

On Second Thought

Big Ten Considers Reinstating Fall Football Season

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Big Ten moved one step closer to possibly reinstating the fall football season after the Big Ten Council of Presidents and Chancellors met remotely with the return to competition task force on Sept. 13 to discuss new testing programs that weren't available when the conference decided to postpone fall sports last month, as well as the best date to kick off a potential season. As of press time no vote had been taken, however.

The video conference by the full contingent of the conference's presidents and chancellors followed a Zoom meeting the day before of the steering committee, which consists of eight presidents and chancellors, when it was decided to present to the full COPC the league's plan to return to play.

During the COPC meeting, the Big Ten's medical subcommittee, co-chaired by Ohio State team physician Dr. Jim Borchers and Penn State athletic director Sandy Barbour, presented the conference with four new rapid-response antigen tests that would allow programs to test daily and decrease contact tracing. They also shared the latest information about myocarditis, a viral inflammation of the heart muscle found in some people who have contracted and recovered from COVID-19.

The Big Ten's football scheduling committee, which includes Ohio State head coach Ryan Day, and the conference's television committee, which includes athletic director Gene Smith, also gave presentations during the meeting.

According to multiple reports, an Oct. 17 start date was looked upon as the most likely option, which would give teams a chance to complete an eight-game regular season and a conference championship game before the College Football Playoff selections are made on Dec. 20.

The 2½-hour meeting came just three days after Day released an emphatic statement that asked the Big Ten why the Buckeyes are unable to play this fall while other conferences move forward

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ANDREW LIND

NOT GIVING UP – Parents of Ohio State student-athletes protested the Big Ten's decision to postpone fall sports with a rally outside Ohio Stadium on Aug. 29. The group called for transparency into the decision and urged the conference to reconsider.

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From The Message Board

While the Big Ten has yet to announce any plans for a potential fall, winter or spring season, questions have swirled for the last month around some of Ohio State's draft-eligible players and the potential for mass opt-outs. With that, we asked the readers on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as staff members, if they would return to school for a season without a shot at a national title. Here are some of the responses:

"If I was a draft-eligible player like Fields or Wade, I might consider a winter schedule but definitely not a spring one. So many players in the past have skipped a winter Bowl game to stay healthy for the NFL draft, so I see no difference in this case. However, if the B1G gives the go-ahead, and all of the rest of the team wants to play, it would be so hard to say no to that. Another thing to consider is the fact that other conferences will be just about finishing their regular seasons just when the B1G would just be getting started. How will all that work out? Will the polls wait till the B1G is done to declare a National Championship? So many things to consider."

– Seedubya

"I think it would depend which teams are playing and how many players have opted out already. If it is going to be a watered-down list of players and teams, I wouldn't risk it if I were Fields or Wade. It wouldn't be worth it."

– PeyoteBuck

"Nope. If you can play in January, you can play right now."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"If it's six or eight games in January and February in a dome, yes. If it's more games than that, or later than February, no. Six or eight games plus B1G championship game can fit into nine weekends in January and February. If players have to play later than say first week of March those leaving for NFL won't play. And probably shouldn't."

"I don't know that there are any positives for high draft picks, but those who aren't fairly sure of being first round picks could improve their stock in the eyes of scouts by playing fantastic."

"If games are later than first week of March, too much wear and tear on the human body for a September kickoff. To say nothing about injuries. Does anybody know if there will be a September kickoff in 2021?"

– Terrier Buck

"No. Too close to the NFL combine/draft by the time this season would end. The NFL will not push things back solely because the B1G chooses not to play until January."

– mrbigbux

"I don't think I would play in a winter season if I were them. Sure, it would be great to go out there and compete for a national title, but I think the risks of injuries or illness are too high when considering their place as a likely first round pick."

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB

"I don't think I would play in a spring season, but a winter start would be intriguing to me, especially if I was Shaun Wade rather than Justin Fields. A winter start would provide enough time to prepare for the NFL combine while still serving as a chance to showcase to scouts what you're capable of, which is a big deal for someone like Wade who has room to move up on draft boards. I think it would likely depend on what the season looks like regarding number of games, postseason, who else is playing and other details like that, but purely from a timing standpoint, I think that I would strongly consider playing in a winter season. Spring? No way."

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Big Ten Lacks Transparency, Answers

The delay in transparency by commissioner Kevin Warren placed a big black eye on the credibility and reliability of the Big Ten Conference.

This debacle was an opportunity for the Big Ten to show real leadership – to have a summit to discuss informational issues with other conferences, gather more information on how others are deciding, collaborating with coaches, factoring in what could be done to ensure safety, offering athletes an option of playing or not playing to manage risk, addressing eligibility issues, etc.

This has not only hurt their reputation for claiming to be so-called "leaders" but likely adversely affects recruiting in the coming years. I am certain that the ACC, Big 12 and SEC thought this was a perfect storm to show their athletes and parents that they can, indeed, figure things out while secretly snickering and (likely) denigrating the "weak" Big Ten programs.

Even if the decision ultimately remained the same, Commissioner Warren's refusal to directly address the parents and athletes while callously and brashly proclaiming that the decisions "would not be reconsidered" shows a rigid disregard for open explanations to the concerns of the athletes and their parents. This commissioner's attitude hints of a fiefdom management style and will not be embraced by other parents or student-athletes.

The international COVID-19 issue was and continues to be a "dynamic" rather than "static" situation, changing almost daily with opinions of the so-called experts. This only shows Commissioner Warren's inability to manage the many decisions he will face in the world of college football.

Other than Ohio State, the sad reality is that the Big Ten teams have simply not shown that they can compete on the national championship stage. Many Big Ten schools are simply content to remain regional programs. Perhaps Ohio State should have gone the route of Notre Dame, leaving the conference for a year and playing against other teams who want to compete. Their ratings would have gone through the roof and sent a message to the conference – either compete or get out of the way.

Thomas L. Hustak
Lima, Ohio

Football Isn't Socially Distant

With testing not yet foolproof, how can football players remain six feet apart when a tailback runs over right tackle and a half-dozen players pile on top of each other when he's tackled?

Why do university administrators claim they "have the right protocols" to resume classes, when clearly – with school after school trying and failing – they don't?

Why is the Big Ten flinching on its good decision to put player safety above revenue, and above fans, and above over-zealous parents, as it should?

We could've starved COVID months ago if only all of us had worn masks and honored the six-foot rule. When did Americans become so stunningly stupid?

Chuck Underwood
Miamisburg, Ohio

In Agreement With Previous Letter

Mr. Terry Walrath is exactly correct in his assessment of the BLM group (BSB Letters, July, 2020). To prove his point, just read their website. It clearly states their origins and goals.

Art Mitchell
New Philadelphia, Ohio

In Defense Of Myself

First, I would like to thank Dave Clark and Dan Lease for their service, and I honor them for it (BSB Letters, August, 2020). Second, I agree with Mr. Clark. It should have never been appropriate for me to write such a letter to BSB. But the athletic department invited such commentary when, through its spokesman, Gene Smith, it chose to inject itself into the political arena. BSB then chose to write about it, a decision for which I cannot fault BSB. That makes the issue fair game as the subject of letters to BSB.

Mr. Clark and Mr. Lease are both wrong when they say Black Lives Matter is not a political party because it does not have candidates on the ballot. Webster's defines a party as "a group of people working together to promote or gain

acceptance for some kind of government, cause, opinion, etc." There is not necessity for a party to run candidates. In fact, many parties don't. I don't believe that either the Nazi Party or the Communist Party will have candidates on the Ohio ballot.

I assume that before writing in support of BLM, Mr. Clark and Mr. Lease researched it enough to know what its publicly stated positions are. I assume that Mr. Clark and Mr. Lease know that BLM demands the abolition of prisons and the police, as well as calling for the end of capitalism. I also assume they know that the leaders of BLM proudly proclaim that they are "trained Marxists." If Mr. Clark and Mr. Lease favor those positions, then, by all means, they, along with Ohio State, should support BLM.

I was a 20-year-old college student myself once. I knew a lot of college students. I raised two college students. What my experience taught me was that you should never take seriously the opinions, advice or judgement of a 20-year-old college student on any important matter. Experience has taught me that the same is true for all kinds of entertainers, including athletes. Perhaps the experiences of Mr. Clark and Mr. Lease have taught them otherwise, and they follow the advice of 20-year-olds, entertainers and athletes in forming their opinions. I choose not to.

Again, I thank these gentlemen for their service and for telling us where they stand – or kneel.

Terry Walrath
Hinckley, Ohio

(For the official policy positions of Black Lives Matter, visit <https://blacklivesmatter.com>. Ed.)

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

Columbus Sports Publications
 1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
 P.O. Box 12453
 Columbus, Ohio 43212
 (614) 486-2202
 bsb@buckeyesports.com

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$99.95/year.

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2020-21 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 40)

No. 1	Sept. 19	No. 5	Nov. 14
No. 2	Oct. 3	No. 6	Nov. 28
No. 3	Oct. 17	No. 7	Dec. 12
No. 4	Oct. 31	No. 8	Dec. 26

The 2021 schedule will be determined based on the Big Ten's winter or spring schedule.

The next issue (Oct. 3 cover date) will be mailed on Sept. 29.

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

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OPINION

Big Ten Continues To Move Slowly, If At All

Just when you think the 2020 Ohio State football season has been scrapped, maybe a truncated version will be played after all. Or maybe not.

At this point, who can keep up?

As I am writing this on the afternoon of Sept. 14, presidents and chancellors of the Big Ten member institutions are reportedly preparing to take another vote regarding the 2020 season. At least that is what we have been led to believe as every schmuck with a smartphone and Twitter account believes he or she has some inside information about what's going on. (Hint: they don't know what's going on any more than you or me.)

Unfortunately, it appears the men and women who draw million-dollar salaries to be decision-makers are reluctant to make a decision about whether or not to throw caution to the wind and allow some 1,400 young men to potentially put their current and long-term health at risk in order to play football.

Here's what we know – or at least what we think we know.

According to reports, at least two meetings were held during the weekend of Sept. 12-13 between the Big Ten's "Return to Competition Task Force" and university presidents and chancellors. The first meeting was smaller and included only eight of the university leaders, but the second reportedly featured all 14 member presidents and chancellors meeting with each of three task force subcommittees – individual ones involving medical information, TV relationships and football scheduling.

If you think setting up a "Return to Competition Task Force" and then dividing said task force into three subcommittees is the height of overthought, you're not alone. The problem facing the presidents and chancellors is a relatively simple one. Plow ahead with the 2020 season and chase that television revenue – as schools in the SEC, Big 12 and ACC are doing – or stick to the original reasons that led to your Aug. 11 decision to postpone the season.

Of course, the landscape concerning the COVID-19 pandemic has changed slightly since that decision was made. Testing procedures have been developed for quicker and more thorough diagnoses, and new research is available concerning myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscle, and other medical conditions found in athletes who have recovered from the coronavirus.

The medical subcommittee is co-chaired by Ohio State lead team physician Dr. Jim Borchers – who played football for the Buckeyes during the early 1990s – and Penn State athletic director Sandy Barbour and includes team physicians from Northwestern, Indiana and Maryland as well as experts in sports medicine and infectious diseases.

That committee presented all of the new information at its disposal to the conference presidents and chancellors via teleconference on Sept. 13. In addition, the presentation reportedly included specifics about how and when the Big Ten could start the football season, along with deadline dates and medical thresholds each team must meet in order to return to competition.

In other words, the Big Ten decision-makers had everything they needed on Sept. 13 to make a final decision about the 2020 football season. And yet, they continued to demur even though it seemed that time was of the essence.

Observers tend to agree the conference must begin play by mid-October in order to schedule enough games to qualify for the College Football Playoff. And let's be real about this. Playing just for the sake of playing

is not really playing at all. Ohio State players and coaches want to play in 2020 so they can chase a national championship. Take that opportunity off the table, and really, what's the point?

So, we wait for 14 men and women to weigh the pros and cons, pluses and minuses, risks and rewards, and come to some kind of consensus as this most unusual of years gets even more so.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Selfishly speaking, sure, I'd like to see Ohio State play football this fall just as it has every fall since 1890. But as I wrote in this space last time, if playing football comes at the cost of just one life – today, tomorrow or 20 years from now – that's a price much too high to pay for our entertainment.

Running For Glory

While looking back at Ohio State's season opener from last year, I remembered that quarterback Justin Fields threw for a touchdown on his second career pass attempt as a Buckeye, a 25-yard strike to tight end Jeremy Ruckert in the first quarter of an eventual 45-21 win against Florida Atlantic.

Somehow, though, it had slipped my mind that Fields turned his first-ever OSU rushing attempt into a 51-yard touchdown against the Owls. That subsequently got me wondering how long it took other notable Buckeyes to score their first career rushing touchdowns.

Eddie George needed only two carries to tally the first of his 44 career touchdowns, scoring on a 1-yard plunge during the second quarter of a 17-6 victory against Bowling Green in 1992. More than a decade later, Chris "Beanie" Wells scored on an 8-yard run during a 35-12 win against Northern Illinois in the 2006 season opener. It was the second career carry for Wells, who would go on to score 30 career touchdowns for the Buckeyes.

Eight others – including five quarterbacks – scored a touchdown within their first seven career carries.

Rex Kern scored the first of 24 career touchdowns on his third carry in the 1968 season opener. Kern's 3-yard score was part of a 35-14 win against SMU for a team that would eventually win the national championship.

Cornelius Greene (now Green) scored on his fifth career carry, a 4-yard scamper in the first quarter of a 56-7 rout of Minnesota in the 1973 season opener. Two years later, subbing for Greene during the latter stages of a 49-0 blowout of Iowa, Rod Gerald rolled 45 yards for a touchdown on the sixth carry of his career. For good measure, Gerald went 14 yards for another score on his next carry.

Art Schlichter scored a 3-yard touchdown on the sixth carry of his career, part of a 27-10 win against Minnesota in 1978. Meanwhile, Terrelle Pryor carried six times before an 18-yard touchdown run on his seventh attempt during a 43-0 victory against Youngstown State in the 2008 season opener.

The aforementioned quarterbacks threw for a combined 19,789 yards and 147 TDs, but they also rushed for 8,304 yards and 123 touchdowns.

Like Pryor, Robert Smith scored on his seventh career carry. Smith ran 2 yards for the Buckeyes' first touchdown of the 1990

season, and it was instrumental in a 17-10 win against Texas Tech. A dozen years later, the Red Raiders were again OSU's season-opening opponent, and Claret broke off a 59-yard touchdown run on his sixth carry in what was ultimately a 45-21 victory for Ohio State.

More recently, Master Teague III joined the ranks of OSU players crossing the goal line early in their careers. On only the sixth attempt of his career, Teague rumbled 33 yards for a touchdown during a 77-31 win against Oregon State in the 2018 season opener.

Ezekiel Elliott (12), J.T. Barrett (15) and Tim Spencer (16) each scored a rushing touchdown within the first 20 carries of their respective careers, but it took some others longer – in some cases, much longer.

Two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin didn't even play in the 1972 opener against Iowa, but when the running game was sputtering the following week against North Carolina, head coach Woody Hayes decided to give his speedy little freshman a shot. Griffin responded with 239 yards and a touchdown, a 9-yard run in the fourth quarter of a 29-14 victory against the Tar Heels. Griffin's first career touchdown came on his 27th and final carry of the afternoon.

Keith Byars rushed for 46 touchdowns during the mid-1980s at Ohio State, but his first didn't come until his 33rd career carry. That came on a 1-yard plunge during a 20-14 loss at Iowa in 1983.

Pete Johnson is OSU's all-time leader with 56 rushing touchdowns, but his first score didn't come until the seventh game of the 1973 season. Johnson tallied a 2-yard TD during a 30-0 win at Illinois, the touchdown coming on his 24th career carry.

J.K. Dobbins is the only Ohio State player ever to record a 2,000-yard rushing season, and he finished his career with 4,459 yards, second only to Griffin in program history. But Dobbins didn't score his first touchdown until career carry No. 36, a 6-yard run during a 31-16 loss against Oklahoma in 2017.

Finally, Troy Smith is regarded as one of the top dual-threat quarterbacks in Ohio State history, and his 2006 Heisman Trophy is testament to that legacy. But some fans tend to forget Smith was an almost-forgotten redshirt in 2002 before beginning his college career the following season as a kick returner.

Still, it remains somewhat remarkable that Smith didn't score his first rushing touchdown until the 66th carry of his career. That came on a 5-yard run during a 24-17 loss at Purdue in 2004.

Loose Ends

- Pending the vote of the conference's presidents and chancellors, reports indicate the Big Ten season would begin Oct. 17. That would be the latest start date for an Ohio State football season since 1891, the Buckeyes' second year of existence. That year, the team kicked off its season Nov. 11 with a 50-6 home loss to Western Reserve.

- That 1891 campaign was also the last time an Ohio State regular season dragged into December. The Buckeyes scored a 6-0 win at Akron on Dec. 5 to salvage a 2-2 record for the year.

- Although no regular-season December games have been played in more than a century, OSU has several times over the years finished its regular season on Nov. 30, including in 1918 when the Buckeyes traveled to Michigan and came home with a 14-0 loss. That game had originally been scheduled for late October but was postponed and rescheduled due to the Spanish influenza outbreak.



Garrett Recovering After Being Injured In Shooting

Ohio State senior defensive tackle Haskell Garrett is recovering after suffering a gunshot wound to his face on Aug. 30. He was found by police around 12:30 a.m. on the 400 block of Chittenden Avenue in Columbus. The Las Vegas native was taken to the Wexner Medical Center in stable condition shortly after sustaining injuries to both of his cheeks.

Garrett was released from the hospital a day later according to a statement from Ohio State head coach Ryan Day.

"Haskell Garrett has been receiving excellent care at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center for the injuries he received on Sunday," Day said in the statement on Aug. 31. "We anticipate he will be released from the Medical Center this morning.

"On behalf of his family and this football program, we would like to thank all those who have been a part of Haskell's treatment and we are grateful that he will be heading home today. We will continue to help him and his family any way we can to expedite his recovery."

Garrett released a statement a day later, thanking the staff at the Wexner Medical Center and the Columbus Police Department.

"I would first like to thank God for keeping his hedge of protection during this time," Garrett said in a statement shared to his Twitter account.

"I want to thank the first responders from the Columbus PD, the EMTs, and the doctors and nurses who took care of me at the Wexner Medical Center. I also want to thank all of my family and friends for their thoughts and prayers during this awful circumstance. I want to inform everyone that I am okay and my recovery is going well.

"Go Buckeyes!"

According to the police report of the incident, Garrett was shot in the face after breaking up a fight. The report indicates that Garrett was walking when he witnessed a male and a female that he didn't know "arguing and being aggressive." Garrett told police that he told the male to stop arguing with the female, before the male pulled out a handgun and fired it at Garrett's face.

Garrett then stated that he ran south on Grant Avenue toward a friend's apartment.

Officers indicated that they found blood and a 9mm shell casing in the street and tracked Garrett to his friend's

Next BSB Print Edition Scheduled For Sept. 29

The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, with a cover date of Oct. 3, is scheduled to be mailed on Sept. 29. BSB will remain on a biweekly print schedule until there is any clarification on an Ohio State football schedule.

"I must admit we're getting a little dizzy trying to keep up with the ever-changing scheduling news," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "Even if we do get clarification, that always could be subject to change. Until readers hear otherwise, we will be publishing every other week.

"Watch your Buckeye Sports Bulletin or the BuckeyeSports.com website for updates on the publishing schedule."

Those readers whose subscriptions have expired and are receiving this issue, it is to make up for any missed issues because of the change in scheduling.

Readers can keep up with any Buckeye activity at the BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all BSB subscribers. The BSB staff will continue its electronic recruiting coverage, daily stories and updates, as well as presenting reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives to fill any Buckeye information void. We will be featuring reprints from our 40th Anniversary Football Season as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays.

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

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apartment nearby. According to the incident report, police spoke with two other people at the apartment, including Ohio State linebacker Pete Werner.

The CPD is investigating the case and has yet to release any official reports or information on a possible suspect.

Garrett, a product of Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, was expected

to be a major contributor for Ohio State prior to the postponement of the season. He played in 11 games in 2019, racking up 10 tackles and 2½ tackles for loss.

Garrett came to Columbus as a consensus four-star prospect, along with his high school teammate quarterback Tate Martell, who transferred to Miami in 2019.

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Ohio State Projects \$130 Million In Lost Revenue

Ohio State's financial department is taking a significant hit in 2020 according to the agenda for the board of trustees' Audit, Compliance and Finance Committee meeting on Aug. 27.

In the financial plan for the 2021 fiscal year, Ohio State is projecting a \$130.3 million decline from revenue generated by the athletics department for the 2020 fiscal year. As the plan states, the coronavirus pandemic has played a major role in the decline.

"COVID-19 has had a material impact on fed policy, and interest rates," the agenda reads. "Athletics is declining \$130.3 million over FY 2020 due to the canceled fall athletics season and related ticket, media, conference, and game guarantee revenue."

The estimate does not take into account a potential spring or winter season for postponed fall sports, which could make up for some of the losses, though a presumed lack of ticket sales for any football games would still present a significant loss in revenue for the university.

While Ohio State has not announced any official cuts yet, the agenda does call for significant restructuring to make up for the lost money, stating that the goal for 2021 is to make "\$175 million in targeted budget reductions on the University side to counteract revenue dilution."

At some universities including Iowa, Minnesota and Stanford, Olympic programs have been on the cutting block. Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith has said that he doesn't expect Ohio State will have to cut programs, but that was prior to the postponing of the fall football season, which serves as Ohio State's biggest moneymaker.

"We have to do some work on our budget," Smith said. "We've got a lot of work to do as we ultimately make some decisions."

Even with the significant loss in revenue, Ohio State is still reporting positive net cash flow of \$248 million for the 2020 fiscal year, though a good deal of that is due to \$170 million in federal stimulus funding.

Trump Reached Out To Warren For Fall Season

The Big Ten may still be on the fence about a potential fall football season, but the president of the United States certainly isn't.

According to a Sept. 1 tweet from President Trump, the White House has been in contact with decision makers

in the Big Ten including commissioner Kevin Warren and is hoping to push for a return to football this fall.

"Had a very productive conversation with Kevin Warren, Commissioner of the Big Ten Conference, about immediately starting up Big Ten football," Trump tweeted. "Would be good (great!) for everyone – Players, Fans, Country. On the one-yard line!"

The Big Ten released a statement shortly after, confirming that there has been communication between the conference and the president, but no decision had been made through those conversations.

"A White House representative reached out to Big Ten Conference Commissioner Kevin Warren on Monday, August 31, 2020, to facilitate a phone call between President Donald J. Trump and Commissioner Warren," the statement read. "On Tuesday, September 1, 2020, Commissioner Warren and the President had a productive conversation."

"The Big Ten Conference and its Return to Competition Task Force, on behalf of the Big Ten Council of Presidents and Chancellors (COP/C), are exhausting every resource to help student-athletes get back to playing the sports they love, at the appropriate time, in the safest and healthiest way possible."

According to Lettermen Row's Austin Ward, much of that conversation revolved around the availability of testing.

"The primary objective for the Tuesday conference call, according to sources, was to discuss the availability of testing, which is believed to be one of the biggest looming hurdles for the Big Ten when it comes to planning any sort of return to action," Ward wrote on Sept. 1.

"The new, cheaper, saliva-based tests could be the key that unlocks the door back to the Horseshoe and stadiums around the conference. And the White House might be willing to assist in that effort by potentially designating part of its supply to the Big Ten after buying 150 million rapid tests last week from Abbott Laboratories."

Even with additional testing secured, the Big Ten would need nine of its 14 presidents to vote in favor of a return to football in the fall. In the case of a split conference, Trump tweeted his support of a Big Ten schedule featuring only the schools that vote to play.

"Big Ten Football is looking really good, but may lose Michigan, Illinois, and Maryland because of those Governors' ridiculous lack of interest or political support," Trump said on Sept. 6. "They will play without them!"

Davis, Fields, Wade Named AP All-Americans

The Big Ten and Pac 12 may not be playing football this fall, but that didn't stop The Associated Press from including players from both conferences on its annual preseason All-America teams. Ohio State was well-represented in that group, with two selections to the first team and one to the second team.

Offensive guard Wyatt Davis, who has since declared for the 2021 NFL draft, was selected as a first-team guard along with former Ohio State recruiting target Trey Smith, a senior at Tennessee. Davis

started just one season in Columbus but was considered one of the best linemen in America entering the 2020 season. The former five-star was a consensus first-team All American in 2019 and a first-team All-Big Ten selection.

Cornerback Shaun Wade, who has also since declared for the draft, was picked for the first team as well, next to LSU sophomore Derek Stingley. Wade was a third-team All-Big Ten selection last season, but anticipation around his expected move to the outside corner spot inspired

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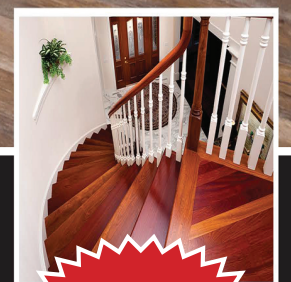


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BSB Podcast Enhances Online Coverage

Buckeye Sports Bulletin has launched a podcast to work in tandem with BuckeyeSports.com to keep BSB subscribers informed on all of the latest around Ohio State football, basketball, recruiting and everything else.

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin Podcast covers Ohio State from all angles, with input from beat writers who cover everything from football and recruiting to men's volleyball and women's hockey, and everything in-between. With BSB's deep Rolodex of former Buckeye players, coaches and college sports analysts around the country, as well as in-house experts Joe Dempsey and Andrew Lind, the BSB podcast has you covered on all things Buckeye, all the time. Staffers Patrick Mayhorn and Wyatt Crosher host with a constantly rotating guest list to get insight and analysis on the latest in Ohio State news.

The podcast posts once weekly on Friday mornings and is free to all BSB subscribers. To find the show, go to your favorite podcast app or website and type in "Buckeye Sports Bulletin Podcast," and click the subscribe button. You can listen on Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, Audible, Google Podcasts, iHeartRadio, Podbean, Spotify, Stitcher, YouTube and anywhere else that podcasts are found.

For those of you who are new to the podcast world, the show is also posted at 10 a.m. every Friday on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as in the BSB Fan Forum.



Continued From Page 5

plenty of excitement in the offseason. In his three years with the Buckeyes, Wade had 56 tackles, four tackles for loss, four interceptions and two forced fumbles.

Quarterback Justin Fields is the lone second-team pick for the Buckeyes, checking in behind Trevor Lawrence, who was picked for the top group. Fields was a consensus second-team All-American following the 2019 season and a first-team All-Big Ten pick. He was also a finalist for the Heisman and the Davey O'Brien award and was the Big Ten offensive player of the year, thanks to his 3,273 yards passing and 51 total touchdowns while tossing just three interceptions.

Fields has not yet announced his intentions for his future at Ohio State, though he did tweet out his support for Davis opting out on Twitter.

Decker Signs New Deal, McMillan On The Move

Former Ohio State offensive tackle Taylor Decker secured a multiyear extension with the Detroit Lions according to an announcement from his agent and the team on Sept. 1. The deal is for six years and worth \$85 million with \$37.5 million fully guaranteed, meaning that Decker will be pulling down just over \$14.1 million a year, which will likely land him in the top 10 of all NFL tackle contracts next season once it kicks in.

Decker, whom the Lions selected in the

first round of the 2016 NFL draft, has started 55 games at left tackle over his first four years in the NFL. Lions head coach Matt Patricia described him as a crucial part of Detroit's offensive foundation.

"The foundation – we're just getting to that point," Patricia said. "I think Taylor is a great example of that, of a guy that has been drafted to play here, that has developed and has gotten better, that has been everything that we want to be about. And you want to keep those guys as you raise them and as you develop them and watch them grow. It's impossible to build a team through roster changes and free agency every year. You just can't do it. Financially, it's impossible."

"Since the day we drafted him, Taylor has dedicated himself to our program and has developed into an important piece of our offense," said Bob Quinn, Lions executive vice president of football operations and general manager. "As one of our team captains, he sets a great example for every player in our locker room. This extension is a reflection of all of Taylor's hard work, and we are incredibly excited to come to this agreement and continue to work with Taylor for years to come. I also want to thank Taylor and his representatives for their work in making this extension a reality."

With Ohio State, Decker started 42 games over three years, saw action in 54 games and helped the Buckeyes put up a 50-4 record in those games. He was a mainstay on Ohio State's national title team in 2014.

While his old teammate was signing a massive extension, former Ohio State linebacker Raekwon McMillan is going to have to adjust to a new locale. He was traded by the Miami Dolphins to the Las Vegas Raiders on Aug. 29, along with a 2021 fifth-round pick, in exchange for a 2021 fourth-round pick.

McMillan was selected in the second round of the 2017 NFL draft by the Dolphins but had his rookie season cut short before it ever started. He tore his ACL in a preseason game, which sidelined him for the entire 2017 season. He returned and played in all 16 games for the Dolphins in 2018, recording 105 total tackles including five for a loss, but he saw his playing time dwindle a bit in 2019 in the first season under head coach Brian Flores, putting up 72 total tackles in 13 games while battling injury problems.

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Now is the time for loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers to show their support through our VIP subscription program as we all work through the coronavirus crisis.

As most of you know, the newspaper business these days is challenging in the best of times. BSB is now facing more challenges with recent events that have slowed the economy and the concerns of some readers about what the paper will look like with the football season postponed.

"Rest assured, we will continue to publish entertaining and informative issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, with or without football," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz pledged. "But if you have been thinking about becoming a BSB VIP subscriber and have the means to do so, now would be a helpful time to show your support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin."

A VIP subscription can easily pay for itself each year with special VIP discounts.

VIP subscribers enjoy a 20 percent discount at the new Conrads College Gifts at Easton. VIP subscribers also enjoy a 5 percent discount on any Ohio State football trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers receive a certificate good for \$10 off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint."

With the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in two different issues annually as supporters of BSB. Current Brutus level patrons will have their names listed in the upcoming Oct. 3 issue of BSB. If you have been considering participating at this level, get your donation in now so that you can be recognized immediately.

Those who add \$100 to their subscription will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB Scarlet patrons. Those who donate \$125 or more will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue.

To upgrade your existing subscription to VIP status, with all the benefits that come with that designation, go to buckeyesports.com/vip-memberships to pay by credit card, or call us at (614) 486-2202 during regular business hours. If readers have questions on this program, they can call the same number.

The following are our charter Elite Wachsman, Elite and Scarlet VIP subscribers. Brutus donors will be listed shortly in an upcoming issue of BSB.

Elite Wachsman Donor (in honor of late BSB assistant publisher Karen Wachsman): Roosters Restaurants Foundation.

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Without an obvious fit in Flores' system, McMillan found himself without a starting spot entering the 2020 season, leading to the move.

"He's somebody who I have a lot of

respect for," Flores said of McMillan. "He's a talented player. He's someone who I think will have a long career, but there's a lot of depth in that room."

As a Buckeye, McMillan, a former five-star, found the field early on the 2014 national title team as a true freshman and slid into a starting role at middle linebacker in 2015 and 2016. He notched 275 total tackles, 18 for a loss and six sacks during his time in Columbus. He was a Butkus award semifinalist, second-team All-American and first-team All-Big Ten selection as a junior in 2016.

Former Buckeye defensive lineman Cameron Heyward also signed a contract extension with the Pittsburgh Steelers. For more information on Heyward see Page 22.

Swimming And Diving Adds Two Coaches

Ohio State director of swimming and diving Bill Dorenkott announced two new additions to Ohio State's swim and dive staff on Sept. 4, as Kyle Patnode and Mike Sullivan will be serving as volunteer assistants.

"I'm excited for Mike Sullivan and Kyle Patnode to join our program for this upcoming season," said Dorenkott. "We believe that both young men have the human qualities to take them far in the profession. To be a coach at The Ohio State University is a privilege and comes with great expectations. Our program values our volunteer assistant position and is dedicated to helping coaches grow professionally. Personally, I was pro-



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From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1985

Ohio State triumphed 10-7 over Pitt in its 1985 season opener thanks to a late touchdown pass from Jim Karsatos to Cris Carter with 4:19 left to play in the game.

While the win for the Buckeyes certainly sent fans home happy, the biggest spectacle of the game was not the result, but the kickoff itself. Ohio State took the field guided by artificial lighting prior to an 8 p.m. start time, the first night game in Ohio Stadium's history.

While the game time might have been unusual, Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce's confidence in his team never faltered. In fact, he entered the game expecting his players to shine under the bright lights.

"I'm kind of convinced we can be night owls," Bruce said. "We, for some reason, seem to like the night. It's night before we get going."

His players loved the opportunity, but Bruce had mixed feelings on the spectacle.

"Other than the long wait for the game, I kind of like to play at night in the stadium," Bruce said. "I don't know if I'd like to do that all the time. I don't mind it, but I hated to wait."

Athletic director Rick Bay was satisfied with the night game.

"Logistically, everything went well," said Bay following the game. "We had a few power problems, but nothing serious – simply an overload from new concession equipment, but nothing we couldn't handle and everything went pretty well."

30 Years Ago – 1990

Freshman tailback Robert Smith and senior flanker Jeff Graham helped propel Ohio State to a come-from-behind 17-10 victory over Texas Tech Sept. 8.

Smith, the much-ballyhooed freshman from Euclid, Ohio, sparked a rally with two long gains and a touchdown in the third quarter, while Graham returned a punt 50 yards for a touchdown in the fourth period, providing the winning margin for the Buckeyes.

After injuries to junior fullback Scottie Graham and junior outside linebacker John Kacherski, Ohio State found itself in need of playmakers, trailing 10-3 after a Texas Tech touchdown with 5:03 to play in the third period.

"There was no doubt we were getting worried," said OSU head coach John Cooper. "Here we are behind 10-3 with two of our top players, two of our most inspirational players, out of the game."

"But we talk all the time about somebody rising to the occasion. This time, it was Robert Smith."

25 Years Ago – 1995

Ohio State opened the 1995 season just off Broadway, looking like a team with designs on ending the year just east of Hollywood.

The 12th-ranked Buckeyes began their treacherous 12-game regular season with a smashing 38-6 win over 22nd-rated Boston College in Kickoff Classic XIII on Aug. 27 at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

The game seemed to follow the pattern set by the last two Kickoff Classics, where a pair of eventual national champions, Florida State in 1993 and Nebraska in 1994, won the game

easily to begin their title runs.

But Cooper stopped short of throwing his latest edition of the Buckeyes into the national title hunt.

"From our standpoint, I've got to be pleased with the opening victory," said Cooper. "Not only did we win the game, but we made enough mistakes that I can go back as the head football coach and do some correcting before the time we play the next ballgame."

20 Years Ago – 2000

For many Ohio State fans, the first half of the Buckeyes' Sept. 9 game at Arizona left quite a bit to be desired, in both the production and entertainment departments.

Fans who flipped the channel or turned the television set off entirely could hardly be blamed for doing so as the Buckeyes slumbered into halftime just past midnight Eastern time trailing Arizona 17-10.

But anybody who turned away or tuned out probably missed OSU's best half of football in some time as the 18th-ranked Buckeyes scored 17 unanswered points and cruised to a 27-17 win over Arizona.

"Anytime you go on the road and beat a Pac-10 team, you've got to be proud," said Cooper, whose team improved to 2-0.

15 Years Ago – 2005

For much of Ohio State's 25-22 loss to Texas on Sept. 10, fans in the Ohio Stadium-record crowd of 105,565 could have blinked their eyes and thought they were watching the 2002 national champion Buckeyes.

After some early struggles, the defense was buckling down and did not allow a touchdown for 44 minutes. OSU was getting the better of the special teams battle. The offense wasn't setting the world on fire, but the kicker was nailing field goals left and right.

Unlike the title-winning Buckeyes, however, the 2005 rendition did not have the clutch stop or offensive play to pull out a last-second victory.

"The game was going the way we wanted it to go," said OSU junior safety Donte Whitner. "The last five minutes, they made some plays and we made some mistakes."

No sooner did UT quarterback Vince Young's knee hit the Ohio Stadium turf on a game-ending kneel-down than critics began pointing fingers at who was culpable for Ohio State's first nonconference home loss in 15 years.

Senior tight end Ryan Hamby was near the top of the list after dropping a sure touchdown pass from quarterback Justin Zwick on two separate occasions, the second after absorbing a hit from Longhorns cornerback Cedric Griffin.

10 Years Ago – 2010

In a week full of ghosts, it took the words of a past great to bring the focus back for the Ohio State football team.

With the No. 2 Buckeyes preparing to face No. 12 Miami (Fla.) for a showdown in Ohio Stadium, talk leading up to the contest was peppered with thoughts back to the last time the two programs met on the gridiron. In a game that ranks among the most thrilling in school history, the 2002 Buckeyes produced a 31-24 double-overtime victory in the national championship game and won their first national title in 34 years.

A few hours before what would become a 36-24 victory for the Buckeyes, former linebacker Cie Grant found himself addressing the 2010 Buckeyes as the honorary captain for the game. With seemingly the entire state of Florida crying out for vengeance for a title it believed was rightfully theirs, Grant had a simple message for the Buckeyes during their pregame meal.

Forget that game.

"There was so much talk and hype on this game from '02 and Cie Grant came in and said, 'This is not about '02. Forget '02. That's in the past. This is the 2010 Buckeyes,' " junior center Michael Brewster said.

That apparently was what the team needed to hear.

"He gave one of the best speeches I've ever heard in my life," Brewster said. "He really set the tone. I wish you guys could have heard that pregame speech because it gave me chills. It was probably the longest and I heard it was the best pregame any of these four- and five-year guys have ever heard."

Five Years Ago – 2015

When Ohio State's alumni band took the field for the home opener against Hawaii on Sept. 12, there was one notable absence.

Jon Woods, who had served as the Ohio State band director for 28 years, passed away the morning of the game at age 76. The former band director was suffering from Parkinson's disease.

"My condolences to Dr. Woods' family," Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer said after the game with Hawaii. "He was a friend of mine and, obviously, I'm a tremendous fan of our band and what he's been a big part of. I believe it was 28 years. That's incredible."

"Saddened to learn of the loss today of a great leader and innovator for TBDBITL and our University community," Ohio State AD Gene Smith added on Twitter.

Before the game the alumni band and current Ohio State marching band played the school alma mater "Carmen Ohio" to honor the late band director as the scoreboard read "Thank you, Dr. Woods."

One Year Ago – 2019

Back in the same stadium in which he had made his college debut two seasons prior, Ohio State junior running back J.K. Dobbins rushed for 193 yards and one touchdown and added another score through the air in a 51-10 win over Indiana at Memorial Stadium in Bloomington, Ind., on Sept. 14.

Dobbins burst onto the scene as a true freshman by rushing for 181 yards on 29 carries in the Buckeyes' 2017 season-opening win over the Hoosiers. He nearly bested that effort in just the first half in 2019.

The highlight of Dobbins' day was his 26-yard touchdown run in the second quarter. He ran around the left side of the offensive line, turned upfield, weaved his way through several defenders, stiff-armed another and barreled his way into the end zone.

"I think it's just a play that shows what I can really do," Dobbins said after the game. "I think a lot of people forgot what I can do, so I just want to keep showing that, keep getting better."

vided similar opportunities at the start of my career and, in turn, have committed to pay it forward to the next generation to lead our sport."

Both Patnode and Sullivan are former Big Ten swimmers. Patnode swam for Iowa from 2013-2017 and was selected as a team captain as a senior. He placed 23rd in the 100-meter butterfly at the Big Ten championships in 2017. After graduation, Patnode has picked up coaching experience as an intern with Iowa's strength and conditioning program as well as Ohio State's, prior to spending the last two years as a graduate assistant at Oakland.

"I'm excited to be a part of this program," said Patnode. "This is an opportunity to be a part of a Big Ten and Power Five program that has and will continue to rise in the ranks of collegiate swimming. I'm looking forward to all the opportunities to learn from Coach Dorenkott and his staff. Moreover, I'm look-

ing forward to being a part of the culture that The Ohio State Swimming and Diving program has created."

Sullivan was a four-year letter winner for Wisconsin from 2015-2019 and spent last year as a coach at the Badger Aquatics Club.

"I am excited to be part of a program that has not only had incredible success in recent years, but is doing it the right way," said Sullivan. "Ohio State has continually been among the best programs in the country at developing swimmers throughout their four years. I saw firsthand during my time as a swimmer the type of pride the swimmers and staff have for Ohio State and I'm excited to be a part of that. I'm really looking forward to learning everything I can from the coaching staff. I also am looking forward to getting to know the entire team. They are a group of extraordinary swimmers but also incredibly interesting people who I am very lucky to get a chance to work with."

Ohio State Announces Advisory Committee

Ohio State announced the list of 22 student-athletes who will fill out the 2020-21 Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Selections were nominated by their head coaches and by sport administrators.

The representatives are Mackenzie Allesie (field hockey), Aziza Ayoub (women's track and field), Channing Chasten (men's soccer), Elexis Edwards (women's gymnastics), Lindsay Epstein (women's lacrosse), Brandon Fisher (men's lacrosse), Jack Good (men's cross country), Mia Grunze (women's volleyball), Meghan Kammerdeiner (women's soccer), Cannon Kingsley (men's tennis), Grace Libben, (rowing), Emma Maltais (women's ice hockey), Myles Marshall (men's track and field), Parker Mikesch (men's volleyball), Austin Pooley (men's ice hockey), Spencer

Sansom (softball), Jacy Sheldon (women's basketball), Griffin Smith (baseball), Kalee Soehnlen (women's cross country), Zach Steiner (wrestling), Master Teague (football) and C.J. Walker (men's basketball).

"These leaders serve as the voice of our student-athletes," Gene Smith said. "Their feedback is extremely important to our department, university and college athletics."

"The purpose of the advisory committee is to 1) Provide advice and guidance to athletic administrators; 2) Solicit student-athlete response to proposed NCAA legislation; 3) Suggest potential NCAA legislation; 4) Create a vehicle for student-athlete representation on campus-wide or conference-wide committees; and 5) Act as a liaison between student-athletes, faculty, administrators and staff," a university statement explains.

Davis, Wade Opt Out As Parents Protest Decision

Continued From Page 1

with their scheduled seasons.

"While I understand the Big Ten Conference's decision to postpone the football season because of health and safety considerations, the communication of information from the Big Ten following the decision has been disappointing and often unclear," Day said. "However, we still have an opportunity to give our young men what they have worked so hard for: a chance to safely compete for a national championship this fall.

"I couldn't possibly be prouder of how this team, our medical personnel, athletic director and president have stayed together and managed through this extremely difficult time with so many unanswered questions. The Big Ten medical subcommittee has done an excellent job of creating a safe pathway toward returning to play in mid-October.

"These young men and their parents have asked so many questions that I do not have an answer to, but the one that hurts the most is 'Why can these other teams and players play and we can't?' Duke is playing Notre Dame and Clemson is playing Wake Forest this weekend. Our players want to know: Why can't they play?"

Although the meeting did not end in a vote, one was expected later in the week. Big Ten bylaws require at least 60 percent of members – or at least nine of the 14 schools – be in favor of reinstating the season, which means at least six presidents or chancellors from institutions other than Iowa, Nebraska and Ohio State would have to change their minds from the last time they voted.

In the meantime, Ohio State will continue to hold practices at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center adhering to the 12-hour per week schedule for teams not playing this fall.

Readers should check BuckeyeSports.com daily for any new developments.

Davis, Wade Opt Out ... For Now

Despite the growing optimism, Ohio State junior guard Wyatt Davis and junior cornerback Shaun Wade announced on Sept. 11 and Sept. 14, respectively, that they will opt out of a potential season and declare for the 2021 NFL draft.

"I should be in the middle of preparing for our game this week," Davis said in a statement posted to Twitter. "Instead, due to the events of 2020, I spent the last (few) weeks with my family and coaching staff trying to determine my future. On one hand, playing at Ohio State has been the experience of a lifetime. On the other, my childhood dream is to play in the NFL.

"After much thought and deliberation and given the uncertainty of our times, I have decided to start preparing for the draft. I am deeply saddened that my time in a Buckeye uniform has been cut short, but I promise that my contributions to the university are just getting started. I am committed to earning my degree and making Buckeye Nation as proud of me as an alumnus as I hopefully did as a player."

A former five-star prospect from Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco, Davis could have been a first-round pick had he left Ohio State after last season's loss to Clemson in the College Football Playoff semifinal. But he chose to return for one more shot at a national title and a chance to become just

the third two-time consensus All-American offensive lineman in school history, joining Chris Ward in 1976-77 and Orlando Pace in 1995-96.

With no plan in place from the Big Ten as of the date of his announcement, Davis decided it was in his best interest to move on to the next level.

"My family and I were waiting to hear any good news that there would be a possibility to play in the fall," Davis told Yahoo Sports in an interview published that same morning. "As the weeks went on, after the initial cancellation, the news didn't seem in favor that we would have an opportunity to play for a national championship if there was a season. At this point, my family and I made the decision that it would be my best decision to take the next step.

"It's really heartbreaking. I believe that we would have won the national championship this year. It's really unfortunate. I feel for all those guys, especially the younger players going into this year having that taken away from them. It's tough, but we are in a pandemic. It's just really unfortunate. We had something really special."

The 6-4, 315-pound Davis, who was named a team captain in August, has signed with an agent and intends to start training with renowned offensive line coach Duke Manyweather in Texas in the coming weeks. But there's still a chance for him – and Wade, for that matter – to return to Ohio State if the Big Ten makes a decision sooner rather than later and so long as he did not accept money from said agent.

If nothing changes, Davis finishes his college career with 16 starts – including two Big Ten championship games, the Rose

Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl – and leaves the Buckeyes with just two returning starters along the offensive line in senior left tackle Thayer Munford and junior center Josh Myers – assuming they don't opt out, as well.

Fifth-year senior Gavin Cupp, sophomore Matthew Jones and redshirt freshman Enokk Vimahi would presumably battle to replace Davis at right guard, while sophomores Harry Miller and Nicholas Petit-Frere are widely expected to win the jobs at left guard and right tackle, respectively.

Wade, meanwhile, was a former five-star prospect from Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Catholic who hoped to prove himself as an outside cornerback this season after spending last fall in the slot.

"Being a student-athlete at The Ohio State University has been the greatest experience of my life," Wade said in a statement shared on Twitter. "It has given me the chance to excel on the football field, earn my college degree, and it has helped me become the man that I am today. For that, I am forever grateful.

"After much prayer and consideration, I have decided to declare for the 2021 NFL Draft. Given the circumstances and uncertainty surrounding the 2020 season, I know in my heart that the best decision for my future is to begin preparing for the next chapter in my life."

While Wade recorded a modest 25 tackles, eight pass breakups, four tackles for loss, two sacks and an interception last season, his absence against Michigan (injury) and Clemson (ejected for targeting) made his value clear. The Buckeyes notably held the Tigers to zero points and 4.3 yards per play before his ejection but 29 points and 8.4



ANDREW LIND

PASSIONATE PLEAS – During a protest outside Ohio Stadium, Gee Scott (left) publicly asked Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren why his son, Powers, can play at Mississippi State this fall but Scott's son, Gee Jr., cannot, while Monica Johnson, the mother of Ohio State offensive tackle Paris Johnson, spoke at length about the conference's lack of commitment to her son.

yards per play after the controversial call.

Wade's initial decision to return offered some stability to an Ohio State defensive backfield that had to replace two starting cornerbacks in Damon Arnette and Jeff Okudah as well as safety Jordan Fuller. But with him now off to the NFL, the Buckeyes must find another replacement from a group that includes senior Marcus Williamson; juniors Sevy Banks and Cameron Brown; sophomore Tyreke Johnson; and true freshmen Lejond Cavazos, Cameron Martinez and Ryan Watts.

Parents Protest Outside Stadium

More than two dozen parents of Ohio State student-athletes gathered outside the Ohio Stadium rotunda on Aug. 29 to protest the Big Ten's decision to postpone the 2020 season.

The group, led by Amanda Babb, the stepmother of sophomore wide receiver Kamryn Babb and president of Football Parents at Ohio State, addressed a crowd of more than 200 fans and several staff members, including offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson, director of player personnel Mark Pantoni and recruiting assistant Weston Zernechel, and called for transparency from commissioner Kevin Warren after the Big Ten released a conference-only schedule in early August, only to postpone the season six days later.

"What happened from Aug. 5 to Aug. 11?" Babb asked. "We think that the commissioner and the presidents of the universities owe (an explanation) to us as parents. They owe that to you as fans. They owe it to the players. That's what we want."

Gee Scott, the father of the true freshman wide receiver with the same name, flew to Columbus from Seattle to voice his displeasure with the Big Ten. His passionate speech drew the loudest roars from those in attendance, especially when he mentioned how Warren's son, Powers, will still play football at Mississippi State this fall while the conference he leads will not.

"I believe as a father, the same way you and your family had the opportunity to make the decision for your son to play football, that maybe you will give us parents that right to have a conversation for our children to play football," Scott said.

"Help us understand why it's OK for you and your family, Mr. Warren, to decide if your kids play football, but it's not OK for me and our parents to decide if our kids play football?"

It was the second protest in a little over one week for Randy Wade, Shaun Wade's father, who had also traveled from Jacksonville to the Big Ten headquarters in Rosemont, Ill., on Aug. 21 in search of answers.

"I could have easily said 'Man, you know what? Shaun's going first round, I don't have to be here,'" Wade said. "But you know what I did? I came here to support the Buckeyes, because I didn't want to take the easy way out."

Other speakers at the rally included Kyle Borland, the father of fifth-year senior line-backer Tuf Borland; Andrea Tate, the mother of junior cornerback Sevy Banks; Corey Teague, the father of sophomore running back Master Teague; Monica Johnson, the mother of true freshman offensive tackle Paris Johnson; and Donovan Lonsway, the father of sophomore Buckeye baseball pitcher Seth Lonsway.

"I'm hoping that by keeping some of the pressure upon the Big Ten that it is encouraging them to come up with a solution," Babb said. "We're not going to stop. We're going to keep fighting until we get answers."



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL/TWITTER

WAITING GAME – While Ohio State awaits word from the Big Ten regarding a potential fall season, the Buckeyes and quarterback Justin Fields can conduct up to 12 hours of practice per week.

Governor Sees Path To Football

Ohio governor Mike DeWine – a long-time Ohio State football season ticket holder – was asked during his Sept. 8 press briefing if he thought the Big Ten made the right decision to postpone the season amid the coronavirus pandemic, which has resulted in more than 137,000 cases and 4,400 deaths throughout the state.

"I don't know whether they made the right call or not, but I think there certainly is a decent chance of there being a season," DeWine said. "I talked to (Ohio State athletic director) Gene Smith this morning about that issue. I'm not going to disclose our conversation other than I inquired about it. He told me it was still in play, still very much a possibility."

DeWine's comment came just hours after Michigan speaker of the house Lee Chatfield sent a letter to Warren urging him to reinstate the football season. The letter was signed by nine additional legislators from Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, including Ohio senator Matt Huffman.

Politicians have no say in the matter, of course, but DeWine believes Ohio State's student-athletes are less likely to contract and spread the virus due to the frequent tests the athletic department conducts.

"As you know, it's not any secret, (Ohio State president) Dr. (Kristina) Johnson's position, Ohio State's decision was to play. I concurred in that," DeWine said. "The key is always going to be how it is done. As I have told some people – I don't know if I've said it publicly or not – but athletes at Ohio State, with their capability of testing very, very, very frequently, could potentially be the safest people (on campus thanks to) very close-in-time testing and a really strong ethic to stay safe."

"I don't know what is going to happen in regard to the Buckeyes," DeWine said. "But I do know that (a fall season) is still very much in play."

If the Big Ten does not reverse course, however, Ohio attorney general Dave Yost is ready to recommend Ohio State file a lawsuit against the conference and its member schools that voted against a fall football season.

"I think we have a cause of action," Yost

told The Columbus Dispatch on Sept. 10. "If these negotiations fall apart, we will be recommending legal action to our client. (The university has an) excellent contract claim for several tens of millions of dollars in lost revenue."

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff continues to monitor the Big Ten Football situation and will post any breaking news at BuckeyeSports.com.

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Defensive Tackle, Tight End Commit To OSU

Ohio State's recruiting efforts have not been slowed by the Big Ten's decision to postpone fall sports, as Manassas (Va.) Unity Reed four-star defensive tackle Tyleik Williams announced his commitment to the Buckeyes on Aug. 27.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

The 6-3, 330-pound Williams is considered the 10th-best defensive tackle and No. 160 prospect overall in the class of 2021. He recorded 47 tackles and 3½ sacks to help the Lions – formerly known as the Stonewall Jackson Raiders – to the state playoffs last fall. He chose Ohio State over finalists Alabama, LSU, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia Tech.

Williams has never been to Ohio State, though he was scheduled to take an unofficial visit with his teammate, 2022 four-star linebacker Shawn Murphy, in early April. That trip was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, so defensive line coach Larry Johnson and linebackers coach/area recruiter Al Washington extended a scholarship offer over the phone instead.

The Hokies were long considered the favorite to land Williams, who hails from the same high school as former Virginia Tech defensive tackle Tim Settle and cornerback Greg Stroman. But a virtual visit to Ohio State earlier this month pushed the Buckeyes to the forefront of his recruitment.

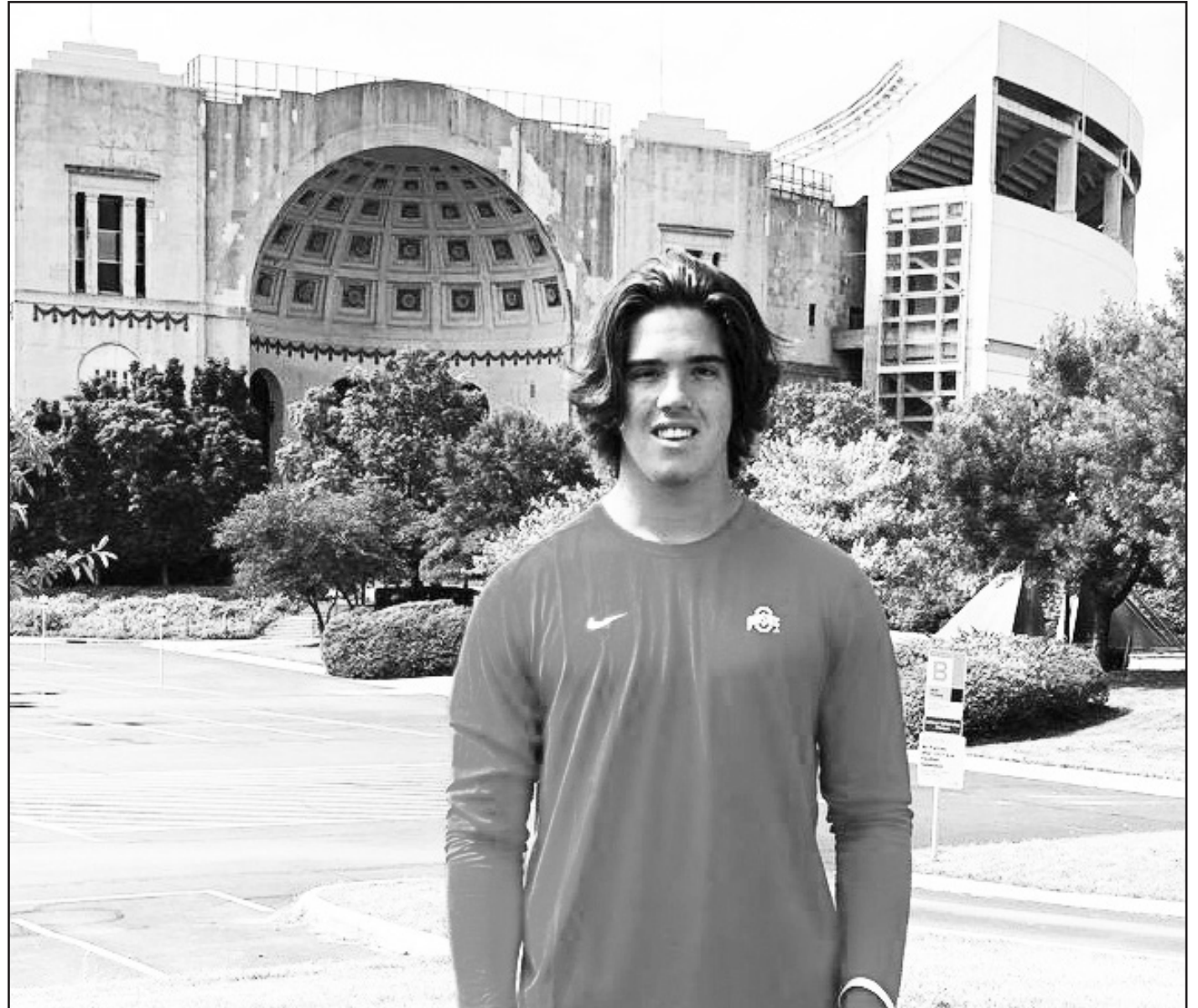
Williams initially hoped to make his college decision after taking all five official visits this fall. But with his high school season pushed to the spring and seemingly no end in sight for the NCAA-mandated recruiting dead period, he decided to accelerate his timeline and commit to Ohio State.

Williams – who will cap his high school career in the Under Armour All-America Game in January – became the 19th commitment in the Buckeyes' 2021 recruiting class, joining Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star end Jack Sawyer and Streetsboro, Ohio, four-star tackle Mike Hall along the defensive line. His pledge briefly helped the program to the top spot in the 247Sports team rankings, surpassing the Crimson Tide, who then regained the lead after landing a commitment from Rock Hill, S.C., three-star tight end Robbie Ouzts on Sept. 8.

Ohio State hopes to add two more players in the trenches this cycle, with Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic five-star defensive end J.T. Tuimoloua; Sumter, S.C., four-star defensive end Justus Boone; Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star defensive tackle Tywone Malone; and Akron Archbishop Hoban three-star defensive end Darryl Peterson among the top remaining options.

Tennessee Legacy Chooses Ohio State

Ohio State continued its strong start to



COURTESY OF BENNETT CHRISTIAN

WHY WAIT – With the NCAA in the midst of an extended recruiting dead period, 2022 Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona three-star tight end Bennett Christian took matters into his own hands with trips to Ohio State and Tennessee before making his college decision on Sept. 1.

the 2022 recruiting cycle when Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona three-star tight end Bennett Christian announced his commitment to the Buckeyes on Sept. 1.

The 6-6, 235-pound Christian – who is considered the 19th-best tight end and No. 370 prospect overall in his class – landed an offer from Ohio State and Tennessee during a two-day period in early June, with head coach Ryan Day, offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson and executive director of football relations Tim Hinton leading the charge for the Buckeyes.

NCAA-sanctioned visits are not permitted during the current recruiting dead period, so Christian took matters into his own hands and made his first trip to Columbus on Aug. 14, at which time he and his father took an unguided tour of campus and had lunch with freshman cornerback and family friend Lejond Cavazos.

Christian made a familiar trip to Knoxville the following weekend, seeing as his father played defensive tackle for the Volunteers under legendary coach Johnny Majors while his mother cheered for the program. Neither one of his parents was pushing him to follow in their footsteps, though, which was good news for Ohio State after the Buckeyes missed on another Tennessee legacy (2021

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	6-2	175	★★★★	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Denzel Burke	CB	6-0	189	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro
Reid Carrico	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Ironton, Ohio
Ben Christman	OT	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Jantzen Dunn	CB	6-2	178	★★★★	Bowling Green (Ky.) South Warren
Michael Hall	DT	6-3	290	★★★★	Streetsboro, Ohio
Jordan Hancock	CB	6-1	170	★★★★	Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett
Marvin Harrison	WR	6-3	190	★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep
Sam Hart	TE	6-5	225	★★★	Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail
TreVeyon Henderson	RB	5-11	195	★★★★★	Hopewell, Va.
Donovan Jackson	OG	6-4	308	★★★★★	Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal
Jakailin Johnson	CB	6-1	175	★★★★	St. Louis De Smet Jesuit
Jaylen Johnson	S	6-1	200	★★★	Cincinnati La Salle
Kyle McCord	QB	6-3	215	★★★★★	Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep
Jesse Mirco	P	6-3	200	★★★	Fremantle, Western Australia
Evan Pryor	RB	5-10	190	★★★★	Cornelius (N.C.) W.A. Hough
Jack Sawyer	DE	6-5	248	★★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Andre Turrentine	S	6-0	175	★★★★	Nashville (Tenn.) Ensworth
Tyleik Williams	DT	6-3	330	★★★★	Manassas (Va.) Unity Reed

Players in the class of 2022 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jyaire Brown	CB	5-11	165	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Bennett Christian	TE	6-6	235	★★★	Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona
C.J. Hicks	LB	6-4	218	★★★★	Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter
Dasan McCullough	ATH	6-5	220	★★★★	Overland Park (Kan.) B.V. North
Gabe Powers	LB	6-4	220	★★★★★	Marysville, Ohio
Tegra Tshabola	OT	6-5	340	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West

ASK AN ANALYST

With Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham

Alabama recently passed Ohio State for the top spot in the 247Sports team recruiting rankings, though the Crimson Tide benefit from having two more commitments than the Buckeyes (21 compared to 19). What do you think has to happen in the coming months for Ohio State to finally wrestle the title away from Alabama, which has finished with the No. 1 overall class in eight of the last 10 recruiting cycles?

"It seems that from a sheer numbers standpoint that Alabama is almost certain to end up knocking off Ohio State, and the Buckeyes' intention to only take 22 or 23 players in this class will probably be the biggest reason for that. From a talent standpoint and a per-player average, Ohio State is likely to finish with the highest-rated group in the country and is in a good position to still land two more five-star prospects in Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau and Steliacoom, Wash. wide receiver Emeka Egbuka.

"Overall, the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic slowed much of the Buckeyes' early momentum – both of those five-stars would likely be committed by now if they'd been able to make spring visits, for example – but there's certainly no reason for Ohio State fans to be disappointed."

The Buckeyes are hoping to add two more offensive linemen to their current class, but

a number of top targets have come off the board in recent weeks in Lititz (Pa.) Warwick five-star tackle Nolan Rucci and Lexington (Ky.) Frederick Douglass four-star guard Jager Burton. Things seem to be trending down with Fairfax (Va.) Robinson Secondary five-star tackle Tristain Leigh, as well, so where will Ohio State turn next?

"The first name to know right now is Zen Michalski, a three-star lineman from Floyd's Knobs (Ind.) Floyd Central who is committed to Louisville. Ohio State offered him last week and has been spending a significant amount of time getting to know him lately. There is also a continuing evaluation of Massillon (Ohio) Washington offensive tackle Terrence Rankl, who is committed to Pittsburgh as well."

Where does Ohio State stand in the race for Greenwood (Ind.) Center Grove four-star defensive tackle Caden Curry, who has family ties to Columbus and admittedly grew up rooting for the Buckeyes?

"The Buckeyes have made Curry a top target on the defensive line in 2022 and he's reciprocated their interest over the last few months. Alabama, Clemson and a host of big-time programs are also heavily involved, and there's no doubt that the versatile lineman is a recruit with national appeal. Still, home is where the heart is, and though he plays just south of

Indianapolis, Ohio State being so involved so early – combined with his family ties to the Buckeye State – probably has them with a leg up on their recruiting foes right now."

Ohio State holds one commitment from Ironton, Ohio, in 2021 four-star linebacker Reid Carrico and is keeping an eye on 2023 four-star athlete Trevor Carter. What position is he likely to play at the next level and do you believe the Buckeyes will offer in the near future?

"After checking out Ironton last week against their rival, Gallia Academy, I came away impressed by Carter as he played safety and running back for the Tigers. I think his future is at linebacker, though, as the currently 6-1, 190-pound sophomore isn't anywhere near done filling out.

"The Buckeyes are watching Carter closely but he's not yet on the physical level of his in-state 2023 counterparts like Mentor defensive end Brennan Vernon and Pickerington Central safety Sonny Styles, each of whom added an Ohio State offer after their first games of the season. When the Buckeyes can get back to normal recruiting and get the chance to see Carter in person for themselves – and evaluate him at a summer camp on their campus – I think the interest will really ramp up and he'll be in position to earn an Ohio State offer next summer."

Savannah, Tenn., Hardin County four-star tight end Hudson Wolfe) earlier this year.

Christian becomes the sixth member of Ohio State's 2022 recruiting class, joining Marysville, Ohio, five-star linebacker Gabe Powers; Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter four-star athlete C.J. Hicks; Overland Park (Kan.) Blue Valley North four-star athlete Dasan McCullough; and a pair of teammates from West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West, four-star offensive tackle Tegra Tshabola and four-star cornerback Jyair Brown.

The staff is still looking to add another tight end in the current cycle to pair with Aurora (Colo.) Cherokee Trail three-star Sam Hart, but the Buckeyes might instead bring on two in 2022, with Dickinson, Texas, four-star Donovan Green; Atlanta Westminster School four-star and Penn State commit Holden Staes; and Pilot Mountain (N.C.) East Surry four-star Benji Gosnell among the players at the position who hold offers thus far.

Early Enrollees Unlikely To Play In Spring Season

Though Day was hopeful that early-enrollee freshmen would be able to play for the Buckeyes during a potential spring season, it appears unlikely after West Virginia athletic director and NCAA Division I Football Oversight Committee chairman Shane Lyons told ESPN's

Heather Dinich the committee does not recommend the idea.

"There was not support to allow mid-year enrollees, transfers or incoming freshmen to compete in the spring semester," Lyons said.

That will come as disappointing news to several Ohio State commits, including Sawyer; Hopewell, Va., five-star running back TreVeyon Henderson; Cornelius (N.C.) William Amos Hough four-star running back Evan Pryor; and Hart, who decided to sit out their respective senior seasons to prepare for such a scenario.

"I think there's some excitement about the possibility of playing two seasons in one year," Day said during a Zoom meeting with reporters on Aug. 12. "I think that's a really exciting thing for them to consider. I'm going to fight really, really hard so that if I'm a midyear guy coming in and we do play in January, I'll have the opportunity to play in January and also in the fall, and it only counts for one year of eligibility because it's only one calendar year. I think that's exciting for them, and the possibility really interests them."

The committee also recommends the extension of the current NCAA-mandated recruiting dead period through the end of

October, as well as the elimination of the fall evaluation period. Those recommendations will be voted on by the Division I Council on Sept. 16.

Senior Season In Jeopardy For Commits

The Philadelphia Catholic League announced on Aug. 24 that it has decided to postpone fall sports amid the coronavirus pandemic, which puts the senior seasons of Ohio State five-star quarterback commit Kyle McCord and four-star wide receiver commit Marvin Harrison in jeopardy.

"After much careful thought, consultation and prayer, a decision has been reached that all of our high schools will opt out of participation in interscholastic competition for the fall 2020 season," the league said in a statement. "We recognize that this news is disappointing to many of our students, families and coaches, particularly our seniors. It saddens us greatly, as well. We recognize the value of athletics as part of our educational philosophy that seeks to provide the holistic formation of young men and women of character. This is not the scenario any of us desired."

Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep – winners of back-to-back and four of the last

six state titles – is exploring its options of playing as an independent this fall since the school is not under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which oversees most of the schools in the Philadelphia Catholic League.

"While we respect the decision of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we believe that we can offer athletic opportunities for our student-athletes in a safe, controlled manner," St. Joseph's Prep athletic director Dan DiBerardinis said in a statement. "Utilizing our Return to Play protocol, which was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Philadelphia Department of Health and endorsed by the PIAA, we feel strongly that a fall sports season can be done safely. We will take every precaution to ensure that all of our coaches and players are following strict protocols."

If the Hawks do wait until the spring to play, though, they will do so without Harrison and McCord, who are both set to graduate early and enroll at Ohio State in January.

Offensive Guard Off The Board

Lexington (Ky.) Frederick Douglass four-star offensive guard Jager Burton



Kyle McCord



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Buckeyes Among Top Options For 5-Star Receiver

Continued From Page 11

committed to Kentucky on Aug. 30 over finalists Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State and Oregon.

The 6-4, 271-pound Burton, who is considered the eighth-best offensive guard and No. 125 prospect overall in the class of 2021, had been among the Buckeyes' top targets at the position for much of the current recruiting cycle. He landed an offer from offensive line coach Greg Studrawa in May 2019, attended a one-day camp in Columbus last summer and then took an unofficial visit for Ohio State's 28-17 win over Penn State on Nov. 23.

Burton talked with Day, Studrawa, assistant secondary coach/special teams coordinator Matt Barnes and offensive line graduate assistant Kennedy Cook almost daily and was scheduled to take an official visit with the Buckeyes on the weekend of June 12-14. That was canceled amid the coronavirus pandemic, so Burton announced shortly thereafter that he would not make his college decision until he could take all five official visits.

Unfortunately, there's no end in sight for the NCAA-mandated recruiting dead period, so Burton adjusted his timeline once again. And without one final trip to Columbus to possibly change his mind, he ended up staying home, as most prognosticators believed he would all along.

Burton will be reunited at Kentucky with his high school teammate, 2021 four-star wide receiver Dekel Crowds, who committed to the Wildcats in mid-May. The two were quite outspoken on social media throughout the recruiting process about their desire to play together at the next level.

Ohio State, meanwhile, currently holds commitments along the offensive line from Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal five-star guard Donovan Jackson and Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star guard Ben Christman and hopes to add two more linemen to the fold this cycle.

With Burton now out of the picture, the staff will ramp up its pursuit of Fairfax



COURTESY OF LUTHER BURDEN

NEXT IN LINE – Cardinal Ritter College Prep five-star wide receiver Luther Burden, the former teammate of Ohio State wide receiver Jameson Williams, could be the next St. Louis-area prospect to land with the Buckeyes.

(Va.) Robinson Secondary five-star tackle Tristan Leigh, though there are additional names to keep in mind moving forward, such as Brentwood (Tenn.) Academy three-star guard Noah Josey; Floyds Knobs (Ind.) Floyd Central three-star offensive tackle Zen Michalski; and Massillon (Ohio) Washington three-star tackle Terrence Rankl.

St. Louis Receiver Interested In Buckeyes

St. Louis Cardinal Ritter College Prep five-star wide receiver Luther Burden included Ohio State in his top 12 on Aug. 28 alongside Alabama, Auburn, Baylor, Florida State, Georgia, Illinois, LSU, Missouri, Oklahoma, Penn State and Texas.

The 6-2, 194-pound Burden is considered the second-best wide receiver and No. 14 prospect overall in the class of 2022, hauling in 93 passes for 2,046 yards and 27 touchdowns in two seasons with the Lions. He landed an offer from wide receivers coach Brian Hartline in April,

Continued On Page 14

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Ohio State Officially Signs Punter Commit Mirco

Continued From Page 12

and though he has yet to make his way to campus, the Buckeyes are expected to play a major role in his recruitment all the way to the end thanks to their ties in his hometown.

Ohio State has pulled a prospect from the St. Louis area in three consecutive recruiting cycles, including Christian Brothers College four-star wide receivers Kamryn Babb and Cameron Brown in 2018; Burden's former teammate and four-star wide receiver Jameson Williams in 2019; and Maryland Heights Pattonville Senior four-star Mookie Cooper in 2020; and could make it four with a signature from four-star cornerback commit Jakailin Johnson, who hails from De Smet Jesuit, in 2021.

With a stockpile of wide receivers already in Columbus and two more on their way in January in Harrison and Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star Jayden Ballard, the Buckeyes can be a bit selective in their pursuit of players at the position for 2022. Other names to keep in mind include Del Valle, Texas, five-star Caleb Burton; Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star C.J. Williams; Chicago St. Rita four-star Kaleb Brown; and Lewisville, Texas, four-star Armani Winfield.

Another Linebacker Interested In Buckeyes

Salisbury, N.C., four-star linebacker Jalon Walker listed Ohio State in his top 10 on Aug. 28 alongside Arizona State, Auburn, Clemson, Georgia, LSU, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Texas and Texas A&M.

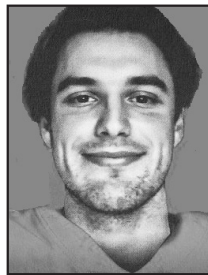
The 6-2, 220-pound Walker is considered the second-best outside linebacker and No. 41 prospect overall in the class of 2022 after recording 121 tackles, eight tackles for loss, eight quarterback hurries, six pass breakups, three forced fumbles, two interceptions and two sacks to help the Hornets to the state finals last fall.

Walker landed an offer from Ohio State's Washington in May, and the two talk a few times each week. He's never been to campus but has received a virtual tour through Zoom.

As mentioned, Ohio State already holds commitments from three linebackers in the 2022 recruiting class in the form of Hicks, McCullough and Powers. The staff hopes to add one more, with Murphy; Shelby, N.C., four-star Malaki Hamrick; and Manvel, Texas, three-star Justin Medlock at the top of the list.

Other Notes From Around The Country

- While the rest of Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class will have to wait until at least Dec. 16, the first day of the early signing period, to fax in their letters of intent, Fremantle, Western Australia, three-star punter Jesse Mirco did so on Sept. 5.



Jesse Mirco

The 23-year-old Mirco, who committed to the Buckeyes in May and plans to enroll in college in January, is not bound by the same rules as high school seniors due to his age. He hails from ProKick Australia, the same program that produced former Ohio State punter Cameron Johnson.

- Lititz (Pa.) Warwick five-star offensive tackle Nolan Rucci committed to Wisconsin on Sept. 8. He landed an offer from Ohio State in January 2019, visited campus for the spring game that April and subsequently listed the Buckeyes among his top nine schools.

Rucci's recruitment ultimately came down to Penn State, where his dad played from 1988-92, and Wisconsin, where his brother currently plays tight end.

- Clayton (Ohio) Northmont three-star wide receiver Markus Allen decommit-

ted from Michigan on Sept. 9. He's a close friend of Hicks, who immediately reached out on social media and encouraged him to join the Buckeyes. Ohio State has not offered Allen, however.

- Greensboro (N.C.) Grimsley five-star defensive tackle Travis Shaw listed Ohio State in his top 13 on Sept. 11 alongside Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, LSU, North Carolina, North Carolina A&T, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia Tech. The 6-5, 310-pound Shaw is considered the second-best defensive tackle and No. 6 prospect overall in the class of 2022.

- The Buckeyes sent out several new offers over the last few weeks, including Hamrick on Aug. 24; 2022 Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers four-star athlete Dallan Hayden on Aug. 25; 2023 Pickerington (Ohio) Central safety Sonny Styles on Aug. 30; 2022 Altoona (Iowa) Southeast Polk four-star safety Xavier Nwankpa on Sept. 7; and the aforementioned Michalski on Sept. 8. Styles is the son of former Ohio State linebacker Lorenzo Styles.

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

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1990

Ohio State had its eye on Florida and California, two traditional recruiting hotbeds that were set to produce another batch of talented prospects for the class of 1991.

The Buckeyes were in the running for some of the best players out of the two states, including quarterback Luke Bencie from Sarasota (Fla.) Riverview; tailback Marquette Smith of Winter Park (Fla.) Lake Howell; wide receiver Darnay Scott of San Diego (Calif.) Kearney and offensive tackle Donovan Roy of Van Nuys (Calif.) Montclair, a teammate of tailback Derek Sparks, another Buckeye target.

"It's really amazing to see how Ohio State crops up in those states," said national recruiting expert Tom Lemming. "They have really done a good job in the past few years expanding their recruiting base to include states like Florida and California."

25 Years Ago – 1995

With the Ohio high school football season kicking off in early September, BSB took a look around the state and ranked some of the top high school prospects who would be taking the field in Ohio in 1995.

The biggest name of the bunch was nationally ranked linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer of Westerville South, a contender for All-America honors. Katzenmoyer (6-4, 240) was considered the state's top prospect and among the nation's top linebackers.

He was considering Notre Dame, Ohio State and Penn State as his top three, but others including Illinois were still being considered.

Another top prospect, Medina defensive lineman Marcus Perez, was considered the best lineman in the state and had already announced his commitment to the Buckeyes.

"He is an instant impact player on the defensive line," said Medina coach John Semenik. "He makes plays and he's hard to double-team. Coach (Mike) Jacobs from Ohio State was really impressed with how quick he comes off the ball. He understands how to use his size for his leverage."

20 Years Ago – 2000

Although he respectfully considered an offer to attend Michigan, everything that Simon Fraser of Upper Arlington (Ohio) High School was looking for in a university was in his own back yard.

"It was a school that I found had the total package academically and what I want football-wise," the defensive

lineman explained to BSB.

With a pre-med major in his future, Fraser admitted that he was a bit enticed by Michigan's topflight medical program.

"I went up there to visit and talk to the people that run the medical school," he said. "But it just didn't feel comfortable up there. I felt a lot more comfortable down here at Ohio State."

15 Years Ago – 2005

At one point it appeared the number of prospects Ohio State would host on official visits for the Texas game would approach 10. In actuality, it turned out to be just three. But those three were important ones, including perhaps the coaching staff's top remaining in-state target.

Cincinnati Princeton offensive lineman Aaron Brown was joined by Pomfret (Md.) McDonough cornerback A.J. Wallace and Bartow, Fla., tight end Steven Wesley in Columbus to enjoy the festivities surrounding the much-anticipated Buckeyes-Longhorns showdown.

Hosted by freshman cornerback Malcolm Jenkins, Wallace came away impressed with the Ohio Stadium-record crowd on hand for the game.

"It was intense," Wallace told BSB. "It was a good game."

10 Years Ago – 2010

When Braxton Miller issued a verbal commitment to Ohio State in June, his head coach expressed a number of hopes for the quarterback's senior season. Chief among them was a wish that the five-star prospect would be able to put together an injury-free season for Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne.

One week into the season, those hopes went up in smoke.

Miller suffered an ankle injury in the first game of the season, a 35-28 defeat Aug. 29 at the hands of Cincinnati Moeller. Playing in the Skyline Chili Crosstown Showdown staged at Cincinnati St. Xavier, Miller had rushed for a career-high 214 yards including first-half scoring runs of 75, 31 and 27 yards before going down.

As a result, Miller could only watch from the sidelines as his team squared off Sept. 5 against Canton McKinley in a nationally televised game as part of the Kirk Herbstreit Kickoff Classic. The result was not pretty – a 26-0 loss to the Bulldogs that dropped Wayne to 0-2 on the season.

"I wanted to play really badly today, but the trainers

wouldn't let me," Miller told BSB. Missing the game also meant a missed opportunity to play against fellow Buckeye commit defensive end Steve Miller (no relation).

"I wanted to play against Steve Miller, and I wished him luck before the game," he said.

Five Years Ago – 2015

Ohio State hosted defensive tackle Antwan Jackson on an unofficial visit for its matchup with Hawaii on Sept. 14.

Jackson, a four-star prospect out of Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove, had a top two of Auburn and Ohio State with Florida and Georgia also in contention.

He was rumored multiple times over the summer to be close to committing, but each such instance ended with a denial from the four-star prospect. Jackson noted that when he was finally ready to decide, the news would come from him and not those around him.

"I'll be committing this fall," he said. "I'm going to let everyone know when I'm going to commit and I'm going to have a ceremony, so just look for it."

The nation's No. 97 overall prospect and No. 11 defensive tackle had visited Ohio State over the summer as well and appeared to enjoy it, saying, "I love the community and I love the coaches. I love the players. I bonded with the players very good and had some good talks with all the players and the defensive coordinator."

One Year Ago – 2019

Ohio State landed a commitment in the early-morning hours of Sept. 10 from one of the state's top-ranked players when Ironton, Ohio, four-star linebacker Reid Carrico pledged his services to the Buckeyes.

The 6-3, 225-pound Carrico was considered the third-best inside linebacker and No. 126 prospect overall in the 2021 recruiting class at the time of his commitment. He recorded 17 tackles in his first two games for the Fighting Tigers to open up his junior season.

Carrico picked Ohio State over more than 30 other offers from schools such as Alabama, Arkansas, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, LSU, Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Ole Miss, Penn State, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia Tech and Wisconsin, among others.

He had visited campus numerous times since landing an offer from the Buckeyes in April 2019, which included participating in a one-day camp in mid-June and attending Ohio State's 42-0 win over Cincinnati on Sept. 7.

Powers Fulfills Childhood Dream With Commitment

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As a child, Marysville, Ohio, five-star linebacker Gabe Powers was destined to be a football player.

Born into a football family, with his great-grandfather Sam earning a tryout with the Green Bay Packers and his father, Mike, becoming a Division II All-American at Findlay before earning a tryout with the Dallas Cowboys, Gabe was taught football from a young age. He even dropped another sport that he enjoyed in order to pursue the family passion.

"It had a lot of influence on me growing up," Powers told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "Every day all we talk about really is football, watch football, study football. Everything's football in our house. At one point I really liked basketball. I was traveling all over the United States for basketball. But, you know, this is a football family. You're not meant for basketball."

With football at the forefront – his favorite football player from his youth being NFL Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis – Powers came to Marysville High School prepared to make an impact. According to head coach Brent Johnson, who played tight end at Mount Union, it didn't take long for Powers to stand out among the rest.

"He's a long, big guy that can move fast, so when you get one of those on the field, you kind of know you have one and then you get to know him and he's a really driven kid who's pretty tuned in to what he wants," Johnson told BSB. "He keeps his circle pretty tight and he's pretty driven towards that goal. He's intelligent in terms of football and not all kids are that way, so he stood out that way quite a bit for us."

The 6-4, 220-pound Powers received his first offer from Colorado on June 28, 2019, after a camp at the university. Less than five months later on Nov. 14, Ohio State sent its offer.

Johnson said that, while it took a little longer than the initial offers, more of the powerhouse recruiting programs eventually got to Powers after getting to see him play in person.

"Colorado offered, and that same weekend Michigan offered, and then once they offered things picked up pretty quick going into his sophomore year," Johnson said. "Schools like Ohio State and Penn State and Clemson, those schools were a little slower. They wanted to see him in action, and so those offers came later in the year. So it was pretty steady from a year ago this summer until he committed."

An Ohio State offer is a big deal for any prospect, but for Powers, who lives less than an hour away from Columbus and who, along with his family, has been a lifelong Ohio State fan, it meant that much more.

"That was a lot," Powers said. "Since I was a little kid growing up, I just wanted to play Ohio State football, and once I got that, I started tearing up a little bit. I called my grandma, and my grandma was crying, so it was a big moment for us."

"We've always been diehard Buckeye fans forever."

Johnson echoed how important the Ohio State offer was to Powers, while also saying that it was equally important to Marysville football as a whole.

"That was a big deal. They're Ohio people and their whole family lives here in



COURTESY OF GABE POWERS

NEVER IN DOUBT – Growing up just 30 minutes away from Ohio State's campus, 2022 Marysville, Ohio, five-star linebacker Gabe Powers always dreamed of being a Buckeye.

Marysville, grandfather to the youngest and all the kids are living here. So that was a big one, and for our program that was a big one," Johnson said. "We've never had an offer from Ohio State. We have a kid playing in Minnesota, we've had kids at Northwestern, but for Ohio State to make an offer, and all the Big Ten schools, you know Michigan, Penn State, you name it, and he handled that with an incredible amount of maturity."

"You would never know it amongst our team that he has a full ride to all those places if he wanted it. He's very humble that way."

Powers committed to Ohio State on Aug. 1, becoming the fourth commit for the Buckeyes in the 2022 class. He is ranked the top outside linebacker in the class and the No. 31 prospect overall.

The commitment was a big deal to Powers and his family, as well as, according to Powers, much of the city of Marysville, which has a population just shy of 25,000.

"It was a very big moment," Powers said. "The whole family, friends, everybody gathered around. Marysville, we're all pretty much family here. We're all a very close community."

After committing at the beginning of the month, Powers was given his fifth star in the

247Sports Composite Rankings by the end of August following a 15-spot jump to No. 31.

The move made Powers the lone five-star commit for the Buckeyes in 2022, and he said that it was a big step for him as a player to see the recognition he earned.

"It was very important to me," Powers said. "I'm very blessed to get that fifth star and I was working towards that fifth star, and once I got it, it was just very humbling."

Powers has developed his game significantly during his first two years at Marysville

according to Johnson, and he should continue to progress as he moves into year three.

"You go from freshman to sophomore, from five coaches to 13 coaches, a little more involved," Johnson said. "There was a curve last year as a sophomore that all sophomores go through. The difference with him and other sophomores is how quick he picked it up. By game five, we were putting him on the offensive side of the ball as well. We initially put him back just to the defense, so he picked it up, and this year he's pretty much playing two ways."

Although Ohio State has been unable to play due to the Big Ten's current decision to postpone fall sports, Governor Mike DeWine has allowed high school sports to return with a limited fan capacity.

Marysville got out to a 2-1 start this year, with the sole loss being a 31-28 defeat to Hilliard Darby on Sept. 4. Powers said that, while the lack of attendance and the inability to use the locker rooms in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19 has been an adjustment, he knows he still has to play his best for the Monarchs in his junior season.

"It's different when you go out on a Friday night and you only see 700 compared to 4,000, 5,000, I think we actually pack almost up to 6,000 and there's barely any standing room," Powers said. "Our town's a football town, so it's different, but you still have to go out there and perform."

With two years left until he makes the jump to the collegiate level, Powers still has time to develop further as the five-star linebacker he is ranked to be. Johnson said that he thinks there is plenty of room for Powers to continue to improve, both in high school and when he ultimately does head to Columbus.

"I think he's going to be explosive," the coach said. "I think he's really green right now, to be honest with you. He weighs about 225, and he has gotten strong in our weight room. I can't imagine what he's going to look like when he gets to Ohio State and gets into their program. He's got a good understanding. I think us playing him at Sam (strongside linebacker) and walking him up (to the line of scrimmage) will be a good introduction to what they want to do, so I think he's going to compete really well. I think the longer he stays, the better he's going to get, too."

As for Powers, he has set a high bar for himself and what he wants to achieve, and he is ready to leave his mark once he officially gets to Ohio State in 2022.

"I set my expectations as high as I can," Powers said. "I want to be there, and freshman year, I want to be a starter. So I set them high, and for myself I expect to achieve those."

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Oklahoma Win Among Bruce's Best At Ohio State

By FRANK MOSKOWITZ

Throughout the fall, Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be "playing" its 40th Anniversary football season with recaps of the biggest Ohio State games of each corresponding week in our publishing history. The following is coverage of the 1983 game in which the No. 6 Buckeyes traveled to No. 2 Oklahoma. Additional features about this game will be posted at BuckeyeSports.com on Thursday, Sept. 17.

There may have been bigger victories for Ohio State football coach Earle Bruce than the one his team posted over Oklahoma Sept. 17. But the fifth-year mentor seemed to feel that this was the best.

It was "by far the best team game – both offensively and defensively – that we've played since I've been here," Bruce said following the 24-14 win by his sixth-ranked Buckeyes over the second-ranked Sooners.

The Buckeyes found themselves in the driver's seat when junior quarterback Mike Tomczak fired his fifth and sixth touchdown passes of the season, both to tight end John Frank, in the game's first 22 minutes.

Tomczak came into the game as the nation's No. 1-rated passer based on his 21 completions in 25 attempts for 273 yards and four touchdowns in OSU's 31-6 triumph over Oregon in its opener.

The Calumet City, Ill., native fired a 16-yard scoring toss to Frank which capped an 80-yard drive following the opening kickoff.

Frank, who would catch seven passes for 108 yards in the game, bowled over Oklahoma's Jim Rockford to get into the end zone with 8:44 showing on the first quarter clock.

Oklahoma has been vulnerable against passing teams in recent years and this was no exception. Tomczak came out flinging, connecting on tosses of five yards to Frank, seven to Kelvin Lindsey and 12 to Frank on the Buckeyes' opening drive, before throwing the touchdown pass.

Tomczak upped the OSU lead to 14-0 with a 15-yarder to the senior tight end early in the second period.

That came on the first play after a fumble by Oklahoma's Marcus Dupree was recovered by Ohio State linebacker Rowland Tatum.

But before the Dupree fumble, a great goal-line stand by Oklahoma had stopped the Buckeyes without a point when cornerback Dwight Drane threw Ohio State tailback Keith Byars for a short loss from inside the 1-yard line on fourth down.

Two plays later, Dupree broke through

the right side for 11 yards, only to have cornerback Shaun Gayle shake the ball loose. Tatum recovered at the Oklahoma 15 to set up Tomczak's second touchdown pass. Frank caught the ball in the left flat then just made it to the corner of the end zone.

Oklahoma scored its first touchdown less than two minutes later by going 85 yards in four plays. Spencer Tillman, a redshirt freshman, raced 37 yards for the touchdown after a 39-yard pass from Danny Bradley to Buster Rhymes and a nine-yard run by Dupree.

With the score 14-7, Scott Case intercepted a Tomczak pass and returned it 20 yards to the Ohio State 39, but David Culver missed a 40-yard field goal try with 5:13 left in the second period.

Oklahoma came up dry on another scoring opportunity in the final minute of the first half. On third-and-two from the Buckeyes' 38, tailback Earl Johnson took a pitchout and overthrew Derrick Shepard on an option pass.

Ohio State scored on its first possession of the second half, shrugging off a holding penalty and going 57 yards on 10 plays.

Tomczak passed 17 yards to Lindsey, 14 to Frank and 16 to fullback Vaughn Broadnax for a first down at the Oklahoma five. Three plays later, Roman Bates blasted through a hole at left guard for a 21-7 advantage.

Oklahoma closed to within 21-14 on a 22-yard fourth-down pass play from Bradley to Shepard with 1:01 left in the third period. The drive covered 62 yards in eight plays following Rhymes' 24-yard punt return and included a 27-yard pass play involving Bradley and Shepard and an eight-yarder which Johnson caught after it was tipped by Ohio State cornerback Garcia Lane.

But Tomczak directed a time-consuming drive of 6:44 which ended in Rich Spangler's 22-yard field goal with 9:15 to go in the game. Ohio State converted three third-down attempts along the way, including a two-yard sneak by Tomczak and a 19-yard pass to Byars.

Oklahoma reached the Buckeyes' 23 with just under six minutes remaining, but linebacker Clark Backus batted away a fourth-down pass and the Sooners went on to suffer their 28th setback in 185 home games since 1946.

"Mike Tomczak did an excellent job. He made some great reads of the defense," Bruce said. "They were cutting off our passes deep, but we had a lot of success to the halfbacks over the middle."

"The defense did an outstanding job. How many yards rushing did Oklahoma have?"

Told that the Sooners had managed

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 24, Oklahoma 14

Sept. 17, 1983 – Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, Norman, Okla.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	7	7	7	3	24
OKLAHOMA	0	7	7	0	14

First Quarter

OSU – Frank 16-yard pass from Tomczak (Spangler kick), 8:44.

Second Quarter

OSU – Frank 15 yard pass from Tomczak (Spangler kcik), 10:57.

OKLA – Tillman 37-yard run (Culver kick), 9:14.

Third Quarter

OSU – Bates 2-yard run (Spangler kick), 8:30.

OKLA – Shepard 22-yard pass from Bradley (Culver kick), 1:01.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Spangler 22-yard field goal, 9:15.

Att. – 75,008

Team Statistics

	OSU	OKLA
First Downs	24	14
Rushing	13	7
Passing	10	7
Penalty	1	0
Rushes-Yards	55-178	41-177
Passing Yards	234	170
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	15-25-1	9-22-0
Offensive Plays	80	63
Total Net Yards	412	347
Third Down Efficiency	10-17	3-13
Punts-Avg.	3-45.0	4-35.2
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	2-1
Penalties	5-45	6-45
Time of Possession	35:50	24:10

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – OHIO STATE: Lindsey 16-75; Byars 16-57; Bates 5-21; Tomczak 11-17; Broadnax 7-8. **OKLAHOMA:** Tillman 13-83; Bradley 10-34; Johnson 12-30; Dupree 6-30.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – OHIO STATE: Tomczak 15-25-1-234-2. **OKLAHOMA:** Bradley 9-21-0-170-1; Johnson 0-1-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – OHIO STATE: Frank 7-108; Byars 3-75; Lindsey 3-29; Broadnax 1-16; Walker 1-6. **OKLAHOMA:** Rhymes 5-77; Shepard 3-85; Johnson 1-8.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – OHIO STATE: Edwards 3-45.0-53. **OKLAHOMA:** Atyia 4-35.2-41.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Avg.-Long.) – OHIO STATE: Lane 1-6.0-6. **OKLAHOMA:** Rhymes 2-17.0-24.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Avg.-Long.) – OHIO STATE: Gordon 1-4.0-4. **OKLAHOMA:** Rhymes 1-36.0-36; Johnson 1-17.0-17.

DEFENSIVE FUMBLES RECOVERED BY – OHIO STATE: Tatum. **OKLAHOMA:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS – OHIO STATE: None. **OKLAHOMA:** Rockford.

TACKLES FOR LOSS – OHIO STATE: Curtis (2), Lane. **OKLAHOMA:** Bryan, Goodlow, Flemmons, Benson, Hall.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – OHIO STATE: Tatum 8-2-10; Curtis 4-2-6; Lowry 4-1-5; Lane 4-1-5; Backus 2-2-4; Gayle 3-0-3; Nelms 2-0-2; Morrill 2-0-2; Giuliani 2-0-2; Lee 1-1-2; S. Hill 2-0-2; Johnson 1-0-1; Bell 1-0-1; Crecelius 1-0-1. **OKLAHOMA:** Shipp 10-0-10; Benson 8-2-10; Bryan 6-0-6; Murphy 6-0-6; Goodlow 5-1-6; Drane 6-0-6; Case 4-0-4; Wilson 3-0-3; Flemmons 3-0-3; Truitt 1-2-3; Casillas 1-2-3; Hall 2-1-3; Stanberry 2-1-3; Migliazzo 2-0-2; Slater 1-0-1; Rockford 1-0-1.

177 yards, one less than Ohio State, Bruce grinned and said, "When you can do that to a team like Oklahoma, when you can do what we did today against Oklahoma, it's a great victory. That was just overall the best game we've played since I've been at Ohio State."

Oklahoma's Barry Switzer, denied his 100th career coaching victory, said the key was that "we couldn't stop them, especially on first down. They had too many second-and-fives on us. And they had too many good drives. We just couldn't get the football."

En route to Ohio State's first touchdown, a drive which took 13 plays and ate up 6:16, Tomczak completed four of five passes for 40 yards. The 6-1, 190-pound quarterback, who completed his last 10 passes against Oregon, connect on his first two against the Sooners, tying Bill Mrukowski's school-record 12 consecutive

completions set in 1961.

Tomczak ended the afternoon with 15 completions in 25 attempts for 234 yards.

Dupree, the touted Oklahoma freshman of a year ago, bruised a knee in the second period and gained only 30 yards on six carries, sitting out better than half the game.

Bruce attributed his team's ability to work in the extreme heat – it was reportedly 135 degrees on the artificial surface – to preseason conditioning.

"All of our hard work – our two-a-days in the hot weather – really paid off. Offensively, we controlled the game. I'll bet we had the ball the big percentage of the time."

The Buckeyes did – controlling the ball for 35:50 to 24:10 for Switzer's Sooners.

This story originally appeared in the Sept. 24, 1983, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

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Tomczak Finds Frank Receptive In Win At Sooners

By RICH EXNER

In the Ohio State win over Oregon, Mike Tomczak went to his wide receivers for the big plays, hitting Thad Jemison six times and Cedric Anderson four times.

The strategy was the same against Oklahoma. Tomczak and the Buckeye coaches went into the game expecting to have their wide receivers open all day. But the Sooners made some defensive switches and took the wide men out of the game.

Had it been last year, Tomczak may have gone to the wide receivers anyway and thrown a couple of interceptions. Instead, the now experienced Buckeye signal-caller took his time in the pocket and waited for secondary receivers to come open.

"Cedric and Thad are great athletes and John Frank is second to none," Tomczak said. "You have to get John the ball when he's open and today he was open. Oklahoma did a super job defending our wide outs."

The result was seven receptions for Frank, one of the biggest if not the biggest days ever by an Ohio State tight end. Add to that three receptions each for tailbacks Keith Byars and Kelvin Lindsey, and a catch each for fullbacks Vaughn Broadnax and Barry Walker, and you have the day's 15 catches.

Notice that Anderson and Jemison were completely shut down. However, the OSU passing game certainly was not, as Tomczak continued on the roll.

Bruce also said the Oklahoma defense did a fine job in shutting down the Buckeyes' wide threats but added that some of the blame rests with Anderson and Jemison.

"It was their own fault they didn't get the ball," Bruce said at his weekly press luncheon.

As a result, Tomczak put together his second outstanding game (15 of 25 for 234 yards, two touchdowns and one interception) and remained on top of the country in passing. Certainly a far cry from when he was benched last year with the 11th best passing efficiency rating in the Big Ten.

More importantly, Tomczak's perfor-

mance is a key reason why the Buckeyes are 2-0, including the big win over national powerhouse Oklahoma.

"I knew it was going to be a hard battle," Tomczak said. "What can I say for our team. It was a great team victory going into the Big Ten. Oklahoma is a fine ball club. We're just happy to come away with a victory."

Getting the chance to play the Oklahomas, the Iowas and the Michigans of college football is one of the reasons Tomczak chose Ohio State.

"That's what football is all about – competition. It will make you a better football player in the long run. We're looking forward to Iowa."

Bruce had commented earlier that he was pointing his team toward the Big Ten opener at Iowa and didn't really care about the Sooners.

"You know he did (care)," Tomczak said. "We looked forward to this game ever since we were recruited here. Playing a big game is what it's all about. That's one of the reasons why I came to Ohio State – a great victory like this. We're just going to have to move on."

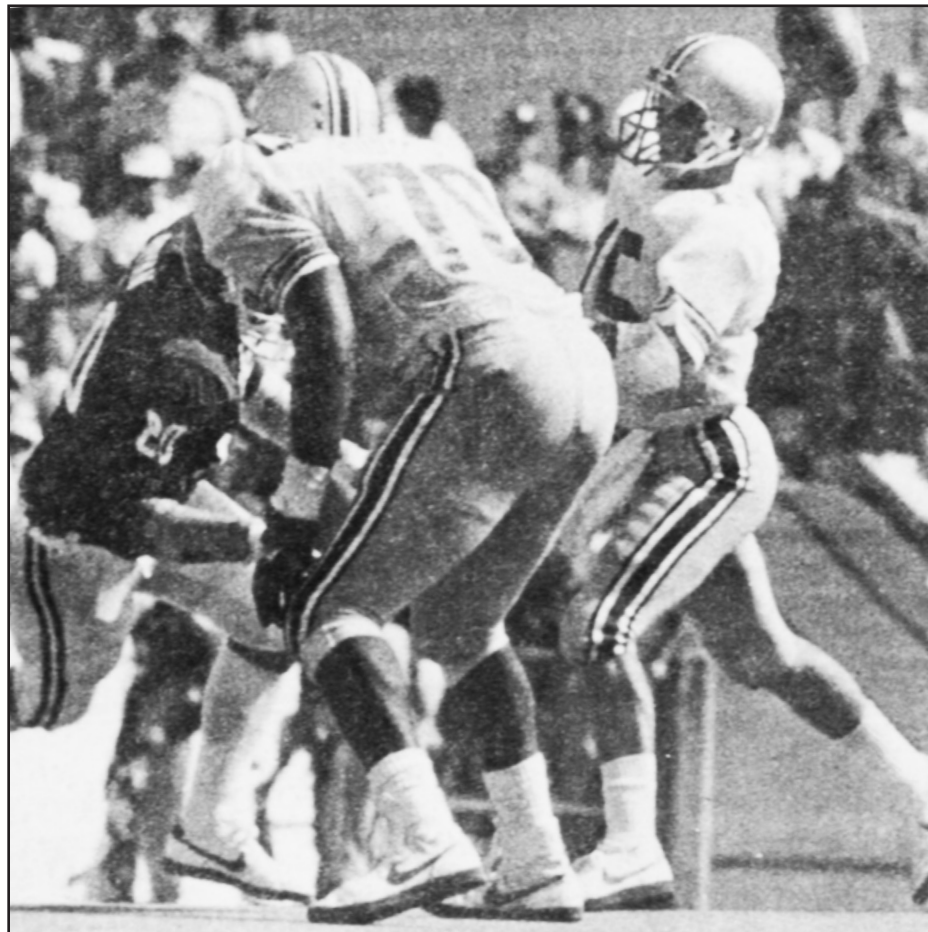
Part of Tomczak's success this season has to be credited to the job the biggest line in Ohio State history is doing. Tomczak, through the first two games, had not been sacked in 1983.

"You have to give a lot of credit to them," he said. "The last two weeks, I've had a lot of time to throw. Defenses are going to have to come at me sooner or later. Once they do, we'll have to counter with something else."

One of the things the Buckeyes will be countering with is a running game. The ground attack was not there against Oregon but arrived at Norman, Okla.

"Football can be an easy game if you use what the defense gives you. If we're going to run the ball, they're going to come after us and try to stop it. And we're going to start passing it."

This story originally appeared in the Sept. 24, 1983, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

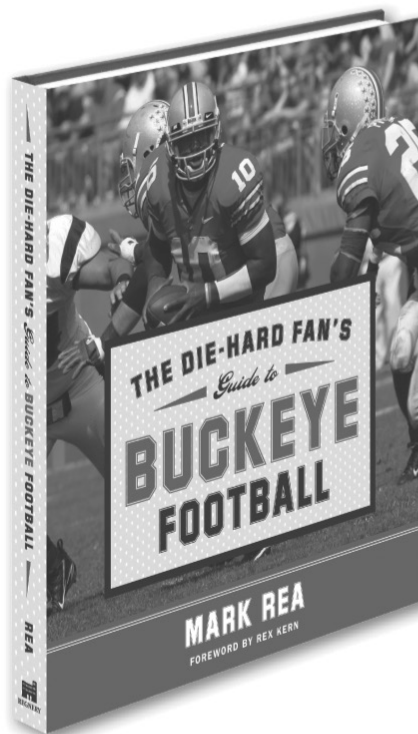


FILE PHOTO

DYNAMIC DUO – Quarterback Mike Tomczak, right, found tight end John Frank seven times for 108 yards in Ohio State's 24-14 win at Oklahoma.

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Buckeyes Shut Down Trash-Talking Sooners In 1983

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Coming off a seven-game win streak, including victories against No. 15 Illinois and No. 13 Michigan to conclude the 1982 campaign, the Buckeyes entered the 1983 season with high expectations and a tough schedule ahead of them.

After dismantling Oregon in week one for the program's eighth straight win, No. 6 Ohio State traveled to Norman, Okla., to take on the No. 2 Sooners.

The game was the second part of a home-and-home series six years apart, and the Buckeyes sought revenge for a 29-28 Oklahoma victory in Ohio Stadium in 1977.

"If you look at the era that we grew up in, Oklahoma, Ohio State, Nebraska, UCLA, USC, Notre Dame – those were about the only schools you heard about – and of course, that school up north," said Kelvin Bell, who was a junior in '83. "Growing up, any of those schools, you looked at them as the top tier.

"Growing up, one of my brothers was a big Oklahoma fan, so I knew them since Billy Sims, and that was one of the key games that I looked forward to when I chose to come to Ohio State."

Oklahoma featured a stud sophomore running back named Marcus Dupree, who had earned All-America honors as a freshman, rushing for 1,144 yards and 13 touchdowns on 7.8 yards per carry despite not starting until the seventh game.

Dupree made a name for himself by rushing for a Fiesta Bowl-record 239 yards in a 32-21 loss to Arizona State to cap his first season.

"During that time, we didn't really have any 'patsies' on our schedule," said Ohio State fullback Vaughn Broadnax, who was a junior in '83. "Every team was a Division I team. But when we found out we were playing at Oklahoma in a venue that's outside of our conference and it's one of those top teams, I remember distinctly during the Fiesta Bowl, where a running back named Dupree ran for some ungodly number, and we knew we were going to have to face him that next fall.

"So, I think our defense took it as a challenge of how they were going to hold his numbers down and how they were going to defend him."

Keeping Dupree, who broke Herschel Walker's national high school record with 87 career touchdowns, in check was easier said than done. The 6-3, 230-pound sophomore had run the 40-yard dash in 4.29 seconds at Philadelphia (Miss.) High School before heading to Norman, displaying an incredible combo of size and speed.

"I'm a free safety, he's lining up at the 'T' back, and I'm looking at this dude straight ahead and I'm like, 'Damn this dude is huge back there,'" Bell told BSB. "The first carry he had, he had 8 yards, and we were going back to the huddle buttoning our chin straps and stuff like, 'Man, damn, this is going to be a long day.'

"But whatever hits we put on him, we didn't realize the effect that we had on him, because he didn't play tough at all after that first hit. That first carry when

he came up the middle, he was bringing it. But evidently, we must have brought something to him."

Ohio State senior linebacker Rowland Tatum played a pivotal role in shutting down both Dupree and the Sooners. Tatum, who led the team with 10 tackles (eight solo) and recovered a key fumble, was the one who knocked Dupree out of the game with only 30 yards, according to Bell.

"People wondered how Marcus Dupree got hurt, and there's a highlight during that game, it was picture perfect. Rowland was fighting blocks off going down the line and hit Marcus Dupree on the sideline. And when you're talking about shedding blocks, like the drills where guys just run down the dummies high-stepping with guys trying to hit their legs, he goes straight down the line, and meets Marcus Dupree right at the sideline," Bell said.

"We never knew how he got hurt, but we think that was the play that took him out of the game."

Broadnax, who was a former roommate of Tatum, said that the Buckeye co-captain had felt like he deserved some of the attention Oklahoma's All-America linebacker Jackie Shipp had garnered.

"Rowland was one of the best linebackers – I would say top five in the country that year – just because he had that knack of being where the ball was and finding it," Broadnax told BSB. "And I remember, Jackie Shipp from Oklahoma being their star linebacker, their All-American linebacker, and Rowland took it on as a challenge because he looked at him and how he played, and Rowland felt kind of slighted.

"So, Rowland proved that day that he was the best linebacker on the field."

Tatum's performance against Oklahoma was reminiscent of former Ohio State safety Jack Tatum, who was a two-time All-American known for the hard hits he delivered. Though not related, Rowland had always looked up to Jack, a.k.a. "The Assassin."

"We were roommates coming in as freshmen. And I remember, we had moved into our dorms over on north campus for camp, and I walked in and there is this shrine on the chest to Jack Tatum, a little figurine and the book, 'The Assassin.'" Broadnax recalled. "And I'm looking at Rowland Tatum, and I said, 'Wait a minute, are you related to Jack Tatum? I know Jack's out in Oakland, Cali, but you're down in Southern California.' And he said, 'No, no, that's just who I've always patterned my game like.'"

"Rowland always played hard. I mean, he could play linebacker, outside linebacker, defensive end position, and he just made some incredible plays during his career at OSU."

While Tatum stood out for the Buckeye defense in the victory over Oklahoma, tight end John Frank, another co-captain, thrived on offense. Frank hauled in seven of Ohio State's 15 completions for a game-high 108 yards and two touchdowns.

What made the performance of Frank even more impressive was that the senior tight end had been fasting prior to the game in observance of the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur.

Other Big 40th Anniversary Games

There were several other big games at this time throughout the years, including the following:

2002: Freshman Maurice Claret rushed for 230 yards and two scores as No. 6 Ohio State knocked off No. 10 Washington State, 25-7, in Columbus for an important early step in their undefeated season.

2008: Mark Sanchez passed for four touchdowns and Buckeye Todd Boeckman was sacked four times while No. 1 USC crushed visiting No. 5 Ohio State, 35-3. Boeckman rotated with freshman Terrelle Pryor, who completed 7 of 9 passes and rushed for 40 yards against the Trojans.

2009: No. 3 USC held No. 8 Ohio State to just 88 yards rushing on 30 carries to win a defensive slugfest 18-15 in Ohio Stadium. The Trojans also struggled on the ground with 40 carries for 118 yards, and both teams completed less than 50 percent of their passes.

The team was unsure if it would have one of its best players and leaders before Frank decided to play for his teammates.

"That was one of the challenges heading into the week, John being of Jewish faith during that holiday of fasting," Broadnax said of Frank. "And he probably wasn't supposed to play because of his faith, but he made the decision for the team to play that game. And I just remember, knowing that we were going to have John to play was a secure feeling because we knew if we had our full team, we would be able to compete with them well."

Another challenge in Norman was a game-time temperature of 93 degrees, with reported temperatures on the field turf as high as 135 degrees.

Broadnax actually thought that the high temperatures better suited the Buckeyes because of the grueling heat they had endured during fall camp.

"We kind of had a benefit during camp of 90-plus-degree days," Broadnax said. "So we were actually conditioned for that type of heat. And unfortunately, Oklahoma didn't experience those temperatures until that week of the game. So when we had virtually camped in 90-degree temperatures – I remember guys falling out and things like that – that's what we were prepared for, not knowing that it was going to be that type of heat during that game."

No matter how much the Buckeyes had practiced in the heat, the Sooners were still favored as the second-ranked team in the country and held a noticeable size advantage over the Buckeyes. Prior to the game, Oklahoma's players let their opponents know what they thought of them.

"Those guys were huge, and they were laughing at us and teasing us in warmups, like 'You little dudes,' and this, this and this," Bell said. "So we had an attitude, like, 'OK, we're going to show you all on the field.' And some of their pregame taunts carried over to our mental attitude from a defensive standpoint, with Rowland Tatum and all of those guys like that."

Like Tatum, Bell used the pregame trash talk from the Sooners as motivation. After a big hit on Oklahoma's All-America wide receiver Buster Rhymes, Bell let him know about it. Old-school Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce was not pleased with his free safety.

"I got in trouble for it with Coach Bruce, but it was on their last drive, and I had a real nice hit on Buster Rhymes," Bell said. "They tried to do a slant route, they were driving down the field, and

out of reaction, I stood over him. And I don't remember what I said, but you can see it on the highlights and everything. Nowadays, I probably would have gotten a 15-yard taunting penalty.

"But they talked so much trash and we'd been talking trash, and I said something to him because he was one of the main ones during pregame warmups, and the attitude carried over throughout the whole game."

Bell, who finished the game with one solo stop and one pass breakup, said he did not receive a Buckeye leaf after the outing, despite playing solid in a win.

"On Mondays, when they handed out our Buckeye Leaves, they would have the video clips of the plays that got the leaves, whether it was a touchdown, whether it was a big hit, whether it was an interception. Then they also had plays that we don't do," Bell said. "So, I had one of those plays for that particular play – 'Well, we don't do that at Ohio State.' Basically, you don't talk. But I took that one, I didn't care – there was meaning behind it. It wasn't like I did that all the time."

Following the 24-14 victory over Oklahoma, the Buckeyes stumbled at No. 7 Iowa the next week, falling 20-14 for their first of three losses on the season.

According to Ohio State historian Jack Park, former football spokesperson Marv Homan pointed to the long-term effects of the heat in Norman for the loss to the Hawkeyes.

"It was Marv's opinion that the Ohio State players were still tired and kind of not up to full strength the next week, because of the tremendous heat exhaustion they suffered at Oklahoma," Park said. "I don't think anybody passed out in the locker room or anything after the game, but that was such a hot day, they were so dehydrated. And it took a long time to get their strength back.

"Now that's seven days, you wouldn't think that would happen. You rest up, you drink a lot of water and everything like that, but Marv's thought was that it was such a hot day in Norman that seven days later, it really affected the team's performance in Iowa City."

While it is unlikely Coach Bruce would approve of any excuses for his team faltering in Iowa, the victory at Oklahoma stood out to the Buckeyes' leader, who was in his fifth season at the helm.

"It was the best game I've seen Ohio State play since I've been coaching them," Bruce said. "We've had a couple of big wins over Michigan, but I think as a team, we played better than we ever have, especially early in the season."

Ohio State Rises From Ashes To Beat No. 7 LSU

By MARK REA

Throughout the fall, Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be “playing” its 40th Anniversary football season with recaps of the biggest Ohio State games of each corresponding week in our publishing history. The following is coverage of the 1988 game in which the Buckeyes stormed back in the final minutes to defeat No. 7 LSU. Additional features about this game will be posted at BuckeyeSports.com on Thursday, Sept. 24.

It was a rags-to-riches story that made Mark Twain’s “The Prince and The Pauper” look like a dime store novel. Trailing Louisiana State 33-20 with less than 4½ minutes left in the game, Carlos Snow softened up the Tigers with a touchdown jab and then Greg Frey and Bobby Olive combined to deliver the knockout punch as Ohio State pulled out an emotion-filled 36-33 victory over the seventh-ranked Tigers.

“One week you’re stomping the grapes and the next week you’re drinking the wine,” said OSU head coach John Cooper after the game. “I don’t know if I’ve ever been around a more exciting finish. I just finished talking to our recruits and told them the next time they came we’d try to play an exciting game for them.”

According to Cooper, who swears allegiance to the Columbus Optimists Club, he still thought the Buckeyes had a chance to win despite being 13 points down with 4:24 to play.

“I thought we were going to come back and I’m not just telling you that,” Cooper said. “You know the old saying, ‘It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.’ We say that all the time.”

Anyone would have forgiven Cooper and the Bucks had they given up. LSU quarterback Tommy Hodson had just completed a 55-yard touchdown pass to split end Alvin Lee who picked off a tip from teammate Tony Moss. That made the score 33-20 with 4:24 remaining.

But OSU got things back together when sophomore quarterback Greg Frey engineered a drive which covered 59 yards and 10 plays but only took 2:28 off the clock. The first nine plays of the drive were passes, but Snow’s number was called on the 10th play and he plowed into the end zone from five yards out to close Ohio State’s deficit to six points at 33-27.

On the ensuing kickoff, Cooper crossed everyone up by instructing place-kicker Pat O’Morrow to boot the ball deep. The junior kicker responded by kicking the ball just inside the goal-line flag for a touchback. The choice to kick it deep was the turning point in the game.

“We talked about it,” Cooper said. “We had two timeouts left. Had we only had one timeout left, obviously we would have had to try an onside kick.

“My feeling was if we try an onside kick and don’t get it, the ball game is over. So let’s kick the ball deep. I didn’t think they were going to throw the football and we had a chance to take two timeouts, stop the clock and then get the ball in good field position.”

When the Tigers were stopped on two rushing plays, LSU head coach Mike Archer decided to take a shot at getting the first down through the air. The gamble didn’t pay off as Hodson overthrew Lee crossing over the middle. As things turned out, the incomplete pass stopped the clock for OSU and served as the Buckeyes’ fourth timeout of the half.

Cooper refused to second-guess Archer for the third-down pass – “You’re not going to get me to do that,” he said – but admitted he saw the reason for the attempt.

“I guess when you’ve got a quarterback like Hodson and have receivers like that, you think you can get the first down. They got a lot

of first downs like that throughout the game,” Cooper said.

After the third-and-12 pass failed, Archer instructed his team to first take a five-yard delay of game penalty and then told punter Rene Bourgeois to run out of the end zone for an intentional safety. Cooper said he agreed with that call, too.

“I think they were wise in taking the safety,” the OSU coach said. “We expected them to take the safety. As a matter of fact, when they took a delay of game penalty on purpose, I was trying to get us to decline the penalty but I couldn’t get word on the field to our players.”

Following the safety, Bourgeois got a free kick at the 20-yard line and punted a high spiral to Olive. The OSU sophomore fielded the ball cleanly and then, following a good block from fellow sophomore Jeff Graham, returned the kick 30 yards to the LSU 38.

Then, with just 38 seconds left in the game, Frey threw over the middle again to Olive who stretched as far as he could to reel in the pass one yard deep in the end zone.

“It was the same post pattern we used in the second quarter,” Olive said. “When I split out, there was a safety and a cornerback there standing beside each other. The free safety rolled up and that allowed me to be one-on-one with the corner.

“I knew the pass was coming to me and the first thing I was wondering was if I was to get open, make sure I catch the ball. I didn’t want to drop it. When I made my post move, I looked up and saw the ball coming. I said to myself that I had to catch it because really I wanted to make up for that dropped punt.”

Olive fumbled LSU’s first punt of the game, setting up the Tigers’ first field goal.

“My confidence was really down after that first punt,” Olive said. “But everyone kept telling me to keep my head up and good things would happen. I was thankful that I could catch that pass to win the game.

“I really thought I was dreaming. I stood up to do my little dance moves and everything broke loose.

“I had a situation similar to this in high school,” said the Atlanta, Ga., native, “but nothing like catching the winning touchdown in front of 90,000 people at Ohio State on national TV to upset a top-10 team.”

While Olive was giving thanks for the catching of the winning touchdown pass, Frey was claiming things worked out just the way the Buckeyes had planned.

“I really thought we could come back,” said the quarterback. “We were moving the ball on them all day; we just didn’t stick it in a couple of times. We only stopped ourselves.

“Plus I remembered Michigan lost last week after being up 30-14 and Miami came back. So I knew we had a chance to come back. I just couldn’t believe that we really did it.”

On the winning touchdown, Frey said the play, called “Con Firm 63-Y Bench,” was a simple post pattern.

“It looked like they were going to play some kind of two-deep and they left the middle wide open,” Frey said. “My pre-read didn’t look like anyone was open but when I dropped back, everyone just flew out of there and left the middle wide open.

“I saw the free safety coming into the play so I tried to lead Bobby and throw it low. If I would have thrown it high, the safety probably would have had a pretty good shot on Bobby. As it turned out, everything was perfect on the play.”

This story originally appeared in the Oct. 1, 1988, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 36, LSU 33

Sept. 24, 1988 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, OH

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
LSU	3	10	10	10	33
OHIO STATE	0	14	3	19	36

First Quarter

LSU – Brown dyke 36-yard field goal, 10:21.

Second Quarter

OSU – Snow 1-yard run (O’Morrow kick), 14:43.

OSU – McCray 23-yard blocked punt return (O’Morrow kick), 12:46.

LSU – Moss 30-yard pass from Hodson (Brown dyke kick), 11:47.

LSU – Brown dyke 27-yard field goal, 0:00.

Third Quarter

OSU – O’Morrow 35-yard field goal, 11:30.

LSU – E. Fuller 4-yard run (Brown dyke kick), 9:42.

OSU – Brown dyke 35-yard field goal, 2:10.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – O’Morrow 41-yard field goal, 13:26.

LSU – Brown dyke 20-yard field goal, 8:43.

LSU – Lee 55-yard pass from Hodson (Brown dyke kick), 4:29.

OSU – Snow 5-yard run (O’Morrow kick), 1:56.

LSU – Bourgeois safety (ran out of end zone), 1:34.

OSU – Olive 20-yard pass from Frey (O’Morrow kick), 0:38.

Att. – 90,584

Team Statistics

	LSU	OSU
First Downs	21	20
Rushing	7	4
Passing	13	16
Penalty	1	0
Rushes-Yards	35-120	35-93
Passing Yards	299	281
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	20-40-0	24-37-1
Offensive Plays	75	72
Total Net Yards	419	374
Third Down Efficiency	7-17	9-15
Punts-Avg.	4-28.8	4-37.5
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-1
Penalties	7-65	8-65
Time of Possession	28:20	31:40

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – LSU: E. Fuller 20-87; Jones 4-17; D. Williams 1-9; Hodson 4-6; Mooock 1-5; Egloff 1-5; Watkins 3-4; Team 1-(-13). **OHIO STATE:** Snow 21-90; S. Graham 5-12; Matlock 2-7; Frey 7-(-16).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – LSU: Hodson 20-40-0-299-2. **OHIO STATE:** Frey 24-37-1-281-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – LSU: Moss 6-117; Lee 6-108; E. Fuller 4-48; Haliburton 3-19; Jones 1-7. **OHIO STATE:** Snow 5-41; Ellis 5-46; J. Graham 4-68; S. Graham 4-43; Olive 3-51; Edwards 2-23; Matlock 1-9.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – LSU: Bourgeois 3-38.3-43; Team 1-0.0-0. **OHIO STATE:** Bohlman 4-37.5-51.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Avg.-Long.) – LSU: None. **OHIO STATE:** Olive 2-2.0-4; Clark 1-19.0-19; McCray 0-0.0-23.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Avg.-Long.) – LSU: Watkins 4-28.0-42; V. Fuller 1-59.0-59; D. Williams 1-15.0-15. **OHIO STATE:** Snow 3-31.7-50; Olive 2-21.6-30; Hicks 1-13.0-13; Licktovitch 1-11.0-11; Koch 1-0.0-0.

DEFENSIVE FUMBLES RECOVERED BY – LSU: Fabacher. **OHIO STATE:** None

INTERCEPTIONS – LSU: Jackson. **OHIO STATE:** None.

TACKLES FOR LOSS – LSU: Sancho (2 1/2), Ausberry, Phillips, James, Team, Hill (1/2). **OHIO STATE:** Team (2), Peel.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – LSU: Harmon 8-7-15; Ausberry 5-9-14; Sancho 5-6-11; Hill 4-7-11; Young 4-5-9; Phillips 1-5-6; Bice 2-3-5; James 2-3-5; Mayes 1-3-4; Raymond 0-3-3; Bundbar 1-2-3; Jackson 2-0-2; Egloff 2-0-2; Team 1-0-1; Brown dyke 1-0-1; V. Fuller 1-0-1; Brown 1-0-1; Hebert 0-1-1; O’Neill 0-1-1; Rush 0-1-1. **OHIO STATE:** D. Smith 3-6-9; Gurd 6-3-9; Showalter 2-7-9; Peel 3-5-8; J. Sullivan 2-5-7; M. Sullivan 2-4-6; MacCready 1-5-6; Dumas 2-3-5; McCray 2-3-5; Clark 3-0-3; D. Brown 2-1-3; Herman 1-1-2; Benio 2-0-2; Kacherski 1-1-2; Team 1-0-1; O’Morrow 1-0-1; Rogan 0-1-1.

Players In The Game

LSU – Sancho, Hebert, Dunbar, Norris, Ausberry, Middleton, Bowman, Phillips, Robinson, Harmon, Brown, James, Boutee, Hill, Young, V. Fuller, Giron, Bice, Raymond, Jackson, Houston, Mayes, Childers, Fabacher, Bourgeois, Lee, Tolbert, Rush, Norwood, Martin, Rodrigue, Coutee, O’Neill, Hubicz, Packnett, Hutchinson, Haliburton, Wi. Williams, Moss, Wa. Williams, Hodson, Mooock, E. Fuller, Watkins, Egloff, Jones, Brown dyke.

OHIO STATE – Kuri, Staysniak, Davidson, Uhlenhake, Tom Moore, Zackeroff, Moxley, Ellis, Palmer, Lickovitch, Huffman, Edwards, Olive, Koch, Hicks, Frey, Powell, Snow, S. Graham, Matlock, Siegenthaler, J. Graham, O’Morrow, Ziakovic, Kacherski, Showalter, Coleman, M. Sullivan, Thomas, MacCready, Frimel, McCray, Rogan, Gurd, Herman, J. Sullivan, Benio, Keenan, Smith, Clark, Brown, Peel, Rutledge, Warner, Dumas, Price, Bohlman.

Buckeyes Secure Heart-Stopping Victory Over Tigers

By MARK REA

In a stadium which has seen its share of last-second victories by opponents in recent years, the Ohio State Buckeyes chalked up one of those heart-stoppers in the win column Sept. 24.

Perhaps spurred on by the Ohio Stadium ghosts of Gomer Jones, Hopalong Cassidy, Rex Kern and Archie Griffin, the Buckeyes scored 16 points in the final 4½ minutes of the game to hand seventh-ranked and previously unbeaten Louisiana State a 36-33 defeat.

Sophomore quarterback Greg Frey, topping off a career day which saw him complete 24 of 37 passes for 281 yards, hooked up with sophomore flanker Bobby Olive with 38 seconds remaining in the game to cap a frenzied fourth-quarter rally.

OSU totaled 374 offensive yards in the ball game, 97 of them coming on the two touchdown drives in the last 4:24. The other two points came when LSU took an intentional safety.

"I don't know if I've ever been around a more exciting finish," said first-year head coach John Cooper, a winner for the second time in three games this season.

"Obviously, it's exciting for us. It's not very exciting to be on the other side of the ball but I think that's a good example of what can happen when you hang tough and hang tough and hang tough like we did.

"We were ready to play," added Cooper, admitting that was something that obviously was lacking in the 42-10 loss to Pittsburgh. "It was a great hitting ball game. I thought our coaches had a good game plan and we played a great football team today. It was a great victory for us – a super, super victory."

While the win was sure to boost the Buckeyes' spirits, not to mention their national ranking, it was a disheartening loss for LSU. It snapped the Tigers' 14-game road winning streak and cost them a chance at an undefeated season.

"This Ohio State team is a lot better than anyone gives them credit for being," LSU head coach Mike Archer said. "My stomach doesn't feel very good but the sun is going to shine tomorrow. Most of the credit goes to Ohio State. We needed to play a 60-minute game and came up 38 seconds short."

The Buckeyes came into the game with plenty of fire, urging the stadium's second largest crowd ever of 90,584 people to get on their feet and remain there.

OSU won the opening coin toss and deferred its selection until the second half. LSU opted to receive the opening kickoff and the Buckeye defense got its first up-close look at a bona fide Heisman Trophy candidate in the Tigers' junior quarterback Tommy Hodson.

Hodson showed his skills briefly in LSU's first possession, completing one of two pass attempts. But the Tigers stalled near midfield and punted the ball away. However, Olive – fielding his first punt since senior Vince Workman was ruled ineligible – dropped the kick. LSU backup cornerback Tom Fabacher pounced on the fumble and the Tigers were set up with first down at the Ohio 16-yard line.

Faced with its first real test of the day, the Buckeye defense responded by holding the potent Tiger offense out of the end zone. LSU had to settle for a 36-yard field



FILE PHOTO

STEPPED UP AT THE RIGHT TIME – The Ohio State defense, led by the likes of sophomore linebacker John Kacherski (95), did an excellent job against LSU's potent offense. The Tigers piled up more than 400 yards in total offense during the game, but the OSU defense held when it had to in the upset victory.

goal from junior David Brown dyke for a 3-0 lead.

Frey and the Ohio State offense got its first possession and probed different things at the LSU defense for 13 plays before stalling. The teams traded punts and then the Buckeye offense went to work again.

Starting at their own 33-yard line, the Buckeyes got rolling slowly. But the drive gathered speed on sophomore strength. Frey hit sophomore tight end Jeff Ellis for an 11-yard pass and, two plays later, hit him again for a 16-yard gain. Then, Frey faked right, moved left and passed to freshman fullback Scotty Graham in the flat for 13 more yards.

The sophomores went back to work when Frey hit Olive crossing over the middle for a 19-yard shot to the one. Then tailback Carlos Snow, another soph, took a pitch and sprinted into the left corner of the end zone. Junior place-kicker Pat O'Morrow connected on the extra point and OSU took a 7-3 lead just 17 seconds into the second quarter.

The Ohio State defense again rose to the occasion, preventing LSU's offense from answering the score. On third-and-four, Hodson misfired on a pass and the Tigers were forced to punt again.

This time, OSU sophomore defensive back Vinnie Clark blew through the LSU line untouched and blocked Rene Bourgeois' punt. The loose ball took a Sunday bounce right into the hands of senior linebacker Michael McCray who completed the 23-yard play by hitting pay dirt. O'Morrow hit the PAT again, giving the Buckeye saw 14-3 advantage over the stunned Tigers.

They weren't stunned long, though. Freshman Vincent Fuller took the ensuing kickoff and returned it 59 yards to

the OSU 31-yard line. Blessed with the excellent field position, Hodson took only two plays to find junior wide receiver Tony Moss for a 30-yard touchdown strike. After Brown dyke's extra point, Ohio State's lead was cut to three.

The Buckeyes tried to get some more points before halftime but were stopped at the LSU 14 when Frey's pass to fullback Bill Matlock hit linebacker Ron Sancho in the head and bounced to teammate Greg Jackson.

Then, with 3:18 left in the half, Hodson got the Tigers rolling again. He moved the team 77 yards in 13 plays, a drive that was topped off by Brown dyke's second field goal of the game, this one a 27-yarder. That cut OSU's lead to 14-13 at halftime.

On their first possession of the second half, the Buckeyes continued to move the ball against Louisiana State. Moving to the LSU eight-yard line, Frey rolled left and looked for a receiver in the end zone but Sancho got to him first, registering a sack. That third-down play forced OSU to settle for a field goal attempt. O'Morrow connected on the 35-yarder.

Then Hodson took over. After getting the ball back, the LSU quarterback hooked up with several of his sticky-fingered receivers to move the ball quickly. Hodson found Moss for a 37-yard gain on the drive's first play and later got one to tailback Eddie Fuller, who made a spectacular leaping catch for a 28-yard gain to the OSU three. Fuller took care of the rest of the drive with a three-yard plunge and put the Bayou Bengals in the lead.

OSU's offense sputtered throughout the rest of the third quarter against LSU's defense. As it was sputtering, LSU was continuing to score points. Brown dyke hit a 35-yard field goal near the end of the third

period to give LSU a 23-17 lead.

O'Morrow matched that with a 41-yarder early in the fourth quarter, his seventh straight of the season, to get the Buckeyes back within three points of the Tigers. But Hodson went back to work, engineering two fourth-quarter drives – the first covering 42 yards in 4½ minutes and the second moving 75 yards in just 2½ minutes.

The last touchdown was almost a back-breaker for the Buckeyes. Hodson rolled right and passed for Moss who tipped the ball into the waiting arms of teammate Alvin Lee. Lee took the deflected ball and easily finished off the 55-yard pass play, giving LSU a 33-20 lead with 4:29 remaining in the game.

While many of the 90,000 plus fans started to head for the exits, Cooper was busily making plans for the Buckeyes' comeback. When someone suggested everyone else wrote off the Bucks at that point, Cooper shot back, "Everybody else ain't playing. Don't hit me with that. It ain't over 'til it's over. We aren't going to quit. I really thought we could come back and I'm not just saying that."

Cooper apparently convinced his quarterback of the same thing.

In all, Frey went to the air eight times in the 10-play drive. But it was Snow who topped off the possession, plowing straight ahead five yards for the score.

Then came a gutsy call on Cooper's part. He crossed up nearly everyone in the stadium by instructing O'Morrow to send the kickoff deep instead of attempting an onside kick.

The first-year OSU coach simply explained, "My feeling was if we try an onside kick and don't get it, the ball game is over. We had a chance to take two timeouts and stop the clock and then get the ball back in good field position again. I really felt our defense could stop them in that situation."

Stop them it did as LSU had a net minus-two yards on two rushing plays. Then, on third-and-12, Hodson threw an incompleteness to set up one last possession for the Buckeyes. But, rather than punt from deep in LSU territory, Archer instructed Bourgeois to take a delay of game penalty and then step out of the end zone for an intentional safety.

That gave the Tigers a shot at a free kick at the 20-yard line. Olive fielded the kick and turned it upfield for a 30-yard return to the LSU 38.

At the 1:24 mark, Frey passed to Jeff Graham on the left sideline for 15 yards and then found Snow over the middle for three yards, putting the ball at the LSU 20.

On second down, working out of the shotgun formation without benefit of a huddle, Frey tried to force another throw down the middle to Ellis but it was broken up by two Tiger defenders.

On the next play, Frey called Olive's number in the huddle for the same play that gained 19 yards in the second quarter and set up the Buckeyes' first TD. This time, it worked even better as the sophomore from Atlanta, Ga., stretched wide out to gather in the touchdown pass about one yard deep in the end zone.

"I thought I was dreaming," Olive said. "Then, when everyone was jumping on my back, I knew we had won the game."

This story originally appeared in the Oct. 1, 1988, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

Resilient Comeback Against LSU Highlights '88 Season

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Coming off a disappointing 6-4-1 season, Ohio State entered a new era in 1988 under first-year head coach John Cooper.

The Buckeyes started off on the right track defeating Syracuse in week one, but then the team was dismantled by Pitt in an ugly game.

"Ohio State had played so well in the opener, which was Cooper's first game that was against Syracuse, and won that game," said Ohio State historian Jack Park. "And then, they went over to Pitt Stadium and got beat, 42-10, and it was even worse than the score. The one touchdown came on a kickoff return by Carlos Snow."

Sitting at 1-1, Ohio State entered the biggest game on the schedule outside of The Game, which was a rematch with No. 7 LSU, who had tied with the Buckeyes the prior season on the road.

Many pundits did not expect the Buckeyes to beat the Tigers, especially after Pitt had destroyed Ohio State in the previous game.

"We kind of didn't know if we were a good team or not very good at that point," said Judah Herman, who was a freshman linebacker in '88. "In the opener, we played a really good game against Syracuse and then things just kind of got away from us at that Pitt game. And we were looking at that like, 'OK, we're going to hopefully define who we are with this LSU game.'"

Those who picked the Tigers must have been feeling quite confident when LSU went up 33-20 with 4:29 left in the fourth quarter. With such little time remaining, a 13-point deficit may have seemed insurmountable, yet the team never surrendered, even if some fans had given up hope.

"A lot of people had left the stadium," Park said. "And they probably wish they hadn't left because they probably got to their car and had the game on and found out Ohio State was going to come back and win, or maybe when they got to their car, they found out that Ohio State had won the game. So it was a little bit of a surprise that way, but it was a big win for Cooper."

Led by the excellent performance of sophomore quarterback Greg Frey, the Buckeyes engineered a historic fourth-quarter comeback to win 36-33. Frey, who threw for 281 yards and one touchdown on 24-of-37 passing, put together a nearly flawless final frame to lead Ohio State to victory.

"Greg's a gamer," Herman said of Frey. "He would step up and make the big throws when we needed them, and that game's a great example. He didn't shy away from the moment. The moment wasn't too big for him. He had a ton of confidence, and he played with it."

Sophomore wide receiver Bobby Olive was also a notable standout in the LSU game. The 6-1, 154-pound Olive had fumbled on his first punt return of the game, giving the Tigers a short field, yet he came up big for the Buckeyes in the clutch.

Olive, who totaled 51 yards on three receptions, made up for his early mistake by capping the monumental comeback with the game-winning touchdown with 38 seconds left.

"For him to make that kind of play, and for Greg to make an awesome throw there,

that was awesome," Herman told BSB. "In some of those games, our offense was just too vanilla, but that game I remember our offense really opened up. It was probably one of the few games where our offense really carried us that day because we didn't play great defense. LSU had a nice offense."

"That game really stands out to me that our offense really had some playmakers that made plays when it really counted down the line."

LSU had a talented team with a Heisman Trophy candidate quarterback in Tommy Hodson, who later became the first SEC player to surpass 8,000 passing yards and 60 passing touchdowns in a career.

"He was a pretty athletic guy, and he had a good arm, so we weren't surprised by that," Herman said of Hodson. "We focused a lot on their speed they had on their special teams. We said their return guy was the fastest guy in the country because anybody else faster was at the Olympics. We knew they had some serious speed at certain positions on their team."

"We respected the quarterback, but we didn't really do anything necessarily special for him. We really focused a lot on, 'OK, how do we contain their speed? How do we avoid big plays on special teams? Don't let people behind us. Don't give up anything cheap.'"

The Buckeye defense somewhat kept the Bayou Bengals' gunslinger in check, forcing incomplete passes on half of his attempts, but Hodson still totaled 299 yards with two scores through the air on 20-of-40 passing.

Although Ohio State surrendered 419 total yards and 33 points, the defense came up with timely stops when needed. The defense shut down LSU's opportunity to run out the clock with just 1:56 left and a six-point lead, forcing a three-and-out, which led to the Tigers taking an intentional safety. After two run plays that were followed by Buckeye timeouts, LSU inexplicably elected to pass on third-and-12, and the attempt fell incomplete to stop the clock.

"On LSU's last possession, they had an incomplete pass, and we couldn't figure

Other Big 40th Anniversary Games

There were several other big games at this time throughout the years. They include the following:

1982: John Elway marched his team 80 yards to a touchdown with 34 seconds to play to give Stanford a victory over the Buckeyes in Ohio Stadium. Mike Tomczak threw an interception deep in Stanford territory to set up the winning drive. Elway passed 63 times, completing 35 for 407 yards.

1989: Ohio State traveled to Los Angeles where Junior Seau overpowered the Buckeye offense in a 42-3 victory for No. 12 USC. Greg Frey was sacked three times and harried on many more occasions while Trojan QB Todd Marinovich passed for 246 yards and four scores.

1990: In a heavy thunderstorm in Ohio Stadium, Ohio State conceded its game with 2:36 to play for a 35-26 win by No. 18 USC. The Buckeyes scored on a Raymont Harris run to close to 35-26, but the coaches and officials agreed that if Ohio State failed to convert on the ensuing onside kick, the game would end.

out why they were passing in that situation that would stop the clock," Park said. "And I think it was really poor coaching on their part at the end of the game there. If they would have run a running play, even if they only got a yard or two, and let the clock run, Ohio State probably would not have won that game."

For the Buckeyes fans who stayed at the game or did not change the channel, the thrilling come-from-behind win against LSU will always be a memorable one. Some of the specific game details, like a blocked punt touchdown by senior linebacker Michael McCray, escape the memory of Herman, however, due to a concussion in that game.

"It's funny, I was at a hotel and I flipped on the TV, and I think that game's like an ESPN Classic or something, because I flipped it on, and they were showing that game. And I got a bad concussion that game," Herman said. "I definitely remember that. It was on a kickoff, and it was funny, I absolutely crushed a guy. And the announcer was like, 'Wow, Judah really hit that guy,' and then the camera zooms in on me on the sideline, and I'm not doing well. I started running toward the LSU bench, and one of my teammates grabbed me."

Even if he does not have the play-by-play memorized, Herman and the Buckeyes look back fondly upon that exhilarating

comeback against the touted Tigers. The '88 season does not stand out in the illustrious history of Ohio State football, yet the team's perseverance against LSU marked a bright spot in an otherwise forgettable campaign.

"That was just one of only four victories that season, but it was good," Park said. "It made the season much better than it would have been, even though the season did end up 4-6-1."

Herman, who made two tackles, including one solo stop, still takes pride in the resilience shown by the '88 Buckeyes in what was a whirlwind start to Cooper's first season.

"Obviously, we didn't give up," Herman said. "I mean, shoot, if we lose that game, we'd be 1-2 on the season and there was a lot riding on that. I wasn't surprised that we fought, and there were some talented guys that made some plays. It was just an emotional deal. If you think about it – a true freshman playing in high school the year before – now I'm actually playing in a game against a nationally ranked opponent and it's at the Horseshoe."

"The first three weeks it was like my head was spinning. You go from the highs from Syracuse, and then Pitt was just embarrassing, and then we found a way to win a huge game there. It was definitely an emotional roller coaster."

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Heyward Signs Lucrative Extension With Steelers

By ANDREW LIND
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Former Ohio State defensive lineman Cameron Heyward had all but accepted the fact that the upcoming season would be his last as a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The team doesn't negotiate contracts during the regular season, and discussions between the two sides regarding an extension were at a standstill heading into the final week of the offseason.

"There was a time where this was almost dead, to be completely honest," Heyward said in a conference call with reporters on Sept. 7. "I was getting ready for farewells and getting ready for my farewell tour and this being my last ride."

But when Heyward reported to the Steelers' practice facility on Sept. 6, a meeting with team president Art Rooney II jump-started negotiations that led to him signing a four-year extension that morning worth \$65.6 million in new money.

The deal makes Heyward – who turned 31 in May – the highest-paid defensive player over the age of 30 in NFL history and keeps him in Pittsburgh through at least the 2024 season.

"I won't divulge what was said, but me and Mr. Rooney got to talking, and you know, I'm just appreciative of him," Heyward said. "I understand it's a family business, and I understand how serious he takes this. But I wanted to be a Pittsburgh Steeler, and he made that happen for me. It's a testament to a lot of people that this got done. There was a lot of doubt for a good bit, but I'm glad to say it got done."

The 31st overall pick in the first round of the 2011 NFL draft, Heyward led the Buckeyes to at least a share of four consecutive Big Ten titles from 2007-10 and garnered first-team all-conference honors as a senior. He did not start a game during his first two seasons with the Steelers but has since developed into one of the most dominant interior defensive linemen in



COURTESY OF THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS

WELL-DESERVED – Former Ohio State defensive lineman Cameron Heyward signed a four-year contract extension with the Pittsburgh Steelers that makes him the highest-paid defensive player over the age of 30 in NFL history.

the league, recording 63 quarterback hits, 37 tackles for loss and 29 sacks over the last three seasons.

"Cam is special," head coach Mike Tomlin told reporters gathered at the 84th annual Dapper Dan Dinner and Sports Auction in February, when Heyward was honored with the prestigious Dapper Dan Sportsman of the Year award. "He is a guy who is ever-present, and there is great consistency in everything he does. He is such a physically imposing guy. The way he does his job is in a very physical fashion. It's something all of us have a lot of respect for and can appreciate. He's always a very emotional player. Over the

years it's been fun to watch him gain control and weaponize that emotion."

Heyward's father, the late Craig "Ironhead" Heyward, was a star running back at the University of Pittsburgh who played for five different teams during his 11-year NFL career. That lack of stability wasn't lost on the younger Heyward.

"To be in such a different situation than what my dad went through – I always feel like I am competing against him and I kind of like it that way – it lets me know that he's still there and it keeps me grounded," Heyward said. "To be in a city where I was born and I have family has meant a lot to me. But not only that, it's a

city in which I am indebted to the community, and it's a city that I love playing for."

Heyward, who was named first-team All-Pro in 2017 and 2019 and has appeared in three straight Pro Bowls, admitted the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic and his contract situation took a toll on his mental health. But he had faith things would work out for him and his family, which includes two young children.

"I am a very emotional person, and I feel with my heart a lot, so quietly I was trying to distance myself a little bit and I was trying to prepare if there was a moment that I wasn't going to be a Pittsburgh Steeler – not to say that I didn't want to be, but I had to wrap my head around this being the last ride."

"Having kids, going through a pandemic, just the level of uncertainty was at an all-time high, the salary cap changing and not knowing what the team can do in these situations, it (all) played a big role of anxiety. I have been reading my Bible, been at Bible study a bunch because I needed it and I am not afraid to admit it. I needed a lot of counseling and a lot of guidance through this. But I am glad we were able to get it done."

With negotiations now in the rearview mirror, Heyward can simply focus on playing football. And seeing as he saw just 500 snaps during his first two seasons in the league while sitting behind former teammates Brett Keisel and Aaron Smith, he feels he has fewer miles on his body than other defensive linemen his age.

"When I was talking to Art yesterday, I told him I feel like there's another gear for me to hit," Heyward said. "I'm in my 30s, but shoot, I played behind those guys for so long, I still feel like I'm in my late-20s."

That's good news for Pittsburgh, a franchise that doesn't typically give players their last "big" contract but practically ensured Heyward will retire as a member of the Steelers.

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Hill Uses Unexpected Draft Slide As Motivation

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

It was considered one of the deepest and most talented wide receiver draft classes in years, and former Ohio State wide receiver K.J. Hill – at 6-0 and 196 pounds – wasn't one of the biggest, strongest or fastest players in the group.

He was, however, among the most productive and reliable, finishing his college career as the Buckeyes' all-time receptions leader with 201 catches – including one in 48 straight games, tying Gary Williams' school record.

"Coming to Ohio State as a young receiver, you see all these great names, and for my name to be at the top of the list is a blessing," Hill told Buckeye Sports Bulletin in a phone interview on Sept. 12, just one day before his first NFL game against the Cincinnati Bengals.

Yet Hill, who was widely projected to be a mid-round pick in April's NFL draft, unexpectedly fell to the Los Angeles Chargers with the No. 220 pick in the seventh and final round. He considers it a blessing in disguise, though, especially since he'll get to use the 32 receivers taken ahead of him as motivation as he begins his professional career.

"It was a dream come true to be drafted," Hill said. "Growing up and playing football, I always envisioned my name going across that ticker. Seeing it happen was kind of unreal, and when it finally happened, it just brought a lot of tears of joy."

"I'm not sure why I fell. I guess they went off analytics instead of film. I can only control what I can control. The Chargers picked me, and I'm going to give them everything I have. I have a chip on my shoulder to prove I'm better than the other receivers selected ahead of me."

Being motivated by others is nothing new for Hill, who grew up in Little Rock, Ark., where there's a long and unfortunate history of drug and gang violence. But rather than fall into the same trap as so many others, he used football as a way to escape the city.

"There's a lot of distractions in Little Rock – bad distractions," Hill said. "My parents kept me down the right path, instilling discipline, having me go to the right school, having me live in the right neighborhood and having me play sports to keep me from all of the things that could have led me down the wrong path."

That focus helped Hill become a consensus four-star prospect, a U.S. Army High School All-American and Ohio State's first-ever signee from the state of Arkansas. But it wasn't until the Buckeyes hired wide receivers coach Brian Hartline – first in an interim capacity after the Zach Smith investigation in 2018 and then on a full-time basis the following season – that he knew he had a shot at the NFL.

"He's been there and he's done it," Hill said of Hartline, who played for the Buckeyes from 2005-08 and spent seven years in the NFL with the Miami Dolphins and Cleveland Browns. "He's been in the same shoes I've been in and the same shoes I want to be in, so I just took in everything he had to say. He really got me to this point and definitely helped me emerge as a big-time player."

"He had a standard in practice and in walk-throughs, and it translated to the game. It was just instilled into us mentally to take those standards with us everywhere we go."

Though the coronavirus pandemic limited training camp and canceled preseason games, Hill's already made quite the impression on his coaches and teammates.

"He's fast enough to be very, very productive in our league," special teams coordinator

George Stewart told reporters on Aug. 24. "He's a strong runner, he's very intelligent and he's very quick."

Quarterback Tyrod Taylor echoed those sentiments that same afternoon when he said Hill has "done a great job of making plays. You can tell he is comfortable at that position."

Again, Hill credited Hartline for his approach.

"I just take every day like a game," he said. "I'm trying to prove myself and show that I am a great receiver who can play at a high level. I really think my approach every day in practice helps me stand out."

Hill has benefited this summer from playing alongside Pro Bowl wide receiver Keenan Allen, who is an exceptional route-runner and as sure-handed as they come. In fact, he sees a lot of similarities between them.

"I watched tape of Keenan when I was in college," Hill said. "Just watched how crafty he is and kind of took some stuff from his game. Now that I'm with him, I can learn hands-on. I ask him questions all the time. Just having a guy like that in the room helps me elevate my game."

On the other side of the ball, Hill has been reunited in Los Angeles with former Ohio State defensive end Joey Bosa. Their college careers only briefly overlapped, as Bosa was a junior and Hill a true freshman during the 2015 season, but their prior relationship was evident on their first day in the facility together.

"He gave me a big hug," Hill said with a laugh. "He had a bunch of advice when I first got here and really just said that it was finally great to have a fellow Buckeye on the team."

Interestingly enough, Hill's first NFL game was against another former teammate in Bengals rookie quarterback Joe Burrow. The two were part of the same recruiting class and remain close to this day, even though Burrow transferred to LSU following their redshirt sophomore seasons.

"Once you're a Buckeye, you're always a Buckeye," Hill said of Burrow, who won the Heisman Trophy and national championship last season and was the No. 1 overall pick in April's draft. "I wasn't really surprised that he had the success he had because I know what type of player he is. He shed blood, sweat and tears with us. We used to pile up in his Jeep for 6 a.m. workouts, and even though he took a different path, we know he did what was best for him and his family."

Of all of his former teammates in the NFL – and it's worth noting there are a total of 50 Buckeyes on active NFL rosters this season – Hill said he's most excited to face Las Vegas Raiders cornerback Damon Arnette, who was this year's 19th overall pick. Both members of Ohio State's 2015 recruiting class, the two went at it in practice every day for the last five years.

"We're in the same division and we have to play him twice a year," Hill said. "Hopefully we get a chance to get some one-on-one work and trash talk like we did when we were at Ohio State. I'm looking forward to that."

"He just has a great mentality. He's a dog. He's going to talk his talk, but when it comes to playing, he's going to back it up. When you go against him, you have to be ready at all times."

Hill – who fielded a punt and saw 11 snaps on offense in his first game, a 16-13 win in Cincinnati – may not be as vocal as Arnette, more often letting let his play speak for itself. But when asked what kind of goals he has for himself at the next level, he didn't hold back.

"I'm going to control what I can," Hill said. "When the ball comes my way, catch it. When I'm on special teams, take advantage of what they give me. But at the end of the day, I just want to be known as one of the best route-runners and best receivers in the NFL."



COURTESY OF THE LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

FITTING IN – Although he was a seventh-round pick in April's NFL draft, former Ohio State wide receiver K.J. Hill secured a spot on the Los Angeles Chargers' 53-man roster with an impressive training camp.

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Playoff Run Solidifies Elliott's Spot As RB Of Decade

By WYATT CROSHER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

BSB is featuring an eight-part series where, in each issue, the staff writers will come to a consensus on one player or a group of starting players who are deserving of being named the best at that position for Ohio State from 2010-19. Part one pertains to the best running back of the 2010s.

Ohio State has had its history of impressive running backs dating back to Chic Harley, then moving forward to Hopalong Cassidy, Archie Griffin, Keith Byars and Eddie George, as well as many others in between.

The 2010s remained just as fruitful as usual in the backfield for the Buckeyes, with four running backs exceeding 2,600 yards and 20 touchdowns, doing so on 5.9 yards per carry or better.

The Nominees

Carlos Hyde started the decade off on a high note. Hyde, who was with Ohio State from 2010-13, rushed for 3,198 yards and 37 touchdowns, averaging 6.1 yards per carry while doing it.

Following him was Ezekiel Elliott, who ran for 3,967 yards and 6.7 yards per carry in three seasons in 2013-15. One of those seasons – the 2014 campaign – ended in a national title.

Mike Weber took over from Elliott and rushed for 2,676 yards during his Buckeye tenure. He rushed in 24 touchdowns and ran for 5.9 yards per carry, including a 1,000-yard campaign in 2016.

Two of Weber's seasons came while splitting carries with J.K. Dobbins, who finished off the 2010s with 4,459 rushing yards and 38 scores, including the first 2,000-yard rushing season in program history, breaking Eddie George's previous record of 1,927 yards. His rushing yards rank second in Ohio State history, trailing only Griffin (5,589 yards).

The Discussion

When asked who they believe was the best Ohio State running back over the past 10 years, here is what the BSB staff had to say:

Wyatt Crosher: "While Dobbins was very impressive in his time at Ohio State, especially in 2019, I would still have to give the edge to Elliott. Both were stars of the offense in their own right, but it is that 2014 postseason run from Elliott that puts him over the edge.

"Stepping up for an injured J.T Barrett, Elliott was an unstoppable force when his team needed him most, eviscerating Wisconsin, Alabama and Oregon on his way to a national title. He was impressive at other points as well, but that championship reign of terror is something that will stick with me for a long time.

"I feel bad for Dobbins, who had a chance to go on a similar postseason run after a great performance against Clemson despite the injury he suffered. But in such a close battle, I have to go with the absolute instead of the 'what if,' and that, to me, gives the slight edge to Elliott."

Joe Dempsey: "I must preface this by saying that Dobbins is one of the best running backs I've seen in all of college football. However, I still think Ezekiel Elliott is the best Ohio State tailback of



FILE PHOTO

UNPRECEDENTED RUN – Former Ohio State running back Ezekiel Elliott rushed for 696 yards and eight touchdowns in the Buckeyes' wins over Wisconsin, Alabama and Oregon on their way to the inaugural College Football Playoff national championship.

the past decade.

"Elliott made the most of his opportunities in Columbus, averaging 6.7 yards per carry for his career. The St. Louis native failed to amass 100 yards from scrimmage only once when receiving more than 12 touches, and that was when he gained 97 yards on 16 touches against Rutgers in 2014. On the other hand, Dobbins had 15 games with more than 12 touches and less than 100 yards from scrimmage, including nine in his final two seasons.

"The biggest argument for Elliott is his performance in the Buckeyes' national championship run as a sophomore in 2014. Elliott concluded the campaign with 121 rushing yards and two touchdowns against Michigan before 220 yards and two scores against Wisconsin in the Big Ten title game, 230 rushing yards and two touchdowns against Alabama in the CFP semifinals, and then 246 rushing yards and four scores in the inaugural CFP national title game against Oregon."

Andrew Lind: "From the time he stepped on campus, Dobbins was a star. He broke the school record for rushing yards by a freshman (1,403), then became the first Buckeye to rush for 2,000 yards in a season as a junior. He finished his career second in Ohio State history – behind only two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin – with 4,459 rushing yards and 106.2 yards per game, while his 38 career rushing touchdowns rank sixth in Ohio State history.

"Dobbins might not have a national title on his résumé like Elliott, but that's no fault of his own. He finished the College Football Playoff semifinal loss to Clemson with 174 yards, including a 68-yard touchdown that put the Buckeyes up 10-0. There's not a doubt in my mind he would have made a similar impact in the 2015 College Football Playoff if the

roles were reversed or in the 2020 national championship had a few controversial calls gone Ohio State's way."

Patrick Mayhorn: "I'm going to go against the obvious answers, because my answer is based more on impact and less on stats. My pick is Hyde. Hyde trails both Elliott and Dobbins in statistical output, but there's a key difference in surrounding personnel that leads me to give Hyde the nod: Elliott and Dobbins were surrounded with championship-caliber talent; Hyde wasn't.

"That isn't to say that Ohio State's 2012 and 2013 offensive rosters weren't talented – they certainly were – just that Hyde and quarterback Braxton Miller frequently served as the only consistent explosive playmakers on the team. Elliott and Dobbins were both always surrounded with top talent like Michael Thomas, Taylor Decker and Billy Price for Elliott or Chris Olave, Wyatt Davis and Josh Myers for Dobbins.

"Hyde's final season in 2013 saw the Buckeyes relying heavily on Corey Brown, Devin Smith and Evan Spencer on the perimeter and an offensive line consisting of Jack Mewhort, Andrew Norwell, Corey Linsley, Marcus Hall and a sophomore version of Decker. Those players were obviously talented, and several went on to very good things, but in a lot of cases, players like Smith, Norwell, Linsley and Decker had not yet developed into what they eventually became.

"Because of that, Hyde was asked to carry to load in a more difficult environment. His offense depended on him picking up yardage every time he touched the ball, because there wasn't enough of a passing threat to withstand a bad day from Hyde on the ground. Elliott and Dobbins have etched their names into the record books for their production, but from the

perspective of impact and importance to the team around him, no back in the last decade meant more to Ohio State's success than Hyde did."

The Choice

While there was some debate, especially after what Dobbins was able to accomplish in the past season, the ultimate consensus went to Elliott, who tallied back-to-back 1,800-yard seasons in 2014 and 2015 while amassing 41 rushing touchdowns those 28 games.

Elliott came to Ohio State as a four-star running back out of St. Louis John Burroughs and ultimately sealed his commitment on National Signing Day in 2013 after some major contention from Missouri, his home state and the alma mater of both of his parents. His commitment was the second for the Buckeyes by a running back in the 2013 class, joining DeSoto, Texas, four-star Dontre Wilson.

"He was an out-of-state guy in Urban Meyer's first full class in 2013," Marcus Hartman, Ohio State beat writer for the Dayton Daily News, told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "We were worried about in-state recruiting, and then he almost flipped on signing day and it was kind of like 'Well, whatever. Who's this guy from Missouri? Who cares?'"

In high school, Elliott played against low-level competition, which led to the talented back finishing his senior season at John Burroughs with 3,061 all-purpose yards and 50 touchdowns.

"He was playing, I want to say, 2A ball. Obviously, he jumped off the screen," Stan Drayton, who is currently the running backs coach at Texas but coached running backs at Ohio State from 2012-14, told BSB. "He was a man amongst boys. He was playing quarterback, receiver, linebacker, safety. He was pretty much everywhere on the field and making an impact. That right there just grabs your attention. And then just the instincts – a natural football player. You could tell he was super smart."

In his first season with the Buckeyes, Elliott mostly remained an afterthought, seeing occasional time while Hyde and Miller each surpassed 1,000 yards on the ground.

Elliott did manage to flash some of his potential in one of the games during his true freshman campaign, rushing for 162 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries in a 76-0 rout against Florida A&M. It was a game that meant little for everyone involved, but it did give the first-year back some key experience moving forward.

"It's been good to get a little more game experience in these early games," Elliott said following the game. "Every time you get game reps it makes you better."

Though he ran for only 100 yards total the rest of that 2013 season, Elliott used that experience to jump-start a dominant sophomore season, in which he ran for 1,878 yards and 18 scores on 6.9 yards per carry.

Still, Elliott's 2014 did not start out all that strongly, with just three 100-yard performances through his first eight games. Then he started heating up with 154 yards and two touchdowns against Michigan State and its No. 1 rush defense. Two weeks later, Elliott again ran for over 100 with 109 yards and a score against

Indiana.

Starting with the victory over the Hoosiers, Elliott would run for more than 100 yards and score at least one touchdown in each of Ohio State's final five games.

"He was just a guy until the end of the season," Hartman said. "Then, all of a sudden he and Darron Lee and a few other guys sort of took off there in the playoff run and it was like 'Wow.'"

With another strong showing – 17 carries, 121 yards, two touchdowns – against Michigan, Ohio State was set to face off against Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship Game. The Buckeyes also had to do it without quarterback J.T. Barrett, who was hurt against the Wolverines and would miss the remainder of the 2014 season.

"I thought they would lose soundly," Hartman said. "As soon as J.T. Barrett got hurt, I texted my wife and said, 'Well, the season's over.' The team that showed up at the Big Ten Championship Game was not the same team that showed up even the week before."

Behind 220 yards and two touchdowns from Elliott, Ohio State beat Wisconsin 59-0, forcing itself into the College Football Playoff and an opening matchup against Alabama.

What was Elliott's encore to his explosion against the Badgers? A 230-yard, two-touchdown outpour against the Crimson Tide, highlighted by an 85-yard run to seal the win for the Buckeyes late in the fourth quarter. Finally, Elliott finished off the miraculous trio of games with 246 yards and four touchdowns in the title-clinching victory over Oregon.

"During the course of his preparation leading up to the playoff, he had slowed the game down. He knew exactly what everybody around him was going to be doing. He had his indicators that he was able to read before the ball was snapped," Drayton said. "When you have a kid who knows the game, knows the scheme, knows what everyone around him is doing and he adds that to some great natural instincts, it was just a matter of time for him to be able to play at the speed he was playing and with the physicality he played with."

"He wasn't thinking. He played with unbelievable confidence because he knew what he was doing. That was an X-factor for him, and it's why he took off."

For Hartman, the back-to-back-to-back 200-yard performances from Elliott were stunning to see and something that had seemed out of character for the running back up to that point.

"I looked at Zeke, he's not a guy who is huge, he doesn't really make people miss that much, but he's just good, so he kind of snuck up on you," Hartman said. "I definitely didn't expect him to all of a sudden just start ripping off 80-yard runs, which he did against Wisconsin. He went from being a solid guy to a difference maker against Wisconsin and then did it again against Alabama with the big run, and then really in the Oregon game, he was really the guy."

"For all the attention that Cardale (Jones) got, because he's the quarterback, he's got the ball in his hands, Zeke, that was like a quiet 200 yards in the national championship game. So that just kind of speaks to his play overall."

In the 2015 season, Elliott's production stayed relatively the same, finishing with 1,821 rushing yards on 6.3 yards per carry. While those numbers both slight-

ly decreased from the season prior, he boosted his touchdown total up to 23 while playing in just 13 games compared to 15.

While he lacked a title run, there were still highlight moments in Elliott's junior year, including a 274-yard barrage against Indiana, equaling the second-most rushing yards in a single game (Keith Byars, 1984) behind George, who ran for 314 yards in a 1995 win against Illinois. Elliott again finished strong, rushing for 214 yards against Michigan and then following that up with 149 yards and four touchdowns to defeat Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl.

"The '15 year, it felt like a lot of times he was really good, but he was also a product of everyone around him," Hartman said. "He's not an absolute breakaway, but he could get more yards than were there because he ran hard, and he had just a little bit of a shake."

Elliott's sophomore and junior seasons rank No. 3 and No. 4 in the program's all-time single-season rushing yards list, with his 3,961 total rushing yards placing third. His 43 rushing touchdowns ties Barrett for fourth most in Ohio State history, and he ranks in the top 10 three times for most rushing yards in a single game, two of which came in the national title run.

All of those accomplishments ultimately led to Elliott going pro after his junior season, where he was selected No. 4 overall by the Dallas Cowboys in the 2016 NFL draft.

"You could tell he was a pro-ready back at the end of his sophomore year. You knew he was a pro back. He had great pad level and was always ready for contact. He was great in protection and was a great ball-security guy," Drayton said. "If you can protect the quarterback and not fumble the football, you've got a chance at that next level. He had those traits at a high level, so it was just a matter of him getting used to the system and learning the timing with their offensive line."

Elliott's three years at Ohio State were the same span of time as Dobbins', but his time to showcase his ability was much shorter, spanning mostly just two seasons, both of which ended with similarly dominant levels of production.

Drayton said his impressive ability to shine above the rest of the team simply on pure effort was obvious early on in Elliott's time at Ohio State.

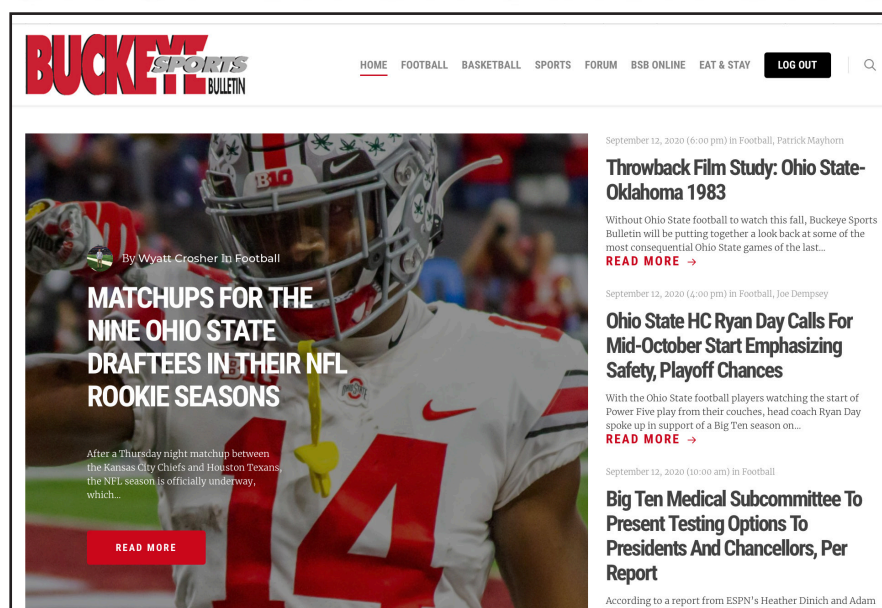
"The thing he brought to the table was work ethic, and that's often the one thing that you have to train a newcomer coming into a program on. He almost outworked the group from day one. You had to slow him down. That's very unusual for a freshman," Drayton said. "He made an impact on kickoffs, kickoff returns, and you just knew he was going to be special. You just knew he had that 'It' factor to him and he was just waiting for his turn. When he got his turn, he proved that he was ready. It didn't take long for Zeke."

Above all of his other tremendous moments, what will always stand out in Elliott's college résumé is his three-game masterpiece down the most important stretch of his career: three-straight 220-yard-plus performances with eight total touchdowns to will his team to a national championship.

It was that ability to come through for the Buckeyes against Wisconsin, against Alabama, against Oregon and against many others that made Elliott one of the best running backs in college football, and BSB's choice for the best Ohio State running back of the decade.

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Tragic Ending Overshadowed Tyrer's Storied Career

By MARK REA
BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

Early in the morning of Sept. 15, 1980, Jim Tyrer lay awake in his south-side Kansas City home. Insomnia had become just another in the increasingly long line of difficulties visited upon the former football star who had earned honorable-mention All-America honors at Ohio State before becoming an All-Pro offensive lineman and Super Bowl champion with the Kansas City Chiefs.

To most of their friends, Jim and Marty Tyrer seemed the perfect couple, married nearly 20 years and living a comfortable suburban life with their four children. Tyrer had played 14 professional seasons, all but one of them with the Chiefs, and then used what one teammate called "studious entrepreneurship" to make the transition from professional football to successful businessman.

With a burgeoning family at home, however, Tyrer quickly tired of a job that kept him on the road throughout the week, and he tried to create financial opportunities for himself. But a string of unfortunate occurrences – poor investments as well as a trio of failed businesses – sent Tyrer into a personal tailspin. After taking a second mortgage on his house and pawning some of his wife's jewelry and furs, Tyrer began selling Amway products as a veil of depression and despair began to shroud his life in darkness.

In the wee hours of that morning almost exactly 40 years ago, the 41-year-old former football star – known to his many friends and teammates as a gentle giant – fumbled for a loaded .38 caliber revolver he kept in a bedside drawer.

What happened in the subsequent handful of seconds has otherwise canceled what was by all accounts an exemplary life. It has certainly cost Tyrer whatever football legacy he might have earned.

Despite starting at right tackle for Woody Hayes for three seasons from 1958 to 1960, being named team co-captain and being named first-team All-Big Ten and honorable-mention All-American, Tyrer's name is nowhere to be found on the membership list in the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame.

"I'm not sure who you would consider a better offensive lineman that ever came out of Ohio State," former OSU halfback/quarterback Tom Matte told BSB. "Maybe Jim Parker. Maybe Orlando Pace. But I'm telling you that Jim Tyrer was right there with those guys. He was one of the best offensive linemen the Buckeyes have ever had."

A third-round selection by the Dallas Texans (who later became the Chiefs) in



COURTESY OF THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

SET THE STANDARD – Former Ohio State offensive tackle Jim Tyrer played 13 seasons for the Dallas Texans/Kansas City Chiefs franchise, garnering All-Pro honors six times.

the 1961 American Football League draft, Tyrer was a nine-time Pro Bowler, six-time All-Pro and three-time AFL champion in Kansas City as well as one of the members of an offensive line that helped neutralize Minnesota's feared "Purple People Eaters" defense in Super Bowl IV resulting in a 23-7 victory for the Chiefs.

But while Tyrer is a member of the Chiefs Hall of Fame, earning induction in 1977, a player with his kind of résumé is conspicuously absent from being enshrined in Canton – especially when Pro Football Hall of Fame bylaws expressly forbid voters to consider anything other than what a player has done on the field.

Kevin Patrick Allen, director of a new documentary titled "A Good Man – The Jim Tyrer Story," believes he knows why Tyrer and his career have not been properly recognized.

"The only reason Jim Tyrer is forgotten, despite his spectacular life, is the last 10 seconds (of that life) were horrible," Allen said.

Football Acclaim

Tyrer grew up in Newark, Ohio, using a 6-4, 225-pound body to star in football and basketball at his high school. He helped the Wildcats win a central Ohio regional championship in basketball and was a two-time all-district performer in football. Those honors helped lead to Tyrer being named the first member of the Newark High School Hall of Fame in 1970.

He grew another inch or two and added another 25 pounds during his three years at Ohio State, although his true size is widely debated.

Despite being listed at 6-5 and 248 pounds on the official OSU depth chart

in 1960, Hayes couldn't resist padding those numbers in his book "You Win With People," published in 1973.

"Jim Tyrer stood 6-6 and weighed 260," Hayes wrote. "Jim was a quiet man, a man who led by example and a man who got better in every practice. ... He is regarded by the Kansas City Chiefs as the best lineman they have ever had."

Before he got to the pros, however, Tyrer became a force on the Ohio State offensive line, starting at left tackle as a sophomore before switching to right tackle for his final two years and paving the way for such halfbacks as Don Clark and Bob Klein as well as fullbacks Bob White and Bob Ferguson.

"Jim was a great guy and a great teammate," former OSU offensive tackle Daryl Sanders told BSB. "He was the right tackle and an established guy when I played my

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first year of varsity ball as a sophomore in 1960. Bob Vogel and I shared the other tackle spot, and Jim couldn't have been more helpful. It's no wonder why he was voted a team captain."

Tyrer was also technically sound at his position. Legendary Michigan head coach Bo Schembechler, who coached tackles at Ohio State from 1958 to 1962, once said he never had to worry about much when Tyrer was on the field.

"I don't remember him ever making a mistake," Schembechler said in 1980. "And if someone else made a mistake, you knew that Jim would take care of it. He was a leader – a quiet leader, but a leader nonetheless. If you asked him to do something, it got done."

That kind of reliability proved invaluable to the Buckeyes throughout the offensive lineman's career.

During Tyrer's senior season at Ohio State in 1960, the eighth-ranked Buckeyes were practicing to play No. 10 Michigan State in East Lansing. The Spartans, led by head coach Duffy Daugherty, were coming off back-to-back shutouts against Notre Dame and Indiana and presented the OSU offense with its toughest test to date.

Hayes reached back into one of his older playbooks to dust off a play called "41 Quick Trap," which was basically a quick-attack pitch to a halfback who would follow a pulling guard. But success of the play was geared to an offensive tackle – Tyrer in this case – getting off his block to pick off the defender lined up over the pulling guard.

The play was called only twice against the Spartans, but thanks to Tyrer, it worked like a charm. Klein picked up 10 yards the first time the play was called and turned the second into a 46-yard touchdown as the Buckeyes went on to a 21-10 victory.

"Jim could do anything you asked him to do," Matte said. "Point-of-attack blocking, cut off a guy, make a downfield block, pass protect. He certainly saved my bacon on more than one occasion."

After his college career ended, Tyrer was invited to play in the East-West Shrine Game and Hula Bowl, prestigious honors in their day. But the NFL didn't seem that impressed. Tyrer fell all the way to the 14th round of the 1961 draft before the Chicago Bears finally picked him with the 188th overall selection.

The upstart American Football League was more enamored with Tyrer, who was now listed at 6-6 and 280 pounds. The fledgling league, which began play with eight teams in 1960, was more aggressive in its pursuit of young players, especially those who were late-round picks by the NFL. Seeing a chance to play right away, Tyrer spurned a lowball offer from the Bears and signed with the Dallas Texans, who had taken him as the 22nd player overall in the AFL draft.

Tyrer became an immediate fixture at left tackle for the Texans, who moved to Kansas City in 1963 to become the Chiefs. During his 13 seasons with the team, Tyrer played in 180 consecutive games – the third-longest streak in franchise history – and became one of professional football's best and most-feared offensive linemen.

"He was the pre-eminent left tackle in all of football," former Houston Oilers defensive lineman Elvin Bethea told reporters upon his 2003 induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. "All other blockers I faced in the NFL were mediocre compared to him. He would just swamp me to where I would be lucky to beat him even once in a game."

"Tyrer was the pioneer of big offensive tackles. He was the best blocker I ever faced."

Tough and physical defensive end Ben Davidson, who enjoyed a Hall of Fame career mostly with the Oakland Raiders, was once asked to name his toughest opponent.

"Doubtlessly, it was Jim Tyrer," Davidson replied. "He was 6-6 and 280 pounds, and his head was so big that when he fired out to block with that big, red Kansas City Chiefs helmet on, it looked as if someone was throwing a red garbage can at you."

Hall of Fame head coach Hank Stram, who coached Tyrer during each of the lineman's 13 seasons with the Chiefs, once said, "If you could pick a prototype (offensive tackle) out of a Sears and Roebuck catalogue, Jim Tyrer would be it."

During Tyrer's era, offensive linemen were prohibited from using their hands to block, so the ability to lead with the head and batter defensive linemen with your helmet was a prized skill. And apparently no one rammed his head into opponents with more authority than Tyrer.

"He was easily the best blocker I ever faced," Davidson said. "He would jam his helmet right up into your sternum where it felt like you were being hit by a truck. He had finesse, too, but power was his game and he knew how to use it."

Photos of Tyrer from his Kansas City days show him wearing a helmet so scarred that the Chiefs logo on either side is almost obliterated.

And although the words "chronic traumatic encephalopathy" were decades away from entering the sporting world's lexicon, there seems little doubt now that Tyrer's particular style of controlled brutality in getting his mission accomplished would lead to dire consequences.

Undiagnosed Brain Injury?

"I know Jim wasn't diagnosed with it, but I have to suspect that he was an early victim of CTE," said Sanders, who later played four seasons at offensive tackle for the Detroit Lions. "How else could you explain what happened? Something so completely out of character and so illogical? How do you explain it? The answer is, you can't."

Tyrer had spent the Sunday afternoon of Sept. 14, 1980, at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City with the younger of his two sons, 10-year-old Jason. The two watched the Chiefs lose a 17-16 decision to the Seattle Seahawks, a game during which nearby fans recalled Tyrer being oddly transfixed by the action. They said he spent most of the game just staring at the field, paradoxically preoccupied and

distant.

When asked if everything was OK, Tyrer reportedly smiled and nodded his head. But everything was most definitely not all right.

During the early hours of the next morning, Tyrer reached for his gun and fired it once. As his startled wife awoke and attempted to get out of bed, Tyrer aimed at her and fired, a fatal bullet striking her in the head. Seconds later, he turned the weapon on himself. It was a murder-suicide that sparked sensational headlines around the country.

"I remember when I heard the news, and I just didn't believe it," said Matte, who played 12 NFL seasons with the Baltimore Colts. "Jim just wasn't that kind of guy. At least, the Jim I knew and played with – he just wasn't that kind of guy. I was really taken aback, and it took me a long time to come to grips with it. You just never in your wildest dreams think something like that would ever happen."

During the 40 years since the murder-suicide, studies regarding CTE and head trauma have underscored the violent nature of football. In recent years, such former NFL stars as Junior Seau, Dave Duerson and Aaron Hernandez have taken their own lives, and autopsies would seem to confirm in each case that CTE was a contributing cause.

Chris Nowinski, a former Ivy League football player and professional wrestler who is now CEO of the Boston-based Concussion Legacy Foundation, has studied CTE for years and knows the Tyrer story well.

"Having looked at over 200 football players," Nowinski told Slate.com writer Michael Socolow earlier this year, "I think it would be nearly impossible that he didn't have CTE."

But since Tyrer played so long ago, and his final act was such a heinous one, his legacy has been forever altered. He was a finalist for the Pro Football Hall of Fame just once, and that was in 1981. Since then, his name is rarely mentioned with the exception of reunions or memorabilia shows featuring Chiefs old-timers.

"Jim Tyrer is a player a lot of people have forgotten about," said Fred Arbanas, an All-Pro tight end who was Tyrer's teammate for nine seasons beginning in 1962. He was also perhaps Tyrer's closest friend.

"Jim was fantastic," Arbanas said. "A hell of a pass blocker. And when it came to run blocking, he'd blow the guys right out of there. He was the best that I've ever seen play. He was also a super father and a good friend. What's kept him out of the Hall of Fame was, you know, the way he checked out and did what he did."

In 1982, another of Tyrer's teammates,

center Michael Oriard, published a football memoir titled "The End of Autumn." In the book, Oriard tried to explain what happened while attempting to piece together the radical transformation that had seemingly overtaken Tyrer after his retirement from professional football in 1974.

Earlier this year, Oriard told Socolow that he doesn't believe Tyrer will ever be enshrined in Canton no matter how much that honor is deserved.

"If they put him in the Hall of Fame," Oriard said, "the NFL will have to acknowledge how his life ended. And the NFL doesn't want to go there."

As for why Tyrer is not a member of the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame, OSU football historian Jack Park has a theory.

"Jim Tyrer played during a sort of down period in the Woody Hayes era," Park told BSB. "His freshman year in 1957, when freshmen were not eligible to play, the Buckeyes won the national championship as awarded by the UPI. Then in 1961, the year after he graduated, they won the football writers' version of the national title."

"During the three years when Jim Tyrer played, I guess you could say the Buckeyes kind of underachieved."

Park's assessment seems correct. From 1958 to 1960, Ohio State posted a 16-8-3 record and never finished higher than third in the Big Ten standings. The 1959 season also featured a 3-5-1 mark, one of only two losing records during Hayes' 28-year tenure with the team.

The team's record during his era, and the fact that Tyrer was a first-team All-Big Ten performer only once, might mean he falls short in the eyes of some voters. The violent nature surrounding his death might be another contributing factor, especially since the OSU Hall of Fame began inducting members only three years before Tyrer's death.

"I know he had a fine pro career, and I'm not sure why he isn't in the Pro Football Hall of Fame," Park said. "As for the greatest offensive linemen in Ohio State history, I don't know that I could rank him with Jim Parker, John Hicks, Chris Ward or Orlando Pace."

"But he was a three-year starter for Woody Hayes, and I think that speaks for itself."



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NCAA Not Looking For Additional Dance Partners

Even though there has been no official start date, the first block of the 2020-21 college basketball season occurred Sept. 10 when the NCAA swatted what many thought was a far-fetched idea by the Atlantic Coast Conference to stage an all-inclusive NCAA Tournament.

Welcome to March Badness.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

While the NCAA on Sept. 16 was expected to recommend that men's and women's basketball games can begin their seasons most likely on Nov. 21 compared to the original date of Nov. 10 because of the relentless COVID-19 pandemic, one conference thought it would be more productive to urge that every single school be allowed into the Big, or in this case, Biggest Dance.

For the men, that would have meant 346 eligible programs out of the 357 that compete. There are also 351 women's teams that would want equal preference.

The 15 ACC men's coaches voted unanimously on Sept. 9 to ask the NCAA to let everyone qualify regardless of record. The early rounds of the tournament would replace the conference tournaments.

Louisville coach Chris Mack went on Twitter to make the ACC case:

"The safety of our players is paramount," Mack said. "The ability to incentivize the regular season without mandating a select number of non-conference and conference games provides options and flexibility for all member institutions. As ACC head coaches, we strongly believe it's in the game's best interest to have an all-inclusive 2021 NCAA Tournament."

Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, one of the most influential people in the sport, said in a statement there is no better way to celebrate college basketball than by inviting everyone to the party.

"This is not a regular season," he said. "It is clearly an irregular season that will require something different. Our sport needs to be agile and creative. Most importantly, an all-inclusive postseason tournament will allow a unique and unprecedented opportunity for every team and every student-athlete to compete for a national championship."

While it's a romantic plan – think "Hoosiers" without the crew cuts – and it might make some feel good after the 2020 tournament was canceled, it's not practical beginning with the cost to the NCAA of holding such far-flung tourneys. Also, no one can predict where the country will be regarding the coronavirus in the spring.



Dan Gavitt

The idea was shot down the next day by NCAA senior vice president of basketball Dan Gavitt through a release:

"Every college basketball team's goal is to play in the NCAA Tournament because everyone loves March Madness. Certainly, we missed it this year and can't wait for 2021. While all who care about the game are entitled to their opinion, and we'll always listen respectfully, at this time we are not working on any contingency plan that involves expanding the tournament field."

Ohio State men's coach Chris Holtmann during an interview with Rick Pizzo on the Big Ten Network on Sept. 10 agreed with the NCAA.

"I like the idea. I'm not in favor of it, but I appreciate the thinking and I can appreciate the thought that went into it with the idea of full participation in a unique year," Holtmann said. "It's been such a special event and it's hard to get into, and it's certainly a challenge in every league."

"I like the number that it's at right now. I wouldn't necessarily be in favor of expanding it. I think there would be a lot of logistical things that would be challenges."

Bouncing The Ball

Now, back to the irregularly scheduled programming.

If basketball gets the go-ahead around Thanksgiving or shortly thereafter, it will be a scramble to fill in the games. The priority is for each conference to determine if nonleague games will be permitted. If the answer is yes, how many will be allowed?

The Buckeyes were slated to open the season Nov. 11 vs. Oakland followed by two more home games against Niagara (Nov. 15) and Akron (Nov. 19). Those would have to be rescheduled or canceled. OSU is scheduled for three games at the Battle 4 Atlantis in the Bahamas Nov. 25-27 in a field stacked with the likes of Creighton, Duke, Memphis, West Virginia and Wichita State.

"September and early October, it is going to be crazy in terms of scheduling across college basketball," Holtmann said on BTN. "There are going to have to be some parameters that are set by the NCAA and specific leagues, but let's say there's an open window of the games being (November) 25th or 26th. Then leagues are going to have to determine, is the event like the Battle 4 Atlantis something you can play in? We'd like to play it. It's a beneficial event. I really

think nonconference for leagues all over the country is important, maintaining a portion of your nonconference season. I'm in favor of that."

"The biggest thing over the next couple of weeks is figuring out the challenges of what your schedule is going to look like. I hope nonconference is included."

Kentucky coach John Calipari appearing on "The Dan Patrick Show" on Sept. 10 said nonconference games are needed not only for the competition but as an aid to mid-majors who get guaranteed money when they travel to big schools.

"You have to have buy-in games," he said. "It's critical to those programs' survival."

Bubble Dribble

Ramping up the season after Thanksgiving would give schools a protective bubble of sorts on campus since most colleges will have sent students home for at least a six-week break by then.

Another option is to have tournaments, or pods, in controlled environments such as the ESPN Wide World of Sports complex near Orlando, Fla., where the NBA has successfully played without a coronavirus outbreak.

CBS Sports reported that The Battle 4 Atlantis could be played at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, S.D., where the 3,250-seat arena is run in conjunction with Sanford Health, which does COVID-19 testing for the PGA Tour.

"Our plan right now is to play in that event, and until we hear otherwise, we're going to assume we're playing in that event, wherever it moves to," Holtmann said. "I've not been to South Dakota. I am enough of a geography buff to know it's probably going to feel a little different than the Bahamas, but as long as we're playing college basketball, I'm all for it. And I understand there's some amazing safety protocols out there that make it a really appealing place to play an event like that."

Holtmann cautioned that nothing is certain, although he is confident there will be a season and a national champion crowned.

"We're literally getting more information, then at times somewhat conflicting information, from one day to the next," he said. "That's nobody's fault. It's just that there's a lot of fluidity to the situation."

"The challenge has been we've got to do our best to be ready knowing that there is going to be a start date here. We know that from college basketball, and there's going to be a tournament so it's our job to prepare the guys to be as ready as we can be given the conditions."

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commits

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
Malaki Branham	SG	6-4	175	★★★★	Akron (Ohio) St. Vincent-St. Mary
Kalen Etzler	PF	6-8	195	★★★★	Convoy (Ohio) Crestview
Meechie Johnson	PG	6-1	185	★★★★	Willoughby (Ohio) Andrew Osborne

Players in the class of 2022 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
Bowen Hardman	SG	6-3	160	★★★	Cincinnati Princeton

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Duo Joins Buckeyes With Years Of Chemistry

On Oct. 1, 2018, Ohio State earned its first commitment of the 2020 class in three-star guard Anyssa Jones out of Westerville (Ohio) South. Seven days later, the Buckeyes doubled their commitments for 2020 with three-star forward Gabby Hutcherson, who also joined Ohio State out of Westerville South.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

The pair have been linked since, but their connection expands longer than just playing together in high school.

"We've played together since we were in about the fifth grade," Jones told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "We started playing COBA (Central Ohio Basketball Association) together, and then ever since then we've been playing with each other at AAU, high school, everything else."

That chemistry was a big part of Jones' pitch for Hutcherson to join her at Ohio State. She said the two talked frequently about how their recruitments were going.

"When I committed, other than my parents, Gabby was the first one I told," Jones said. "We communicated a lot about it, see where our heads were at. For a while we were choosing between some of the same schools, but we would talk about our recruitment, where we were thinking about going."

"To have Gabby here with me, I had to try and convince her and hopefully she went along, and thankfully she did."

But Hutcherson also said that the decision for the duo to both play college in Columbus was not a joint decision. Instead, the two made their decisions separately, even with the idea of playing at the next level together being one that both were excited about.

"I feel like we always had been put together as being a partnership, but when it came to our recruitment, we kind of wanted it to be our own individuals," Hutcherson said. "Of course, we (talked about recruitments). She's my best friend and we've played together for so long, it did have a certain effect, but not as much as people think it did. I think we all just knew that this is where we were meant to go."

Despite the duo coming from the same high school and playing together since before entering middle school, Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said that he never focused on Hutcherson and Jones as a group deal.

Instead, McGuff said that he focused on both players individually to allow them to have their own separate recruitments and hoped that it would lead both of them to commit to the Buckeyes.

"I didn't try to make it like that because I wanted them to have their own experiences in this process, but they do like playing together and they are good friends, so it kind of made it easier to do that," McGuff said. "Obviously if you didn't feel that way about somebody then you might pause a little bit (about recruiting together), but that certainly wasn't the case here."

But before either of them played with each other, they each found their way to basketball through their families. Jones said it was her dad who started her at the age of 5 through the YMCA, while both of Hutcherson's parents played basketball at the collegiate level.

Hutcherson's mom, Mindy Smith, played

basketball at Ohio State from 1987-90, finishing third on the 1989-90 team in scoring (12.2 points per game) and rebounding (5.3 rebounds per game) while leading the team in blocks (30).

That basketball bloodline led to Hutcherson shooting with her dad at practices and eventually joining a church league at the age of 6 before joining a travel basketball team in the third grade. But as far as her mother's connection to Ohio State – a connection that made Hutcherson an Ohio State fan "literally all" of her life – it was an important piece, but not the largest reason for Hutcherson's commitment to the Buckeyes.

"My dad and obviously my mom are huge Ohio State fans so I just grew up being a Buckeye my whole entire life," Hutcherson said. "It was obviously a big part, but at the same time, she never really tried to convince me either way to go here or not go here, but it had a big part of it."

"I always thought about how cool it would have been to do a mother-daughter duo, that type of thing, but she always just wanted me to follow my heart and go where I thought was going to be the right place. And I always thought Ohio State was going to be the place I go ever since I was younger."

While at Westerville South, Hutcherson finished with a team-high 14.4 points per game in her senior year and was named the OCC-Buckeye Player of the Year. Jones, a year after averaging 15.8 points per game and making third-team All-Ohio as a junior, finished with 12.4 points per contest in her final high school season.

But as both transition from high school to college, Jones has an added wrinkle she is dealing with: a severe high ankle sprain that she announced on Feb. 10 would cost her the remainder of her senior season at Westerville South.

The 5-10 guard said it was difficult to miss out on the final stretch of her senior year, but that she is at almost 100 percent seven months later, and McGuff said that it is a focus to get her back at full strength this offseason.

"She's doing pretty well," McGuff said. "We've been working on that in the training room and in the weight room just to make sure that we continue to keep her on the path of putting that behind her. She's done a good job with the rehab and all that, and it hasn't seemed to bother her on the court."

As for goals for the two incoming local freshmen, both put an emphasis on winning, while both also say that they hope to have an opportunity to make an impact in their first year with the program.

"The main goal is to win," Jones said. "For me, personally, because I'm a freshman coming in and it is very tough for a lot of freshmen to come in and play, my main goal right now is to get on the court – practicing hard and making sure I show them why I belong at this school and why I should get some playing time. So for me I'm kind of taking it a step at a time."

McGuff said that he thinks both players can find a role on the team in their debut collegiate seasons, with both Hutcherson and Jones bringing unique abilities to the roster.

"Gabby's really long and skilled and can run like a deer. She has to do some development in the weight room" the coach said. "I think our strength staff will really be of great benefit to her, but she has a lot of potential and she's a great kid with an awesome personality. Anyssa is a little different. She's got a great basketball frame, she's strong and tough and physical and she loves the weight room. I think she'll add some toughness and intensity, and she's also got good skill to go with that. So they're



COURTESY OF OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

TAG TEAM – Anyssa Jones, pictured, and Gabby Hutcherson, both from nearby Westerville (Ohio) South, were two key members of Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class.

OSU Women's Basketball Verbal Commits

Players in the class of 2021 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the ESPN rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Kaitlyn Costner	PG	5-8	N/A	Mishawaka (Ind.) Penn
Taylor Thierry	SG	5-10	N/A	Willoughby (Ohio) Laurel

different players, but both I think have a chance to really impact us.

"They can definitely both help us, but we do return some good players. But there's certainly an opportunity for newcomers to really have a big impact because as much as we return – five starters from our last game – we also lost some good players. So I think they can both have an impact."

Ohio State enters the season with a roster that, while more experienced than last season's, remains inexperienced, with just two juniors and two seniors to go with three sophomores, a redshirt freshman and three true freshmen.

Hutcherson and Jones fall into the latter group but bring a unique chemistry between one another after playing basketball together for the better part of the past decade.

"Coming on the team and having one of my closest friends is definitely a bonus," Jones said. "We know how we are on the court, so that chemistry is there since we've played with each other for so long."

Buckeyes At Full Strength In Practice

McGuff told BSB on Sept. 3 that the entire team is back in Columbus for workouts, including forwards Dorka Juhasz and Rebeka Mikulasikova, who return from Hungary and Slovakia, respectively.

"We've got everybody back," McGuff said. "Coming off a little bit of a break, we got everybody tested for COVID and then once that cleared we got them. We're in the weight room and we're doing some small group stuff on the court, so a lot of skill, development type stuff right now."

As for a timetable on when the team can participate in full practices with the entire roster at once, McGuff said that it shouldn't be long from now, and that he expects to be able to follow whatever is set by the NCAA in the coming weeks.

"We're still kind of working through that," McGuff said. "I think that will be on the horizon before too long, where we can get more people out there. Coinciding with that is we were pretty confident here in the middle of September that the NCAA is going to give us some guidance on when the season may start, and so that will kind of allow us to lay out how we want to finish the preseason and then lead into practice starting."

McGuff Calls Nov. 25 Start 'Reasonable'

There were reports that the NCAA men's basketball oversight committee and women's basketball oversight committee agreed on Sept. 1 to propose a Nov. 25 start date for the 2020-21 college basketball season.

While no official announcement has been made, McGuff told BSB that it sounds like a strong date to start things up, allowing enough of a window to get both the teams prepared as well as the safety protocols.

"That seems reasonable. I think that gives us plenty of time to get our team ready to play after obviously not a normal summer in terms of strength, conditioning and just overall development," McGuff said. "I think that would give us enough time to get ready to play. I think it would give everybody enough time to have the proper protocols in place so we can do it safely, so I think that seems like a reasonable start date to me."

Start Of Hockey Season Put On Ice By NCAA

An announcement coach Steve Rohlik anticipated became reality Sept. 10 when the start of the 2020-21 Division I men's and women's hockey seasons were put on hold with no timetable to begin. Instead of opening Oct. 9-10 at Connecticut, the Ohio State men's hockey team will await word from the Big Ten for the next step.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

"I think it was expected across the country," Rohlik said. "All the programs right now are trying to be prepared as much as possible for what might come down the pike.

"We all kind of knew October probably wasn't going to happen at the start, but where it lands, we don't know."

Delays and cancellations have affected professional and collegiate sports since the COVID-19 pandemic first took hold in early March, including abruptly ending the post-seasons for the Buckeyes.

The OSU women (24-8-6) were poised for their second NCAA tournament in three seasons after winning their first Western

Collegiate Hockey Association tournament. The men (20-11-5) were about to host Michigan in a conference semifinal and would have qualified for the NCAA tournament for a program-record fourth straight season.

The pause in the opening of the 2020-21 season came via a release by the Hockey Commissioners Association (HCA), which represents the 11 D-I men's and women's conferences.

It read in part: "The conferences have been working together on plans to return with a focus on the health and safety of everyone associated with our campus communities. Due to the impact COVID-19 continues to have across the country and within higher education, the start of competition for the Division I college hockey season will be delayed. Each conference will announce details on game schedules, including the start dates, individually. We look forward to our players and fans enjoying the college hockey experience this season."

The original season start dates were Sept. 19 for women and Oct. 3 for men.

Rohlik said it was inevitable that the hockey schedule would be disrupted once it was announced by the Big Ten on Aug. 10 that all fall sports, including football, would be canceled with an eye on playing in the spring.

"When they were delayed, you certainly knew how can we all of a sudden be up and

running the first week in October?" he told BSB on Sept. 10.

Hockey is unique in that it really straddles three sports seasons with the men's Frozen Four scheduled for April 8-10 in Pittsburgh (the women's is March 19-21 in Erie, Pa.). It would have been controversial if somehow a high-risk sport such as hockey, considered a winter sport, were to play in October while Big Ten football was barred.

"That's the toughest part. I think we have the longest season of any sport," Rohlik said. "Sometimes you forget we're basically almost a fall sport from when we start.

"We kind of get thrown in the middle there. The nice thing is we've been wrapped in with basketball a little bit, which is good."

By that he means there is some talk that hockey's start will mirror that of college basketball. On Sept. 16, the NCAA is expected to recommend a college basketball start date around Nov. 21, moved from the original Nov. 10 opening.

"That's one of the options," Rohlik said. "We're hearing a lot of things. One of the speculations is would it be smarter to start around Thanksgiving weekend when pretty much most schools will either be done with the first semester or going to finish up virtually right after that. That's some of the reasoning surrounding that time. That's a possibility."

Varied Starts

Having the HCA as the voice for all conferences is a refreshing change from the chaos in college football where the Big Ten and Pac-12 presidents opted not to have fall football while the ACC, Big 12 and SEC will play through the coronavirus.

Rohlik said he has separate weekly video calls with the conference hockey coaches as well as all Division I men's hockey coaches.

"There's been a lot of communication, a lot of talk back and forth trying to stay educated with the coaches, the NCAA, rules committees, everything," he said.

However, that does not mean there will be uniformity in starting dates or the number and types of games to be played. As the HCA release noted, it's up to each conference to formulate a schedule to meet their needs.

Eastern College Athletic Conference hockey, for example, has half of its 12 schools – Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton and Yale – also as members of the Ivy League, which will not allow athletics in any sports until Jan. 1. It's possible the other ECAC programs could play nonconference games prior to that before beginning a league schedule after the first of the year.

Meanwhile, the National Collegiate Hockey Conference hopes to start by Nov. 20, and Hockey East is focused on a conference-only schedule.

"It's huge for us to get the Big Ten playing football," WCHA women's commissioner Jennifer Flowers told the Duluth (Minn.) News Tribune. "It's been pretty noted that across the Big Ten institutions that if there is no football, it will be a real challenge to really have anything else."

Big Ten schools OSU, Minnesota and Wisconsin play in the women's WCHA.

As for what Big Ten hockey might do for start dates and conference vs. nonconference games? No one knows.

ESPN's John Buccigross posted on Twitter that the conference is considering

some type of bubble where teams could gather and play a series of games a la the NHL playing in Toronto and Edmonton after the regular season was paused in March.

"Anything's possible," Rohlik said. "We're certainly not at the NHL level, but you see how well they've done it – not that we could go to that extreme. We're willing to talk about, investigate anything. We don't have any answers yet, but we wouldn't be doing our jobs if we didn't throw everything out there as college hockey coaches to say what if this, what if that?"

Another thought is that with students going home for Thanksgiving and staying there, it creates a natural on-campus bubble for about six weeks in which to compete.

All Big Ten?

When, where and the opponents are secondary for Rohlik.

"First and foremost, it's about games," he said. "Any college coach would say we want to play as many games as possible. If that just includes just our league, I guess so be it."

One interesting idea being floated according to Rohlik is having the usual 24-game Big Ten schedule augmented by regionalized "league nonconference" games.

"We might play The Team Up North and Penn State and Michigan State more than Minnesota, Wisconsin," he said. "Maybe Minnesota plays Wisconsin and Notre Dame a few more times if we have to play nonconference."

The thinking behind that is COVID-19 testing and safety measures would be standardized throughout the league whereas protocols for nonconference schools may be different.

"We certainly think we can still play our 24 league games where things are at now," Rohlik said. "Will we be able to play the 34 games (including nonconference)? Probably not. I don't think so. If we can get started in November, I think trying to get to that 30-game point could be vital."

If there are nonleague games, the Buckeyes would likely stay close to home, meaning the series at UConn would not be rescheduled. Instead, expect opponents within reasonable bus distance, say, Bowling Green and Miami, or schools in Michigan.

"The league's going to make that decision if they want us to play within the league," Rohlik said. "They made that decision right away with fall sports."

"We're limited somewhat to what the Big Ten decides, but we're certainly open if they believe health and safety can still be first and forefront and be able to play nonconference schools, whoever that is."

Until the schedule is posted, the players will continue with their eight hours a week of conditioning and on-ice activities in hopes of gearing for a season.

"The guys are going through lots of meetings on Zoom," Rohlik said. "Lots of compliance meetings, lots of academic meetings, training stuff. It's all what we normally would be doing, but usually we can do that in team meetings – sit down and talk together. Zoom's taken over our lives."

"Everything's changed from what we're used to. I think everybody thought once we shut down in March, not in our wildest dreams did we feel like we would be in this situation today."

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Coaches Wonder If Iowa's Program Cuts Will Spread

By PATRICK MAYHORN
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

When Iowa announced that it would be cutting men's and women's swim and dive, men's tennis and men's gymnastics on Aug. 21, it cited lost revenue as a result of the coronavirus pandemic as the guiding force behind the move. In an open letter, the Iowa athletic department explained that it expected to lose upwards of \$100 million this year and needed to reconcile some of those losses by tightening up the budget. The easiest way for a university to do that, as many have in the six months since the pandemic took hold in America, is to cut programs that don't generate much money.

"The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a financial exigency which threatens our continued ability to adequately support 24 intercollegiate athletics programs at the desired championship level," the open letter reads. "With the Big Ten Conference's postponement of fall competition on Aug. 11, University of Iowa Athletics now projects lost revenue of approximately \$100 million and an overall deficit between \$60-75 million this fiscal year. A loss of this magnitude will take years to overcome. We have a plan to recover, but the journey will be challenging.

"In that context, we are writing today with some extremely difficult news. In consultation with the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, we have made the decision to discontinue four of our varsity sports programs at the conclusion of the 2020-21 academic year: men's gymnastics, men's and women's swimming and diving, and men's tennis. Each of these teams will have the opportunity to compete in their upcoming 2020-21 seasons, should the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 permit, before they are discontinued at the varsity level."

Iowa was the first Big Ten university to cut programs in the wake of COVID-19 though it was followed by Minnesota – which cut four programs of its own on Sept. 10 – but is far from the first big domino to fall. Universities have been making similar moves since April, starting at the lower levels but moving all through the collegiate athletics community. One of the top athletic departments in the nation, Stanford, made major news in early July when it announced its intention to cut 11 of its 36 varsity sports, citing similar issues to those that Iowa presented.

Stanford estimates a deficit exceeding \$12 million as a result of the lost revenue in this academic year, while Iowa presents an even more drastic situation. The figures are similar all around the country. At Ohio State, the athletic department is projecting more than \$130 million in lost revenue this year, and the university has already announced budget cuts totaling \$252.2 million this fiscal year, the majority of which are coming from cuts in university operations. Those cuts come even with Ohio State dipping into a significant savings reserve.

"We've tried to do the best we can to balance the budget," board of trustees Chairman Gary R. Heminger told the trustees' advancement committee on Aug. 27. "The benefit that this university has is that we've had a significant amount of cash reserves to be able to help us bridge the gap over this pandemic that we're going through.

"That bridge is good in the shortfall, but that bridge doesn't span forever. That's what we certainly have to manage long term."

While the financial figures presented by these universities are certainly dire, there are questions in the sport business community about how much money is actually being lost and why making money quickly is such a priority.

"Iowa, in terms of pure revenue, is one of the largest athletic departments in the entire country," collegiate athletics business reporter Matt Brown told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "They bring in, according to last year's numbers that they sent to the department of education, over \$150 million a year. And they're able to do that because they have a really lucrative television contract with the Big Ten and one that is projected to get a lot more lucrative over the next several years as the Big Ten signs a new television rights deal in 2022. There's a real chance that Iowa is bringing in \$70 plus million dollars a year just from television conference distributions here by the end of the decade.

"So right now they clearly have a short-term cash problem, because you're probably not going to get most of that broadcast money this year, because you're not playing football in the fall. On top of that, Iowa was used to selling out its football stadium, which means money from tickets, money from selling concessions, from selling parking spaces, all the other gameday revenue. You're not getting that, but a lot of your expenses are still fixed. Iowa still has to pay the debt service for its facilities. It still has to pay its coaches. It has to pay for the academic support staff. So that's why departments are looking at this and realizing, 'Oh my gosh, we're in this terrible financial situation.'

"But unless you think that COVID is going to last for several years, or that Iowa's ability to make money in three or four years is irreparably damaged, what you have is a short-term financial problem, which you could pretty easily navigate by borrowing, which is actually what Iowa is about to do.

"However, when cutting programs to try to make up for that lost money, it's unclear how much return these universities will actually see and how much of a difference that will make in trying to close a deficit.

"When you look at the amount of money that these four sports cost, comparing that to the revenue, it's a tiny drop in the bucket. And that means if Iowa really has a cash problem, it's because it spent it on the wrong stuff, not that it doesn't have enough money coming in.

"I was talking with (executive director of the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America) Greg Earhart and we tried our hand at calculating the tuition revenue that's earned by these four programs, along with the actual hard and fast costs, and we came up with \$1.7 million," Brown explained. "I mean, at the high end, we're looking at maybe \$3 million, and these are savings that Iowa is not even going to realize for several years, because Iowa has already come out and said, 'We're going to honor the coaching contracts for all of these coaches that we're getting rid of. We're going to honor the scholarships.'

"You still have almost all of those costs coming in, outside of the very minimal operational gameday costs. So you're look-

ing at some really politically unpopular cuts, some cuts that are going to take away student opportunities, to maybe save \$1.7 million in three or four years from your \$151 million athletic department. That's just not very much money."

So why make these cuts at all? In Brown's view, there are two primary reasons.

"One: Iowa is looking to secure financing, it is trying to borrow money to help keep the athletic department solvent over the next year," Brown said. "That's an especially important thing in Iowa's department, because they have a really high debt service compared to many other public institutions. They borrowed a bunch of money to build some expensive facilities, and whether those facilities are being used or not, somebody from the school must pay.

"And I think Iowa's debt service annually is a little over \$10 million a year. So even if you lay off all the coaches, you don't play a single sporting event, you've still got to pay back \$10 million bucks. So it is possible that whoever Iowa is borrowing the money from, whether that's the university at large, a bank, a private donor, or even the Iowa state house, they might say, 'We want you to cut your future cash obligations.' And for political reasons or for visibility reasons, that could potentially require cutting the sports too. And then generally, if you're cutting one or two, you might have to cut a few more to be balanced with Title IX."

The second reason leans much closer to the concern from players and coaches of these sports at schools around the nation and of a fear that these kinds of cuts may be inevitable, even for athletic departments that don't desperately need the money.

"The other thing here is that Iowa may have decided it doesn't really want to be in the business of those sports anyway," Brown told BSB. "For men's gymnastics in particular, I think there's a reason this is a sport that's commonly near the top of the cut line because most schools across the country don't sponsor it. It's a little bit expensive, it's hard to find coaches, it's harder to recruit. And I think right now there might be two dozen schools that sponsor D1 men's gymnastics.

"So if you're an athletic director and you're thinking, 'Maybe in a couple of years I can get out of this program, it's probably not in our long-term future and I can put some of the blame on Kevin Warren or put some of the blame on COVID or somebody else for making this decision, that makes my life a little bit easier.' And then for every school that decides to cut men's gymnastics, that makes it easier then for another school to reach that same conclusion. There may be operational or political reasons for doing this, but it isn't about saving hard and fast cash right now."

Of the two reasons, that second option is far more dangerous for at-risk programs in the NCAA. The budget issues have been laid bare this summer, but department support for a program is a bit harder to quantify. Even if a school has enough money to continue funding all its programs, other institutions making these cuts provides a precedent for athletic departments to do the same without actually needing to, financially speaking. The rest of the Big Ten may not need to make program cuts, but that doesn't mean that other universities won't take a hard look at getting out of some sports that they no longer want to be in.

"I don't think anybody in the Big Ten

except for maybe Rutgers needs to do this, but they certainly now have the political coverage to do this," Brown said. "And I wouldn't be shocked if Ohio State looked at their number of their sports because I believe Ohio State sponsors more varsity sports now than any other FBS institution.

"They might decide that they can provide a better athlete experience if they sponsor two or three fewer sports. They wouldn't need to do that because they couldn't afford it, but that might just be a strategic decision and that I think could potentially be defensible as long as they don't say it's because we're broke because obviously you're not broke. The sports that I would be most concerned about on the Olympic level would be men's gymnastics and men's and women's tennis."

For Ohio State, the concerns among the coaching fraternity may not be as serious as they are elsewhere in the conference, as the Buckeyes bring in more money than almost any other program in America, but that doesn't mean that they aren't there. Women's soccer coach Lori Walker-Hock told The Columbus Dispatch that she's "fearful that changes would happen within our department" in the wake of the pandemic.

Ohio State declined a BSB request to speak to several coaches of sports that have been impacted elsewhere.

"Our coaches aren't going to comment on other schools' situations at this time as they just don't know the details behind all of the decisions," an Ohio State spokesman told BSB.

Athletic director Gene Smith told reporters in July that Ohio State wasn't planning to cut any sports, but that was before the postponement of the fall Big Ten football season, the biggest money maker in college sports.

"At this point in time, we're avoiding that," Smith said. "We have to do some work on our budget. We've got a lot of work to do as we ultimately make some decisions."

Smith echoed those sentiments in a conversation with BSB in July but was quick to mention that the university was still looking for clarity moving forward before making any sort of decisions.

"We don't know yet the total depth of the impact," Smith told BSB in July. "Everyone is tightening their belts, and we'll talk about this publicly later, probably in August when we have clarity. But at the end of the day, everyone is being smart and being frugal. We've done some reductions here and there, but at this point in time, we're just waiting until we make our football decision, get into August and have more clarity.

"The coaches have done a good job of tightening their budgets, but keep in mind that we have expenditure savings because we didn't have spring sports. We didn't have baseball games, softball games and those operations, so those were significant savings for us. We feel good about how our Olympic sports have done, and now we just have to wait and see what we look like in August."

August has come and gone, and with it went the certainty that a football season provides for an athletic department like Ohio State's. Without that security and with programs dropping across the country, the Buckeyes may have some questions to answer sooner than later about continuing to carry their 36 varsity sports.

Nebraska Players File Lawsuit Against Big Ten

Eight players from the Nebraska football team are suing the Big Ten, requesting an order to invalidate the conference's decision to cancel fall sports.

The plaintiffs in the 13-page lawsuit are Nebraska football players Garrett Snodgrass, Garrett Nelson, Ethan Piper, Noa Pola-Gates, Alante Brown, Brant Banks, Brig Banks and Jackson Hannah. The Husker players are seeking damages of less than \$75,000 and for the fall season to be restored, according to the suit.

BIG TEN NOTES

Joe Dempsey

Although Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren had said the vote by the Big Ten Council of Presidents and Chancellors was "overwhelmingly in support of postponing fall sports and will not be revisited," the suit said that the council did not vote on whether to cancel the fall football season.

Minnesota President Joan Gabel and Michigan State President Samuel Stanley, Jr. are referenced by the suit as being quoted that the council did not vote on the decision to cancel or postpone the 2020 fall football season.

The suit states that this is "a case in which a powerful collegiate athletic conference con-



NEBRASKA FOOTBALL/TWITTER

COURT CASE – Eight Nebraska football players, including redshirt freshman linebacker Garrett Nelson, filed a lawsuit against the Big Ten seeking damages of less than \$75,000 and asking for the conference to restore the fall football season.





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tends that its student athletes have no rights.”

“Even though its decision significantly and directly affects the rights and opportunities of student athletes at its member institutions, the Big Ten has rejected calls for transparency and refuses to provide documents supporting its claim that a vote was taken or that a proper process was followed,” the lawsuit states. “As a result of the failure of process, the student-athlete plaintiffs have been irreparably harmed.”

Minnesota Cutting Several Men's Olympic Sports

Minnesota announced that it will eliminate four varsity sports: men's indoor track and field, men's outdoor track and field, men's gymnastics and men's tennis.

The school is facing an estimated revenue loss of \$75 million this fiscal year.

The only obstacle for the discontinuation of the sports is a board of regents vote. If approved, all four sports will be eliminated from the athletics department after the 2020-21 season. It will directly affect 58 student-athletes.

“Once we determined that we simply are no longer able to sustain 25 sports financially, we reviewed our overall sport offering with an eye toward a sports sponsorship model that would provide sustainable, competitive and equitable participation opportunities for our remaining programs,” Minnesota athletic director Mark Coyle said.

“Due to recent shifts in our female and male undergraduate demographics, we also needed to take steps to ensure compliance with our commitment to provide gender-equitable participation opportunities for our students consistent with federal law requirements. We also considered community impact, local and national interest, competitiveness, and sport sponsorship at the Big Ten and NCAA Division I level.”

Purdue Coaches, AD Volunteer To Take Pay Cut

Purdue head football coach Jeff Brohm, head basketball coaches Matt Painter and Sharon Versyp and athletic director Mike Bobinski voluntarily took a 20 percent pay cut and agreed to give up money from incentives.

Athletic department officials are projecting the Boilermakers could face a budget deficit of more than \$50 million.

The other head coaches and assistant coaches at Purdue will voluntarily take 15 percent pay cuts, while other staff members are facing reductions in force, reduced work schedules, furloughs or salary cuts ranging from 5-50 percent.

Additionally, Brohm, Painter, Versyp and Bobinski agreed to donate \$1 million to the school's More Than A Game fund for Purdue's day of giving campaign.

Wisconsin Football, Hockey Teams Take Break Due To COVID-19

Wisconsin's football and men's hockey teams announced on Sept. 9 a two-week break after COVID-19 outbreaks caused issues on campus.

“We have been conducting our own COVID-19 testing of student-athletes and staff on a regular basis since early June and will continue to do so,” Wisconsin athletic director Barry Alvarez said in the statement. “Since we began testing in athletics, our decision-making has been guided by our own test results. That continues to be our plan going forward.”

“I can also confirm that our football and men's hockey teams will take a two-week break from team activities per our COVID-19 testing protocols.”

A Wisconsin official added, “Test results dictated that we pause team activities for those two sports.”

The Badgers' athletic department last publicized its COVID-19 case numbers in early August, at which time 21 of 259 student-athletes tested from June until then were COVID-19 positive. In the two weeks after most students returned to campus, the total number of infections on campus was more than 1,000.

COVID-19 test results are not broken down by team or date of test, and football and men's hockey were the only two sports to pause activities due to test results.

Michigan State Students Asked To Quarantine Amid Outbreak

Health officials asked Michigan State students to self-quarantine immediately after parties contributed to 342 new COVID-19 cases.

“At least a third of new cases recently attended parties or social gatherings, and at least one third of those gatherings are associated with a fraternity or sorority,” the Ingham County Health Department said in a statement.

Students were asked to self-quarantine for 14 days, but they are permitted to attend “in-person instruction, labs, and intercollegiate athletic training,” the health department said.

“They may also leave their homes to work or to obtain food, medicine, medical care, or supplies that are needed to sustain or protect life when such cannot be obtained via delivery,” the health department added.

The hundreds of new COVID-19 cases at the school date to Aug. 24, the health department said. Only 23 people had tested positive before that date.

“This is an urgent situation,” said Ingham County Health Officer Linda S. Vail. “The exponential growth of COVID-19 cases must stop.”

The outbreak started as students returned to the East Lansing area for the fall semester, the department said. Most MSU classes are online but “many students had binding off-campus leases or simply desired to physically return to the university community.”

“MSU is committed to doing everything we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” David Weismantel, a Michigan State physician said. “The safety of our entire community is a priority, and we all have a role to play in preventing the spread of the virus. This recommendation from the health department is another tool to help us do just that.”

The quarantine recommendation is not an “emergency order,” but the health department warned that “more stringent and mandatory restrictions will be imposed if students do not comply and break the transmission cycle.”

NU To Have No Underclassmen On Campus Due To COVID-19

Northwestern will not have freshmen and sophomore students back on campus or

in residence halls for the fall term and will keep sorority and fraternity houses closed, which is in stark contrast to the school's initial plan.

During a community town hall meeting, Northwestern officials had said that the campus would open but with a reduced residence hall capacity and many employees still working from home.

“This is not a letter we wanted to write, but we are compelled to make several adjustments to our plans for undergraduate students this fall after consulting with Northwestern Medicine experts as well as state and local public health officials,” officials wrote in a community-wide email. “We also have studied COVID-19's increasing spread through suburban Chicago, listened to your feedback, and learned from our peer institutions' experiences during the early stages of reopening their campuses.”

All first- and second-year students will entirely shift to remote learning, and officials said they “discourage” those students from returning to the Evanston, Ill., area for the fall quarter, with limited exceptions.

Fraternities and sororities will remain closed until the winter quarter (Jan. 4). The student affairs office will work with third- and fourth-year students who live in those houses to find alternative housing, according to the email.

“These changes are designed to reduce the density of our Evanston campus residential housing; preserve the on-campus experience for as many third- and fourth-year undergraduates, graduate students and professional students as possible; allow for more quarantine and isolation spaces on campus; and respond to the pandemic's spread,” the announcement said.

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Big Ten Should Reveal Reasons For Cancellation

When it comes to COVID-19, I'm on the cautious side. But the Big Ten presidents' decision on Aug. 11 to cancel the fall football season without a detailed explanation still makes no sense to me more than a month later.

Would the season eventually have to be canceled? Maybe.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

But there was no need to rush to judgment so early, well before the "scheduled" start of the season and far, far ahead of when it could possibly have been pushed back – to late September or even October.

Already, high school football is taking place in Ohio, with the blessing of the governor's office.

So is the NFL, which received special permission from the governor to put up to 6,000 fans in the stands as a trial for two games each in Cincinnati and Cleveland. Neither the high school nor NFL decisions may prove to be wise.

But the Big Ten canceled early, though many if not most member schools had the wherewithal far beyond the means of any high school to provide safety to the players and staff.

Maybe in the end, the Big Ten will turn out to be the smart league in the bunch. But being "smart" is hard to determine when there is no real explanation.

The decision would have been more easily understood if the presidents of the 13 public universities in the Big Ten had explained why it was so necessary to cancel so early. It would have been

more easily understood if the Big Ten had immediately said the decision was the result of an 11-3 vote of university presidents. And it would have been more easily understood if Commissioner Kevin Warren had held a news conference, explained the reasoning and answered legitimate questions.

After all, he is the president of a conference that includes – I repeat – 13 public universities.

Instead, the decision was clouded in secrecy. That's no way to sell what you're doing as making sense. Put together your case, explain it in detail and maybe more people will agree that what the Big Ten did was right.

Money Matters

Give the Big Ten presidents credit for this, however. They didn't let money drive their decisions. Otherwise, there were billions of reasons to let the games go on.

Big Ten schools spend close to \$2 billion on sports, according to the latest NCAA financial reports that were filed for the 2018-19 school year. (The 2019-20 reports won't be submitted until December.)

Many of those bills won't go away. More than \$220 million was spent on athletic scholarships. Coaches' salaries topped more than \$320 million. Administrators and staff were paid another \$330 million-plus. Right there you are approaching \$1 billion in bills, most of which will remain with or without a football season.

And the chief generator of that money – football – is gone, at least for the time being. Close to \$500 million was collected from media rights, close to \$400 million from ticket sales. Suffice it to say, football is the driver there as well.

Ohio State spent \$221 million on its athletic program in 2018-19. Of the \$59.8 million OSU raised in ticket revenue, \$50.6 million came from football. Those are big dollars to be out even for the richest of the Big Ten athletic programs.

Ohio State that year spent \$22.1 million on athletic scholarships for 718 athletes, some receiving partial scholarships. It spent another \$39.3 million on coaches, and \$38.1 million on administrators and staff. (Side note here, that's more than triple on employees than student-athletes.)

In a way, the smaller programs have less to lose.

Purdue took in \$7 million in football ticket revenue that same year, Indiana \$6.8 million, Illinois \$6.1 million and Maryland \$5.9 million. Those were the four lowest of the 13 reporting schools.

Northwestern, as a private school, does not make its athletic finances public.

Pro Money

Speaking of money, I decided to check in on how former Buckeyes are doing with the start of the NFL season.

Keep in mind that most NFL contracts aren't guaranteed for the full term, so a lot of the cash is paid out up front as bonuses in year one of multiyear contracts.

Here's what is reported by the salary-tracking website spotrac.com for NFL veterans from Ohio State:

Number 2 in the league for pay this year, behind Russell Wilson's \$53 million, is San Diego Chargers defensive end Joey Bosa, taking in \$43 million in salary (\$1 million), a signing bonus (\$35 million) and a roster bonus (\$7 million). His new five-year contract is worth \$135 million.

Dallas running back Ezekiel Elliott ranks 37th with \$19.8 million, part of a six-year, \$90 million contract.

New Orleans wide receiver Michael Thomas is tied for 149th at \$11 million as part of a five-year \$96.3 million deal that paid him \$21.6 million last season in total.

New Orleans defensive back Malcom Jenkins is tied for 178th at \$10.05 million, part of his four-year \$32 million deal.

Rookie Money

Three rookies with Ohio State ties however, rank above Elliott. This is because their big bonuses came this year in signing their first contracts.

You can see how the money quickly drops off by looking at these deals ranging from No. 1 overall pick Joe Burrow to that for J.K. Dobbins, taken in the second round. Each of these deals is for four years.

OSU/LSU quarterback Joe Burrow is getting \$24.5 million of his \$36.2 million deal this year as the top pick in the draft. His pay this year ranks 17th among all NFL players.

Defensive end Chase Young as the second pick is getting \$23.3 million this year (21st overall) of his \$34.6 million contract.

Cornerback Jeff Okudah, as the third pick, is getting \$22.5 million this year (22nd overall) of his \$33.5 million contract this season.

Defensive back Damon Arnette, the 19th pick overall, is getting \$7.9 (254th overall) of his \$13.4 million deal.

Running back J.K. Dobbins was chosen 55th overall. He'll be paid \$2.3 million this year (587th overall) as part of his \$5.7 million contract.

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Very, Very Good Isn't Good Enough For Hall

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Did you know that there is such a thing as the NFL Hall of Very Good, as created by the Professional Football Researchers Association?

"Begun in 2002, the Hall of Very Good seeks to honor outstanding players and coaches who are not in the Hall of Fame," the PFRA states on its website.

The list of the "Very Good" is fascinating, as it includes many players I assumed were already enshrined in Canton. In fact, it appears that 26 players who were originally in the Hall of Very Good were eventually enshrined in the actual NFL Hall of Fame. Among those were Harold Carmichael, Carl Eller, Bob Hayes, Gene Hickerson, Alex Karras, Jerry Kramer, Ken Stabler and Mick Tingelhoff, just to name a few.

Now some of you probably follow the goings on in Canton more closely than I do and might be more familiar with who is and isn't enshrined in the real Hall of Fame. But look at the PFRA list and see if there isn't somebody there that you assumed was already immortalized. Just google "PFRA Hall of Very Good."

But before you do so, consider this trivia question. There are four former Ohio State football players who have been inducted into the Hall of Very Good. Three of them are linemen on one side of the ball or the other, the other a linebacker. I was surprised to learn that three of them did not already have their busts in Canton.

Give it some thought. I'll get to the answer later.

To Play Or Not To Play

My neighbor Crissy Hanna, mother of my good friends Harlee and Houck Hanna, stopped me on the street the other day.

"Do you think they are going to play football?" she asked.

"That's the 10th time I've been asked that today," I told her.

"Well, I guess I'm the 11th."

"I'm going to tell you what I told the others," I said. "Your guess is as good as mine."

I'm sure I have spoken to many of you on the phone over the last few weeks, and you asked the same question. And my answer was the same.

"Your guess is as good as mine."

I want to promise Crissy, our loyal BSB subscribers and any random person who has randomly asked me here or there. I was not trying to be flip or evasive when you have asked.

Honestly: "Your guess is as good as mine."

Every expert or so-called expert from New York to Los Angeles has offered up their opinion in the last few weeks, but it always proves to be just their opinion, even though it is always based on an impeccable source.

I don't think Gene Smith or President Johnson knows (or knew, pending any firm news) whether – and certainly when – the Buckeyes and the Big Ten are going to play. That leaves Ernie Internet and Randy Radio and Teddy Television to speculate. At least I haven't been proven wrong with my constant and candid response.

We thought we might have an answer for you by the time we went to press, but that seems to have fallen by the wayside. Let me remind you that we are monitoring the situation on our BuckeyeSports.com website, so be sure to check there daily – or even hourly as the situation can change rapidly – and don't forget to put your two cents' worth on the Forum. As you can imagine, the discussion between the readers and the BSB staff has been lively as posters and staffers join Ernie and Randy and Teddy in the speculation.

Whatever decision the Big Ten ultimately

makes, I hope it is based on safety and science and not perceived pressure because other conferences are carrying on. There have already been problems early in those conferences' schedules, and there will be more to come. It only takes one positive test to create myriad problems.

One thing continues to bother me, and I devoted a lot of space in this column last issue to this subject, so I won't overwhelm you again. But I want to repeat it because I truly believe it. If the virus is serious enough that only 20 or 25 percent of normal capacity will be allowed to attend a game, or in some cases no fans will be allowed to attend at all, why is it safe enough for the athletes to sweat and slobber over each other, congregate in the locker room and on the sideline? I don't care what the protocols are. Either it's safe for all of us or it's not safe for any of us.

These aren't people being thrown to the lions for our mass amusement. These are student-athletes and should be treated with even greater concern than we are.

Again, make the decision on safety and science, not on the fact that all of us miss our beloved Buckeyes.

Trivia Answer

The four former Buckeyes inducted into the Professional Football Researchers Association Hall of Very Good are Randy Gradishar, Jim Marshall, Dick Schafrath and Jim Tyrer.

Readers of this column may recall that I expressed my surprise that Gradishar was not already in the Hall of Fame in the recent May issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, and I made my impassioned case for the former Ohio State and Denver Broncos player's induction at that time. That issue of BSB is archived at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com if you want to recall my reasoning.

I also would have assumed that Marshall and Schafrath were in.

Marshall, who played on Ohio State's 1957 national championship team and had a 19-year career with the Minnesota Vikings, playing until he was 42, is probably best known to the casual fan for his famous wrong-way run against San Francisco in 1964.

"But it was his performance at right defensive end as part of the Purple People Eaters during Minnesota's great 1968-78 run that is most noteworthy," the PFRA says in Marshall's profile. "The Vikings won ten division titles and went to four Super Bowls during Marshall's career."

"Their defense was often overpowering and led the NFL in numerous categories during the Purple People Eaters heyday. Perhaps most impressive was a three-year run (1969-71) when they allowed less than ten points per game and led the league all three years in fewest points. Marshall once held NFL records for most consecutive games played and started, and still holds records for most opponent fumbles recovered in a career (29) and most consecutive games played by a defensive end (282)."

It's notable that two of Marshall's fellow Purple People Eaters, Carl Eller and Alan Page, are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Schafrath also played on the 1957 Buckeye national champions, and more importantly to Browns fans, he was a key cog for Cleveland's famed 1964 NFL champions.

"Dick Schafrath took over Cleveland's start-

ing left tackle job in 1960 and held it for the rest of his career," the PFRA says of Schafrath, who retired after the 1971 season. "Along the way, he was selected to six Pro Bowls, was a consensus first-team all-pro three times and a second-team or all-conference selection several other times."

"From 1963 through 1969, the Browns featured one of the most potent running games in history, with Schafrath and Gene Hickerson leading the way. All told, Schafrath blocked for three Hall of Fame running backs: Jim Brown, Bobby Mitchell, and Leroy Kelly. The Browns led the NFL in rushing yards four times and in numerous other rushing categories during Schafrath's tenure while Brown won six rushing titles and Kelly two."

Among the players from the 1964 Browns team who are already in the Pro Football Hall of Fame are Brown, Lou Groza, Gene Hickerson, Kelly, and Paul Warfield. Groza and Warfield, of course, are former Buckeyes.

And then there is Tyrer.

I guess I hadn't thought much about Tyrer either way through the years. As I am sure I have stated in this space somewhere in the last 39 years, I was a huge fan of the old AFL in my youth and, accordingly, was quite familiar with him and knew how dominant he was in that league, helping his Kansas City Chiefs to the very first Super Bowl. Yet despite spending the bulk of my adult life covering Ohio State football, I never really gave Tyrer much thought as a Buckeye and had kind of forgotten about him as a pro.

He was indirectly involved with my only meeting with Woody Hayes, and it was a bit of a strange meeting at that.

I was cobbling together a modest living working simultaneously for both the old Buckeye Leaves and The Dispatch in 1980. I was the low man on the totem pole at The Dispatch, but I was assigned the story of Tyrer's murder/suicide with his wife back in September of that year. For this cub reporter, it was a pretty big assignment.

I filed my story, and along the way to the press, longtime Hayes confidant and Dispatch sportswriter Paul Hornung intercepted the story and called Woody and got some quotes, which he added to the article which ran under my byline.

In one of the truly strange coincidences of my life, that afternoon I put on my Buckeye Leaves hat and went up to campus to cover a story. I bumped into Woody on the street outside his office at the ROTC building. I felt obligated to tell him about the Tyrer story and how it included quotes from the coach, even though I had never met Woody.

"Coach, I'm Frank Moskowitz and I am the one who wrote the story in The Dispatch about Jim Tyrer. Mr. Hornung added the quotes, and I am sorry they ran the story under my byline."

Woody was clearly less bothered by all of this than I. Obviously, he knew that Hornung had gotten the quotes from him, and in retrospect, I am sure he was way more concerned with the tragedy involving one of his former players than he was about whose byline ran on the story.

While in later years I became friends with Mrs. Hayes, as mentioned, that was my only encounter with Woody.

And despite that being a fairly significant encounter in my journalistic career, I still hadn't

given much thought to Tyrer through the years.

After I stumbled across the Hall of Very Good, I got to wondering why Buckeye fans, myself included, seem to give little consideration to Tyrer, a giant of a man, when they consider the Ohio State offensive line greats through the years.

People talk about Jim Parker or John Hicks or Orlando Pace, but seldom Jim Tyrer. He is not in the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame. If you look at the four Ohio State players mentioned from the NFL Hall of Very Good, with the possible exception of Gradishar, Tyrer probably has the best pro credentials. Yet hardly a peep.

After pondering this for a while, I sent BSB managing editor emeritus Mark Rea off to figure out the life and times of Jim Tyrer and why he is not among the pantheon of Ohio State offensive linemen. The results of Mark's efforts can be found on pages 26-27 of this issue.

Buckeye football historian Jack Park makes a good point in Mark's story about Tyrer having played in a rare and brief downtime in Ohio State football, with the Buckeyes posting a 3-5-1 record in 1959 and never finishing higher than third in the Big Ten during his stay, which may affect Buckeye fans' recall of Tyrer. Tyrer also did not receive as many college accolades as some of the other Buckeye big men.

There seems to be some difference of opinion between Park and former Buckeye and longtime Baltimore Colts star Tom Matte, a teammate of Tyrer's in Columbus, on where Tyrer fits in among the Buckeye greats.

"I'm not sure who you would consider a better offensive lineman that ever came out of Ohio State," Matte told Mark. "Maybe Jim Parker. Maybe Orlando Pace. But I'm telling you that Jim Tyrer was right there with those guys. He was one of the best offensive linemen the Buckeyes have ever had."

Keep in mind Matte played with Parker for seven seasons with the Colts.

Park seemed to feel Tyrer's greater achievements came as a pro.

"I know he had a fine pro career, and I'm not sure why he isn't in the Pro Football Hall of Fame," Park said. "As for the greatest offensive linemen in Ohio State history, I don't know that I could rank him with Jim Parker, John Hicks, Chris Ward or Orlando Pace."

The always reliable Wikipedia has this to say about why Tyrer is not in the pro Hall of Fame: "Tyrer's playing credentials compare favorably with NFL linemen in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. However, several factors evidently mitigate against his induction. 1) The murder of his wife and Tyrer's subsequent suicide on September 15, 1980. 2) Many of his teammates have been inducted, and selectors tend to shy away from enshrining too many from the same team. 3) Modern selectors may have little knowledge of the American Football League or believe it was an inferior league."

It is true that many of Tyrer's teammates with the Chiefs are already in Canton – eight of them, as well as the team's owner (Lamar Hunt) and coach (Hank Stram), to be exact. As far as the AFL being inferior, when the league finally completely merged with the NFL in 1970, Tyrer, a perennial All-AFL standout in his first nine seasons with the upstarts, was All-Pro his first two seasons in the more established league, indicating he would have been a star either way.

As for the murder/suicide, Kevin Patrick Allen, director of the documentary titled "A Good Man – The Jim Tyrer Story," says: "The only reason Jim Tyrer is forgotten, despite his spectacular life, is the last 10 seconds (of that life) were horrible."



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