so proud of him. He got his degree from The Ohio State University last year. He's in graduate school. He's been a tremendous teammate and a tremendous addition."

Hummer appreciated the opportunity to play for his hometown school.

"Six years ago if you'd have told me I'd be here today, I would have told you you

OSU Men's Basketball Signees & 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

were crazy," he said. "Just to be able to be a part of the team that has the potential to make three NCAA Tournament appearances."

He spoke those words the day before the Illinois game.

Unfortunately, the Buckeyes never had a chance to compete in the tournament when the NCAA abruptly pulled the plug on the season on March 12 because of the coronavirus pandemic, hours before the Buckeyes were to play Purdue in the Big Ten tournament in Indianapolis.

Hummer did not play in the March 8 regular-season finale at Michigan State, so the game vs. Illinois was his farewell. There's a chance he and Wesson could be granted an extra season by the NCAA because as seniors their careers were cut short.

Hummer posted a message on his Twitter account shortly after the season was scrubbed:

"You know we start the first week of June preparing for the month of March. This sucks. It's terrible what's going on in the world but it really shows you to not take anything for granted and live and love in the moment cause that stuff can be taken away in the blink of an eye."

Regardless of any NCAA ruling, there will be a Hummer competing for the Buckeyes next season. His sister Emily has committed to play for the women's golf team beginning in the fall.

Walk This Way

Holtmann said he doesn't get stressed thinking about the consequences of starting players such as Lane and Hummer in meaningful games at the end of the season.

When he was beginning his head-coaching career at Gardner-Webb, he decided he was not going to start a senior walk-on but changed his mind at the urging of assistant coach Takayo Siddle, who

played at G-W when Holtmann was an assistant there.

"He said, 'Coach, it really matters. Really,'" Holtmann said. "I've done it since that point on. He had just got done playing so I think he brought that perspective too."

"I think they really look forward to it, especially when you're talking specifically about a walk-on who's not ever played."

Holtmann said G-W jumped to a 23-0 lead in that game with his walk-on starter.

"That probably confirmed my decision for me even more," he said. "That validated it, for sure. It's a morale boost too."

Thought For The Day

Holtmann gave a shout-out to OSU football coach Ryan Day after freshman guard and Illinois native E.J. Liddell torched the Illini for 17 points, 11 rebounds and a humungous block as he stepped up in the absence of injured forward Kyle Young.

Day had visited the locker room after the 77-63 win over Michigan on March 1.

"He actually looked at E.J. and said, 'Hey, listen, I see you getting better,' because Ryan watches a lot of our games just like I watch all of his games."

"He talked about every guy's path is different and you've got to own your own

BIG Men's Basketball

	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Maryland	14	6	.700	24	7	.774
Michigan State	14	6	.700	22	9	.710
Wisconsin	14	6	.700	21	10	.677
Illinois	13	7	.650	21	10	.677
Ohio State	11	9	.550	21	10	.677
Penn State	11	9	.550	21	10	.677
Iowa	11	9	.550	20	11	.645
Rutgers	11	9	.550	20	11	.645
Michigan	10	10	.500	19	12	.613
Indiana	9	11	.450	20	12	.625
Purdue	9	11	.450	16	15	.516
Minnesota	8	12	.400	15	16	.484
Northwestern	3	17	.150	8	23	.258
Nebraska	2	18	.100	7	25	.219

March 3 Scores

Michigan State 79, Penn State 71
Rutgers 78, Maryland 67
Purdue 77, Iowa 68

March 4 Scores

Indiana 72, Minnesota 67
Wisconsin 63, Northwestern 48

March 5 Scores

Michigan 82, Nebraska 58
Ohio State 71, Illinois 63

March 7 Scores

Wisconsin 60, Indiana 56
Rutgers 71, Purdue 68
Northwestern 80, Penn State 69

March 8 Scores

Maryland 83, Michigan 70
Minnesota 107, Nebraska 75
Michigan State 80, Ohio State 69
Illinois 78, Iowa 76

March 11 Scores

Minnesota 74, Northwestern 57
Indiana 89, Nebraska 64

path and sometimes guys figure it out a little earlier. Sometimes guys figure it out a little bit later."

Always A Champion

In the previous Court Report of March 7, while noting the 1960 NCAA championship being honored during the Illinois game, it was reported that Gary Gearhart had passed away in 2001.

That was a shock to him since he is alive and well and attended the reunion at Value City Arena to the cheers of the crowd.

It's no surprise that squad is so revered. Not only is the group the only national champs for the program, but they've all had successful careers and lives post-basketball.

Holtmann made sure his current team understood they were in the presence of Buckeye basketball royalty.

"They came to our shootaround," he said of the 1960 team. "It was really a phenomenal experience for all of us."

Holtmann also mentioned that he'd seen Jerry Lucas at several games over the years, including the one vs. the Wolverines.

"It's pretty cool to have him around," Holtmann said.

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Tournament Momentum Ends To Coronavirus

Ohio State was set on building on its impressive run through the Big Ten tournament and making an upset path through the NCAA tournament, where it was projected to be a six seed by ESPN.

The Buckeyes were winners of 10 of

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

their last 13 games and made it all the way to the tournament final before losing to Maryland, which was projected to be an NCAA tournament one seed, and was doing it all with the youngest team in the conference and one of the youngest rosters in the country.

"I don't think a lot of people projected us to get this far, especially in the Big Ten tournament," sophomore guard Janai Crooms said after the loss to the Terrapins on March 8. "Getting this far with a young team, we can do a lot of big things in the NCAA tournament. If we just stay together, keep our mind-set all on the same page, we could do some great things."

But this team doesn't get its chance to do those great things, at least not this season.

Due to the growing concerns about the coronavirus, the NCAA women's tournament was canceled, and Ohio State was forced to look to the future.

"It was shocking to many of us – to everyone," sophomore forward Dorka Juhasz said. "It's kind of heartbreaking because I feel like our team played the best basketball of the whole season in the past few weeks. Obviously the Big Ten tournament, we made a great run so we were really excited to play and see where we can get there with that performance

with this young team.

"It is sad because everybody was so excited and we worked so hard this season. Obviously, every team did. We were really excited to play."

Though the players were stunned by the news, after days of continued suspensions and cancellations from various other sports at multiple levels, head coach Kevin McGuff could see the writing on the wall.

"Certainly, I was kind of preparing for this just based on the events of these past couple days and how quickly things seem to have changed," McGuff said. "And certainly, I feel like people made the right decisions in this case. And putting the safety of the student-athletes and the people that would have been involved at the tournament, had it gone on, putting that first and foremost was the most important thing."

"It was certainly the right decision. Unfortunate. Disappointed. Our kids played so well at the end of the year. I really wanted to see what we could accomplish in the NCAA tournament because I really loved how we were playing and all the progress that we had made. But you know, sometimes things like this happen that we can't control."

Ohio State finished the season with a 21-12 record, an 11-7 record in the Big Ten and three wins against teams that finished the season in the top 25. It was a team destined for the Big Dance despite having just one upperclassman who received significant minutes and having five freshmen in its regular rotation.

But is it too soon to reflect on a season that was a clear leg up on expectations, and one that shows plenty of optimism for the future?

"I was talking to my coaches, about this season and everything, but it's just kind of hard to reflect right now," Juhasz said. "You know, I kind of feel empty without finishing it, obviously. We did a great job at the Big Ten tournament, even if we couldn't get the win against Maryland, but



SONNY BROCKWAY

MISSED OPPORTUNITY – Ohio State and junior guard Braxtin Miller will have to wait another season to prove their talents in the NCAA tournament.

with this young team, I feel like we just improved so much.

"It needs a little more time for me to just reflect on how we played and everything, but it was definitely a great season and obviously with so many young freshmen and sophomores, it's just really exciting to see the next year."

The Buckeyes lose just one senior,

forward Savitha Jayaraman, heading into next season. Jayaraman played only one minute this season, the final minute of senior night against Northwestern, but was a strong leadership figure for a team that was in need of experience.

But moving forward, Ohio State is set to return 100 percent of its scoring from this season and is bringing in a pair of local three-star commits in guard Anyssa Jones and forward Gabby Hutcherson, as well as five-star point guard Kateri Poole, all of which could help in extending the

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2019-20 Ohio State Women's Basketball Statistics

21-12 Overall (11-7 Big Ten)
Statistics through games of March 8

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									O-D	T-Avg.						
Dorka Juhasz	31-31	942-30.4	160-336	.476	40-101	.396	50-94	.532	95-197	292-9.4	51-1	33	49	38	38	410-13.2
Kierstan Bell	30-10	630-21.0	125-317	.394	56-176	.318	20-30	.667	25-106	131-4.4	52-1	49	60	27	36	326-10.9
Jacy Sheldon	33-24	902-27.3	117-242	.483	44-127	.346	39-49	.796	27-65	92-2.8	63-0	48	45	3	45	317-9.6
Braxtin Miller	33-32	1039-31.5	94-288	.326	26-104	.250	55-75	.733	21-87	108-3.3	56-0	114	46	8	59	269-8.2
Aaliyah Patty	33-31	686-20.8	106-218	.486	17-59	.288	29-46	.630	44-135	179-5.4	93-2	31	54	33	30	258-7.8
Madison Greene	33-21	817-24.8	77-185	.416	23-67	.343	76-96	.792	23-45	68-2.1	65-1	82	50	8	34	253-7.7
Rebeka Mikulasikova	29-1	476-16.4	80-159	.503	25-54	.463	37-45	.822	26-58	84-2.9	49-1	17	46	10	9	222-7.7
Janai Crooms	32-10	758-23.7	91-195	.467	10-48	.208	27-53	.509	26-98	124-3.9	65-1	107	89	29	31	219-6.8
Kaelynn Satterfield	18-0	145-8.1	16-43	.372	2-11	.182	10-11	.909	10-22	32-1.8	16-0	5	21	0	3	44-2.4
Aixa Wone	28-5	254-9.1	17-50	.340	2-16	.125	7-11	.636	15-22	37-1.3	33-1	17	26	1	8	43-1.5
Savitha Jayaraman	1-0	1-1.0	0-1	.000	0-1	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	0-0.0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0-0.0
TEAM									51-55	106			17			
Total.....	33	6650	883-2034	.434	245-764	.321	350-510	.686	363-890	1253-38.0	543-8	503	503	157	293	2361-71.5
Opponents.....	33	6650	779-1997	.390	201-670	.300	415-587	.707	387-845	1232-37.3	481	420	530	88	237	2174-65.9

bench and truly setting the team up for a big tournament run.

There was an opportunity to shock the world that was lost due to things that were out of the Buckeyes' control. But next season, Ohio State has all the pieces to be a dangerous team, one with the experience to match its talent.

"It's just good that we still have that dangerousness that it's pretty hard to prepare for our team because literally you never know which game who's going to show up," Juhasz said. "It's awesome that everybody's going to be sophomores and juniors. So it's really exciting for next year, and obviously, all my teammates are in the same mind-set too."

Bell, Juhasz Earn Conference Awards

Ohio State's two leading scorers earned conference awards for their strong regular-season performances.

Juhasz landed on the All-Big Ten first team, the only Buckeye to make it on the first or second team. The sophomore forward finished the season averaging 13.2 points and 9.4 rebounds per game, both of which were team highs.

She was also efficient on the floor, shooting 47.6 percent (160 of 336) from the field and 39.6 percent (40 of 101) from three, good for fourth and second on the team, respectively.

OSU Women's Basketball Signees

Players in the class of 2020 who have signed letters of intent to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the ESPNW rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Gabby Hutcherson	F	6-2	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South
Anyssa Jones	G	5-9	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South
Kateri Poole	G	5-8	★★★★★	Bronx (N.Y.) South Shore

Freshman guard Kierstan Bell also earned some recognition, making it on the Big Ten All-Freshman Team. Bell was the only other double-digit scorer for the Buckeyes, averaging 10.9 points per game while also finishing No. 3 on the team with 4.4 rebounds per game.

Bell finished the year with 56 three-point makes, the most on the team, and shot 39.4 percent from the field and 31.8 percent from deep. She was also selected as an honorable mention for the All-Big Ten teams.

Juhasz Makes Conference All-Tournament Team

Despite not having the final that it wanted, Ohio State did not go home completely empty-handed, with Juhasz earning a spot on the Big Ten All-Tournament Team.

Juhasz was joined by Michigan forward Naz Hillmon, Maryland forward Stephanie Jones, Maryland guard Ashley Owusu and

Indiana guard Ali Patberg, with Owusu taking the award for most outstanding player in the tournament.

In four games, the most by any team in the tournament, Juhasz averaged 12.8 points and 11.5 rebounds per game while shooting 42.9 percent from the floor and 43.8 percent from three.

BIG Women's Basketball

	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Maryland	16	2	.889	28	4	.875
Northwestern	16	2	.889	26	4	.867
Iowa	14	4	.778	23	7	.767
Indiana	13	5	.722	24	8	.750
Rutgers	11	7	.611	22	9	.710
Ohio State	11	7	.611	21	12	.636
Michigan	10	8	.556	21	11	.656
Michigan State	9	9	.500	16	14	.533
Purdue	8	10	.444	18	14	.563
Nebraska	7	11	.389	17	13	.567
Minnesota	5	13	.278	16	15	.516
Wisconsin	3	15	.167	12	19	.387
Illinois	2	16	.111	11	19	.367
Penn State	1	17	.056	7	23	.233

March 4 Scores

Wisconsin 71, Illinois 55
Minnesota 85, Penn State 65

March 5 Scores

Purdue 72, Michigan State 63
Rutgers 63, Wisconsin 55
Michigan 81, Nebraska 75

Ohio State 77, Minnesota 56

March 6 Scores

Maryland 74, Purdue 62
Indiana 78, Rutgers 60
Michigan 67, Northwestern 59
Ohio State 66, Iowa 66

March 7 Scores

Maryland 66, Indiana 51
Ohio State 66, Michigan 60

March 8 Score

Maryland 82, Ohio State 65

She also stepped up in the final against Maryland, leading Ohio State with 20 points on 8-of-18 shooting and hitting 4 of 6 triples while adding five rebounds in the loss.



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OSU's Impressive Tourney Run Falls Short In Finals

By WYATT CROSER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Heading into the Big Ten tournament as a six seed, Ohio State made an unexpected run all the way to the tournament championship game, winning three games in three days, including a 21-point upset victory over No. 3 seed Iowa at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

But despite the impressive string of wins, the Buckeyes could not become the first six seed in Big Ten women's history to end with a victory, falling to No. 1 seed Maryland and seemingly putting the team in a great place for a high seed in the NCAA tournament, a tournament that would ultimately be canceled due to concerns about the coronavirus.

Buckeyes Down Gophers In Dominant Fashion

With two wins against Minnesota already in the books, Ohio State appeared to have its first Big Ten tournament game locked up early in its 77-56 victory on March 5 in a game played in front of 4,349.

The Buckeyes held a 23-6 lead in the first quarter on the back of a 10-0 run, all of which started by forcing the Golden Gophers to 0-of-5 shooting and five turnovers in the first 5:03 to open the game.

But despite the two defeats, and despite the 17-point margin early, No. 11-seeded Minnesota (16-15) did not go down without a fight, cutting the deficit to six points at halftime, 39-33.

That lead eventually dropped down to 54-50 early in the fourth quarter, but from there, Ohio State (19-11) ignited, eventually winning in dominant fashion by 21 points.

The Buckeyes advanced to play three-seeded Iowa in the tournament's quarterfinals.

"We did pretty good as a team staying together," said freshman guard Kierstan Bell. "Just doing what we do best, executing. We got a lot of weird shots, but they were falling, so that was pretty good, and we just stayed in it."

With the advantage down to just four in

the fourth quarter, the Buckeyes went on a 14-0 run, holding Minnesota scoreless for 6:39, to officially seal the win.

Despite the gap closing significantly, Ohio State never trailed in the game.

"We just finally started making some shots," said Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff. "I thought we got good shots throughout, but we were really kind of inconsistent with our shooting. And once the shots started going in, it kind of fueled our defense a little bit, too."

Sophomore guard Janai Crooms was huge off the bench for Ohio State, which used only seven players, finishing with 14 points, four rebounds and four assists in just 21 minutes.

"It felt great," Crooms said. "My teammates found me, got me the ball in transition and had confidence in me."

Another sophomore who came up big was forward Aaliyah Patty. She ended the night with 15 points and eight rebounds.

Ohio State led by as much as 15 points in the second quarter but took only a 39-33 lead into halftime after hitting three of its final 16 shots from the field.

Freshman guard Madison Greene found her shooting touch early after struggling in the past few games and led the Buckeyes with nine first-half points, including scoring seven of the team's first 15 points to start the game.

Sophomore forward Dorka Juhasz also made an impact, grabbing 10 rebounds in the opening half despite scoring just four points. Juhasz struggled from the field all night (six points, 3-of-11 shooting) but had a strong game on the boards with 16 rebounds.

"She played really hard," McGuff said. "I thought she was good defensively. She had some huge rebounds, and she missed some shots she normally makes, but that's the way it goes."

On the night, the Buckeyes shot 43.1 percent (31 of 72) from the field and 22.2 percent (6 of 27) from three, while Minnesota shot 32.3 percent (20 of 62) and 36.0 percent (9 of 25) from three.

Ohio State played without freshman forward Rebeka Mikulasikova, who did not trav-

Ohio State 77, Minnesota 56

March 5, 2020												
Bankers Life Fieldhouse • Indianapolis, Ind.												
	1	2	3	4	F							
Minnesota (16-15)	11	22	15	8	56							
Ohio State (19-11)	23	16	15	23	77							
Minnesota												
	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
T. Bello	35	1-5	2-5	4-6	3	4	4					
Powell	32	4-14	3-6	1-5	4	1	14					
Scalia	26	4-11	0-1	1-2	1	1	9					
Brunson	30	4-11	0-0	1-2	3	1	11					
Hubbard	31	3-11	2-2	2-4	1	2	10					
Adashchik	13	2-5	0-0	0-2	2	0	4					
Sconiers	27	1-4	0-0	2-5	0	4	2					
K. Bello	5	1-1	0-0	1-1	0	0	2					
Tomancova	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Totals	200	20-62	7-14	15-30	14	13	56					
Percentages: FG: 32.3%. FT: 50.0%. 3-point field goals: 9-25 (Powell 3-5, Scalia 1-5, Brunson 3-7, Hubbard 2-6, Adashchik 0-2). Team rebounds: 6. Blocked shots: 3 (Sconiers). Turnovers: 22 (T. Bello 2, Powell 9, Scalia, Brunson, Hubbard, Adashchik 4, Sconiers, K. Bello 2, TEAM). Steals: 4 (Brunson, Hubbard 2, K. Bello).												
Ohio State												
	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Juhasz	33	3-11	0-1	4-12	2	1	6					
Patty	35	6-11	3-5	3-5	2	3	15					
Greene	36	4-9	0-0	1-3	3	1	9					
Sheldon	35	6-13	1-3	1-2	0	1	15					
Miller	33	4-12	4-5	0-3	5	3	13					
Bell	18	2-9	0-0	1-2	1	1	5					
Crooms	21	6-7	1-1	2-2	4	1	14					
Totals	200	31-72	9-15	15-30	17	11	77					
Percentages: FG: 43.1%. FT: 60.0%. 3-point field goals: 6-27 (Juhasz 0-4, Patty 0-1, Greene 1-3, Sheldon 2-6, Miller 1-4, Bell 1-7, Crooms 1-2). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 9 (Juhasz 4, Patty 2, Sheldon, Bell, Crooms). Turnovers: 11 (Juhasz, Patty 2, Greene 2, Sheldon 2, Bell, Crooms 2, TEAM). Steals: 14 (Juhasz, Patty 2, Greene, Sheldon, Miller 8, Bell).												
Officials: Hall, Morris, Thompson. Attendance: 4,349.												

el with the team and missed the remainder of the Big Ten tournament.

Ohio State Rolls Into Semifinals With Upset Win Over Hawkeyes

Before Ohio State's game with Iowa started on March 6, a door was left open for Ohio State to make the Big Ten tournament championship game.

In the matchup prior, seventh-seeded Michigan took down Northwestern, one of the teams that shared the regular-season conference title and the one that would have been waiting for the Buckeyes if they managed to upset the No. 3 seed in Iowa.

With that door more open, Ohio State (20-11) sprinted through it, blasting the No.

Ohio State 87, Iowa 66

March 6, 2020												
Bankers Life Fieldhouse • Indianapolis, Ind.												
	1	2	3	4	F							
Ohio State (20-11)	29	19	25	14	87							
Iowa (23-7)	14	17	13	22	66							
Ohio State	Total FG FT			Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Juhasz	25	6-11	2-4	5-9	0	4	15					
Patty	16	1-3	2-2	1-3	1	3	4					
Greene	31	4-4	1-1	0-4	3	2	12					
Sheldon	35	5-7	2-3	0-5	3	1	14					
Miller	33	4-11	7-7	1-3	4	2	15					
Bell	26	6-14	0-0	0-2	2	3	16					
Crooms	23	4-6	0-0	0-2	6	2	9					
Wone	11	0-4	2-2	2-1	0	3	2					
Totals	200	30-60	16-19	11-32	19	20	87					
Percentages: FG: 50.0%. FT: 84.2%. 3-point field goals: 11-27 (Juhasz 1-2, Patty 0-1, Greene 3-3, Sheldon 2-4, Miller 0-3, Bell 4-10, Crooms 1-2, Wone 0-2). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 4 (Juhasz 2, Bell 2). Turnovers: 18 (Juhasz 4, Patty 3, Greene 2, Sheldon 2, Miller 2, Bell 3, Crooms, Wone). Steals: 7 (Juhasz, Greene, Miller 4, Crooms).												
Iowa	Total FG FT			Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Warnock	25	1-9	2-2	1-3	3	2	4					
Czinano	35	4-14	3-5	3-1	0	0	11					
Ma. Meyer	32	4-10	3-3	0-7	3	3	13					
Sevillian	30	4-5	1-2	0-2	1	4	13					
Doyle	33	6-18	3-4	0-2	4	3	16					
Marshall	14	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Ollinger	11	1-1	1-2	2-2	0	0	3					
Sanders	7	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	2	0					
Martin	8	1-3	0-0	1-0	2	1	3					
Taiwo	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0					
Me. Meyer	2	1-1	0-2	0-0	0	0	3					
Cook	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Totals	200	22-63	13-20	10-17	15	66						
Percentages: FG: 34.9%. FT: 65.0%. 3-point field goals: 9-25 (Warnock 0-5, Ma. Meyer 2-6, Sevillian 4-5, Doyle 1-5, Marshall 0-1, Martin 1-1, Taiwo 0-1, Me. Meyer 1-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 0. Turnovers: 14 (Warnock 2, Czinano, Sevillian 5, Doyle 6). Steals: 9 (Warnock, Doyle 5, Ollinger, Sanders, Martin).												
Officials: Napier, Enterline, Krommenhoek.												
Attendance: 4,798.												

19 Hawkeyes (23-7) early and continuing to pile it on much of the way for an 87-66 win before 4,798.

Just 2:17 into the game, McGuff subbed in Bell. Immediately, the freshman guard's impact was felt, and in a big way. From the time Bell was subbed in, Ohio State went on a 19-0 run to take a commanding 22-3 lead that ended with a 29-14 advantage after the first quarter.

"It was really important to just make sure we had a lot of energy from the very beginning," junior guard Braxtin Miller said about the hot start. "We wanted to send a message from the jump and just show that we were ready, and we really wanted it."

Bell scored 11 points in the quarter and finished with a team-high 16 on 6-of-14 shooting, including four makes from three.

In the first quarter, Iowa senior guard Kathleen Doyle, the newly named Big Ten Player of the Year, took a hard fall and had to be subbed out of the game. She returned later in the first, went down again, and again returned, finishing with 16 points on 6-of-18 shooting despite clearly being hampered by the fall.

"They have the Big Ten Player of the Year, so we were preparing for a lot," Juhasz said. "But it's just effort. I believe we were going out, we were hungry for the win, and I mean, in the first quarter, we made a really big push."

Ohio State held onto that first-quarter advantage and even extended it by leading 48-31 at halftime behind 63.0 percent shooting (17 of 27) from the floor and 57.1 percent shooting (8 of 14) from three in the first 20 minutes.

Bell's 14 points were a big piece of that, as were the 13 points and eight rebounds in the half by Juhasz.

From there, the Buckeyes kept their foot on the gas pedal. Backed by a 25-13 third-quarter advantage, Ohio State took a 73-44 lead into the final frame, all but sealing a trip to the semifinal against the Wolverines.




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Iowa cut the deficit to 20, 78-58 with 4:22 to play but could not overcome the 29-point margin they had faced entering the frame.

"Iowa has got a great team," McGuff said. "I have great respect for them. I thought our defense was certainly better tonight than the first time we played them (a 77-68 Iowa victory). That was the key. We were going to have to stop them."

Juhasz ended with 15 points and was one of five players in double figures for Ohio State on the night, along with Bell, Miller (15 points), Greene (12 points) and freshman guard Jacy Sheldon (14 points).

While the big win was a major positive, the night did come with some negatives. Miller and sophomore forward Aaliyah Patty both left with injuries, though both made their returns with Ohio State having just eight players dressed.

On the night, the Buckeyes shot 50.0 percent (30 of 60) in total and hit on 11 of 27 (40.7 percent) from behind the arc. Iowa shot 34.9 percent (22 of 63) and 36.0 percent (9 of 25) from three.

"We've been kind of building towards this to make sure we're playing our best basketball at this time of year," McGuff said. "Everybody does, but for us, with so many new people and we were so young, it's been a real process. And that's probably what I'm most proud of – our kids have really committed to making sure we improved as a team throughout the year."

Buckeyes Down Wolverines To Advance To B1G Finals

Ohio State came in the winner of three straight 21-point blowouts, including a 77-56 win over Purdue in the regular-season finale on Feb. 29, but the same could not be said about the result of its Big Ten tournament semifinal matchup against Michigan on March 7 in a game played before 7,213.

The six-seeded Buckeyes saw an 11-point lead late in the third quarter evaporate after a 14-3 Wolverines run at the end of the frame and to start the fourth quarter, evening the score at 47.

But in that fourth quarter, Ohio State held Michigan scoreless for the next 3:09 and without a field goal for the next 4:38 following the run, using defense to grind out a 66-60 win and advance to the Big Ten tournament championship game.

"I was really proud of their poise," McGuff said of his team. "We made a lot of great plays on both ends of the floor down the stretch, and it just shows how much we've grown as a team."

A steal and Euro step layup by Sheldon ended the Michigan run and put Ohio State back up two points. That sparked an 11-3 run, giving the Buckeyes a 58-50 lead.

The Wolverines (21-11) fought back with five unanswered to bring it back to a one-possession game with just over a minute to play, but then Greene came through in a big way for Ohio State (21-11).

The freshman guard hit a difficult contested layup with 35 seconds remaining to make it a five-point game and then hit two key free throws to help ice the game.

Sheldon stole a Michigan inbound and hit a layup with 5.3 seconds left for good measure, officially sending Ohio State to the title game to face off against top-seeded Maryland.

Greene finished the game with a team-high 13 points and was a perfect 7 of 7 from the free-throw line, while Sheldon added 11 on 5-of-7 shooting.

"I just had to take care of the ball, do what a point guard does, and I feel like I did my job," Greene said. "I may not have scored with the threes or layups, but I contributed with the free throws at the end, which were very important. I'm just glad my teammates

believed in me, got me the ball, and I'm just blessed to make them."

The Buckeyes took a 32-26 lead into half-time thanks to a variety of scoring all the way down their roster. Crooms led with eight points, including six straight to start the second quarter.

Though they were down, Michigan sophomore forward Naz Hillmon had a dominant first half, scoring 13 of her team's 26 points to go with eight rebounds. Hillmon remained a force down low all night, ending with game highs of 22 points and 16 rebounds.

"We certainly had to pay attention to Naz Hillmon," McGuff said. "She was outstanding tonight, and she's so hard to guard. A lot of our conversations were trying to keep the ball out of her hands, which is very difficult to do, and then keeping her off the glass. She's a great player and showed that again tonight."

Five players ended the night in double figures for Ohio State, and six players ended with scoring totals between eight and 13 points, showing the balance of the offense in the victory.

"What helps us is our depth," Crooms said. "We all contribute in some type of way. If we just keep that going, we're going to do really successful things."

The first half was mainly headlined by runs from both teams. Ohio State opened with the first four points of the game, but Michigan responded with a 7-0 run to take the lead. In the second quarter with the teams tied at 18, the Buckeyes went on a 10-0 run to take a 28-18 lead with 4:57 before the half, only for the Wolverines to answer with six straight of their own.

For the game, Ohio State kept Michigan in check on offense, holding the Wolverines to 35.8 percent (24 of 67) from the floor and 30.4 percent (7 of 23) from three. But the Buckeyes' offense never fully heated up either, finishing shooting 42.4 percent (25 of 59) overall and 23.5 percent (4 of 17) from deep.

Ohio State's Run Falls Short Against Terrapins

After a remarkable run through the Big Ten tournament, Ohio State fell short of becoming the lowest seed to win it, losing 82-65 to top-seeded Maryland in the final on March 8 before a crowd of 4,687.

The Buckeyes led early, but the Terrapins (28-4), who were ranked No. 4 in the country, slowly took over with suffocating defense and rebounding, each of which translated to the offensive side of the ball.

"They were getting points and transitioning off turnovers and in second-chance points, and that really hurt us," McGuff said. "But in general, I'm really proud of our team. We fought and scratched, and we had a great tournament. Give credit to Maryland. They're terrific, really good."

Though Ohio State (21-12) did manage to score 22 points in the first quarter, it combined for only 24 across the second and third frames. After starting the game hitting 11 of 21 attempts from the field, the offense slowed, making only six of its next 30 attempts.

"They've done a great job this year with their defense," McGuff said. "They mix their defense up. They just make it really tough on you to generate quality shots, and they're long and athletic, so they can switch a lot of things."

In the championship game, the Buckeyes shot 25 of 66 (37.9 percent) overall and 10 of 26 (38.5 percent) from three, while Maryland hit on 31 of 66 (47.0 percent) and 8 of 18 from behind the arc (44.4 percent). The Terrapins also held a 48-31 advantage on the glass.

Juhasz led the Buckeyes with 20 points on the night, shooting 8 of 18 from the field. The second-year forward was selected as one of five players on the All-Tournament Team.

Ohio State 66, Michigan 60

March 7, 2020												
Bankers Life Fieldhouse • Indianapolis, Ind.												
	1	2	3	4	F							
Michigan (21-11)	16	10	16	18	60							
Ohio State (21-11)	14	18	14	20	66 <th colspan="7"></th>							
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Hillmon	37	10-21	2-5	10-6	3	1	22					
Brown	33	4-14	3-4	2-5	1	3	14					
Dilk	38	1-8	0-2	1-4	4	2	2					
Nolan	35	2-6	0-0	0-4	2	4	6					
Johnson	39	5-13	0-0	2-4	3	4	12					
Varejao	9	1-2	0-0	1-0	3	1	2					
Rauch	7	1-3	0-0	0-1	0	1	2					
Kiser	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Totals	200	24-67	5-11	21-24	16	60						
Percentages: FG: 35.8%. FT: 45.5%. 3-point field goals: 7-23 (Brown 3-11, Nolan 2-4, Johnson 2-6, Rauch 0-2). Team rebounds: 5. Blocked shots: 5 (Brown 3, Johnson 2). Turnovers: 12 (Hillmon, Brown 4, Dilk 3, Johnson 3, Rauch). Steals: 4 (Hillmon, Dilk 2, Johnson).												
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Juhasz	33	4-9	0-0	3-8	2	2	10					
Patty	28	5-12	0-0	1-5	1	3	11					
Greene	33	3-8	7-7	2-3	2	2	13					
Sheldon	30	5-7	1-2	0-2	2	0	11					
Miller	33	3-9	4-6	0-2	3	1	10					
Bell	18	1-7	0-0	0-0	0	0	3					
Crooms	22	4-7	0-0	0-2	2	0	8					
Wone	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Totals	200	25-59	12-15	8-24	12	8	66					
Percentages: FG: 42.4%. FT: 80.0%. 3-point field goals: 4-17 (Juhasz 2-4, Patty 1-3, Greene 0-2, Sheldon 0-1, Miller 0-1, Bell 1-5, Crooms 0-1). Team rebounds: 4. Blocked shots: 7 (Juhasz 2, Greene, Sheldon, Bell 3). Turnovers: 9 (Juhasz, Patty 6, Greene, TEAM). Steals: 9 (Patty 2, Greene, Sheldon 3, Miller 3). Officials: Napier, Roberts, Hall. Attendance: 7,213.												

"They have great upperclassmen leaders," Juhasz said. "And they're very aggressive. They forced some turnovers, and you can see that we were down on the boards by I don't even know how much – a lot. So they were really aggressive."

Ohio State trailed Maryland 44-35 at half-time, with a 25-13 rebounding advantage in favor of the Terrapins being a key difference.

Also making the difference for the Terrapins were freshman guard Ashley Owusu and senior forward Stephanie Jones. Owusu finished the opening 20 minutes with 11 points, five rebounds and six assists, while Jones led Maryland with 14 points and six rebounds on a perfect 5-of-5 shooting.

Jones and Owusu continued to be the main points of the Terrapins' offense, with the senior forward finishing with 18 points and 10 rebounds, while the first-year guard ended with 17 points, six rebounds and 11 assists. Both players finished as selections to the All-Tournament team, while Owusu was

Maryland 82, Ohio State 65

March 8, 2020												
Bankers Life Fieldhouse • Indianapolis, Ind.												
	1	2	3	4	F							
Ohio State (21-12)	22	13	11	19	65							
Maryland (28-4)	20	24	16	22	82							
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	Pf	Pts					
Juhasz	35	8-18	0-0	2-3	0	2	20					
Patty	18	2-4	0-0	1-3	0	2	4					
Greene	38	1-4	5-6	2-3	5	2	7					
Sheldon	32	4-11	0-0	1-4	1	2	11					
Miller	28	3-10	0-0	0-3	5	1	6					
Bell	28	5-13	0-0	1-5	5	1	13					
Crooms	22	2-5	0-0	0-1	3	1	4					
Wone	3	0-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	0					
Totals	200	25-66	5-6	8-23	19	11	65					
Percentages: FG: 37.9%. FT: 83.3%. 3-point field goals: 10-26 (Juhasz 4-6, Greene 0-1, Sheldon 3-8, Miller 0-2, Bell 3-8, Crooms 0-1). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 6 (Juhasz, Patty, Greene 2, Bell, Crooms). Turnovers: 10 (Patty 2, Greene 2, Sheldon, Miller 2, Bell, Crooms 2). Steals: 7 (Greene, Sheldon 2, Miller 2, Bell, Crooms).												
Maryland	Total	FG	FT	Reb.								
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.					
Austin	27	6-7	2-3	1-7	1	1	14					
Jones	36	6-10	6-6	3-7	1	0	18					
Charles	22	3-9	0-0	2-2	1	2	6					
Mikesell	24	4-9	0-0	0-3	1	1	12					
Watson	33	4-9	0-0	1-5	1	2	11					
Owusu	34	7-16	3-3	2-4	11	2	17					
Miller	16	1-6	1-2	2-2	3	2	4					
Masonius	8	0-0	0-0	0-0	2	1	0					
Vujacic	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Totals	200	31-66	12-14	14-32	11	82						
Percentages: FG: 47.0%. FT: 85.7%. 3-point field goals: 8-18 (Mikesell 4-8, Watson 3-7, Owusu 0-1, Miller 1-2). Team rebounds: 7. Blocked shots: 4 (Austin, Jones, Mikesell, Miller). Turnovers: 13 (Austin 2, Jones, Charles, Mikesell 2, Watson, Owusu 4, Miller 2). Steals: 7 (Austin, Watson 4, Owusu, Miller). Officials: Zentz, Grinter, Cross. Attendance: 4,687.												

named the Most Outstanding Player of the tournament.

"They're a great, great team with a lot of great players," Sheldon said. "They're great in transition. They're really aggressive on the boards, and they are really deep too. So they're a great team overall."

Sheldon was one of three Buckeyes in double figures, finishing with 11 points and five rebounds. Besides Sheldon and Juhasz, Bell also ended with 13 points, six rebounds and five assists.

Ohio State started the game up 7-3 and ended the first quarter with a two-point advantage thanks to 10 early points from Juhasz. But a 24-13 Maryland advantage in the second quarter started the momentum that eventually led to the 17-point Terrapins' victory. Ohio State was never closer than nine in the second half, and Maryland would lead by as many as 22.



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Inside Ohio State's Wrestling Weight Program

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Quinn Kinner looks natural, just as he always has. He's smooth on the mat, fluid in his transition and rapidly approaching elite from the top position, which is one of the first things that Ohio State head coach Tom Ryan preaches to his wrestlers. Against Maryland on Jan. 31, Kinner downed Lucas Cordio with a dominant 16-1 tech fall, and he was one of five Buckeye winners against Penn State on Feb. 15, edging out Brady Berge, 4-3.

He couldn't beat Nebraska's Peyton Robb in between the two, but the redshirt freshman certainly looked the part of Ohio State's next contender at 157 pounds, just as he was expected to be. The two-time New Jersey state champion was, after all, a tremendously sought-after recruit who flipped his commitment from N.C. State to Ohio State to be in situations just like these. Just as his classmate Sammy Sasso has done all year at 149 pounds, Kinner looked primed to come into his own at 157.

Above all else the young Buckeye looked comfortable. He claimed two tournament titles in his redshirt freshman season, and the confidence he gained was starting to translate into the duals side of collegiate wrestling, which can in some cases take several years.

When looking at Kinner's fitness and confidence at 157 pounds, it boggles the mind to consider the 24-pound weight gain

that moved him there in the span of approximately two months. On Nov. 17, Kinner wrestled for Ohio State at 133 pounds and lost to Virginia Tech's Collin Gerardi. Seventy-six days later, he debuted at his new weight, looking more comfortable than ever before.

For a wrestler who entered Ohio State as a 138-pounder then moved to 141 initially before dropping to 133 at the beginning of the season, the journey to 157 has been long and winding. That much fluctuation can create quite a bit of instability if not controlled. That's where Riley Ross comes in.

Ross serves as the director of wrestling sports science and development for Ohio State, a role he took over prior to the 2018 season.

"I'm a sport science performance coach," Ross explained. "My job is anything and everything pertaining to these guys performing on the mat and tracking the technology that we employ in order to help these guys just be at their best."

In layman's terms, he's responsible for making sure Ohio State's wrestlers can do what Kinner has done this season: find a weight that works best for them, in a healthy and efficient way. To do that, Ross – a former wrestler himself – works directly with Ohio State's coaching staff to determine body type and weight potential to structure a comprehensive plan for each wrestler. Ohio State has an affiliated dietician who puts together food plans so that everything can be tracked down to the calorie.

"We have a dietician that we work with,"

Ross said. "But because of my experience as a wrestler previously and because of the sports that I've worked with within mixed martial arts and combat sports in general, it allows me to give a little more insight with these guys, a little more anecdotal information."

Ross' job with OSU is a year-round battle against complacency.

Because of the nature of college wrestling, Ohio State works around a significant offseason that will see athletes departing from the school for long breaks. In those times, the wrestlers are expected to maintain a body fat percentage range that will allow them to stay within their comfort zone and return to what Ross describes as their set point.

"We ask our athletes to be around a certain (body fat) percentage on a consistent basis, and this summer we'll have expectations for that to be the same, even though they're not here. What happens is your body has a set point. And whatever your weight is, if you can stay near it, your body will always come up to that set point. The challenge with these athletes is that they're 18 to 23 years old. You hit your hormonal optimized profile at like 25. And so some of these guys are growing inches in height. They're growing inches in girth, so it's really tough to put them in a set plan."

So, when Ohio State decides that it wants to shift a wrestler into a new weight class or add some extra power to a wrestler struggling, what actually goes into that process? The first step is to find a baseline to help with decision making for the wrestler in question. As Ross explains, those guides come in the form of three body types.

"I really identify three body types," Ross said. "They're called ectomorph, endomorph and mesomorph. We identify as a staff where each one of these athletes sit. Ectomorphs like (sophomore 125 pounder) Malik Heinselman have a hard time putting on weight. A mesomorph like Quinn has an easier time putting on weight, they can lose it and gain it very quickly, and it doesn't seem to affect them on a massive scale compared to somebody else."

The final body type, endomorph, refers to someone who gains weight easily but can struggle to lose it.

In Kinner's case, with that mesomorph body type, the weight changes weren't actually that taxing physically. He described the weight cut from 141 to 133 as brutal, due in large part to the significant dedication to cardio required for that sort of cut with his natural weight closer to 157. However, because he's able to change his body makeup easier than, say, Heinselman, the work itself was nowhere near the most difficult part of his weight changes.

Instead, Kinner says that his biggest obstacles in losing weight were mental. He faced severe eating anxiety and fretted over every calorie that he was taking in.

"It's mentally taxing if you're trying to lose weight," Kinner explained. "Making 133 was brutal, even more so mentally than it was physically. Physically, it definitely wasn't fun. But mentally it was just wearing on me every day. You're doing the math. 'I'm going to have to eat this much, lose this much' and it's just constantly in your head. And if it's not going right then, it's just like everything spirals."

"I always had a problem with eating at all. I know some guys have a problem with eating too much. My big issue was that I didn't

want to eat. I was scared to eat, because I knew I was going to have to lose it. I didn't know if I was going to be able to. It was just really scary for me. The coaches were always trying to tell me, 'Eat, and we'll help you get it off. It won't be a problem. Just eat, you need food.'"

Handling the mental anguish that can come with severe weight changes in a very high-pressure environment isn't just an unwritten role for Ohio State's coaches and Ross, either. Wrestlers can't be at their best if they're worried about making weight, meaning that the support system around them must be ironclad, and perhaps more than anything else, that's what Ross is responsible for. He applies his experience as an MMA trainer to Ohio State.

"I came from within the mixed martial arts world, where it's even more extreme," Ross said. "I've had guys on the cusp of being a contender, and the number one guy in the world gets hurt. And they have an opportunity to fight on a card, and they have three weeks to lose 25 pounds. So I really made it a point for those guys to stay lower, stay where they need to be. But the psychological stress of wrestling is tough enough. There's probably nothing more stressful, because somebody's coming at you on a daily basis that wants to physically impose their will on you."

While Ohio State's athletes may not be expected to drop 25 pounds in a matter of weeks, Ross has the same approach. He still pushes every day to keep the focus on training rather than numbers on the scale as a way to limit stress and keep focus on what really matters.

"I think what we wanted most of all, and what we want most of our athletes here, is that they don't win their match with the scale and lose their match with the opponent," Ross said. "And when you're trying to wrestle with the scale on a daily basis, it's a really, really tough battle to win, because it's really you vs. you."

The same rules apply to weight gains, which happen quite a bit more frequently at Ohio State – in large part because Ross is not a fan of weight drops unless absolutely necessary. There's no cut-and-dried, set plan for the weight gain. Instead, Ohio State maintains the approach of leaning into the body type and basing food plans off the work exerted by the wrestler.

"The way that you dictate how the weight gets put on is with the work that you do," Ross explained. "The lifts that we do, those facilitate a response to gain muscle vs. just putting on weight. Coach Ryan is a master at putting on really solid weight, and you see his body transformation pictures. Those are a really good example of how the work put in dictates what the weight looks like."

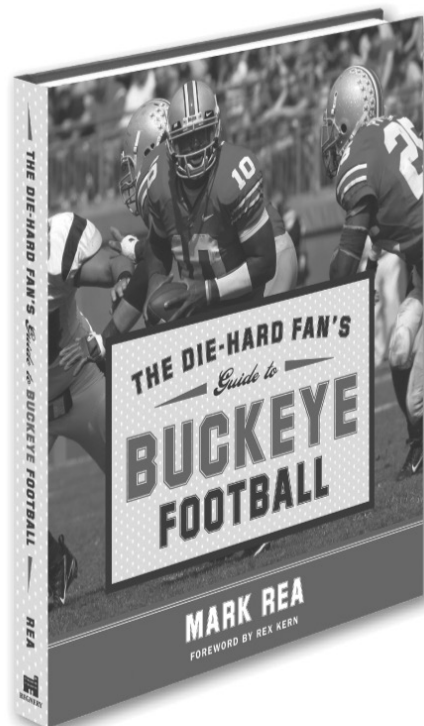
"And in the case of Quinn, the work that he did made him eat more. Because if he didn't, then his muscles, his body wouldn't have said, 'Hey, I know I need more protein, I know I need to be doing these things.' He knew he had to eat, just because the work made him hungry. Because your body is looking for those nutrients in order to make that happen."

When losing or gaining weight, the battle for Ohio State's wrestlers and coaching staff remains the same. With real competition always around the corner, the focus must be on training, rather than raw numbers.

"These guys shouldn't be wrestling against the scale on a consistent basis," Ross said. "The battle is with somebody else."

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Senior Captains Capture Big Ten Wrestling Titles

Ohio State held true to the form it has shown all season long at the Big Ten championships on March 7-8 in Piscataway, N.J., as the Buckeyes received championship-caliber competition from their top wrestlers, impressive effort from the middle of the team, and disappointment at the back.

Ohio State was unable to live up to head coach Tom Ryan's pre-championship goal of sending all 10 wrestlers in the starting lineup to the NCAA championships. The Buckeyes did manage eight qualifiers, but season-long struggles at 133 pounds and 157 pounds bit them one last time.

ON THE MAT Patrick Mayhorn

Unfortunately for Ohio State, those NCAA championships have been canceled in accordance with an NCAA directive related to the coronavirus pandemic that has halted essentially all major sports.

The Buckeyes were led by three podium finishers.

The two champions were the senior captains. Luke Pletcher won his first Big Ten title as he avenged his recent loss against Penn State's Nick Lee, 6-5 and claimed the top spot at 141 pounds. Meanwhile, 197-pound Kollin Moore capped his flawless season with a dominant tournament and a 4-1 title win over Nebraska's Eric Schultz. It was his third Big Ten title.

Star redshirt freshman Sammy Sasso would have headed to his first NCAA championships after a second-place finish at 149 pounds. Sasso survived an early scare against Northwestern's Yahya Thomas and claimed a 5-4 win in the second tiebreaker round before knocking off Michigan's Kanen Storr 3-0 in the semifinals. In the final, Sasso came up just inches short of defeating Iowa's Pat Lugo for the second time this season, with a last-second takedown attempt for Sasso coming up short after a video review. The takedown would have given Sasso the win, but instead Lugo took the title, 2-1.

It was quite the weekend for Ohio State, even with the Buckeyes finishing third in the final team score standings, behind Iowa (157.5 points) and Nebraska (132). Ohio State's 112 points were enough to edge out Penn State's 107 for the third spot.

One of the biggest surprises of the weekend came at 125 pounds, where sophomore Malik Heinselman bounced back from a first-round pin by Northwestern's Michael DeAugustino to win three of his final four matches and secure a seventh-place finish.

Heinselman entered the weekend hoping for a podium finish, but qualifying for the NCAAAs and maintaining recent momentum made for a great showing from him.

"I've had a lot of good wins these last few weeks," Heinselman said on March 5. "I think it helped with my confidence, and I truly believe that I'm going to be on the podium at the Big Ten (championships)."

Heinselman was one of four Buckeyes who outperformed his seeding, finishing seventh after entering the events as the No. 11. He was joined in that category by Ethan Smith (seeded No. 5 at 165, finished fourth), Kaleb Romero (seeded No. 6 at 174, finished fourth) and Rocky Jordan (seeded No. 6 at 184, finished fifth). Heavyweight Gary Traub entered as



OHIO STATE WRESTLING/TWITTER

CAREER-ENDING WIN – Ohio State senior wrestler Luke Pletcher won his first Big Ten title by defeating Penn State's Nick Lee, 6-5, in their matchup at 141 pounds on March 8.

the No. 6 seed and finished sixth after falling to Nebraska's David Jensen in the fifth-place match, 6-0.

At 133, freshman Jordan Decatur was given perhaps the toughest first-round draw of any Buckeye, squaring off with the No. 3-seeded Austin DeSanto from Iowa. DeSanto was not a new foe for Decatur, who fell to the Hawkeye junior, 27-12, in Ohio State's regular-season matchup with Iowa.

In Piscataway, Decatur was again without much answer for one of the nation's best 133-pounders, falling in a 17-3 major decision. A 1-0 decision defeat against Minnesota's Boo Dryden ended Decatur's season.

After being thrown into the fire at 133 following Quinn Kinner's significant weight jump, Decatur filled in admirably for the Buckeyes but will likely be looking for more than a 14-10 record as a sophomore. He could also eye a jump back to 141 pounds, a spot closer to his natural weight that will be vacant following this season.

At 157, Elijah Cleary flashed signs of a stunning run but ultimately fell short. Cleary, the No. 11 seed in his class, pulled off a first-round upset of Michigan State's No. 6 Jake Tucker by way of a 5-1 decision.

He couldn't maintain the momentum, coming up just short of a big upset against No. 3 Kendall Coleman of Purdue, 3-2. A 10-2 loss to Wisconsin's Garrett Model marked the end of Cleary's junior campaign. In his first season as a full-time starter, Cleary put forth an 18-12 record (3-8 in duals), though he was able to hold off Kinner down the stretch to maintain his starting role.

Echemendia Admitted To OSU

Ohio State got some good news on March 6 with the official confirmation that highly touted Cuban recruit Anthony Echemendia had finally been accepted into Ohio State, and is set to be admitted in May.

Echemendia's arrival at Ohio State has been highly anticipated by Buckeye fans and coaches alike since he signed with the program in November, but in the months since, there was little word on his status. As a very recent immigrant from Cuba, Echemendia's high school experience was far from typical. Sorting through his eligibility took time, and while Ryan and his staff were frustrated by the wait, they welcomed the announcement all the same.

"We should have had him in December, but there was a lot to process with admissions and with his status as a citizen," Ryan said. "They've had the time to sort it out now, and the legal team weighed in and they've had time to evaluate it and admit him."

Echemendia was even more excited than his new coach.

"God is good, and today (Ohio State) gave me the best news of my life," Echemendia said. "I'm really, really happy today."

Much of the hang-up related to Echemendia's test score requirements, which he says he did not initially reach.

"I was supposed to get into Ohio State in December, but because of my SAT score, I couldn't get in because they were asking me for a higher score," Echemendia explained. "I started taking English classes to take the SAT again to get a better score, but today they gave me the news that I would be admitted to Ohio State in May without taking the SAT again."

The two-time junior national champion will be ready to suit up for the Buckeyes opening the 2020-2021 season, though to this point, the weight where he will do so remains up in the air.

"That's all on Tom Ryan," Echemendia said of his potential weight class. "He's going to be the one telling me my weight class, because he's the coach – I'm the athlete."

The natural fits for Echemendia appear to be in the 141/149 range, given his walking around

weight that sits in that area. He wrestled at 152 pounds in high school but dropped to 145 at the Junior and Cadet National Championships in July of 2019.

However, if he has the frame for a slight bulk, there could be open competition at 157 pounds. There will also be a vacancy at 141 following Pletcher's departure, but as mentioned, Decatur could be eyeing that spot, along with Dylan D'Emilio, Klay Reeves and J.D. Stickley. It seems as though 149 isn't a true option, given the presence of Sasso for the next three seasons.



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"It was 6 o'clock when I left the rink Thursday. ... It felt like midnight."

Ohio State men's hockey coach Steve Rohlik accurately described his feelings that were likely felt by millions across the continent and around the world on an exhausting and stunning March 12, the day that sports stopped.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

In a matter of hours, students-athletes in colleges across America became just students, and even then in many cases there were no schools to attend. The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic forced most leagues and sporting events worldwide to shutter, at least temporarily, and the NCAA was not immune.

The men's and women's basketball tournaments and the remaining winter and spring championships were canceled, and the Big Ten was among the conferences that canceled spring sports competitions entirely.

Included among the casualties was the conference's hockey semifinal between the No. 2-seeded Buckeyes and No. 3 Michigan slated for Nationwide Arena in downtown Columbus at 5:30 p.m. on March 15.

Instead, the Buckeyes' finished the regular season tied with Michigan and Minnesota for second in the Big Ten behind Penn State with an overall record of 20-11-5, reaching 20-plus wins in four straight seasons for the second time in program history (2001-05).

Here's how the days surrounding March 12 unfolded:

The Buckeyes had completed media interviews around noon on March 11 when word began circulating that Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine was going to drop a bombshell at 2 p.m. The previous day DeWine had recommended against holding mass gatherings of more than 1,000 people to combat the spread

of the coronavirus.

The Columbus Blue Jackets declared afterward that they would defy the recommendation and would operate per usual when they hosted the Pittsburgh Penguins on March 12 at the 18,130-seat Nationwide Arena.

On the afternoon of the 11th, DeWine said he would order a ban on mass gatherings in the coming days. With that, the Blue Jackets announced that their five remaining home games would be played without spectators.

The expected mandate also meant that the Buckeyes' game vs. the Wolverines would have limited attendance.

Rohlik said by that point he and his team were riding a roller coaster of emotions. On the weekend of Feb. 28-29, the Buckeyes had a chance for at least a share of their second straight regular-season title but took only one of a possible six points from last-place Wisconsin at Value City Arena.

That disappointment was erased when OSU swept the visiting Badgers 9-1 and 2-1 in overtime in the best-of-three conference quarterfinal series March 6-7 that all but assured the Buckeyes of a program-record fourth straight NCAA appearance.

"When we beat Wisconsin twice, there was that feeling of we've got a chance, one, to still move on and win a Big Ten tournament title, and two, a chance basically locking ourselves in the national tournament," Rohlik said. "The elation and emotion from (March 7) to our practices on Monday and Wednesday changed all of a sudden Wednesday when the governor spoke about the restrictions."

Rohlik was in constant communication with Ohio State associate athletic director Shaun Richard about the ticket distribution for the Michigan game. At first, it was going to be four tickets per player and staff.

"OK, we're going to be in a big building and it's going to be really weird playing in front of really nobody, not too many people," Rohlik remembered thinking, as told to Buckeye Sports Bulletin on March 14. "And then the next conversation was it's probably going to be just the team and personnel."

That's where it stood when Rohlik went home early on the evening of the 11th. By then, the NCAA had said the men's basketball tournament would begin the following week without fans, and the Big Ten stated that the remainder of its men's basketball tourney in progress would follow suit.

The sports world changed that night at 9:27 p.m. when it was reported that Utah Jazz player Rudy Gobert had tested positive for the coronavirus. Five minutes later, the NBA announced its season would be suspended indefinitely.

"All of a sudden it was, 'Oh boy, this is bigger than a hockey game or basketball game,'" Rohlik said.

The dominoes would start to fall, and the NHL, Major League Soccer and Major League Baseball suspended play the next day. At 11:49 a.m. on the 12th, the Big Ten canceled the men's basketball tournament, and other conferences did likewise. College hockey conference tournaments were also being canceled until the Big Ten was the final holdout.

Meanwhile, the Buckeye hockey team had an off-ice session, including yoga, on the morning of the 12th. Later, they planned to

reconvene at a steakhouse for dinner.

"Shaun called, 'You're going to have to cancel. Everything's done.'" Rohlik said. "What do you mean everything's done?"

"Cancel everything. The season's over." I was like, "The Big Ten tournament?"

Richard told Rohlik it was likely that the season was over.

Rohlik told the team to meet in the locker room at 3:30 p.m. By the time the players arrived, Richard had informed Rohlik that no decision had been made.

"The hardest part was I kind of knew what was going on because I had been in touch with Coach Rohls and I feel like a lot of guys didn't know," senior captain Ronnie Hein told BSB. "He called me originally and told me the season was over. I called all the guys and we got together in the locker room and he said never mind, he just got a phone call and it was still on."

Rohlik said, "They asked if everything's done and I said I'm not 100 percent sure yet."

The players departed to deal with other stressful situations. The university was shutting down, and all courses for the spring semester would be online.

Also, anyone in campus housing would have to leave.

A half hour after meeting with the players, Richard informed Rohlik that the season was officially over by NCAA edict.

"(Rohlik) called me and said come back to the rink, it's over," Hein said.

The team gathered again at 4:45 p.m.

"It was a pretty emotional meeting, basically telling them it's done," Rohlik said. "NCAA tournament, done. Big Ten tournament, done. The season's over."

"I've never been involved in anything like that. The last time I kind of felt numb and unknowing and all that was 9/11. To put things in perspective, we all understand first and foremost it's the safety of our athletes, it's the safety of our staff, the safety of our families, the safety of our communities."

Rohlik said the toughest part was seeing the look of his seniors knowing that everything in their world changed so quickly.

"Basically, it's here you go, eight seniors, thank you and it's over and clean out your lockers," he said. "It was a tough way to look them in the eye, and the tears and the hugs. Our program is in a better place than when they got here."

"We're dealing with athletes. We're dealing with competitors. We're dealing with guys that have put in four years of their lives to do something they still had the opportunity to do this year."

Rohlik feels fortunate that the senior brunch was held the day after the regular season finale vs. Wisconsin.

"Imagine if that were scheduled for this weekend (March 13-15)," Rohlik said. "Then we'd really have no closure. I still feel like we don't have closure. At least we had a senior banquet with parents and everybody there."

By Friday the 13th, aptly enough, the athletes in all OSU sports were told that the campus training facilities would be off limits and there could be no team functions, including practices. The hockey players had until 5 p.m. on March 16 to clean out their lockers.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet," Hein said on March 14. "At first it feels like a weekend and you'll be going back to practice on Monday. Once we all get home and doing our own thing, it will really set in."



Steve Rohlik

One More Time?

The NCAA is allowing a fifth year of eligibility for seniors in spring sports such as baseball, softball and lacrosse and as BSB went to print was mulling doing the same for seniors in winter sports that did not get to compete in national tournaments.

"If it does go through I would definitely look at taking a fifth year," Hein said. "We've been advised not to sign any pro contract until we see what the NCAA comes out with as far as eligibility."

"I would think the majority of the seniors who haven't already signed would look into coming back for a fifth year. You get another shot at the national title, which is what you play for all year, and that fell through."

If an extra year is granted, it is unlikely NHL draft picks Carson Meyer (Blue Jackets) and Tanner Laczynski (Philadelphia Flyers) would return.

Unreal

It was snowing in Columbus when BSB talked to Hein by phone on March 14, but he was in Pensacola, Fla., with several teammates enjoying their own version of spring break.

"We were talking here today," he said. "We're supposed to be playing a game tomorrow. That's the weirdest part."

"It's something that happened to everybody, not just us. There's nothing we can do about it. It is devastating but there's a lot worse things going on out there."

Staying Busy

Freshman defenseman Layton Ahac from North Vancouver, British Columbia, was one of those who lived in campus housing who was forced to head home when the school was shut down. There was a problem, though, in continuing his education.

"Initially at OSU, internationals were not allowed to take online courses," Rohlik said. "That's changed the last few days. He's allowed to take them now."

Not The Same

Usually if you win your final two games of the postseason, as the Buckeyes did, it means playing in the semifinal and final of the Frozen Four. Not this year.

"We always talk about winning that last game of the year," Rohlik said. "If you do that, you've probably done something special. It's surreal."

Final Thought

Hein with another reason he'd consider returning if granted a bonus season:

"We had to pack up our (stuff) and leave so quick. You don't really have any closure after four years in the program and all your friends you made, and all of a sudden you pack up and you're gone."

Series sweep

The Buckeyes made quick work of Wisconsin in the first game of the Big Ten quarterfinals thanks to four goals and one assist by Meyer. Three of his goals were in the second period. Sophomore Quinn Preston added two goals in the 9-1 rout.

Freshman Jaedon Leslie scored 1:12 into overtime of Game 2 to end the series with a 2-1 victory. Meyer had the other goal and junior Tommy Nappier made 29 saves.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's playoff series against Wisconsin, go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

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Coronavirus Concerns End Season For Buckeyes

Ohio State's baseball season is over before it ever really got started. As part of the precautions that Ohio State and the NCAA at large are taking in response to the coronavirus disease, all spring championships have been canceled, along with all spring sports, many of which just opened. Baseball is obviously included in that list, and after 14 games, Ohio State is now officially back into the offseason.

FROM THE STRETCH

Patrick Mayhorn

In addition to the cancellation of the season, which was effective immediately as of March 11, all organized team activities have been suspended until April 6. Ohio State baseball players were expected to clear their lockers by 5 p.m. March 16 and have until March 22 to move out of their residence halls. All athletic facilities will be closed, though players are still able to work with athletic training staff elsewhere.

In a statement from the Big Ten, which came to the decision before the NCAA, the reasoning for the decision is laid out.

"All of these decisions are in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and are in line with the priorities of health, safety and wellness for student-athletes, students, coaches, administrators, fans, media, campus and community populations," the statement says.

"The main priority of the Big Ten Conference continues to be the health, safety and wellness of our student-athletes, coaches, administrators, fans and media as we continue to monitor all developing and relevant information on the COVID-19 virus."

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith spoke in favor of the steps that the Big Ten took, noting that this is "uncharted territory for us as an institution, let alone as an athletic department." He also explained that while it's "disheartening and extremely painful" to end seasons, he has no doubts that it was the correct decision for the sake of the public good.

The cancellation does bring up questions of eligibility for seniors, of which the baseball team has six: pitchers Joe Gahm, Patrick Murphy and Jake Vance; and infielders Matt Carpenter, Conner Pohl and Noah West. The NCAA was quick to address those concerns, announcing in a statement on March 13 that spring athletes will receive an extra year of eligibility.

"Council leadership agreed that eligi-

bility relief is appropriate for all Division I student-athletes who participated in spring sports," the NCAA's Division I coordination committee said. "Details of eligibility relief will be finalized at a later time. Additional issues with NCAA rules must be addressed, and appropriate governance bodies will work through those in the coming days and weeks."

With the season coming to an abrupt end, Ohio State's reflection on those first 14 games will be complicated. The Buckeyes' final record sits at 6-8, a disappointing total for a team that came into the year hot off of a surprise NCAA tournament run. Entering the year, head coach Greg Beals hoped that the experience of the previous season could propel Ohio State, despite a young roster.

"The fact that we have been in the national tournament three of the last four years, we have a great understanding and a realization of what that expectation is, and it has given our guys a clearer vision," Beals said before the season.

Carpenter echoed the sentiment.

"We may have a younger core, but just going out there and experiencing big moments – guys know what it feels like, and guys are hungry to get back there because they know just how special it is," Carpenter said.

Despite that experience, and the return of the entire starting pitching rotation, led by star sophomore Seth Lonsway, Ohio State struggled with finding its identity. Because the season is ending prematurely, the Buckeyes will never really get the chance to grow into the potential they had.

"The identity is always evolving during the season, and we haven't gotten to the point where we have been able to really entrench that identity," Beals said on March 6 following a 3-6 start.

The players also knew that they hadn't hit their stride yet.

"We definitely have not played the way we know we are capable of, but we are making adjustments and we are going to keep going and getting better," pitcher Mitch Milheim said after a 9-1 loss to Stetson. "We have had spurts of playing really, really well."

After that rough start, Ohio State actually did start to show signs of life in the last few weeks. It won three straight games against Harvard (13-1 on March 7), Fairfield (8-3 on March 8) and North Florida (10-2 on March 10), the latter of which inspired some optimism from Beals.

"I liked how everybody played tonight as a team," Beals said after the victory. "We got good pitching and rolled a couple double-play balls. Our defense was solid, playing without any errors. This was probably the best game we played so far this year, but we have to keep it rolling tomorrow and into the weekend."

A loss to North Florida a day later, 9-5, was the last of the season. Ohio State was set to enter a three-game weekend series with Liberty that the Buckeyes were hoping to sweep and take some momentum.

Although the season is lost, there are some positives for Ohio State to take moving forward. First, Beals snatched his 300th win at Ohio State against Lipscomb on Feb. 28, making him the fourth coach in school history to reach the milestone.

Additionally, Ohio State appears to have at least two legitimate All-America caliber players entering next season in junior catcher Dillon Dingler and Lonsway, along with very strong contributors in sophomore infielder Nick Erwin, sophomore outfielder Nolan Clegg, true freshman outfielder Mitchell Okuley and junior pitcher Griffan Smith.

Dingler was already a second-team All-Big Ten selection as a sophomore and started this year with an outstanding .340 batting average while slugging a team-high .760, with an on-base percentage of .404. He also

easily led the team in RBI with 14.

Erwin (.368 batting average, .526 slugging percentage and .364 on-base percentage), Clegg (.333/.515/.395) and Okuley (.300/.450/.440) all sat atop the stat sheets and provided consistent offense for a team that was lacking it more often than not.

Lonsway was masterful in his 18 innings on the mound, even if he finished the year with just a 1-2 record. He struck out 42 batters, put up a 3.00 ERA and allowed just 11 hits on the year. Smith was less overpowering, striking out 16 in 16 1/3 innings of work while allowing 18 hits, but he was harder to score on (2.76 ERA).

With each of those players expected back next season, along with the return of those seniors who were previously going to depart after the season, Ohio State could be looking to make a serious run at the Big Ten title and another NCAA berth. Until then, however, the Buckeyes will have to do what everyone else in college sports is doing right now: sit at home.

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Big Ten Suspends All Team Athletic Activities

The Big Ten announced that all organized team activities have been suspended until April 6 in response to concerns regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), with plans to re-evaluate at that time.

Following the cancellation of the men's basketball tournament, the Big Ten also announced the cancellation of all conference and nonconference competitions through the end of the academic year, including spring sports that compete beyond the academic year, and participation in all NCAA tournaments and competitions.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

Additionally, the conference also announced a moratorium on all on- and off-campus recruiting activities for the foreseeable future.

The conference plans to use this time to work with medical experts and institutional leadership to determine next steps for moving forward in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Big Ten, the main priority of the conference continues to be the health, safety and wellness of the student-athletes, coaches, administrators, fans and media as the conference continues to monitor all developing and relevant information on the COVID-19 virus.

Big Ten Schools Suspend In-Person Classes

When the University of Nebraska-Lincoln announced on March 12 that it was suspending in-person classes in an effort to prevent further spread of the coronavirus, it became the last Big Ten school to do so.

"I appreciate that dealing with the impact of this pandemic has been challenging in many ways," Nebraska chancellor Ronnie Green wrote. "We are, and will be, working through unprecedented changes in how we meet our education, research and engagement missions."

The Cornhuskers followed the other 13 conference schools by having all the school's in-person classes transitioned into online courses to be taught remotely.

Indiana QB Peyton Ramsey Transfers To Northwestern

The nation's worst passing offense added a quarterback from within the conference when Northwestern brought in Indiana's Peyton Ramsey through the transfer portal. As a graduate transfer, Ramsey will be eligible to play in 2020, with one season of eligibility remaining.

"Sometimes the road to realizing your dreams can take you in a different direction than you expected," Ramsey posted on his Twitter account. "With that being said, I would like to announce my decision to continue my playing career at Northwestern University. I am grateful to Coach Fitz (Pat Fitzgerald) and his entire staff for this opportunity. I can't wait to get started."

Ramsey started all 12 games for the Hoosiers in 2018 after starting four games



BIG TEN CONFERENCE/TWITTER

DIFFICULT DECISION – First-year commissioner Kevin Warren made the decision to cancel the Big Ten men's basketball tournament just minutes before the first scheduled game on March 12.

as a redshirt freshman in 2017. The Cincinnati Elder product lost his starting job to Michael Penix Jr. prior to the 2019 campaign but started Indiana's final seven games following an injury to Penix.

For his career, Ramsey has completed 66.5 percent of his passes (633 of 952) for 6,581 yards with 42 touchdowns and 23 interceptions. The former three-star recruit from Cincinnati has also shown the ability to run the ball, gaining 832 career rushing yards and scoring 14 touchdowns on 300 attempts.

At Northwestern, 2019 was a forgettable year, particularly for the team's passing offense. Hunter Johnson, Aidan Smith and Andrew Marty all started at quarterback for the Wildcats at various times. Northwestern's passing efficiency rating was 84.53, which ranked last among the 130 Football Bowl Subdivision teams and more than 15 points lower than No. 129 Old Dominion.

Combining for 15 interceptions and only six touchdown passes, Northwestern quarterbacks led the team to a 3-9 record.

Fitzgerald fired longtime offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Mick McCall the day after the conclusion of the season, replacing him with former Boston College offensive coordinator Mike Bajakian.

Johnson, Smith and Marty all return at quarterback, as well as T.J. Green, whom the NCAA granted a sixth season of eligibility after he suffered a season-ending foot injury in the Wildcats' season opener. After the passing woes in Evanston in 2019, Ramsey is expected to seize the reins of Bajakian's offense.

Maryland Women's Basketball Wins Big Ten Tournament

For the fourth time in the six years since Maryland joined the Big Ten, its women's basketball team won the conference tournament. The Terrapins defeated Ohio State 82-65 at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis on March 8.

Maryland boasted five double-digit scorers against the Buckeyes, with senior Stephanie Jones leading the way with 18 points and freshman Ashley Owusu adding 17 off the bench. Shakira Austin (14 points), Taylor Mikesell (12 points) and Blair Watson (11 points) all contributed to the balanced attack from the Terrapins.

The Terps (27-4) entered the post-season ranked No. 6 nationally in the Associated Press top 25 poll and were expected to be a top contender in the NCAA tournament before it was canceled.

Maryland head coach Brenda Frese has led her team to at least a share of the Big Ten regular-season title five times in six seasons. The Terrapins have played in the Big Ten tournament championship game all six years they have been in the conference. After losing in the past two Big Ten title games, Maryland brought the trophy back to College Park.

Conference Cancels Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament

The Big Ten men's basketball tournament was canceled due to concerns regarding the coronavirus, just minutes before the first scheduled game of the day on March 12.

"The Big Ten Conference announced

today that it will be canceling the remainder of the Big Ten men's basketball tournament, effective immediately," the Big Ten released in a statement. "The Big Ten Conference will use this time to work with the appropriate medical experts and institutional leadership to determine next steps for moving forward in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic."

The cancellation did not come as a shock, especially following a March 11 incident at the tourney when Nebraska coach Fred Hoiberg had to be rushed to the hospital. He tested negative for the coronavirus but positive for the flu virus, influenza A.

The timing of the cancellation came as a surprise, however, with Michigan and Rutgers players getting the news while warming up in preparation for a 12 p.m. ET tipoff.

"The final decision was made about 11:40 Eastern time, and these are not easy decisions because they impact so many people," said Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren. "But I said from my first day with the Big Ten, the players will always be my first priority in every decision that gets made."

"Yesterday was an emotional day, not only here but at other conferences and other sports as well. Nothing really changed from last night, I just needed some clarity. At the end of the day, this is about our student-athletes and I want to make sure we never put them in a position that's not best for them. I feel good that we did the right thing. If it turns out we overreacted, I'm comfortable with that."

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2020 FOOTBALL

Sept. 5 BOWLING GREEN; **12** at Oregon; **19** BUFFALO; **26** RUTGERS.

Oct. 10 IOWA; **17** at Michigan State; **24** at Penn State; **31** NEBRASKA.

Nov. 7 INDIANA; **14** at Maryland, **21** at Illinois; **28** MICHIGAN.

Dec. 5 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

MEN'S BASKETBALL (21-10, 11-9)

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, W 71-52; **29** MORGAN STATE, W 90-57.

Dec. 4 North Carolina, W 74-49; **7** PENN STATE, W 106-74; **15** Minnesota, L 84-71; **17** SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE, W 80-48; **21** Kentucky at Las Vegas, W 71-65; **29** West Virginia at Cleveland, L 67-59.

Jan. 3 WISCONSIN, L 61-57; **7** Maryland, L 67-55; **11** Indiana, L 66-54; **14** NEBRASKA, W 80-68; **18** Penn State, L 90-76; **23** MINNESOTA, L 62-59; **26** Northwestern, W 71-59.

Feb. 1 INDIANA, W 68-59; **4** Michigan, W 61-58; **9** Wisconsin, L 70-57; **12** RUTGERS, W 72-66; **15** PURDUE, W 68-52; **20** Iowa, L 85-76; **23** MARYLAND, W 79-72; **27** NEBRASKA, W 75-54.

March 1 MICHIGAN, W 77-63; **5** ILLINOIS, W 71-63; **8** Michigan State, L 80-69.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (21-12, 11-7)

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, L 68-53; **30** Northern Iowa in Las Vegas, W 64-46.

Dec. 5 LOUISVILLE, W 67-60; **8** RADFORD, W 70-57; **15** Stanford, L 71-52; **17** Sacramento State, W 104-74; **28** PURDUE, L 66-50; **31** Minnesota, W 66-63.

Jan. 6 Maryland, L 72-62; **9** MICHIGAN, W 78-69; **12** PENN STATE, W 80-70; **16** Michigan State, L 68-65; **19** ILLINOIS, W 77-47; **23** Iowa, L 77-68; **30** MARYLAND, L 85-65.

Feb. 2 Nebraska, W 80-74 (OT); **6** Illinois, W 78-58; **9** WISCONSIN, W 82-74; **13** MINNESOTA, W 99-76; **16** Indiana, W 80-76; **19** NEBRASKA, W 65-52; **22** Rutgers, L 59-57; **25** NORTHWESTERN, L 69-55; **29** Purdue, W 77-56.

March 5 Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis vs. Minnesota, W 77-56; **6** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis vs. Iowa, W 87-66; **7** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis vs. Michigan, W 66-60; **8** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis vs. Maryland, L 82-65.

BASEBALL (6-8, 0-0)

Feb. 14 Saint Joseph's in Port Charlotte, Fla., L 7-3; **15** Pittsburgh in North Port, Fla., W 4-1; **16** Indiana State in Port Charlotte, W 10-6 (10); **21** Georgia Tech, L 12-4; **22** Georgia

Tech, L 5-2; **23** Georgia Tech, L 12-2; **28** Lipscomb, W 11-6; **29** Lipscomb, L 5-4.

March 1 Lipscomb, L 4-2; **6** Stetson in DeLand, Fla., L 9-1; **7** Harvard in DeLand, Fla., W 13-1; **8** Fairfield in DeLand, Fla., W 8-3; **10** North Florida, W 10-2; **11** North Florida, L 9-5.

SOFTBALL (9-9, 0-0)

Feb. 7 South Carolina, L 3-2; **8** North Dakota State in Columbia, SC, W 13-5; **8** Southern Illinois in Columbia, W 5-0; **9** UNC Greensboro in Columbia, W 5-4 (10); **14** NC State, L 5-3; **15** Notre Dame in Raleigh, NC, L 7-1; **15** NC State, L 5-3; **16** Notre Dame in Raleigh, L 6-4; **21** UC Santa Barbara in Fresno, Calif., W 5-1; **21** Fresno State, L 9-4; **22** UC Santa Barbara in Fresno, L 5-2; **22** Pacific in Fresno, W 6-2; **23** University of Illinois at Chicago in Fresno, W 4-2.

March 6 Oregon State in Tempe, Ariz., W 3-0; **7** Wright State in Tempe, W 13-0 (5); **8** Oregon State in Tempe, L 7-3; **8** Arizona State, L 9-0; **9** Lehigh in Tempe, W 10-2 (5).

FENCING

Jan. 4 January NAC at Charlotte, N.C., NTS; **12** Detroit Mercy Invitational; NTS; **15** DENISON, NTS; **18** St. John's Duals at New York, N.Y., NTS; **19** Philadelphia Invitational; NTS.

Feb. 1-2 Northwestern Duals, NTS; **22-23** MIDWEST CHAMPIONSHIPS.

March 7-8 NCAA Regionals at Detroit, Mich., NTS.

MEN'S GYMNASTICS (2-2, 1-2)

Jan. 18 ARIZONA STATE & OKLAHOMA, 2nd (398.600); **25** Penn State, L 405.900-405.000.

Feb. 1 MICHIGAN, L 409.600-408.500; **8** Arizona State & California at Tempe, Ariz., 2/5; **21-23** Winter Cup at Las Vegas, NTS; **29** NAVY, W 408.900-397.200;

March 7 IOWA & NORTHERN ILLINOIS, 1/3.

WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS (3-3, 2-3)

Jan. 11 North Carolina State, W 194.025-193.800; **18** Michigan State, L 195.450-195.275; **25** CENTRAL MICHIGAN & MARYLAND, 1st (195.500).

Feb. 1 MINNESOTA, L 197.400-195.550; **9** Michigan, L 197.350-195.900; **14** PENN STATE, W 195.350-195.150; **21** Big Five at Toledo, 3/5; **28** Missouri, 4/4.

March 8 Arizona and Bridgepoint, 2/3.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (20-11-5, 11-9-4)

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, W 3-1.

Dec. 1 MICHIGAN STATE, W 2-0; **6** MINNESOTA, W 3-2 (OT); **7** MINNESOTA, T 1-1 (L 3x3); **27** COLGATE, W 3-2; **28** COLGATE, W 3-0.

Jan. 3 Cornell at Las Vegas, L 5-2; **4** Army at Las Vegas, W 2-1 (OT); **10** Wisconsin, W 4-2; **11** Wisconsin, L 5-2; **17** NOTRE

DAME, T 4-4 (L SO); **18** NOTRE DAME, W 2-1; **24** Minnesota, L 6-3; **25** Minnesota, L 4-1; **31** Michigan, L 3-2.

Feb. 1 Michigan, W 4-1; **7** PENN STATE, T 2-2 (OTW) **8** PENN STATE, L 6-3; **21** Michigan State, W 1-0; **22** Michigan State, W 4-2; **28** WISCONSIN, L 3-2; **29** WISCONSIN, T 3-3 (OTL).

March 6 Big Ten Tournament First Round vs. Wisconsin, W 9-1; **7** Big Ten Tournament First Round vs. Wisconsin, W 2-1 (OT)

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (24-8-6, 13-6-5)

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** CORNELL, W 3-1; **30** CORNELL, L 5-1.

Dec. 14 Princeton at Las Vegas, L 4-2; **15** Princeton at Las Vegas, W 5-2.

Jan. 10 MINNESOTA STATE, W 6-0; **11** MINNESOTA STATE, W 8-4; **17** Minnesota, W 4-1; **18** Minnesota, L 2-1; **24** QUINNIPIAC, W 2-1; **25** QUINNIPIAC, W 3-2; **31** BEMIDJI STATE, W 7-2.

Feb. 1 BEMIDJI STATE, T 2-2; **7** Minnesota Duluth, L 5-4 (OT); **8** Minnesota Duluth, L 4-1; **15** Wisconsin, W 3-1; **16** Wisconsin, T 1-1; **21** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 3-0; **22** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 6-3; **28** WCHA Tournament vs. Minnesota State, W 4-2; **29** WCHA Tournament vs. Minnesota State, W 1-0.

March 7 WCHA Touranment vs. Minnesota, W 4-3 (OT); **8** WCHA Tournament vs. Wisconsin, W 1-0 (OT).

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, NTS.

Jan. 3-4 KENTUCKY, Men, W 175.5-142.5; Women, W 163-156; **18** MICHIGAN, Men L 190-110; Women, L 165-135; **24-25** Shamrock Invitational at South Bend, Ind., Men 3/4; Women 2/4; **31** Pittsburgh, NTS.

Feb. 14-16 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL; **19-22** Women's Big Ten Championship at Iowa City, Iowa, 1/12; **26-29** Men's Big Ten Championship at Bloomington, Ind.,

2/10.

March 1 LAST CHANCE MEET (women's), NTS; **8** LAST CHANCE MEET (men's), NTS.

MEN'S TENNIS (14-3, 1-0)

Jan. 15 NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 7-0; **15** DAYTON, W 5-0; **19** XAVIER, W 7-0; WRIGHT STATE, W 7-0; **25** PURDUE, W 4-0; **26** TULSA, W 4-0; **26** TOLEDO, W 4-0.

Feb. 1 TEXAS, W 4-1; **7** ARIZONA STATE, W 7-0; **9** USC, W 4-2; **11** TEXAS A&M, W 4-1; **14** Wisconsin, W 4-0; **15** Wake Forest, W 4-3; **16** North Carolina, L 4-0.

March 1 Georgia, L 4-0; **4** Stanford, L 4-3; **8** PENN STATE, W 6-1.

WOMEN'S TENNIS (9-3, 2-0)

Jan. 17 Michigan Invitational at Ann Arbor, Mich., NTS; **25** ITA Kickoff at Stillwater, Okla., W 4-0; **31** DUKE, W 4-2.

Feb. 7 National Indoors at Chicago vs. Georgia Tech, L 4-1; **8** National Indoors at Chicago vs. Michigan, W 4-3; **16** Vanderbilt, L 5-2; **21** KENTUCKY, W 4-1; **23** ARIZONA STATE, W 5-0; **27** Purdue, W 5-2.

March 1 Florida State, W 4-3; **7** NORTHWESTERN, W 5-2.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

Jan. 10 Kentucky Invite at Lexington, Ky., NTS; **17-18** Michigan Invite at Ann Arbor, Mich., Men 2/3; Women NTS; **23-25** Columbia Challenge at New York, NTS; **30-31** Texas Tech Invitational at Lubbock, Texas, NTS.

Feb. 1 Texas Tech Invitational at Lubbock, Texas, NTS; **7** Midwest Open at Geneva, Ohio, NTS; **13-15** Iowa State Classic at Ames, Iowa; **14-15** Tiger Paw Invite at Clemson, S.C.; **22** Kent State Tune Up at Kent, Ohio; **22** Alex Wilson Invitational at South Bend, Ind.; **28-29** Big Ten Championships at Geneva, Ohio, Men 5/12; Women 1/13.

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (11-8, 2-5)

Jan. 4 North Greenville, W 3-0; **7** Urbana, W 3-0; **9** Saint Francis, W 3-0; **16** LINCOLN MEMORIAL, W 3-1; **17** KING, W 3-0; **24** USC at University Park, Pa., W 3-0; **26** UCLA at University Park, Pa., L 3-1; **31** Saint Francis, W 3-0.

Feb. 1 Penn State, W 3-0; **7** UCSB, L 3-1; **8** LONG BEACH STATE, L 3-1; **13** LEWIS, L 3-0; **15** MCKENDREE, W 3-0; **21** Loyola Chicago, L 3-1; **22** Purdue Fort Wayne, L 3-1; **28** Quincy, W 3-0; **29** Lindenwood, L 3-1.

March 4 BALL STATE, L 3-1; **8** PENN STATE, W 3-1.

WRESTLING (10-4, 6-3)

Nov. 2 Michigan State, NTS; **10** STANFORD, W 29-6; **15** Pittsburgh, W 23-12; **17** VIRGINIA TECH, L 21-15.

Dec. 1 CORNELL, W 23-9; **6-7** C.K. Invitational at Las Vegas, 2/32.

Jan 6 ARIZONA STATE, W 17-16; **10** RUTGERS, W 22-13; **17** Wisconsin, W 24-13; **19** ILLINOIS, W 28-6; **24** Iowa, L 24-10; **26** Minnesota, W 22-13; **31** MARYLAND, W 43-3.

Feb. 2 Nebraska, L 19-14; **9** NORTHWESTERN, W 28-10; **15** Penn State, L 20-16.

March 7-8 Big Ten Championship, 3/14.

Garza Named Big Ten Player Of The Year

Iowa junior center Luka Garza was named the men's basketball Big Ten Player of the Year after averaging 23.9 points and 9.8 rebounds in 32.0 minutes per game for the 20-11 Hawkeys.

Garza made incredible improvements to his conditioning and overall game after averaging 13.1 points and 4.5 boards in 23.7 minutes per contest as a sophomore.

"That's a process," Iowa coach Fran McCaffery said, "and as you know, everybody's in a big rush. 'I got to be one-and-done, I got to get to the league.' You know, what you have to do is get your game right. Get your body right. And that's what he's done, and it's been fun to watch.

"It's always a beautiful thing when, as a coach, you don't have to be the one motivating. He's already motivated. Some days I feel like saying, 'Luka, take your girlfriend to the movies.' "

Garza was one of two unanimous decisions by the conference's coaches for the All-Big Ten first team with Michigan State's Cassius Winston. Lamar Stevens of Penn State joined Maryland's Anthony Cowan Jr. and Jalen Smith to round out the first team (coaches).

Illinois' Ayo Dosunmu, Michigan's Xavier Simpson, Michigan State's Xavier Tillman, Minnesota's Daniel Oturu and Ohio State's Kaleb Wesson made up the second team (coaches).

Indiana's Trayce Jackson-Davis, Iowa's Joe Wieskamp, Rutgers' Geo Baker, and Nate Reuvers and D'Mitrik Trice of Wisconsin were named third-team all-conference by the coaches.

The media selected the same first team and second team as the coaches besides replacing Cowan Jr. with Dosunmu. They

differed on the third team with the media choosing Illinois' Kofi Cockburn and Minnesota's Marcus Carr over Trice and Baker.

Tillman was named defensive player of the year, Cockburn earned freshman of the year honors and Maryland's Aaron Wiggins won sixth man of the year.

Wisconsin head coach Greg Gard earned coach of the year honors after leading the Badgers to a 22-9 season, with a 14-6 conference record, tying Maryland and Michigan State for the best Big Ten ledger.

Doyle Wins Women's Big Ten Player Of The Year

Iowa senior guard Kathleen Doyle won the women's basketball Big Ten Player of the Year, as selected by both the conference coaches and media.

After winning a share of the Big Ten title, Northwestern earned a pair of post-season awards. Joe McKeown was chosen as Big Ten Coach of the Year by both his colleagues and the media, while Wildcat guard Veronica Burton was named defensive player of the year.

Ashley Owusu from Big Ten co-champion Maryland earned freshman of the year honors, while Nebraska guard Leigha Brown was voted sixth player of the year.

Doyle joined Maryland senior guard Kaila Charles, Michigan sophomore forward Naz Hillmon and Northwestern junior guard Lindsey Pulliam as unanimous first-team All-Big Ten selections by both the coaches and media. Rutgers' Arella Guirantes was a unanimous first-team choice by the coaches but not the media.

The conference's All-Big Ten teams consist of 10 first-team honorees, with

Grace Berger and Ali Patberg of Indiana, Northwestern's Abi Scheid, Ohio State's Dorka Juhasz and Purdue's Ae'rianna Harris all earning first-team honors from the coaches.

Iowa's Monika Czinano and Penn State's Kamaria McDaniel replaced Berger and Scheid in the media voting.

Big Ten Standouts Named To College Football HOF

Three former Big Ten standouts as well as a pair of stars from current Big Ten institutions were selected as members of the 2020 College Football Hall of Fame class.

Former Michigan offensive tackle Jumbo Elliott (1984-87), Minnesota defensive end Bob Stein (1966-68) and Ohio State running back Keith Byars (1982-85) were elected into the hall of fame for their standout careers in the Big Ten.

Former Maryland linebacker E.J. Henderson (1999-2002) and Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch (1998-2001) did not compete in the Big Ten but represent current conference programs.

The 2020 College Football Hall of Fame Class will be officially inducted during the 63rd NFF Annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 8 at the New York Hilton Midtown.

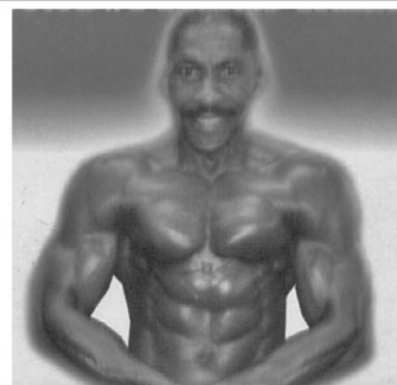
8 Big Ten Student-Athletes Named Sullivan Semifinalists

Eight Big Ten student-athletes were among the 33 semifinalists for the 2020 Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) James E. Sullivan Award for the nation's top amateur athlete.

The student-athletes representing seven different Big Ten schools include the following: Justin Fields (Ohio State football), Spencer Lee (Iowa wrestling), Beata

Nelson (Wisconsin women's swimming & diving), Dana Rettke (Wisconsin volleyball), Pat Spencer (Northwestern men's basketball), Lauren Stivrins (Nebraska volleyball), Megan Taylor (Maryland women's lacrosse) and Cassius Winston (Michigan State men's basketball).

The list of 33 semifinalists will be cut to 10 finalists by the end of March, with the recipient to be named at the AAU James E. Sullivan Award Ceremony on April 21 at the New York Athletic Club in Manhattan.



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Byars Headed To College Football Hall Of Fame

Bramble has gotten his due from the College Football Hall of Fame.

Bramble, you may ask, who is Bramble?

Bramble is a guy who was so good at Ohio State that his teammates kiddingly and admiringly gave him the nickname, saying he was a combination of Jim Brown (the "Br" part) and Earl Campbell (the "amble" portion).

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

Brown, of course, is still regarded by many as the greatest running back ever to play in the NFL. Campbell at the time was one of the NFL greats for his era. And Keith Byars – the man who got the nickname – was college football's best running back – a powerful combination of speed and strength.

A little bit awkward, the nickname really never did catch on, but it was befitting of the style and quality of Byars' play at Ohio State in the early 1980s.

Earlier this month, Byars was announced as part of the 2020 class of inductees in the College Football Hall of Fame.

I admit, I'm a little partial when it

comes to Byars. I was thrilled to hear the news, glad that Byars was so honored and even more pleased to learn that the selectors shared my admiration for the way Byars played the game.

Byars, hampered by injuries, had a solid but not starring 13-season NFL career. But in college, before the first of his serious foot injuries, Byars truly was great.

I first came across Byars in the Ohio High School North-South All-Star game at Massillon's Paul Brown Tiger Stadium in the summer of 1982. If a you're a collector of old Buckeye Sports Bulletins like I, you can find the picture I shot of Byars that night on page 2 of the August 1982 issue, BSB Volume 1, Issue No. 31. He flashed receiving skills that night, playing in a game with five other OSU recruits.

Byars' brief freshman bio in the 1982 OSU media guide gave us a taste of his versatility. "Unusually quick, well-coordinated athlete for his size," the description of the 6-2, 225-pounder began, before noting that he averaged 11.5 yards a carry in an All-America season at Dayton Roth High School. In four sports (football, basketball, baseball and track) he earned 10 letters and won two state basketball championships. Hobbies were listed as bowling and movies.

That fall, we didn't get a chance to see much of Byars on the field. He carried the ball just six times for 24 yards as a freshman. Tim Spencer (273 carries for 1,538

yards), Jimmy Gayle (142 for 647) and Vaughn Broadnax (103 for 514) monopolized the carries. But during Byars' sophomore season in 1983, we began to see the talents possessed by this versatile athlete.

Byars led the Big Ten in rushing with 1,199 yards on 222 carries (5.4 yards per carry), plus he caught 23 passes for another 359 yards (15.6 yards per catch). And Byars scored a Big Ten-record 22 touchdowns, the most memorable of which was a 99-yard kickoff return in Ohio State's Fiesta Bowl victory over Pitt.

That set the stage for Byars' most memorable year at OSU.

In a 45-26 win against Iowa early in the 1984 season, Byars famously ran for a touchdown, caught a touchdown pass and threw a touchdown pass. His 354 all-purpose yards against Purdue remain a single-game school record. But no day was more memorable than Oct. 13, 1984.

Illinois had taken a 24-0 lead. But after OSU finally got on the board with a 16-yard Byars TD run late in the second quarter, Byars went to the sideline, looked into the network cameras, said, "Hi," to a number of people and then assuredly told everybody back in Dayton that "we coming back."

Come back they did, mainly because of Byars. He later scored on a 67-yard run, sprinting most of the way to the end zone after losing a shoe.

His final TD and OSU school-record-tying fifth of the game came with 36

seconds left to give the Buckeyes a 45-38 win under dim temporary lights trucked in for the late-afternoon game that ran into night. Byars finished that day with a school-record 274 yards rushing and squarely in the race for the Heisman Trophy.

Byars lost the Heisman vote that year, finishing a distant second to Boston College quarterback Doug Flutie. But he clearly was college football's best running back – one of the best running backs at any level that year, including the NFL, I would argue.

He led the nation in rushing (1,764 yards), all-purpose yards (2,441) and scoring (144), won the Big Ten MVP award and was presumed the Heisman favorite for 1985.

Unfortunately, he missed most of his senior season with a foot injury, adding just 213 yards to his career total. Instead, Bo Jackson won the 1985 Heisman with numbers that weren't quite as good as Byars had posted the year before. But I'll never forget the talent Byars possessed before his injuries in college and the pros. I've considered him right up there with Eddie George and a notch above the other great backs in recent Ohio State history.

So I applaud the College Football Hall of Fame for making the right choice. The induction ceremonies will be in New York City on Dec. 8. A deserving honor indeed for a gentleman off the field and a delight to watch on the field.

Congratulations, Bramble.

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Pandemic Puts OSU And Sports World On Hold

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Things have changed so rapidly around the world, and particularly in this country, in just the past few days that I wonder what we will be doing or how we will be feeling by the time you read this, just days from my writing.

I had someone recently speculate to me that all the hubbub concerning the coronavirus would prove to be overblown. My response to that was that if this proved to be overblown, that would be the best outcome.

We should all pray for that result.

But the truth is we are traveling in uncharted territory. No one knows what the ultimate effects on our health, the health of our loved ones, the economy, our health system and so many other things will be. Far down the list is what is going to happen on the sports scene.

If anything, Americans were a little slow to react to what has now been deemed a pandemic. Thus, the whirlwind action as we quickly try to make up for lost time.

Am I happy that virtually every athletic event in the foreseeable future has been canceled? Of course not. Sports provide a diversion for nearly every American and people around the globe, and as a follower of amateur athletics by trade, I am deeply saddened for the athletes at Ohio State and everywhere who have had their pursuits – pursuits that they have worked and trained for nearly all their lives – halted.

Do I think canceling the events was the right decision? As I have learned more and more about the coronavirus and its spread, of course.

The curtailment of sporting events and other forms of entertainment is in the best interests of the participants and those who watch them. By acting decisively now, one hopes we can get the spread under control quickly and be back in the stands watching our favorite teams and players, sooner rather than later.

If it has to be later, so be it. Our health, the health of our loved ones and the health of our community are paramount.

Now if someone could just explain to me the run on toilet paper. That's America at its best, isn't it?

Tinkering With The BSB Print Schedule

With little Buckeye sports news to report on and little news expected soon on when there will be Buckeye sports news to report, we will not be publishing the Buckeye Sports Bulletin scheduled to be mailed on March 31.

We are scheduled to return with the April 18 issue, set to be mailed on April 14. If we have to, we will fill it with recruiting news, historical pieces, columns and, with any luck, news on when there will be athletic news.

In the meantime, we urge you to follow us daily on the electronic BuckeyeSports.com. We will be ramping up our recruiting coverage, coming up with some creative ideas for stories, running more reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives and, of course, keeping you current on the latest health-related developments. You can discuss all of these things with BSB staff members and other readers on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum. I will be there each day, as I generally am, to answer any of your questions about the Buckeyes or BSB.

You can also call us at (614) 486-2202 with any queries.

The Greatest OSU Football Teams

I was so busy washing my hands regularly, that I forgot to post the list of USA Today's top 150 college football teams of all time on BuckeyeSports.com, as I promised in this space last issue. I will get that corrected in the next day or two so that you can see for yourself the 150

teams, including six Buckeye squads, that were deemed better than the 1968 Buckeyes.

While I analyzed that list and Ohio State's presence there in the last issue, I also discussed in this space staff writer Wyatt Crosher's efforts to determine the greatest Ohio State football team to not win a national championship.

I have had some thoughts about that quest since we last went to press.

As we were discussing the article in the office in preparation for doing the research and writing the story, the young guys kept mentioning the 2015 team as one of the best to not win the national crown. That was a team that I would not have necessarily considered when drawing up a list of potential contenders for that title. Maybe my recollection of that team was affected by the dismal way they lost to Michigan State at home in the rain that season.

With so much fanfare from our staff, I decided to revisit the 2015 Buckeyes. And I must say, that team was stacked. This was future NFL central.

The offensive line featured Jacoby Boren at center, future Rimington award winners Billy Price and Pat Elflein at guards and Taylor Decker and Chase Farris at the tackles. Future pro Nick Vannett held down the tight end spot.

At the receivers, you had Michael Thomas, who has proved to be an even greater pro than he was a collegian, Braxton Miller, Jalin Marshall and Curtis Samuel, and reserves such as future stars Parris Campbell and Terry McLaurin.

And if that weren't enough, you had college and pro running back great Ezekiel Elliott to carry the mail.

And running all of that was J.T. Barrett, though I believe his growth was stunted that year by the early-season decision to rotate him with Cardale Jones. Still, that's a lot of depth at quarterback between the two guys who had led the Buckeyes to the inaugural CFP title the year before.

On defense, the line was anchored by a pair of Big Ten defensive linemen of the year in Joey Bosa and Tyquan Lewis, with Jalen Holmes and Sam Hubbard in reserve. The interior featured a rotation of Tommy Schutt, Joel Hale and Michael Hill.

With all the hand-wringing over the current set of Buckeye linebackers, how would you like to start Joshua Perry, Raekwon McMillan and Darron Lee?

Garcon Conley and Eli Apple started at cornerback with Marshon Lattimore and Damon Webb rounding out the two-deep, and Tyvis Powell and Vonn Bell were at the safeties, with Malik Hooker in reserve.

Wow! This was the culmination of the first four years of Urban Meyer recruiting.

Give the ball to Zeke 30 times in the rain against the Spartans and maybe this column is completely different.

Personally, I did not get to Columbus until 1976, which means I missed the Super Sophs' junior and senior years of 1969 and '70, as well as the Archie Griffin years from 1972-75, which means I missed all those great teams that were unable to win the title. For people like me, the 1998 team is the poster child for a Buckeye team that should have won the national championship but didn't.

The cover of BSB's football preview issue that year had a banner headline that read, "The Year of the Buckeye." Here's what I wrote in this

space heading into that 1998 season:

"It seems like the entire John Cooper tenure at Ohio State has been building up to this 1998 season. Throughout Cooper's stay in Columbus, there have been hints of that magical season which all football fans live for. Unfortunately, that type of season has eluded the Buckeyes for 30 years.

"Now it seems that the players are in place, the coaching staff is in place, the schedule is favorable, and – maybe – the stars are properly aligned for a run at the national championship. Virtually every pollster in the country seems to agree, as the Buckeyes are a solid preseason No. 1."

Again, it was Michigan State, coached by Nick Saban, that spoiled the championship party, leaving Ohio State fans to have to wait another four years before their beloved Buckeyes finally won their first crown since 1968.

Although looking back at the 2015 OSU team was enlightening for me in the positive, in revisiting the '98 team with more than 20 years of hindsight, maybe that team wasn't quite as strong as advertised and remembered.

They were led by one of Ohio State's great quarterbacks in Joe Germaine, who finally had the position to himself after rotating with Stan Jackson in 1996 and 1997. He had a great receiver in David Boston and a solid one in Dee Miller. But while Michael Wiley was a fine running back, he is not generally listed in the pantheon of Ohio State backs. He had Matt Keller at fullback to block for him.

The offensive line, from left to right, of Tyson Walter, Rob Murphy, Kurt Murphy, Ben Gilbert and Brooks Burris was solid, but not spectacular, as was tight end John Lumpkin.

The defensive line of Joe Brown and Ryan Pickett on the interior flanked by Brent Johnson and Rodney Bailey at the ends was hardly up to the standards of Ohio State lines we expect under coach Larry Johnson today.

Where this team was really strong, in my book, was the back seven. The linebackers were Na'il Diggs, Andy Katzenmoyer and Jerry Rudzinski, backed by a great secondary of cornerbacks Antoine Winfield and Ahmed Plummer, with Nate Clements in reserve, and safeties Damon Moore and Gary Berry.

It was a team that could have won the national championship but didn't. But do I consider it one of the best among Ohio State teams to not grab the brass ring? Not as much as previously.

When we considered great teams at Ohio State that didn't win it all, it was generally teams that had one critical loss or tie. For a great team based on talent alone to not win the title, how about a team with three losses – the 1984 Buckeyes.

If you rate a team on future NFL careers, consider '84 team members Keith Byars (13 NFL seasons played), Cris Carter (16), Rory Graves (4), Thomas "Pepper" Johnson (13), Eric Kumerow (3), Jim Lachey (10), Kirk Lowdermilk (12), Chris Spielman (10), Mike Tomczak (15), Tom Tupa (16), Jeff Uhlenhake (9) and William White (11). That's 132 combined years in the NFL right there.

And there was plenty of other talent on that team with such players as White's mates in the defensive secondary, Greg Rogan, Sonny Gordon and Terry White; flanker Mike Lanese; running back John Wooldridge; defensive tackle Dave Morrill; and many, many more.

The Buckeyes still finished 9-3 but beat

Michigan, were Big Ten champions and went to the Rose Bowl, though they lost to a subpar USC team. But if you like star power, this team had it!

And one last note on the top 150 college teams of all time.

I mentioned last issue that Meyer had two of the teams among the greatest, his 2008 Florida team (No. 52) and the 2014 Ohio State national champions (No. 126). Cooper, who is in the College Football Hall of Fame but not generally considered in the same regard as Meyer, also had two teams among the best: the 1996 (No. 32) and 1998 Buckeyes (No. 89). Coop actually fared a little better than Urban on this list. Woody Hayes trumped them both with his 1973 and 1954 Buckeyes, ranked Nos. 18 and 66, respectively.

My Favorite Buckeye To The Hall Of Fame

Mentioning Byars and the 1984 Buckeyes is a nice way to segue into congratulating Byars for his selection to the College Football Hall of Fame. I've never made it a secret that Byars is my all-time favorite Buckeye.

You've got to love a guy whose second-most famous game might be one in which he didn't even play. In addition to his dominant and colorful performance against Illinois in '84 (see Rich Exner's column on page 38), he played a key part in Ohio State's famous upset of top-ranked Iowa in 1985, even though he was forced to sit out due to a bum foot.

According to the Nov. 9, 1985, issue of BSB recapping that 22-13 victory over the Hawkeyes, Byars spurred the team on with an impassioned speech before the game.

"It was really something else," fullback George Cooper said after the win. "Keith never loses his composure. I guess because he knew he wasn't playing, he didn't want to lose this game. He didn't want us to lose.

"He kind of got upset. He kicked a few things around. That kind of showed us this game meant something. That fired us up a lot. Keith never gets upset, and he got upset. A glass here, a table there. A tray."

Added Lanese: "I hadn't seen Keith so emotional since I've been here. I can't speak for the other guys, but it sure got me fired up."

This and other BSB stories about Byars were posted as part of BuckeyeSports.com's Reprint Thursday on March 12.

Hummer Shines On Senior Day

It's tradition in college basketball to send seldom-used seniors and senior walk-ons into the game on Senior Day, even if only for a few seconds. It is the tradition of Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann to start his seldom-used seniors.

Senior Buckeye walk-on Danny Hummer took his Senior Day start against Illinois on March 5 and ran with it.

The 6-foot Upper Arlington product scored the game's first basket, just 24 seconds into the contest. Still in the first minute, he came up with a steal, and he later fed E.J. Liddell for a bucket to tie the score at six with 16:20 to play in the half before being removed from the game at the 15:32 mark.

Good for you, Danny. You took your moment and shone, scoring a victory for all the athletes who toil in anonymity in hopes of minutes on the court or field like yours. There was a turnover in there, but I am erasing that from my mental scorebook.

Hummer, who transferred from Air Force before the 2017-18 season, finishes his Ohio State career after appearing in 22 games. He scored 13 points, pulled down four rebounds and dished out seven assists.



FOR ATHLETES

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

HOW CAN I TELL IF I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

You may have a concussion if you have any of these symptoms after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body:

- Get a headache
- Feel dizzy, sluggish or foggy
- Be bothered by light or noise
- Vomit or feel sick to your stomach
- Have trouble focusing or problems remembering
- Feel more emotional or problems remembering
- Feel more emotional or "down"
- Feel confused
- Have problems with sleep



HOW CAN I HELP MY TEAM?

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Avoid hits to the head and follow the rules for safe and fair play to lower your chances of getting a concussion. Ask your coaches for more tips.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

You play an important role as part of a team. Encourage your teammates to report their symptoms and help them feel comfortable taking the time they need to get better.

Concussion symptoms usually show up right away, but you might not notice that something "isn't right" for hours or days. A concussion feels different to each person, so it is important to tell your parents and doctor how you are feeling.

The information provided in this document or through linkages to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to a physician or other health care provider.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/concussion>



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