

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 7, 2020

## *Fast Start Fuels Buckeyes' Victory In Happy Valley*

By ANDREW LIND  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Every time Ohio State travels to Penn State, the Buckeyes are met by one of the most intimidating atmospheres in college football. More than 110,000 screaming fans clad in white, shaking their pompoms and creating a deafening roar that makes it difficult for even the best quarterbacks to communicate with their teammates.

This year, though, the seats were mostly empty, aside from the cardboard cutouts in the student section and family members scattered across the stands. But had the stadium been full, it wouldn't have taken Ohio State very long to silence the crowd.

On the first play from scrimmage, sophomore wide receiver Garrett Wilson took a handoff on an end-around and raced 62 yards down the sideline to the Nittany Lions' 13-yard line. Two plays later, sophomore running back Master Teague powered his way into the end zone to give the Buckeyes a 7-0 lead just one minute and 17 seconds into the game.

"I thought, offensively, we got off to a good start," Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said after the game. "I thought we had good balance, we controlled the ball."

The Buckeyes got the ball back in Penn State territory after the Nittany Lions went for it on fourth-and-2 from their own 45-yard line and Sean Clifford's ball fell incomplete under pressure from senior linebacker Pete Werner.

Ohio State then took advantage of the short field, with junior quarterback Justin Fields finding junior wide receiver Chris Olave for a 26-yard touchdown to extend the lead to 14-0 less than seven minutes into the game.

After the defense held Penn State to a field goal and the two teams exchanged a couple of possessions, Fields hit a wide-open junior tight end Jeremy Ruckert to put the Buckeyes up 21-3.

"I thought Justin played excellent," Day said. "He threw some really good balls. I thought the third-down throw to Ruckert was a huge play in the game after the snap over his head (two plays prior). Overall, just a gutsy win on the road. Hard to win here. I'm proud of our guys."

After forcing a three-and-out on the subsequent possession, Ohio State seemed content to go into the half with an 18-point lead. But an odd sequence that included an intentional delay of game and a kneel-down on



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

**WASTED NO TIME – Ohio State running back Master Teague scored a 4-yard touchdown just three plays into the game, giving the Buckeyes a lead they would not relinquish at Penn State.**

fourth-and-6 gave Penn State the ball back in field-goal range with just one second remaining.

"That was probably the most bizarre thing I've ever experienced," Day said. "There was two seconds on the clock and we took a long knee that probably took four seconds, so it was completely mismanaged. I'd rather not get into it. Once it happened, we just had to move on and put it behind us. There was nothing we could do at that point."

"I mean, there's two seconds on the clock and we take the snap, Justin waits, waits, waits, waits, waits and takes a knee. I don't know how that took one second. They said it came down from replay, and that's all I know. It was obviously extremely frustrating, but that's just another

thing we overcame."

The Nittany Lions made the 50-yard field goal as time expired then carried that momentum into the second half and put together an eight-play, 75-yard scoring drive to cut the Buckeyes' lead to 21-13.

"The play at the end of the half was strange," Penn State head coach James Franklin said after the game. "I'm not going to argue it a whole lot, we got points out of it, but it was definitely strange."

"Being able to end the first half with some points and then being able to come out in the second half and be able to do some good things knowing we were getting the ball

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# FAN FORUM

## Buckeye Leaves

*Ohio State jumped out to an early 14-0 lead and held on the rest of the way for a 38-25 victory over Penn State in Happy Valley. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff distributed Buckeye Leaves to the deserving players who stood out against the Nittany Lions on Oct. 31, as did BSB readers.*

**Wyatt Crosher, BSB:** “The defensive line stepped up in a big way for Ohio State, and nobody stepped up more on the line than Tommy Togiai.

“After a pretty modest opening game against Nebraska, Togiai exploded against the Nittany Lions, recording a team-high seven tackles, four solos and three sacks, the first three sacks of his Ohio State career.

“And somehow, despite the crazy strong numbers, it does not tell the whole tale, with him and fellow interior lineman Haskell Garrett constantly finding their way into the Penn State backfield to mess with quarterback Sean Clifford.

“This was a monstrous Halloween night for the D-line, and Togiai was the scariest of them all.”

**Joe Dempsey, BSB:** “Justin Fields played his first game at Penn State, where he was once committed, and showed the Nittany Lions what they were missing. The standout junior signal caller earned a Buckeye leaf, completing 28 of 34 passes for 318 yards and four touchdowns in the Buckeyes’ 38-25 victory at Happy Valley.

“Fields’ performance had tremendous stats to back it up, but his excellence went beyond the box score. The dual-threat quarterback dropped dime after dime to his receivers, beating solid coverage with outstanding throws all night long.

“Garrett Wilson also deserves recognition for his playmaking

and consistency, hauling in 11 catches for 111 yards after opening the game with a 62-yard rush on an end-around. Wilson reeled in six first downs, with four coming on third down.

“Master Teague also gave the Buckeyes a boost with his running ability, tallying 110 yards and one score on 23 carries, including a long burst of 31 yards.”

**Andrew Lind, BSB:** “Some wondered if Chris Olave would even play against Penn State after he suffered an apparent head injury in the season-opening win over Nebraska. But based on Ohio State’s offensive game plan, it was clear the staff was never worried about his status.

“Olave snagged a 26-yard touchdown pass over cornerback Joey Porter to put the Buckeyes ahead 14-0 less than seven minutes into the game. And when the Nittany Lions opened the second half with a long touchdown drive to cut the lead to 21-13, he hauled in a 49-yard touchdown reception to halt the momentum.

“Olave finished the game with seven catches for a team-high 120 yards and two scores, topping the 100-yard mark for the second straight game and continuing to try to put that Fiesta Bowl mistake behind him.”

**Patrick Mayhorn, BSB:** “After a shaky start to the season in a 52-17 win over Nebraska on Oct. 24, the Ohio State defensive line responded in a massive way against Penn State, and captain Jonathon Cooper was among the best performers in the group.

“Cooper was strong on the stat sheet against the Nittany Lions with five tackles and half a sack, but it felt as though he was in the backfield on every single play. His presence seemed to bother PSU quarterback Sean Clifford all night long.

“The Nittany Lions were never able to establish a downfield passing attack because Clifford was consistently dealing with No. 0 in the backfield, as Cooper beat right tackle Will Fries play after play

to blow into the backfield. Some of his most impressive plays, like a bull rush that nearly knocked tight end Pat Freiermuth into Clifford in the third quarter, didn’t even show up in the final stats.

“In a game where Ohio State knew it would need its leaders to step up, Cooper rose to the occasion and put forth what might have been his best performance as a Buckeye. He absolutely deserves a Buckeye leaf this week.”

**Mark Rea, BSB:** “Justin Fields, obviously. Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson, obviously. Master Teague for his second career 100-yard game.

“But let me give credit where credit is due. I have been as critical of Pete Werner and Tuf Borland as anyone (maybe more so), but each veteran linebacker played well – indeed, very well – against Penn State. I don’t know what got into them, or who lit a fire under whose you-know-what, but both Werner and Borland played assignment football and initiated action rather than let the action come to them. Let’s hope that continues.”

### BSB Subscribers

“The entire D-line and O-line for displaying championship form, especially Tommy Togiai and Jonathon Cooper. The trio of Justin Fields, Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson for another unstoppable and dominating performance. Master Teague for a physical and consistent performance. All the tight ends for contributing with skill and physicality. The linebackers Tuf Borland and Pete Werner for an awesome game. Marcus Hooker for his energy and sensational play. The offensive coaching staff for involving the tight ends so well, and the defensive coaching staff for containing a very good dual-threat QB to net single-digit rushing yards.”

– AnthonyBuckeye



## From The Message Board

**Ohio State moved to 2-0 on the season following a 38-25 win over Penn State in a game that many considered to be the most difficult on the Buckeyes’ schedule. Now, following the win and with Michigan falling to Michigan State 27-24 on Saturday, we asked readers on the Buckeye Sports Bulletin Fan Forum, as well as staff writers, which remaining game is the toughest on the schedule for Ohio State. Here are some of the responses:**

“I honestly would be disappointed if they lose one game. They are marginally above and beyond the best team in the B1G and I don’t think there is another team in the conference that can keep up with them for a full 60 min.”

– Tiffin Buckeye

“Only two Cs: complacency and COVID-19. Teams might not be able to play because of the virus even if OSU stays free of infections. Complacency is the only other obstacle. The score vs. Penn State should have been 44-22, or worse.”

– Terrier Buck

“Hate to say it but I still think it’s Michigan. Much like I rolled my eyes after the media’s reaction to their beat down of Minnesota because we didn’t know what kind of a team Minnesota really had (that answer came quickly), I’m going to hold out on exactly how bad their loss to Sparty really was. Yes, I know Sparty lost to Rutgers, but they turned the ball over seven times. I will withhold judgement until I have a bigger sample size.”

– btsu9

“With Harbaugh fighting to save his job, it has to be TTUN. Do I think they will win? Doubtful, but it still is The Game.”

– Mcarr

“I will say TTUN even though they may be subpar. They reach inside deep to fight us every year. Their QB will be jazzed up. It will be a fight.”

– PeyoteBuck

“TTUN always has a chance. It is The Game, after all. I suppose Indiana does too, if the planets align like they did for Iowa and Purdue in years past, though those games were on the road. Michigan State ended Ohio State’s title dreams in 1998, but I don’t think they have the firepower (or the coach) this year. Nope, I’ll say only the coronavirus or an injury to Justin Fields can stop the Buckeyes the remainder of the regular season way.”

– Poster That Harley Built

“Would it be wrong to say the only thing that can stop the Buckeyes is themselves? Ohio State should win every game left on its schedule by 10+ points, including whoever it faces in the Big Ten Championship Game. It’s simply going to be a matter of the Buckeyes not having any letdowns on the road or sleepwalking through presumed snoozers against lesser opponents at home. Penn State was the closest team on the schedule in terms of talent, yet the game really wasn’t as close as the score would suggest. If you force me to pick an opponent, though, I’ll say Indiana. The Hoosiers have some talent on offense that could pose a threat and plenty of confidence after starting the season off with wins over Penn State and Rutgers.”

– Andrew Lind, BSB

“I think it’s Indiana. Michael Penix looks like the No. 2 quarterback in the conference through two weeks, and I think that the IU defense is at least capable, whereas Michigan’s has looked downright awful in stretches so far. If that offensive line can round into form and help out halfback Stevie Scott, Indiana becomes pretty dangerous on offense and could be a top 15 or top 10 team by the time it makes the trip to Columbus. With that said, I don’t see any team left on the schedule seriously threatening the Buckeyes, even including the Big Ten West winner. It’s a testament to Ohio State certainly, but also to this being a pretty bad year for the conference from top to bottom.”

– Patrick Mayhorn, BSB

“Michigan really looked lackluster against Michigan State or else I would have to pick them. Currently, I would say Ohio State’s toughest test on the schedule is that Big Ten Championship, which, if they play enough games, seems likely to be the Wisconsin Badgers. Of all the other Big Ten teams besides Ohio State, Wisconsin has easily looked the best to me, with Northwestern or maybe Indiana coming in a distant third.

“If you are going strictly with who is on the schedule, I think Indiana will put up the best fight of teams remaining, but the only team in the conference that I think has even a remote chance to beat the Buckeyes is the Badgers.”

– Wyatt Crosher, BSB



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No. 1	Sept. 19	No. 7	Nov. 21
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No. 5	Nov. 7	No. 11	Dec. 19
No. 6	Nov. 14	No. 12	Dec. 26

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

The next issue (Nov. 14 cover date) will be mailed on Nov. 10.

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## OPINION

# Fields Leads OSU Victory Against Penn State

I never thought I'd see a better quarterback wear an Ohio State uniform than Art Schlichter, and that opinion remained rock-solid for about 25 years until Troy Smith came along. Then I saw Dwayne Haskins, and I never thought I'd see a better OSU quarterback than him. And now there's Justin Fields, who features the flash and dash of Schlichter, the steely resolve of Smith, and the arm strength and accuracy of Haskins.

Fields, who operated with surgeon-like precision during the Buckeyes' season opener against Nebraska, one-upped himself with his Oct. 31 performance during a 38-25 decision against Penn State in a game that was not nearly as close at the final score might indicate.

The 6-3, 228-pound junior from Georgia connected on his first seven pass attempts against the Nittany Lions and finished 28 of 34 for 318 yards and four touchdowns. Fields proved he could make every throw in the book, whether it was tossing laser-beam clotheslines on slant patterns, back-shoulder throws on the boundary or majestic downfield rainbows into the hands of his talented receivers.

It must have been particularly galling for Penn State head coach James Franklin, who once had Fields verbally committed to his program. That happened during a fit of excitement as Fields watched the unranked Nittany Lions score a thrilling 24-21 victory against the No. 2 Buckeyes at Happy Valley in 2016.

Had Fields stuck with that commitment, who knows how the course of history might have changed? But he switched to Georgia, eventually transferred to Ohio State, and has presided over two victories against Penn State, which has now lost eight of its last nine meetings with the Buckeyes.

Nittany Lions quarterback Sean Clifford – a product of St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati – did about all he could against an OSU defense that seemed more than a little embarrassed about its uneven performance in the season opener against Nebraska. Clifford survived a withering pass rush that resulted in five sacks to complete 18 of 30 attempts for 281 yards and three touchdowns.

Clifford's performance was aided greatly by junior receiver Jahan Dotson, who quite simply played out of his mind. Dotson caught eight passes for 144 yards and all three of Clifford's touchdowns, doing most of his damage against OSU cornerback Shaun Wade, arguably one of the top defensive backs in college football.

To be fair to Wade, there wasn't much a defender this side of Deion Sanders, Champ Bailey or Mel Blount could have done against a receiver who was feeling it like Dotson, who made one spectacular grab after another. That included a one-handed stab for a 21-yard touchdown just one play after he had set up the score with an equally impressive one-handed catch.

Take away Dotson from the equation, however, and you come up with the conclusion that the game was not as close as a 13-point final score might indicate.

Penn State managed only 44 net yards rushing a week after piling up 250 yards on the ground against Indiana. That was part and parcel because the Buckeyes took away just about everything the Nittany Lions wanted to do with their ground game, including quarterback draws. Clifford, who had run for 119 yards against the Hoosiers, accounted for a net of only 5 yards vs. Ohio State.

And let's give credit where credit is due. I

have been as hard (or maybe harder) as any critic of linebackers Tuf Borland and Pete Werner, but each had an excellent game against Penn State. I don't know who said what to whom or who lit a fire under whoever's you-know-what, but both linebackers refreshingly carried out their assignments and initiated the action instead of letting the

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

action come to them.

Defensive props also to defensive tackle Tommy Togiai and defensive end Zach Harrison, each of whom might have played the best games of their OSU careers so far.

There is still room for improvement, both offensively and defensively. With the exception of the first offensive play of the game when wideout Garrett Wilson took a handoff and galloped 62 yards, the running game was fairly vanilla. There is still much work to be done in the secondary, two chip-shot field goals were missed, there was a needless time-management brain cramp at the end of the first half that led to a Penn State field goal, and the Buckeyes committed nine penalties, including three personal fouls.

But with Rutgers and Maryland next up on the schedule, one would figure Ryan Day and his staff will use those games as mid-season tuneups for what one hopes will be a stretch run to the College Football Playoff.

## The Numbers Game

- Chris Olave and Wilson each eclipsed the 100-yard mark in receiving for the second game in a row, the first time in program history that has ever happened. A pair of Ohio State receivers hadn't each cracked the century mark in the same game twice in a single season since David Boston and Dee Miller did it against West Virginia and Indiana in 1998. And there has been only one tandem of receivers ever to notch three games during their careers in which each had 100 or more receiving yards in the same game. Gary Williams and Doug Donley accomplished that feat in the 1980 Rose Bowl against USC, a 1980 regular-season game against Illinois, and the 1980 Fiesta Bowl against Penn State.

- With eight catches for 144 yards, Dotson became the second OSU opponent in the last four games to eclipse the 100-yard mark in receiving. Quintez Cephus of Wisconsin caught seven balls for 122 yards during Ohio State's 34-21 victory in the 2019 Big Ten Championship Game. Before that, the Buckeyes had a streak of 12 straight games during which they had not allowed a 100-yard receiver.

- Dotson also became the first opposing player to grab three touchdown passes in a game since Chris Moore of Cincinnati during a 50-28 win by the Buckeyes on Sept. 24, 2014. Moore had only three catches in that game, but they all went for touchdowns totaling 221 yards.

- No Big Ten receiver had caught three TD passes in a game against Ohio State since Minnesota tight end Jay Carroll caught three of QB Mike Hohensee's five touchdown passes during a 35-31 win against the Buckeyes at Memorial Stadium on Nov. 7, 1981.

- OSU running back Master Teague rushed for 110 yards on 23 carries against

Penn State, one yard shy of a career high. The performance pushed the sophomore's career total to 1,046 yards, and he became the 62nd player to rush for 1,000 or more yards during his OSU career. Teague pushed past such notables as Rod Gerald (1,041, 1975-77), Tom Barrington (1,024, 1963-65) and Bo Rein (938, 1964-66) on the program's all-time rushing list, and he needs only two more yards to pass Paul Warfield (1,047, 1961-63).

- With his 318 passing yards against the Nittany Lions, Fields went over the 300-yard mark for the fourth time in his career, pushing him into fourth place on the OSU all-time list of 300-yard passing games. Haskins (2018-19) had nine such games while Joe Germaine (1996-98) and J.T. Barrett (2014-17) had eight each.

- Fields also established a new program record with his fifth straight game of 275 yards or more through the air. He had shared the mark of four straight with Germaine, who had four in a row during the 1998 season.

- Fields exceeded the 200-yard passing mark for the 12th time in his OSU career, tying him with Schlichter (1978-81) for eighth place on that list. Next up are Greg Frey (1987-90), Germaine and Troy Smith (2003-06), each of whom threw 13 times for 200 or more yards during their respective careers.

- Fields also set a new OSU record for most passing yardage in the first two games of a season. His 594 total against Nebraska and Penn State wiped out the old mark of 566 established by Smith in 2006. Rounding out the top five are Haskins (546 in 2018), Justin Zwick (537 in 2004) and Mike Tomczak (507 in 1983).

## Halloween Highlights

The victory against Penn State pushed the Buckeyes' all-time record to an impressive 13-3 in games played on Halloween. Eerily strange are those three defeats are three of the most notable losses in Ohio State football history.

The first one came Oct. 31, 1936, when the Buckeyes traveled to Notre Dame and returned with a 7-2 loss. The defeat came one year after the so-called "Game of the Century" in which Ohio State watched a 13-0 lead after three quarters evaporate into an 18-13 loss when the Fighting Irish scored the winning touchdown with only 32 seconds remaining.

The Buckeyes lost another Halloween contest in 1942, a 17-7 defeat at sixth-ranked Wisconsin that became known as "The Bad Water Game" after several OSU players fell sick due to drinking contaminated water on the train to the game in Madison. Ohio State recovered the following week with a 59-19 romp against Pittsburgh and closed out the season by beating its final four opponents by a 165-58 margin, earning the program's first-ever national championship in the process.

Finally, OSU experienced a 13-7 home loss to Michigan State on Oct. 31, 1987. The Buckeyes managed only 147 yards of offense in the game, and more than half of that came on the first play from scrimmage when split end Everett Ross gathered in a 79-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Tom Tupa.

No one thought much about it at the time, but it was the first of three straight losses for the Buckeyes down the stretch of the 1987 season and triggered one of the most mishandled events in OSU athletic history – the firing of head coach Earle Bruce during the week before the Michigan game.





### Olave Returns Against Penn State After Injury Scare

Ohio State standout wide receiver Chris Olave did not miss a beat against Penn State in his second game of the season, hauling in seven passes for 120 yards and two scores in Ohio State's 38-25 win over the Nittany Lions. However, a return to the field for Olave against Penn State did not always look so certain, after a hard blow to the head in the third quarter against Nebraska sidelined him for the remainder of the game and put into question his status moving forward.

The hit in question, which saw Nebraska safety Deontai Williams ejected for targeting after colliding with Olave following his sixth catch of the game, left the Buckeye receiver looking dazed and shaky on the field.

The immediate reaction from Buckeye analysts and fans was that Olave had likely sustained a concussion, but he passed concussion protocol in the injury tent shortly after the play and remained on the sideline until the game ended.

However, Olave's availability was still up in the air when head coach Ryan Day spoke to the media during the week. His return to the lineup was not confirmed until he was omitted from Ohio State's weekly injury report, which listed cornerback Lejond Cavazos, defensive lineman Jacobbe Cowan, running back Marcus Crowley, guard Gavin Cupp, tight end Patrick Gurd, wide receiver Jaylen Harris, long snapper Roen McCullough, defensive tackle Jaden McKenzie, defensive back Alec Taylor and safety Kourt Williams as out for the game. Noticeably missing from that group was linebacker Justin Hilliard and defensive tackle Taron Vincent, who



COURTESY OF OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

**STEPPED UP – Even with sixth-year senior linebacker Justin Hilliard sidelined due to a false positive COVID-19 test, Ohio State's defense – led by defensive tackle Tommy Togiai (72) – recorded five sacks of Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford.**

both missed the win over Nebraska.

"He's had a good strong week of practice," Day said of Olave on Oct. 29. When asked for the plan if Olave was unable to play, Day said that Ohio State was comfortable leaning on its depth.

"We'd just move some things around, like we always do," Day said. "That's where depth comes into play. We'll see how the week goes."

Olave's return to play was no surprise for slot receiver Garrett Wilson, who told media on Oct. 27 that he was "super confident" Olave would play against Penn State and that the receivers would be able to step up if he couldn't.

"I talked to Chris and he seemed all good," Wilson said. "I think Chris is going to be ready to play on Saturday, but with the depth of our receivers – it's such a deep room – I know we've got some young guys ready. That would be a great opportunity for them to step up and show that competitive excellence and take on that role. I have full faith in our receiver room that somebody could step up and fill that void."

### Hilliard Out, Farrell, Brown Suffer Injuries

Ohio State was down three major contributors by the time the clock hit zero against Penn State, after entering with an almost completely clean bill of health. The first blow actually came several hours before the game, when Hilliard received a positive on a rapid-response COVID test after arriving in Happy Valley.

However, the senior captain's first test proved to be a false positive when he tested negative on the more reliable PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test shortly after. Despite that, out of an abundance of caution, Hilliard was ruled out for the night, his second straight missed game after sitting out against Nebraska as well.

"It's an ongoing deal," Day said of COVID adjustments prior to the season. "This is going to go on for a while, and we have to continue to be vigilant in that area, not get fatigued with following all the protocols, doing what we have to do and making the sacrifices that have been made. That's been everybody. And that's not easy to do. It's an emphasis every single day. I've made it my vow to the players that I'll bring it up

every single day."

Tight end Luke Farrell and cornerback Cameron Brown also sustained injuries that forced them to leave the field, Farrell with an undisclosed leg injury and Brown on a medical cart after what looked to be a noncontact leg injury. Ohio State had not shared any additional information on either player as of press time.

### Day Not Interested In Changes At RB

Despite some early struggles in the running game that had Ohio State come out flat against Nebraska before rounding into form for a solid showing against Penn State, Day has no plans to make any significant changes to Ohio State's starting duo of Master Teague and Trey Sermon.

"I thought they were solid," Day said on Oct. 27. "I thought as the (Nebraska) game went on, they played better. Same thing just with the run game in general. I think early on it was just OK. That's kind of what happened the first game. We're really looking hard to take the next step in game two. One of the things you just don't get used to is going against those different fronts. In

### BSB Staff Close With Penn State Predictions

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff continued to show off their strong prognostication skills with their predictions for the game at Penn State on the electronic BuckeyeSports.com. Patrick Mayhorn almost hit the game on the nose with his 38-24 prediction. Wyatt Crosher and Joe Dempsey were close with each seeing the game at 34-24. Andrew Lind was a little farther off at 44-20, but in fairness to Andrew, the game could have easily ended up with such a score.

Staff predictions are posted each gameday morning.

The BSB staff also provides electronic recruiting coverage, daily stories and updates, as well as presenting reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives on BuckeyeSports.com. We will be featuring reprints covering games from our 40th Anniversary Football Season as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays this fall.

Additionally, staff members man the BuckeyeSports.com Forum, interacting with subscribers on the hot topics of the day. Don't forget the live Official Game Thread. If something interesting, troubling or exciting happens in the game, share your thoughts in real time.

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### BSB Podcast Enhances Online Coverage

Buckeye Sports Bulletin now has a podcast to work in tandem with BuckeyeSports.com to keep BSB subscribers informed of 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.

With Ohio State's 2020 season under way, the BSB podcast has moved to two shows a week: a preview show released at 10 a.m. on the Friday before each game and a recap show released on the following Monday, reacting to all of the action in the latest Buckeye game. Those preview shows feature an in-depth interview with a beat writer who covers Ohio State's upcoming opponent, to provide the best possible insight on the matchup for the Buckeyes.

The show is free for all listeners. 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. The recap shows will be posted every Monday morning, at the same time as the Friday previews.



## 2020 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2020 Record
Oct. 24	NEBRASKA	W, 52-17	FOX	0-1
Oct. 31	at Penn State*	W, 38-25	ABC	0-2
Nov. 7	RUTGERS	7:30 p.m.	BTN	1-1
Nov. 14	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	1-1
Nov. 21	INDIANA*	TBA	TBA	2-0
Nov. 28	at Illinois*	TBA	TBA	0-2
Dec. 5	at Michigan State*	TBA	TBA	1-1
Dec. 12	MICHIGAN*	12 p.m.	FOX	1-1
Dec. 19	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

\* 2019 bowl team

\*\* at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

terms of a scout team, the look just isn't the same. But as the game went on, I thought it got better.

"The more we go against different looks, I think the more comfortable we'll get. And then the running backs have got to continue to get tackled and get a feel for what that's like, keep their pads down, see the different cuts that are there. I don't think it was great early on, but I think as it went on, it got better."

The Buckeye offensive line had a similar view of the game, acknowledging early struggles but praising the second-half performance on the ground against the Cornhuskers.

"We've got a lot of young guys up front, with Harry (Miller) and Nick (Petit-Frere)," guard Wyatt Davis said on Oct. 24 after the game with the Huskers. "But I was really impressed today with how they've come along in this program. I really do believe that once we get rolling, our running game will be back to even better than what it was last year. I just think that we've just got to knock off the rust of not playing against another team and just really focus this week on film and what we did wrong and how we can get better – really focusing on the little things."

Added center Josh Myers, "It's not something that I think we're extremely worried about. I think we have confidence that they're all things that we can get fixed."

While Ohio State is unlikely to go away from its primary ball carriers, Day did mention that Steele Chambers will likely continue to find his way onto the field.

"We're not changing what we're doing," said Day. "But Steele is certainly capable of getting in the game. If it calls for that, we feel comfortable putting him in there."

### OSU Setting NCAA, Program Records

Ohio State's victory over Penn State put the Buckeyes in contention to enter the record books this season, as it marked the 10th straight road win against an AP-ranked opponent, tied for the longest streak ever. The streak goes all the way back to 2012, when Ohio State toppled No. 20 Michigan State, 17-16.

Since then, Ohio State has beaten No. 16 Northwestern in 2013, No. 7 Michigan State in 2014, No. 12 Michigan in 2015, No. 14 Oklahoma and No. 8 Wisconsin in 2016, No. 9 Penn State and No. 24 Michigan State in 2018, No. 10 Michigan in 2019 and now No. 18 Penn State in 2020. The last road loss to a ranked team came Nov. 26, 2011, at No. 17 Michigan, 40-34.

In a similar vein of winning streaks, Ohio State has also won 17 consecutive games against ranked Big Ten foes.

Individually, Olave and Wilson etched their names into the school record book as well. After both players went over the 100-yard mark receiving against Nebraska, a repeat performance against the Nittany Lions served as the first time in Ohio State history that "two receivers have had 100 receiving yards in the same game, in consecutive games" according to an Ohio State spokesman.

### Ohio State Names Nebraska Champions

Ohio State named 16 total champions on Oct. 26 to go along with offensive, defensive and special teams players of the game following the 52-17

season-opening win over Nebraska.

Quarterback Justin Fields led the way as the offensive player of the game, while defensive tackle Haskell Garrett claimed the defensive title and former OSU club football player Chris Booker secured the special teams crown.

As for the champions – a designation that goes to players who generally went above and beyond expectations throughout game week and into the game – eight belonged to the offense, eight to the defense.

On offense, tight ends Luke Farrell and Jeremy Ruckert, wide receiver Garrett Wilson, center Josh Myers, guard Wyatt Davis and tackles Nicholas Petit-Frere and Thayer Munford were all announced as champions.

Defensively, tackle Tommy Togiai, end Jonathon Cooper, cornerbacks Shaun Wade and Marcus Williamson, safety Marcus Hooker and linebackers Baron Browning and Tuf Borland earned the nod from the coaching staff.

Last but certainly not least, though not included in the total champions count, Ohio State named four scout-team players of the week: halfback Robert Cope, offensive lineman Jack Jamieson and linebackers Mitchell Melton and Cade Kacherski.

### Ohio State-Rutgers Draws Prime-Time Slot

For the second week in a row, Ohio State will

Continued On Page 6

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Continued From Page 5

kick off under the lights in prime time, this time in the friendly confines of a nearly empty Ohio Stadium.

After squaring off with Penn State in a 7:30 p.m. kick in the ABC prime-time slot, Ohio State will play host Rutgers in prime time at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 7, this time on the Big Ten Network.

This is Ohio State's first home night game of the season and likely the last, unless the Nov. 21 matchup with Indiana draws major attention, as the final home game of the season against Michigan will be a noon kickoff. It also marks the return to Columbus for Rutgers head coach Greg Schiano, who worked as a defensive coordinator for the Buckeyes from 2016-18, as well as Ohio State transfers Brendon White and Malik Barrow.

Ohio State had just one home night game in 2019, a 34-10 win over Michigan State, though it did play under the lights three times total, in three consecutive weeks against Nebraska, the Spartans and Northwestern.

### Buckeyes Still No. 3 In Polls

Following a 13-point win over Penn State, Ohio State remained steady in both the Amway coaches poll and the Associated Press top-25

poll, staying put at No. 3 behind Clemson and Alabama.

The Buckeyes received two first-place votes in the coaches poll, while the Tigers had 43 and the Crimson Tide had 17. The top two teams are much closer in the AP poll, with Clemson taking 33 of the 62 first-place votes and the other 29 going to Alabama.

Also, in the coaches poll was Wisconsin which, despite not playing against Nebraska due to a COVID-19 outbreak, ranked No. 11, staying put as the No. 2 team in the conference. Following close behind was Indiana at No. 13, with Michigan also staying in at No. 25 after a three-point loss to Michigan State.

In the AP poll, the Badgers were ranked No. 10, the Hoosiers were at No. 13 and the Wolverines were at No. 23.

Northwestern, Penn State and Michigan State each received votes in both the AP and coaches polls but did not crack the top 25 of either.

Notably, former Buckeye player and coach Luke Fickell has Cincinnati all the way up at No. 6 in both polls.

### Day Thought Nebraska Should Have Chance To Play

Shortly after Nebraska's Oct. 31 matchup with Wisconsin was canceled due to 12 positive COVID tests within the Wisconsin program, the Cornhuskers attempted to schedule a game against FCS foe Tennessee-Chattanooga. While both teams were healthy and had the weekend free, the Big Ten shot down that request in a final approval vote without citing any official reasoning. While his team has not been afflicted by a similar situation so far, Day took issue with that and told media on Oct. 29 that he feels Nebraska and other healthy Big Ten teams with an open spot following a cancellation should be permitted to schedule a replacement game.

"I thought they should have had the opportunity to (play)," Day said.

While Day was disappointed in the decision, he did clarify that he understands the extenuating circumstances around it.

"I know there's a team in Lincoln that wanted an opportunity to play, and they're not playing this week," Day said. "That's just hard. It's just hard to swallow. When you look at your players

## From The Pages Of BSB

### 35 Years Ago – 1985

Ohio State escaped the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome with a 23-19 victory over a band of upstart Golden Gophers from Minnesota on Oct. 26 to improve to 6-1 on the season and 3-1 in conference play.

"They were tough today; they're really tough," said Ohio State coach Earle Bruce. "It took a great effort out of the Buckeyes to win that football game. I was very pleased with our football team that they were able to come back when the score was 19-10 and win the football game. That showed a lot of character, with the way everything was stirred up against us.

"The emotion was high and we stuck in there and played good football. We had a lot of adversities today. We lost Keith (Byars), we lost John (Wooldridge). We had to play with a freshman tailback."

That freshman tailback, Vince Workman, helped lead the Buckeyes on the day, carrying the ball nine times for 34 yards – including a 16-yard score that put the Buckeyes in front for good – in place of Keith Byars, who suffered an injury on the final play of the third quarter.

"At first I didn't know he was hurt," Workman said of Byars. "I just went into the game and played. I saw he was on the sidelines and I just figured I was going to have to play the rest of the game."

### 30 Years Ago – 1990

It had been six years since Ohio State celebrated two successive blowouts the magnitude of their consecutive victories over Purdue and Minnesota. After dispatching the Boilermakers 42-2 in West Lafayette Oct. 20, the Buckeyes returned to Ohio Stadium for homecoming and plowed over the Big Ten-leading Minnesota Golden Gophers 52-23.

The 94 combined points in successive weeks was the largest output by the Buckeyes since the ninth and 10th games of the 1984 season, when they combined for 102 points against Indiana (50-7) and Northwestern (52-3).

The contest against the Gophers, who dropped out of a first-place tie in the conference with Iowa and Illinois, was marked by big offensive performances by several members of the Buckeyes.

Senior quarterback Greg Frey completed 16 of 28 passes for 257 yards and three touchdowns, completing passes to seven different receivers. Freshman tailback Robert Smith, meanwhile, piled up 120 yards, teaming up with halfbacks Raymont Harris (81 yards) and Butler By'not'e (51 yards) to toss in a significant portion of a 294-yard performance for the Buckeyes on the ground.

### 25 Years Ago – 1995

Ohio State rolled up a school-record 56 first-half points and then put the plane on autopilot and coasted to a 56-35 win over 25th-ranked Iowa on Oct. 28 at Ohio Stadium.

The win improved OSU's mark to 8-0 overall and 4-0 in Big Ten play and allowed the Buckeyes to keep pace in the conference with Northwestern (7-1, 5-0), which eked out a 17-14 win, spoiling homecoming for rival Illinois.

OSU's 56-point first half shattered the school's previous mark of 41 in a first half, which was achieved in 1994 in a 48-14 win over Purdue, as well as in 1983, during a 55-7 drubbing of Northwestern.

"I don't think we've ever had a start like that," said OSU coach

John Cooper. "No, we had a start similar to that against Pittsburgh (a 63-28 win) a couple years ago. I think we scored on the first play of the second quarter and went ahead 35-0.

"But the first half, that's about as good as we can play."

### 20 Years Ago – 2000

Ohio State found out what the rest of the Big Ten already knew – Purdue's pass-oriented offense and quarterback Drew Brees could be an absolute load some days.

In a game to decide the upper hand in the race for the Big Ten championship and the Rose Bowl berth, it was Purdue and Brees who enjoyed the last laugh. The 16th-ranked Boilermakers rallied late Oct. 28 for a wild 31-27 win over the 12th-rated Buckeyes before 68,666 at Ross-Ade Stadium.

"That is a tough way to lose a ballgame," said Cooper, whose team dropped to 6-2 overall, 3-2 in Big Ten play and all but out of the Rose Bowl race. "Purdue has an outstanding football team, and we have to give them credit.

"I'm proud of the way our team played."

But Brees simply would not be denied. He completed 39 of 65 passes for 455 yards and three touchdowns against four interceptions.

"I don't know if I've ever seen a quarterback put on a better performance passing the football against us than what he did today," Cooper said. "He did what he had to do to win the game."

Brees led a furious comeback for the Boilermakers (7-2, 5-1), who suddenly controlled their own destiny in the hunt for the Rose Bowl. Trailing 20-10 after three periods, he threw three fourth-quarter touchdown passes to pull out the win.

The last touchdown was the largest, a 64-yard bomb to former walk-on Seth Morales for the game-winning score with 1:55 to play in the game.

### 15 Years Ago – 2005

Ohio State's Big Ten battle Oct. 29 against Minnesota pitted the nation-leading No. 1 Ohio State rushing defense against Minnesota's No. 1 rushing offense, trench warfare that was a throwback to the days when conference championships were won and lost on the ground.

But for all of the fancy passing offenses of the day – and OSU quarterback Troy Smith and Minnesota counterpart Bryan Cupito combined to throw for 629 yards – at the heart of the Buckeyes' 45-31 victory was a re-emerging running attack led by sophomore tailback Antonio Pittman.

Going head to head with Laurence Maroney – the Gophers' star tailback who entered the game No. 3 in the nation with 161.9-rushing yards per game – Pittman took over the spotlight for himself, running for a career-high 186 yards and two touchdowns as the Buckeyes flexed their muscles and kept pace in the Big Ten championship race.

### 10 Years Ago – 2010

On the night before Halloween, Ohio State turned TCF Bank Stadium into a house of horrors for the home team during a 52-10 throttling of Minnesota.

The 11th-ranked Buckeyes (8-1, 4-1) scored touchdowns on

offense, defense and special teams, but they also made enough mistakes to give head coach Jim Tressel and his coaching staff plenty to look at during a week off before a Nov. 13 home game against Penn State.

"I think the reality of our situation is that we get to head home tomorrow and catch up a little bit academically and get some guys healthy, and then we've really got to look and see where we've got to get better," Tressel said.

Among the miscues were a missed field goal, an interception tossed inside the Minnesota 5-yard line and a kickoff that went out of bounds.

"There are probably a multitude of things we've got to get better if we're going to go into November and have a chance to contend for the conference championship, so we'll make great use of this week," Tressel said.

### Five Years Ago – 2015

Ohio State was set to be off Oct. 31, and its first and only open week of the season came at a much-needed time.

"It's crucial," linebacker Darron Lee said following a 49-7 win over Rutgers. "Our coaches said be smart, take care of your body and get ready for the stretch run because it's going to be a gauntlet for these last couple games."

Ohio State was dealing with a plethora of injuries to key players. The most recent addition to the injury report was defensive lineman Tommy Schutt, who sat out against Rutgers after having surgery to repair a broken bone in his wrist.

Schutt was far from the only Buckeye to sit out against the Scarlet Knights. Wideout Parris Campbell didn't play and was set to miss "a couple more weeks" according to head coach Urban Meyer, while fellow wide receivers Dontre Wilson and Johnnie Dixon joined him on the reserve list with a sore foot and knee tendinitis, respectively.

### One Year Ago – 2019

Wisconsin presented a stout challenge with its daunting defense and running back/Heisman Trophy candidate Jonathan Taylor. Add persistent, sometimes driving, rain and the odds seemed to get better for the No. 13 Badgers and their ball-control offense that wanted to keep Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields and his 22 touchdown passes off the field as much as possible.

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

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

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



and your coaches, all the sacrifices that have been made, and they don't have a game this week, and they didn't do anything wrong, that's really hard. I know it's the pandemic, so you have to chalk it up to 2020. But when you're the head coach like Scott (Frost) is, and you've got to look at your players and say, 'We're not playing, even though we did everything right,' that's hard to swallow. That's why I really feel for those guys right now."

#### Four Buckeyes Shed Their Black Stripes

Four more new faces have officially joined the Buckeyes. Offensive tackle Trey Leroux, guard Grant Toutant, defensive lineman Darrion Henry-Young and tight end Joe Royer all lost their black stripes since BSB last published. That moves the total black stripes lost to 24, with 22 belonging to the class of 2020.

Leroux came to Ohio State as the player with the second-lowest ranking of any member of the 2020 class – ahead of only kicker Jake Seibert – checking in as the No. 1,140 player and No. 91 offensive tackle in the 247Sports composite rankings. However, the Norwalk, Ohio, product was one of the first offers of the Ryan Day era in Columbus.

"I want to thank the entire offensive line unit, (offensive line coach Greg Studrawa), (graduate assistant) Kennedy (Cook), specifically, the entire strength staff," Leroux said in a speech to his teammates posted to Twitter. "Go Bucks!"

Toutant was also a three-star prospect coming to Ohio State, ranked as the No. 463 player and No. 35 tackle in the country out of Warren, Mich.

"First off, I'd like to thank (Studrawa), my unit, coach (Mickey Marotti) and the strength staff," Toutant said. "Go Bucks!"

Henry-Young, a former four-star prospect

from Cincinnati (Ohio) Princeton was ranked the nation's No. 154 player and No. 16 defensive tackle. He was credited with a sack in his first game as a Buckeye.

"I want to say thank you man, I'm honored to be here," Henry-Young said. "I want to shout out my big brothers on the Rushmen, (defensive line coach Larry Johnson) and the rest of the staff. Go Bucks!"

Royer was the lone tight end in Ohio State's 2020 class, a three-star prospect ranked the No. 413 player and No. 14 tight end out of Cincinnati.

"I just want to thank you to my parents, and everyone back home, you guys, for welcoming me in the summer, and Coach (Marotti) and his staff," Royer said, before briefly returning to thank the "tight end unit, Coach (Kevin) Wilson and my big brother Jeremy (Ruckert)."

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COURTESY OF OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

**ON TARGET** – Ohio State junior tight end Jeremy Ruckert caught a pair of touchdown passes, including a 1-yard score on fourth-and-goal with just over nine minutes left in the fourth quarter.



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# Fields, Olave Continue Early-Season Connection

Continued From Page 1

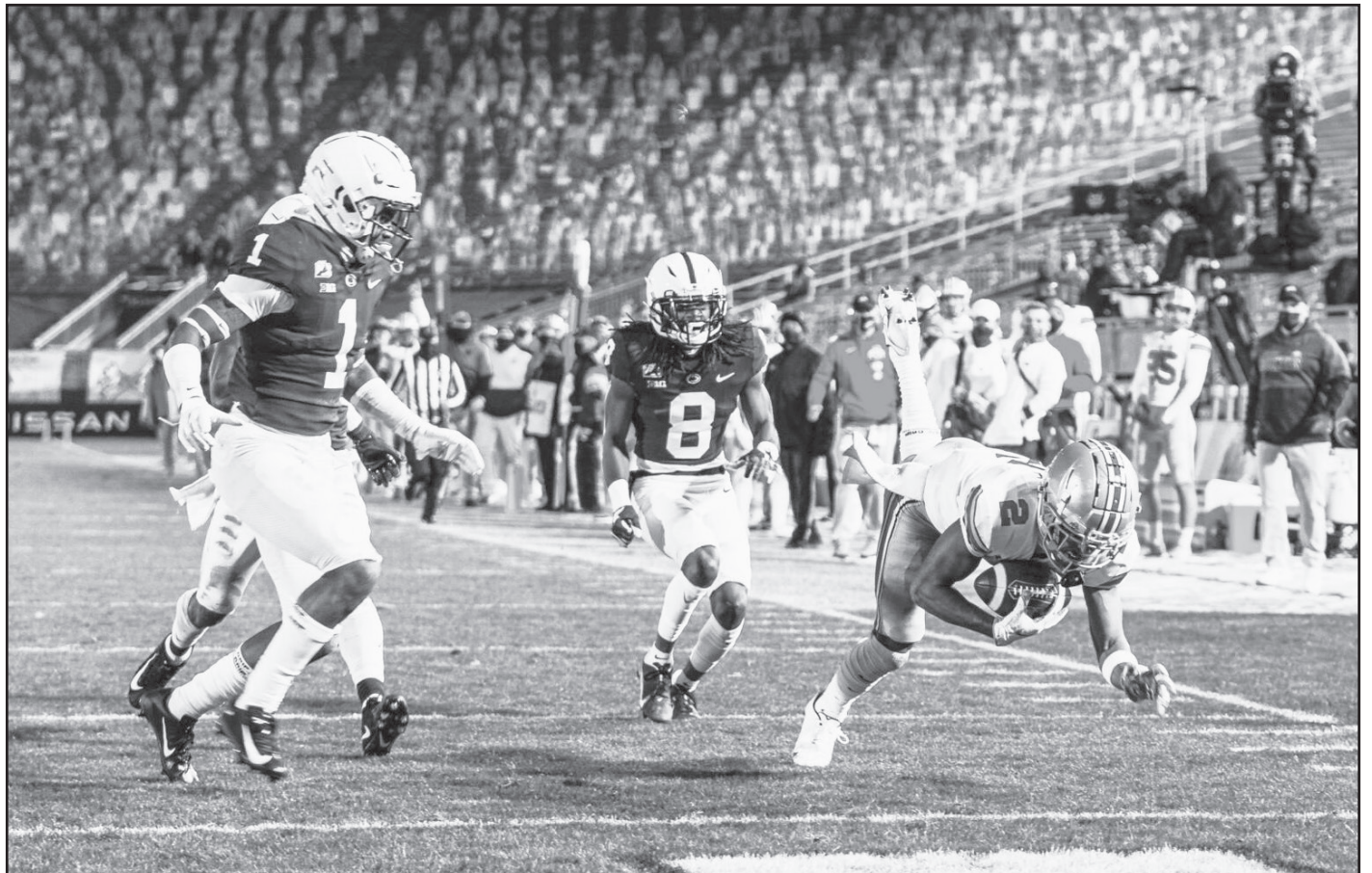
back, that was kind of our opportunity to get some momentum in the game and then get a stop and really make this a game.”

Ohio State’s offense responded with a lengthy drive of its own, which was capped off by a 49-yard touchdown pass from Fields to Olave to go back up by 15.

“It certainly helps when you have players like that who can make plays,” Day said. “We’ve got a lot of weapons. The good thing is when you just have one guy, sometimes they can kind of take that away, but when you have several guys like that, and then you have the offensive line like we have in the running game, now that really makes (the defense) play honest.”

Penn State didn’t go down without a fight. Wide receiver Jahan Dotson scored a pair of fourth-quarter touchdowns, including an outstanding one-handed snag over junior cornerback Shaun Wade. But Ohio State closed the door with another 75-yard scoring drive, capped off with a 1-yard pass from Fields to Ruckert, converting two fourth-and-1 plays along the way.

“I think I needed a drink after that drive,” Day said. “My heart was in my throat, I’ve got to tell you. But you’ve got to be aggressive. One thing I learned early on (in my career) was that when you’re calling these plays if you put them in the game plan and you can execute it, you have to call them in those moments. You have to trust it. It doesn’t make it easy. It’s



COURTESY OF OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

**DIDN'T MISS A BEAT** – Although he left Ohio State’s season opener against Nebraska with an apparent head injury, junior wide receiver Chris Olave caught seven passes for 120 yards and two touchdowns in the Buckeyes’ 38-25 win at Penn State, including a 49-yard strike from junior quarterback Justin Fields.

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stressful, but that was great execution."

With the 38-25 win, Ohio State recorded its 10th straight road victory over a ranked opponent, tying the mark set by Notre Dame from 1941-49. This also marked the seventh straight road game in which the Buckeyes scored at least 38 points, the second-longest streak in the AP poll era (since 1936). Only Oregon had a longer run, doing so in nine games from 2011-13.

"It wasn't clean, but our guys just kept swinging away," Day said. "And we had some adversity along the way, we just we just kept playing hard. In big games like this, when those guys play like this on this stage, it's big time. This was a big stage, and this was kind of our moment to show everybody where we're at, and I'm proud of the way our guys played."

#### Kicking Issues Arise

While it did not factor into the final outcome, Ohio State missed two chip shot field goals in the win over Penn State.

The first came when senior starter Blake Haubeil pushed a 20-yard attempt wide right with 13:25 remaining in the sec-

ond quarter after successfully converting two point-after tries in the opening frame.

It was later revealed he complained of a groin injury in pregame warmups, which is why junior walk-on Dominic DiMaccio was already handling kickoff duties.

Haubeil headed to the locker room following the miss, though he did return to the sidelines after halftime. DiMaccio, meanwhile, added a 22-yarder with 1:02 left in the third quarter to extend the Buckeyes' lead to 31-13. He then missed a 23-yard attempt with just over one minute remaining in the fourth.

"Hopefully we can get Blake healthy again and get that back in order because that was not good," Day said. "We left points on the field there, and those are heartbreakers. It's one thing to not score touchdowns, but when we miss a field goal, it hurts your momentum. You feel it. It's real."

Coming into the game, Haubeil had made 24 of 29 career field goals and had never missed a PAT in 127 attempts. DiMaccio, on the other hand, had not attempted a field goal prior to the game and was just 2 of 3 on point-after tries.



ANDREW LIND

**IN A PINCH** – With starting kicker Blake Haubeil dealing with a groin injury, Ohio State called upon walk-on Dominic DiMaccio at Penn State.

# Ohio State Fans!

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# Ohio State's Passing Offense Makes History

After steamrolling Nebraska in their first game, the Buckeyes traveled to Happy Valley to take on Penn State. The Nittany Lions had held Indiana to 170 yards on 19-of-36 passing in their first game, displaying their stingy defense led by dynamic pass rushers and an experienced secondary.

Following a comfortable 52-17 victory against the Huskers, Ohio State knew Penn State posed a tougher threat to its high-powered offense. In order to beat the Nittany Lions in their house, the Buckeyes needed to bring their best in the passing game.

## GAME NOTEBOOK

### Joe Dempsey

Junior quarterback Justin Fields continued his Heisman Trophy campaign with one of the most brilliant performances of his career. The former Penn State commit showed the Nittany Lions what they are missing, shredding their defense for 318 passing yards and four touchdowns.

Fields eclipsed the 300-yard mark for the fourth time in his career and the third time in his past five games. He threw for four scores for the sixth time since becoming a Buckeye in 2019, and he put up such gaudy numbers while tossing just six incomplete passes on 28-of-34 passing.

"I'm proud of his preparation," Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said of Fields following the 38-25 victory. "He worked really hard this week to get prepared in the meeting room, and he was on it. I mean, he was really on it, and I give him credit. I'm not surprised with the way he plays. He does it in practice, and when you can start to take the meeting room to the field quickly, that's when you really become special. That's what separates young players from really good veteran players, and he's starting to do that. He just has a good way of being accurate. He's got great anticipation."

Picking up where they left off against the Huskers, junior wide receiver Chris Olave and sophomore slot receiver Garrett Wilson dominated the talented Penn State secondary. Olave and Wilson etched their names in Ohio State history as the first duo to surpass 100 receiving yards each in consecutive games.

Olave led the Buckeyes with 120 yards on seven receptions, averaging 17.1 yards per catch and scoring two touchdowns. Wilson set a career high with 11 catches for 111 yards and continued to provide Fields with a go-to guy on third down. The sophomore standout snagged six first-down receptions, with four of them coming on third down.

"Of course, those guys are talented," Fields said of Olave and Wilson. "They definitely make my job easier by the way they perform on the field, so I'm just glad they're on my team. I'm glad I get to throw those guys the ball."

With the Buckeyes leading by just eight points in the third quarter, Olave came through with the play of the game. The former three-star recruit reeled in a 49-yard touchdown off a double move where he toasted the Penn State secondary.

"Chris is a very fast guy on the outside, and I trust him," Fields said of Olave. "When I throw the ball up and he's in one-on-one coverage, it's usually either him or nobody coming down with the ball. I put my full trust in Chris, and he's a great player and a great receiver."

In his postgame interview, Day was asked about attempting to go for big plays in the passing game against a stout defense like Penn State's in regard to Olave's long score.

"They're hard to find against Penn State because they put a safety in the middle of the field," Day said. "They get a lot of depth, and you've really got to pick your shots on them. That was a double move we spent a lot of time on. The combination of our receivers tracking deep balls and Justin's ability to throw the ball down the field with accuracy is tremendous, and you saw that tonight. That was a huge play in the game."

Day, who works closely with the quarterbacks and calls the plays, has considerable



COURTESY OF OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

**SPREADING THE LOVE** – Justin Fields threw two touchdown passes apiece to tight end Jeremy Ruckert, left, and wide receiver Chris Olave in Ohio State's 38-25 win over Penn State.

trust in Fields, who has thrown just three interceptions in 448 career attempts. Part of what gives Day so much comfort in trusting Fields to make the right play is the amount of effort he put into improving in the elongated offseason.

"I feel very confident right now," Fields said. "We put in so much work in the offseason, I worked my butt off just trying to get better in each aspect of the game. So, I think it's paying off right now."

"We got a lot of time working with Coach Day and individually. I just think me and the

receivers, being on the same page, that's why we're having so much success right now."

Before the COVID-19 pandemic led to spring practice being canceled, Fields and his receivers were strengthening their chemistry with extra workouts. After spring ball was cut short, the extra work did not stop.

"We practiced so many days throughout this summer, when we were planning on playing on time and then once we got shut down, we didn't skip a beat. We just stayed out there and really worked on our timing with everybody," said junior TE Jeremy Ruckert. "I think that's what you guys can see with Justin and how smart he's been with the ball lately. He throws it on time and where it has to be every play and doesn't really force a lot of passes. Even though it's a new group out there out wide and everything, we kind of spend a lot of time in there just getting the timing right."

Ohio State hit some adversity on a first-and-goal play from the 1-yard line when junior center Josh Myers rifled the ball through Fields' hands on a shotgun snap. Fields fell on the botched snap for a 13-yard loss, and he hit senior tailback Trey Sermon for a 4-yard gain on the next play to set up third-and-goal from the 10.

Following a Penn State timeout, Fields found Ruckert for a 10-yard score.

"The third-down to Ruckert was a huge play in the game, after having the snap over his head," Day said. "Overall, just a gutsy win on the road. It's hard to win here and I'm proud of our guys."

Ohio State could not have made the touchdown pass to Ruckert look any easier, and that is because it was a play call that was set up by strong runs and showed the connection that Fields developed with his tight end in the offseason.

"We slid the protection right, and we just threw hot off that linebacker that blitzed. I

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# Game Analysis

## What Worked Well

Led by junior quarterback Justin Fields, Ohio State's passing offense thrived at Penn State. The dynamic dual-threat signal caller did his damage with his arm in Happy Valley. Fields demonstrated immense poise on the road, completing 28 of 34 passes for 318 yards and four touchdowns in a nearly flawless performance.

Typically an effective runner, Fields found little room to run against the Nittany Lions, with his six rushing attempts going for minus-4 yards. Despite a lack of production with his legs, Fields put together one of the finest outings of his collegiate career.

Fields dropped touch pass after touch pass to his talented receivers, displaying a particularly close connection with standout wideouts Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson. Olave led the team with 120 yards on seven catches, while Wilson led both squads with 11 receptions for 111 yards. Junior tight end Jeremy Ruckert also added two touchdowns.

The Ohio State offensive line excelled in pass protection, allowing only two sacks against an elite Penn State pass rush and giving Fields plenty of time to throw.

## What Didn't Work

Ohio State showed some uncharacteristic inconsistency on special teams in an otherwise dominant performance. Ohio State senior kicker Blake Haubeil missed a 20-yard field goal before exiting with an apparent groin injury. Fourth-year junior kicker Dominic DiMaccio, a former walk-on, filled in for Haubeil, but he botched a fourth-quarter field goal from only 23 yards out to finish 1 for 2.

The Buckeyes punted only twice against Penn State, but neither went particularly well for the visitors. The first punt by fifth-year senior punter Drue Chrisman traveled only 37 yards, nearly 7 yards below his career average. Chrisman's number was called again in the fourth quarter with Ohio State up 38-25 and 3:59 to play from the Penn State 40-yard line, and he booted a beautiful punt that gunner Chris Olave was ready to pin at the 1. However, long snapper Bradley Robinson ran down the ball and bobbled it into the end zone for a touchback.

## Play Of The Game

After the Buckeyes went up 21-3, they gave up 10 straight points, making it a one-possession game early in the second half. Instead of giving in to the Nittany Lions' momentum in their stadium, Fields and the Ohio State offense responded by immediately driving down the field.

Fields found Wilson for a first down on third-and-4, and third-year sophomore tailback Master Teague gained 4 yards on a third-and-1 rush to keep the chains moving and set up the play of the game.

Facing second-and-8 from the Penn State 49 up 21-13, Fields felt pressure on his right side and stepped to his left. The reigning Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year used a strong pump fake to freeze the Nittany Lions' secondary, and Olave used a double move before racing up the sideline. Fields set his feet and launched a bomb over the heads of four Penn State defenders and into the outstretched arms of Olave as the receiver fell into the end zone for his second score.

– Joe Dempsey

just saw that linebacker blitz, and I told Ruck to run a slant if he blitzed, so we just executed," Fields said of Ruckert. "We've been doing that for so long now, we've been practicing that since I've been here. That's just another well-executed play by the offense."

Ruckert, who has spent much of his time in Columbus as a blocker, was not surprised to score a touchdown after the running game had set up an opportunity for him to take advantage of what he had seen on film.

"We knew that was a possibility with the look, play-action. We ran the play earlier and that was kind of off of it," Ruckert said. "We repped it in practice, we knew it was a possibility, but the ball was in the air forever. I'm just happy to catch it."

Ruckert spoke highly of Fields following the game, discussing how the game-changing athlete has elevated himself to a prominent leadership position on the team.

"He's really taken a step this offseason of becoming a leader," Ruckert said. "It's kind of tough, coming in as a transfer and really getting everybody behind you, but I feel like he did a great job of that last year, and he just carried off of that. We all rallied behind him. We know that he's got 100 percent effort on every single play, in the weight room, in the meeting room, and everything."

"We know he's got our back, so it's our job to get his. I think you can see how much love we've got for each other on that field and how we'd just do anything for each other. That's just how we play. We are trying to play for each other, not for ourselves. Stats will come if you just play hard every single play and just try to do everything you can for the guy next to you."

With Ruckert hauling in two touchdowns and Olave and Wilson putting forth historic efforts, Day expressed how difficult his high-octane offense can be to stop with an array of weapons.

"Can they double-team Chris on third down? Well, no, because we could run the ball or Justin can scramble," Day explained. "Can they just spy Justin? Well, if they don't, then Garrett Wilson's running a crossing route."

"There's a lot of give and take here, and that really helps. And certainly, in big games like this, when those guys play like this on this stage, it's big time. And this was a big stage. This was kind of our moment to show everybody where we're at, and I'm proud of the way our guys played."

## OSU Defensive Line Cages Lions

Ohio State's high-octane offense will get most of the attention and headlines from the 13-point win at Penn State, but the defense deserves its due.

The Buckeyes shut down the Nittany Lions early and kept their offense from getting into much of a groove. Penn State succeeded on only three of its nine third-down attempts and went 0 for 1 on fourth down.

"I feel like we threw the first punch early, but when it comes to a fight or a football game, you're going to get punches thrown right back at you, and it starts up front," said fifth-year senior defensive end Jonathon Cooper. "In order to have a good game, you have to have a good offensive line and a good defensive line playing at their best, and we know that on both sides of the ball. We wanted to make sure we got out on them early."

Stopping the Penn State rushing attack immediately set the tone defensively for Ohio State. The Silver Bullets held the Nittany Lions to just 44 yards on 27 carries, for a paltry 1.6 average.

"I feel like in order to be a great defense, you have to stop the run," Cooper said. "If you let an offense run on you all day, then

you're not a really good defense and you probably don't have a really good defensive line. So that's a huge emphasis for us, just stopping the run early."

Part of what made Ohio State so sound against the run was the play of their interior linemen, particularly junior Tommy Togiai and senior Haskell Garrett.

Togiai tallied seven tackles (four solo) and three sacks, while Garrett recorded two assists, prompting two-time captain Cooper to be asked about their performance.

"They're amazing," Cooper said of Togiai and Garrett. "I think they have been playing the best football of their careers, honestly, just with their effort, how focused they are, their leadership, and everything in between. They've been doing great. I have nothing but good things to say about them."

Ohio State's entire defensive line elevated its level following a somewhat lackluster showing in the season opener. The Rushmen were partially inspired to make sure defensive line coach Larry Johnson, who spent 14 seasons in Happy Valley, did not return without coming away victorious.

"We definitely know Coach Johnson's history with Penn State, and just earlier this week, we talked about how he was coming back to enemy territory," Cooper said. "This isn't his home, we're his home now and we want to make sure we put on a good performance especially for him just because of his history with Penn State."

Not only did they shut down the running game of Penn State, but Ohio State's defensive linemen got after PSU quarterback Sean Clifford, combining for five sacks and seven tackles for loss. Cooper totaled a career-high five tackles (one solo) with half a sack and one-half TFL, and the Gahanna, Ohio, native was asked which play was his best.

"I really don't think it was a play, per se. I feel like my leadership showed a lot tonight, just speaking for my defense and getting them ready to go," Cooper said. "I feel like my leadership throughout the whole entire game was my best performance, honestly, regardless of what I did on the field. I feel like getting my guys going and making sure that they're still in the game and they're into it is what I do best."

Cooper excelled as an inspirer, firing up multiple defensive linemen to exceed their

expectations. Togiai entered the game with zero career sacks and finished with a hat trick.

In addition to Cooper's half sack, sophomore Zach Harrison recorded one-half sack and 1½ TFL among his four stops (two solo). Cooper also pressured Clifford right into the arms of third-year sophomore Javontae Jean-Baptiste, who ended the game with two tackles (one solo) and a sack.

The relentless pressure from the Buckeye defensive front forced Clifford into committing the game's first turnover in the fourth quarter. After being flushed out of the pocket by the pass rush, Clifford threw an ill-advised pass downfield, where third-year sophomore safety Marcus Hooker picked it off.

"The D-line created a lot of disruption," Day said. "We got that big turnover late, Marcus was opportunistic on that play – a really big play."

After surrendering 377 yards, including 217 on the ground, and 17 points to lesser Nebraska, the Ohio State defensive line took the onus for a disappointing defensive outing. Though they gave up 25 points, the Buckeyes held Penn State to 325 yards.

"We went back and watched the film and saw what we could get better at," Cooper said. "And we came out there today and went out there and proved it."

## Ground Game Gains Traction

The Buckeye offense struggled to establish its patented ground game against Nebraska in the first game of the season. Meanwhile, the Nittany Lions held the Hoosiers to just 41 yards on 26 carries for a 1.6 yards-per-carry average.

Knowing Penn State boasted a stout defensive front, Day and Ohio State emphasized the importance of succeeding in the running game in preparation for the showdown.

Wilson took an end-around for 62 yards on the first play of the game, and third-year sophomore tailback Master Teague gained 9 yards before scoring a 4-yard touchdown. The Buckeyes' opening drive traveled 75 yards in three plays, which were all tone-setting runs.

"Offensively we got off to a good start," Day said. "We had good balance, we controlled the ball. Typically, we try to run a lot of plays, and time of possession usually isn't

a big deal. But we did a good job controlling the ball and having good balance on offense."

The Buckeyes totaled 208 yards on the ground, which opened up the passing attack for Fields and Co. thanks to the Nittany Lions' concern with the running game. Ruckert credited Ohio State's rush offense for his two receiving touchdowns.

"We ran the ball really well today, so it opened up a lot of things out wide, especially in the play-action play," Ruckert said. "Our tight end room has been so accountable and reliable on each other. It wasn't just me. It was me and Jake (Hausmann) in there selling the run, and I was just lucky enough to get out there and make the play."

"I think it just shows how much we care about this team because a lot of our catches, a lot of our touchdowns, come from the way we sell the run. And all that happens because of the way that we block in the run game and in the pass game."

Helping lead the way on the ground for the Buckeyes was Teague, who rushed for 110 yards and one touchdown on 23 carries. Last season's third-team All-Big Ten tailback hit his holes with more explosion, gaining a long of 31 yards in a solid showing.

"Our offensive line played well. We had over 200 yards rushing, and I thought Master ran harder," Day said. "We were getting four (yards) a shot or five a shot, and that's good. That keeps you in rhythm. You are able to control the game, which I thought we did, and it was good to have balance."

Wilson finished second on the team with 62 rushing yards, while Oklahoma transfer Trey Sermon gained 56 yards on 13 tries with a long of 15 yards. Fields took six attempts for minus-4 yards.

Day came away from the prime-time matchup with Penn State pleased with the performance of his offensive line, consisting of senior tackle Thayer Munford, redshirt freshman left guard Harry Miller, Myers, fourth-year junior right guard Wyatt Davis, and third-year sophomore right tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere.

"Overall, I thought we played physical," Day said. "We had good energy, and we played tough. It wasn't clean, but our guys just kept swinging away. We had some adversity along the way. We just kept playing hard."



# Fields Shines Under The Lights At Penn State

By CRAIG MERZ  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State jumped to an early lead and weathered every Penn State comeback attempt as Justin Fields threw for four touchdowns to lead the No. 3 Buckeyes to a 38-25 win over the No. 18 Nittany Lions at Beaver Stadium in University Park, Pa., on Oct. 31.

Fields guided the Buckeyes (2-0) to a quick 14-0 advantage.

When the Nittany Lions (0-2) threatened to make it a game in the third quarter, he hit Chris Olave for a 49-yard TD to make it 28-13 and later added his second scoring strike to Jeremy Ruckert on a fourth-and-1 for a 38-19 lead with under 10 minutes to play.

Fields, who was 20 of 21 for 276 yards and two TDs in the season-opening 52-17 win over Nebraska, was 28 of 34 for 318 yards. Olave had two TD receptions, Garrett Wilson had 111 receiving yards and 62 more yards on the ground, and Master Teague rushed for 110 yards on 23 carries and the first score of the game.

Ohio State scored on its first two possessions and had a 21-6 halftime lead.

"I thought we had good energy; I thought we played tough," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. "It wasn't clean, but our guys just kept swinging away."

## How It Happened

Ohio State stunned the Nittany Lions with a 75-yard, three-rush scoring drive that took 1:17 after the opening touchdown as Teague scored from the 4.

But it was slot receiver Wilson's 62-yard end-around on the first play that was the setup. From the 13, Teague followed with a 9-yard run before carrying bodies into the end zone on the next play for the 7-0 lead.

The Ohio State defense came through with a stop that led to the next touchdown for a 14-0 score at the 8:39 mark. Penn State was denied on a fourth-and-2 from its 45 when linebacker Pete Werner



COURTESY OF THE OHIO STATE DEPT. OF ATHLETICS

**IN CONTROL – Junior quarterback Justin Fields threw for 318 yards and four touchdowns in Ohio State's 38-25 win at Penn State on Oct. 31.**

hurried quarterback Sean Clifford into an errant throw.

OSU had a second-and-10 when Fields hit Olave for 9, and Trey Sermon moved the sticks to the 33 with a 3-yard run. After a 7-yard toss to Jameson Williams to the 26, Olave made a sterling grab along the right sideline in the end zone for the TD.

Penn State cut the deficit to 14-3 on a drive kept alive by a penalty. Baron Browning was called for roughing the passer, and instead of fourth down from the PSU 23, the Nittany Lions got new life at the 38. Jahan Dotson later had a 20-yard catch to the OSU 45, and Devyn Ford gained 23 running to the 22.

The Nittany Lions pushed as far as the 10, but a delay of game forced them into a 31-yard field goal by Jake Pinegar with 2:57 left in the first quarter. PSU chewed up 5:42 over 11 plays and 61 yards.

Ohio State blew a chance to answer with points when Blake Haubeil missed a 20-yard field goal to the right with 13:25 left in the second quarter. Day said afterward that Haubeil was struggling with a groin injury.

The Buckeyes had marched from their own 25 with the big play being a 20-yard pass to Wilson with an extra 8 yards for a late hit out-of-bounds by Brandon Smith to place the ball on the 9. Sermon had two runs to the 3, but Fields – who at that point was 7 for 7 for 81 yards – made a throw to the left corner that Wilson could not hold on to on third down.

The Buckeyes benefited from a PSU penalty to go ahead 21-3. Fields overthrew Wilson on third-and-2 from the OSU 19, but Lamont Wade was flagged 3 yards for interfering with Wilson.

OSU chunked its way down the field. Sermon ran for 15, Luke Farrell and Williams had receptions for 16 apiece, and Wilson caught a ball for 19 to the 12.

On third-and-3 from the 5, Fields had a quick sneak to the 1, but the next snap went over his head to the 14 where he recovered it.

Sermon took a screen pass 4 yards to the 10, and on third down Fields found Ruckert alone in the middle of the field for the TD with 2:23 remaining in the half to complete the 89-yard, 15-play, 6:06 possession.

The first half ended on a bizarre note when with two seconds left, Fields stepped back and took a knee on fourth down for a 3-yard loss to the OSU 33. The teams exited the field only to have a review put one second on the clock.

Penn State long kicker Jordan Stout then hit a 50-yard field goal as time expired to make it 21-6 as Day vociferously protested.

## Fields To The Rescue

The momentum carried to the first possession of the third quarter when PSU went 75 yards in 3:46 with Clifford going 5 for 5 for 75 yards, including a 14-yard TD to Dotson for a 21-13 score with 11:14 remaining.

Ohio State quickly responded, going 75 yards on eight plays in 2:33 with the capper a 49-yard score down the left side from Fields to Olave, who stretched for the ball in stride at the 4 and tumbled across the goal line.

The Buckeyes extended the lead to 31-13 with 1:02 to go in the third at the end of a 12-play series that ate up 6:22 but resulted in only a 22-yard field goal by backup kicker Dominic DiMaccio. Teague had a 31-yard run during the drive.

Back came Penn State.

Dotson made a highlight grab, palming the ball with his right hand and running in for a 21-yard TD to pull the Nittany Lions to within 31-19 on the second play

of the fourth quarter. The first was his 37-yard catch on a third-and-17. The two-point conversion failed.

Another sustained OSU drive ended with Fields flipping a 1-yard TD to Ruckert for a 38-19 advantage with 9:14 left. Wilson had two catches for 39 yards, and Olave's 17-yard reception got the Buckeyes to the 8. Teague had seven carries for 23 yards on the 75-yard, 12-play, 5:16 series.

Penn State refused to go away, and Dotson had his third TD catch, this time for 20 yards with 6:27 remaining. The two-pointer failed again for a 38-25 score. PSU went 75 yards with Parker Washington having catches of 31 and 16 yards and Clifford adding an 11-yard run.

After a late Marcus Hooker interception of Clifford and 31-yard return to the 9, Teague had three rushes for 4 yards and the Buckeyes had a 23-yard field-goal try by DiMaccio, who missed it with 1:13 left.

Penn State ran eight plays and the game ended with the Nittany Lions at their 46.

## By The Numbers

Fields in two games is 48 of 55 (87.3 percent) for 594 yards, six TDs and zero interceptions. ... Olave had seven catches for 120 yards ... Dotson made eight catches for 144 yards, and Clifford, after passing for 29 yards in the first half, finished 18 of 30 for 281 yards, three TDs and an interception. ... Tommy Togiai led the Buckeyes with seven tackles (four solo) and had a career-high three of the team's five sacks for 13 yards. ... OSU had 526 yards (318 passing, 208 rushing). The Buckeyes also had nine penalties for 80 yards. ... Penn State had 325 total yards (281 passing, 44 rushing on 27 attempts). ... The kickoff temperature at 7:44 ET was 41 degrees.



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# The Numbers Game

## Ohio State 38, Penn State 25

Oct. 31, 2020 – Beaver Stadium, University Park, PA

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	14	7	10	7	38
PENN STATE	3	3	7	12	25

### First Quarter

**OSU** – Teague, 4-yard run (Haubeil kick), 13:43; 3 plays, 75 yards, 1:17 TOP.  
**OSU** – Olave, 26-yard pass from Fields (Haubeil kick), 8:39; 5 plays, 45 yards, 2:42 TOP.  
**PSU** – Pinegar, 31-yard field goal, 2:57; 11 plays, 61 yards, 5:42 TOP.

### Second Quarter

**OSU** – Ruckert, 10-yard pass from Fields (DiMaccio kick), 2:23; 15 plays, 89 yards, 6:06 TOP.  
**PSU** – Stout, 50-yard field goal, 0:00; 1 play, 0 yards, 0:01 TOP.

### Third Quarter

**PSU** – Dotson, 14-yard pass from Clifford (Pinegar kick), 11:14; 8 plays, 75 yards, 3:46 TOP.  
**OSU** – Olave, 49-yard pass from Fields (DiMaccio kick), 8:41; 8 plays, 75 yards, 2:33 TOP.  
**OSU** – DiMaccio, 22-yard field goal, 1:02; 12 plays, 75 yards, 6:22 TOP.

### Fourth Quarter

**PSU** – Dotson, 21-yard pass from Clifford (Clifford run failed), 14:30; 5 plays, 75 yards, 1:32 TOP.  
**OSU** – Ruckert, 1-yard pass from Fields (DiMaccio kick), 9:14; 12 plays, 75 yards, 5:16 TOP.  
**PSU** – Dotson, 20-yard pass from Clifford (Clifford pass failed), 6:27; 7 plays, 75 yards, 2:47 TOP.  
**Att.** – 1,500  
**Weather** – 41 degrees, mostly clear; wind S 4 mph

Team Statistics		
	OSU	PSU
First Downs	24	20
Rushing	10	4
Passing	12	13
Penalty	2	3
Rushes-Yards	45-208	27-44
Passing Yards	318	281
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	28-34-0	18-30-1
Offensive Plays	79	57
Total Net Yards	526	325
Third-Down Efficiency	10-18	3-9
Punts-Avg.	2-38.5	4-49.0
Fumbles-Lost	2-0	0-0
Penalties	9-80	5-31
Time of Possession	37:01	22:59

**Individual Statistics**  
**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – PSU:** Ford 8-36; Clifford 18-5; Levis 1-3. **OSU:** Teague 23-110; Wilson 1-62; Sermon 13-56; Fields 6-(-4); TEAM 2-(-16).  
**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – PSU:** Clifford 18-30-1-281-3. **OSU:** Fields 28-34-0-318-4.  
**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – PSU:** Dotson 8-144; Washington 4-73; Freiermuth 3-46; Lambert-Smith 2-18; Ford 1-0. **OSU:** Wilson 11-111; Olave 7-120; Ruckert 4-25; Williams 2-23; Farrell 1-16; Hausmann 1-13; Smith-Njigba 1-6; Sermon 1-4.  
**PUNTING (No.-Avg.) – PSU:** Stout 4-49.0. **OSU:** Chrisman 2-38.5.  
**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Avg.) – PSU:** None. **OSU:** None.  
**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Avg.) PSU:** Washington 1-16.0. **OSU:** None.  
**MISSSED FIELD GOALS – PSU:** None. **OSU:** Haubeil (20), DiMaccio (23).  
**FORCED FUMBLES – PSU:** Dixon. **OSU:** None.  
**FUMBLE RECOVERIES – PSU:** None. **OSU:** None.  
**INTERCEPTIONS – PSU:** None. **OSU:** Hooker 1-31.  
**SACKS – PSU:** Smith 1.0-8; Shelton 1.0-8. **OSU:** Togiai 3.0-13; Jean-Baptiste 1.0-8; Cooper 0.5-1; Harrison 0.5-1.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS – PSU:** Smith 1.5-9; Shelton 1.0-8; Brown 1.0-4; Brooks 1.0-4; Owheh 0.5-0. **OSU:** Togiai 3.0-13; Harrison 1.5-3; Jean-Baptiste 1.0-8; Borland 0.5-2; Cooper 0.5-1; Werner 0.5-1.

**TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – PSU:** Brooks 5-6-11; Wade 6-2-8; Luketa 4-4-8; Brisker 4-4-8; Mustipher 2-6-8; Owheh 2-4-6; Dixon 4-1-5; Smith 3-2-5; Porter 3-2-5; Katshir 2-1-3; Simmons 1-2-3; Shelton 1-1-2; Brown 1-1-2; Isaac 0-2-2; George 1-0-1; Sutherland 1-0-1; Castro-Fields 1-0-1; Wilson 0-1-1; Hansard 0-1-1; Beamon 0-1-1; Toney 0-1-1. **OSU:** Togiai 4-3-7; Hooker 5-1-6; Werner 1-5-6; Borland 1-4-5; Cooper 1-4-5; Banks 3-1-4; Harrison 2-2-4; Wade 2-1-3; Friday 1-2-3; Williamson 1-1-2; Jean-Baptiste 1-1-2; Garrett 0-2-2; Proctor 0-2-2; Smith 1-0-1; Watts 1-0-1; Ransom 1-0-1; Jackson 0-1-1; Browning 0-1-1; Cage 0-1-1.

### Players In The Game

**PSU** – Washington, Freiermuth, Walker, Miranda, Menet, Thorpe, Fries, George, Dotson, Clifford, Ford, Toney, Mustipher, Shelton, Owheh, Dixon, Brooks, Smith, Castro-Fields, Brisker, Wade, Porter, Sutherland, Lambert-Smith, Rudolph, Levis, Wilson, Brown, Gordon, Isaac, Jacobs, Lee, Hardy, Holmes, Bruno, Simmons, Hartlaub, Luketa, Katshir, Tarburton, Beamon, Hansard, Effner, Holmes, Culpepper, Wallace, Kuntz, Lutz, Strange, Checa, Ellies, Pinegar, Forrest, Stout.

**OSU** – Fields, Olave, Wilson, Teague, Davis, Myers, Munford, Miller, Petit-Frere, Ruckert, Farrell, Harrison, Smith, Togiai, Browning, Jackson, Banks, Werner, Williamson, Hooker, Wade, Borland, Cooper, Ransom, Hickman, Watts, DiMaccio, Mitchell, Williams, Booker, Sermon, Jean-Baptiste, Smith-Njigba, Scott, Stover, Babb, Gant, Chambers, Dever, Rossi, Proctor, Kacherski, Friday, Johnson, Hausmann, Cage, Chrisman, Garrett, Haubeil.

## Season Statistics

2020-21 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Oct. 24	(5) NEBRASKA	52-17	1,344
Oct. 31	(3) Penn State (18)	38-25	1,500
Nov. 7	(3) RUTGERS	7:30 p.m.	
Nov. 14	at Maryland	TBA	
Nov. 21	INDIANA	TBA	
Nov. 28	at Illinois	TBA	
Dec. 5	at Michigan State	TBA	
Dec. 12	MICHIGAN	Noon	
Dec. 19	Big Ten Championship Week	TBA	

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

Team Statistics		
	OSU	Opp
First Downs	52	37
Rushing	23	15
Passing	24	19
Penalty	5	3
Average Per Game/Rush	211.5	127.0
Average Per Game/Pass	297.0	220.5
Total Offense	1017	695
Total Plays	148	113
Average Per Game	508.5	347.5
Average Per Play	6.9	6.2
Penalties-Yards	12-94	13-121
Fumbles-Lost	4-1	3-2
Third Down Efficiency	18-31	7-19
Percentage	58%	37%
Fourth Down Efficiency	4-5	0-1
Percentage	80%	0%
Sacks-Yards	8-33	5-37
Time Of Possession Avg.	35:08	24:53

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	28	17	24	21	0	90	45.0	
Opponents	10	10	10	12	0	42	21.0	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Master Teague	35	151	4.3	3	31
Trey Sermon	24	104	4.3	0	16
Justin Fields	21	50	2.5	1	17
Steele Chambers	4	32	8.4	0	17
Xavier Johnson	4	17	4.2	0	7
Jack Miller	2	23	11.5	1	21
TEAM	2	-16	-8.0	0	0
Garrett Wilson	1	62	62.0	0	62
OSU Totals	93	423	4.5	5	62
OPP Totals	63	254	4.0	2	47

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Justin Fields	48	55	87.3	594	6-0	213.99
OSU Totals	48	55	87.3	594	6-0	213.99
OPP Totals	34	50	68.0	441	3-1	157.9

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	18	240	13.3	1	42
Chris Olave	13	224	17.2	2	49
Jeremy Ruckert	5	31	6.2	2	13
Jameson Williams	3	30	10.0	0	16
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	3	11	3.7	1	6
Luke Farrell	2	21	10.5	0	16
Trey Sermon	2	11	5.5	0	7
Julian Fleming	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jake Hausmann	1	13	13.0	0	13
OSU Totals	48	594	12.4	6	49
OPP Totals	34	441	13.0	3	37

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Master Teague	3	–	–	–	–	18
Blake Haubeil	–	9-9	–	–	1-2	12
Jeremy Ruckert	2	–	–	–	–	12
Chris Olave	2	–	–	–	–	12
Dominic DiMaccio	–	3-3	–	–	1-2	6
Garrett Wilson	1	–	–	–	–	6
Jack Miller	1	–	–	–	–	6
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	1	–	–	–	–	6
Justin Fields	1	–	–	–	–	6
Sevyn Banks	1	–	–	–	–	6
OSU Totals	12	12-12	–	–	2-4	90
OPP Totals	5	3-3	0-1	0-1	3-3	42

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Blake Haubeil	0-1	1-1	0-0	0-0	1-2
Dominic DiMaccio	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-2
OSU Totals	1-3	1-1	0-0	0-0	2-4
OPP Totals	1-1	1-1	0-0	1-1	3-3
Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long

Drue Chrisman	4	175	43.8	0	52
OSU Totals	4	175	43.8	0	52
OPP Totals	9	419	46.6	0	56

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
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Marcus Hooker	1	31	31.0	0	31
OSU Totals	1	31	31.0	0	31
OPP Totals	0	0	0.0	0	0

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
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Garrett Wilson	2	23	11.5	0	22
OSU Totals	2	23	11.5	0	22
OPP Totals	0	0	0	0	0

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
-----------------	-----	------	------	----	------

Demario McCall	1	10	10.0	0	10
Garrett Wilson	1	4	4.0	0	4
OSU Totals	2	14	7.0	0	10
OPP Totals	4	70	17.5	0	22

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
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Pete Werner	5	8	13	1.5-5	–
Marcus Hooker	9	1	10	–	–
Tuf Borland	4	6	10	0.5-2	–
Tommy Togiai	5	5	10	3.0-13	3.0-13
Jonathon Cooper	1	6	7	0.5-1	0.5-1
Marcus Williamson	5	1	6	–	–
Zach Harrison	3	3	6	2.5-4	1.5-2
Baron Browning	3	2	5	–	–
Shaun Wade	3	1	4	–	–
Josh Proctor	3	2	5	1.0-5	–
Sevyn Banks	3	2	5	–	–
Haskell Garrett	2	2	4	1.0-5	1.0-5
Tyler Friday	1	3	4	–	–
Dallas Gant	3	0	3	–	–
Teradja Mitchell	3	0	3	–	–
Javontae Jean-Baptiste	1	2	3	1.0-8	1.0-8
Jerron Cage	2	0	2	–	–
Lathan Ranson	2	0	2	–	–
Antwuan Jackson	1	1	2	–	–
Ryan Watts	1	0	1	–	–
Tyreke Smith	1	0	1	–	–
Darrion Henry-Young	1	0	1	1.0-4	1.0-4
Craig Young	1	0	1	–	–
Cameron Brown	1	0	1	–	–
Trayvon Wilburn	1	0	1	–	–
Chris Booker	1	0	1	–	–
Cade Stover	1	0	1	–	–

OSU Totals	66	48	114	12-47	8-33
OPP Totals	86	68	154	11-51	5-37

**Fumbles Forced:** 1 – Gant.

**Fumbles Recovered:** 2 – Banks, Proctor.



# BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 38, Penn State 25

**Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on what this win means to the team:** "It was a big step forward. To win this game on the road is a huge step for us. But there's a lot to be done. Absolutely, there's a lot to be done, and we'll just keep going back to work. But I think that's very encouraging that there's a lot of work to be done and you still play like this and win like this."

**Ohio State junior quarterback Justin Fields on what this win means to the team:** "We knew it was a big game coming into it, but as Coach Day says, we take it one week at a time. So we're just going to focus on playing Rutgers next week. But we're definitely happy that we won."

**Ohio State junior tight end Jeremy Ruckert on what a win like this means for the Buckeyes:** "Winning any game on the road in the Big Ten is important, and we knew coming in that it was going to be a challenge, especially them coming off a loss. We knew that we were going to get their best shot, and I think we really made a statement today about what kind of team we have. We're not one-dimensional, we can do all different types of things, and I think that's just a testament to our coaching staff, our strength staff and all of our players, just working together and just trying to get our one goal, winning every game week by week."

**Fields on how the team improved from the Nebraska game to the Penn State game:** "I think we did a lot of stuff better, but to be honest, I'm just happy that we won the game. I think we did a lot of things well today, but ultimately, I'm just happy that we won."

**Penn State head coach James Franklin on the aftermath of giving up a 62-yard run to sophomore wide receiver Garrett Wilson on the first play of the game:** "The opening play obviously was a big play, but that's going to happen. That happens sometimes, and you have to be mentally tough and you have to bounce back from it. You have to be resilient, but people are going to make plays."

**Franklin on Penn State's aggressive decisions during the game, including going for a fourth down on the team's first offensive drive of the game:** "We wanted to be aggressive, that's why we went for it early. We went into this game knowing that we were going to have to score points, score touchdowns, so we wanted to go for it as much as we possibly could in fourth-down situations."

**Franklin on the struggles getting a rushing attack from junior quarterback Sean Clifford:** "We felt like going into the

game the quarterback running game would be something that would be a big part of the game. We weren't able to get that going."

**Clifford on what Ohio State's defense was doing against the Nittany Lions:** "Ohio State's a team who, they match up in man, they play you in one-high (safety) because they have athletes across the board. That's just their identity, and that's their mentality. So I told the guys we're going to have to win on man routes, we're going to have to run across people's faces and get open."

**Penn State junior wide receiver Jahan Dotson on what was working in the second half on offense:** "We were just able to capitalize on what they were giving us. We basically took shots, trusted in our play-makers and we made plays. That was pretty much it."

**Ohio State fifth-year senior defensive Jonathon Cooper on what wasn't working as well in the second half against Penn State:** "That's just all up to film. Things are going to happen, plays are going to happen. They are a really good team, Penn State, and we knew that coming into it. And we knew that they were not going to lay down in the second half either. All we can really do is look at the film and get better for next week."

**Franklin on the struggles Penn State's defense had against Ohio State's offense:** "Defensively, we really couldn't get them off schedule. They were in manageable down-and-distance situations pretty much the entire game, and with a quarterback like that and their offensive personnel, not getting them off schedule, it's going to be challenging."

**Franklin on how the battle at the line of scrimmage went for Penn State:** "We weren't able to get tackles for loss or sacks, and then the same thing with our offensive line, so there's a lot of things that go into that, obviously, but we did not win the line of scrimmage tonight."

**Franklin on if Fields is the best quarterback he has ever faced at Penn State:** "I'm not sure. He is talented, and it's not just Justin – it's all of the pieces around him as well. I think we have a pretty good pass rush, and we weren't able to get to him a whole lot tonight. So they protected him well, did a good job of mixing the run and the pass. They're very talented on the perimeter at the wide receiver positions as well – all the things that we knew. We had tremendous respect for them coming into the game."

**Fields on how having talented teammates helps him succeed:** "The more tal-

ent we have, the easier a job it is for me. It's simple like that."

**Fields on where the team must go from here after a 2-0 start:** "We're going to go in tomorrow, look at the film and just try to get better each and every week. We're going to keep improving each and every practice and just keep getting better."

**Dotson on what he proved following his three-touchdown performance against Ohio State:** "That I can make plays when I get the ball in my hands. That's my goal every time I touch the ball or get an opportunity to touch the ball. It's just make a play."

**Dotson on his second touchdown of the game, which came on a highlight-reel one-handed catch:** "I have to practice that after practice just because coaches prohibit that at practice. It's two hands every time you get an opportunity to catch the ball, so I kind of practice that on the side with Parker (Washington), KeAndre (Lambert-Smith), guys like that, and I got to show I was capable of doing that in the game today."

**Cooper on if this was the best game of his Ohio State career:** "I don't even know the stats, I don't even know what happened. I feel like it was all a blur. I was just into the game. I feel like my team up north games are pretty good throughout the years, but I don't know, this one feels up there for sure."

**Cooper when he was told what his final stats were (five tackles, one half sack):** "That's all? That's all they gave me? Dang, I need more."

**Clifford on his interception to sophomore safety Marcus Hooker in the fourth quarter:** "I thought we did a pretty good job of keeping the ball. That's on me, on the second-to-last drive, trying to make a play and if I want to go from good to great to elite, I can't make a play like that. I have to make that play or throw it out of bounds."

**Clifford on having to potentially motivate his teammates after an 0-2 start to the season:** "If you're not motivated right now, then I don't really want you on the team. Like that's just a fact. If you're not motivated off of two losses, when your back's against the wall, if you're somebody who's just going to fold and just say, 'All right, we'll get them next year,' I don't want you here."

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# Garrett's Return A 'Miracle' For Buckeyes

By PATRICK MAYHORN  
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Without the context of the offseason that he endured, one might have looked at No. 92 on Ohio State's defense in its season opener against Nebraska and seen a game-changing defensive tackle, one who dominated the interior of the Cornhusker line and wreaked havoc on quarterback Adrian Martinez.

With context, it's hard to find appropriate words to describe Haskell Garrett's reintroduction to Ohio State football. Just 55 days after being shot in the face as he reportedly broke up an altercation between two strangers while walking near Ohio State's campus, Garrett took the field for the Buckeyes as a reserve on Oct. 24. He left it as a budding star in the eyes of many, including Ohio State's coaching staff, which named him the defensive player of the week after he notched two tackles and one sack and disrupted several more plays.

It was a move that stunned many observers of the program but seemingly caught no one donning the Scarlet and Gray by surprise.

"I'm not surprised because I know what Haskell is capable of," head coach Ryan Day said on Oct. 27. "I am really impressed with the way he played. You have to give credit to everybody involved to get him ready to play at that level after such a traumatic event. It was pretty impressive to see that turnaround."

For Garrett, a return to football after an off-season filled with trauma and obstacles served as a guiding force, something he could keep in the front of his mind to carry him through a situation no one can ever prepare for.

"I was focused on that moment and that time and just getting back to football focus and just trying to get back to football," Garrett said in his first media availability after suffering the injury. "And I knew that there was a greater purpose. So just being ready for any opportunity and when I was cleared, I was full-go and I was ready and prepared to hit the ground running."

While Garrett's work ethic and dedication kept him afloat through the weeks he spent unable to participate in practice, he certainly didn't engineer his eventual return and the success that followed it on his own. He spent as much time as he possibly could working with the Ohio State medical team to expedite the healing process, while essentially living in defensive line coach Larry Johnson's office to improve the mental part of his game.

"Post-surgery, I couldn't do anything physically, but I could do stuff mentally and would just sit there and talk with Coach J and go over game plans and just be as prepared as possible," he said. "When I had found out that I had really no major damage to my mouth nor face, I knew in that moment that it was time to just get back to working, refocus myself and just be ready for any opportunity I have to get back to play."

While focusing his time on growing his understanding of the game, Garrett dealt with several physical challenges. The gunshot wound left him missing five teeth, which has limited him primarily to a liquid diet until his teeth are replaced. For a man touching 300 pounds who has built much of his craft around his size, that requires a whole lot of liquid.

"I have to drink a lot of protein shakes," Garrett said. "For the most part, it's a lot of intake throughout the day and constantly changing my routine in what I put in my body."

Once he was finally cleared for action in the days leading up to Ohio State's opening game, Garrett was finally able to appreciate the moment and fully embrace his craft.



ANDREW LIND

**QUICK RETURN** – Just two months after being shot in the face while allegedly breaking up a fight, defensive tackle Haskell Garrett recorded Ohio State's first sack of the season in the Oct. 24 win over Nebraska.

"I was very happy the second I got cleared, just the fact that I knew they wanted me to be out there and I'm a leader in the unit and that the guys are leaning on me as much as I lean on them," Garrett said. "So it was just really emotional, and it was really a very blessed opportunity to go out there and be with them."

The road to recovery may have been a long one for the senior from Las Vegas, but according to center Josh Myers – who frequently matches up with Garrett in practice – he looked like a man possessed as soon as he took the field.

"His first day back in pads, we ran an outside zone play, and he got my number on it," Myers said on Oct. 28. "I was not ready for it. Man, he came off the ball so hard. I could just tell he was so happy and excited to be back. And he came off the rock on the first day of pads, on the first set of team drills, and I was like 'Oh my God.' I don't know what all he did at home during the quarantine, but the way he came off the ball was

different. It was different than the way he did before, and it was different than most players I've ever played against."

Ohio State may need Garrett to be different from most players this season. Without a true star to buoy the defensive line as the Silver Bullets have had in years past, Johnson will likely take contributions from anywhere he can get it. He told reporters shortly before the season that he wasn't worried about the lack of an obvious star at defensive end, but Ohio State did seem to be impacted by the missing production that it can usually depend on from someone like Chase Young or one of the Bosa brothers.

Sophomore Zach Harrison recorded a sack, as did reserve tackle Darrion Henry-Young after the Nebraska game was already in hand, but no player on the defensive line looked quite as disruptive as Garrett. He may not be ready to leap to the impact level of a Young or Bosa, but Garrett thinks he can fill those shoes, because when a player is as prepared as he was against

the Huskers, success is almost sure to follow.

"Every year, we've always had to step up," Garrett said. "I've been around a lot of great D-tackles. I remember when Dre'Mont (Jones) left, he was a great D-tackle, and Tracy Sprinkle left, he was a great D-tackle. And then DaVon (Hamilton) had to step up, Jashon (Cornell) had to step up, I had to step up, Robert Landers, B.B., had to step up. So every time we lose one, it's just the next one up, as Coach J says. They're big shoes to fill, but I believe we'll get it done this year."

"I don't think anybody really realizes how much goes into one play in college football and any level of the sport," Garrett said. "When you're prepared, you do good things and when you're always ready and going in and doing stuff and meeting with your coach, nothing can stop you."

Whether he's truly ready to be a star, impact player for the Buckeyes or not, Garrett's story will remain a shining example of perseverance and dedication for a player who fought for playing time for three years and was just inches away from needing to fight for his life in the fourth. Any way you slice it, there seems to be only one word to fit Garrett's journey: miracle.

"I hugged Haskell in the locker room after the game and I said, 'This is a miracle.' It's a miracle," defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs said. "This kid was shot in the face. And he just never gave up. He just kept coming in."

"My office is right across the hall from Larry Johnson's, and he's in there working with Larry with the stitches and all that stuff, learning and preparing without being able to do anything physically. And for him to do that and then to be able to play – I'm not going to tell you how he played, I don't know that until I watch the tape. But I know having him on the field was a difference-maker for the Buckeyes in every way, shape and form."

Myers is also thankful Garrett is back and well, even if it means more difficult practices.

"Personally, I was terrified because I woke up (the morning of the shooting) and had no idea what was going on and obviously was very, very scared," Myers said. "I love Haskell. Our entire team loves Haskell, and we're just so thankful that he's safe. It's a miracle he's with us."

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# Booker Takes Unconventional Path To Playing Time

By ANDREW LIND  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State senior wide receiver Chris Booker thought his football career was over when he transferred from the University of Dayton in 2017. He had red-shirted during his freshman year with the Flyers, and his passion for the game had faded as a result.

But while playing flag football on the turf fields outside Ohio Stadium with his cousin and friends that fall, Booker realized he missed the competition and camaraderie that comes with playing the sport.

So Booker – a two-time all-state wide receiver at St. Louis John Burroughs School, the program that produced former Buckeye running back Ezekiel Elliott – joined the Ohio State club football team, where he made an instant impact under the guidance of head coach and former Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff writer James Grega.

“(He was) the best player on the team, without question,” Grega told Buckeye Sports Bulletin in a phone interview on Oct. 27. “Extremely gifted with the ball in his hands, but also very technically sound. The only time he came off the field was on kickoff and punt or if the game was out of hand. He started at wide receiver and cornerback, but we also lined him up in the slot and at running back at times.”

In his lone season with the club team



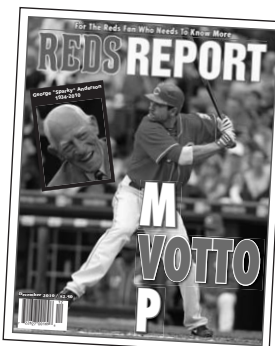
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**MAKING AN IMPACT** – Ohio State wide receiver Chris Booker (86) went from club football All-American to special teams player of the week following the Buckeyes' 52-17 win over Nebraska on Oct. 24.

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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

in 2018, Booker caught 14 passes for 371 yards and seven touchdowns in just four games to earn National Club Football Association first-team All-American honors. That included five catches for 173 yards and three scores in a 36-21 win over rival Miami (Ohio).

“Playing at the club was so much fun,” Booker said during a teleconference on Oct. 28. “It really just felt like high school again, just being able to go out there and play with my brothers. I made some lifelong friends on the club team, and I won’t forget my experiences there. That really had me fall in love with the game again.”

After the season, Grega put together a tape of Booker’s highlights and sent it – along with a letter of recommendation – to Ohio State assistant director of player personnel Justin Perez and executive director for football relations Tim Hinton in hopes of getting him a walk-on opportunity with the varsity team.

“Other than his overall talent, his love for the game and his drive and determination separate him from other players,” Grega said. “Sometimes at this level of football, the best player on your team is not often the hardest worker, but Chris was both. He knew he was better than everyone on our roster and probably better than anyone in our league, but that didn’t stop him from outworking everyone. On top of all that, he is probably one of the most humble guys I have been around.”

A few months later, the staff asked Booker to come to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center for a meeting to gauge his interest in joining the team.

“They really took a chance on me, and I really appreciate the opportunity,” Booker said. “I’m just blessed.”

Booker did not appear in a single game with Ohio State last season as he focused on adding muscle to his 6-2 and 190-pound frame. But even then, his performance in the weight room and on scout team made quite the impression on director of sports performance Mickey Marotti and running backs coach Tony Alford.

“Coach Mick came up to me one day – and it really meant so much to me – but he came up to me one day after our practice and said, ‘If you keep doing what you’re doing, you’re going to play,’” Booker said. “I really didn’t even know what to say because not a lot of walk-ons play here. Not to mention, I’m new to the team and I haven’t been here as long as many other walk-ons. I was just patiently waiting for my time, but when he told me that, my mind-set kind of changed. Like ‘OK, I can do this.’”

Booker finally saw his first action in an Ohio State uniform in the 52-17 win

over Nebraska on Oct. 24. He recorded a tackle and earned special teams player of the game honors for his efforts on the kickoff coverage, kickoff return and punt return units.

“It’s just an unbelievable story,” Ohio State coach Ryan Day said during a conference call with reporters on Oct. 28. “What he’s done in the weight room with Mick, what (wide receivers coach) Brian Hartline has done in terms of turning him into a receiver and then his work on special teams with (special teams/secondary coach) Matt Barnes, I can’t say enough.

“You talk about a big heart. He wasn’t playing football. I asked him in a team meeting, ‘How many stars did you have?’ He said, ‘Zero. I wasn’t recruited by anybody.’ It just goes to show you when somebody wants something enough and they have a big enough heart, anything’s possible. What an inspirational story. It was really, really cool to see.”

Given the amount of talent on the roster ahead of him at wide receiver, Booker is unlikely to see playing time on the offensive side of the ball. Even so, he’s just grateful for the opportunity to once again play football – not to mention at a high level – after nearly giving up the game altogether.

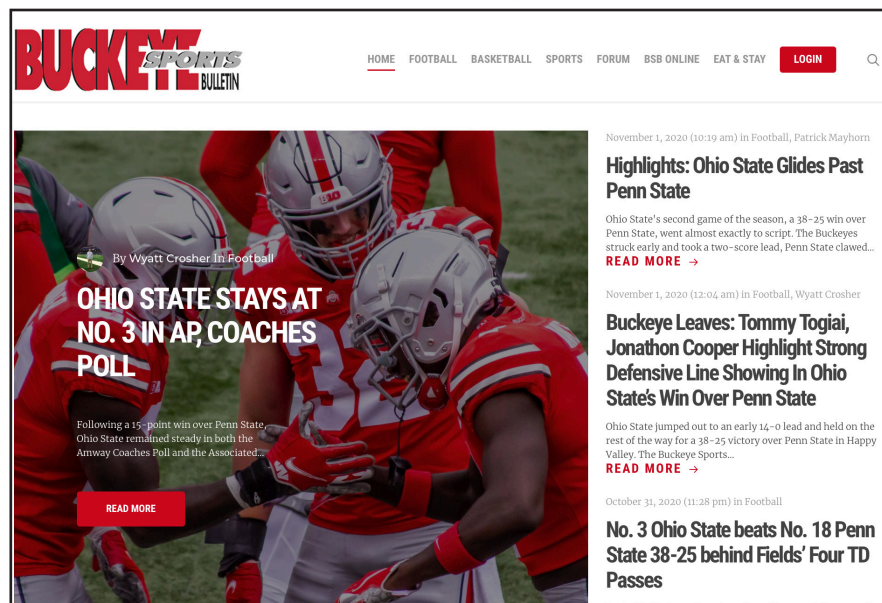
“The competition here is the first thing you think about when you think about a place like Ohio State,” Booker said. “It’s a top-three program. They get all the best recruits and the best talent, so you know you’re going to have to work hard if you want to see the field at all.

“Just what I’ve been able to accomplish is nothing short of amazing. And the opportunities that they have given me is amazing, as well. I’m just grateful, and I can’t say that enough.”

Booker – who is on track to graduate this spring with his bachelor’s degree in psychology – isn’t the first player to make the leap from the club program to the varsity team, following in the footsteps of former Ohio State wide receivers De’Shawn White and Kato Mitchell, defensive end Chris Fong and defensive back Elijaah Goins. But if he continues to make plays in his limited opportunities, he could very well turn into the most notable player to do so.

“I am just so happy for him,” Grega said. “He went through a lot to get to this point. Watching the game against Nebraska, I cheered about as loud for his tackle on special teams than I did for any of the touchdowns scored. I couldn’t be more proud for him and thrilled for his family. A lot of sacrifices were made for him to be where he is, and it’s gratifying to see him finally get rewarded.”

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# Campbell, Hill, Thomas OSU's Top Receivers In 2010s

By WYATT CROSHER  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

*BSB is continuing on 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 is deserving of being named the best at that position for Ohio State from 2010-19. Part four is on the best wide receivers of the 2010s.*

Ohio State has had plenty of talented wideouts in its program history, from such players as Cris Carter to Joey Galloway to Terry Glenn to David Boston. But the Buckeyes have also not had the most eye-popping stats from their wideouts, often due to being a run-first offensive attack through the coaching styles of Woody Hayes, Jim Tressel and Urban Meyer.

"Recently they maybe haven't had as many superstars at Ohio State as they have had at some other positions," Dan Hope, Ohio State football writer for Eleven Warriors, told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "I mean they certainly have a strong history at that position, I don't know that it jumps out at me the same way that say running back or linebacker or cornerback does, but they've certainly had some standout players at that position."

Still, despite some offenses that did not favor the receivers, plenty of big names came through Ohio State in the 2010s at the position and still found a way to make a large impact in their time with the program.

## The Nominees

The decade started out with some strong

seasons from Corey Brown, who played from 2010-13 and tallied 1,440 yards and 13 receiving touchdowns in his final two seasons, leading the team in receiving yards in both 2012 and 2013.

Brown received some major help in the room in 2011 in the form of both Devin Smith and Evan Spencer. Smith was one of the most prolific deep threats in recent memory for the Buckeyes, amassing 2,503 yards and 30 touchdowns in his four seasons with the program, including a 2014 season in which he had 931 yards and 12 scores on 33 catches, good for a sparkling 28.2 yards per reception.

Spencer never put up the big stats like Smith or Brown, finishing his Ohio State career with 52 receptions, 579 yards and seven touchdowns, but he was a key force in the blocking game and made a pivotal play in the College Football Playoff semifinal against Alabama, throwing a 13-yard touchdown pass against the Crimson Tide at the end of the second quarter.

Michael Thomas was the recipient of that Spencer touchdown pass, and he had a pair of incredibly strong seasons to end his Buckeye career, totaling 110 receptions, 1,580 yards and 18 touchdowns during the 2014 and 2015 campaigns.

Though he was a hybrid between a running back and wide receiver, Curtis Samuel made a big impact in the passing game, bringing in 107 catches for 1,249 yards and nine touchdowns while also rushing for 1,286 yards and 15 touchdowns.

Parris Campbell had some decent numbers heading into his fifth-year senior season, but that 2018 season was where he exploded, setting an Ohio State record with 90 catches on

the year, hauling them in for 1,063 yards and 12 touchdowns.

The same could be said for Terry McLaurin, who had 550 yards and eight touchdowns prior to 2018 but finished that season with 35 catches for 701 yards and 11 touchdowns, while also being one of the strongest performers on special teams, constantly downing punts inside the opponents' 10-yard line.

K.J. Hill was a key contributor on four Ohio State teams from 2016-19, and that consistency allowed Hill to finish his career with 201 receptions for 2,332 yards and 20 touchdowns, becoming the first player in program history with at least 200 catches.

Chris Olave still has at least one more season to write his story in Ohio State's history books, but his efforts in the last decade were still impressive. Olave finished 2019 with 49 catches for 849 yards and 12 touchdowns and totaled 61 receptions for 1,046 yards and 15 scores in the 2010s.

## The Discussion

When asked who they believe were the three best wide receivers during the 2010s, here is what the BSB staff had to say:

**Wyatt Crosher:** "Ohio State had a whole bunch of talent in the wide receiver room this past decade but also had a lot of talent that didn't have as large an impact on the field as one would expect.

"The first of these was Thomas, who is now one of the very best receivers in the NFL but never erupted for even a 1,000-yard season while he was with the Buckeyes. Still, Thomas had a knack for coming up huge in key moments and was easily the most talented player in the room during the last 10 years, so I think he has to be included here.

"Later in the decade, Ohio State found more production in its room, especially in 2018 during Dwayne Haskins' lone season as starter. That season, McLaurin went from average to exceptional, and it came with more than just his play at wideout. McLaurin was also one of the best leaders on that team and displayed pure excellence on special teams, and that – along with his breakout numbers during his fifth-year senior season – has him locked in for a spot on my list.

"Finally, I will go with Hill, who found a way to quietly break a program record for receptions, something that he did by never being the most explosive player but by always being one of the most consistent on the field. He was crucial for the Buckeyes' offense for multiple seasons and will always be underrated for what he brought to the team."

**Joe Dempsey:** "Choosing just three Ohio State wide receivers for the all-decade team presents a difficult challenge because it guarantees a handful of highly skilled, productive players will be excluded. McLaurin, Smith and Thomas did not make the cut for me, and there are strong arguments for each of them to be listed among not only the best Buckeye receivers in recent years but of all time.

"Hill makes my all-decade team due to his unmatched production, consistency and effectiveness in getting open for timely first downs. Hill's 201 receptions are the most in program history, and he took advantage of those opportunities, ranking sixth in both career yards and touchdowns with 2,332 and 20, respectively. Whether it was J.T. Barrett, Haskins or Justin Fields, Hill provided each quarterback with a dynamic weapon in the slot.

"Campbell deserves a spot among the best receivers in the decade for his game-breaking abilities with the ball in his hands. While splitting time with Hill in the slot in 2018, Campbell set a single-season school record with 90 recep-

tions, which he took for 1,063 yards and 12 scores. The converted running back's highlight-filled season capped an explosive career in Columbus and catapulted his NFL draft stock to where he became a second-round pick.

"Olave came to Columbus out of California as a three-star prospect in 2018, but the under-rated wideout did not waste time becoming a household name. Olave emerged on special teams as a true freshman before breaking out against Michigan in a 62-39 upset victory, where he blocked a punt resulting in a touchdown and caught two of his own as a receiver. He carried that momentum into his sophomore season, when he reeled in 49 receptions for 849 yards and 12 touchdowns, tying Smith and Campbell for the most single-season receiving scores in the decade. Olave's all-around impact and production in big games makes him worthy of an all-decade spot."

**Andrew Lind:** "With so many talented receivers and only three spots available, I felt it was best to choose the player of the decade at the X, Z and H-back positions.

"The first name that comes to mind at the X is Thomas, though I'd argue he was underutilized at Ohio State thanks to maturity issues that plagued him early in his career. But once he finally put everything together on and off the field, he was easily the best receiver to play for the Buckeyes in the 2010s.

"Thomas finished his Ohio State career with 113 receptions for 1,602 yards and 18 touchdowns, none more memorable than the toe-tapping score in the 2015 Sugar Bowl win over Alabama.

For all of his physical talent, Thomas was nowhere near the playmaker Smith was. Smith had a knack for big plays at the Z position, from the game-winning touchdown reception in the 2011 upset of Wisconsin to his three-touchdown performance in a blowout of the Badgers in the 2014 Big Ten Championship Game.

"To me, Smith's play was the biggest reason for the Buckeyes' run to the national title that season – not Cardale Jones' arm or Ezekiel Elliott's three-game tear. He simply ran by defenders and caught every jump ball thrown his way.

"Last but not least, having to choose between Hill, Campbell and Samuel proved to be a difficult task at the H-Back slot. But I'll go with Hill, who finished his career with a school-record 201 career receptions and was the most consistent, albeit not very flashy, player the Buckeyes have had in my lifetime – and possibly ever.

"Campbell makes a compelling argument after his 2018 season in which he became the first wide receiver since 2002 to record 1,000 yards in a season, while Samuel was arguably the best athlete on the field when he played. I just think there's something to be said about someone who showed up and did his job every game to little or no fanfare."

**Patrick Mayhorn:** "Trying to pick wide receivers of the decade for Ohio State is a lot more difficult than I thought it would be. While the Buckeyes have seen quite a few outstanding talents come through Columbus at wide receiver in recent years, it's fairly difficult to differentiate within the top five or six best and cut it down to three, because none of those wideouts felt truly transcendent in Columbus.

"Thomas has slipped into that territory in recent years because of his play in the NFL, but in all honesty, his college career was never that impressive to me. He was certainly very good, but he was not being utilized in a way that maximized his ability, which hurts him in calculations like this one. There are other players who fit that billing. Guys like Samuel, Jalin Marshall and Dontre Wilson could've easily had

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the talent to crack a list like this but were never fully dedicated to the receiver spot, as they were asked to split time as that H-back hybrid player.

"Because of that, trying to pick the most talented players of the decade at wide receiver is essentially impossible, because some of the best of the bunch never really got to show what they could do at Ohio State. So I went instead with pure production and landed on Hill, Campbell and Spencer.

"Hill is the easiest to explain. He's the most productive receiver in program history, and he did so as a slot receiver for three different quarterbacks, three offensive coordinators and two head coaches. Through all that turmoil, Hill was always a model of consistency and a security blanket for the signal caller. He isn't the most explosive player in school history, but his contributions were crucial to every team he was on, even when he was a freshman.

"Campbell also seems pretty obvious to me. He was the first 1,000-yard receiver for Ohio State since 2002 and a staple on the best passing attack in Ohio State's long history in 2018. His early-career struggles set him back a little bit, but he was so good under the tutelage of Brian Hartline that it's hard to pick against him.

"My final pick needs a little more explanation, because on his career, Spencer had just 52 catches for 579 yards and seven scores, only slightly better than the numbers you'd expect from a career backup. However, if we're going on production and impact, there may not be a wide receiver who meant more to that 2014 national title team than Spencer did. Sure, Smith caught bombs from Cardale Jones and Thomas was always there when the Buckeyes needed yardage, but Ohio State doesn't beat Alabama in the semifinals without Spencer's blocking on the perimeter or his brilliant touchdown pass to Thomas to end the first half.

"He was a leader for the entire season, an outstanding blocker and a greatly underrated piece of Ohio State's storied history at wide receiver."

## The Choices

**Michael Thomas:** Before becoming one of the best wide receivers in the NFL, Thomas came to Ohio State as a low three-star recruit out of Woodland Hills (Calif.) Taft. He was ranked the No. 765 overall prospect and barely ranked within the top 100 wide receivers in the 2011 class, coming in at No. 89.

After a brief stint in 2011 at Virginia's Fork Union Military Academy with another Ohio State commit, quarterback Cardale Jones, Thomas came to the Buckeyes in 2012 and immediately found his way on the field. That season, Thomas played in 11 games and had three catches for 22 yards, making one reception each in games against UAB, Purdue and Michigan.

He seemed to be on the path to a more substantial role in 2013, but Thomas did not see the field again until 2014, redshirting his second season with the program.

"We've never seen anything like it," Dave Biddle, editor at Bucknuts, told BSB on Thomas' missed 2013 season. "He played as a true freshman in 2012, was a healthy scratch as a sophomore in 2013, redshirted because he was so immature, and then really just matured a lot and ended up being one of the best receivers we've seen."

After that year without seeing action, Thomas immediately started his 2014 campaign off on the right foot, scoring touchdowns in each of his first three games, including a six-catch, 98-yard performance in the loss to Virginia Tech, which he followed up with a two-catch, 77-yard showing against Kent State. Both of his receptions against the Golden Flashes went for touchdowns.

By the end of the 2014 season, Thomas had 54 catches for 799 yards and nine touchdowns,

and one of those touchdowns was a crucial play for the Buckeyes during their run to the College Football Playoff.

Toward the end of the second quarter with Ohio State trailing Alabama 20-13, head coach Urban Meyer dialed up a trick play that had the ball in Spencer's hands as the thrower, and he found Thomas in tight coverage on the left side of the end zone. Thomas leaped for the ball, managed to get one foot in bounds and scored to bring the Buckeyes within one point with 12 seconds left before halftime.

"When it was in the big games, he seemed to step up and make his biggest plays when they needed him the most," Hope said. "I always felt just watching him at Ohio State that he was someone who was going to have a chance to make a big impact at the next level."

But even before that pivotal moment in the semifinal against the Crimson Tide, there was another play during the middle of the season that stuck in the mind of Biddle. In a 49-37 victory over Michigan State, Thomas had three receptions for 91 yards and a score, with that score coming on a 79-yard run that started with a simple slant pass by Barrett.

Thomas beat Michigan State cornerback Trae Wayne on the play. Wayne would later get selected No. 11 overall by the Minnesota Vikings in the 2015 NFL draft.

"The first time I remember him where I was like, 'Wow, that was an NFL play,' was the game at Michigan State in 2014," Biddle said. "His football speed was always sneaky good, and he already had a step on him, but Trae Wayne didn't catch him, and he started making plays like that where it was like 'Man, this guy is making NFL plays out there.'"

Thomas put up similar numbers to 2014 in his 2015 season, which would end up being his final year with Ohio State. That season, Thomas caught 56 passes for 781 yards and nine touchdowns, with a pair of 100-yard games against Maryland and Rutgers, as well as a strong showing against Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl, where Thomas had seven catches for 72 yards and a touchdown.

The production was enough to get Thomas selected in the second round, No. 47 overall by the New Orleans Saints, where he has quickly turned into one of the top wideouts in the league. Last year, Thomas broke the NFL record with 149 receptions, bringing them in for 1,725 yards and nine touchdowns despite never breaking 1,000 yards receiving in a season with Ohio State.

"I think it was the way he was used at Ohio State," Hope said. "I don't think they ever made him the focal point of the offense that maybe they should have at times. He was obviously playing with Ezekiel Elliott and he was a big part of the offense, and they've been so heavy on these receiver rotations over the years that they just didn't target him as much as you would think with someone that talented."

**Parris Campbell:** Campbell was brought down to Columbus as a four-star prospect from Akron St. Vincent St. Mary's, ranked as the No. 22 receiver and No. 139 player overall in the 2014 class, as well as the fourth-best recruit in the state of Ohio.

After redshirting his first season, Campbell did not record a reception in his 2015 campaign, although he did get an opportunity in Ohio State's opening game against Virginia Tech but could not make the catch. Biddle said that, from there on out, Campbell received an unfair reputation from fans as a receiver who has a problem with drops.

"I think it was a little unfair because his first ever game as a redshirt freshman at Virginia Tech he had a drop in the end zone," Biddle said. "It's a little unfair that he had that rep, but he was much more secure with the football as a senior."

Campbell made the first catch of his col-

legiate career against Tulsa then finished his sophomore season with 13 receptions for 121 yards, while also finding a touchdown on the ground off a 5-yard rush against Rutgers.

He moved into a more established role within the offense in 2017, hauling in 40 catches for 584 yards and three touchdowns, along with 10 rushes for 132 yards and another score. Campbell's highlight performance of his junior season came in the opener against Indiana, where he recorded six catches for 136 yards and a touchdown, with the score coming on a 74-yard connection with Barrett.

But those solid numbers from Campbell did not compare to the huge output the fifth-year senior produced in 2018, where he broke Ohio State's single-season record with 90 catches for 1,063 yards and 12 touchdowns.

"A lot of it was finding the right role for him," Hope said. "I think he's a guy who has that elite speed, but he's not really that great down-the-field pass catcher, that guy you're going to throw deep balls to. He's that guy who you throw him a short pass and then he can make something with it if he gets into the open field. So I think the role that he ultimately ended up in is that H-back in Ohio State's offense. I think that that ended up being the role that allowed him to thrive."

Along with the role change, Hope said he thinks a coaching change also helped to bring out the best in not only Campbell, but in the entire receiver unit. Former Ohio State wide receivers coach Zach Smith was fired heading into the 2018 season, with Brian Hartline getting promoted as his replacement.

In the season Hartline took over, the wide receivers helped to lead an offense that threw for 51 touchdowns and a nation-leading 5,100 yards.

"I think certainly, we saw with a lot of these receivers when Brian Hartline took over as receivers coach, that a lot of them took leaps forward," Hope said. "Someone like Terry McLaurin was even more pronounced, but I think Parris benefited from that as well."

Campbell's receptions were eighth in the country, while his yards ranked 25th. The redshirt senior had a variety of breakout games in 2018, including an eight-catch, 147-yard, two-touchdown effort against Tulane and another dominant showing against the Hoosiers, this time for nine catches, 142 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

But the game that likely stands out more than any is Campbell's performance against Michigan. During a 62-39 win, Campbell had six catches for 192 yards and two touchdowns, including a 78-yard score off a push pass to put the Buckeyes up 48-25 in the fourth quarter.

Biddle credited the major improvements made by Campbell to an improvement in his mental fortitude.

"He always had the wheels, but I think it was more than that, though. I think he had the confidence," Biddle said. "He was just brimming with confidence that year, and we saw it when he would catch the ball and I'd almost be surprised if he wasn't able to get an extra however-many yards, sometimes taking it to the house."

**K.J. Hill:** Like Campbell, Hill entered Ohio State as a four-star prospect, but his journey to Columbus came all the way from North Little Rock, Ark., where he was ranked the top player in his state and the No. 153 overall player in the 2015 class.

Also unlike Campbell, Hill made an impact quickly, hauling in 18 catches for 262 yards in 2016, his redshirt freshman season, scoring a touchdown in his first game against Bowling Green and having a pair of five-reception games against Big Ten opponents Nebraska and Maryland in back-to-back weeks.

Hill built on that strong first year of play and led the team with 56 catches and finishing second with 549 yards in 2017. Three of those

receptions went for touchdowns, two of which came in another game against the Cornhuskers. But the week after Nebraska was Hill's biggest game to date and one of the biggest in his career, as he brought in 12 catches for 102 yards in a one-point win over Penn State.

"He's a guy who was never really a superstar, but was just a guy that was so consistently reliable for four years," Hope said. "I think a lot of it is just the fact that this is a guy who caught almost every ball that came his way. He ran great routes. He was really perfect for that slot receiver role."

Hill blossomed in 2018 with 70 receptions for 885 yards and six touchdowns and remained steady for the Buckeyes in 2019. Despite a small dip in production with 57 catches for 636 yards and 10 scores, Hill's consistency was proven when he tied Gary Williams' record of 48 consecutive games with a reception, a streak that continued until the end of Hill's Ohio State career.

But that was not the only record Hill was a part of. In the Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin, Hill had seven catches for 83 yards and two touchdowns, and on his fourth reception, he surpassed Boston for the most receptions in program history with 191. He ended his career with 201 catches, becoming the first Buckeye to reach the 200-catch threshold over the course of his career.

"He quietly set that record," Biddle said. "Not many people talk about that. I always talked about how his hands were fantastic, but he was also a really good route runner, really tough. He's not a fast guy, but he also knew after getting the ball how to get 4 or 5 yards just by going north-south. He knew his limitations where he wasn't a burner, but it's route running, toughness and great hands is why K.J. Hill was able to set that record."

Hill left Ohio State after the 2019 season and departed from a room that is full of young, five-star talent. While the 2020s have just started, Hope said there are already multiple contenders for next decade's list to look out for.

"The kind of talent they've recruited, there's so many guys that have the potential to be guys we're talking about years from now," Hope said. "I think they're doing an excellent job of building talent in that room. And I think certainly over the course of this next decade, they're going to have some first-round NFL draft picks and, depending on how they use them, maybe even some All-Americans in that room."



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# Schiano Returns To Columbus With Rutgers

By PATRICK MAYHORN  
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

The last time Greg Schiano was on the field at Ohio Stadium, it was in a 62-39 victory for the Buckeyes over Michigan, a bright spot at the end of a regular season that had seen the Buckeyes battle through self-inflicted damage, largely on the side of the ball for which Schiano was responsible. That was his final season as Ohio State's defensive coordinator, a three-year term that saw one of the best defenses in program history in 2016 – his first year – and one of the worst in Ohio State's modern era in his final year.

He'll return to the sidelines in Columbus on Nov. 7, this time as the man in charge at Rutgers, a program that he led from 2001-2011, putting up a 68-67 record and taking the team to five straight bowl games and six in his tenure, more than half of the total bowl appearances (10) in school history.

Schiano won't be the only familiar face on the visitors' sidelines for Buckeye fans, as he brought with him former Buckeye safety Brendon White – the son of Earle Bruce safety William White – and tackle Malik Barrow, who left the program in 2018.

Aside from those three, however?

This is a Rutgers roster and program that looks quite a bit different than it did when the Buckeyes took a road trip to Piscataway last season, toppling the Scarlet Knights – then led by quarterback Johnny Langan and interim head coach Nunzio Campanile – in a 56-21 romp. Langan and Campanile remain but have been replaced in their previous spots by Nebraska transfer Noah Vedral and Schiano, with Langan serving as a red-zone quarterback and Campanile working as the tight ends coach.

Quite a bit of the offense around Vedral is brand-new as well. Schiano hired former Oklahoma State offensive coordinator Sean Gleeson, a New Jersey native who used to coach at Princeton, to run his offense. In Gleeson's words, that means the implementation of an up-tempo spread look, with plenty of run-pass options sprinkled in to make things easier on Vedral.

"We want to be a fast, no-huddle offense," Gleeson said. "If you could envision the best press basketball team you've ever watched, that's kind of how we want to do our business. We'll be operating primarily out of the shotgun. You'll see an aggressiveness in the way our guys line up and address the next snap that should

be different. It should be something like, 'Wow, these guys are going at a pretty good clip.'

"We want to snap the ball around every 15 seconds. That's kind of our time stamp for no-huddle football. The no-huddle operation is the first layer of fast. The second would be we literally want fast people. Our playing surface is enormous. We have 110 yards of vertical space at most and we have 53 yards of width. Compared to basketball, they have fast people on that court, but they don't have that much space. If we can get some guys that move from point A to point B, we'll be in great shape."

That approach seemed to work pretty well for the Scarlet Knights in their first game of the 2020 season, as they rattled off a 38-27 win over Michigan State.



Greg Schiano

Rutgers exceeded the 21-point mark just twice in 2019, making 38 in the opening game quite the accomplishment, especially against a Big Ten opponent. The last time Rutgers scored at least 38 points against a conference foe? It was on Nov. 28, 2015, in a 46-41 loss to Maryland.

Against the Spartans, the Rutgers offense was far from electric, racking up just 276 total yards, but Vedral looked to be in control of the system, completing 18 of his 29 passes for 169 yards and a touchdown.

"As an offense, we had our hiccups," Vedral said of the Michigan State game. "As a quarterback, I had mine. So it was good to get kind of the rust off and see those things on tape."

The rest of the offense provided a bit less to be excited about.

Running back Isaih Pacheco is a multi-year contributor for the Scarlet Knights and rushed for 729 yards in 2019 – a team high – but against Michigan State he seemed to struggle behind an offensive line that was a concern entering the season, gaining 61 yards on 19 carries. Wide receiver Bo Melton returns after leading the team in receptions in 2019 with 30 and looks to be one of two consistent downfield threats for Vedral, along with Wisconsin transfer Aron Cruickshank, though Pacheco actually had more receptions (five) against MSU than Melton or Cruickshank did (four).

For the coaching staff, the offensive line presents a bit of a challenge. Schiano said that it was one of several groups that will need to improve this season, with guard Nick Krimin serving as the only returning starter from last season.

"Like every other position on our team, I think it is a work in progress," Schiano said. "We have some guys that are really

## Get To Know ... Rutgers

### About Rutgers

- **2020 record:** 1-1.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 5, Defense 9, Specialists 2.
- **Head Coach:** Greg Schiano, 12th year at Rutgers (second stint), 69-68.
- **Series History:** 7th meeting; Ohio State leads 6-0-0
- **School Facts:** Location – Piscataway, N.J.; Enrollment – 50,200; Nickname – Scarlet Knights; Color – Scarlet; Conference – Big Ten (East Division); Stadium – SHI Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 52,454).

### Top Offensive Returners

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Isaih Pacheco	29	87	3.0	2
Noah Vedral	23	41	1.7	1
Aaron Young	10	30	3.0	0

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Noah Vedral	39-63	61.9	298	3-4

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Bo Melton	8	100	12.5	2
Isaih Pacheco	9	69	7.7	0
Shameen Jones	7	61	8.7	1

### Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 29.5  
Rushing Yards Per Game – 114.0  
Passing Yards Per Game – 147.5  
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 261.5

### 2020 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Oct. 24	at Michigan State	W, 38-27
Oct. 31	INDIANA	L, 37-21
<b>Nov. 7</b>	<b>at Ohio State</b>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>
Nov. 14	ILLINOIS	TBA
Nov. 21	MICHIGAN	TBA
Nov. 28	at Purdue	TBA
Dec. 5	PENN STATE	TBA
Dec. 12	at Maryland	TBA
Dec. 19	Big Ten Championship Week	TBA

### Top Defensive Returners

Def. Leaders	Solo-Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Tyshon Fogg	5-17	22	3.0-9	0
Olakunle Fatukasi	8-11	19	2.0-3	0
Brendon White	9-6	15	0.5-1	0
Avery Young	4-7	11	0	0
Tre Avery	5-6	11	1.0-2	0
C.J. Onyechi	3-6	9	2.0-6	1.0-4
Julius Turner	4-4	8	1.0-2	0
Christian Izien	6-2	8	0	0
Michael Dwumfour	1-6	7	1.5-9	0

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD
Tre Avery	1	19	19.0	0
Brendon White	1	13	13.0	0

### Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 32.0  
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 77.5  
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 278.5  
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 356.0

getting better. I think (line coach) Andy Aurich is doing a really good job developing the line, he and (assistant) Scott Vallone. We have some experience but not a ton. Nick Krimin would certainly be the elder statesman there, and he is a real strong leader for us on the offensive line."

Defensively, there's quite a bit more experience and certainty for Schiano and new coordinator Robb Smith, who spent several years with Schiano during his first tenure at Rutgers and with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Defensive ends Elorm Lumor and Mike Tverdov; linebackers Tyshon Fogg, Drew Singleton and Olakunle Fatukasi; and defensive backs Tre Avery and White are all seniors with playing experience, with help from Michigan transfer Michael Dwumfour at tackle, junior tackle Robin Jutwreten, junior Avery Young at cornerback and junior safety Christian Izien to fill out the defense.

The stars of the defense are at linebacker and in the secondary. Fogg and Fatukasi were Rutgers' leading tacklers a year ago, and Fatukasi continued his solid play in week one, claiming Big Ten co-defensive player of the week honors after recording 10 tackles and recovering two fumbles.

"He certainly had a very good game," Schiano said of Fatukasi. "Double-digit tackles, two takeaways and a recovered two fumbles. I am very, very happy for him. He's worked very hard."

In the defensive backfield, former Ohio State signee Tre Avery (formerly known as Kareem Felder) is asked to do quite a bit in Schiano's man coverage-heavy scheme, but he excelled against Michigan State with seven tackles, one TFL and an interception, a performance that he said he expected from himself.

"It was nothing really different," Avery said postgame. "I just did what I was coached to do. I do what I do in practice and things like that. So it wasn't anything really different. I could always play press-man, but it really came down to my D-line

getting pressure on the quarterback and them just throwing the ball up."

The questions about the defense, despite the experience, are pretty similar to those around the offense. With a roster that went 2-10 in 2019 and has struggled for years to build any sort of momentum, Schiano is very much in the rebuilding phase and searching for consistent contributors.

The week one win over Michigan State was a huge deal for Rutgers, but it came with seven Spartans turnovers. That isn't likely to happen every week, and it certainly didn't in game No. 2 against Indiana, which saw Rutgers fall 37-21. There are pockets of excitement, but Schiano has been quick to temper expectations at every turn.

"We are such a young, young group," Schiano said. "I don't mean necessarily by years in school. I mean by time together. It's been so choppy. Forget what we don't have in. We need to get better at what we do. We don't really need to be moving into any new things right now. Our efficiency was not what we are looking for in certain areas, and we need to improve that. That is in all three phases. There is a lot to work on."

Still, despite the long road ahead of the Scarlet Knights, there seems to be life in Piscataway. That win over Michigan State was the first for Rutgers over a Big Ten foe since 2017. Even if Rutgers doesn't get another this season, breaking that losing streak meant the world to the players in the program, and they hope it can work as a building block for the future.

"It was a surreal feeling," said Fogg. "I don't even know how to explain it. I am still in shock for words. I just got dressed and I am still taking it in. It just means a lot. I have not seen a Big Ten win since I was a freshman here. Having that first one under our belt feels so surreal, and I appreciate it so much. It was definitely a spectacular moment that I can enjoy with my brothers and the rest of the coaching staff. It means a lot."

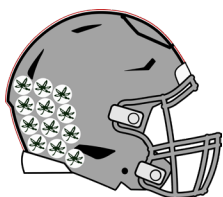


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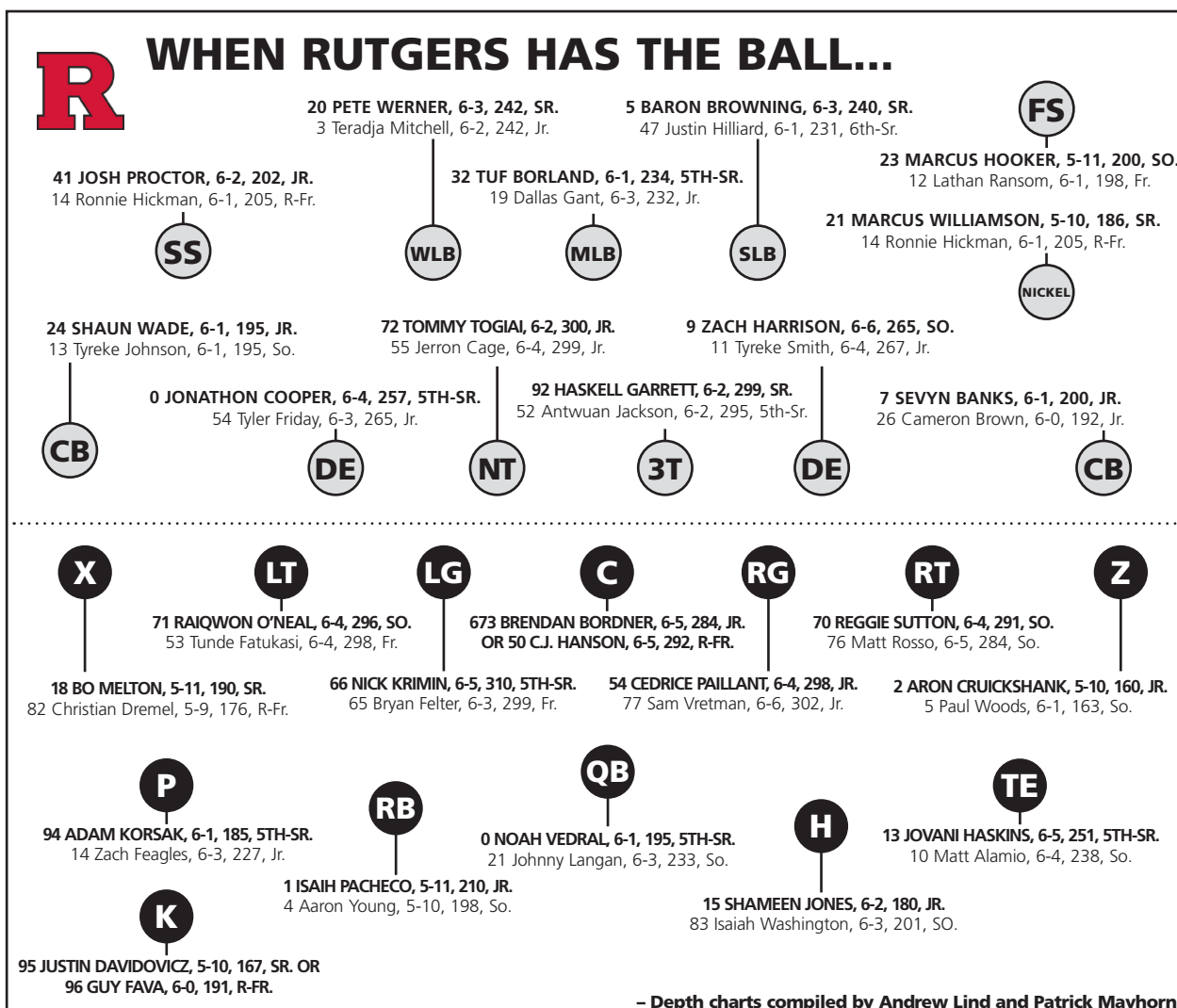
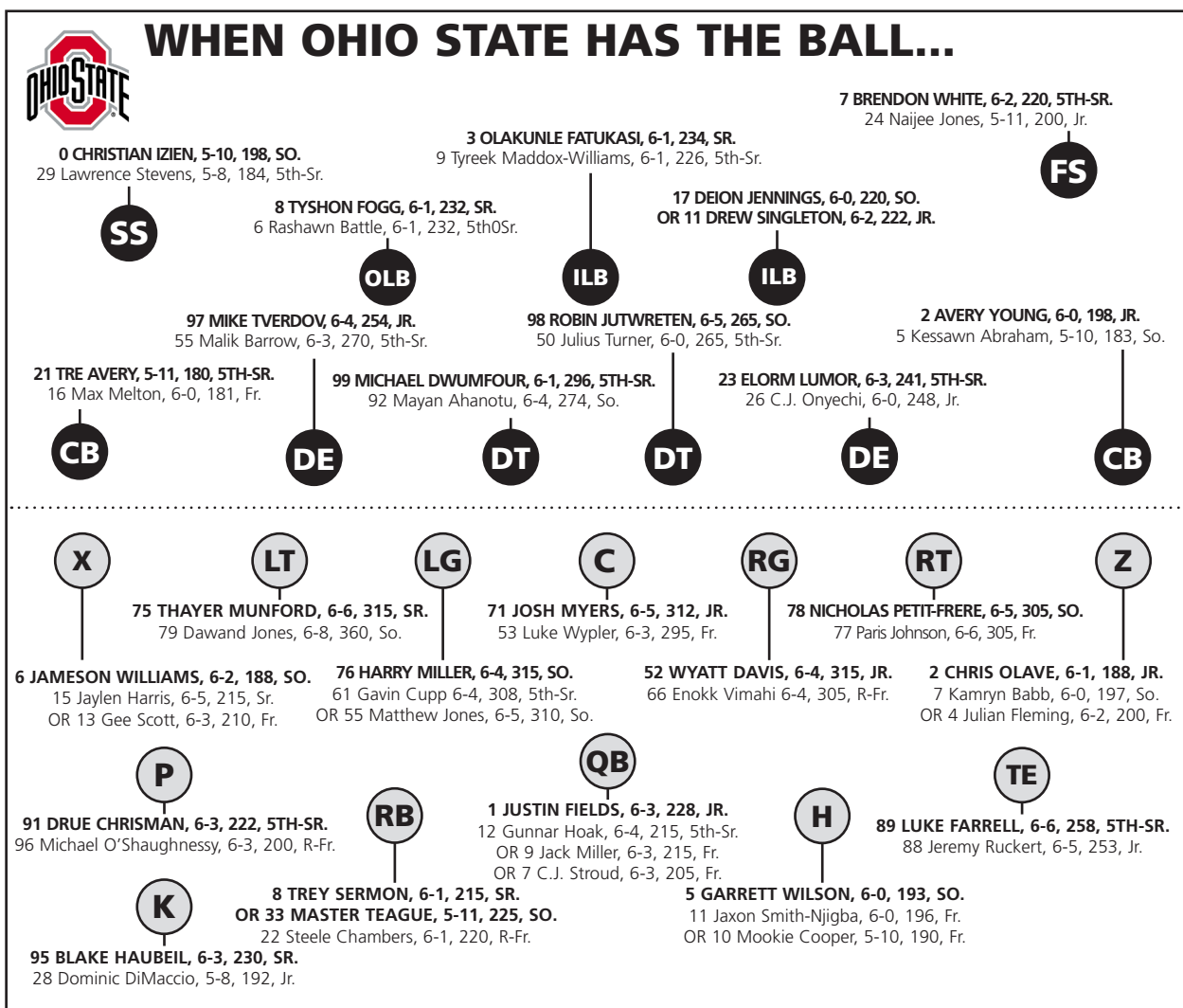


# Ohio State vs. Rutgers

Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020 • 7:30 p.m. • BTN  
Ohio Stadium; Columbus, OH



## Projected Depth Charts



- Depth charts compiled by Andrew Lind and Patrick Mayhorn

## How We See It

### OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE VS. RUTGERS RUSH DEFENSE

The big guys on the line showed up after a lackluster performance in the opener vs. Nebraska. Master Teague rushed for 110 yards on a 4.8 average, Garrett Wilson bolted 62 yards on an end-around on the first play from scrimmage, and Trey Sermon added 56 yards on 13 carries (4.3). The best news was QB Justin Fields had only six carries vs. the 15 against the Cornhuskers. In all, the Buckeyes totaled 208 yards at 4.6 yards a pop. In Rutgers' 37-21 loss to Indiana on Halloween, the Scarlet Knights yielded 109 rushing on 40 carries for a 2.7 average. For the season, Rutgers has allowed 159 net yards for a 2.0 average per carry. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

### RUTGERS RUSH OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Scarlet Knights rushed for 121 yards vs. the Hoosiers but gained only 3.7 yards per attempt. There is some talent. Kay/Ron Adams ripped a career-long 37-yard rush for a touchdown and had a career-best 63 yards in the game. Something to watch for is the usage of backup quarterback Johnny Langan. Nebraska had great success with second-stringer Luke McCaffrey (87 yards) running the ball against the Buckeyes, and Langan had two totes for 9 yards in the Indiana game. Starting QB Noah Vedral had a 16-yard run. Ohio State limited Penn State to 44 ground yards (1.6 average for 27 carries), but the Nittany Lions were down to their third-string back and spent most of the game trailing, so handing the ball off wasn't much of an option. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

### OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE VS. RUTGERS PASS DEFENSE

Fields is 48 of 55 (87.3 percent) for 594 yards, six TDs and zero interceptions in two games. Chris Olave and Wilson each have topped 100 receiving yards in consecutive games. Eight players had catches against Penn State, including tight end Jeremy Ruckert with two of his four going for TDs. The negative is Fields being sacked twice. Rutgers is allowing 278.5 passing yards per game. Enough said. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

### RUTGERS PASS OFFENSE VS. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Vedral was 21 of 34 for 130 yards, two touchdowns and three picks vs. Indiana with his longest completion being 23 yards. He was also sacked four times, which is bad news for the Scarlet Knights because the Buckeyes got to PSU QB Sean Clifford five times. The good news for Rutgers, if Vedral has time, is that the Buckeyes weren't very impressive defending the pass. Clifford had 281 total passing yards and three touchdowns to Jahan Dotson. **EDGE: EVEN**

### SPECIAL TEAMS

This comes with an asterisk. OSU was awful in most all phases beginning with a missed 20-yarder by Blake Haubeil in the first quarter. But coach Ryan Day later said Haubeil was nursing a groin injury, so he'll get somewhat of a pass. Dominic DiMaccio hit from 22 but missed from 23. Punter Drue Chrisman was OK for his two boots, but on the second the coverage blew a chance to down the ball at the 1. Rutgers got a 55-yard kick return from Aron Cruickshank in the season opener against Michigan State and recovered an onside kick against the Hoosiers to give the Scarlet Knights the ball in Indiana territory. **EDGE: RUTGERS**

### INTANGIBLES

Rutgers has lost 29 straight to ranked opponents back to 2009 for the longest streak of any Power Five conference member. The streak began the first time former Buckeye assistant Greg Schiano was coaching there. It likely won't end vs. the Buckeyes, but Schiano is willing to pull out all the stops to instill belief in his team. In addition to the onside kick, the Scarlet Knights also converted a pair of two-point conversions. It might be a letdown game for the Buckeyes after the physical and emotional win at Penn State, but they know there can be no slip-ups in the eyes of those selecting the playoff teams. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

### STAFF PREDICTION

Schiano will rebuild Rutgers, but it will take time. There is a lot of personal pride among the ex-Buckeyes associated with the program, but it comes down to this: Ohio State was able to post 38 points at Happy Valley despite a few short circuits in the red zone and 80 penalty yards. It was far from a perfect game, so how much improvement will there be this week? Day would love to have a blowout to reach into his depth pool. The only team that can stop the Buckeyes this weekend will be themselves. **OHIO STATE, 52-17**



# OSU Forces Five Turnovers In Upset Of No. 1 Iowa

By CRAIG JAMES

*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 Ohio State's big upset of No. 1-ranked Iowa in rainy Ohio Stadium on Nov. 2, 1985. The game was played against the backdrop of heavy criticism of the Ohio State defense, which responded with an outstanding game led by a stellar and colorful performance by linebacker Chris Spielman. Additional features about the game will be posted at BuckeyeSports.com on Thursday, Nov. 5.*

Maybe this was Iowa's year.

Although the Hawkeyes had not beaten Ohio State in Ohio Stadium since 1959, they came to Columbus on Nov. 2 armed to the teeth.

Iowa was undefeated (7-0) and had been ranked No. 1 for the past five weeks. The Hawkeyes had a quarterback named Chuck Long who was first in the nation in passing efficiency and a team that was best in the country in scoring offense, third in total defense and fifth in total offense.

Maybe that was enough to beat OSU on its home turf for once.

It wasn't.

The Buckeyes, the nation's leader in turnover margin, forced Long into throwing four interceptions and recovered an Iowa fumble on the way to a 22-13 win. The victory put OSU in a tie with the Hawkeyes for first place in the Big Ten conference, with both squads sporting 7-1 overall and 4-1 league records.

"I think you saw a great team effort out there," Buckeye coach Earle Bruce declared. "I think the defense came back and did a great job, an outstanding job."

There had been some doubts expressed before the game about Ohio State's ability to stop Long and running back Ronnie Harmon. The Bucks were ninth in the conference in pass defense and were giving up

an average of 375.7 total yards a game to opponents.

But from the very first play of the game, when linebacker Chris Spielman broke up and almost intercepted a Long pass, the stage was set for what was to be a contest filled with OSU defensive highlights.

For openers, the Buckeyes shut out Iowa in the first quarter. During the Hawkeyes' initial possession which included the Spielman play, Spielman came through again and forced Harmon out of bounds for a two-yard loss. Iowa punted and OSU set up shop on its own 31.

With tailback Keith Byars still smarting from a bruised foot suffered a week before and unable to play, in addition to backup tailback John Wooldridge still recovering from bruised ribs, Ohio State came out passing. Quarterback Jim Karsatos completed throws to flanker Mike Lanese for 18 and 21 yards, then got off another one to split end Cris Carter for a gain of 17 yards to the Iowa nine.

The drive stalled against Iowa's goal line defense. Two passes to Carter were broken up, and freshman tailback Vince Workman, making his first collegiate start, was stopped for a two-yard loss on his first carry of the game. The Bucks settled for a 28-yard field goal by Rich Spangler with 11:03 left, which marked the first time this season that the Hawkeyes had been scored on in the opening period.

Iowa had to punt again during its next turn at bat, which featured a pass deflection by middle linebacker Larry Kolic. Ohio State took the ball and zipped across the field on Karsatos-to-Carter pass plays of 18 and 30 yards which advanced the Buckeyes to the Iowa 22. Workman and fullback George Cooper got OSU as far as the Hawkeye 14 before it bogged down. An incomplete pass from Karsatos to Wooldridge brought up fourth-and-2 and Spangler came back to attempt a 31-yard field goal. But this time the ball went wide right.

Ohio State's defense went back to work. Spielman intercepted a Long pass during Iowa's next possession. Spielman also fumbled a moment later, but safety Terry White

## Other Big 40th Anniversary Games

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

**1986:** Ohio State followed up its big win from the year before with another outstanding defensive effort against Iowa, defeating the No. 11 Hawkeyes, 31-10, in Iowa City. The hosts mustered just 203 yards of total offense (79 rushing, 124 passing). Cris Carter had a big day for the No. 17 Buckeyes with six catches for 121 yards, including a 72-yard touchdown. Greg Rogan returned a fumble 31 yards for another score, and Chris Spielman continued his strong play against Iowa with 18 tackles.

**1991:** This time it was the No. 11 Hawkeyes who played solid defense, holding No. 13 Ohio State to just 221 total yards in a 16-9 win in Ohio Stadium. Kent Graham was just 8 of 24 passing for 97 yards for the Buckeyes and was sacked six times and picked off once. Greg Smith blocked an Iowa extra-point attempt, and Jason Simmons returned it 85 yards for two of OSU's points.

**2016:** Nebraska came to Columbus with a 7-1 record and a No. 10 ranking, but Ohio State administered an epic beatdown, 62-3. Damon Webb and Malik Hooker returned interceptions of 36 and 48 yards, respectively, for touchdowns, and Curtis Samuel scored twice on passes from J.T. Barrett, including a 75-yarder. Joe Burrow closed out the scoring for the No. 6 Buckeyes with a 12-yard run.

recovered the ball at the Hawkeye 29.

The Buckeyes held on briefly before a Karsatos pass was picked off by free safety Rick Schmidt on Iowa's own three. But the Hawks didn't get very far. On third-and-four, Kolic dropped Harmon for a four-yard loss. Gary Kostrubala, standing in the end zone, attempted to punt away, but rover Sonny Gordon, coming in from the left side, leaped high and blocked the kick. The ball bounced out of the end zone for a safety and OSU led 5-0.

The Hawkeyes were thwarted again in the second quarter when cornerback William White stepped in front of wingback Scott Helverson.

This time, Ohio State, starting at its own 38, took advantage of the opportunity. Cooper pushed his way for five yards, then Wooldridge, on his first running play, followed key blocks by Cooper and guard Jeff Uhlenhake and outraced Iowa's Nate Creer on a 57-yard touchdown dash. With 9:06 to go in the half, Spangler's extra point gave OSU a 12-0 lead.

Iowa tried again and failed again. Another Long pass intended for Helverson was intercepted, this time by cornerback Greg Rogan. A return of four yards put the ball on the Iowa 46.

Now the Buckeyes' running game was operating in full gear. Cooper broke tackles for gains of 15 and 13 yards. Wooldridge cut through the center for eight and OSU was soon knocking at the door.

But some unique play-calling didn't pan out. Faced with third down and four at the Iowa four, Carter took a reverse handoff, but was tripped up as he tried to pass to tight end Ed Taggart in the end zone. Carter was called for an illegal forward pass. OSU received a loss of down and Spangler came through with a 26-yard field goal, increasing the Buckeyes' advantage to 15-0 with 5:00 left.

The Hawkeyes got on the scoreboard during their last possession before halftime, despite tackles for losses by linebackers Mike Sullivan and Byron Lee and two broken up passes by Terry White and Rogan.

Fullback David Hudson took a screen pass from Long and picked up 20 yards, followed by a 21-yard gain by Harmon. Split end Bill Happel took a reception as far as the Ohio 11 before being stopped by tackle Darryl Lee. On fourth-and-2 at the Ohio 3-yard line, Harmon took an option pitch and just got in at the left flag to score with 28 seconds remaining. A PAT by Rob Houghtlin left Iowa behind by just 15-7.

The third quarter was all defense, with no scoring. Another good drive by Ohio State fell apart when Spangler's 29-yard field goal attempt sailed wide to the left. The Hawks, in turn, were forced to punt. The Bucks' next drive was halted when strong safety Jay Norvell intercepted a Karsatos pass and returned the ball eight yards to the Ohio 19.

With the Hawks threatening, Spielman came up with one of the most important plays of the game. On fourth-and-1 at the Ohio 10, Harmon got the call and tried to leap over right guard. Spielman was there to meet him for no gain and OSU got the ball back.

On Iowa's first play of the final stanza, Long got off a pass to Helverson, who was hit hard first by Terry White, then by linebacker Derek Isaman. A fumble resulted and tackle Fred Ridder recovered the ball at the Iowa 31.

The Bucks kept it on the ground. Workman cut up the field for 15 yards on one play to the Iowa four. After being stopped for no gain, Workman took a pitch from Karsatos and just got in the end zone for OSU's final score with 11:39 to play. Spangler's kick put the Bucks on top 22-7.

But Iowa came back. The Hawks were sidetracked briefly when Rogan and Isaman broke up Long passes, but later, Rogan was called for pass interference, giving Iowa the ball on the Ohio eight. Two plays later, Hudson dove over from the two to score with 8:19 to go, closing the gap to 22-13.

The Hawkeyes decided to go for two points. Kevin Harmon took an option pitch from Long, but was stopped short of the goal line by Gordon.

Iowa was in trouble, but Ohio State wasn't in the mood to send out any sympathy cards. On the Hawks' next drive, Terry White broke up two more Long passes and linebacker Thomas Johnson hit Kevin Harmon for a two-yard loss. Faced with a fourth down and 12, Houghtlin's field goal try from 42 yards out missed the mark.

Spielman added a final defensive touch for Ohio when he made his second interception of the game, allowing the Buckeyes to run out the final minute and a half.

"I felt very proud of our football team today," said Bruce. "It was one of the finest victories I've ever been associated with as a coach. We weren't going to be denied today."

*This story originally appeared in the Nov. 9, 1985, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.*



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# Spielman, Defense Inspired By Reporter's Criticism

By CRAIG JAMES

The incentive for Ohio State was there. After all, the Buckeyes were getting ready to host the No. 1 team in the country, which just happened to be Big Ten foe Iowa. A win over the undefeated Hawkeyes by OSU was needed in order for the Bucks to control their own destiny in terms of the conference title.

"I didn't like having Iowa come in here as a favorite" said OSU linebacker Chris Spielman. "If a guy comes to my back yard to fight me, he'd better bring an army or kill me if he wants to win. The whole defense felt that way."

Thus, with those types of emotions running throughout the Buckeye camp, it was certain the players knew what they were up against and what they had to do.

And after Ohio State had stunned Iowa 22-13 before a record Ohio Stadium crowd and a national television audience, OSU coach Earle Bruce remarked that his squad had "played as hard as we've played at Ohio State for a long time."

The incentive was one thing, but the motivation, according to Spielman, came from another source.

Specifically, it was a column in the Columbus morning newspaper that day that made the team see red. The writer wondered, among other things, if Ohio State's defensive secondary would be able to hold Iowa quarterback Chuck Long to under 1,000 passing yards.

"I know the article written in the Citizen Journal today - well we took that a little bit to heart," Spielman said after the game. "All year we've been hearing criticism about our defense.

"I don't care what people say about our defense. We're 7-1, you know? I had a good feeling that we'd probably play the best defensive football game we've played. I think you could see how we run to the football, cause turnovers and make things happen."

Spielman seemed to be doing all of those things single-handedly. He was responsible for intercepting two of Long's passes and breaking up a third, and he tied fellow linebacker Pepper Johnson with a team-high 19 tackles, including one stop for a loss. For his efforts, he was named the Buckeye Sports Bulletin Buckeye of the Week, edging safety Terry White.

"I just did what I was supposed to do," said Spielman. "I think I played a little more disciplined today.

"This week, it seemed like I watched three miles of film on Iowa. I became more of a technician today than I have been in past weeks. I thought I played pretty well."

He also was tired of hearing bad things said about Ohio State's defense.

"Students come up to me and say, 'What's wrong with the defense?' " he commented. "I go to eat lunch and the janitor asks, 'What's wrong with the defense?"

"I say that doesn't matter to us. The important thing is that we believe in ourselves. And we do. Every one of those defensive football players had confidence in each other's ability to get the job done. And that's what we did.

"We pulled it together and we played a great defensive football game. A team

defensive football game."

Any observer could tell that Spielman was going to have a great game judging from the first play of the game. Iowa had initial possession of the ball and Long wanted to throw to wingback Scott Helverson. The pass was broken up by Spielman, who lunged for the ball with one hand and couldn't hold on to it for an interception.

Two plays later, Spielman forced running back Ronnie Harmon out of bounds for a two-yard loss and the Hawkeyes had to bring their punting unit on the field.

"I think it got us off to a quick start, due to the fact that we shut them out for most of the first half," he said. "We made a commitment that we were going to play 60 minutes of football, and we did."

Spielman got his first interception later in the opening period when Long passed over the middle for tight end Craig Clark. Spielman then tried to cut upfield with the ball for a return, only to see the ball come loose when he was hit by a Hawkeye.

Luckily, White was just a step away and recovered it for OSU.

"I saw the tight end delaying," Spielman recalled. "Chuck Long overthrew him and I was just there to catch the ball. I dropped it, but we got the ball. I tried to be a running back like in high school.

"That was two years ago. Sometimes I forget and I have a flashback."

That just goes to show that Spielman had come to play, even if it meant playing without a helmet.

"I hit a guy and my ear pads popped off my helmet and fell out," he smiled. "The referee didn't give me an equipment timeout. He said, 'Either go out or play with your helmet the way it is.'

"If you know Chris Spielman, he's not going to go out (of the game). So Chuck Long rolled out to pass and my helmet was bobbing on my head, so I said, 'To hell with it.' I threw the helmet off and went after him like a dummy. I got punched in the face."

But there was no time to seek comfort. Spielman was needed now. He came up with a second interception that halted Iowa's last drive of the game, but he was also involved in a key play late in the third quarter.

Iowa had intercepted a Jim Karsatos pass and had quickly moved the ball to the Ohio 10, where the Hawkeyes were faced with fourth-and-1. Harmon tried to leap over the pack for the first down, only to be stopped dead in his tracks by Spielman for no gain.

"He jumped in the air and I was surprised I didn't get blocked," the linebacker said. "So I just ran through there and caught him by his legs. That was it."

Spielman's modesty could be understood. He was, as he put it, doing his job, just like the rest of the Buckeyes.

"The key to topping Iowa was our enthusiasm and our pride," he said. "Our pride was on the line at this point of the season.

"Like I said earlier, we have confidence in our defense that we can play with anybody when we're playing good."

*This story originally appeared in the Nov. 9, 1985, issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.*

## The Numbers Game

### Ohio State 22, Iowa 13

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
IOWA	0	7	0	6	13
OHIO STATE	5	10	0	7	22

#### First Quarter

**OSU** - Spangler, 28-yard field goal, 11:03.

**OSU** - Safety. Gordon blocked Kostrubala punt out of end zone, 0:02

#### Second Quarter

**OSU** - Wooldridge, 57-yard run (Spangler kick), 9:06.

**OSU** - Spangler, 26-yard field goal, 5:00.

**IOW** - R. Harmon, 3-yard run (Houghtlin kick), 0:28.

#### Fourth Quarter

**OSU** - Workman, 4-yard run (Spangler kick), 11:39.

**IOW** - Hudson, 2-yard run (2-pt run failed), 8:19.

**Att.** - 90,467

#### Team Statistics

	IOW	OSU
First Downs	21	16
Rushing	12	8
Passing	7	8
Penalty	2	0
Rushes-Yards	41-176	45-219
Passing Yards	169	151
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	17-34-4	10-17-2
Offensive Plays	75	62
Total Net Yards	345	370
Third-Down Efficiency	7-15	2-11
Punts-Avg.	4-32.5	4-45.3
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	1-0
Penalties	3-16	7-57
Time of Possession	29:38	30:22

#### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** - **IOW:** R. Harmon 26-120; Hudson 7-25; K. Harmon 3-21; Long 5-10. **OSU:** Cooper 17-104; Wooldridge 9-89; Workman 13-31; Carter 1-1; Karsatos 5-(-6).

**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** - **IOW:** Long 17-34-4-169-0. **OSU:** Karsatos 10-17-2-151-0.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** - **IOW:** R. Harmon 5-19; Flagg 3-42; Hudson 3-36; Helverson 2-31; Happel 2-26; Smith 1-8; K. Harmon 1-7. **OSU:** Lanese 4-63; Carter 3-65; Taggart 1-14; Workman 1-5; Cooper 1-4.

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** - **IOW:** Kostrubala 3-43.3-56; Team 1-0-0. **OSU:** Tupa 4-45.3-53.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** - **IOW:** Smith 2-8; Happel 1-6. **OSU:** Gordon 1-5.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** - **IOW:** R. Harmon 4-58. **OSU:** Ross 1-20.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds)** - **IOW:** None. **OSU:** Ridder.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** - **IOW:** Schmidt, Norvell. **OSU:** Spielman (2), Rogan, W. White.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** - **IOW:** Drost, Norvell, Gear, Team (3). **OSU:** Spielman, Johnson, Rogan, B. Lee, Kolic, M. Sullivan.

**TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.)** - **IOW:** Station 5-7-12; Mitchell 5-4-9; Drost 3-6-9; Norvell 2-6-8; Davis 1-5-6; Peterson 1-5-6; Pryor 2-4-6; TEAM 4-0-4; Creer 2-2-4; Vrieze 2-2-4; Gear 2-2-4; Millett 1-3-4; Schmidt 1-1-2; Sims 1-0-1; K. Harmon 1-0-1; Wirth 0-1-1; M. Haight 1-0-1; Cook 1-0-1. **OSU:** Spielman 7-12-19; Johnson 4-15-19; Rogan 6-5-11; D. Lee 2-5-7; Kumerow 3-3-6; Isaman 1-4-5; B. Lee 1-4-5; Gordon 3-1-4; T. White 2-1-3; Kee 1-2-3; Kolic 2-1-3; W. White 2-1-3; Holliman 1-2-3; M. Sullivan 1-2-3; Ridder 0-3-3; Carter 1-1-2; Wood 1-1-2; J. Sullivan 1-1-2; Leach 0-1-1; Hill 1-0-1; Cooper 1-0-1; Moore 0-1-1; Higdon 0-1-1.

**PLAYERS IN THE GAME** - **IOW:** Pryor, Mott, Burrell, Drost, D. Haight, Peterson, Weires, Vrieze, T. Anderson, Millett, Gear, Davis, Wirth, Reilly, Station, Alexander, Sims, Smiley, Crowe, Norvell, Burt, Bolan, Mitchell, Schmidt, Creer, Kostrubala, Happel, Early, D. Croston, Gambol, Humphrey, Sindlinger, Spanger, Kratch, M. Haight, Flagg, Smith, Clark, Cook, Long, Vlasic, Helverson, Bush, R. Harmon, K. Harmon, Bayless, Goodman, Hudson, Cotton, Sennott, Bush, Houghtlin. **OSU:** Taggart, Hutchinson, Graves, Uhlenlake, Maggs, Moore, Gilmore, Kotterman, Carter, Do. Smith, Karsatos, Workman, Walker, Wooldridge, Cooper, Matlock, Lanese, Ross, Spangler, Kumerow, Ridder, Holliman, D. Lee, Higdon, B. Lee, Isaman, J. Sullivan, J. Davidson, Kolic, M. Sullivan, Soltis, Spielman, Leach, Johnson, Kee, Jordan, Wood, Bell, W. White, Rogan, T. White, Hill, Tupa.



# Buckeyes Topple No. 1 Hawkeyes With Turnovers

By JOE DEMPSEY  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

*In addition to reprinting our coverage of Ohio State's biggest games each week in celebration of Buckeye Sports Bulletin's 40th anniversary, we will periodically publish new stories where we look back at the specific games and talk to former players and coaches from those teams.*

Ohio State entered the 1985 season with high hopes and senior tailback Keith Byars set to lead the team and win the Heisman Trophy along the way. However, the reigning Heisman runner-up suffered a foot injury in the preseason, which caused him to miss most of the season and hampered him when he did play.

Despite lacking their best player in Byars, the Buckeyes beat Pitt, Colorado and Washington State to open the season before falling 31-28 at Illinois. Ohio State did not collapse following the loss, however, defeating Indiana, Purdue and Minnesota in consecutive weeks to climb to No. 8 in the country ahead of a matchup with No. 1 Iowa in Ohio Stadium.

Even though the Hawkeyes were unbeaten, the Buckeyes took offense to the fact that the visitors were expected to come into the Horseshoe and beat them.

"As a team, we were basically an underdog with people coming into our stadium, so it kind of gets you really pumped up," former Ohio State safety Sonny Gordon told BSB. "The No. 1 team coming in and you're just thinking in the back of your mind, 'We are going to make this happen somehow. We are going to defeat them.'"

The No. 1 Hawkeyes featured standout quarterback Chuck Long, a Heisman candidate, and dynamic tailback Ronnie Harmon, as well as talented receivers in Bill Happel and Scott Helverson.

"Chuck Long was coming in, and he was ranked No. 1," Gordon said. "People were not that high on us. I was probably one of the oldest guys in the secondary as

a junior that year. And just leading up to the game, it was like we just need to shut them down. We all need to do whatever we need to do to make sure that we may get some type of name recognition. Do something."

Facing such a highly touted team, Gordon and his teammates knew they had to elevate their game. The Ohio State defense forced the high-powered Iowa offense to punt after a three-and-out on its first drive where standout linebacker Chris Spielman stopped Harmon for a 2-yard loss on third-and-1.

Ohio State quarterback Jim Karsatos led the Buckeyes down the field with 60 passing yards on his first four attempts before they settled for a Rich Spangler field goal.

Later in the first quarter, Karsatos threw an interception at the Iowa 3-yard line with Ohio State leading 3-0. The Buckeye defense shut down Harmon again on three consecutive runs, setting up fourth-and-8 from the Iowa 5. Then Gordon changed the course of the game.

Screaming through the B gap, Gordon shot through the Hawkeye line to swat the punt attempt into the end zone for a safety.

"To be honest with you, I wanted to put pressure, but I didn't think I was going to block it," Gordon said. "I probably should have calmed down, because I was so excited I blocked it down. If I would have calmed down and blocked the punt and fell on the ball, I would have had a touchdown."

Though he did not score six, Gordon gave the home crowd something to cheer about and sparked a fire in his teammates. The Buckeyes entered the game expecting to defend their home field, but the blocked punt provided confidence that they would win. Former Ohio State assistant coach/recruiting coordinator Bill Conley, who coached inside linebackers in 1985, remembered the effect Gordon's block had on the game.

"I mean you could not hear anything," Conley told BSB. "It was deafening. The crowd was really into it. They were loud. When the game started, it was like in the late afternoon. By the time it got to the second half, nightfall was coming. It was a drizzly cold rain. The sound just echoed."

Gordon gave the Buckeyes a jolt, pushing the early lead to 5-0 with the block and inspiring his teammates to step up their game.

"It was a huge momentum changer," Gordon said, "to be early in the game like that, to hold them down there with a three-and-out, and then to block that punt in the end zone. If you see my film, I was going nuts. It was crazy. And I think it got everybody else pumped up as well. That's why Spielman got 19 tackles, man, he was pumped. 'I can't let Sonny outshine me.'"

Spielman, who was a sophomore, did not let anyone outshine him, finishing the game with 19 tackles, one sack and two interceptions. Gordon appreciated how Spielman did not just talk the talk, but he always backed it up on the field. Conley, who also had coached Gordon at Middletown (Ohio) High School, respected how the standout linebacker made his presence felt on the field.

"There are all kinds of leaders. There are vocal leaders, and there are leaders like Chris who is a leader by example," Conley said of Spielman. "He wasn't a rah-rah guy, but he played with such intensity. When he made a hit, I mean, he made a hit. He was a physical football player, and you didn't want to get hit by Chris Spielman."

Following Gordon's punt block for a safety, the Buckeye offense went three-and-out. Long drove the Hawkeyes into Ohio State territory before throwing an interception to sophomore cornerback William White.

Ohio State sophomore fullback George Cooper took a first-down carry for 5 yards, setting up one of the biggest plays of the season. Tailback John Wooldridge, who did not start due to fractured ribs, entered the game and instantly made his mark.

"We began to struggle a little bit in our running game," Wooldridge told BSB. "I hadn't played yet, and Earle Bruce just came to me, he looked at me, and he said, 'Hey, we need you. Are you ready to go? Can you go?' I said, 'If you're ready for me to be in there, I'm ready to go. I prepared this week, I'm ready.'"

Wooldridge, a fourth-year junior, entered the game against a defense that was aggressively slanting into run gaps, and he and his blockers used that to their

advantage. The talented tailback took a carry on second-and-5, and Wooldridge can take it from there.

"When I got to the hole, there was a defensive lineman just standing right there in front of me," Wooldridge said. "And without me knowing what I should do at that point – you get to the point where as a running back, you don't really have time, you just got to make a move – and I did."

"I was able to just kind of sidestep the defensive lineman, George Cooper had already got through the hole and he hit the linebacker, and I had to sort of do a sidestep away from a defensive back, and it just parted like a sea. Once I sidestepped that defensive lineman, it opened up. There was a gaping hole there. I didn't see anyone. I mean, it was 57 yards away, but I was able to see Brutus all the way into the end zone."

"That allowed us to really begin to say, 'This game could be ours. We can actually take out the No. 1 team in the country.'"

The 57-yard touchdown run by Wooldridge pushed the Buckeyes' lead to 12-0 with 9:06 until halftime. Iowa may have been surprised by the isolation play that turned into a long score, but former Ohio State left guard Jeff Uhlenhake, then a redshirt freshman, said the offense had seen something to take advantage of up front.

"They had a nose guard, and we picked up on film that you could actually tell which way he was going to slant at times," Uhlenhake told BSB. "I remember having the ability to, as you're looking at the nose guard's feet, you could kind of get a drift on which way he was going to slant. It wasn't the perfect thing, but it was true a great part of the time. And that really helped with the fullback stuff that day, as I recall, because we had the quick hitter to Coop. And it just made the blocking easier when you knew which way their nose guard was going to slant."

The long touchdown run by Wooldridge carried special significance because he was stepping up in the place of the injured Byars, who was held out with a foot injury. The 1984 Heisman Trophy runner-up had high hopes for his senior season, but he was derailed by getting hurt in the preseason. Byars spoke to the team ahead of the matchup with Iowa, expressing his raw emotion to his teammates.

"He just wanted to make sure that his voice was heard in terms of what it was going to take for us to be successful against a team like that," Wooldridge said of Byars. "And also, the level of consistency we were going to have to show throughout the whole four quarters to beat a team like Iowa. I think he slammed a table or slammed a bunch of glasses that were



Sonny Gordon

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## 40TH ANNIVERSARY GAME REVISITED

sitting on the table, and glasses and water flew all over the place.

"It was one of those moments where if you weren't awake yet, and if you didn't realize that you had the No. 1 team in the nation coming in to a pay a visit to you, then hearing a bunch of glass shatter, that will certainly get your attention."

Former Ohio State linebacker Derek Isaman, who was a true freshman in '85, said he did not recall many of the specifics from the Buckeyes' upset of the Hawkeyes. He remembers the passion with which Byars spoke to the team before the game, however.

"Keith got really upset, he was on crutches and stuff and he just threw out a whole bunch of curse words," Isaman told BSB. "He could fire us up."

"It lit a fire under everyone's heinie. This guy was the best of the best his junior year. For him to get up there and get fired up like that, it was an inspiration to everyone, especially with Iowa coming into town being ranked No. 1."

Uhlenhake spent his redshirt season dreaming of the opportunity to open up running lanes for Byars, but the foot injury drastically limited the tailback's production as a senior. The future All-America lineman said he could feel the pain Byars dealt with that year.

"Obviously, Keith was a phenomenal player and came back for his last year, and had to be frustrated that he couldn't play," Uhlenhake said, "and especially play against the No. 1 team in the country coming onto your turf in your stadium."

Though it was not exactly what he envisioned, Uhlenhake did not lack confidence in the Buckeye backs who took over in Byars' place, including Wooldridge, Cooper and Vince Workman, who was a freshman.

"We had some younger guys, but we were starting to approach the middle of the season," Uhlenhake said. "We had enough time where we knew what those backs were capable of that were playing. John Wooldridge had good acceleration, good quickness and was very elusive. Coop was a fullback that obviously was a bigger fullback that had good agility for a fullback and could carry the ball as well as block."

The trio of Wooldridge, Cooper and Workman combined for 224 rushing yards against the Hawkeyes, led by 104 from Cooper and 89 by Wooldridge.

Following Wooldridge's long score, Iowa floundered again, with Long throwing an interception to sophomore cornerback Greg Rogan. After the pick, the Buckeyes drove down to the Iowa 4 but settled for a Spangler field goal to extend the lead to 15-0.

Long and Harmon kept Iowa alive with a 14-play drive covering 88 yards and capped by a 3-yard Harmon score with just 28 seconds until the midway intermission.

Ohio State drove down the field on its opening drive of the second half but stalled out at the Iowa 12-yard line, where Spangler missed a 29-yard field goal. The Hawkeyes drove the ball to the Ohio State 39, but the defense held strong, forcing a punt.

The Buckeyes took over on their own 14, and Karsatos threw an interception on second-and-14, which Iowa returned to the OSU 19. Harmon gained 8 yards on two carries to set up third-and-2, but he added only 1 yard on his next carry. Trailing only eight points with less than four minutes left in the third quarter, Iowa went for it on fourth-and-1, but the OSU defense shut down Harmon's leap to force a turnover on downs.

"The thing that that defense did so well was they ran to the football," Conley said. "We call it swarming to the football. And so that's how we made so many plays. On that fourth-down stop for example, hell, there were about four guys on the tackle. Everybody else was reading around it. And Isaman was one of those guys who was really a team player. He didn't want to let his teammates down, and he really rose to the occasion."

Spielman was credited with the stop, but the swarm of Buckeyes were ready to help out, including Isaman, who had replaced Byron Lee after an injury.

"I was scared to death," Isaman told BSB. "But it was quite an honor and a privilege to be able to go out there and play as a freshman. And Iowa was No. 1 when

they came in that game, so it was a quite an honor. I got in, got to hit a few people. I made some good plays, I think. I didn't give up a touchdown or anything."

The Buckeyes failed to generate any offense on their following drive, punting the ball away to the Iowa 13. On the Hawkeyes' first play of the drive, Long hit Scott Helverson for an 18-yard gain, but Isaman forced a fumble that Fred Ridder recovered.

Isaman's forced fumble was one of the most pivotal plays of the game, because Ohio State drove 31 yards in 2:07 and scored on a Workman touchdown to push the lead to 22-7.

"It's just overwhelming, as far as excitement," Isaman said. "You have 90,000-95,000 people hooting and hollering. It's quite an experience that you can't really describe. It's so awesome. To make a play, and to be a freshman, what an honor."

The top-ranked Hawkeyes did not go down without a fight, however, responding with an 80-yard touchdown drive in 10 plays that took just 3:20 off the clock. The score made it 22-13, and Iowa coach Hayden Fry elected to go for two to make it a seven-point game.

Iowa attempted a toss to Harmon, but Gordon came up and made a clutch stop to keep the OSU lead at nine points.

After the score, Ohio State had two consecutive three-and-out drives with an Iowa missed field goal sandwiched between them. When the Hawkeyes got the ball back with 1:37 left and a nine-point deficit, Spielman quickly ended their last-ditch effort with his second interception of the

day on second-and-10.

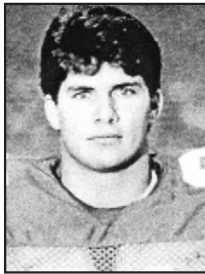
"Every time they had a little momentum going, it just killed their momentum," Conley said. "The momentum was wearing a different uniform after that. We pretty much controlled the football game, but they were good, they didn't quit, and they kept coming after us. And we missed a couple of field goals, or it wouldn't have even been that close. Every time the defense had to make a big play, they did."

Five turnovers and a blocked punt for a safety helped the Buckeyes upset the No. 1 team in the country at home, which was something Gordon and his teammates took rather seriously.

"We were underdogs coming into our stadium," Gordon said. "That kind of made us more upset than anything, when you're an underdog in your own stadium. Even though they were ranked No. 1 and they were a good team, it's like, 'They're coming into the 'Shoe, and we're an underdog in the 'Shoe? This ain't going to happen. We're going to make our name.'"

Even though the Buckeyes went 2-2 to end the season following the huge victory over Iowa, they still answered the bell when the nation's top team came into Ohio Stadium. If nothing else, handling the top team in the country forever gave the 1985 Buckeyes bragging rights.

"I live in Michigan now, so if you can imagine, every time somebody talks smack, I always pull up either that, or the game where I'm hitting (Jim) Harbaugh. That's huge, like, 'This is what Buckeyes do,' and then you show them that little clip," Gordon said. "The No. 1 team comes into the Horseshoe and we're underdogs - we take care of business."



Derek Isaman



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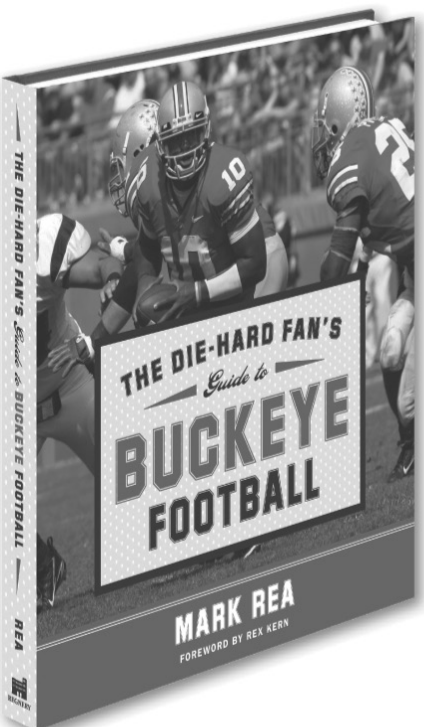
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# Texas Quarterback Ewers Reopens Recruitment

Ohio State appears to be on the verge of landing a commitment from the nation's top-rated signal caller, as Southlake (Texas) Carroll five-star quarterback Quinn Ewers decommitted from Texas on Oct. 28 and subsequently received several 247Sports crystal ball predictions in favor of the Buckeyes.

## RECRUITING OUTLOOK Andrew Lind

"With the (recruiting) process being abnormal this season, I tried my best to keep an open mind to all possibilities," Ewers said in a tweet that evening. "However, the more I've considered, the more I've come to realize I didn't explore all options as thoroughly as I would have liked. Therefore, I've decided to decommit and reassess the situation before making such an important decision on my future."

"I would like to thank the University of Texas for their belief in me and my abilities. I understand this year has been challenging for the coaches and administrators as well, so I appreciate their understanding and wish them the best in the future. My family and I also thank Texas Longhorns fans for their interest and support. I will soon have a firm decision on where I will spend the next few formative years of my life and career, and I look forward to sharing that with you."

The 6-3, 175-pound Ewers – who is considered the second-best prospect overall in the class of 2022 – grew up rooting for Texas and had been committed to the Longhorns since Aug. 14. But his relationship with Ohio State head coach Ryan Day dates back more than two years, after the Buckeyes offered him a scholarship following a strong performance at a one-day camp in June 2018, even though he had yet to take a snap of high school football.

Ohio State quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis noted last month how difficult it is to recruit amid the pandemic and ongoing dead period because of a lack of in-person evaluation opportunities, which is one reason they've offered only four quarterbacks in their 2022 recruiting cycle thus far, including Ewers; Tiger (Ga.) Rabun County five-star Gunner Stockton; Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra five-star Maalik Murphy; and Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic three-star Steve Angeli. However, Ewers made quite the impression on Day during his lone trip to campus, and he's been at the top of the Buckeyes' priority chart ever since.

"I've known those guys for a while," Ewers told 247Sports director of recruiting Steve Wiltfong on Oct. 29. "I went up there in eighth grade. That's when they offered me, and ever since then I've kept a good relationship and it's been fun talking to those guys. Coach Dennis is really fun to talk to. He's younger and easier to connect with, and Coach Day is as well. Those guys are really cool."

Schools such as Alabama, Auburn, Clemson and Oklahoma are all hoping Ewers will give them a second look, but



COURTESY OF QUINN EWERS

**NEXT IN LINE** – Although he grew up rooting for the home-state Longhorns, Southlake (Texas) Carroll five-star quarterback Quinn Ewers is widely expected to commit to Ohio State in the coming weeks.

he's expected to make an announcement in the coming days or weeks.

If he does ultimately choose the Buckeyes, Ewers would become the second five-star quarterback in as many cycles to commit to Ohio State, joining Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep's Kyle McCord in the class of 2021. And while that competition might scare away some, Day believes the players he recruits will thrive in it.

"At Ohio State, if you come to be a quarterback, you're the shortstop of the New York Yankees," he said during a teleconference on Oct. 27.

### Pledges Hint At Other Commitments

On Oct. 25, just a few days before Ewers backed off his pledge, several members of Ohio State's 2022 recruiting class indicated on social media that something big was in the works.

"We're going to break the internet," Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter four-star linebacker C.J. Hicks tweeted. "Just watch."

Overland Park (Kan.) Blue Valley North four-star linebacker Dasan McCullough then added fuel to the fire when he tweeted, "I finally get to say it! Who's ready for another boom?"

Things only got more interesting when a group of high-priority targets put Ohio State's handle in their Instagram or Twitter bios, including Del Valle, Texas, five-star wide receiver Caleb Burton; Lynchburg (Va.) Liberty Christian Academy five-star offensive tackle Zach Rice; Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star cornerback Domani Jackson; Grosse Point (Mich.) South five-star cornerback Will Johnson;

## 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	OG	6-6	299	★★★★	Richfield (Ohio) Revere
Jantzen Dunn	S	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
Zen Michalski	OT	6-7	288	★★★	Floyds Knobs (Ind.) Floyd Central
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

Des Moines (Iowa) Southeast Polk four-star safety Xavier Nwankpa; Atlanta Woodward Academy four-star running back Damari Alston; and Katy, Texas, four-star cornerback Bobby Taylor.

While it remains to be seen if the news extends beyond Ewers' decommitment and possible pledge, it's worth noting

**Continued On Page 28**



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# First Ohio State Commit Switches To UA Game

Continued From Page 26

both Burton and Jackson began trending toward the Buckeyes over the next few days. Taylor, meanwhile, is still awaiting an offer from the staff.

## Henderson Switches To Under Armour Game

With NBC canceling the annual All-American Bowl amid the coronavirus pandemic, Ohio State five-star running back commit TreVeyon Henderson announced on Oct. 25 that he will now play in the Under Armour All-America Game instead.

The 5-11, 195-pound Henderson was one of a nation-leading 12 Ohio State commits set to play in the All-American Bowl, including Pickerington (Ohio) North five-star defensive end Jack Sawyer; Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal five-star offensive guard Donovan Jackson; McCord; St. Louis De Smet Jesuit four-star cornerback Jakailin Johnson; Massillon (Ohio) Washington four-star wide receiver Jayden Ballard; Streetsboro, Ohio, four-star defensive tackle Mike Hall; Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett four-star cornerback Jordan Hancock; Ironton, Ohio, four-

star linebacker Reid Carrico; Cornelius (N.C.) William Amos Hough four-star running back Evan Pryor; Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep four-star wide receiver Marvin Harrison; and Manassas (Va.) Unity Reed four-star Tyleik Williams.

Of course, the Under Armour All-America Game could eventually cancel its game, as well. But if it does remain intact, Henderson would join Richfield (Ohio) Revere four-star offensive guard Ben Christman, who was the only future Buckeye slated to play in the game at this time.

## Five-Star Tackle Misses Buckeye Bash

Fairfax (Va.) Robinson Secondary five-star offensive tackle Tristan Leigh was supposed to join members of Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class at Sawyer's house to watch the Buckeyes' season opener against Nebraska on Oct. 24 but was unable to make the trip after his mother fell ill. Even so, the 6-5 and 270-pound Leigh still holds the Buckeyes in high regard as he looks to make his college decision in the coming months.

"They're still up there with me," Leigh



COURTESY OF TREVEYON HENDERSON

**SWITCHING IT UP – Hopewell, Va., five-star running back TreVeyon Henderson will now play in the Under Armour All-America Game on Jan. 7 after NBC canceled the annual All-American Bowl.**

## A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

### 30 Years Ago – 1990

Fourteen weeks until signing day, and Ohio State was still near the top of the list for four of the country's top seven tailbacks.

Marquette Smith of Winter Park, Fla.; Stephen Pitts of Middletown, N.J.; Tyrone Wheatley of Dearborn Heights, Mich.; and Ki-Jana Carter of Westerville (Ohio) South had all indicated their interest in the Buckeyes.

National recruiting expert Tom Lemming rated Smith the top tailback prospect in the country. Pitts was ranked second, Wheatley was fourth, and Carter was seventh.

Additionally, two of Ohio's top three quarterbacks had the Buckeyes at the top of their lists of favorite schools as well. Bubba Lichtenberg of Athens and Bob Hoying of St. Henry indicated that Ohio State topped the charts of their favorite schools.

### 25 Years Ago – 1995

Westerville South linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer was considered a generational prospect and had drawn comparisons with former Ohio State All-American Chris Spielman. And, as of about 3:30 p.m. on Oct. 26, Katzenmoyer and Spielman compared in another way: They were both Buckeyes.

Katzenmoyer ended months of speculation by issuing a verbal commitment to play college football at nearby Ohio State. The USA Today "Super 25" player picked the Buckeyes over a field that included Boston College, Michigan, Nebraska and Penn State.

"Through this whole process, I have had one college in my mind, and that's why I am committing to the Ohio State University," said Katzenmoyer, touching off loud applause from teammates, classmates, faculty and community members in the Westerville South media center.

He became the 10th member of OSU's 1996 recruiting class, a group that was expected to sign letters of intent for the Buckeyes on national signing day, Feb. 7.

### 20 Years Ago – 2000

Ohio State picked up its 11th verbal commitment for 2001 when Sandusky (Ohio) Perkins fullback/linebacker Brandon Schnittker committed to the Buckeyes on Oct. 22.

According to Schnittker, OSU assistant George Belu had called him earlier that day to offer him a scholarship. It did not take him long to accept, he said.

"Coach Belu called and said they wanted me to play for them," Schnittker said. "I was amazed. I was kind of overwhelmed. This was my first Big Ten offer.

"I talked to my family, made up my mind and called him

back. He was excited about it, and he said the coaching staff was excited. Their interest had been increasing and they were calling me every week.

"I guess they just saw some things on the films that they liked."

Schnittker (6-2, 245, 4.63) was a two-way standout for Perkins, which finished the regular season 10-0. On offense, he carried 70 times for 700 yards and scored 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he had 95 tackles, five interceptions and four recovered fumbles.

### 15 Years Ago – 2005

Once the Ohio State scholarship offer he had always dreamed of was in his possession, Grant Schwartz felt like the right thing to do was wait. Other teams had treated him well during the recruiting process, and he didn't want to make a rash decision by committing to the Buckeyes.

But after some further consideration, he realized there was nothing rash about his feelings. As a longtime fan of the program and the son of Brian Schwartz, who played under Woody Hayes and Earle Bruce in the late '70s, there was nowhere else that Schwartz wanted to be.

With that in mind, he gave members of OSU's coaching staff his verbal commitment shortly before the Buckeyes' game with Minnesota, ending a recruiting process that in some ways began after Schwartz visited Ohio State's summer football camp and in other ways had been going on far longer than that.

"I just decided that it's been my lifelong dream to play for Ohio State," Schwartz told BSB. "I might never get this opportunity again, so it was time to take it."

### 10 Years Ago – 2010

Cincinnati Taft defensive lineman Adolphus Washington was continuing to add new scholarship offers.

"Things are really starting to take off for me," he told BSB. "I now have offers from Alabama, Texas, Boston College, Texas A&M, Indiana, Ohio State and possibly a few others. Alabama is like a second home to me, because that's where my family is from. I have a cousin going to Alabama right now, and my dad is from there. I've never been to the school, but I've been in the state before. I have a lot of interest in the Alabama program.

Listed at 6-6, 240 pounds, Washington camped at OSU during the summer and took in a game at Ohio Stadium during the 2010 season.

"Things are good with Ohio State, for sure, and I might be going to the Michigan game in a few weeks," he said. "I

haven't really spoken to anyone from Ohio State lately, but everything's good there. Ohio State is close to home, but it's not real close, so it's still like going away to school. They are definitely one of my top choices."

### Five Years Ago – 2015

The long and dramatic dance between Kareem Walker and Ohio State was finally over. Walker, a five-star running back out of Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic, decommitted from Ohio State on Nov. 3.

"It is after much consideration, thought and meeting multiple times with my family and coaches that I'm rescinding my verbal commitment to Ohio State," he wrote in a note posted to Twitter. "At this point, the relationship has changed. I've wrestled with this for a few months and truly wanted it to work out. However, I do not think it is fair to Ohio State or myself to remain committed when my heart is telling me otherwise.

"I will be taking my visits and ultimately making a decision that will best serve me and my family. I will not be commenting on my recruitment until after I submit my LOI and enroll for spring semester. I need to focus on my team, my grades and my play."

The loss of the nation's No. 2 running back and No. 25 overall prospect dropped Ohio State to No. 2 in the team rankings for the class of 2016 according to Scout.com, one spot behind LSU and one ahead of Alabama, as of Nov. 8.

### One Year Ago – 2019

Despite the threat of heavy rain throughout the game, Ohio State welcomed a long list of visitors to campus for a 38-7 win over Wisconsin on Oct. 26, including many of its own commits.

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

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



# ASK AN ANALYST

## With Lettermen Row's Jeremy Birmingham

**With seemingly no end in sight for the NCAA-mandated recruiting dead period, do you think Ohio State can land both Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic five-star defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau and Steilacoom, Wash., five-star wide receiver Emeka Egbuka without another visit?**

"I think it's entirely realistic to say that they can, but the odds are certainly lower if these two can't get back to campus. It's more difficult for Tuimoloau because Egbuka has at least been to campus twice previously. There are rumors that the dead period could extend even to March, and if that's the case, things get even more difficult to project."

**Fairfax (Va.) Robinson Secondary five-star offensive tackle Tristan Leigh was unable to make it to Buckeye Bash on Oct. 24 after his mother got sick. Do you think that marks the final nail in the coffin for Ohio State, or do the Buckeyes still have a chance?**

"Over the next few weeks and maybe months, you'll probably see Leigh and his camp make a number of statements about the desire to still visit

Columbus to take another look at Ohio State, but the odds are getting pretty long for the Buckeyes if they want to overtake LSU and Oklahoma in his recruitment.

"The visit for the Buckeyes Bash could have turned the tide – his mom is rumored to have a strong affinity for Ohio State – but the Buckeyes are now in a pretty difficult spot moving forward."

**With a little over a month and a half until the early signing period, do you think any of Ohio State's 20 pledges are wavering in their commitment or do you expect them to all sign with the Buckeyes when it's all said and done? If so, who are those players and who are the biggest challengers in their recruitment(s)?**

"The Buckeyes have done a great job maintaining their commitments over the last eight months, and quite honestly, there's not a lot of concern moving forward about the strength of any of the current verbal commitments.

"Sure, there's some who will suggest that Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro four-star cornerback Denzel Burke, who has not yet been to Columbus, could be on the

rocks, but there's nothing to suggest that is the case.

"Others will worry about the possibility of a decommitment from Philadelphia St. Joseph's Prep five-star quarterback Kyle McCord if he's sandwiched between Jack Miller/C.J. Stroud and 2022 Southlake (Texas) Carroll five-star Quinn Ewers, but there's no indication from the family that he's seriously thinking about any other school."

**Do you think LSU's disappointing start, combined with the self-imposed recruiting sanctions, opens the door for Ohio State to flip Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star linebacker Raesjon Davis, or has that ship long sailed?**

"It doesn't appear the Buckeyes are entirely out of the loop for Raesjon Davis, but that's not really related to the NCAA issues that LSU could be facing. Linebackers coach Al Washington has kept Ohio State in the mix for Davis for the last few months, but again, if he can't make a visit, there's no chance to flip him. He was trying to get to the Buckeye Bash but was unable to arrange his travel, and now the question is whether or not he'll find the opportunity anytime in the future."

told Wiltfong. "I like the development of their players. Coach (Greg) Studrawa has a really good track history of getting dudes where they're supposed to be and maximizing their abilities and getting them to the league. They're a championship contender every year. Just playing on that stage, if you put on right there, that's good for building your name and profile as a player."

Nearly 70 percent of prognosticators believe Leigh will end up at LSU, with Clemson and Oklahoma also fighting for his signature. Ohio State has a lot of ground to make up, and the Buckeyes most likely won't be able to do that unless he returns to Columbus soon.

### Big Ten Rules Hamper Recruiting

While part of the Big Ten's decision to limit attendance at games this fall to family members of players and staff created an even playing field within the conference, that's not the case elsewhere across the country.

In fact, while the Buckeyes' commits have taken it upon themselves to meet up for games as a way to build camaraderie and recruit other prospects to join them, schools in the ACC, Big 12 and SEC have been handing out tickets to top targets since they're also allowing the general public to attend. And that's put the Big Ten and Pac-12, which also won't allow fans when it kicks off play on Nov. 7, at a serious disadvantage on the recruiting trail as programs attempt to gain any advantage they can amid the extended dead period.

"I think it's certainly an advantage for those schools if kids can go to their game for one school and not for another," Day said during a conference call with reporters on Oct. 29. "It's a huge competitive advantage, and I don't think that's fair. These recruits and their families have to make tough decisions, so they need the opportunity to go see these places, which they haven't for such a long time. I think that's really hard on them and their families. There's not an easy solution. I don't really have the answer right now, but I know that there's some inequity going on right there that needs to be addressed."

### In-State Lineman Commits To Clemson

Clemson has once again come into Ohio and landed a commitment from an offensive lineman with an offer from Ohio State, after Strongsville four-star tackle Blake Miller picked the Tigers on Oct. 28.

The decision was somewhat of a surprise given the 6-6, 315-pound Miller – who is considered the 24th-best offensive tackle and No. 210 prospect overall in the class of 2022 – had just narrowed his lengthy list of scholarship offers to Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Michigan and Ohio State on Oct. 19. But now he follows in the same footsteps as Jackson Carman, a former five-star prospect from Fairfield who was widely considered a Buckeye lean before he chose the Tigers during the 2018 cycle.

Ohio State, meanwhile, already has one commitment at offensive tackle for the 2022 recruiting class in West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Tegra Tshabola. It's still a bit early to tell how many players the staff will target at the position, but other names to keep in mind include Rice; Daleville (Va.) Lord Botetourt five-star Gunner Givens; Fond Du Lac (Wis.) St. Mary's Springs four-star Billy Schrauth; Charlestown, Ind., four-star Kiyaunta Goodwin; and Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star Aamil Wagner.

### Running Back Talks Interest In Ohio State

Reading (Pa.) Governor Mifflin four-star running back Nicholas Singleton holds nearly 30 scholarship offers, but Ohio State is one of the schools standing out in his recruitment following an unofficial trip to campus on Oct. 24.

The 5-11, 195-pound Singleton – who is considered the seventh-best running back and No. 109 prospect overall in the class of 2022 – landed an offer from Buckeye running backs coach Tony Alford in January, and the two have maintained close contact ever since.

"They want me bad," Singleton told 247Sports recruiting analyst Brian Dohn. "They want me to come back up there and get to know them more and build a relationship with them."

While Singleton has yet to officially trim his list of scholarship offers, other schools in the mix include Notre Dame, Penn State, South Carolina and Wisconsin.

Running back isn't a position of significant need for Ohio State in 2022, especially with Henderson and Pryor set to arrive on campus in January. But the Buckeyes will always look to take at least one each cycle, so other players to keep in mind early on include the aforementioned Alston; Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star Kaytron Allen; Winter Park, Fla., four-star Terrance Gibbs; and Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers four-star Dallan Hayden.

### Other Notes From Around The Country

- Williamstown, N.J., five-star safety Keon Sabb listed Ohio State in his top 15 on Oct. 30 alongside Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Georgia,

Maryland, Michigan, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Rutgers, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas A&M. He is considered the top-rated safety in the class of 2022.

- Givens hinted on Oct. 30 that he will announce his top six schools sooner rather than later. He last trimmed his list of offers to 12 schools on Sept. 29, naming Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida State, Georgia, LSU, North Carolina, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State, South Carolina and Virginia Tech among his early leaders.

- Pilot Mountain (N.C.) East Surry four-star tight end Benji Gosnell will make his college decision on Nov. 4. Gosnell, the 11th-best tight end in the class of 2022, previously announced a top three of Florida, North Carolina and Ohio State.

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

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# Badgers Pause Team Activities Due To Virus

COVID-19 cases at Wisconsin caused the cancellation of the Oct. 31 Wisconsin-Nebraska game. The Wisconsin football team put all team-related activities on pause and will take at least seven days off due to an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases within the program.

The decision to put football on hold and cancel the game was made by athletic director Barry Alvarez and school chancellor Rebecca Blank in consultation with the Big Ten. The matchup with the Huskers will not be rescheduled.

## BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"We have said from the beginning that the health and safety of our student-athletes, coaches and staff members comes first," Alvarez said in a statement. "Over the past several days we have seen a rising number of student-athletes and staff contract the virus. The responsible thing for us to do is to pause football-related activities for at least seven days."

As of Oct. 28, 12 people within the Wisconsin football program had tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous five days – six student-athletes and six staff members, including head coach Paul Chryst.

"This morning I received the news that I had tested positive via a PCR test I took yesterday," Chryst said in a statement. "I informed my staff and the team this morning and am currently isolating at home. I had not been experiencing any symptoms and feel good as of this morning."

"I am disappointed for our players and coaching staff who put so much into preparing to play each week. But the safety of everyone in our program has to be our top priority, and I support the decision made to pause our team activities."

Wisconsin's next scheduled game was at home against Purdue on Nov. 7.

Graham Mertz, Wisconsin's redshirt freshman quarterback, is among the players who tested positive for COVID-19. Mertz, who set multiple Badger records in his starting debut, must sit out 21 days per Big Ten protocol for positive COVID-19 tests.

The second-year signal caller connected on 17 straight completions to begin his first start. Mertz finished with 248 yards and a school-record five touchdowns, completing 20 of 21 passes for a school-record 95.2 completion percentage in the Badgers' 45-7 victory against Illinois.

In addition to being required to sit out for three weeks, according to the coronavirus protocols instituted by the Big Ten, Mertz will also have to undergo extensive cardiac testing to investigate any long-term conditions that could arise from COVID-19 including myocarditis. Myocarditis is the inflammation of the heart muscle, which has been linked to COVID-19.

With Mertz out and senior Jack Coan recovering from foot surgery, third-year sophomore quarterback Chase Wolf was expected to take his place as the starter. However, Wolf also reportedly tested positive for COVID-19.

Fourth-year junior quarterback Danny Vanden Boom is expected to be the next man up if Wolf's positive test is confirmed. Vanden Boom has thrown just one pass for a 3-yard touchdown in his career, giving him a 455.2 passer rating. The Badgers' only other signal

caller on the roster is 6-8 freshman Daniel Wright, a walk-on.

Following the cancellation of the game at Nebraska and the game with Purdue, Wisconsin is scheduled to travel to No. 13 Michigan if it can return to play.

### Illinois QB Peters Among Two To Test Positive For COVID

Brandon Peters, Illinois' starting quarterback, and Griffin Moore, a redshirt freshman tight end, tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 29.

Peters and Moore missed Illinois' 31-24 loss to Purdue on Oct. 31, along with "several other players" sidelined for contact tracing. The Illini listed 14 players out for the game, including Peters and Moore, due to injury or contact tracing.

Coran Taylor, a sophomore, found himself taking snaps behind center on the Illini's second possession following an apparent ankle injury to last-minute starter Matt Robinson. Taylor tossed two touchdowns and totaled 233 yards with two picks. Illini backup quarterback Isaiah Williams was listed as out without any specification.

Peters and Moore must sit out 21 days, according to Big Ten policy, and will be eligible to return for the Illini's Nov. 21 game at Nebraska, forcing them to miss contests against Purdue, Minnesota and Rutgers and return with four games left.

Illinois head coach Lovie Smith had said on Oct. 28 that there had been no positive COVID-19 tests on his team.

"Our team is clean," Smith said one day before the positive tests. "We're kind of humiliated down in the bunker. We have a protocol in place that we follow daily. But right now, for our football team, not much has changed."

### Penn State RB Cain Will Miss Rest Of Season With Injury

Noah Cain, Penn State's starting tailback, will miss the remainder of the 2020 football season after suffering an injury in the season opener against Indiana.

Head coach James Franklin did not give details, but Cain was seen on the sideline in Bloomington, Ind., using crutches and wearing a supportive boot that extended from his left foot to lower leg.

"I love Noah, so much respect for Noah," Franklin said. "He really had an unbelievable offseason and worked really hard for this opportunity."

Cain became the second Nittany Lion running back to be ruled out indefinitely in October. Projected starter Journey Brown was ruled out for an indefinite period, which could be for the whole season after an undisclosed medical issue was discovered in the preseason.

While Brown led Penn State in rushing last season, totaling 890 yards and 12 touchdowns on 6.9 yards per carry, Cain set a school freshman record with eight rushing touchdowns and 443 rushing yards, averaging 5.3 yards per carry.

In the loss to the Hoosiers, Cain carried the ball three times, gaining 13 yards, which came on Penn State's first four plays of an opening touchdown drive before his injury.

Once Cain went down, fellow sophomore Devyn Ford filled the primary running back role, rushing for 69 yards and one touchdown on 20 carries, adding three receptions for 11 yards.

A pair of Penn State freshman running backs, Caziah Holmes and Keyvone Lee, made their collegiate debuts against Indiana, gaining 16 yards and 35 yards, respectively.

### Attorney For Group Of Former Players Fires Back At Iowa

Iowa rejected the demands of the eight black former Iowa football players who allege racial discrimination during their time with the Hawkeyes, but the attorney representing them said the case is not over.

Civil rights attorney Damario Solomon-Simmons of Tulsa, Okla., had stated the players' demands, which include a payment of \$20 million, in a 21-page letter to university officials dated Oct. 5. The former Hawkeyes also called for the firings of head football coach Kirk Ferentz, offensive line coach Brian Ferentz and athletic director Gary Barta.

The general counsel of the university issued a response saying it would not give in to the demands and that work had already begun to create a more welcoming environment for black student-athletes. The response from the general counsel was sent to members of the media along with a copy of Solomon-Simmons' original letter.

"In response, it appears Iowa released our confidential letter to the media with the sole intention of trying to shame and intimidate our courageous clients," Solomon-Simmons said in a statement. "It did not work. In fact, Iowa's move has ... only strengthened the resolve of our clients to continue to stand up for their rights and the rights of their teammates."

The former players who have said they were mistreated are Akrum Wadley, Aaron Mends, Jonathan Parker, Marcel Joly, Maurice Fleming, Reggie Spearman, Kevonte Martin-Manley and Andre Harris.

Solomon-Simmons' original letter said that if the student-athletes' demands were not met by Oct. 19, the former players would file a lawsuit seeking damages.

In June, Iowa hired an outside law firm to review the culture of the football program after dozens of former players, primarily black athletes, spoke out on social media to allege racial disparities and mistreatment. The former Hawkeyes spoke up in protest against racial injustice following the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police and after Iowa responded with only minor changes.

The Iowa athletic department severed ties with longtime strength and conditioning coach Chris Doyle, who received \$1.1 million in a severance agreement after several players had accused Doyle of using racial slurs when addressing them, which he denied. Brian Ferentz, who is the son of Kirk Ferentz, was also alleged to have been abusive to players.

The internal review included interviews with 111 current and former players and employees, and it found the cultural problems at Iowa were systemic.

The demand letter from the former players called for the university to make a payment of \$10 million "for the loss of earning capacity, loss of professional opportunities, defamation, pain and suffering, mental conditions, mental anguish, PTSD, humiliation, and overall emotional distress that our clients have incurred."

Additionally, the former Hawkeyes demanded \$10 million to set up a fund established for athletes, not including themselves, to compensate them "for the discrimination and ongoing severe and pervasive acts that constitute intentional discrimination where defendants intended to treat African-Americans differently."

Other demands by the former Iowa players include an annual anti-racist training for all athletic department staff, the creation of a permanent Senior Black Male Administrator position, and tuition waivers for black student-athletes who attended Iowa during Kirk Ferentz's 22 years and did not graduate.

## BIG 2020 Standings

East Division			
	W	L	Pct.
Indiana	2	0	1.000
<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.000</b>
Maryland	1	1	.500
Michigan	1	1	.500
Michigan State	1	1	.500
Penn State	1	1	.500
Rutgers	1	1	.500
West Division			
	W	L	Pct.
Northwestern	2	0	1.000
Purdue	2	0	1.000
Wisconsin	1	0	1.000
Nebraska	0	1	0.000
Illinois	0	2	0.000
Iowa	0	2	0.000
Minnesota	0	2	0.000

### Oct. 30 Score

Maryland 45, Minnesota 44 (OT)

### Oct. 31 Scores

Michigan State 27, Michigan 24

Purdue 31, Illinois 24

Indiana 37, Rutgers 21

Northwestern 21, Iowa 20

**Ohio State 38, Penn State 25**

Wisconsin at Nebraska, canceled

### Nov. 7 Games

Michigan at Indiana, 12 p.m.

Michigan State at Iowa, 12 p.m.

Nebraska at Northwestern, 12 p.m.

Purdue at Wisconsin, 3:30 p.m.

Maryland at Penn State, 3:30 p.m.

Minnesota at Illinois, 3:30 p.m.

Rutgers at Ohio State, 7:30 p.m.

Solomon-Simmons said the issue of racial discrimination will not be erased with "diversity councils, grandiose statements of support, helmet decals, 'unity' walks, prepaid expensive reports, kumbaya implicit bias seminars, and tokenizing of a few black faculty, athletes, and staff."

### Top Performers From Across The Conference

Taulia Tagovailoa led Maryland to a 45-44 overtime win against Minnesota, completing 26 of 35 attempts for 394 yards and three touchdowns and adding eight rushes for 59 yards and two scores. Tagovailoa was the top Big Ten performer of the week outside of Ohio State.

Jahan Dotson deserves honorable mention for reeling in eight receptions for 144 yards and three touchdowns in Penn State's 38-25 loss to the Buckeyes.

Tagovailoa's backfield mate, Jake Funk, excelled for the Terrapins, rushing for 221 yards and a touchdown and adding three catches for 22 yards and another score. Minnesota tailback Mohamed Ibrahim led the Gophers with 207 yards and four touchdowns on 41 carries in the loss.

Purdue quarterback Aidan O'Connell completed 29 of 35 passes for 376 yards and two scores in a 31-24 win against Illinois. O'Connell's favorite target, David Bell, caught nine passes for 122 yards and one touchdown.

Michigan State wide receiver Ricky White snagged eight catches for 196 yards and one score in the Spartans' 27-24 upset of 24.5-point favorite Michigan.

Northwestern defensive back Brandon Joseph, a redshirt freshman, excelled in the Wildcats' 21-20 comeback victory at Iowa, picking off two passes and recording four tackles (three solo).



# Do You Know Where Your Big Ten Schedule Is?

In the previous Court Report it was noted that the Ohio State men's basketball schedule for the upcoming season was coming out in drips because of the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Well, it wasn't exactly the faucet being opened full throttle, but the Buckeyes have their nonconference schedule filled with the announcements of games at Notre Dame and against North Carolina.

## COURT REPORT Craig Merz

Still ahead, the long-awaited Big Ten slate, which is expected to begin with up to four games for each team in December.

First came the Oct. 29 announcement that Ohio State will face North Carolina in the CBS Sports Classic on Dec. 19 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland. A day later, the ACC-Big Ten Challenge matchup vs. Notre Dame was set for South Bend, Ind., on Dec. 8.

Neither was a major surprise in that both are annual games with the only drama being the opponents, sites and, in the case of the ACC-Big Ten Challenge, the date.

Still, in this crazy world of making it up on the fly, nothing is assured.

For example, the Buckeyes had planned to play in the Battle for Atlantis in the Bahamas, but that tournament was scrapped and they will open the season with three games Nov. 25-27 in the Crossover Classic in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Next are home games vs. Morehead State on Dec. 2 and Alabama A&M three days later. The nonleague schedule ends, as of now, with Notre Dame and North Carolina.

Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann likes the Crossover Classic because of its COVID-19 testing protocols. The tourney is in conjunction with Sanford Health, whose senior vice president of quality, Jeremy Cauwels, is a member of the NCAA COVID-19 medical advisory group. All members of each team's traveling party will be tested regularly for coronavirus once they arrive, and they will be in a controlled environment, or bubble, for the duration of the tournament.

However, and it's a big however, on Oct. 30 CBS Sports reported that Utah pulled out of the Crossover Classic over concerns about South Dakota's rising positive COVID-19 case rate, which is second nationally only to North Dakota. A replacement team had not been named as BSB went to press.

Ohio State got a bit of a break in its travel for the ACC-Big Ten Challenge by being able to bus to Notre Dame if desired when the Buckeyes could have been sent flying to Florida or North Carolina, for instance.

They also benefited with the CBS Sports Classic being in Cleveland. Last season they defeated Kentucky 71-65 in Las Vegas. Obviously, the less time spent in airports and hotels the better to avoid contracting the virus.

As for the games themselves, the Buckeyes and Fighting Irish will play for the 13th time but the first since Dec. 21, 2013, when OSU improved its record in the series to 8-4 with a 64-61 victory at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

OSU last played in South Bend on Dec. 4,

1972, earning an 81-75 overtime victory.

The Buckeyes are 7-11 in the ACC-Big Ten Challenge, having broken a five-game losing streak last season thanks to a 74-49 win at North Carolina.

UNC will be seeking revenge through the CBS Sports Classic at the home of the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers. Kentucky plays UCLA in the second game.

The Buckeyes are 3-3 in the Classic, which is held on the Saturday before Christmas in a different city each year. In the most recent Classic meeting with North Carolina, the Tar Heels won 86-72 in New Orleans in 2017.

OSU does not have fond memories of its most recent trip to Cleveland on Dec. 29, 2019, after the No. 2 Buckeyes lost 67-59 to No. 22 West Virginia.

One casualty of COVID-19 is the annual Gavitt Tip-Off Games between the Big Ten and the Big East. The Big East is hoping to schedule games against Big 12 opponents instead.

### What A Mess

Now for the weekly look at the dumpster fire known as the college basketball schedule.

Stadium network basketball analyst Jeff Godman recently tweeted responses from exasperated schedule makers when asked how they were coping with cancellations and postponements.

A sampling of the varied and colorful comments: "Dentist chair no novocaine (sic); Wild game of make believe; Operating under false pretense; Fecal festival; Total. Effing. Calamity; Similar to playing go fish; All done ... for now!; A cluster\*\*\*\* of epic proportions; Sleep and pray we play; Ready for April!; Pissing in the wind."

There is reason for alarm.

ESPN on Oct. 26 canceled 10 college basketball events it had planned at its sports complex in Orlando, Fla., because of challenges in getting the proper testing protocols.

More than two dozen schools were to have participated while staying in a bubble like the one the NBA successfully employed there to complete its season by crowning the Los Angeles Lakers champions in October.

### Conference Calls

The Pac-12 on Oct. 26 announced the weekly matchups and sites for its 20-game conference format with specific details to come after consultation with its television partners.

It's ironic that the Pac-12 is ahead of the Big Ten in releasing a schedule because it was the Pac-12 that followed the lead of the Big Ten when it came to football. The Big Ten was first with a conference-only schedule and the first to cancel the fall football season with the Pac-12 following in both instances. Once the Big Ten reversed course, the Pac-12 did likewise, though at a slower pace.

Now, the Pac-12 will return to playing football on Nov. 7 and will allow other sports, including basketball, to compete in this calendar year after initially banning all athletic events through Dec. 31.

Elsewhere, the Big East announced its conference schedule through December. Commissioner Val Ackerman hopes to have the remainder of the schedule out by early next month.

"We broke our schedule into two pieces to take more time to see what makes sense for us in January or February," she said. "There are models on the table that best suit our

## 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	★★★★	Garfield Heights (Ohio)

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

needs and provide the safest environment."

Also, the ASUN (Atlantic Sun) Conference will retain its 16-game schedule for men and women but with a single-site format. Under the new plan, league teams will play a two-game series at one location with a day off between games.

"This scheduling model gives our teams and student-athletes the greatest chance to complete a full slate of conference games," said ASUN Commissioner Ted Gumbart.

### Moving On

Former Buckeye player and staff assistant Andrew Dakich will join ex-OSU assistant Mike Schrage's staff at Elon University as the director of basketball operations.

Dakich spent the 2017-18 season as a graduate transfer for the Buckeyes after four seasons as a walk-on at Michigan. He averaged 3.0 points, 2.1 assists and 1.8 rebounds in 19.0 minutes in 34 Ohio State games before spending the 2018-19 season as graduate assistant prior to being promoted to program assistant last season.

"He has a bright future in our business," Holtmann said in an Oct. 29 statement. "Andrew has a really good feel for the game and how teams work, as we all saw during his playing season as a Buckeye."

Schrage was an assistant to Holtmann when Dakich played for the Buckeyes. He became Elon's head coach before the 2019-20 season.

"He is a former coach's son who is tough,

selfless, and has an incredible heart and feel for the game," Schrage said of Dakich.

### Uniformity

Ohio State men's basketball Twitter account (@OhioStateHoops) released a 39-second video Oct. 30 depicting the level of enthusiasm Holtmann has for the new uniforms unveiled in October.

He is seen getting out of his car in the Schottenstein Center parking lot adorned in the scarlet uniform while assistant coach Ryan Pedon comments that the whole thing is "getting out of hand."

Holtmann wears the No. 25 jersey and shorts again as he leaves a staff meeting, and assistant coach Jake Diebler says he can't remember the last time he saw Holtmann without them, noting he's in uniform cutting film and FaceTiming.

"I know he's excited about it, but is this taking it too far? I don't know," Diebler deadpans.

The last scene is of Holtmann exiting his car in uniform, with the air pods in place, having a conversation about "ball strength defense."

Matt Norlander, senior writer/college basketball analyst for CBS Sports was impressed, for the most part, with the production and tweeted: "@ryanpedon has to work on that on-screen presence, but aside from that, this is the best social-media content I've seen from a college program in a while."



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# Beacham Brings Experience To Young Roster

On July 28, Ohio State announced it would be bringing in Toledo forward Tanaya Beacham as a graduate transfer for the 2020-21 season. While Beacham has not yet played a game in Value City Arena for the Buckeyes, she has had experience inside the Schottenstein Center.

## DOUBLE DRIBBLE Wyatt Crosher

Beacham played high school basketball at Youngstown (Ohio) Ursuline for two years before transferring to Toledo Rogers to play her junior and senior seasons. While at Toledo Rogers, she helped the team make the Division II state championship game, where she would play against Kettering Alter down in Columbus.

Meeting her in the championship game was a then-sophomore guard whom Beacham did not yet know by the name of Braxtin Miller. Miller was a grade below Beacham and ultimately committed to Oklahoma State, while Beacham signed with the local Rockets.

Eventually both players found their ways to Ohio State through the transfer portal, and now both are the lone senior members of the Buckeyes heading into this season.

"We actually just talked about it," Beacham told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "We used to play for basically rival schools, and now we're playing on the same team together at the same

place where we were trying to win a state title. We laugh about that all the time."

Miller got the last laugh, with Kettering Alter winning the game 57-42 to cap off an undefeated 30-0 season. Miller, who told BSB she played through an ankle injury, scored 11 points in 25 minutes while Beacham tallied 10 points, seven rebounds and a pair of assists.

"Everybody planned on me not playing in the game, but then I knew Toledo Rogers was a tough team, so I had to do as much as I could and get it together and I played," Miller said. "So it was a crazy game. We played them a bunch of times, then we played in the state championship, so (Beacham and I) just talked about how we knew it was going to be a good team and I told her that her team was so athletic. We always said we didn't even know how we beat them."

Prior to high school, Beacham said she had been playing basketball since she was 5 years old, when she would play all day on Saturdays at the YMCA starting at 8 in the morning. Basketball was always her main passion, with the 6-1 forward saying she "pretty much just played basketball, that's all I ever knew."

Beacham said her decision to switch high schools came through a desire to strengthen her competition and to improve her own game, with thoughts of playing at the collegiate level in the back of her mind.

"I just wanted to surround myself around athletes that I know that were all about basketball like I was," Beacham said. "I loved playing in Youngstown, but when I came to Toledo, it got more, I'd say, more serious for the next level. It set my mind-set of how reality would be

## 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

for college."

In her freshman season with Toledo, Beacham played in just one game, earning two personal fouls in one minute of play. But her role increased significantly in year two, becoming a consistent bench player with 7.0 minutes per game in 30 games played, including one start.

That season, Beacham averaged 3.6 points and 2.0 rebounds per game, shooting 63.4 percent from the field and 67.9 percent from the free-throw line, both of which were highs during her time with the Rockets.

Beacham's junior season saw her in a similar role, coming off the bench for 33 games and averaging 3.9 points and 3.0 boards a night while shooting 47.3 percent in those contests. But her minutes went up from 7.0 to 11.3 per game, showing an increase in trust with the forward going into the 2019-20 season.

That year, Beacham had easily her most productive season yet. In 31 games played, including 20 starts, Beacham averaged 10.8 and 5.5 rebounds per game, shot a team-high 58.3 percent from the floor and led the team with 12 blocks on the year.

"I think it's just the progression that I made from transforming myself from my freshman year to my last year at Toledo," Beacham said on what she looks back at her time with the Rockets. "I put pride into getting better every year and making sure it was something different or something I added on to my game. I want to take pride in that I think I transformed as a player within those four years of being there."

Her efforts were enough to gain the attention Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff when Beacham entered the transfer portal on June 10.

"I'm really excited about her," McGuff told BSB. "She's a great kid, she plays extremely hard, and plus she's got some experience as a college player. She's a little different than Dorka (Juhasz), AP (Aaliyah Patty) and Rebeka (Mikulasikova) in that those guys, just by virtue of what our style is, they've spent a lot of time on the perimeter. Tanaya's spent more time around the basket, and she's a tough, rugged defender, rebounder and can really score around the basket, too."

Beacham said that she left Toledo in order to "explore my other opportunities," and that she ultimately chose to go to Ohio State because of the fast-paced play that McGuff has implemented in his time with the program.

"Ohio State was a great fit for me," Beacham said. "I love the style of play. I love that it was close to home. I'm only two hours away from Toledo so I'm still close to my family. I just felt like it was perfect. Their program was good, so it was a perfect fit."

As McGuff mentioned, Beacham has done almost all of her damage from inside the arc, attempting just one three-pointer in her time with the Rockets, with that shot being a miss. But McGuff thinks her different style of play compared to the forwards already on Ohio State's roster will only help the Buckeyes' roster on the whole.

"She's kind of starting out as more an inside player and learning to play on the perimeter more, and she's doing a great job picking that up, but I like it because it just gives us a different

dimension vs. the kids that we've already had before she got here."

Along with her abilities on the court, Beacham was also named as a team captain in her final season with the Rockets despite being, in her own words, someone who "sits back and doesn't say much," instead deciding to lead by example.

Miller agreed, saying Beacham has been important through practices thus far, even if she is not the most outspoken member of the team.

"She's not as much vocal, but she definitely leads by experience," Miller said. "She's always just doing the right thing, super willing to listen because it is a new team, so some things just are new with how some teams run defense or offense or whatever. She's always willing to listen and then from there just always working hard and doing her best. I think that she just leads with that and helping others and showing others that this is the right thing to do."

Beacham said she first got acclimated with the team through Zoom calls because of COVID-19 and that the lack of face-to-face communication "kind of sucked at first." But since, the fifth-year senior forward said she has really enjoyed her time with the team once they were able to practice together following a two-week isolation period.

Miller has already noticed the difference that Beacham has made with the team and believes that her experience and skill set will be crucial to Ohio State's success this season.

"She's incredible," Miller said. "I love Tanaya. She is an extremely great, tough-nosed rebounder. Every time you think that the other team has it, she somehow gets a hand on it when they're least expecting it and gets it. She's a really great finisher and is able to finish over a lot of really big guys that we have in here."

"That was the thing we lacked obviously last year with so many freshmen. But this year, I think we have people from last year that now know what they're doing and then a senior that came in, a grad transfer like Tanaya, that has been there and knows the ins and outs and knows how to do things and the way to be. So, I think that it's super important and it's going to be something that helps us go far this year."

The last time Beacham played in Columbus was in a title game more than five years ago against her fellow senior teammate, but the next time she plays there, it will be for a team that has heightened expectations after an impressive campaign with one of the youngest rosters in the country.

So far, Beacham said she has fit in extremely well with the team and has been able to come out of her shell because of the relationships she has already made with her teammates. But when it comes to the basketball side of things, Beacham has been just as impressed with the talent that she believes Ohio State possesses this year.

"I love these girls," Beacham said. "I actually think transferring here was a great experience for me because when I first got here I was so quiet and I feel like within the two months that I've been here I've opened up so much. I feel like everybody can create their own shot, everybody is a scoring threat, so the defenses will have to watch out."

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# Bucks Are Spooky Good

Even the spirit of "Old Coaly" could not help the Nittany Lions on Halloween night in State College. "Old Coaly," a mule whose bones are still on display in the Hetzel Union Building on the Penn State campus, was the original mascot for Penn State until being replaced by the Nittany Lion in 1907.

Under a full moon, with the only white-out being the reflection from over 106,000 metal seats in Beaver Stadium, the Ohio State Buckeyes came to town with a lot of tricks and very few treats for the men dressed in white and blue.

## COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

Once again, the Ohio State game plan was solid, and the players' execution of it was near flawless in a sport where efficiency reigns supreme. Ryan Day and his staff are masters of identifying the individual talents of each player and putting them in winning game situations.

Take for instance the jet sweep to Garrett Wilson to open the football game, which set the tone for the night as he scampered 62 yards to set up the first Buckeye touchdown.

By using Wilson at the slot position, he can be used as a runner and receiver. He has speed, quickness, agility and the ball skills to hurt the opposing defense in a multiplicity of ways. He runs precision routes as a slot receiver and is equally impressive with his yards after the catch.

That's just one example of how the staff can get the mismatches they want at various positions. For the moment, the Ohio State Buckeyes are the "cream of the crop" in the Big Ten in this shortened season that has a long way to go.

### Running Game Back on Track

Even though the Buckeyes averaged nearly the same amount of yards per rush against Penn State as they did against Nebraska, there is no doubt major improvement took place from game one to game two. It all starts up front, and the offensive line of the Bucks had much greater push, sustained longer and picked up slants and sustains much better than a week ago.

Running back Master Teague was on a mission to show he was back and ready to take over as the heir to J.K. Dobbins. He didn't get the 150-plus yards Dobbins did against the Nittany Lions last year, but he put up over 100, scored a touchdown and averaged 4.8 yards per carry. Most impressive is how Teague pressed the line of scrimmage faster and displayed better vision than last week. He showed he can be a power runner when necessary by accelerating through arm tackles to pick up extra yardage. Teague has good speed, but he is definitely a better north-south than east-west runner.

Trey Sermon had half as much yardage as Teague but also showed improvement in attacking the line of scrimmage harder and quicker than against the Cornhuskers. Sermon brings a lot to the table because of his versatility and experience as a runner, toughness in pass blocking, and ability to catch the ball out of the backfield. Teague and Sermon have the potential to be a good one-two punch for the Buckeye offense for the rest of the 2020 season.

### Fields Sees the Field

It was great to see the Buckeyes didn't need Justin Fields' feet to run the football against the Lions. He officially had six carries but just a couple of those were called runs. Even though he

took a big hit and was leveled late in the game on a back-side pass rush, he didn't have to take the pounding he did against Nebraska.

Fields once again demonstrated to the football world that he is a world-class athlete at the quarterback position in reading coverages, picking out open receivers and delivering the football on time. He is instinctive in terms of when to release the football, holding it just long enough for his receivers to get open. His fast start against the Nittany Lions put Penn State in a hole they were never able to dig out of.

Fields completed his first seven passes and went 15 of 18 for the first half. In just two games, Fields has thrown for just under 600 yards and six touchdowns. In the era of spread offenses, Fields is a perfect fit for the Buckeyes. He delivered the football to eight different players for the second week in a row.

There is little doubt, when it comes to consistency along with the ability to make the big play, no quarterback in college football is better than Fields. He took another step toward winning the Heisman against Penn State, but for him and the Buckeyes, it's one game at a time. Barring injury or the same fate as Trevor Lawrence, Fields has a legitimate chance to claim the big prize.

### Bucks Have Tight Ends, Too

The Ohio State defense was tasked with stopping the Sean Clifford to Pat Freiermuth connection Saturday. Freiermuth is not only one of Penn State's most valuable offensive weapons but, arguably, the best tight end in college football. The Buckeyes rose to the occasion and held him to just three receptions and 46 yards.

There is little doubt the best tight ends in Happy Valley on Halloween night were wearing scarlet and gray. Jeremy Ruckert, Luke Farrell and Jake Hausmann aren't the three Musketeers, but this trio of swashbuckling tight ends are skilled at more than just blocking. They also display the ability to slash their way through defenses and find open areas, making them tall targets for their quarterback.

They may practice chivalry off the field, but on the field, they are dangerous foes to opposing teams. Saturday they caught a combined six receptions for 54 yards. Ruckert, one of the most athletic tight ends in the Big Ten, also had two touchdown receptions. The Buckeye tight ends are officially a valuable part of the Ohio State passing attack. Just ask them.

### Pressure Up Front

The Ohio State defensive line had to put pressure on Clifford to have any chance of stopping the Nittany Lions. If the Buckeye front four could put heat on Clifford themselves without relying on help from linebacker blitzes, the Penn State offense would be stymied. There is little doubt this mission in the trenches was accomplished.

Led by Tommy Togiai's seven tackles and three sacks, the Buckeye defensive front accounted for 26 of the team's 57 tackles. They put constant heat on Clifford by getting great push along with penetration to the point of either sacking, flushing out, or forcing early throws from the Penn State quarterback for four quarters. Clifford ended up being sacked five times by the unit.

Former Penn State assistant Larry Johnson, now with the Buckeyes, saw nine of his defensive linemen whom he rotated into the game get tackles for the evening in his old stomping grounds.

*Known as one of the top recruiters in college football, Bill Conley was a national championship-winning coach and player at Ohio State who suited up for Woody Hayes and spent 17 years on the staffs of Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel. His column will appear throughout the season in BSB.*





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# Bucks Take Care Of Business In Happy Valley

It says something about a team when they thoroughly dominate yet people think they played poorly. Not sure about whom it says – the team or the fan base – but it is definitely interesting.

Ohio State started fast against Penn State, scoring a touchdown within the first 90 seconds of the game and leading 14-0 less than halfway into the first quarter. That cushion allowed the Buckeyes to try a few things, maybe figure out what works and what doesn't so that they can keep or discard it for the rest of the season.

## THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

The Nittany Lions were obviously shell-shocked by the quick OSU start and were never truly a threat to win the game. They made it a little bit interesting late with a couple of fourth-quarter touchdowns, but Ohio State wasn't leaving Happy Valley with anything other than a win.

Justin Fields was once again, well – Justin Fields. The guy continues to amaze and impress and makes at least two or three “wow” throws each week. His best of this night was a second-quarter high-arching toss off a rollout on second-and-14 in the second quarter at the Penn State 31, with just enough touch to find Garrett Wilson on the sideline. His deep scoring throw to Chris Olave up the left sideline on second-and-3 early in the game was a close second, as there were defenders in the area. Fields put enough mustard on it to get over the defenders yet just enough touch to allow Olave to cradle it in. A thing of beauty.

Fields is, through two games, the national leader in ESPN's QBR metric, which tells a better story about top-notch quarterback play than the antiquated pass efficiency rating. QBR is qualitative, measuring all action plays (which includes runs) while pass efficiency rating is only a passing metric and

more about quantity.

The running game also improved, as Master Teague appeared more certain of his role. In the opener the Buckeyes used him a handful of times on outside runs, which isn't his strength. He's a downhill, between the tackles runner, and that's what OSU used him as against Penn State. Trey Sermon is the shifter of the two and was utilized more on off tackle and outside zone runs. Each was over four yards per carry – Teague at 4.8, Sermon at 4.3 – a welcome change from the almost nonexistent rushing total of the Nebraska game.

The defense also came to play, harassing Nittany Lions quarterback Sean Clifford for much of the night. After hearing nothing but glowing things about Clifford – a former Cincinnati prep star – it appears to be little more than hype. He didn't make it through last year's game against Ohio State due to injury and wasn't very good against the Buckeyes this time around. At what point do people realize that a player is what he is, no matter how much they want him to be better?

I had concerns about Clifford heading into the season, wondering if he would hold the Penn State offense back due to his lack of accuracy. He hit 60.0 percent against the Buckeyes, which is nothing to write home about, and would have been worse had Jahan Dotson not made two fabulous catches in the fourth quarter, one a one-handed pluck out of the air against an off-balance Shaun Wade that turned into a touchdown.

The Buckeyes netted five sacks, three coming from Tommy Togiai. It's nice to see the junior finally making an impact, along with senior Haskell Garrett, who created a bunch of pressure on Clifford. The edge rush game isn't quite where it needs to be yet, but it's nice to see the interior playing so well until an edge guy emerges.

There were just enough issues for Ryan Day to get after them about – the penalties (nine, including four personal fouls), the coverage by the secondary (Wade did not have a good evening) and the clock management at the end of the first half – though truthfully I didn't know if that was on Day or the referees. But it allowed Penn State to kick a field goal

heading into halftime.

There's no doubt that not having fans in the stadium helped Ohio State immensely.

Urban Meyer often said it was his least favorite road trip as it played havoc with the offensive signals and play calls. Having experienced a couple, it must be said that it's hard to hear yourself think. The crowd is probably worth 3-4 points, so not having to worry about that no doubt made preparation much easier for Ohio State.

This game was probably the last real hurdle OSU had to clear on the road to an unbeaten season – though it should be noted that next up Rutgers, which has shown an ability to run the ball in its two games. There's also the Greg Schiano factor – it's not a secret that Day didn't want to keep him around, certainly not as coordinator anyway. So he went back to the place where he found the most success, and the Scarlet Knights already appear to be a much-improved team. Sure, there is still a big talent deficit, but at least Rutgers has looked like an actual football team instead of a punching bag that gets 70 dropped on it with regularity.

## Wolverines Wither

Just when it looked like it was safe to once again be a Michigan football fan, the Wolverines laid an egg.

What makes it even worse is that it came against in-state foe Michigan State, whom Mike Hart once derisively called “Little Brother.” Well, “Little Brother” has now beaten Jim Harbaugh three times in six meetings and coupled with being shut out by OSU in five meetings, Harbaugh is now 3-8 against the teams U-M fans want most to beat.

There are three things Michigan fans crave – a Big Ten title and wins over OSU and MSU. There have been none of the former and too few of the latter, and you have to wonder if this is finally the year when the administration says enough is enough. Harbaugh is the only coach in Power Five to not be signed for 2021, and it wouldn't be the least bit shocking if he left of his own accord, to go back to the NFL. But it also wouldn't be shocking if the U-M higher ups cut bait on a guy for whom they had such high hopes but who has been mostly disappointing.

The Wolverines looked good in an opening win over Minnesota, though we have since learned that the Gophers are fool's Goldy. Against MSU the Wolverines repeatedly tried to run inside, right into the strength of the Spartan defense. Not surprisingly, it didn't work. Michigan State found success with its deep perimeter passing game, forcing at least three pass-interference penalties on Michigan's typically handsy crew of corners, yet the coaches did little about it.

That's the big knock on Harbaugh. Sure,

he brings passion and hard work to the table, no question about it. But he coaches a game that is considered prehistoric by today's standards.

Very few teams are playing power football, at least with success, yet that's what Harbaugh is leaning on. The game is all about speed and mismatches and getting the ball out quickly and putting the defense back on its heels. Michigan does very little of that. In a nutshell, the coaches don't put the players in the best position to succeed, and that's going to end up costing the team games.

It already has, and you have to think there are at least a couple more L's on the schedule, too.

If Michigan can't right the ship in the next two games, against Indiana and Wisconsin, then newspapers and internet sites in Ann Arbor and beyond are going to have a field day.

## Dandy Dozen

Rankings can be funny.

They are really all about perspective – how people view things. Some voters simply slot teams based on strength – “I think Georgia would beat BYU, so I have the Bulldogs ranked higher.” Others look at rankings as a snapshot of what has already happened and go from there – “I don't love Cincinnati's schedule, but they have put up numbers and beaten everybody.”

I am somewhere in the middle. I definitely think rankings are a weekly snapshot of what has occurred, but I also think that strength of team and strength of schedule have to come into play at some point.

With that said, this is how one man sees the college football landscape as the calendar changes to November.

1. Alabama (6-0)
2. Clemson (7-0)
3. Ohio State (2-0)
4. Notre Dame (6-0)
5. Cincinnati (5-0)
6. Georgia (4-1)
7. Texas A&M (4-1)
8. BYU (7-0)
9. Oklahoma State (4-1)
10. Florida (3-1)
11. Miami (5-1)
12. Coastal Carolina (6-0)

It will be interesting to see what the pollsters do with the national rankings as OSU will take on an unranked Rutgers squad while Clemson and Notre Dame battle in South Bend. The Tigers will be without Trevor Lawrence, so if they lose will the voters not drop them as far because they would have “an excuse”? Also, would the voters move Notre Dame ahead of the Buckeyes if they knock off the mighty Tigers? Definitely things that bear watching after next weekend.

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# Nit-Picking Not Necessary In Win Over Lions

Most Buckeye fans and observers, including me, were concerned about the same things coming out of Ohio State's season-opening win over Nebraska. They were troubled by the running game, in lieu of the departed J.K. Dobbins, and the defense, especially against quarterback runs. Never mind that the home team coasted to a 52-17 victory and that Ohio State showed improvement in these areas as the game with the Huskers progressed.

Buckeye fans will be Buckeye fans, and they had to find something to worry about, especially with the team scheduled to play what most perceived as the most dangerous opponent on the regular-season schedule in Penn State the following Saturday.

Any concerns were quickly allayed against the Lions.

The Buckeyes took the ball first and on their very first play used a little razzle-dazzle to gain 62 yards on a run by Garrett Wilson. Master Teague, who carried six times for just 12 yards in the first quarter of the game with the Cornhuskers, followed with good-looking runs of 9 and then 4 yards into the end zone to give Ohio State a quick, three-play, 75 ground-yards march that put at ease concerns about the running game. Teague bettered his rushing total for the first quarter the week before in just 1:17.

Teague would finish with 110 yards on 23 carries, far more than the 41 yards he racked up against Nebraska. Trey Sermon added 56 yards on 13 carries. More importantly, franchise quarterback Justin Fields had to tote the ball only six times, two of which were sacks, and that was less than half the 15 carries he exposed himself to against Nebraska.

As for the defense, the Buckeyes forced Penn State to turn the ball over on downs on its first possession and held the Lions to three three-and-outs in the first half. But for a borderline roughing-the-passer call, the Buckeyes would have had a fourth and held Penn State to just three points in the first half.

One of the reasons the Buckeyes looked so strong on defense in the first 30 minutes was that they managed to keep the quarterback runs in check. Sean Clifford, who had gained 119 yards the week before in a loss to Indiana, carried 11 times for 10 yards in the first half. Things didn't get much better in the second stanza. Clifford finished with 18 carries for 5 net yards, a far cry from the damage inflicted by Nebraska quarterbacks Adrian Martinez and Luke McCaffrey on the ground the week before.

"We felt like going into the game the quarterback running game would be something that would be a big part of the game," Penn State coach James Franklin admitted. "We weren't able to get that going."

Penn State gained just 75 yards on 25 plays in the first half.

Spurred by momentum gained after the bizarre run-out-the-clock sequence at the end of the half that led to a 50-yard Jordan Stout field goal for the Lions with one second before the intermission, Penn State scored 19 points and racked up 250 yards in the second half but never really threatened. Ohio State answered every Penn State blow with a blow of its own.

In fact, much of PSU's success in the second half can be traced to the play of one Lion – Jahan Dotson. Frequently going up against Ohio State's best defender in Shaun Wade, Dotson caught seven passes after the intermission, several of the circus variety, and totaled 124 yards in the final 30 minutes, good for three scores. Dotson was in the type of groove that even the best of defenders would have been unable to temper.

Still, the Buckeyes won the game by 13 points and could have won by a much more

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

decisive margin. Some of Ohio State's failure to blow out the Lions had to do with Penn State's grit. The hosts could have folded at any time, especially without the benefit of their famed "White Out" crowd.

But Ohio State also aided the Nittany Lion cause with nine penalties for 80 yards, this after the Buckeyes were flagged only three times for 14 yards in the opener. As mentioned, one of the Penn State field goals in the first half was aided by a penalty, though give the guilty party, Baron Browning, credit. His pass breakup in the end zone on the same drive helped hold the Lions to just three points.

The Buckeyes were also uncharacteristically hampered by poor special teams play. Not only did Ohio State miss two short field goals, but reliable punter Drue Chrisman had a mediocre punt in the second quarter that gave PSU better field position than they should have had (they didn't capitalize), and when on his only other punt he dropped the well-covered kick near the goal line, the Buckeyes botched the coverage and it went for a touchback.

Fortunately, safety Marcus Hooker bailed Ohio State out on the next play with an interception to help keep the game at its final 38-25 margin. Hooker's play in the first two games has raised some eyebrows, especially for his hard hitting.

Here I am, again, finding fault with a critical victory over a quality opponent. But if Ohio State really is to make a march to the College Football Playoff and ideally beyond, these are types of things they will need to eliminate.

And besides, Buckeye fans will be Buckeye fans.

### Replacing The Stars

Throughout the extended offseason and in the early going, Buckeye fans have been wondering who was going to replace Chase Young, the most recent in the line of superstar defensive linemen for the Buckeyes, following the likes of Joey and Nick Bosa.

We may have gotten our answer in the win over Penn State. The Buckeye defense may be prepared to dominate the line of scrimmage by committee.

In fairness to defensive line coach Larry Johnson, he has always surrounded his stars with outstanding talent. There simply has always been one player who stood out above the rest. Against Penn State, it seemed like all of the defensive linemen stood out.

In total, nine defensive linemen made stops against the Lions, accounting for 26 of Ohio State's 57 tackles.

Those who stood out were led by Tommy Togiai, who was tops on the team with seven tackles, three of which were sacks. Others with solid stat lines included Jonathon Cooper with five tackles and a half sack; Zach Harrison with four tackles, 1.5 tackles for loss and a half sack; and Javontae Jean-Baptiste with a sack for 8 yards among his two tackles.

And Haskell Garrett was disruptive for a second straight week, even though he was credited with only two assists.

Who knows? Maybe one of the defensive linemen may emerge from the pack and become the next Buckeye superstar. But right now, the committee seems to be working.

### Tight End Watch

The tight ends played a bigger role in Ohio

State's passing game against Penn State, with Jeremy Ruckert leading the way with four catches for just 25 yards but two touchdowns. Luke Farrell and Jake Hausmann also had catches, for 16 and 13 yards, respectively.

People have been waiting for Ruckert to take a more active role in the passing game. With Farrell shaken up in the Penn State game, will Ruckert finally get his chance to shine?

Will this finally be the oft-promised year of the Ohio State tight end?

### It's Fields Again

Of course, the tight ends can't shine if there is no quarterback to throw the ball to them. That is hardly a problem at Ohio State.

Fields continues to amaze anyone who sees him play. He was an impressive 28 of 34 against the Lions for 318 yards and another four scores. The thing that amazes me is the fact that he has thrown 409 passes as a starter at Ohio State with only three interceptions, two of which came in the playoff game against Clemson last season.

He seems equally comfortable throwing to Wilson or Chris Olave. He'll throw to freshmen. He'll throw, as mentioned, to the tight end. He just doesn't throw to the other team.

We are witnessing something special.

### Hard Hitting In The Rain

BSB's 40th Anniversary football season continues with a 22-13 victory over top-ranked Iowa on Nov. 2, 1985, in rainy Ohio Stadium. Anytime you beat the No. 1 team in the country it's a big deal, but this game was all the more memorable because of the backdrop against which it was played and the dynamic and colorful performance turned in by sophomore linebacker Chris Spielman.

The Hawkeyes, led by legitimate Heisman Trophy candidate Chuck Long, were a legitimate pick to top the nation. Long was first in the nation in passing efficiency, and the team was best in the country in scoring offense, third in total defense and fifth in total offense while jumping out to a 7-0 start.

Meanwhile Ohio State, which entered the game at 6-1 and 4-1 in the conference, was being lambasted by its own fans and local media for its porous defense. The Bucks were ninth in the conference in pass defense and were giving up an average of 375.7 total yards a game to opponents.

The morning of the game, a local beat writer had wondered if Ohio State could hold Long "to under 1,000 passing yards." This sent the Buckeye defense, and Spielman in particular, into overdrive.

For the record, the Buckeyes held Long to just 169 yards on 17-of-34 passing. More importantly, they picked him off, count 'em, four times.

But the defensive play in the rainy stadium was so much more than that.

"The Buckeyes showed a national television audience not only that they could play good defense, but play it in the traditional Ohio State way – with some savage hitting," I wrote in this space in the Nov. 9, 1985, issue of BSB. "The third-quarter play in which Terry White and Derek Isaman jarred the ball loose from Iowa receiver Scott Helverson for a fumble, and Terry White's fourth-quarter smash into Quinn Early that turned a possible touchdown into an incompletion quickly come to mind."

The play of Spielman also quickly comes to

mind even now, 35 years later. He was in on 19 tackles, including a key tackle for loss, picked off a pair of Long passes and even mixed it up on one play without a helmet.

But it wasn't just Spielman.

The defensive secondary of juniors Terry White and Sonny Gordon and sophomores William White and Greg Rogan, which had been the target of much of the pregame barbs, came through mightily. Rogan had 11 tackles, including one for loss, an interception and two pass breakups. Terry White had three pass breakups and a fumble recovery in addition to the hard hits mentioned above. Gordon had four tackles and his famous punt block into the television camera that resulted in a safety and helped set the tone of the game in the Buckeyes' favor early. And William White had an interception and a pass breakup to go along with three tackles.

Spielman was still fired up after the game, and his press conference commentary remains legendary. Most of it is captured in our 40th Anniversary reprint on page 23 of this issue. A lot of it is well known, such as his comments about bringing an army to beat him and why he jumped into the fray with no helmet.

I did find an interesting quote that I had forgotten.

On his first interception, he started on the return but fumbled. Fortunately, Terry White was there to recover.

"I tried to be a running back like in high school," he explained. "That was two years ago. Sometimes I forget and I have a flashback."

Speaking of running with the football, Ohio State's victory wasn't all predicated on defense. The Buckeyes outgained the Hawkeyes, 370-345, including 219-176 on the ground. A good chunk of that 219 rushing yards came on a 57-yard touchdown run by John Wooldridge.

Wooldridge spoke to BSB for a look back at the Iowa game which appears on pages 24-25 of this issue. I loved his description of the hole that opened for him with the help of key blocks by fullback George Cooper and guard Jeff Uhlenhake.

"Once I sidestepped (a) defensive lineman, it opened up," he explained. "There was a gaping hole there. I didn't see anyone. I mean, it was 57 yards away, but I was able to see Brutus all the way into the end zone."

Ohio State is now 7-2 in the 40th Anniversary season with wins over No. 2 Oklahoma (1983), No. 7 LSU (1988), No. 15 Notre Dame (1995), No. 4 Penn State (1996), Purdue (2012), Penn State (2014) and No. 1 Iowa (1985). The Buckeyes suffered losses to No. 5 Alabama (1986) and Illinois (1992).

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# FOR ATHLETES

## HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

#### • CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

Headache, nausea, vomiting, balance problems, dizziness, double or blurred vision, sensitivity to light or noise, feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy, memory problems, confusion, just not "feeling right" or "feeling down".

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?



**REPORT IT.** Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.

**GET CHECKED OUT.** If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a health care provider can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

**GIVE YOUR BRAIN TIME TO HEAL.** A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

### WHY SHOULD I TELL MY COACH & PARENTS ABOUT MY SYMPTOMS?

Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.

While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

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