

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$3.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!



Vol. 41, No. 2

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Sept. 18, 2021

OSU Defensive Unit, Coordinator Feel Heat After Upset Stunner Vs. Oregon

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

Ryan Day and Kerry Coombs apparently have a difference of opinions when it comes to the Ohio State defense.

After the Buckeyes had been victimized again and again – a couple of times by the same formation, personnel and play-call – and had surrendered 505 total yards during a 35-28 home loss to Pac-12 rival Oregon, Day expressed some frustration while Coombs seemed to believe a little better execution was the answer to his defensive unit's problems.

When Day opened with the age-old excuse of having to watch the game film to determine exactly what happened, saying, "I'll give you an answer early next week," reporters pressed him further.

"It seemed like the same play to me that they hit us on and we didn't make adjustments," Day said. "That was very frustrating."

The Ducks repeatedly probed the edge of the boundary against the Buckeyes and met little to no resistance. Oregon's first touchdown was a 14-yard run by junior running back CJ Verdell, who took a handoff, sprinted to his left and simply motored past a half-dozen OSU defenders on his way to the end zone.

Verdell's touchdown capped a 99-yard drive that averaged nearly 10 yards per play. On the score, the Ducks lined up with three receivers split wide to the right – the same basic alignment as the play before when quarterback Anthony Brown gashed the OSU defense for 18 yards – and then let their offensive line collapse the Buckeyes to the left. No one even touched Verdell until safety Bryson Shaw gave the Oregon running back a token shove as he crossed the goal line.

The Ducks scored again in the second quarter on a play that was nearly identical. This time, only two receivers lined up wide to the right, but the Buckeyes found themselves caught flat-footed with a lone safety lined up nearly 10 yards off the line of scrimmage. Verdell took an underhanded toss from Brown and must have experienced a heavy dose of déjà vu as he sprinted around the left end and past six defenders.

This time, the Oregon running back needed a couple of seal blocks as well as a downfield block from offensive guard Dawson Jaramillo, and Shaw caught up to him at about the 2, but the result was essentially the same. Another 14-yard touchdown play,



SONNY BROCKWAY

ON THE HOT SEAT? - Ohio State defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs was the subject of sharp criticism in the wake of his unit's performance during the Buckeyes' 35-28 loss to Oregon. Coombs defended his players and his scheme during postgame comments but promised his defense "will get better."

this time on a fourth-and-1.

"The perimeter run play where we didn't get the crack, that showed up a couple of times," Day said. "They hit it for a touchdown, and then later, they hit the same one for another touchdown. If they hit you with it once, you have to make an adjustment. If they hit you with it twice, then there's an issue you have to fix. We need to look at that and figure out what it is."

Verdell struck again early in the third quarter, knifing through the middle of the OSU line and turning a third-and-3 situation into a 77-yard touchdown romp that seemed eerily reminiscent of the 56-yard run Minnesota running back Mohamed Ibrahim broke off on a fourth-and-1 against the Buckeyes a week earlier.

Oregon went back to the left side for its fourth touchdown, a simple handoff to backup running back Travis Dye, who outraced everyone to the end zone for a 5-yard score. And then the Ducks capped their scoring with a 14-yard pass from Brown to freshman tight end Moliki Moatavao. That came off play-action that caused OSU linebacker Tommy Eichenberg as well as Shaw to bite, and Moatavao easily slipped in behind them.

It was the second straight subpar performance for the Ohio State defense, which gave up 408 yards and 31 points in the season opener against Minnesota. Never before in the 132-year history of the program have the Buckeyes ever allowed

Continued On Page 10

FAN FORUM

Buckeye Leaves

In the wake of Ohio State's 35-28 loss to Oregon on Sept. 11, the BSB staff and a select group of posters to the BuckeyeSports.com Forum deliberated on which Buckeyes earned Buckeye Leaves with their performances in a losing effort.

Chase Brown, BSB: Jesse Mirco put together a phenomenal effort against Oregon. Ohio State called upon the Perth, Australia, native three times during the contest, and he responded with three punts that traveled 130 yards for an average of 43.3 yards. Mirco's longest punt bounced and rolled a total of 62 yards.

While Mirco's distance played a significant role in my decision to give him a Buckeye leaf, I look more to how those punts affected Oregon's field position. His first two punts pinned the Ducks at their own 1-yard line, and his final punt landed just in front of the Oregon 20-yard line.

Mirco's success would undoubtedly put a smile on former head coach Jim Tressel's face.

Wyatt Crosher, BSB: Ohio State might have fallen to Oregon at home, but there were still some highlights to be found within the team.

Those were more difficult to find on the defensive side of the ball, but on offense, the passing attack was mostly strong with C.J. Stroud throwing for the second-most passing yards in program history.

Typically, Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson are the primary targets, but against the Ducks, it was Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who led the way with a game-high 145 yards on seven receptions, two of which were touchdowns. Smith-Njigba was excellent all game long and got open when the Ducks were able to slow down both of Ohio State's two main wideouts, and he was able to be a key cog in the comeback effort.

It may have not been enough against Oregon, but Smith-Njigba flashing the way he did can only mean good things for the Buckeyes moving forward through the rest of the season.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: It's hard to take away much in the way of positives from the defensive performance that Ohio State put on display during its 35-28 loss to Oregon, but it does have at least one capable to build around in sophomore linebacker Cody Simon. Simon's six tackles (only one solo) don't pop off the box score, but his Buckeye leaf is more about competence than anything else.

While his position mates found themselves frequently lost in the wash, overreacting to Oregon's fakes in the backfield, Simon stood strong, often serving as the only man in the correct gap against the run. His play against the pass was strong, too, including on a pass breakup in the fourth quarter that returned the ball to Ohio State's offense – even if that offense squandered its opportunity.

On the few times he was tasked with pressuring the quarterback, Simon again flashed his athleticism, never arriving home but posing much more of a threat to quarterback Anthony Brown than Ohio State's standard four-man rush ever did. For the second straight game, Simon stood out like a healthy, articulate thumb on a defense of sore fingers.

Mark Rea, BSB: Being as old-school as I am, I would prefer to follow the lead of Woody and Earle – no victory, no Buckeye leaves. However, if I must award one or two, I'll go with C.J. Stroud and his OSU freshman-record 484 yards passing.

There were several missed throws and a lack of clock awareness at the end of the first half. But Stroud seemed to make the best of some bad situations he was forced into by the OSU coaching staff.

Chris Olave also probably deserves a leaf. A dozen

catches for 126 yards, including 37 yards after the catch, is an outstanding performance for most receivers. For Olave, just another ho-hum day at the office.

BuckeyeScott: I, too, think Jesse Mirco deserves some recognition, but being able to pin the Ducks back on the 1-yard-line twice was also a result of great punt coverage. The entire punt special teams unit gets my Buckeye leaves.

bstu9: Jaxon Smith-Njigba gets my Buckeye leaf. The sophomore WR had seven catches for 145 yards and two touchdowns to establish himself as another legitimate weapon on the Buckeye offense. By far the best game in his young Buckeye career.

AnthonyBuckeye: Chris Olave and Jaxon Smith-Njigba for their superlative performances, C.J. Stroud for almost 500 yards passing in only his second start, the OL for giving him time to pass for four quarters, Haskell Garrett for so many tackles close to the line of scrimmage, Denzel Burke for another excellent game and punter Jesse Mirco for twice pinning the Ducks inside their 5-yard-line. The run D and the red-zone D do not get any Buckeye leaves.

PeyoteBuck: Mirco is the man for me. Perhaps one day the rest of the team will take advantage of his talent.

Poster That Harley Built: We keep talking about the talent in the receiving room and we had seen glimpses of Jaxon Smith-Njigba. But his performance against Oregon was his coming-out party. It was like having his receiving room "black stripe" removed.



From The Message Board

Ohio State suffered its first regular-season defeat in Ryan Day's tenure as head coach, falling to Oregon, 35-28. Despite the Buckeyes dropping to 1-1 on the season, we asked readers on the Buckeye Sports Bulletin Fan Forum to list some of the positives, or silver linings, they can take from the game heading into the remainder of the season. Here are some of the responses:

"C.J. Stroud's arm, especially if he can develop more consistently. Chris Olave's effort. He just defines 'Buckeyeness,' doesn't he? Miyan Williams and TreVeyon Henderson. Although they weren't breaking off big runs, they demonstrated that last week was no fluke."

– Michael Bauer

"The weather was great!"

– John Lanning

"We are alive and healthy? Lol."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"Well after that fiasco, I would say that our young and inexperienced defensive players are getting a lot of reps. Hopefully that will help in future years if not sooner in future games."

– BuckeyeScott

"Jaxon Smith-Njigba looked to be in the same class as Olave and Garrett Wilson. Denzel Burke and Smith-Njigba are definitely silver linings for the Buckeyes going forward."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"The punting coverage was very good."

– R1TBDBITL

"Silver lining? As bad as our defense was, it still counts as only one loss. Still undefeated in league play too!"

– bstu9

"The spirited play of the rightfully-maligned defense at the end of the game."

– Poster That Harley Built



FAIR Landscaping & Design

"Give your lawn the FAIR advantage."

TOTAL LAWN CARE

- Fertilization & Weed Control
- Mulching, Seeding & Sodding
- Fencing, Landscape Design
- Yard Clean-up & Hauling
- Tree & Bush Trimming
- Damaged Lawns We Can Fix!

Free Estimates & Affordable Prices **614-235-8740** Mike FAIR, Owner



A West Side Tradition Since 1967

1189 N. Wilson Rd.
(614) 279-3344
& Next Door Tavern

Catch all the Ohio State action
Big Ten Network • NFL Sunday Ticket
14 TVs • OSU Memorabilia



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

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

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

PUBLISHER
 Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
 Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
 Mark Rea

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
 Wyatt Crosher Patrick Mayhorn

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
 Karen Wachsmann 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
 Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
 Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
 Chase Brown Craig Merz
 David Breithaupt Bob Roehm
 Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
 Joe Dempsey Steve Siegfried
 Rich Exner Jeff Svoboda
 Mike Wachsmann

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
 Jan Jager Ron Friedman

2021-22 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 41)

No. 1	Sept. 11	No. 13	Dec. 18
No. 2	Sept. 18	No. 14	Jan. 15
No. 3	Sept. 25	No. 15	Jan. 29
No. 4	Oct. 2	No. 16	Feb. 12
No. 5	Oct. 9	No. 17	March 5
No. 6	Oct. 23	No. 18	March 19
No. 7	Oct. 30	No. 19	April 2
No. 8	Nov. 6	No. 20	April 16
No. 9	Nov. 13	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 20	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 27	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 4	No. 24	August

The next issue (Sept. 25 cover date) will be mailed on Sept. 21.

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

Wachsmann Elite Donor:



Star Power Not Getting It Done On Defense

Here's a bit of contrarian thinking as you search for another pin to stick into your Kerry Coombs voodoo doll. Ohio State's 35-28 loss to Oregon wasn't entirely the defensive unit's fault.

Yes, the Buckeyes were forced early into playing from behind, and that, in turn, led head coach Ryan Day to rely a little too much on his passing attack. But epic fourth-down failures by the offense were every bit as much to blame for OSU losing to Oregon as epic failures from a defense that seemingly can't muster a pass rush, set an edge or defend the short side of the field.

The first offensive flub came on the Buckeyes' initial possession of the game. Facing a fourth-and-7 at the Oregon 31, Day decided that spot on the field was outside kicker Noah Ruggles' range (it would have been about a 48-yarder) and too far to expect a conversion from the running game. So Day elected to place the fourth-down fate of his team in the hands of redshirt freshman quarterback C.J. Stroud, who promptly overthrew receiver Chris Olave to turn the ball over to the Ducks on downs.

It was the first of three fourth-down failures in the game for the Buckeyes. They couldn't move the Oregon defensive line off the ball on a fourth-and-2 at the Ducks 39-yard line late in the second quarter, getting stuffed for no gain, and a hurried Stroud missed Olave again on a fourth-and-2 at the Oregon 8 with the third-quarter clock winding under four minutes.

The Ducks didn't convert any of those stops into points, but it's difficult to quantify how much they meant to Oregon's defensive confidence and how much they went toward Ohio State's total team frustration. Suffice it to say, offensive conversions by the Buckeyes on any of the three fourth-down situations might have altered the outcome of the game, and we wouldn't be asking the difficult questions about the OSU defense that we probably should have been asking all along.

By my count, Ohio State has at least 30 defensive players on its roster who were four-star recruits coming out of high school. Sevyn Banks, Cameron Brown, Haskell Garrett were all four stars. So were Cody Simon, Marcus Williamson, Teradja Mitchell and Javontae Jean-Baptiste. Tommy Eichenberg, Tyreke Smith, Denzel Burke, Josh Proctor, Ryan Watts – yep, all four stars. The same with Dallas Gant, K'Vaughan Pope and Kourt Williams. Heck, Zach Harrison and J.T. Tuimoloau were rated five-star prospects as was Jack Sawyer, who has mysteriously disappeared after a dominating performance in the spring game.

That's an awful lot of potential star power for the kind of performance the Buckeyes have displayed during the first two games of the 2021 season.

For starters, the Buckeyes have been alley-rolled by Minnesota and Oregon in terms of the running game. On the heels of Mohamed Ibrahim's 163-yard effort in the opener (achieved in only three quarters before Ibrahim's right Achilles gave out on him), C.J. Verdell rushed for 161 yards in game two.

That marks the first time in program history the Buckeyes have allowed individual opponents to rush for 160 or more yards in the first two games of a season. Heck, since the 2014 national championship season, two is the most 100-yard efforts the OSU defense has allowed over the course of an entire season.

But that's only scratching the surface. After two games, this year's defensive unit is on an alarming pace that should give Day pause and make Coombs very nervous.

The 2018 defense is generally considered one of the most porous in program history. It gave up the most total yards, most yards per

game, most rushing touchdowns and most rushing yards per carry, and this year's unit is on pace to obliterate those marks.

The Buckeyes have already surrendered 913 total yards in two games, an average of 456.5 yards allowed per game. The opponent record set in 2018 is 403.4.

This year's defense is giving up an average of 33.0 points per game. That figure was 25.5 in 2018 and 25.8 last season, the top two opponent averages in history. Likewise, yards-per-play averages are on the incline – 5.8 in 2018, 5.9 last year and 6.2 so far this season. Again, that would be a program record.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

And if you'd like to duck and run for complete cover, Ohio State opponents are averaging three rushing touchdowns per game. That puts the Buckeyes on pace to give up 42 TDs on the ground over a 14-game season. The program record is 26.

If you think you're sensing a trend, you're not alone.

Naturally, one would have to assume those alarming numbers are not going to continue. Over the next month, the Buckeyes will face Tulsa, Akron, Maryland and Rutgers, and if they don't run that four-game table, no one will be talking about Oregon anymore.

Still, there's an uneasiness surrounding the Buckeyes, particularly on the defensive side of the ball – an uneasiness that permeates from a coaching staff that doesn't completely acknowledge there is a problem.

Day definitely acknowledges it, and his somewhat heated sideline discussion with Coombs during the Oregon game might signify an underlying problem. After the game, while the head coach was expressing his dismay with a particular defensive alignment the Ducks exploited several times to their advantage, the defensive coordinator continued to defend his scheme.

"I think that the defensive structure that has been in place is a successful one and one that a lot of folks are really comfortable with," Coombs said. "We have to execute, we have to prepare, we have to have our kids in the right places to make the right plays. (But) I love the scheme, I love the players. I don't take this lightly. I can assure you, we will get better."

That might have been the best defense of anything Ohio State displayed all afternoon. Unfortunately, it seemed to equal what was seen on the field – at least in terms of futility.

Stroud Vs. Stroud

Despite throwing for 778 yards in his first two starts, more than any Ohio State quarterback in history after only two games, Stroud seems to remain uncomfortable at the controls of the OSU offense.

Perhaps we have indeed been spoiled these last few years with more-polished quarterbacks such as Justin Fields and Dwayne Haskins. Perhaps Stroud, who admitted to a sore shoulder in the wake of the Minnesota game, is banged up a little bit more than anyone is willing to reveal.

Whatever it is, the redshirt freshman just seems to be at odds with himself. Rather than allowing his natural talent to take over, Stroud appears to be overthinking things, perhaps trying to do too much within the structure of an offense simplified for a first-year starter.

I realize Day and his offensive staff want Stroud to be a classic, pro-style pocket pass-

er, but he showed enough mobility last year to run for a 48-yard touchdown against Michigan State. He seems reluctant to tuck the ball and run when his receivers cannot get separation – even when the field seems to be wide open in front of him. That occurred a couple of times against Oregon, and Stroud took advantage of the situation only once for a 15-yard gain. His other two rushing attempts – minus two sacks – were worth exactly 2 yards.

There are also times when Stroud underscores the fact that he remains a redshirt freshman and first-year starter. When he threw a midrange pass with just one second left in the first half rather than heaving something toward the end zone, it was reminiscent of when Mike Tomczak lost track of downs and clocked the ball on fourth down near the end of a 28-23 loss to Purdue in 1984.

Additionally, Stroud appears to lock on his primary receiver and stare him down. That is something more veteran defenders will make him pay for later in the season if he doesn't learn to look off his primary target once in a while.

But the thing that is perhaps most troubling is that Stroud seems to be struggling with his confidence. Perhaps he still thinks he has to look over his shoulder, wondering if his next mistake will bring Kyle McCord, Jack Miller or even Quinn Ewers into the game. But a quarterback lacking in confidence cannot lead, and any quarterback at any level has to have leadership skills if his team is to be successful.

At some point in each of the first two games, according to Stroud's own account, teammates have gone to him to buoy his spirits and keep his focus on the task at hand. I realize it's difficult for a redshirt freshman to push himself to the fore as a team leader. But there's more to the quarterback job at Ohio State than just learning the playbook and throwing the ball around on Saturday afternoon.

Stroud can be everything the Buckeyes need in a winning quarterback. He simply needs to trust himself.

And Finally

I wrote in this very space just one issue ago that Stroud's 294 passing yards against Minnesota marked only the eighth time an Ohio State QB has thrown for at least 200 yards in his first start. The number is actually nine.

How could I have forgotten Kenny Guiton's performance during the 2013 game at Cal? Subbing for an injured Braxton Miller, Guiton threw for 290 yards and four touchdowns during a 52-34 win against the Bears.

The following week, Guiton got another start and equaled OSU's single-game record with six touchdown passes during a 76-0 blow-out of Florida A&M. Guiton was back to second-team status for much of the remainder of the 2013 season, but he still wound up throwing for 749 yards and 14 TDs.

Undrafted by the NFL, Guiton had a brief tryout with the Buffalo Bills in mini-camp in 2014 but failed to make the Bills' roster. After that, he went into coaching and began as a graduate assistant on Tom Herman's staff at Houston. Guiton followed Herman to Texas, where he served as offensive quality control assistant in charge of receivers.

Guiton has also served as an assistant at Stephen F. Austin and Louisiana Tech, and since 2020 he has been wide receivers coach at Arkansas for head coach Sam Pittman.

Guiton's receivers combined for 14 catches and 138 yards in a 40-21 win against Texas on Sept. 11, the Razorbacks' first home win against their old Southwest Conference rivals since 1981. Arkansas is off to its first 2-0 start to a season since 2016.

OHIO STATE

INSIDER

Buckeyes Plummet In National Rankings

After its 35-28 defeat at the hands of Oregon on Sept. 11, Ohio State took a tumble in both major college football polls, falling to No. 9 in The Associated Press media poll and No. 11 in the coaches' poll. The Buckeyes entered the matchup with the Ducks as the nation's No. 3 team in both national rankings.

The AP has Ohio State barely inside the top 10 as one of two teams with a loss in the upper echelon. The other is No. 6 Clemson, which lost to second-ranked Georgia in week one. Alabama leads both polls, followed by the Bulldogs, Oklahoma and Georgia as a consensus top four.

Iowa cracks the top five in the AP listing, while Texas A&M is fifth in the eyes of the coaches.

Each poll has Clemson at sixth, swapping the Hawkeyes (seventh in the coaches' poll) and Aggies (seventh in the AP poll) behind them. Cincinnati is unanimous at No. 8, and Penn State rounds out the AP's top 10, behind the ninth-ranked Buckeyes while Florida and Notre Dame round out the coaches' selections.

The AP poll places five Big Ten programs within its top 25. In addition to the top-10 trio, Wisconsin is at No. 18 and new arrival Michigan appears at No. 25 after a blowout victory against Washington.

The same five crack the coaches' poll but with Iowa alone as a top-10 team. Af-

ter Ohio State at No. 11, Penn State sits at No. 12, Wisconsin at No. 17 and Michigan at No. 25.

Michigan State, Indiana and Maryland received votes in both polls, and Rutgers earned a few votes among the coaches as well.

Oregon's leap from No. 12 to No. 4 is the most significant rise in the AP selections, while Ohio State's six-spot drop is the largest of any team that remained within the top 25. Oregon led the big movers in the coaches' poll as well, moving up seven spots, while Ohio State's eight-spot drop was again the largest – though No. 14 USC and No. 15 Texas dropped out of the rankings entirely. The Trojans lost a 42-28 decision to Pac-12 rival Stanford, and the Longhorns were victims of a 40-21 rout at Arkansas.

Day, Kelly Relationship Continues To Flourish

Six degrees of separation is the concept that the world is so small that all people, on average, are only six (or fewer) social connections away from one another. That concept is especially true in the world of college football coaching where an assistant takes his head coach's philosophy, tinkers with it, makes it his own and then tailors it to fit his own system.

Ryan Day didn't need six degrees of separation to become successful in his first stint as a head coach. He needed only one – mentorship from longtime offensive innovator Chip Kelly, who coached Day as offensive coordinator at New Hampshire and then hired him as an assistant on his NFL staffs at Philadelphia and San Francisco.

The third-year Ohio State head coach readily admits his philosophies on the game have been influenced by Kelly, who is currently in the fourth season of rebuilding the program at UCLA.

"He's meant a lot to me – as much or more than anyone else in terms of my career," Day told reporters Sept. 7. "He's very, very close to me. We talk all the time. His summer home is right across the



FILE PHOTO

TALKING IT OVER — Current Ohio State head coach Ryan Day, like his predecessor Urban Meyer, has made no secret he has borrowed a lot of his offensive philosophy from former Oregon and current UCLA head coach Chip Kelly (left, talking with Meyer before a game).

street from mine, his wife and mine are very, very close, so we've always stayed very, very close. We share thoughts and ideas on just about everything – not just football. He's obviously been a huge mentor for me and a very close friend."

While at New Hampshire, Day flour-

ished in Kelly's innovative offense, setting a host of career records including completion percentage and touchdowns. Day continued his relationship with Kelly when longtime New Hampshire head coach Sean McDonnell gave him his first coaching job in 2002 as tight ends coach for the Wildcats. Kelly was still UNH's offensive coordinator and remained in that capacity until leaving in 2008 for a similar position at Oregon.

Meanwhile, Day left his alma mater after only one season, eventually winding up at Florida in 2005 as a graduate assistant on Urban Meyer's staff. They quickly discovered they had something in common – affinity for Kelly's offensive scheme as well as his innovative approach to the game and running a program.

It's a well-known story that Kelly allowed Meyer to hang around the Oregon football facility during the latter's 2011 hiatus from coaching. Then, when Meyer took the Ohio State job, many of Kelly's innovations – including the tracking of sleep patterns, nutrition and heart rates of players – made their way to Columbus.

Meyer also lured Day away from Kelly's staff in San Francisco after the 2016 season, installing the then 38-year-old as quarterbacks coach and co-offensive coordinator. Since 2017, Ohio State quarterbacks have thrown for 14,857 yards and 156 touchdowns – and counting.

Day typically deflects any praise for that kind of success, insisting his philosophy came almost totally from Kelly.

Complete Issue Of BSB Posted Immediately Upon Mailing

With the Ohio State football season under way, Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers are beginning to get a sense of when their BSB will be delivered each week. For those of you who are having problems with your mail delivery, here is a reminder that the complete print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted on the BuckeyeSports.com website at the same time as the paper is mailed. This is a free service to all print subscribers, as is all the other content provided at the site.

BuckeyeSports.com offers immediate coverage of each game posted at BuckeyeSports.com as well as discussion of the game at our Forum, including the "Official Game Thread," with real-time comments from BSB staff members and readers throughout the game. Also watch for the popular Staff Predictions before each game.

The BSB staff provides daily posts on any and all Ohio State sports news, including the latest in football recruiting as well as presenting reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Additionally, staff members man the BuckeyeSports.com Forum, interacting with subscribers on the hot topics of the day.

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

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

As mentioned, readers who have been experiencing postal delivery problems can read the complete edition of each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin online at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at the usual time.

Readers with delivery problems might also consider upgrading their existing subscriptions to first-class mail in an envelope. Subscribers can upgrade to first class through the end of the football regular season for \$24 and through the traditional recruiting season for \$34. Call (614) 486-2202 to order immediately by credit card or send your check or credit card information to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com or your mail service, feel free to call us at the above number.

2021 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 2	at Minnesota	W, 45-31	Fox	1-1, 31-26 win over Miami (OH)
Sept. 11	OREGON*	L, 35-28	Fox	2-0, 35-28 win over Ohio State
Sept. 18	TULSA*	3:30 p.m.	FS1	0-2, 28-23 loss to Oklahoma State
Sept. 25	AKRON	TBA	TBA	0-2, 45-24 loss to Temple
Oct. 2	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	2-0, 17-7 win over Syracuse
Oct. 9	MARYLAND	Noon	TBA	2-0, 62-0 win over Howard
Oct. 23	at Indiana*	TBA	TBA	1-1, 56-14 win over Idaho
Oct. 30	PENN STATE	TBA	TBA	2-0, 44-13 win over Ball State
Nov. 6	at Nebraska	TBA	TBA	2-1, 28-3 win over Buffalo
Nov. 13	PURDUE	TBA	TBA	2-0, 49-0 win over UConn
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN STATE	TBA	TBA	2-0, 42-14 win over Youngstown St.
Nov. 27	at Michigan	Noon	Fox	2-0, 31-10 win over Washington
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	Fox	

* – 2020 bowl team ** – at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

“He has a great football mind,” Day said. “And it isn’t just about being a spread guy. He can do it with a variety of personnel and figure out a way to attack you. He’s had success at all levels. He just loves football, and it’s great to see him building the program back up at UCLA. I think he walked into a very difficult situation there, and he’s had to have a lot of patience the last couple of years in building it the right way. I think now things are going well for him. They’re going to have a bright future there because he’s one of the best football coaches in the country.”

“What he did at Oregon was unbelievable. He had a lot of success in the NFL, too, at times. Certainly at the end, it wasn’t as successful as he would have liked, but now you can see it going again. Nothing’s changed with him. He’s still a great coach.”

Gaoteote Awarded Immediate Eligibility

After several months of waiting, the NCAA approved former USC linebacker Palaie Gaoteote’s waiver for immediate

eligibility one day before the Buckeyes hosted Oregon.

Just the day before, Day said Gaoteote’s request had been denied. However, NCAA and university spokesperson Michelle Brutlag Hosick confirmed later that same day to The Columbus Dispatch that Gaoteote had indeed earned approval.

Day’s confusion came from a miscommunication between the NCAA and Ohio State. What Day presumed to be a denied request, the organization clarified as a non-decision. The NCAA had not rejected the petition but declined to give a timetable for its decision. That decision came only a few hours later.

Gaoteote was a five-star recruit in 2018 who played in three injury-plagued seasons at USC. He started in 14 games and played in 20 before he decided to transfer to Ohio State in June. Gaoteote practiced with the Buckeyes throughout fall camp but had not taken first-team reps because of his uncertain future.

Once he was declared eligible, OSU wasted no time getting him on the field as Gaoteote made his scarlet and gray de-

but against Oregon. He was not credited with a tackle.

Commemorative Decals Mark 9-11 Anniversary

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. The attacks claimed 3,000 lives, caused more than 25,000 injuries as well as countless long-term health problems, and were responsible for more than \$10 billion in property damage.

As with nearly every other undertaking – big and small – throughout the country, college football put its 2001 season on hold in the wake of the attacks. Ohio State’s scheduled game four days later at UCLA was postponed for a week, and when the Buckeyes eventually flew to Los Angeles, there was still a sense of uncertainty. OSU wound up losing that game, 13-6, the first defeat for Jim Tressel in his first season as head coach of the Buckeyes.

Before this year, Ohio State had played twice on Sept. 11 since the attacks – wins against Marshall in 2004 and Miami (Fla.) in 2010 – and wore commemorative helmet decals during each of those games. The Buckeyes attached similar decals to their helmets for the game against Oregon.

Twenty years ago on Sept. 11, a young University of New Hampshire junior was preparing for a Tuesday morning class when he heard the news of an airplane hitting one of the World Trade Center towers.

“I believe it was like 9 a.m. or 9:30, and all of a sudden, it came on the TV screen,” Day said. “I didn’t end up going to class because we couldn’t believe what we were seeing. I remember calling home, and for a few days after that, not feeling safe.”

“They canceled our game that week, and I remember going out to practice and not being sure what to do. We had a player on our team that lost a family member, so it was very, very real being in the Northeast.”

New Hampshire had gotten off to a 2-0 start in 2001 and was scheduled for a week-three game at Dartmouth. That contest was canceled and rescheduled for Sept. 22. The Wildcats took a 42-38 victory to move their record to 3-0 for the season but lost seven of their last eight to finish 4-7 under McDonnell.

“That doesn’t seem that long ago to me,” Day said. “Being from the Northeast, it was obviously a very difficult time, and this year being the 20th anniversary,

it brings back a lot of memories.”

Stroud Named B1G Freshman Of Week

After his first start in scarlet and gray, Ohio State redshirt freshman quarterback C.J. Stroud was named Big Ten Freshman of the Week. Michigan State running back Kenneth Walker III was named the Offensive Player of the Week, Iowa defensive back Riley Moss was picked as the Defensive Player of the Week, and Penn State punter/kicker Jordan Stout was tabbed as the Specialist of the Week.

It wasn’t always smooth sailing for Stroud during his career-opening start. He went just 8 of 14 for 58 yards and an interception in the first half against Minnesota, and Ohio State went to the locker room trailing 14-10. He cited early nerves as his primary issue after the game.

“First-game jitters,” Stroud said. “I mean, they’re a great team. Minnesota’s a great defense. Thank God I have great teammates. They encouraged me. So that’s kind of what happened in the second half.”

The Buckeyes kept going to their young quarterback, and Stroud delivered in the second half. He connected on just five passes, but four of them went for touchdowns – two to Chris Olave and one each to Garrett Wilson and TreVeyon Henderson. He finished his afternoon with 13 completions in 22 attempts for 294 yards, four scores and just the one interception.

Ohio State hadn’t had a Big Ten Freshman of the Week since the second week of the 2018 season when quarterback Tate Martell won the award after a perfect 10-of-10 showing for 121 yards and a score while rushing for 95 yards and another touchdown during a 52-3 win against Rutgers.

Young Secondary Inspires Confidence

The Ohio State secondary raised some questions for Ryan Day before the Buckeyes faced the Gophers in the season-opening game. Without injured cornerbacks Sevn Banks and Cameron Brown, OSU relied on a few individuals who hadn’t seen a lot of playing time.


Leading the way in that bunch was true freshman cornerback Denzel Burke, who earned the starting nod in the top cornerback spot and played well. He drew a pass-interference penalty early but found his flow as the game went on and put in a strong second half.

Continued On Page 6




FILE PHOTO

FINALLY ELIGIBLE — USC transfer linebacker Palaie Gaoteote was finally granted his eligibility at Ohio State on Sept. 10, one day before the Buckeyes took on Oregon at Ohio Stadium. Gaoteote was a five-star recruit in 2018.



THE
CASE BOWEN
COMPANY

Robert Bowen



James Case



**COMMERCIAL & ASSOCIATION
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**
Brokerage Services | Sales | Leasing

www.CaseBowen.com | 614.799.9800
6255 Corporate Center Drive | Dublin, OH

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

"Talk about getting thrown to the fire," Day said of Burke. "He's competed since he's got here and he deserved to start. He's got to continue to grow. If he can learn from those mistakes, he'll have a chance to be a very good player."

Redshirt freshmen Ryan Watts and Lejond Cavazos saw action at cornerback as well in place of the injured veterans, while bullets Ronnie Hickman and Craig Young as well as safety Bryson Shaw provided depth.

Still, Day wasn't completely satisfied with his new group, which committed its fair share of penalties down the field and struggled against Minnesota's short passing game.

"I thought they competed. But were there mistakes? Absolutely," Day said. "Overall, there were some really good things. It certainly wasn't perfect. A lot of improvement needs to be made, and that has to happen."

Coombs Addresses Defensive Rotation

Ohio State trotted out 24 different players to populate its 11 defensive slots throughout the 45-31 season-opening win against Minnesota. For an early-season tune-up game against a weaker non-conference opponent, that number might have been low as the Buckeyes work to see what they have on the second- and third-team levels.

The opener against a veteran Minnesota team, however, was not that. The Buckeyes were seriously challenged in Minneapolis, pushed hard by a physical offense and held to just 10 points of their own in the first half. They didn't find real security in a lead until the fourth quarter when Henderson slashed through the Gophers secondary for a 70-yard touchdown.

The defensive lineup did little to reflect that, though, especially in the first half. Without Banks or Brown, Ohio State had a real excuse for experimentation at the spot, but curiously, that was one of the tightest positions on the field – just four players saw snaps on the outside.

The real study was elsewhere, at linebacker for example, which saw five players contribute to a position that placed just two or three players on the field every play at the maximum. The defensive line also experienced heavy rotation, but position coach Larry Johnson always likes to play a lot of linemen.

Ohio State's conclusion? As defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs told it, the results were mixed.



FILE PHOTO

MISS YOU — The Ohio State secondary has been dealing with injuries to a couple of starters already this season, including cornerback Sevyn Banks (12), shown here in action during the 2019 season.

"I think that after a game, self-evaluation is the first thing you do," Coombs said. "What could you have done better? And we have a laundry list of things we need to do better and improve on. I would like to think that in critical moments, we handled some things really well."

"I would really like to compliment our staff because we got some looks and formations we had not seen and they did a phenomenal job of coming up with answers and communicating that with the players. Really, Larry (Johnson), Matt (Barnes) and Al (Washington) did a really, really good job with that."

However, Ohio State made it clear that its intentions are not to always have a

defense quite so flexible in its personnel.

"They would go from 11 personnel to like 13 with an extra tackle in the game," Day explained. "And so to make that big of a jump from 11 to 12 to 13, we wanted to match personnel in that game because we felt like based on their style of play, that was really important."

"So, kind of what you saw in that game, it looked like a New York sidewalk at times. Guys are coming in, guys are coming out. And I thought they could have given us a little bit more time to sub. It seemed a little rushed at times. But that was unique to that game."

Any disagreements from Coombs, who was promoted to the lone-DC position in



Reynolds Travel "On the Road Again" for 2021 Ohio State Football Away Games

Reynolds Travel is once again offering packages to all 2021 Ohio State Away Football Games and a Bengals vs. Packers Same Day trip and hope you can join us for another great football season. Here is a listing but full details are available on our website at www.reynoldstravel.com.

OSU vs. Rutgers-Sept. 30-Oct. 3- 3-night motorcoach trip to New York/Piscataway, N.J. with 3 nights accommodations in the heart of Manhattan at the Sheraton Times Square with breakfast daily, Tour of New York, game tickets in Ohio State section with transportation. Also offering land only package from Thurs, Sept. 30-Sun., Oct. 3 with 3 nights at the Sheraton Times Square with breakfast daily, airport transportation roundtrip, tour of the New York, game ticket and transportation.

OSU vs. Indiana- Oct. 22-24- 2-night motorcoach to French Lick, Indiana with accommodations at the French Lick Resort with visit to a horse farm in Kentucky and lunch at Churchill Downs enroute, game day roundtrip transportation from French Lick and game ticket in Ohio State section.

OSU vs. Nebraska-Nov 4-7 - 5-night motorcoach trip with 1 overnight in each direction with accommodation for 1 night at Jumer's Rock Island Hotel and Casino in Rock Island, Illinois and 3 nights at the Embassy Suites in Omaha, Nebraska with breakfast

daily and city tour of Lincoln, game tickets in Ohio State section with transportation and 1 night on return at the Pair of Dice Hotel and Casino in East Peoria, Illinois on the return. Also offering air package or land only package from Thursday, Nov. 4-Sunday, Nov. 7 at the Embassy Suites in Omaha with breakfast daily, game tickets in Ohio State section with transportation and city tour of Lincoln. Air packages on Southwest Airlines roundtrip from/to Columbus to/from Omaha, Nebraska.

OSU vs. Michigan-"Big Game in the Big House"- Nov. 26-27- 1 night motorcoach trip with accommodations for Friday night at the MGM Resort and Casino in downtown Detroit including breakfast on Saturday and game tickets in Ohio State section at Michigan Stadium with return to Columbus when the game is over.

NFL Game- Cincinnati Bengals vs. Green Bay Packers-Oct. 10- Same day trip to Cincinnati by deluxe motorcoach to see the Bengals vs. Packers at the Bengals Stadium in Cincinnati. Game tickets are in Section 201 which is corner end-zone.

Trips fully escorted by Reynolds Travel, offering Ohio State trips since 1978.
Visit our website at www.reynoldstravel.com to see more.



8934 Commerce Loop Dr.
Columbus, OH 43240
Phone: 614-847-8008
Toll Free: 866-880-0577

FOOTBALL SEASON IS HERE.

WHEN IT COMES TO FOOTBALL WE AIN'T PLAYIN'.

SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND HELLO TO DRINKS, APPS AND GAMES RIGHT HERE AT THE BUCKET.

JOIN US AT ONE OF OUR 10 COLUMBUS LOCATIONS OR ORDER GAME-DAY GRUB TO-GO AT MYRUSTYBUCKET.COM

the spring? Certainly not right now.

"Well, first of all, he's the head coach, so of course I agree with him," Coombs said with a smile. "But I would tell you absolutely (that is the plan). We are still finding our way. We're still figuring out exactly who are the best players and what the best combinations are in situations. And so the only way to do that is to get some game experience. And so we played a lot of guys, guys who deserved to play."

25 Buckeyes Named Champions Vs. Gophers

More than two dozen players made the champions list following Ohio State's season-opening win against Minnesota.

Defensive lineman Zach Harrison earned the defensive player of the game award for his strip sack of Minnesota quarterback Tanner Morgan, which led to a touchdown from defensive tackle Haskell Garrett. After the ball slipped from Morgan's hands, it bounced off a Minnesota player and right into Garrett's hands. The preseason All-American did the rest and returned the fumble 32 yards for a score.

The coaching staff also awarded wide receiver Chris Olave and running back Miyan Williams with offensive player of the game honors. Olave caught four passes for 117 yards and two touchdowns while Williams carried the ball nine times for 125 yards and a score, including a 71-yard touchdown run in the first quarter.

Offensive champions were TE Jeremy Ruckert, WR Jaxon Smith-Njigba, OL Nicholas Petit-Frere, OL Dawand Jones, OL Luke Wypler, OL Thayer Munford and OL Paris Johnson Jr., while defensive champions were DE Javontae Jean-Baptiste, DT Antwan Jackson, DT Garrett, DT Taron Vincent, CB Denzel Burke, SAF Josh Proctor, SAF Ronnie Hickman, SAF Bryson Shaw, LB Cody Simon, LB Tommy Eichenberg and LB Teradja Mitchell

The special teams player of the game

Attention Reds Fans

Will the Cincinnati Reds make it to the playoffs? You can read about the stretch run and much more in our sister publication, Reds Report.

As noted in The View From 15th And High last issue, readers who act now can receive a year of Reds Report, regularly \$44.95, for just \$19.95. As a bonus, we'll give you a chance to see the playoff drive for yourself with four free tickets to either the game with the Dodgers on Sept. 19, the Pirates on Sept. 21 or the Nationals on Sept. 26.

Just call (614) 486-2202 or write BSB at P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 and ask for the Reds Report "15th and High Special." Hurry to make sure you get tickets to the game of your choice. This offer is only good while ticket supplies last.



FILE PHOTO

DEFENSIVE CHAMPION — OSU defensive end Zach Harrison reaches for the football against Minnesota QB Tanner Morgan in the Buckeyes' 45-31 win at Minnesota. Harrison's strip sack on the play was a turning point in the game and earned him defensive player of the game honors from the Ohio State coaching staff.

was tight end Mitch Rossi, and scout team players of the week were TE Corey Rau, CB Jordan Hancock and LB Jackson Kuwatch.

Former QB, Assistant Mummey Dies At 80

John Mummey, who played fullback and quarterback for Woody Hayes at Ohio State in the early 1960s and then joined Hayes' coaching staff after graduation, died Sept. 6 at his home in Fairport Harbor, Ohio. He was 80.

Mummey was a native of Painesville, Ohio, and was an All-Ohio halfback at Harvey High School in his hometown. He began his college career at Ohio State as a fullback in 1960 but moved to quarterback in 1961 and helped the Buckeyes win the national championship that season. Mummey was the team's "running" QB, rotating in and out of the quarterback position with Bill Mrukowski and Joe Sparma. Mummey, who finished his college career with 775 yards rushing and four touchdowns, averaged 5.7 yards per carry in 1961 and 5.6 yards in 1962.

Following graduation, Mummey became a graduate assistant on Hayes' staff in 1963 before embarking upon a teaching career that included high school coaching. He returned to Columbus in 1969 as OSU freshman coach. When freshmen became eligible in 1972, Mummey was placed in charge of receivers and tight ends as well as the team's conditioning program.

Mummey was also instrumental in recruiting and made inroads in California.

After leaving OSU following the 1976 season, he worked for several years in business and then became a middle school teacher in Kettering and West Carrollton before retiring in 2002 to Fairport

Harbor, located about 30 miles northeast of Cleveland.

Rose Bowl Nemesis Cunningham Dies

Former USC fullback Sam "Bam" Cunningham, who scored four touchdowns against Ohio State during his team's 42-17 victory in the 1973 Rose Bowl, has died. He was 71.

Cunningham, who was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1992, is widely recognized for helping speed up the process of integration in football programs across the South. Cun-

ningham, then a sophomore, ran for 135 yards and two touchdowns when USC beat an all-white Alabama team, 42-21, to open the 1970 season. That performance, coupled with those of his African-American teammates, was pivotal in Alabama head coach Bear Bryant's decision to begin recruiting black players.

"What they saw was the future," Cunningham told ESPN in 2016. "Their team was eventually going to be integrated."

In 1971, Alabama had black players on scholarship for the first time and

Continued On Page 8

MI MEXICO
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

4775 East Main Street, Columbus, OH 43213 • (614) 577-0143



AUTHENTIC Mexican Food

Mon. 11am - 11pm
Tues. - Sat. 11am - 10pm
Sun. 11am - 9pm

4775 East Main Street, Columbus, OH 43213 • (614) 577-0143

Every football Saturday, come in and enjoy margaritas & bottled beers at half price.

Try our new Jumbo Sangria Margarita!

www.MiMexicoColumbus.com

THURSDAY • 1/2 PRICE MARGARITAS & BEER • 3-9 pm

\$10 OFF
Any Food Order
of \$50 or more

Dine in only.
Not valid with any other coupon.
Not valid on Thursdays.

\$5 OFF
Any Food Order
of \$25 or more

Dine in only.
Not valid with any other coupon.
Not valid on Thursdays.

50% OFF
Buy 1 entree at the regular price, get 2nd entree (equal or lesser value) for 50% off

Dine in only.
Not valid with any other coupon.
Not valid on Thursdays.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 7

played for the national title. The Crimson Tide lost a 38-6 decision to Nebraska in the Orange Bowl, but the decade became a standout era for Bryant and Alabama as they went on to win three national championships.

Longtime coach Jerry Claiborne, who played for Bryant at Kentucky and later coached with him at Alabama, once said, "Sam Cunningham did more to integrate Alabama in 60 minutes than Martin Luther King did in 20 years."

Cunningham capped his college career with a virtuoso performance in the 1973 Rose Bowl against the Buckeyes. He scored four second-half touchdowns, often by propelling himself into the air and over the goal line. The Trojans broke open what had been a 7-7 tie at halftime. Cunningham scored three times from the 1 and once from the 2.

"It became a bit of a legend with Sam going over the top of an offensive line,"

Podcast Dissects Oregon Defeat

With Ohio State into its 2021 season, the Buckeye Sports Bulletin podcast is back to its twice-weekly football season publishing schedule, posting preview and recap shows each week of the regular season.

The BSB podcast, hosted by associate editors Wyatt Crosher and Patrick Mayhorn covers each game from every angle, releasing a full game preview on the Friday morning before the game and an in-depth recap on each Monday morning.

former USC teammate Lynn Swann said. "Nobody could stop him."

Cunningham was selected No. 11 overall in the 1973 NFL draft by the New England Patriots and went on to play nine seasons for the team, becoming the franchise's all-time leading rusher. He was a Pro Bowl selection in 1978, when the Patriots set an NFL team record with 3,165 rushing yards. The mark stood until 2019, when it was broken by the Baltimore Ravens.

Cunningham finished his NFL career with 5,453 yards rushing and 49 touchdowns before retiring after the 1982 season. In addition to the College Football Hall of Fame, he was inducted into the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame (1992), USC Athletics Hall of Fame (2001) and Patri-

The show is free for everyone. To find it, 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 and anywhere else that podcasts are found. For those of you that are new to the podcast world, the show is also posted at 10 a.m. every Friday and Monday on BuckeyeSports.com, as well as in the BSB Fan Forum.

ots Hall of Fame (2010).

After his playing career, Cunningham, the brother of former NFL quarterback Randall Cunningham, worked as a landscape contractor in California.

Do You Need A BSB First-Class Upgrade?

By now, you have had a couple of

chances to see how your mail delivery of Buckeye Sports Bulletin looks to be this football season. If delivery has not been timely, we strongly suggest upgrading to first-class mail in an envelope for football season for just \$24. You can upgrade through the traditional recruiting season for \$34. We especially recommend the upgrades for BSB readers living outside Ohio.

Give us a call at (614) 486-2202 to upgrade immediately with a credit card or send your check, money order or credit card information to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Be sure to mention either the "football" or "recruiting" upgrade.

Chase Brown, Wyatt Crosher, Patrick Mayhorn and Mark Rea contributed to this report. For up-to-the-minute Ohio State coverage, be sure to check out BSB online at BuckeyeSports.com and on Twitter @Buckeye_Sports.

Brutus Level VIPs To Be Recognized

If you have wanted to show your support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program but are unable to participate at the Scarlet or Elite level, now is the time to sign up at the Brutus level for just \$50. Brutus level VIPs are recognized in BSB twice a year, and we will be running the complete list of Brutus VIPs in the next several weeks. VIP donors help Buckeye Sports Bulletin stay alive and vibrant.

"We want to thank the many BSB readers who have stepped up and shown their support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "It is a true vote of confidence in what we are doing now, what we have done the previous 40 years, and what we plan to do in the future."

A VIP upgrade can easily pay for itself each year with special VIP discounts and perks.

VIP subscribers enjoy a 20-percent discount at Conrads College Gifts at Easton. VIP subscribers also enjoy a 5-percent discount on any Ohio State football trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers receive a certificate good for \$10 off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint," as well as a card good for \$10 off your next food purchase at Rusty Bucket, the popular neighborhood hangout.

As mentioned, with the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in two different issues annually as supporters of BSB.

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

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

The following are our Elite Wachsman, Elite and Scarlet VIP subscribers. Brutus level VIPs will have their names listed at a later date.

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

Elite Donors: Marshall Beck, Sarasota, Fla.; B2, Reston, Va.; Phillip Blue, Prior Lake, Minn.; Fredrick Bradshaw, Columbus; In memory of Norwin Brovitz, Oakmont, Pa.; Brian Bucher, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; Richard Dunkelberger, Groveport, Ohio; Thomas E. Farish, Port St. Lucie, Fla.; Fred Fingerhut, Phoenix; Sander Flaum, New York; Chalk Fry DDS, Sarasota, Fla.; Laura Granich, Columbus; Paul E. Hackett, The Villages, Fla.; James Hamilton, Murrysville, Pa.; Curtis High, Beavercreek, Ohio; Freddie & Joe Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Carl R. Jeffery DDS, Van Wert, Ohio; Bill Judy, Dublin, Ohio; Frank Klaus, Pepper Pike, Ohio; Fred Krisch, Cleveland; Paul Lappert, Columbus; Larry Larson, Ladera Ranch, Calif.; Dan Laville, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Dr. Jonathan Lucas, Portsmouth, Ohio; Col. George R. Nelson, New Albany, Ohio; OSU65Bob, Mishawaka, Ind.; Jim Reichler, Crestone, Colo.; The Russell Group United, Columbus; Charlie Shaffer, Edison, Ohio; Bill Short, Sparta, Ohio; Mark Skinner, Columbus; James Thomas, The Villages, Fla.; Chuck Underwood, Miamisburg, Ohio; Dan van Blaricom, Dublin, Ohio; Beth Wachsman, Columbus; Elliott S. Wettstein, Waverly, Ohio; David J. Young, Supply, N.C.; Anonymous, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Anonymous, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Lancaster, Ohio; Anonymous, Lewisburg, W.Va.

Scarlet VIPs: Anthony Ananthanarayanan, Rochester, Mich.; Greg Brooks, Gahanna, Ohio; Marty Brumbaugh, Troy, Ohio; Dennis Dahm, Sandusky, Ohio; Tom Goila, Cincinnati; Doug Harris, Lima, Ohio; Ed Helal, Ashland, Ohio; Phil Helal, Strongsville, Ohio; Joseph Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Lawrence Romanoff, Powell, Ohio; Jim Shaw, Lake Forest, Calif.; William Torok, Girard, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Peoria, Ill.; Anonymous, Dallas; Anonymous, Norwalk, Ohio.

If things are changing
at your bank, maybe it's
time to *change banks.*

Personal & Business Banking/Lending • Treasury Management
Agribusiness Banking • Financial Planning



PROUD SPONSOR OF OHIO STATE ATHLETICS



HEARTLAND BANK

Visit us online at **Heartland.Bank**

#FeelGoodBanking



Member FDIC

NMLS# 440231

Equal Housing Lender

Reds SEPTEMBER 2021



SEPT. 3-5



FRIDAY // 7:10

- Post-game Fireworks Show, presented by Coca-Cola



SATURDAY // 7:10

- Barry Larkin Dual Bobblehead, presented by TriHealth
First 15,000 fans

SUNDAY // 1:10

- Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Tyler Stephenson Fathead® Kids Giveaway, presented by Raising Cane's
Kids 14 & younger



SEPT. 17-19



FRIDAY // 7:10

- Military Appreciation Night, presented by CareSource
- Post-Game Fireworks Show, presented by Adams Recovery Center

SATURDAY // 2:10

- Reds Can Cooler, presented by Coca-Cola
First 15,000 fans



SUNDAY // 1:10

- Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Eugenio Suárez Fathead® Kids Giveaway, presented by Great Clips
Kids 14 & younger



OKTOBERFEST Ticket Package

Includes a Reds vs. Dodgers ticket and a drink at the game, a commemorative Oktoberfest mug, and a drink at Oktoberfest Zinzinnati!

(item only available with purchase of ticket package)
Available at [reds.com/themes](https://www.reds.com/themes)



SEPT. 20-22



MONDAY // 6:40

TUESDAY // 6:40

WEDNESDAY // 12:35

- Business Day Special!
For only \$20, get your game ticket + \$10 in concession credits!

SEPT. 23-26



THURSDAY // 6:40

- Thirsty Thursday!
For only \$30, get your game ticket + \$10 in concession credits!

FRIDAY // 7:10

- Fiesta Rojos, presented by Toyota



- Post-game Fireworks Show

SATURDAY // 7:10

- Reds Team Photo, presented by Morris Furniture
First 15,000 fans

SUNDAY // 1:10

- Family Sunday, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Joey Votto Fathead® Kids Giveaway, presented by Chick-fil-A
Kids 14 & younger



(513) 381-REDS (7337)



[reds.com/TICKETS](https://www.reds.com/tickets)

*Some restrictions apply. Schedule and promotions subject to change.

Explosive Passing Attack Not Enough To Win

Continued From Page 1

their first two opponents of a season to eclipse the 30-point mark.

Digging even deeper, the OSU defense allowed Oregon to run the ball almost at will. Led by Verdell, who had 161 yards on 20 carries, the Ducks ran for 269 yards on 38 carries. That was an average of 7.08 yards per attempt, the fifth-highest for an opponent in program history.

"Anytime you're in that situation," Day said, "you're asking yourself, 'Is it personnel, is it scheme or is it coaching? If it's scheme, we need to get that fixed. And if it's coaching, we need to do it better. If it's personnel, we have to make some changes.'"

Meanwhile, Coombs defended his scheme while admitting that lack of execution was a main culprit.

"I think that the defensive structure that has been in place is a successful one and one that a lot of folks are really comfortable with," the OSU defensive coordinator said. "We have to execute, we have to prepare, we have to have our kids in the right places to make the right plays."

"I love the scheme. I love the players. I don't take this lightly. I can assure you, we will get better."

As to Day's frustration about getting beaten for touchdowns on the almost exact same play, Coombs again blamed execution rather than the defensive call.

"Those plays where we didn't set the edge were plays in man coverage, and the guy who we were in man coverage against was cracking (back on) the linebacker," he explained. "We have to get off that block and make a play there. I don't want you to hear that and say that we're blaming a player. I take full responsibility for that. That doesn't fall on the player (but) we have to do a better job setting the edge on the defense."

In the end, Coombs said the defensive troubles, no matter what their reason or reasons, were his responsibility.

"That's my job," he said. "We have to play better. And when I say we have to play better,

I'm not blaming our players. The standard for our defense is one of excellence. I have to do a better job. I think our kids played hard, they practiced well, they prepared."

"I'm disappointed. I hate losing with a passion. You don't come to Ohio State to get beat in the Horseshoe. Everything that happens on Saturday that could happen better is going to be my responsibility. We are actively working every series when we come off the field to make adjustments. That's my responsibility. It's frustrating when that doesn't get done."

In the end, it was an obviously disappointed Day who summed up the loss probably the best he could.

"There will be a lot of second-guessing after today," he said. "There always is after a loss. But if we do a better job of executing, there'll be less second-guessing."

Record For Naught

While Oregon was running wild against the Ohio State defense for much of the afternoon, the Buckeyes seemed to struggle with their running game. A week after averaging 7.7 yards per carry against Minnesota, OSU's production was nearly cut in half. The Buckeyes ran for 128 yards on 31 attempts, an average of just 4.1 yards per carry.

"We just seemed a little out of whack today," Day said. "It didn't seem like we got the running game going today, and it kind of threw us off. If we were running the ball better, if we had run the ball better, we wouldn't have needed to throw the ball as much. We want balance. I'm looking at the (stat) sheet, and we had 484 yards passing and 128 rushing. That's not balanced, and when we're out of balance, we're out of whack."

Redshirt freshman quarterback C.J. Stroud was the beneficiary of that "out of whack" offense, establishing new single-game highs for his brief career by completing 31 of 54 attempts for 484 yards and three touchdowns. While the completion total tied for the sixth most in program history, the attempts established a new single-game record while the yardage figure is second only to Dwayne Haskins, who threw for 499 yards against



SONNY BROCKWAY

BIG AFTERNOON — OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud (7), shown here pursued by Oregon defensive end Bradyn Swinson (44), threw 54 times for 484 yards in a losing effort against the Ducks. The attempts established a new single-game program record while the yardage was the second most ever for an Ohio State QB.

Northwestern in the 2018 Big Ten Championship Game.

All of that yardage led to another program record. Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba each eclipsed the 100-yard receiving mark, the first time in Ohio State history the team has had a trio of 100-yard receivers in the same game. Olave had 12 receptions (tied for fourth-most in school history) for 126 yards, Wilson grabbed eight balls for 117 yards and one touchdown, and Smith-Njigba gathered in seven catches for a career-best 145 yards and two scores.

For the second week in a row, Ohio State receivers also showcased their talent for knowing what to do with the football once the catch was made — 167 of Stroud's 484 yards came after the catch.

Stroud admitted to doing all that heavy lifting with a sore shoulder sustained from last week's college debut against Minnesota.

"I had some nicks and bruises off that game," he said. "But I was healthy enough to play. That's all that matters. My receivers did a great job creating separation today. After I got going, I really didn't feel any pain in my shoulder. I'll be all right. I'm good."

Even with his record-setting performance, Stroud still experienced some difficulty while throwing on the run. His lone interception came on his team's next-to-last possession when he was flushed out of the pocket and overthrew Olave along the sideline.

"I just rushed it on my part," Stroud said. "I definitely should have taken a little more time to execute the play. Chris did a great job executing a scramble drill, and I have to put it on him. Simple as that."

Stroud also seemed a little flustered with regard to clock management at the end of the first half.

Trailing 14-7, the Buckeyes got their final possession of the opening half at their own 20 with only 34 seconds remaining. Stroud quickly completed three passes to push all the way to the Oregon 35, but with only 0:01 showing on the clock, rather than go for the end zone, he dropped off a pass in the middle of the field to running back Miyan Williams, who was tackled at the Oregon 18 as time expired.

Another time, Day took responsibility for putting Stroud into a difficult situation. The Buckeyes were faced with a fourth-and-2 at the Oregon 8-yard line in the third quarter, but rather than try to run the ball to make the first down, the OSU head coach called for a pass.

"I felt like we needed to go for it, and they hit us with a zero blitz," Day said. "If we had run the ball a little bit better, we probably would have run it there, but it just didn't feel great at that moment in that spot. I'll take the blame on that one."

"But then they came with it a second time later and we were ready for it. We scored on it. But the first time, they got us and I didn't put C.J. in a great situation there."

With 778 yards already this season, Stroud shattered the OSU record for most passing yardage in the first two games of a season. The mark was set just a year ago by

SHOOT CLAY TARGETS AT BLACK WING SHOOTING CENTER

TRY SOMETHING NEW: TRAP » SKEET » SPORTING CLAYS



3722 MARYSVILLE RD., DELAWARE | WWW.BLACKWINGSC.COM | 740-363-7555

Justin Fields, who threw for 594 yards in the first two games of the 2020 season. Only four other Ohio State QBs have thrown for 500 or more yards in the first two games of any season – Troy Smith (566 in 2006), Haskins (546 in 2018), Justin Zwick (537 in 2004) and Mike Tomczak (507 in 1983).

Meanwhile, Olave and Wilson each eclipsed the 100-yard mark in the same game for the fourth time in their careers, and that established another new Ohio State record. Only one other tandem of receivers in OSU history ever notched three games during their careers in which each had 100 or more receiving yards in the same game. Gary Williams and Doug Donley accomplished the feat in the 1980 Rose Bowl against USC, a 1980 regular-season game against Illinois, and the 1980 Fiesta Bowl against Penn State.

Still, to pile up 612 yards of total offense and convert only twice on fourth down, and come away with zero points on six of 10 trips into Oregon territory is the mark of a potentially explosive offense still trying to establish its identity.

“It was tough going all the way down there and not getting a touchdown,” Smith-Njigba said. “We try to regroup when we get on the sideline, and try to bounce back every drive. But it’s tough.”

Streaks Snapped

The loss ended a couple of lengthy winning streaks for the Buckeyes. It snapped a 23-game home winning streak, the longest by a Big Ten team since Ohio State had a program-record streak of 25 straight home wins from 1972 to 1976.

And it ended OSU’s streak of 22 consecutive regular-season victories. The program record is 28 in a row established from 2005 to 2007.

It was also the first victory for Oregon after nine straight losses to Ohio State, and the importance was not lost on Ducks head coach Mario Cristobal.

“This is an unbelievable venue, a historic place,” Cristobal said. “To even get an opportunity to play at a place like this, you’re grateful. You’re thankful to go out there and play the way that we did. To scrap and get out of tough situations like we did ... it was a big game for Oregon and a big game for the Pac-12.”

It was the second signature win for the Pac-12 in the still-young 2021 season, coming on the heels of UCLA’s 38-27 upset of No. 16 LSU on Sept. 4. The Ducks’ victory was also the Pac-12’s first nonconference road victory against a top-five team since 1990 when unranked Stanford traveled to South Bend and knocked off No. 1 Notre Dame, 36-31.

The way Oregon played was inspired, especially without a pair of defensive stalwarts – injured edge rusher Kayvon Thibodeaux (ankle) and linebacker Justin Flowe (foot), each of whom made the flight from Eugene to Columbus but didn’t play.

“It’s hard to express in words the magnitude of coming out here, down a couple of guys due to injuries, and just playing gritty, gutsy football,” Cristobal said.

“This is one of the hardest places to play in all of college football,” added Oregon offensive lineman Alex Forsyth. “Let’s not sugarcoat it. That was the No. 3 team in the nation that we just beat in their stadium. This was a big win for our program.”

Ohio State and Oregon met for the first time in the 1958 Rose Bowl, a game the Buckeyes won by a 10-7 final score on a 34-yard field goal by Don Sutherin. The most recent meeting took place at the inaugural College Football Playoff Championship Game, played Jan. 12, 2015, in Arlington, Texas. OSU took

Who Is The Greatest Quarterback In Ohio State History?

Options:

J.T. Barrett ____
Justin Fields ____
Joe Germaine ____
Cornelius Greene ____
Dwayne Haskins ____
Bobby Hoying ____
Rex Kern ____
Craig Krenzel ____
Braxton Miller ____
Terrelle Pryor ____
Art Schlichter ____
Troy Smith ____

Instructions:

Number your picks 1-10 (feel free to write in any players we left off the list) and mail this ballot to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212. Lists can also be emailed to bsb@buckeyesports.com or subscribers can vote on the forum at BuckeyeSports.com. Please provide your name, age and any additional comments regarding your ballot. Copies of the ballot are accepted and voters are welcome to attach additional paper if more space for comments is needed.

Comments:

a 42-20 victory in that one to claim the 2014 national championship.

Even with the loss, the Buckeyes are still 61-27-2 all-time against teams currently in the Pac-12. That includes winning records against every team except USC (9-13-1), Stanford (2-3) and UCLA (4-4-1). Ohio State is undefeated against Washington State (8-0), Oregon State (3-0), Arizona State (2-0) and Utah (1-0). Against the rest of the Pac-12, the Buckeyes are now 9-1 against Oregon, 9-3 vs. Washington, 7-1 vs. California, 4-1 against

Colorado and 3-1 vs. Arizona.

Meanwhile, the Ducks are now 22-35 all-time against teams currently in the Big Ten. That includes winning records against Michigan State (4-3) as well as Illinois (2-1), Indiana (2-1), Iowa (2-1) and Purdue (2-1). Oregon has split six games with Wisconsin and has a losing record against Minnesota (1-3), Penn State (1-3), Michigan (2-3), Nebraska (2-6), Northwestern (0-1) and Ohio State. The Ducks have never played Maryland or Rutgers.

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL TICKETS!

We have your seats to the season's hottest action!



For Your Ticket Connection Call:

DREAM SEATS

YOUR TOTAL TICKET SOURCE

1611 W. FIFTH AVE. COLUMBUS, OH 43212

(614) 340-8989

www.dreamseats.com

All NCAA & NFL Games in Stock!

all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events

NOW OPEN

BRINGING THE HEAT

TO HIGH STREET



EL SEGUNDO

MEXICAN KITCHEN

SHORT NORTH ARTS DISTRICT

614.965.6660 | 698 N. High Street | ElSegundoColumbus.com

Buckeyes Meet Familiar Fate In Home Opener

Ohio State has hosted a Power Five non-conference opponent for its home opener only four times since 2004, and if the Buckeyes have anything to say about it, they might not open their doors to such rude houseguests again anytime soon.

A 77-31 blowout against Oregon State in 2018 serves as the lone respite for the program in its recent history for such situations, with dramatic (and for some, even traumatic) losses to Virginia Tech in 2014, Oklahoma in 2017 and now Oregon in 2021.

Beyond just the home-opening woes, the trio of losses seem to share quite a bit of connecting fiber. Each of the three saw the Buckeyes – in their words – surprised by a game plan they did not anticipate in full. Against Virginia Tech, Ohio State infamously struggled against defensive coordinator Bud Foster's "bear front" look, which he deployed to fluster new starting quarterback J.T. Barrett.

At the time, the Buckeyes said they were caught off-guard by Foster's blitz-heavy defense and that they couldn't adjust quick enough to rally for a victory.

"They didn't exactly do it the way we thought they would," said fifth-year senior right tackle Darryl Baldwin after that match-up. "We kind of had to go on the fly and change our system up a little bit. We found a couple of plays that worked, but not everything was working for us and it just threw us off a little bit."

In 2017, first-year Oklahoma head coach Lincoln Riley dialed up RPO after RPO, test-

GAME NOTEBOOK Patrick Mayhorn

ing a Buckeye defense that had seen very little of the play fakes prior to the game and racking up nearly 400 passing yards in the process.

"I think our problems in the secondary tonight were different than the other night (in Ohio State's first game of the season against Indiana), which doesn't make it better or worse," then Buckeye defensive coordinator Greg Schiano said after the Oklahoma game. "Just different. It wasn't as much one-on-one coverage. It was more mistakes, and we need to do a better job coaching. When you make mistakes, it's the coach's fault. So we need to get that fixed in a hurry."

Fast-forward four years, and the connections continue, even in the postgame polemics. Ohio State again found itself struggling against a fresh look for a feisty road underdog, this time in the form of Oregon's pre-snap motion and plays into the boundary – not a standard look from Oregon offensive coordinator Joe Moorhead, who held the same position at Penn State in 2016 and '17.

"The number of plays that were run into the boundary was something that (Oregon) had not shown a good deal of," second-year



SONNY BROCKWAY

TARGET PRACTICE — OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud (7) riddled the Oregon defense for 484 yards through the air, connecting with seven different receivers in the game. Stroud finished his afternoon with 35 completions in 54 attempts, and he threw for three touchdowns.

OSU defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs said. "That's where we had difficulty. But we need to make adjustments on the sidelines

and go from there."

Ohio State's largest issues in those first two games, and now in this most recent edi-

[@RedsMuseum](#)
[Reds Museum](#)
[@RedsMuseum](#)

GO BEHIND THE SCENES WITH A GREAT AMERICAN BALL PARK TOUR

PRESENTED BY
Dinsmore

Tour tickets are available through the Hall of Fame Box Office and online.
Tours available Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

For more information, call the Hall of Fame Box Office at (513) 765-7923 or visit

[REDSMUSEUM.ORG](https://RedsMuseum.org)

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

After some crossed wires early in the game that led to a few air-mailed passes, the Ohio State passing attack again settled into nice form against a strong Oregon secondary, bolstered by its usual dynamic receiver duo of Chris Olave (12 receptions, 126 yards) and Garrett Wilson (eight receptions, 117 yards, one touchdown).

With more performances like this one, though, that duo may soon morph into a tremendous trio, as sophomore slot receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba had a breakout performance. The Rockwall, Texas, product hauled in seven receptions for 145 yards and two scores – all new career-high marks – and served as another safe target for quarterback C.J. Stroud as he settled into the game.

It's hard to imagine that Ohio State is hoping to throw the ball 54 times every game this season, but Stroud hit on 35 of them (64.8 percent) for 484 yards and three scores. The first-year starter didn't throw an interception until his pocket collapsed with just seconds to play in the game, and he didn't press to make something happen, either, which was an improvement from his rough turnover against Minnesota in week one.

Head coach and offensive play-caller Ryan Day was likely quite a bit less pleased with this one – though maybe former head coach Jim Tressel would appreciate it. Freshman punter Jesse Mirco and the punt unit in general had quite the day as well.

Mirco attempted only three punts, but he fired off a 62-yarder and had two punts downed at the 1-yard-line. It's hard to draw it up much better than that, even if Oregon marched 99 yards down the field for a touchdown after his first.

What Didn't Work

Just about everything else, especially on the other side of the football. It was a brutal day in the trenches for both Ohio State lines, with the rushing attack generating only 128 yards on 31 carries (4.1 yards per carry) to Oregon's 269 yards on 38 attempts (7.1 yards per carry).

While Ohio State's second-level defenders often looked out of place in defending the ground game, Oregon's were quick and decisive, meeting running backs at or near the line of scrimmage on far too many occasions for Day's liking.

The OSU defense fared better against the Oregon passing attack than it did the running game, surrendering 236 yards and two scores to quarterback Anthony Brown but holding him under a 50-percent completion rate (17 of 35 passing). The bigger issue was in how the yards were surrendered. Just like the run defense, Ohio State's pass defenders often found themselves significantly out of position, trailing well behind the Oregon receiver or, in many cases, unaware of him completely.

Play Of The Game

No play was more important – or more telling – than Oregon's final touchdown, which was just enough for the Ducks to shut the door on the Buckeyes in the fourth quarter. On their opening drive of the final frame, Oregon took the ball from its own 26-yard-line and made short work of the Ohio State defense. The Ducks quickly rolled to the OSU 14-yard line in five plays, thanks in large part to a Lathan Ransom face mask away from the play, which was tacked onto a 30-yard gain from tight end Spencer Webb.

In the red zone, Oregon turned again to the tight end, faking a handoff in the backfield that drew the entire Ohio State defense in, and as Brown rolled to his left, he found a wide-open Moliki Mataavao, who had slipped past OSU safety Bryson Shaw and into the end zone. It was an outside run of the same design that had yielded two prior Oregon touchdowns, and the Buckeyes, unwilling to be scorched again, ran right into offensive coordinator Joe Moorhead's game-sealing trap.

— Patrick Mayhorn

tion, are well-known. They drew the brightest spotlight and became the largest focal point for those teams in the past, with the 2014 team taking its blows on offense and responding by building out a rushing attack that no one could topple on the way to a national title, and the 2017 squad rebounding to field a top-15 defense nationally in points allowed per contest.

Head coach Ryan Day hopes to match those efforts this season and has taken a similar tack to predecessor Urban Meyer, who challenged both 2014 offensive coordinator Tom Herman and Schiano after those two showings. Day was seen on the field laying into Coombs during a lengthy Oregon drive.

“When you're in the heat of the battle, that's just kind of how things go,” Day said. “We have to get things addressed and fixed.”

Like in those preceding games, though, the man at the helm for Ohio State didn't think that the more-harangued side of the football should be alone in shouldering the blame. The 2014 defense surrendered several long touchdown drives to Virginia Tech, while the 2017 offense scored just 16 points vs. Oklahoma, sparking a Meyer tirade that could be plucked and dropped straight into 2021.

“Offense was bad,” Meyer said after the loss to Oklahoma. “We're going to do what we do and that's go back to work as hard as we possibly can, starting somewhat tonight and tomorrow and figure this thing out.”

In fact, Meyer's tirade just about was dropped into 2021, albeit in somewhat kinder words.

“I thought at the end, (the defense) got two good stops for us and then we didn't do anything with them,” Day said. “The offense has to do their part in this thing as well. I don't think we established the run, and when the defense did give the offense the ball back, we didn't do anything with it. We had two opportunities that we didn't score on. There's enough blame to go around here.”

For this year's version of the Buckeyes, as it was for those, it's time to get back into the lab with a pair of nonconference matchups against Tulsa (Sept. 18) and Akron (Sept. 25) remaining before an Oct. 2 trip to Piscataway to take on Schiano's Rutgers team in a resumption of Big Ten play.

“We have to go back to work,” Day said. “When you go through adversity, you find out about your team and your leadership. This hurts, it feels awful and it's unacceptable, but now we find out who the leaders are and who is with you. In times like this, there are plenty of fingers that are going to get pointed. When things are going well, it's easy to lead. But when things don't go the way you want, that's when you need to show your resolve. That's going to be a lesson for our guys in this game right here. This isn't fatal, but it's certainly not acceptable and we have to get it fixed.”

Fourth-Down Woes Frustrate Head Coach

It was a day of firsts and records for Ohio State in quite a few ways, but there might be none more impactful than the record for most total yards in a loss in school history. Ohio State established that dubious honor with 612 yards in the seven-point loss.

Bolstered by a passing attack that broke one program record and threatened a couple of others, those 612 yards weren't enough to overcome the Oregon attack, due in part to

one traditional turnover – C.J. Stroud's late interception – and three more on downs, as Ohio State went just 2 of 5 on its fourth-down conversion attempts.

The first try came on Ohio State's first drive of the game from the Oregon 31-yard-line when Stroud's pass to Chris Olave flew off course.

Next, in the second quarter and trailing by a touchdown, Ohio State tested the Oregon rush defense on fourth-and-2 from the Ducks 39-yard-line, and halfback Miyan Williams was stuffed at the line.

The last served as a major sticking point for Day, who took responsibility for putting Stroud in an inopportune spot against a heavy blitz look on fourth-and-2 from the Oregon 8 late in the third quarter. The coach later said all three fourth-down failures were crucial in determining the game.

For the Buckeyes, seeing three promising drives end with zero points was just as damaging as an interception or fumble would have been, though Day said that with the way the game was going, he had little interest in testing his new kicker and trying to settle for three points.

“Anytime you go for it on fourth down and don't convert, it hurts,” he said. “I guess we could have gone for (a field goal) in a couple of those situations, but I felt like it was a back-and-forth game, and we needed a touchdown. We have to go back to work and do a better job executing.”

“Sometimes when those (fourth-down plays) go 4 and 5 yards, as opposed to 2 and 3 yards, it makes all the difference in the world, especially in that plus-territory. They didn't today and that kind of threw us off.”

Proctor Suffers Major Injury

Senior safety Josh Proctor was listed as a game-time decision entering the matchup with Oregon after he suffered what looked to be a shoulder stinger in the fourth quarter of Ohio State's Sept. 2 win against Minnesota. But he left the game against the Ducks with a new, much more serious injury.

Serving in an emergency free safety role to help ease in new starter Bryson Shaw, Proctor contributed where and when he could against the Ducks despite that nagging shoulder injury, and he nearly made it through the bout unscathed.

However, Proctor was tangled up in a downfield skirmish late in the third quarter and seemed to roll up badly on his right leg. The Ohio State medical team brought in the stretcher and an air cast shortly after Proctor went down – used generally in the case of broken bones. The Buckeyes didn't share any details on his injury before BSB went to print, but Day's prognosis after the game was not positive, and it seems that the veteran safety will miss significant time.

“Josh's injury looked not good out on the field,” Day said. “Our prayers are with him. I know it was a tough moment for him to be out there. We're praying for the best, but it did not look good out on the field.”

Shaw racked up three tackles in Proctor's place as Ohio State's single-high safety but was caught behind Oregon's Travis Dye and C.J. Verdell on all three of their touchdown plays.

Welcome To The Big Time

Ohio State saw 13 of its players make

their first career starts in Ohio Stadium against the Ducks – six on offense and seven on defense. Offensively, Paris Johnson Jr., Dawand Jones, Smith-Njigba, Stroud, Williams and Luke Wypler made their first starts in the Horseshoe, while Denzel Burke, Tommy Eichenberg, Ronnie Hickman, Teradja Mitchell, Lathan Ransom, Shaw and Taron Vincent did likewise on defense.

Another 13 Buckeyes made their way onto the Ohio Stadium field for the first time in a regular-season affair, including, among others, USC linebacker transfer Palaie Gaoteote IV, who was declared eligible by the NCAA just a day before kickoff. He was joined by kicking specialists Noah Ruggles and Jesse Mirco, running back TreVeyon Henderson, who ran second on the team in carries and rushing yards behind Williams, and J.T. Tuimolau, the prized 2021 defensive end recruit who arrived on campus in July.

Finally, for nearly half of Ohio State's players who earned snaps, the game marked their first appearance in front of an almost packed Ohio Stadium crowd, with 27 of the 59 players who cracked the contributors list in their first or second seasons with the Buckeyes. Though the stadium did not hit Ohio State's sellout goal, Day was delighted by the enthusiasm the 100,482 fans in attendance demonstrated in their first game back since Nov. 23, 2019.

“First off, I want to thank the crowd and everybody coming out today and being really loud in the fourth quarter,” Day said after the game. “I'm sorry that we weren't able to pull out the victory for everybody who came today. This was a great crowd.”

Ducks Spoil Home Opener With 35-28 Upset

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Oregon Ducks did what they wanted on offense for most of the game, and their defense got the stops when needed. That proved to be the winning formula Sept. 11 in a 35-28 upset of third-ranked Ohio State in front of 100,842 fans at Ohio Stadium.

Oregon running back CJ Verdell ran for 161 yards and two touchdowns and added three pass receptions for 34 yards and another score, while quarterback Anthony Brown executed an offense that produced 505 total yards (236 passing and 269 rushing) for the 12th-ranked Ducks (2-0), who never trailed and led 14-7 at the half in part because Ohio State did not score on four trips past midfield.

"We have to learn from this," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. "We have to grow from this, figure out where the execution issues are and get them fixed."

The Ducks pulled off the stunner against the Buckeyes (1-1) in the first home game with fans since 2019 because of COVID-19.

Trailing 35-28 midway through the fourth quarter, OSU had three late chances – the final one from its own 11 with 20 seconds left – but couldn't get the tying score.

"This is an unbelievable venue, a historic place," said Oregon head coach Mario Cristobal. "To even get an opportunity to play at a place like this, you're grateful. You're thankful to go out there and play the way that we did."

Running Game Woes

Ohio State had the game's first possession and rapidly went to the Oregon 31, highlighted by a 20-yard scamper by Miyan Williams on a third-and-2 from the OSU 46. But the drive stalled when quarterback C.J. Stroud missed Chris Olave across the middle on a fourth-and-7.

It would be a repeated theme throughout the game as the Buckeyes rolled up 612 yards of total offense with little to show for it.

Later in the first quarter, the Buckeyes moved to the Ducks 33 after a Stroud 15-yard run and a late hit by Oregon cornerback Dontae Manning. A false start hampered the series, and Stroud couldn't connect with tight end Cade Stover on third-and-11, forcing Jesse Mirco into a 33-yard punt to the 1.

Oregon then went 99 yards in 10 plays, capped by a 14-yard run by Verdell for a 7-0 lead at 14:27 of the second quarter in the last of several big plays. The series included Verdell's 20-yard reception on third-and-11 from the Ducks 41, while Brown added a 19-yard pass to Devon Williams and an 18-yard run.

The Buckeyes immediately went three-and-out, but Mirco again pinned the Ducks at their own 1 after a 62-yard punt.

This time, though, Oregon stalled and Stroud led the Buckeyes to the tying score at the 8:42 mark, connecting on a 27-yard pass to a wide-open Garrett Wilson. During the five-play, 70-yard series Stroud also had 26- and 15-yard passes to Jaxon Smith-Njigba.

Verdell put the Ducks ahead 14-7 at 4:51 of the second quarter with a 14-yard TD after an underhanded toss from Brown on fourth-and-1. The drive went 65 yards on seven plays with Brown connecting on passes of 12 yards to Troy Franklin and 30 to Kris Huston.

The Buckeyes squandered a 21-yard run by Williams and a 13-yard catch by Olave on their next drive when they were denied on fourth down. Williams was stopped for no gain on fourth-and-2 at the 39.

OSU had one more possession at the end of the half, a series on which Stroud completed four straight attempts for 62 yards. But they just had too far to go, and the half ended with the Buckeyes at the Oregon 18.

Playing From Behind

The Ducks received the third-quarter kickoff and needed just 1:16 to increase their lead to 21-7. On third-and-3, Verdell



SONNY BROCKWAY

CAN'T CATCH ME — Oregon safety Steve Stephens (7) is no match for Ohio State speedster Jaxon Smith-Njigba (11) as he motors toward the end zone. Smith-Njigba had a career afternoon against the Ducks, setting new personal bests with seven catches for 145 yards and two touchdowns.

blew through the line and raced 77 yards to the end zone.

The Buckeyes needed a score and got it when Stroud found a seam and drilled a 26-yard TD pass to Smith-Njigba at the 10:25 mark to make it 21-14. Stroud also had passes of 22 to Wilson and 14 to Olave on the seven-play, 75-yard sequence.

Oregon once again had no trouble moving down the field, going 75 yards in seven plays to jump back ahead by two touchdowns. Travis Dye finished the series with a 5-yard sweep to the left to make it 28-14 at the 7:38 mark of the third quarter. Dye also had a 15-yard run on the possession which was extended another 15 yards to the OSU 23 on a Tommy Eichenberg face-mask infraction.

The Buckeyes again turned the ball over on downs on their next possession when a fourth-down pass from Stroud to Olave at the back of the end zone was broken up by DJ James with 3:43 left in the third. The Buckeyes had marched 67 yards to the Oregon 8 with Stroud completing four passes for 42 yards, and freshman TreVeyon Henderson rushing three times for 30 yards.

After an Oregon punt, a 29-yard catch by Smith-Njigba ended the third quarter. That drive later featured another fourth-down play, but this time the Buckeyes were able to convert when Wilson made a left sideline catch worth 23 yards on a fourth-and-3. Henderson ran in from the 2 on the next play to make it a one-score game again at 28-21 with 12:54 remaining.

Brown came right back and threw for 30 yards to Spencer Webb after which a face-mask penalty by Lathan Ransom added another 15, pushing the ball to the OSU 25. Verdell kept the drive alive with a third-and-6 run for 7 yards, and on the next snap, Brown found Moliki Matavao for a 14-yard touchdown to make it 35-21 at the 10:10 mark. Oregon went 74 yards and consumed 2:36 in six plays.

Again, Stroud rallied the Buckeyes with a series that included a 41-yard pass to

Olave, Julian Fleming's nab for 10 yards and a 15-yard TD to Smith-Njigba on a fourth-and-6 to make it 35-28 with 7:55 left.

After Oregon punted, the Buckeyes did as well when a holding penalty nullified a Stroud 11-yard run to the Oregon 38.

Another Ducks punt gave the ball back to OSU at its 28 with 4:43 left. The Bucks were near midfield when Stroud was sacked for 8 yards by Bradyn Swinson. After an incompleteness to Wilson, Stroud was intercepted by Verone McKinley at the Oregon 35 with just 2:50 remaining.

The Ducks kept the ball until a 27-yard punt gave it back to OSU at its 11 with only 20 seconds left. A 12-yard pass to Smith-Njigba was followed by Stroud taking a 12-yard sack to end the game.

Stroud was 35 of 54 for 484 yards, three touchdowns and the late critical interception. His yardage total was an OSU freshman record and the second most in program history to the 499 for Dwayne Haskins against Northwestern in the 2018 Big Ten Championship Game.

Ohio State had three receivers with more than 100 yards for the first time, led by Smith-Njigba with 145 yards on seven catches for two TDs. Chris Olave added 126 yards on 12 catches, and Garrett Wilson caught eight balls for 117 yards and a touchdown.

Oregon's Brown was 17 of 35 for 236 yards with two TDs, and he rushed for another 65 yards on 10 tries.

Numbers Game

The loss snapped the Buckeyes' 23-game home winning streak, the third-longest active streak in the country. The last loss at Ohio Stadium was to Oklahoma in 2017. The Buckeyes' last regular-season loss was at Purdue in 2018. ... Williams gained 77 yards on 14 carries, and Henderson netted 54 on 12 runs. ... Oregon was 8 of 16 on third down, and the Buckeyes were 6 for 15. OSU was 2 of 5 on fourth while the Ducks were 1 for 1.



www.HatemAutomotive.com
service@hatemautomotive.com

1407 West Fifth Avenue
Columbus, OH 43212
614-486-5277

Tom Hatem Automotive
Serving all of Columbus' automotive repair needs
for over 23 years.
BMW • MERCEDES • MINI COOPER • PORSCHE



BSB Quotebook: Oregon 35, Ohio State 28

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on his team's shortcomings against Oregon: "I felt like it was a game that we were never in control of. It felt like they ran the ball, and we didn't do a very good job of running the football, and we weren't able to convert on fourth downs. And because of that, we were always kind of playing catch-up. We must learn from this. We have to grow from this, and we still have a lot of football left. We have to figure out where the execution issues were and get them fixed."

Day on his play-calling down the stretch: "Maybe in that last drive, we should have run the ball a little more. I was probably trying to force the issue a little bit too much downfield. But that's the way the game was going, and I thought throwing it there was what we should have been doing."

Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud on his nerves at the beginning of the game: "To begin the game, I feel like we came out strong. We got the ball moving. Kind of the whole first half, we got the ball past the 50-yard line and split the field. We weren't getting in the end zone. It's something we need to fix execution-wise because I feel like if we put more points up, we might have won the game. On my part, I have to be better."

Stroud on his faith in the offensive play-calling: "Our game plan is always solid. I don't ever question the game plan. Coach Day is a great coach. Coach (Kevin) Wilson is a great coordinator. Coach Corey Dennis, he does a great job. So whatever plays they put out there, we have to execute them."

Stroud on his desire to be a leader moving forward: "I have to keep being a leader in the room. Haskell (Garrett) came up after the game and said something great. He said,

'The season's not over, and we're not going to press. We're going to stick together. We're not going to point fingers.' It starts on my behalf to lead the team as a quarterback. I will do my part to get us back to where we need to be."

Ohio State left guard Thayer Munford on Oregon's defense causing problems for the offensive line: "It was nothing we haven't seen before. They basically did the same thing Clemson did. They're blitzing every time, running the linebackers through. They came in the gaps hard – harder than we expected. We know that we need to work on it this week and the weeks ahead. We know we need to get better. They punched us in the mouth, and we tried to respond. We responded – we've got to keep going, though. We all know it's a big deal if the offensive line doesn't get movement. At the same time, we've got to keep going. It doesn't matter who is there."

Ohio State defensive tackle Haskell Garrett on the team's mentality after the loss: "We've got a long season. This isn't COVID anymore. Our main objective is still there. We need to get to Indy (for the Big Ten Championship Game). It was a nonconference game. We're going to take it as a lesson. We're going to get on the film. Nobody should hang their heads low. We're going to put this behind us and go play the next game. It is what it is. They (won a national championship after an early loss) in '14. We can do it in 2021."

Ohio State wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba on his confidence in Stroud at quarterback: "C.J. has a big heart. He's a competitor. I knew that since the first time I met him. He's going to keep going. We're going to keep going. I know he has my back. I have his back. We're just going to put this behind us and keep going."



SONNY BROCKWAY

UP AND OVER – Oregon quarterback Anthony Brown (13) lofts a pass over OSU defensive tackle Haskell Garrett (92) during the Ducks' 35-28 win against the Buckeyes. Garrett and his defensive line mates could not get to Brown all afternoon, and the Oregon QB piled up 301 yards of total offense.

Ohio State defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs on continuing to rotate players on defense: "Obviously, we don't believe we're playing too many players. We believe that we have a good number of players who can play. It's still early in the season, and this is when you're still learning about your guys. It's unfortunate that it came against a very good team. It's very difficult to come out of training camp and play 70 plays in a game at any position. We have good depth and good talent, and we're trying to play guys and find the right combination of guys all the time."

Oregon head coach Mario Cristobal on his level of comfort with second-year starting quarterback Anthony Brown: "He had over 300 yards of offense today, so that speaks for itself. He was winning over the team toward the end of last season, and I think today everybody saw why."

Day on what was most to blame for the loss: "I think everybody on our staff works really, really hard. We all make decisions together as a group, but ultimately it comes back on me because I'm the head coach."

Pac-12 Network analyst Yogi Roth on the significance of the victory: "The win was Oregon's biggest in intersectional play since at least a 2007 victory at Michigan and was perhaps the most significant nonconference regular-season result for any Pac-12 member in conference history."



SONNY BROCKWAY

MOSTLY CLEAN POCKET – Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud (7) took advantage of clean passing lanes against Oregon to throw for his freshman-record 484 yards. But the Ducks managed to get to the redshirt freshman late in the game, registering a fourth-quarter interception as well as a game-ending sack.

The Numbers Game

Oregon 35, Ohio State 28

Sept. 11, 2021 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	0	7	7	14	28
OREGON	0	14	14	7	35

Second Quarter

ORE – Verdell, 14-yard run (Lewis kick), 14:27; 10 plays, 99 yards, 3:57 TOP.

OSU – Wilson, 27-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 8:42; 5 plays, 70 yards, 1:47 TOP.

ORE – Verdell, 14-yard run (Lewis kick), 4:51; 7 plays, 65 yards, 3:51 TOP.

Third Quarter

ORE – Verdell, 77-yard run (Lewis kick), 13:38; 3 plays, 84 yards, 1:16 TOP.

OSU – Smith-Njigba, 26-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 10:25; 7 plays, 75 yards, 3:13 TOP.

ORE – Dye, 5-yard run (Lewis kick), 7:38; 7 plays, 75 yards, 2:47 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Henderson, 2-yard run (Ruggles kick), 12:54; 8 plays, 73 yards, 2:08 TOP.

ORE – Matavao, 14-yard pass from Brown (Lewis kick), 10:10; 6 plays, 74 yards, 2:36 TOP.

OSU – Smith-Njigba, 15-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 7:55; 8 plays, 75 yards, 2:15 TOP.
Att. – 100,482

Weather – Sunny

Team Statistics

	OSU	ORE
First Downs	32	27
Rushing	8	12
Passing	23	13
Penalty	1	2
Rushes-Yards	31-128	38-269
Passing Yards	484	236
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	35-54-1	17-35-0
Offensive Plays	85	73
Total Net Yards	612	505
Third Down Efficiency	6-15	8-16
Punts-Avg.	3-43.3	7-39.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties	8-71	4-35
Time of Possession	30:14	29:46

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **OSU**: Williams 14-77; Henderson 12-54; Stroud 5-(-3). **ORE**: Verdell 20-161; Brown 10-65; Dye 8-43.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **OSU**: Stroud 35-54-1-484-3. **ORE**: Brown 17-35-0-236-2.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **OSU**: Olave 12-126; Wilson 8-117; Smith-Njigba 7-145; Williams 3-38; Ruckert 3-36; Henderson 1-12; Fleming 1-10. **ORE**: Verdell 3-34; Webb 2-32; Williams 2-28; Redd 2-27; Franklin 2-19; Hutson 1-30; McCormick 1-16; Ferguson 1-15; Matavao 1-14; Johnson 1-11; Dye 1-10.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.) – **OSU**: Mirco 3-43.3. **ORE**: Snee 7-39.0.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Avg.) – **OSU**: Wilson 2-(-8). **ORE**: None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Avg.) **OSU**: Egbuka 2-56. **ORE**: Hutson 2-38.

MISSED FIELD GOALS – **OSU**: None. **ORE**: None.

FORCED FUMBLES – **OSU**: None. **ORE**: None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES – **OSU**: None. **ORE**: None.

INTERCEPTIONS – **OSU**: None. **ORE**: McKinley III 1-0.

SACKS – **OSU**: None. **ORE**: Johnson 1.0-12; Swinson 1.0-8.

TACKLES FOR LOSS – **OSU**: Vincent 0.5-1; Garrett 0.5-0. **ORE**: Johnson 1.0-12; Swinson 1.0-8; Williams 1.0-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **OSU**: Mitchell 4-7-11; Hickman 6-4-10; Garrett 2-4-6; Simon 1-5-6; Harrison 4-0-4; Eichenberg 2-2-4; Brown 2-1-1; Shaw 1-2-3; Smith 1-2-3; Proctor 1-2-3; Vincent 0-3-3; Cavazos 2-0-2; Jackson 1-1-2; Pope 0-2-2; Jean-Baptiste 0-2-2; Ransom 1-0-1; Williamson 1-0-1; Williams 0-1-1; Tuimoloau 0-1-1; Burke 0-1-1; Gant 0-1-1; Johnson 0-1-1. **ORE**: Wright 4-6-10; Williams 7-1-8; Sewell 4-3-7; Stephens 2-5-7; McKinley III 4-2-6; Swinson 4-1-5; James 3-2-5; Ware-Hudson 2-1-3; Brown 2-0-2; Manning 1-1-2; Aumavae 1-1-2; Ma'ae 0-2-2; Williams 0-2-2; Dorlus 1-0-1; Battles 1-0-1; Bridges 1-0-1; Happle 1-0-1; Jackson 1-0-1; Johnson 1-0-1; Jones 0-1-1; Funa 0-1-1; Jeannis 0-1-1; Heaukulani 0-1-1.

Players In The Game

OSU – Olave, Wilson, Stroud, Smith-Njigba, Williams, Wypler, Munford, Johnson Jr., Petit-Frere, Jones, Ruckert, Mitchell, Vincent, Harrison, Smith, Ransom, Hickman, Shaw, Brown, Burke, Eichenberg, Garrett, McCall, Williams, Cavazos, Fleming, Williamson, Jean-Baptiste, Martinez, Egbuka, Young, Watts, Stover, Harrison Jr., Gant, Gaoteote IV, Chambers, Hooker, Crowley, Johnson, Mirco, Simon, Henderson, Sawyer, Pope, Proctor, Robinson, Tuimoloau, Kacherski, Jackson, Jones, Hamilton, Vimahi, Fryar, Jackson, Cage, Booker, Williams, Ruggles.

ORE – Johnson III, Pittman, Verdell, Brown, Hutson, Walk, Bass, Jones, Moore, Forsyth, McCormick, Sewell, Wright, Dorlus, Stephens, Bridges, Williams, Brown, McKinley, Swinson, Funa, Aumavae, James, Williams, Redd, Matavao, Manning, Thornton, Franklin, Johnson, Addison, McNeill, Webb, Hill, Ferguson, Jeannis, Caldwell, Dye, Jackson, Happle, Bassa, Tilmon, Roth, Snee, Noland, Buckner, Shults, Cooper, Heaukulani, Ma'ae, Lewis, Powers, Jackson, Battles, Jaramillo, Aumavae-Laulu, Laloulu, Williams, Shipley, Williams, Jones, Poti, Ware-Hudson.

Season Statistics

2021-22 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Spt. 2	(4) at Minnesota	W, 45-31	50,805
Spt. 11	(3) OREGON (12)	L, 35-28	100,482
Sept. 18	(9) TULSA	3:30	
Spt. 25	AKRON	TBA	
Oct. 2	at Rutgers	TBA	
Oct. 9	MARYLAND	Noon	
Oct. 23	at Indiana	TBA	
Oct. 30	PENN STATE (10)	TBA	
Nov. 6	at Nebraska	TBA	
Nov. 13	PURDUE	TBA	
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN STATE	TBA	
Nov. 27	at Michigan (25)	Noon	
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.	

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

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	49	51
Rushing	16	21
Passing	31	25
Penalty	2	5
Average Per Game/Rush	164.5	236.0
Average Per Game/Pass	389.0	220.5
Total Offense	1107	913
Total Plays	113	148
Average Per Game	553.5	456.5
Average Per Play	8.3	6.2
Penalties-Yards	13-119	9-85
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-2
Third Down Efficiency	10-23	16-30
Percentage	43%	53%
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-5	2-2
Percentage	40%	100%
Sacks-Yards	2-18	2-20
Time Of Possession Avg.	25:46	34:14

Score By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	7	10	28	28	0	73	36.5
Opponents	0	28	21	17	0	66	33.0

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Miyan Williams	23	202	8.8	1	71
T. Henderson	14	69	4.9	1	11
Master Teague	6	29	4.8	0	10
Marcus Crowley	6	19	3.2	0	7
C.J. Stroud	8	10	1.3	0	15
OSU Totals	57	329	5.8	2	71
OPP Totals	88	472	5.4	6	77

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
C.J. Stroud	48	76	63.2	778	7-2	174.3
OSU Totals	48	76	63.2	778	7-2	174.3
OPP Totals	31	60	51.7	441	3-0	129.9

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Chris Olave	16	243	15.2	2	61
Garrett Wilson	13	197	15.2	2	56
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	9	157	17.4	2	29
Jeremy Ruckert	4	51	12.8	0	21
Miyan Williams	3	38	12.7	0	17
TreVeyon Henderson	2	82	41.0	1	70
Julian Fleming	1	10	10.0	0	10
OSU Totals	48	778	16.2	7	70
OPP Totals	31	441	14.2	3	30

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Noah Ruggles	-10-10	-	-	-	1-1	13
Chris Olave	2	-	-	-	-	12
Garrett Wilson	2	-	-	-	-	12
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	2	-	-	-	-	12

T. Henderson	2	-	-	-	-	12
Haskell Garrett	1	-	-	-	-	6
Miyan Williams	1	-	-	-	-	6
OSU Totals	10	10-10	-	-	1-1	73
OPP Totals	9	9-9	-	-	1-1	66

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Noah Ruggles	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	1-1
OSU Totals	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	1-1
OPP Totals	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	1-1

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Jesse Mirco	5	216	43.2	0	62
OSU Totals	5	216	43.2	0	62
OPP Totals	10	389	38.9	0	48

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
OSU Totals	0	0	0	0	0
OPP Totals	2	23	11.5	0	23

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	4	-7	-1.8	0	1
OSU Totals	4	-7	-1.8	0	1
OPP Totals	1	9	9.0	0	9

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	2	56	28.0	0	29
TreVeyon Henderson	1	19	19.0	0	19
OSU Totals	3	75	25.0	0	29
OPP Totals	3	55	18.3	0	23

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Teradja Mitchell	8	13	21	1.0-3	-
Ronnie Hickman	11	10	21	-	-
Cody Simon	4	9	13	1.0-11	1.0-11
Josh Proctor	3	7	10	-	-
Tommy Eichenberg	3	6	9	-	-
Dallas Gant	4	5	9	-	-
Haskell Garrett	3	5	8	0.5-0	-
Antwuan Jackson	4	3	7	1.0-1	-
Zach Harrison	7	0	7	1.0-7	1.0-7
Tyreke Smith	2	4	6	-	-
Taron Vincent	3	3	6	0.5-1	-
Bryson Shaw	3	3	6	-	-
Denzel Burke	3	2	5	-	-
Lejond Cavazos	4	0	4	-	-
Lathan Ransom	3	1	4	-	-
Cameron Brown	2	1	3	-	-
K'Vaughan Pope	0	3	3	-	-
Ryan Watts	3	0	3	-	-
J. Jean-Baptiste	0	2	2	-	-
Steele Chambers	0	2	2	-	-
C.J. Stroud	1	0	1	-	-
Tyleik Williams	0	1	1	-	-
Marcus Williamson	1	0	1	-	-
J.T. Tuimoloau	0	1	1	-	-
Xavier Johnson	0	1	1	-	-
OSU Totals	72	82	154	5.0-23	2.0-18
OPP Totals	70	42	112	4.0-25	2.0-20

Fumbles Forced: 2 – Harrison, Ransom.

Fumbles Recovered: 2 – Garrett, Eichenberg.

TOPSOIL



VERY RICH PULVERIZED
OR UNPULVERIZED
“SOIL PLUS”

BLENDED SOIL WITH SAND and ORGANIC COMPOST
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
CRUSHED LIMESTONE, WASHED SAND & GRAVEL

ANY SIZE LOAD • IMMEDIATE DELIVERY ANYWHERE

Buy Where the Professionals Do • Delivered on Time - Every Time, It Doesn't Cost Any More!
Columbus' Largest

JONES FUEL COMPANY

350 Frank Road • 443-4611 • 1-800-TOPSOIL
www.jonestopsoil.com

www.theredbricktapandgrill.com

292 E. Gates St.

Columbus

(614) 444-2742

HAPPY HOUR 3-8pm Mon-Fri

Half off all 30 drafts • Half off select appetizers

Craft bottle specials all day

100 Craft Beers!

New Food & Cocktail Menu

Newly Renovated Patio with Fire Pit

Handmade Pizzas &
In-House Smoked Meats



Simon Hoping To Carve Out Role At LB

By **CHASE BROWN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

During Ohio State football media availabilities, it is customary for reporters to speak with head coach Ryan Day, an offensive or defensive coach, and a few key players, often those considered leaders among the team.

Leading up to Ohio State's game against Oregon, the media spoke with Day, defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs, All-America wide receiver Chris Olave and linebacker Cody Simon.

For some, Simon might seem like a strange choice to be the final player who answered questions before Ohio State played in one of its most significant games of the regular season. But to the coaches and players, the sophomore's selection isn't strange at all. In fact, it reflects the role Simon is creating for himself in his second season.

Simon outpaced his 14 total snaps from 2020 in Ohio State's season-opening game against Minnesota. The second-year linebacker checked in for 37 plays, finishing with seven total tackles while recording the Buckeyes' first sack of the year.

Ohio State defeated Minnesota by two touchdowns, 45-31, and while the box score reflected a 14-point victory for the Buckeyes, Simon said he and his teammates weren't pleased with their defensive performance against the Gophers and that the Silver Bullets left a lot to be desired moving forward. Ohio State's 35-28 loss to Oregon a week later only fuels that flame.

"We've got a lot to improve on, obviously," Simon said at the availability. "It was definitely a new atmosphere. I'm not used to that crowd and everything just because of the COVID year. But it was really exciting, and I'm happy to have been a part of that and to keep building and keep going every week."

Throughout fall camp, Day and Coombs hinted they would rotate a number of players in at different positions. When the

Ohio State defense took the field against Minnesota, what Day and Coombs mentioned became a reality.

Twenty-four defensive players received snaps for Ohio State, including five linebackers. Teradja Mitchell led the unit with 70 snaps, followed by Tommy Eichenberg (49), Dallas Gant (41), Simon (37) and Steele Chambers (nine).

Mitchell, Ohio State's weakside linebacker, holds Simon to a high standard. Throughout Mitchell's three years as a Buckeye, he's seen some talented defensive players come and go – Nick Bosa, Chase Young and Jeff Okudah, to name a few – and he thinks Simon possesses the same potential.

"From day one, I noticed that Cody's a natural-born leader," Mitchell said in August. "He's come in, he puts his head down, and works every day. He's very disciplined, very detailed about his work. He's going to be great. He's going to be one of the greats here."

That kind of preparation sets Simon apart from his teammates. Coombs rotated different players on the field against Minnesota, making each defensive shift short-lived. To Simon, it's not the number of opportunities that matters. Rather, it's what a player does with them.

"Every week, we always prepare for anything," Simon said. "We trust our coach. He's going to put whoever he needs in at the right time. It's always about staying ready. There's never a time where your name might not be called. So you have to be ready to make a play when your name is called."

Simon's most significant contribution in the season opener came on the final play of the first half when he sacked Minnesota quarterback Tanner Morgan on a designed blitz. The Gophers held a 14-10 lead at the time and looked poised to extend their lead heading into the break, but Simon's tackle stifled the drive, knocking Minnesota out of field-goal range.

"I just tried to do what I can to help the



Cody Simon

team," Simon said. "At that point, that's what the team needed. I'm just happy I could make a play for the team. It was a momentum-booster for us. We came into the locker room and we knew what we had to do."

Ohio State sent four defensive linemen and two linebackers after Morgan on the play. With five offensive linemen preoccupied, and no tight end or running back to chip a pass rusher, Simon went unblocked and he sacked the Minnesota quarterback for a 12-yard loss.

"That play, I just kind of saw it and went," Simon said. "It was a blitz. It opened up and I went for it."

Simon maintains that he can make a similar, game-changing play every week for Ohio State. He holds that belief because he keeps himself engaged on the sideline, keeping ready for when his name is called. He added six more stops vs. Oregon.

Whatever Coombs decides to do with the rotation, Day said that the Buckeyes need to improve as a collective unit. After graduating four seniors from a season ago – Tuf Borland, Pete Werner, Baron Browning and Justin Hilliard – Ohio State's linebacking corps looks a lot different.

"I think the linebackers did some good things (against Minnesota), but again, it's an inexperienced group," Day said. "They have not played a lot of football. You think

of those four guys that left last year, there were a lot of games, a lot of snaps under their belt. But there were some good things (from this year's group), there's some potential there. There's also some plays they wish they had back. Overall, as a group, it was a solid performance, but there's room for growth there."

Linebackers coach Al Washington thinks that Simon can lead the unit, even as a sophomore. Like many others, Simon hasn't received a whole lot of reps in live games, but he does the right things at the right times for the Buckeyes.

"He's just a really mature kid," Washington said in August. "Very focused. He processes really fast. Obviously, he's very gifted physically. He's just a mature kid for his age. He took last year, for example, and didn't play much but really learned from the guys that were really playing and took advantage of that time. We're excited about Cody. He's a phenomenal leader as well. Players really respond to him."

Simon hopes to prove himself worthy of Washington's praise. When he takes the field this season, he is hungry to set the tone and to bring an energy that his teammates can match every play.

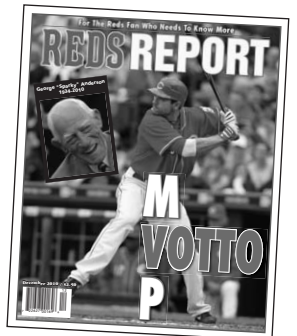
"I hope they see an ultimate leader," Simon said, "someone who can conduct a defense and someone who can just be a team player. I want to be the best player for the team I can be, and whatever that role is, I'm going to play it as hard as I can."

REDS FANS!

Follow The Reds Year-Round In Reds Report

Reds Report is must reading for every Reds fan. Each information-filled issue includes player features; historical articles; extensive minor-league coverage with features on top prospects, complete statistics and farm club updates; box scores and game summaries for every Reds game; complete team and individual statistics; a Reds memorabilia section and much more.

1 Year (12 issues) — \$44.95



Send to: Reds Report • P.O. Box 12453 • Columbus, Ohio 43212

- ☐ Please send me a one-year (12 issues) subscription to **Reds Report** for \$44.95.
- ☐ My check or money order is enclosed. Check # _____
- ☐ Charge to my: ☐ Discover ☐ MC ☐ Visa ☐ AMEX

Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

For Faster Service On Credit Card Orders Call

1-800-760-2862

2021 Buckeye Road Trips

**OSU at Rutgers with New York City Tour
September 30-October 3**

**OSU at Indiana plus Beautiful Brown County
October 23-24**

Looking for other travel opportunities?

- Iconic National Parks
- Ireland/Scotland 2022
- Italy Amalfi Coast 2022
- Rock and Roll Liverpool & London
- France River Cruise 2022
- Hawaiian Island Land or Cruise 2022



www.GoPrimeTours.com
614-766-5553

*Doing Buckeye road trips
since 1996!*

Henderson Chases Success Of Rare Frosh Backs

By **WYATT CROSHER**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

The 2021 season marks the 50th year that college football has allowed its players to step on the field during their freshmen seasons. Immediately, that decision backfired on Ohio State.

During the first game of the 1972 season, Ohio State defeated Iowa by a 21-0 final score, but the Buckeyes fumbled the ball four times. One of those fumbles went down in the books as lost by quarterback Dave Purdy, but in reality, it was a true freshman running back that missed the pitch and caused the error. That running back did not register a stat in the game.

Under head coach Woody Hayes, it was fair to question whether or not that particular freshman would see much action for the remainder of the season or at least in the near future with the Buckeyes facing North Carolina in game two. But that freshman running back, whose name was Archie Griffin, did play the next game – a lot.

Griffin broke the program's single-game record with 239 rushing yards on 27 carries, a total that surpassed Ollie Cline's 229 yards against Pittsburgh from 1945.

"The legend was born that day," Bucknuts writer and former BSB editor Steve Helwage told BSB. "It got him off on a great four-year career that had two Heisman trophies, but his legend was born as a freshman in his second game. He's kind of the pioneer of the freshman running back."

That performance started what wound up being a productive first season for Griffin, during which he led the team with 867 yards on 5.4 yards per carry and found the end zone three times. Of course, as Helwage said, it only got better for Griffin, who still holds the career Ohio State rushing record with 5,589 yards.

And, nearly a half-century later, while not quite getting off to the start that Griffin did, another first-year Ohio State running back has already found a way to make headlines.

TreVeyon Henderson had two carries and one reception in his collegiate debut against Minnesota. He earned 15 yards on rushing and 70 on the catch, taking a completion near the line of scrimmage and gashing the Gophers defense with blistering speed all the way for a touchdown.

Henderson played even more snaps in game two against Oregon, totaling 54 yards and a touchdown on 12 rushing attempts and adding one reception for 12 yards.

Since the rule change in 1972, Ohio State has had just five freshmen lead the team in rushing, and only four of them were true first-year players. But looking generally at when freshmen have been able to get on the field for the Buckeyes, Helwage said that running back is one of the primary positions to have less-experienced players make their mark.

"It's primarily at the skill positions because I think it's hard for a lineman to come in and make a tremendous mark as a true freshman because you're not as physically developed," Helwage said. "You're an 18-year-old kid going in against 21- and 22-year-old men, and they may have 20 or 30 pounds on you. A lineman will get into the strength program and add on weight and become a man by his third or fourth year. That's really not that important at the skill positions."

"What's important at the skill positions is you have the athleticism and the ability to make plays. Those are the two big things you need at the skill positions. Now, you're not going to see a 175-pound running back come in and do a whole lot in the Big Ten. They would just be too small. But if you show up at 220 pounds or whatever, you're ready-made, you're durable, you're solid. You can log 15 carries a game and it's not a problem. Wide receiver, same thing."

"Defensive back, to a degree, is the same thing, but there's also an experience factor there. You may have tremendous athletic ability, but experience is probably as important at that position as anything. But running backs and wide receivers at Ohio State over

the years have seen their fair share of freshmen come in and play pretty well."

Griffin's 1972 season made it seem as if Ohio State was going to consistently take advantage of the new freshman rule at the running back position. But after one of the greatest college football players of all-time left Columbus, there wasn't a pivotal first-year performance for the Buckeyes during the remainder of the 1970s.

That continued throughout the 1980s, even when such major talents as Keith Byars came through the program. Despite what Byars would wind up doing at Ohio State (1,764 rushing yards and 12 touchdowns in 1984), he ran the ball just six times for 24 yards as a freshman.

It took until 1990 – a full 18 seasons after Griffin burst on the scene – before another freshman running back would truly take the spotlight. That was Robert Smith, an Ohio Mr. Football winner out of Euclid High School, who chose to stay in-state over another major program in USC.

Even before he stepped on the field, signing Smith was a big recruiting win for head coach John Cooper, and once he did play for the Buckeyes, Smith made the decision feel like a win for all parties.

Smith became the first Ohio State back to rush for over 1,000 yards as a freshman, tallying 1,126 yards and eight touchdowns on an impressive 6.4 yards per carry. Helwage said Smith was the guy in the backfield for the Buckeyes primarily out of necessity, but it was a move that paid off all the same.

"He was fabulous, and they really needed him because Carlos Snow, who was supposed to be the running back, had some health issues and wasn't able to play in 1990," Helwage said. "So, it went to Robert Smith, and he was great."

While Griffin built on his first year and had a remarkable 1973 season, finishing fifth in Heisman voting that year, Smith did not do the same. His stat line for 1991 – zero rushes, zero yards, zero touchdowns.

Smith was not hurt, but instead left the team much in part because of a spat with offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac about prioritizing class over practices.

"I think the best way to characterize it is that, honestly, I got bullied out of the program. From speaking to other coaches that worked on that staff, Uzelac didn't want me on that team," Smith said in a 2014 interview with Eleven Warriors. "He didn't like me. He thought I was babied, pampered, and made it a point to push with me right away to kind of put pressure on me psychologically. He was a bully."

"It came to a head in the summer, sitting in the locker room where I was missing a morning class to go to a lab to stay on schedule to take organic chemistry that fall. He came up to me and said, 'I know the school thing is important, but we have to have you here instead of class next week.' And that was like the last straw. I ended up sitting out that year. By the time I left the team, I was really under distress, just kind of feeling bullied and pressured and confusion and anger. Rather than come back and be a distraction I thought it was best to just walk away from the team at that point and stay away from the team for that whole year."

"So, I switched to a track scholarship and

ended up taking organic chemistry that fall and was preparing for the track season. It was interesting."

The next Ohio State first-year running back to break the 1,000-yard barrier also would break Smith's freshman rushing record. His story shared many similarities with Smith, too.

Maurice Clarett joined the Buckeyes as head coach Jim Tressel's first commitment in the 2002 class. After becoming Ohio Mr. Football at Warren Harding, Clarett immediately rose to the top of the running back depth chart for the season opener against Texas Tech. He impressed to the tune of 175 yards and three touchdowns in a 45-21 victory.

On the field, Clarett was a star, leading Ohio State with 1,237 rushing yards and 16 rushing touchdowns as the Buckeyes marched to the national championship. But he was more than his pure production, and the huge chip on his shoulder was punctuated by his passion for the game.

"He had a personality as big as the stadium," Helwage said. "I mean he just brought people in because he was so gritty and didn't have a lot of pretense about it. He was a football player. He was a real brash freshman to come in and do and say the things that he was doing and saying. He was ahead of his time, I think."

That passion was noted by everyone around Clarett, and it was Clarett himself who reflected in a telling of his story from 2011 on Grantland.

"When I initially came to campus, my mind was set on being the best football player OSU had ever seen," Clarett wrote. "Anyone who knew me at the time would tell you I had a huge ego. I believed in myself that much because I thought that no one had it as rough as I did growing up, so they couldn't match my hunger to continue to develop as a player."

"I had come from a neighborhood and city that was filled with murder, robberies, and drug dealing. That reality and the culture hardened me. I knew the opportunity I had. I felt no one around me could match my hunger."

"People wear pain on their face. You can see their struggles by looking them in their eyes, and when you capture that energy and direct it to something positive it's hard to stop them. That was how I saw myself back then. I didn't see the same 'DOG' in the other guys on the team."

Clarett, like Smith, did not play at Ohio State in his sophomore season. But unlike Smith, Clarett never returned to the Buckeyes due to a variety of off-the-field problems. Despite all of that, however, Clarett achieved something neither Griffin nor Smith could – winning a national title.

While his rushing was a primary reason for the Buckeyes getting to the championship game against Miami (Fla.) at all, it was his strip of Hurricanes defender Sean Taylor and forced fumble after an interception that helped to make the difference against the Hurricanes.

But he also helped on the ground, scoring the title-winning touchdown in double overtime to bring home the hardware.

Once again, it took a while for the Buckeyes to find another freshman running back



Capital Awards inc.



5211 N. High St. • 614-888-9699 • sales@awardsbycapital.com

TROPHIES ★ PLUS

All under one roof!

Trophies • Plaques • Acrylic awards • Promotional Items
 Glass Etching • Logos • Medals & Ribbons • Laser Engraving
 School Awards • Advertising Specialties • Name Badges
 Cross Pens • Desk Sets • Signs
 Custom & Stock Certificates
ANY CUSTOM AWARD
 for the Central Ohio area

24 Hour Service Available

Specializing in Business Awards since 1978

to carry the majority of the weight for the rushing attack. In 2006, Chris “Beanie” Wells had a strong campaign with 576 yards and seven touchdowns, but that was dwarfed by leading rusher Antonio Pittman.

Instead, it took until 2016 when redshirt freshman Mike Weber ran for 1,096 yards and nine touchdowns. This time, though, it wouldn’t take years for another freshman to break the 1,000-yard mark. The following year, true freshman J.K. Dobbins took the reins with Weber out for much of the 2017 season with an injury.

Dobbins continued where Weber left off and more, setting a new program record with 1,403 yards as a freshman, doing it on only 194 carries (7.2 yards per rush) and scoring seven touchdowns.

“Dobbins, I think, was as positive a surprise as anybody having not played much at all,” Helwage said. “I think he played part of one game as a high school senior and got hurt and that was it. And (Ohio State) needed him. They needed him in a bad way.

“And Weber, they needed him, too, after Ezekiel Elliott left to go the NFL after 2015. I can remember the veterans saying how they took Weber aside and told him, ‘You have to be the guy’ because they really didn’t have any other running backs. Weber did a great job as a redshirt freshman on the whole, I thought.”

Dobbins and Weber shared the backfield duties in 2018, but both saw their numbers decline from their freshman seasons. Helwage said that it seemed like the starting job should not have been taken back from Dobbins after 2017, though he does not blame Weber for the struggles both had.

“I think people got a taste of Dobbins and just assumed and believed that he needed to be the one,” Helwage said. “Weber had to take a backseat to him, although there were times when Dobbins was hurt and Weber still came through for him. Weber was a good Ohio State football player in my opinion, a good teammate. He was there for four years, even though he only played three. I don’t think he owed anybody anything and it was just kind of a timing thing.

“They recruited an outstanding player behind him, and Dobbins was just kind of an indomitable force. You just weren’t going to keep that guy off the field when he was healthy.”

Three years after the Dobbins-Weber backfield, Ohio State again is without a primary ball-carrier – at least, not yet. For the first two games of the 2021 season, the Buckeyes have rotated a variety of running backs, one of which is a true freshman that has already proven capable of breaking out.

Henderson is up there with the most talented first-year running back Ohio State has had in the modern recruiting era. Since 247Sports started composite rankings in 2000, Henderson ranks third among Ohio State’s highest-rated running backs. He is behind only Wells and Sammy Maldonado, a five-star prospect in the class of 2000. He had just 218 yards in his two seasons with the Buckeyes before transferring to Maryland.

It is less about if Henderson has the talent to put up numbers like Claret or Dobbins, at least according to Helwage. He said what is more likely to hold the top-rated running back of the 2021 class is having other im-

pressive backs such as Miyan Williams and Master Teague in the running backs room.

“I think that they’re going to come up with clever ways to use him and not get him banged up between the tackles and maximize what he can give them because they have backs that they can slam in there,” Helwage said of Henderson. “They don’t need to do that with him. And I can’t imagine why you would. That’s just not his niche. He’s got amazing vision, and he has amazing footwork, and he can make people miss. I think you want to take full advantage of that.”

Speaking of Teague, his redshirt freshman season in 2019 was the sixth-most productive by a freshman running back in Ohio State history. He finished that season with 789 rushing yards and four touchdowns on 5.8 yards per carry.

Teague put up those numbers despite a program-record 2,003 rushing yards from Dobbins in the same season. His production was enough to get the attention of conference coaches, who named him to their All-Big Ten third team.

“They had obviously one of the best offenses in college football in 2019, and to me, there was just plenty of work,” Helwage said. “I mean, when you have a 2,000-yard back, and then you have another guy that’s still able to get nearly 800 yards, it just tells you how great things were rolling for Ohio State that year.

“Teague did a lot of great things I thought in that in that first year that he played. You could say he got a lot of the yards after games had been decided. And the other team may have been substituting or whatever because games were kind of out of reach for a lot of

these teams. I mean, it was very rare for that Ohio State team to have a game go into the fourth quarter. They blew everybody out.

“But he was third-team All-Big Ten as the backup, so that tells you that the opposing coaches recognized how big of an impact he was having. And now, he’s in a place where they have four frontline running backs that can all play and I think they’re going to have to split the work.”

While Williams, Henderson, Teague and Marcus Crowley each got carries in the opener against Minnesota, only Williams and Henderson received touches against Oregon. During the week leading up to the contest vs. the Ducks, Day said he leaves the running backs rotation up to position coach Tony Alford.

“I give him my input, but at the end of the day, I have a lot of respect and trust in Tony,” Day said. “He knows those guys intimately and he’s going to roll those guys in.”

The running back room is a crowded one for Ohio State, and Henderson may not be likely to become the sixth freshman running back in Ohio State history to lead the team in yards on the ground. But that doesn’t mean he won’t be productive.

“To me, Henderson is more of the changeup guy who, after those guys have softened things up, will hit that hole, make a guy miss, and it’s a 40-to-50-yard play,” Helwage said. “To my way of thinking, he’s got a niche. I don’t think it’s going to be 15 or 20 carries a game, but I think he’s going to be able to do a lot. If they give him five or 10 touches a game, he has the potential to give you 150 yards of offense.”

REDS HALL OF FAME MEMBERSHIP KNOCKS IT OUT OF THE PARK

Join today to get these exclusive membership benefits and MORE!

- Unlimited admission to the Reds Hall of Fame
- Collectible gifts
- 2021 Reds publication
- Early access and special discounts for many HOF events
- Discount in the Hall Shop—now 15%
- And new for 2021—a member-exclusive commemorative pennant!

 @REDSMUSEUM  REDS MUSEUM  @REDSMUSEUM

For more information, call the Hall of Fame Box Office at (513) 765-7923 or visit



REDSMUSEUM.ORG



Receiver Duo Of Olave, Wilson In Rare Company

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Ohio State has never had two receivers reach the 1,000-yard mark in one season. But what is also true is that the Buckeyes have only rarely had even one 1,000-yard receiver in a season, and didn't fully open up the passing attack until Ryan Day took over as head coach in 2018.

Just five players have ever recorded a 1,000-yard receiving season while playing for the Scarlet and Gray – Cris Carter in 1986, Terry Glenn in 1995, David Boston in 1998, Michael Jenkins in 2002 and Parris Campbell in 2018.

That list is almost certainly going to grow after the 2021 season. The only real question is by how much? Senior receiver Chris Olave might be as close to a lock to hit the mark as Ohio State has ever had. He nearly reached it as a sophomore in 2019 after bursting onto the scene at the end of his true freshman season, hauling in 48 passes for 840 yards despite serving as target No. 2 for quarterback Justin Fields behind leading target man K.J. Hill (57 receptions).

Olave was on pace again in 2020, reeling in 50 receptions for 729 yards, which he could have nearly doubled were it not for the coronavirus pandemic limiting him to just seven games and the Buckeyes to only eight. Extrapolate that over a 15-game season (regular season, Big Ten title game,

two playoff matchups) and Olave's averages have him at 107 receptions and 1,562 yards, both of which would have easily landed him atop the single-season leaderboards in program history.

Assuming Olave is able to stay healthy and Ohio State is able to play a full schedule, it's hard to devise a scenario that doesn't see Olave reach the 1,000-yard mark at a minimum. That figures, though, that the senior version of Olave is identical to the one the Buckeyes saw take the field seven times in 2020. The OSU wideout and his coaches would certainly push back on that – with the game film from week one to back their statements up.

As Day and Olave tell it, this offseason was one of skill-set growth for the California native. Olave served primarily as a deep-ball threat for Fields, but worked hard to add another dimension to his game this summer, practicing more as a catch-and-run receiver than one that tracks the deep ball.

"That's one of the big reasons I came back – to try to get better at gaining yards after the catch," Olave said. "I practiced that a lot, trying to finish plays. Even when I get tagged off, I try to make moves on the next defender and practice how I play. It definitely carried over to the game."

As Olave alluded, it would be hard to miss that new emphasis in his showing against Minnesota to open the season for



SONNY BROCKWAY

I GOT IT — Ohio State receiver Garrett Wilson (5) was part of an explosive aerial attack against Oregon. With eight catches for 117 yards and a touchdown, Wilson joined teammates Chris Olave and Jaxon Smith-Njigba as the only trio of Buckeyes ever with 100 or more receiving yards in the same game.

the Buckeyes. On just four receptions, Olave racked up 84 yards after the catch – nearly half of his entire 2020 season total (172) – turning two intermediate C.J. Stroud passes into long touchdowns in the second half.

He added another 126 yards on 12 catches against Oregon, including 37 after the catch.

"I think the emphasis for Chris coming into the season was running after the catch," Day said. "He's taking care of the football, too. I think that was something that he felt, coming off last year, that he really needed to work on. It's just a start for

him, but it's good to see. He has to continue to take care of that ball and when you take care of the ball, you can have confidence in running through and forcing guys to tackle you, so hopefully, there's more to come."

Olave isn't alone in the OSU receiver room as a threat to take just about any pass to the house, nor is he by himself in his hunt for four digits in the yards column by the end of the season.

Junior Garrett Wilson finished the 2020 campaign close behind in both receptions (43) and yards (723) and he, too, would have surpassed the 1,000-yard mark were

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

RULES AND RATES: 20 cents per word, 10 cents for more than one insertion. Minimum order of \$5. No agency discounts. Make checks payable to Buckeye Sports Bulletin. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

All ads are uniformly set with the first two words set in boldface capital letters at no charge. However, no other words may be set in boldface. Anyone planning a larger or more distinct ad may receive our ad rate card upon request.

We reserve the right to request additional information or merchandise be submitted from advertiser prior to acceptance of an ad, and we reserve the right to refuse advertisements considered objectionable.

Deadline is one week prior to publication date. Call (614) 486-2202 or write P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 for info.

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia and equipment, programs, pennants, glasses, books, jerseys, helmets, ticket stubs. One item or a hundred. Will travel. Call George at (614) 506-1081.

WANTED TO buy: OSU basketball tickets/stubs from the 1960s, '70s, '80s, '90s & 2000s. Call Mike at (704) 995-0414.

FOR SALE! Woody Hayes glasses frames from 1963. The real ones. Call (513) 947-0120 or (937) 402-9765.

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia, programs, ticket stubs, pennants, championship rings, gold pants, helmets, autographs, game-used equipment, small or large collections. Call Chris at (419) 957-6789.

FOR SALE — OSU-MICHIGAN Game, 1975 - original RADIO broadcast on CD! Woody's last great team & Archie's last UM game as Bucks go 11-0! Three-disk set runs 3½ hours! Listen in your car! \$25 + \$3 S & H. Call 1-630-527-8890!

BSB PUBLISHER Frank Moskowitz and other members of the BSB staff are available to speak at your business, social or alumni group meetings. Informative and fun. Call (614) 486-2202 for details.

Cucos Taqueria

The Great Taste of Mexico
only at Cucos Taqueria

HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY - FRIDAY 4-7PM

2162 W. HENDERSON RD. COLUMBUS, OH 43220
(614) 538-8701 | CUCOSTAQUERIA.COM

Order Online
Pick-up & Delivery
Drinks-to-Go

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

it not for the shortened season. His averages projected 81 receptions for 1,356 yards over 15 games.

Like his partner out wide, the 2021 version of Wilson is no carbon copy, though the differences in his game are a bit less pronounced than Olave, who seems to have shifted much of his style to better complement a new quarterback in need of those extra yards after the catch. Wilson, who was always a strong route runner, has honed in even further on his craft and flashed it against the Gophers, making veteran safety Calvin Swenson look like a rookie with an impressive deep post route on the way to a 56-yard score.

"Garrett's athleticism is off the charts," Olave said. "He's probably the most talented player on the roster, really. He's so gifted, but he can run routes (well) also. If the ball is in his area, he has a chance to catch it, contested or not."

For the veteran duo, that's what this last offseason together was about. There's a distinct air of professionalism to the two, who seem to have fully grasped the Ohio State system and can now work on the minutiae and the details, as an experienced NFL receiver might. The days of big development leaps might be gone for both players, at least in college, but that's only because it's difficult to be a whole lot better than they already were.

"We see it every day (those guys improving on the little things)," Day said. "Sometimes it's on routes where they don't get the ball in practice, where you see somebody running a backside route and maybe they're third or fourth in the progression and probably aren't going to get the ball. But they're working on something significant at the top of their route to make them better. The quarterbacks, everybody notices those things, and that makes them better. When you're young, (a lot of the time you're thinking), 'I'm not getting the ball right here, I'm just going to go through the motions.' But (they're not doing that) and it's really starting to pay dividends."

Ohio State is hoping to see that carry

through the remainder of the season, helping to provide serious relief for a first-year starting quarterback. The expectations for Stroud are that he will continue to improve as the season moves along, and that he won't need to rely quite as heavily on big plays after the catch from his star receivers. But, it's quite a bit easier to take steps in processing and in development with players like that on the outside.

What could that yield for the duo statistically, though? That's still hard to get much of a gauge for. They combined for just nine catches against the Gophers in week one, but still racked up nearly 200 yards, with 117 from Olave and 80 from Wilson. In the 35-28 loss to Oregon in week two, they combined for 20 catches worth 243 yards



Chris Olave

and a touchdown. Of that yardage, 60 of it came after the catch.

On that pace, the two could easily surpass the 1,000-yard mark, setting a new high in Ohio State's passing history and establishing themselves as the nation's top receiving duo, though wide receivers coach Brian Hartline thinks they've already achieved the latter.

"It's a pretty easy assessment coming off last season (when) they were arguably the best duo," Hartline said. "Obviously, they have to go earn it again, but from a preseason standpoint, I think they put themselves in position to be considered that."

Top duo or not, and regardless of whether or not they become 1,000-yard receivers, Ohio State doesn't need rankings or numbers to support what it already knows about its star receivers.

Each is expected to be playing on Sundays much sooner than later – and there is a case that each could have been first-round picks in the 2021 draft had Olave

declared and if Wilson was a year older. They very well could still be taken day one in 2022.

Their impact on Ohio State's offense down the field is one that Day never wants to take for granted, no matter how automatic it looks when Wilson is torching a safety or Olave is gliding down the sidelines.

"I try not to be numb to it because I appreciate it so much," Day said. "When you look at the work ethic that both of those guys have, and the work that they have put in this offseason, it was significant. The way that they practiced in this preseason has allowed them to be as dynamic as they are."

"I think you're seeing them play fast right now and at a high level and that's got to continue, but it's all based on how they practice. They've practiced really well. Their attitudes and their work ethics have been excellent, and so if they can continue to bring that every day it's going to go a long way for the offense."

PANEL TOWN & FLOORS

Established in 1967

FLOORS FOR THE WAY YOU LIVE



Free Cleaning System with Purchase of a Floor

1063 Dublin Rd., Columbus, OH 43215 • 614-488-0334

Extended Summer Sale! 20% OFF • 24 Month Financing

THE RECLAIMED BARN



1080 Ridge St. Columbus, OH 43215

614-524-5934 • www.reclaimedbarn.com

SEE STORE FOR DETAILS. LIMIT ONE DISCOUNT PER CUSTOMER. PURCHASE MUST BE MADE BY 09/30/2021



Train to be the BEST you can be!
Designing fitness programs to
meet your personal needs.

Personal Training

Group Fitness Training

Sports Specific Training

Owned and Operated By:

Brent Johnson

614-570-9918

B-fit.training@hotmail.com

Located at 2378 East Main Street in Bexley, Ohio

Rebuilding Tulsa Team To Invade Horseshoe

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Quite a few things have changed for Tulsa since Ohio State last took on the Golden Hurricane in week two of the 2016 season and rolled to a 48-3 win.

Tulsa bounced back from that loss and rallied to put together an impressive 10-3 season in head coach Phillip Montgomery's second year at the helm. The team rattled off wins in all but two American Athletic Conference bouts and claimed a 55-10 blowout victory against Central Michigan in the Miami Beach Bowl.

However, things quickly fell apart for Montgomery, a former Art Briles assistant who drew interest for several Power Five jobs following the 2016 campaign but decided to stay put. Without star quarterback Dane Evans, the Golden Hurricane plummeted in 2017, dropping all the way to 2-10 as the offense – which had led the group to its strong record the year before – faltered, leaving Tulsa with a porous defense and an insufficient offense.

The offense dropped even further in 2018 with quarterback Seth Boomer at the helm. The youngster was never able to fully grasp Montgomery's air raid-adjacent offense, and the production fell even further. Tulsa scored just 24.1 points per contest on the way to a 3-9 season.

After rebounding slightly to 4-8 in 2019, led by Baylor quarterback transfer Zach Smith, many fans and media members expected the Montgomery experiment would come to a close and that Tulsa would move on with three straight losing seasons on his résumé, which all came as soon as he populated the program with his own players rather than his predecessor's recruits as in years one and two.

It didn't happen, though. Perhaps buoyed by his early success – and helped by a lack of obvious replacements – Montgomery earned another shot entering the 2020 season and took advantage of it in full. He reworked his program's identity around a trio of excellent defenders and rode a top-30 defense along with a Smith-led offense to a 6-3 record that was just 14 total points away from an undefeated 9-0. The Hurricane fell to Oklahoma State (16-7), Cincinnati (27-24) and Mississippi State (28-26) but nabbed big wins over then-No. 11 UCF (34-26) on the road and No. 19 SMU at home (28-24) to earn a spot in the AAC title game, in which it took that loss to Cincinnati.

It was an extremely impressive case of adjusting on the fly to the talent at hand to see Montgomery, a longtime offensive-minded coach, rebuild his team around a dominant defense and save his job in the process.

Unfortunately for the seventh-year coach, the 2021 season presents another situation that will require swift adjustment to keep Tulsa in the hunt atop the AAC. All three of those star defenders – linebacker Zaven Collins and cornerbacks Akayleb Evans, and Allie Green IV – are gone. Collins was selected by the Arizona Cardinals in the first round of the 2021 NFL draft, and both Evans and Green transferred to Missouri. The portal can give, as it did with Smith on offense, but as this offseason showed, it can also take away and be just as damaging when players are transferring out.

"The portal is here to stay, so it's about learning how to try to adapt to it," Montgomery said. "It's going to open up some avenues and it's going to allow you to replace some things. It's also going to cause you problems on your rosters.

"I know there are a lot of coaches out there

that are saying, 'I'm going to recruit the portal extremely heavy. I'm going to put a lot of focus there.' We're not quite there yet because I want to do a good job of recruiting the local high schools, recruiting high school kids to come here, to develop those guys and continue to grow them. I want to use the portal as an opportunity, as things happen and as things change, to be able to add some experience and some depth from a positional standpoint."

Those defensive losses left Tulsa again without an obvious identity, and it showed in a week-one loss to UC Davis, a Football Championship Subdivision powerhouse but a team the Golden Hurricane certainly expected to beat. The defense, even in replacing its stars, held UC Davis to just 19 points, but that stop-and-start offense from 2020 didn't take the kind of step forward that Tulsa needed it to, scoring just 17 points. Without a top defense to cover for it, 17 points just won't get the job done for the Hurricane this season.

Still, Montgomery is confident in the stability that Tulsa does have on its roster and within its staff, including nine returning starters on offense and a majority of the defensive front, even without Collins. The coach sees the trio of down years from 2017-19 as a crucial piece in building a program built to withstand losses such as the ones his team took this offseason.

"We had some tough years," Montgomery said. "Those tough years, I think, helped create what we're trying to do now and made last year so much more special because they've been through some ups and some downs and now we're on a trend back upward. That makes me proud of our program and what we've been able to do."

In that loss to UC Davis, and in a week two 28-23 defeat against Oklahoma State, Tulsa did show signs of life on that rebuilding defense. Defensive tackle Jaxon Player is among the best in the AAC and ends Cullen Wick and Anthony Goodlow were strong up front against the run and as contributors in rushing the passer, which Tulsa did as well as anyone in 2020.

A lot of that comes from its defensive ideology rather than the talent within it. Defensive coordinator Joseph Gillespie is committed to rushing five or six defenders on almost every obvious passing down, leaning heavily on his defensive backs to make plays in man coverage behind a blitzing front six. Returning linebackers Justin Wright and Treyvon Reeves certainly help with that. The former is a consistently sound tackler, and the latter is a relentless blitzer out of Tulsa's star position, a hybrid linebacker/safety similar to Ohio State's bullet.

The secondary is a different story. Evans and Green served as the top two cornerbacks for Tulsa in 2020, and though both safeties – Kendarin Ray and TieNeal Martin – and nickel Cristian Williams return, finding viable options in those outside spots has proved challenging for Gillespie through two weeks. Tulsa surrendered 311 yards through the air in week one against the Aggies and 173 against the Cowboys in week two. Senior Tyon Davis has stepped into the top role and is serving as a leader at cornerback, but his production has yet to match his experience.

"I want a guy like Tyon Davis leading that room," Gillespie said. "The thing that I love about him, he just sat back when all of that happened (with the corners leaving) and let everybody think (what they were going to think) while his work will speak for itself in due time. He believes that, and I believe that, too."

The offense is significantly more experienced than the defense, losing only Smith from the top line of the depth chart. In his place is

Get To Know ... Tulsa

2021 Record: 0-2.

Team Information: Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 3-3-5; Starters Returning – Offense 10, Defense 9, Specialists 2.

Head Coach: Phillip Montgomery, 7th year at Tulsa, 31-40.

Series History: 2nd meeting; Ohio State leads 1-0-0.

School Facts: Location – Tulsa, OK.; Enrollment – 3,276; Nickname – Golden Hurricane; Colors – Blue, Gold; Conference – American; Stadium – H.A. Chapman Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 30,000).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Deneric Prince	30	180	6.0	2
Shamari Brooks	20	106	5.3	0
Davis Brin	13	34	2.6	0

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Davis Brin	34-55	61.8	425	0-2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Keylon Stokes	6	114	19.0	0
Deneric Prince	6	49	8.2	0
Josh Johnson	6	41	6.8	0

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 20.0

Rushing Yards Per Game – 182.5

Passing Yards Per Game – 212.5

Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 295.0

2021 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Sept. 2	UC DAVIS	L, 19-17
Sept. 11	at Oklahoma State	L, 28-23
Sept. 18	at Ohio State	3:30 p.m.
Sept. 25	ARKANSAS STATE	TBA
Oct. 1	HOUSTON	7:30 p.m
Oct. 9	MEMPHIS	TBA
Oct. 16	at South Florida	TBA
Oct. 29	NAVY	7:30 p.m
Nov. 6	at Cincinnati	TBA
Nov. 13	at Tulane	TBA
Nov. 20	TEMPLE	TBA
Nov. 27	at SMU	TBA
Dec. 4	AAC Championship	TBA.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL	Yards	Sacks
Kendarin Ray	9	10	19	–	–	–
Yohance Burnett	8	8	16	1.0-1	–	–
Bryson Powers	6	6	12	–	–	–
Jon-Michael Terry	5	6	11	2.0-5	1.0-3	–
Cullen Wick	6	4	10	2.0-7	1.0-4	–
Tyon Davis	5	5	10	–	–	–
Robert Revels III	2	7	9	1.5-2	–	–
Jaxon Player	2	6	8	2.5-4	–	–

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD
Justin Wright	1	55	55.0	1

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 23.5

Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 114.0

Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 242.0

Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 356.0

Davis Brin, who earned the backup QB job last season with a strong performance against Tulane when Smith and Boomer went down with injuries. Still, he's yet to click into Montgomery's quick passing game through two weeks, throwing for just 425 yards with a 61.8 completion percentage. He's found strength in his ability to respond to mistakes in the past, though, and Tulsa is hoping that he can do the same against an Ohio State defense still working to find its footing, especially against the short passing game.

"What you love about him is that he truly learns and grows every time he goes (onto the field)," Montgomery said. "He has a bad day and it's painful to him. He's like, 'I can't have that. What do I have to do to correct that or what did I do to cause that?'"

Brin has the AAC's most experienced receiving corps around him, led by senior starters Sam Crawford Jr., JuanCarlos Santana and Keylon Stokes, star contributor Josh Johnson off the bench and returning tight ends Ethan Hall and James Palmer, who serve more as blockers than they do as receivers but can do plenty of both.

Stokes was the best of the bunch in 2020, hauling in 46 receptions for 644 yards and three scores and has jumped out to a strong start in 2021 with six catches for 114 yards, making him the top priority for Ohio State's secondary, whether one of the dinged-up starters, Sevin Banks or Cameron Brown, or the insurgent youngsters Denzel Burke, Lejond Cavazos or Ryan Watts draws the assignment. Stokes is also one of 14 super seniors back this year for the Golden Hurricane, which is among the most in college football.

"I think these guys understand that they did some really good things (last year), but we left some things on the table," Montgomery said. "We feel like we can continue to improve and continue to get better. It was great to see those guys make the commitment to come back and be ready to really dive into this again.

"Getting to the championship game last year has really enticed those guys. They got together

and they talked. That was one of the big (determining factors) on a lot of those guys coming back or not coming back. They all want an opportunity to get back to the championship game and go win it."

Halfback Shamari Brooks isn't a super senior, but this is his fifth go-round in Tulsa after an ACL tear sidelined him in 2020 and prevented him from becoming the program's all-time leading rusher. He needs 1,097 more yards to reach that record.

"I'm very anxious to play again," Brooks said before the season. "It's been a long time since I've played, it feels like. I want to get back out there with my team.

"I'm definitely appreciating things more. Just the little things like being around my teammates in the locker room, those little conversations like that. During my injury for a few months, I was just in bed the whole time."

Like Minnesota halfback Mohamed Ibrahim, who rushed for 163 yards on 30 carries against the Buckeyes in week one, Brooks is a smaller power back, shaped more like a bowling ball than a track runner, and he'll be working behind a very big and very experienced offensive line. The group boasts four seniors and five returning starters. Unlike the Gophers, though, this is a group that has yet to find its rhythm on the ground and doing so for the first time against Ohio State is never an easy task, regardless of the defensive struggles the Buckeyes have faced.

"We've got to be better in all three phases," Montgomery said after the upset loss to UC Davis. "That being said, one game doesn't make our season. We just know we've got a lot of work to do.

"It's a new year, new faces in there. Offense is about timing and rhythm and jelling. I'm not taking anything away from UC Davis, but I felt like most of the time it was us stopping us and not the other way around."



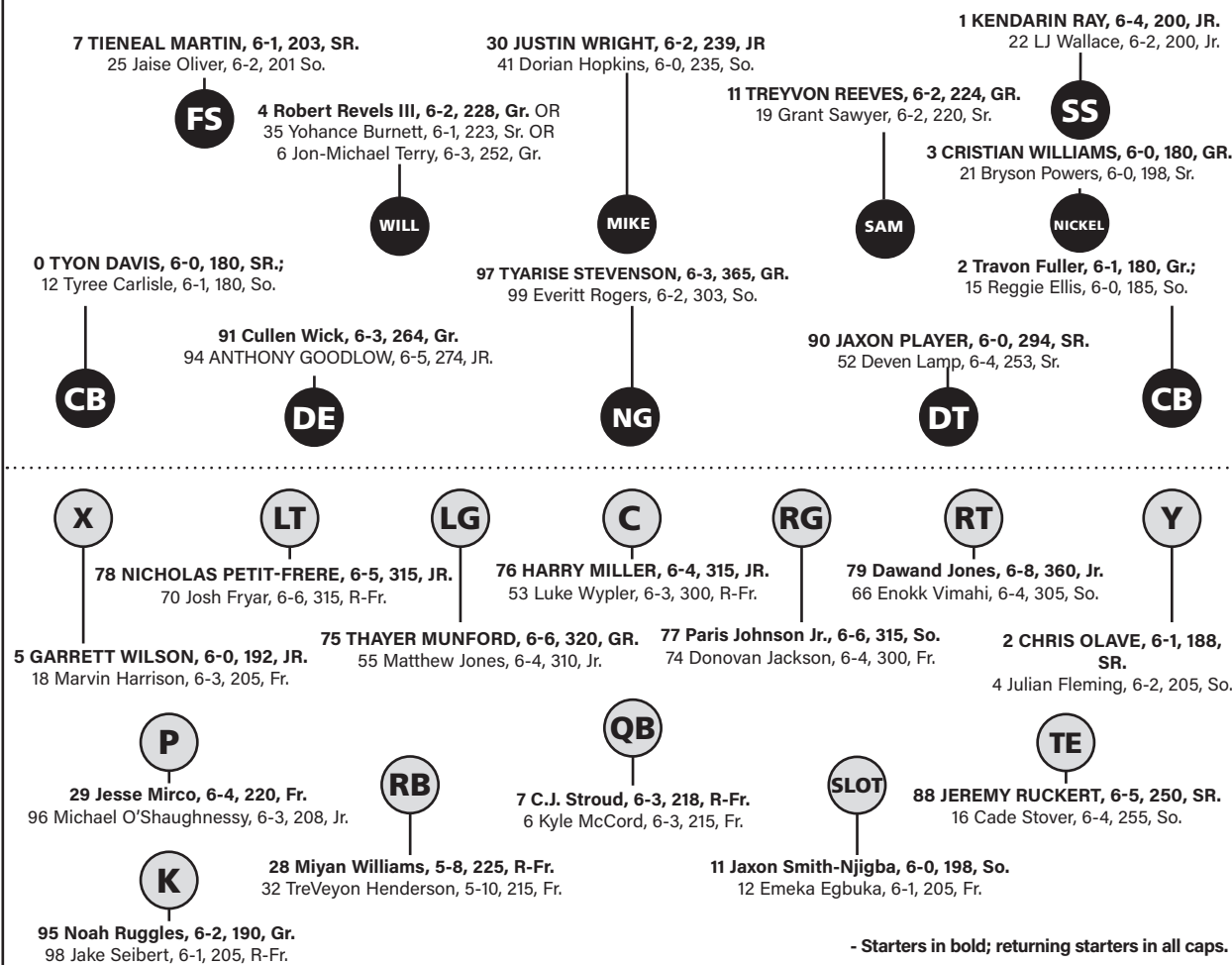
Ohio State vs. Tulsa

Saturday, Sept. 18 • 3:30 p.m. • FS1
Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio



Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. TULSA RUSH DEFENSE

The Buckeyes turned to a two-man only system during the 35-28 loss to Oregon. Miyan Williams (14) and TreVeyon Henderson (12) had all 26 rushes among the running backs. They combined for 131 yards and a touchdown for a 5.0-yard average – good, but not what Ohio State fans have become accustomed to. Quarterback C.J. Stroud had a net of minus-3, and his five totes were more reminiscent of Dwayne Haskins than Justin Fields. Head coach Ryan Day wants more balance in the play-calling, so look for the backs to get an early workout against Tulsa. The Golden Hurricane have allowed just 228 yards on a 2.6 average per carry through two games. **EDGE: EVEN**

TULSA RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

All aspects of the OSU defense are suspect. They will be facing an offensive line with nine players who have started at least one game. They are one of nine FBS teams with that distinction. Minnesota leads the country with 10, and like the Golden Gophers, the Hurricane return all five starters. The results against beefy Minnesota were not good. Mohamed Ibrahim rushed for 163 yards and two TDs in the season opener in only three quarters before getting hurt. Oregon's CJ Verdell ran through and over Ohio State for 161 yards, including a 77-yard score. Tulsa doesn't have on dominant back but two good ones in Deneric Prince (180 yards, 6.0 yards per carry) and Shamari Brooks (106, 5.3). **EDGE: EVEN**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. TULSA PASS DEFENSE

When you pass for 484 yards as Stroud did against Oregon, 28 points are not nearly enough. Jaxon Smith-Njigba (145), Chris Olave (126) and Garrett Wilson (117) became the first trio of receivers in OSU history to have 100-plus yards in the same game. Stroud is growing into his game after two career starts, and it was a good sign that he targeted eight receivers vs. the Ducks. Tulsa has three sacks in two games, so the Hurricane haven't applied much pressure. Still, linebacker Justin Wright had a pick-six vs. Oklahoma State, and Tulsa returned two interceptions for touchdowns last season. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

TULSA PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs is on the hot seat, and well he should be. The Buckeyes are allowing yards in chunks and making good quarterbacks look better. Oregon QB Anthony Brown was just 17 of 35 for 236 yards, but he always seemed to get the completion when needed. Among those 35 throws, the Buckeyes had exactly zero sacks. Zero is a number you might want for your soft drink's sugar content, but not for your defense's sack total. Tulsa first-year starter Davis Brin is 34 of 55 (61.8 percent) for 425 yards with zero TDs and two INTs. Keylon Stokes leads Tulsa with 114 receiving yards on six catches for a 19.0 average. **EDGE: EVEN**

SPECIAL TEAMS

For much of the first half vs. Oregon, the Buckeyes' best weapon was punter Jesse Mirco, who twice pinned the Ducks at the 1. Freshman Emeka Egbuka had two kickoff returns for 56 yards vs. Oregon and could break one at any time. Tulsa gave up a 98-yard kickoff return for an Oklahoma State TD, while Kenny Solomon averages just 18.5 yards on four KO returns for the Hurricane. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

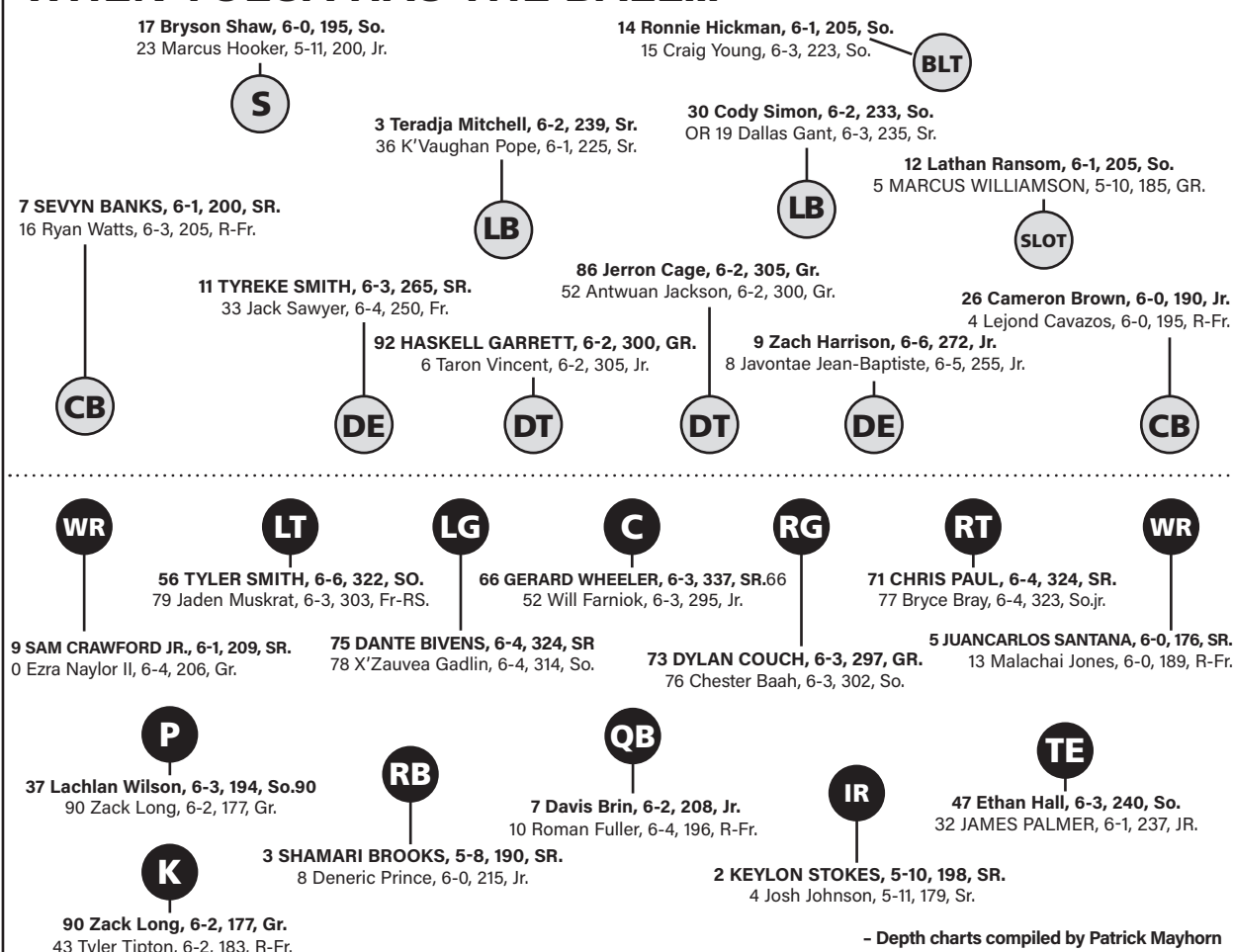
INTANGIBLES

After what could have been two passing grades against quality opponents in the Golden Gophers and Ducks, the Buckeyes were supposed to exhale against Tulsa. Instead, everyone is holding their breath wondering if the season is salvageable after the Oregon debacle. Tulsa, runner-up to Cincinnati in the American Athletic Conference last season and expected to challenge the mighty Bearcats this season, rebounded from an inexplicable 19-17 loss to FCS opponent UC Davis in their season opener to give Oklahoma State all it could handle before losing a 28-23 decision. The Hurricane offer an intriguing challenge. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

STAFF PREDICTION

Here's guessing Tulsa will be sick of the letters O-S-U after its tough loss at Oklahoma State followed by a trip to Columbus to play what should be an angry bunch of Buckeyes. The Hurricane will have to pull out all their tricks in order to compete, but Ohio State should quickly reduce them to something less than gale force. **OHIO STATE 49, TULSA 20**

WHEN TULSA HAS THE BALL...



Michigan WR Bell To Miss Rest Of Season

Michigan wide receiver Ronnie Bell will miss the remainder of the season after suffering a right knee injury on a punt return during the second quarter of the Wolverines' 47-14 victory against Western Michigan on Sept. 4.

The senior captain from St. Louis had one reception for a 76-yard touchdown prior to his injury.

"It's a shame," Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh said.

Bell was expected to be the Wolverines' top receiver after posting a team-high 401 yards and one touchdown on 26 catches in six games in 2020.

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

"It will be very difficult to replace Ronnie Bell," Harbaugh said. "Really tough. He's seasoned, experienced, tremendous blocker, so competitive and such a gamer. Now somebody has to try to fill those shoes."

Daylen Baldwin, a Jackson State transfer, recorded one catch for 69 yards and one touchdown against Western Michigan. Cornelius Johnson finished second on the team in receiving yards in 2020 with 254 yards, along with three touchdowns.

Michigan also added Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star wideout Cristian Dixon in the 2021 class. Additionally, Roman Wilson, A.J. Henning and Mike Sainristil will have more opportunities step up in Bell's absence.

Badgers RB Berger Slips On Depth Chart

When Wisconsin dropped its season opener, a 16-10 loss to Penn State on Sept. 4, a major story in Madison was the

absence of sophomore running back Jalen Berger.

Berger was expected to be a leader in the Badgers' backfield after leading the team with 301 rushing yards in four games as a true freshman in 2020. However, Berger did not play a single snap in the season opener, giving way to Clemson transfer Chez Mellusi as well as Isaac Guerendo.

Head coach Paul Chryst said Berger's lack of playing time had less to do with him and more to do with the production of Mellusi and Guerendo, who took 31 and 13 carries, respectively.

"Jalen's had a good approach (but) we also like what Chez and Isaac have done," Chryst said. "The way the game played out, we weren't thinking we needed to go with three (tailbacks) at the time. Just because he didn't play doesn't mean he's doing something wrong. It's also (we) liked what Chez did and Isaac did."

Ahead of the Badgers' matchup with Eastern Michigan on Sept. 11, Chryst reiterated that Berger was not in the doghouse and that the tailback group will continue to work as a committee.

"With Jalen, he's had a good week of practice," Chryst said. "He was doing some good things before. A part of it is we had a lot of snaps last game. But I don't know how many times we really felt like we were in a great rhythm. I think that always helps when you can get guys in and guys in a rhythm."

"But I've liked the way that Jalen has practiced this week. There is not a side-show going on. He's a guy that has had success before and was young last year – a true freshman. As long as he continues to approach it the right way and work, which he's been doing, his opportunities will come."

During Wisconsin's 34-7 victory over Eastern Michigan, Berger carried the ball 15 times for 62 yards and one touchdown, while Mellusi had 20 carries for 144 yards and one score, and Guerendo added four carries for 92 yards and a touchdown.

Michigan, Webber At Odds Again

Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel allegedly apologized to former U-M basketball standout Chris Webber on behalf of the university before Webber's Sept. 11 induction into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

"I was told by the athletic director at the University of Michigan that he was sorry," Webber said. "And he wasn't even there at the time (I was playing). He told me that he did his research and that he needs to apologize. His exact words (were) he needs 'to apologize to the 18-year-old Chris Webber because we didn't protect him.'"

According to Manuel, however, such an apology never took place.

"I enjoyed the conversation with Chris when we met several years ago," Manuel said in a Sept. 10 statement released by the school. "But I can assure you I made no apology to Chris, and for those who may be curious, I never asked him to apologize to the University of Michigan. I wish Chris nothing but the best, and I'm happy that he's being inducted into the Basketball Hall

of Fame."

The Michigan men's basketball program was the subject of NCAA sanctions, which included Webber accepting improper benefits. Webber was the Fab Five member most vilified for taking money from university booster Ed Martin. In 1992, Webber, Jalen Rose, Jimmy King, Ray Jackson and current Michigan men's basketball coach Juwan Howard became the first freshman quintet to start a national championship game.

The university eventually investigated the recruitments of the so-called Fab Five, and when federal authorities got involved, they discovered Martin provided a teenaged Webber and his family with hundreds of thousands of dollars over several years.

"I was the lowest-hanging fruit," Webber said of the university's investigation. "I had the biggest name."

Webber, who was a five-time All-NBA player, was federally charged for lying about his relationship with Martin, but in 2003 he took a plea deal and avoided jail time and felonies. After previous denials, he admitted Martin gave him money and that he had paid Martin some of it back after going to the NBA.

Michigan then cut ties with Webber. He was not welcome on campus, the 1993 and '94 Final Four banners were removed from Crisler Center, and his stats were erased from the record books.

The way the investigations played out created a rift between him and his former Fab Five teammates. Webber declined to attend a Fab Five reunion and declined to participate in ESPN's acclaimed "30 for 30" documentary about the squad.

Webber said his experience in Ann Arbor will be detailed in his upcoming book, "By God's Grace." The Hall of Famer is also developing his own television series about the Fab Five with some help from Howard. "Hopefully some of the things in (my book) will reveal what happened, how things happened, and hopefully just life can go (on) or it can just get back to normal in that way," Webber said. "Hopefully, once we address all this good stuff, we'll get back to it."

Standout Guard Commits To Iowa

Iowa men's basketball received good news the morning of the annual Iowa-Iowa State football game on Sept. 11.

Council Bluffs (Iowa) Abraham Lincoln shooting guard Josh Dix committed to the Hawkeyes, joining Wolfeboro (N.H.) Brewster Academy three-star point guard Dason-Bowen in the 2022 recruiting class.

In addition to Iowa, Dix had reported scholarship offers from Drake, Minnesota, Northern Iowa, Purdue, Wake Forest Wisconsin, and others. The 6-4, 180-pound guard took an official visit to Iowa on Sept. 3, and he was scheduled to officially visit Wisconsin on Sept. 10.

Dix led his team in scoring and assists with 19.4 points and 4.3 assists per game, while averaging 7.2 rebounds and shooting 54.5 percent from the field and 73.3 percent from the free-throw line. Dix, who also took a visit to Iowa in June, is the No. 1

BIG

2021 Standings

East Division

	Conf.		All		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Michigan State	1	0	2	0	1.000
Penn State	1	0	2	0	1.000
Ohio State	1	0	1	1	.500
Maryland	0	0	2	0	1.000
Michigan	0	0	2	0	1.000
Rutgers	0	0	2	0	1.000
Indiana	0	1	1	1	.500

West Division

	Conf.		All		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Iowa	1	0	2	0	1.000
Illinois	1	0	1	2	.333
Purdue	0	0	2	0	1.000
Nebraska	0	1	2	1	.667
Minnesota	0	1	1	1	.500
Wisconsin	0	1	1	1	.500
Northwestern	0	1	0	1	.000

Sept. 11 Games

Virginia 42, Illinois 14
 Minnesota 31, Miami (Ohio) 26
 Northwestern 24, Indiana State 6
 Michigan State 42, Youngstown State 14
Oregon 35, Ohio State 28
 Rutgers 17, Syracuse 7
 Purdue 49, UConn 0
 Nebraska 28, Buffalo 3
 Penn State 44, Ball State 13
 Iowa 27, Iowa State 17
 Wisconsin 34, Eastern Michigan 7
 Indiana 56, Idaho 14
 Maryland 62, Howard 0
 Michigan 31, Washington 10

Sept. 17 Game

Maryland at Illinois, 9 p.m.

Sept. 18 Games

Nebraska at Oklahoma, Noon
 Cincinnati at Indiana, Noon
 Northern Illinois at Michigan, Noon
 Michigan State at Miami (Fla.), Noon
 Minnesota at Colorado, 1 p.m.
 Purdue at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m.
 Kent State at Iowa, 3:30 p.m.
 Tulsa at **Ohio State**, 3:30 p.m.
 Delaware at Rutgers, 3:30 p.m.
 Northwestern at Duke, 4 p.m.
 Auburn at Penn State, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 25 Games

Bowling Green at Minnesota, Noon
 Wisconsin at Notre Dame, Noon
 Rutgers at Michigan, 3:30 p.m.
 Indiana at Western Kentucky, 8 p.m.
 Illinois at Purdue, TBD
 Colorado State at Iowa, TBD
 Nebraska at Michigan State, TBD
 Ohio at Northwestern, TBD
 Kent State at Maryland, TBD
 Akron at **Ohio State**, TBD
 Villanova at Penn State, TBD

Oct. 1 Game

Iowa at Maryland, 8 p.m.

Oct. 2 Games

Minnesota at Purdue, Noon
 Northwestern at Nebraska, 7:30 p.m.
 Western Ky. at Michigan State, 7:30 p.m.
 Charlotte at Illinois, TBD
 Michigan at Wisconsin, TBD
 Indiana at Penn State, TBD
Ohio State at Rutgers, TBD

Help BSB Grow

Loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers frequently ask us what they can do to help keep BSB vibrant in this increasingly electronic age. One of the things readers can do is introduce BSB to new readers who might find our Ohio State sports content interesting.

In order to help you do that, we are offering an opportunity to send four free trial issues to potential subscribers. We will then offer your potential subscriber a very special offer to get them to join the fold of loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers.

We are also offering a special \$19.95 subscription rate for gifts for our service men and women. It's nice to send a little bit of home to those all over the world who are protecting us. Don't forget to include an APO address when applicable and remember, any subscription includes electronic access to BSB, so our Buckeyes in uniform will be able to enjoy their BSB immediately, wherever they are.

This four free trial issue offer is not good for current subscribers. This offer is to introduce readers to BSB. You can conveniently email your names and addresses to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com or mail them to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212.

prospect in Iowa and No. 23 shooting guard in the country, according to 247Sports.

“I really had a good time at my visit, and I really like the campus,” Dix said during the summer.

The commitments of Dix and Brown give Hawkeyes head coach Fran McCaffery his backcourt of the future in Iowa City. Brown is the No. 19 point guard and No. 144 overall recruit in the 2022 class.

Dix and Brown join 2021 commits Wau-kee (Iowa) Senior three-star power forward Payton Sandfort and Oakdale (Conn.) St. Thomas More three-star center Riley Mulvey as the future faces of Iowa men’s basketball.

Potter Signs With NBA's Heat

Former Ohio State and Wisconsin forward Micah Potter recently signed with the Miami Heat and was invited to the team’s preseason training camp.

Potter appeared in six NBA Summer League games with the Heat, averaging 7.3 points, 3.5 rebounds, 1.2 blocks, 1.0 assists and a total plus-15 plus/minus while shooting 55.9 percent from the field. His first NBA experience was highlighted by a double-double performance Aug. 17 against Dallas. He had 15-points and 10 rebounds while adding five blocked shots.

Miami is once again expected to be one of the top teams in the Eastern Conference during the 2021-22 season, so it will be difficult for Potter to make the regular-season roster. However, his invitation to training camp likely signals he will have a spot on Sioux Falls Skyforce, which is the Heat’s G-League affiliate.

At Wisconsin during his senior year, Potter averaged 12.5 points, 5.9 rebounds and 1.4 assists in 22.2 minutes per game, shooting 50.4 percent from the field, 38.6 percent from beyond the arc and 84.0 percent from the charity stripe.

Top Performers Across Conference

Michigan State quarterback Payton Thorne stood out as one of the Big Ten’s top performers in week two, leading the Spartans to a 42-14 win over Youngstown State and a 2-0 start to the season. The third-year sophomore signal-caller completed 15 of 21 passes for 280 yards and four touchdowns, adding three carries for 19 yards and one score. Thorne’s favorite wideout, Jayden Reed, reeled in four receptions for 181 yards and two touchdowns.

Nebraska quarterback Adrian Martinez further etched his name in the history books during the Cornhuskers’ 28-3 victory against Buffalo, becoming the fifth player in the Big Ten to reach 6,000 passing yards and 2,000 rushing yards for a career. The fourth-year junior signal caller threw for 242 yards and two touchdowns on 13-of-19 passing, adding nine carries for 112 rushing yards.

Michigan tailback Blake Corum excelled in the Wolverines’ 31-10 win over Washington, tallying 171 yards and three scores on 21 carries.

Purdue quarterback Jack Plummer thrived in the Boilermakers’ 49-0 demolition of Connecticut, completing 16 of 20 passes for 245 yards and four touchdowns.

Maryland quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa threw for 274 yards and three touchdowns on 22-of-27 passing in the Terrapins’ 62-0 rout of Howard.

Minnesota tailback Trey Potts stood out in the Gophers’ 31-26 victory over Miami (Ohio), stepping up in the place of the injured Mohamed Ibrahim. A third-year sophomore, Potts gashed the RedHawks for 178 yards and two touchdowns on 34 carries.

Northwestern tailback Evan Hull helped lead the Wildcats over Indiana State, 24-6, running for 126 yards and two touchdowns on 22 carries.

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago – 1981

Woody Hayes made his first appearance in Ohio Stadium since being fired following the 1978 season when he showed up for Ohio State’s opener with Duke on Sept. 12. Hayes spent the game in an empty radio booth in the Ohio State press box, declining all interview requests. He looked pale and appeared to have lost weight.

After the game, Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce said he was not aware of Hayes’ presence at the contest.

“This is the first I’ve known that he was at the game,” Bruce said. “I think that’s great. I think that’s super. I wish that I’d known it. But he keeps a lot of his stuff secret. He’s been over to see our team one time for dinner, so we’ll have him back any time he wants to come.”

35 Years Ago – 1986

Two days had passed since his Ohio State football team had been chased out of Seattle by a pack of Huskies and Bruce still hadn’t gotten over the shock.

“I hate today. I hated yesterday,” said Bruce, facing a larger than usual number of media types at his weekly press luncheon. “I just won’t feel good until after the game on Saturday – I hope.”

Bruce had plenty of reasons to feel down in the dumps because it was somewhere near there that he had last seen his Buckeyes in action. A 40-7 annihilation at the hands of Washington – the worst loss by an OSU team in 19 years – left a bad taste in the coach’s mouth.

“There’s not much for me to discuss,” Bruce said. “The Washington game is gone. It’s a loss. Whether it’s a 7-6 ball game or a 40-7 ball game, it’s still a loss. We’ll just have to approach it in that the most important game now is Colorado.”

It marked Ohio State’s first 0-2 start – they opened with a loss to Alabama at the Kickoff Classic -- to a season since the turn of the century.

30 Years Ago – 1991

Ohio State tailback Robert Smith confirmed he wouldn’t be suiting up for the Buckeyes in 1991 after he declared his intention to sit out a week prior but waffled publicly in the days after. He took to a lectern to announce his decision, alongside Ohio State athletic director Jim Jones, and read from a prepared statement.

“There has been a great deal of speculation as to the exact reason why I left the team,” Smith said. “The issue is that I question whether I can be happy playing football at this level. From an outside point of view, it would have appeared that my success as a part of the team would have left me satisfied with my freshman year. This is not the case.

“Throughout the year, I questioned the importance of what I was doing relative to my larger goals in life. In view of these doubts, I believe neither the team nor I would benefit from my return to the program at this time.”

Smith continued, apologizing to Ohio State head coach John Cooper, offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac, their families, the football team and the athletic department for the way he handled the matter.

25 Years Ago – 1996

As first games go, Ohio State’s 70-7 win over Rice was resounding. However, it was clear that the first hurdle the Buckeyes had to clear in 1996 was probably their easiest.

The Buckeyes, missing several of the integral pieces that orchestrated an 11-2 campaign in 1995, showed no intentions of taking a step back.

“Obviously, we are happy to win this ball game as impressively as we did and also to have the chance to play a lot of football players,” Cooper said.

Ohio State rolled up 632 yards of total offense and scored touchdowns on 10 of its first 11 possessions of the game. Defensively, OSU allowed Rice’s triple-option offense just 218 yards and one score.

The individual stars for Ohio State were many, beginning with junior tailback Pepe Pearson, who carried 17 times for 119 yards with three touchdowns. Freshman wide receiver Michael Wiley also found the end zone three times, once on a 49-yard reverse and on bombs of 51 and 60 yards from backup quarterback Joe Germaine. Likewise, freshman receiver David Boston electrified the crowd with a 58-yard TD catch of a pass from starting QB Stanley Jackson.

20 Years Ago – 2001

In a time of deep national tragedy, the world of athletics went on a hiatus.

That was the reaction at Ohio State and across the country in the wake of the series of terrorist attacks Sept. 11 that left over 6,000 people missing or dead in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

In the hours and days following the tragedy, professional and college athletic teams and their leagues postponed and canceled games for the remainder of the week.

In fact, Ohio State was one of the first college teams to announce a postponement. Speaking fewer than 12 hours after the hijackings, OSU athletic director Andy Geiger announced the school’s Sept. 15 home game with San Diego State had been postponed until Oct. 20.

“I think we felt strongly that we should not play on Saturday,” Geiger said. “It was very clear that trying to play this game would be the wrong thing to do.

“I cannot imagine, feeling the way I feel right now and seeing the pictures on television that we’ve all seen all day long, bringing 100,000 people to Ohio Stadium in four days.”

15 Years Ago – 2006

Championship teams typically choose the largest stage to make their biggest statement.

That was true of Ohio State on a warm, humid September night in Texas when the Buckeyes did what championship teams are supposed to do. They took the ball with 12:18 remaining in the fourth quarter and drove 72 yards for the decisive blow in a 24-7 knockout of defending national champion Texas.

Played before a Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium-record crowd of 89,442, the contest rang the probable death knell for one title reign and may have signaled the beginning of another.

Ohio State’s players didn’t want to hear that, though. “I don’t think (this validates preseason polls),” sophomore linebacker James Laurinaitis said. “We came down here and played a great team and beat them. That’s all it means right now. Don’t get me wrong – it’s a tremendous feeling to come into this stadium and beat a team that has as many talented players as Texas. It’s a huge confidence-builder for us.

“But it only means that we’re moving forward, moving in the direction we want to go. I thought we made a lot of mistakes to-night, and maybe that’s to be expected when you go on the road and play the team that’s ranked No. 2 in the country.”

33 Recruits Make Trip To OSU For Oregon Loss

For the first time since a game against Penn State on Nov. 23, 2019, Ohio State hosted a full crowd for a home football game in Ohio Stadium.

That also meant that the Buckeyes would be hosting recruits for the first time in nearly two years, and it made for a busy day both on and off the field. But head coach Ryan Day was hoping to find a balance between having a mass quantity and still being able to give each recruit his own individual experience.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Wyatt Crosher

"There's a balance (to planning out the number of visitors)," Day said. "The more people you bring on campus, the less attention you can spend on each person. But there's also something about being here on game day and seeing this type of environment. I wish we could invite everyone in the country and take everybody on, but there's a limitation on all of that. We just want to make sure that we're doing a good job with the people on campus."

Despite searching for that balance, Day did also understand there would be a sizable number on campus, and a sizable number would be accurate. At least 33

current Buckeye commits and recruiting targets were there to see the team's home opener.

Suwanee (Ga.) Lambert four-star wide receiver Kojo Antwi; Kettering (Ohio) Alter five-star linebacker C.J. Hicks; Chandler, Ariz. four-star wide receiver Kyion Grayes; and West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star offensive tackle Tegra Tshabola were all at the game to represent the Buckeyes' 2022 class. Ohio State's lone 2023 commit, Thompson's Station (Tenn.) Independence four-star tight end Ty Lockwood, was also in attendance.

As far as targets go, Greenwood (Ind.) Cedar Grove four-star defensive lineman Caden Curry; Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star offensive lineman Earnest Greene; Hammond (Wis.) Saint Croix Central four-star offensive lineman Carson Hinzman; Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove four-star defensive lineman Christen Miller; and Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star offensive tackle Aamil Wagner were the 2022 players in attendance for Ohio State.

For the 2023 class, there were 18 recruits not yet committed who were in person for the game. They were Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek four-star safety Caleb Downs; Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco Roswell cornerback Jshawn Frausto-Ramos (Ga.); Massillon (Ohio) Washington running back Willtrell Hartson; Blessed

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

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
Kojo Antwi	WR	6-0	190	★★★★	Suwanee (Ga.) Lambert
Terrance Brooks	CB	5-11	190	★★★★	Little Elm, Texas
Jyaire Brown	CB	6-0	178	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Kaleb Brown	WR	5-11	177	★★★★	Chicago St. Rita
Caleb Burton	WR	6-0	165	★★★★★	Del Valle, Texas
Bennett Christian	TE	6-6	235	★★★★	Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona
Benji Gosnell	TE	6-4	225	★★★★	Pilot Mountain (N.C.) East Surry
Kyion Grayes	WR	6-1	170	★★★★	Chandler, Ariz.
Dallan Hayden	RB	5-11	195	★★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers
C.J. Hicks	LB	6-3	220	★★★★★	Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter
Gabe Powers	LB	6-4	230	★★★★	Marysville, Ohio
Kye Stokes	ATH	6-2	185	★★★	Seffner (Fla.) Armwood
Tegra Tshabola	OT	6-5	340	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Ryan Turner	CB	6-0	180	★★★★	Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep

Trinity Catholic four-star running back Justice Haynes; Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star safety R.J. Jones; Indianapolis (Ind.) Roncalli offensive tackle Trevor Lauck; St. John Bosco safety Ty Lee; Snellville (Ga.) Brockwood four-star quarterback Dylan Loneragan; Findlay, Ohio, four-star defensive lineman Luke Montgomery; Dallas South Oak Cliff four-star cornerback Malik Muhammad; Roswell, Ga. four-star cornerback Ethan Nation; Riverside (Ohio) Stebbins wide receiver Adrian Norton; McDonough (Ga.) Eagle's Landing Christian offensive tackle Zechariah Owens; Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star offensive lineman Joshua Padilla; Pittsburgh Brashear four-star linebacker Ta'Mere Robinson; Pickerington (Ohio) Central five-star safety Sonny Styles and St. John Bosco five-star defensive end Matayo Uiagalelei.

And, while Oregon quarterback Anthony Brown played well in the game, another Anthony Brown – Springfield, Ohio, four-star wide receiver and Minnesota commit Anthony Brown – was another 2023 recruit in attendance.

There were also five prospects from the 2024 class, including Fort Mill (S.C.)

Catawba Ridge four-star quarterback Jacy Davis, the top-rated prospect of the class in 247Sports' in-house rankings. He was joined in Columbus by Chillicothe (Ohio) Unioto tight end Tayvion Galloway and three prospects from St. John Bosco – four-star linebacker Kyngstonn Valiamu-Asa, four-star cornerback Marcelles Williams, and four-star safety Peyton Woodyard.

"Recruits have been talking about coming to this game since they saw it on the schedule, and we'll have a big number here," Day said. "It's great to have families be able to see the crowd and have the experience of game day here, which we're hoping is one of the best it has been in a long time. It's been over 600 days since we've had a full stadium here in the Horseshoe, and what a game it is with a Pac-12 team coming in here. I think the recruits and their families are going to be excited to be here, and the experience – every time you visit a campus, it's a different experience, and this is obviously a unique one."

Ohio State suffered a 35-28 defeat to Oregon for Day's first regular-season loss as head coach. Some might think an

When it's time to rest, make it Columbus' best.
When you come to a game or visit
The Ohio State University...

...you can stay at one of our award winning hotels in the heart of downtown Columbus or nearest to your game destination.
For reservations, call your preferred hotel.
Make your reservations today!

The Arena District Hampton Inn & Suites

501 N. High St. Downtown Columbus
(614) 559-2000
www.columbusdowntownsuites.hamptoninn.com

Canopy by Hilton Columbus Short North
77 E Nationwide Blvd - Columbus Downtown
614-223-1400
www.columbusdowntownshortnorth.canopybyhilton.com

Airport-Easton Area Hilton Garden Inn

4265 Sawyer Rd. (614) 231-2869
www.columbusairport.stayhgi.com

Airport-Easton Area Hampton Inn
4280 International Gateway (614) 235-0717
www.columbusairport.hamptoninn.com

The Ohio State University Hilton Garden Inn

3232 Olentangy River Rd.
(614) 263-7200
www.columbusuniversityarea.stayhgi.com

**The Ohio State University
Aloft University District**
1295 Olentangy River Rd. (614) 294-7500
www.aloftcolumbus.com

**The Ohio State University
Hampton Inn & Suites**
3160 Olentangy River Rd. (614) 268-8700
www.columbusuniversityareasuites.hamptoninn.com

Hampton Inn and Suites Hilliard
3950 Lyman Dr 614-334-1800
www.columbushilliardsuites.hamptoninn.com



EL VAQUERO
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

3230 Olentangy River Road
Columbus, Ohio, 43202
(614) 261-0900
www.ElVaqueroRestaurants.com

EVERYDAY
HAPPY HOUR
4 pm-8 pm

Now offering Margaritas to go!

\$5.00 OFF
your total bill of \$25 or more
Coupon valid only Sunday – Thursday. Excludes tax and alcohol. Dine-in and carry-out. One coupon per table. Not valid with any other offers. Valid at all locations with coupon. Expires 10/1/21

\$6.00 OFF
your total bill of \$30 or more
Coupon valid only Sunday – Thursday. Excludes tax and alcohol. Dine-in and carry-out. One coupon per table. Not valid with any other offers. Valid at all locations with coupon. Expires 10/1/21

upset loss like that would hurt the Buckeyes with the targets who saw the game in person. But Buckeye Scoop recruiting writer Marc Givler told BSB prior to the matchup with the Ducks that he thinks what happens on the field is less important than some would think.

“Generally, I never think that kids are going to decide on the results of the game. I think people blow this out of proportion,” Givler said. “But with that said, 100,000 fans should be a really great atmosphere. That’s an advantage that Ohio State has over 90 percent of college football, so you want to be able to show kids what it would be like to play a home game in Ohio Stadium and what that all entails from an atmosphere standpoint.”

Givler also noted that the group of prospects in attendance are generally already holding Ohio State in high favor heading into the visit, so they should be moved less by what they saw in the game itself.

“A lot of these guys have already been to Ohio State, so they already have great feelings about Ohio State,” he said. “They wouldn’t be coming back if not, so they liked their own officials or the previous visits or whatever it may be. They liked those. A lot of these kids visited over the summer, and now you just want to validate those positive feelings about Ohio State. So, you go out there, you show them a great atmosphere and you show them how you coach your team on a gameday.”

Bucks Visit Allar With Hope Of Flip

The move by former five-star quarterback Quinn Ewers to enroll at Ohio

State early for the 2021 class sent shockwaves throughout college football. It even caused copycats, including in the Big Ten with Rutgers quarterback Gavin Wimsatt, who made the same move Sept. 4.

But it also had a ripple effect for the Buckeyes and what they plan to do in terms of recruiting at the quarterback position – not only in the distant future, but also in the 2022. Now, without a quarterback for its upcoming class, Ohio State seems likely to look both in-state and at prospects who have already committed to see if a flip is possible.

And the Buckeyes appear to be doing both at once in the case of four-star quarterback Drew Allar of Medina, Ohio. The 6-5, 228-pound Allar committed to Penn State in March, at which point he was listed as the No. 257 overall prospect in the 2022 class.

About six months later, Allar is now a top-100 prospect, climbing all the way to No. 92 in the rankings.

According to Ari Wasserman, former BSB writer and current recruiting analyst for The Athletic, Allar was visited at his high school by Ohio State quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis for a Sept. 3 game. That night, the QB prospect threw for 391 yards and four touchdowns, so it is safe to assume Dennis liked what he came to see.

Allar followed that performance with a career-high 523 passing yards during a 38-27 win against Stow on Sept. 10. Givler said that Ohio State is certainly going to go for the flip with Allar, but he thinks it is unlikely the Buckeyes succeed in their mission.

“I think Ohio State is definitely going to try – it has already started that pro-



SONNY BROCKWAY

HOSTING DUTIES — Ohio State head coach Ryan Day (left), seen here chatting with Oregon counterpart Mario Cristobal, played host Sept. 11 to a large contingent of high school prospects on hand at Ohio Stadium to watch the third-ranked Buckeyes host the Pac-12 rival Ducks.

cess – but it’s going to be, in my opinion, very difficult to convince Drew to give up on a really, really appealing depth chart situation at Penn State and enter maybe the most competitive quarterback room

in the country right now,” Givler said. “It definitely is something that would make sense for Ohio State. It’s almost

Continued On Page 28

ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Scoop’s Marc Givler

Ohio State is eyeing Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star wide receiver Carnell Tate. Where do the Buckeyes stand with Tate, and how important of a get would he be for the 2023 class?

“I very much like Ohio State. I think they’re in a great position to land his commitment when he announces on the 8th. They’ve recruited so many good receivers, it’s hard to get too up and down over one player at that position right now, but if you trust (wide receivers coach) Brian Hartline, you know that this is one of his top guys, and he’s put a lot of time on this one. And from what we’ve seen on the field the last couple of years, when Brian Hartline likes someone, that generally works out well for Ohio State on the field. The guys he likes coming out of high school have generally panned out for them.

“It’s one of those that you get excited about because it’s just like so many of these other guys Hartline has landed. It’s another Marvin Harrison Jr., it’s another Emeka Egbuka, it’s another top-60 type of prospect. It just keeps the ball rolling, and yes, it’s a deep wide receiver room right now in terms of the quality, but it’s not so much in quantity. They don’t have a ton of numbers there. What they have is outstanding, but it’s not huge numbers, so they’re going to have to get three or four more good ones in 2023. This would be a phenomenal start if they can land Tate, and I think they will.”

Do you expect Tate to be the next commitment in Ohio State’s 2023 class or are there some other names for recruits who could commit to the Buckeyes before him?

“You never quite know. I mean, right now Tate is the safe pick for the next guy. But who knows what could happen with someone like Phenix City (Ala.) Glenwood School five-star cornerback A.J. Harris? I think that’s maybe more toward Thanksgiving, but Harris is going to come for that Maryland game on Oct. 9. Could something happen between now and then? It’s possible.

“It feels like we’ve had four-star offensive lineman Joshua Padilla

from Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne on commitment watch for several months now. That’s one that I think could maybe go at any time, but he’s talking about maybe making some officials now, so we’ll see. If you were a betting man and you tried to bet the timing of these things, you’d be losing a lot of money. It’s very difficult. Unless a kid sets a firm date, it’s very difficult to time these things. So, we’ll see what happens coming out of Oregon.

“You look at someone like Pickerington (Ohio) Central five-star safety Sonny Styles, who I think they’re in great shape with, I don’t think that one is ending anytime soon. To bring this full-circle, I do think it’s most likely that Tate is next, but let’s see what happens through the next few weeks and some of the visitors they may get.”

Speaking of Styles, he is obviously a major talking point being a top-10 prospect nationally who comes from the state of Ohio. What does Ohio State have to do to secure his commitment down the line when he ultimately makes his decision?

“I think just continue to do what they’re doing. I think he really likes the idea they have sold him on of being a position-less defensive player where, depending on the opponent and the situation, he may be standing up as an edge rusher, he may be playing linebacker or maybe more of a hybrid, bullet type, covering in space. And I think he really likes that idea of just being used in that way (because) that’s kind of how his high school team uses him. That is obviously a big factor for him.

“He also has a great relationship with (linebackers coach) Al Washington, and quite frankly, he’s just more of an OSU guy than his brother (wide receiver Lorenzo Styles Jr.) was. I know everyone’s going to point to his brother being at Notre Dame and think that he’s going to automatically do that, but I really don’t think that’s going to be the case. I really think Ohio State is in a good position right now. Ironically, it was his brother who put him in touch with Ohio State. His brother wasn’t doing that out of randomness. That was obviously

a school that Sonny wanted to hear from when he was a freshman.

“There’s going to be a lot of talk about that dynamic, and yes, Notre Dame is going to get its chances with him here with visits, but I think Ohio State continuing to hammer the ‘you’re our top priority and we’re going to use you in all these different situations’ is going to be a winning formula.”

After West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star cornerback Jyaire Brown solidified his commitment by shutting down his recruitment, are there any current commits or position groups from Ohio State’s 2022 class that fans should be concerned about?

“I still think the secondary is worth watching because there’s just so many of them, and you just wonder if they’re all going to make it to the finish line or if someone’s going to look at a depth chart somewhere else and like things a little bit more. So I would still kind of watch that. With that being said, once they lost Jacksonville (Fla.) Riverside five-star cornerback Jaheim Singletary, it felt like everything stabilized at that point because you were really looking at some of these guys in that secondary like, ‘Is this going to stick, is that going to stick?’ And I think when Singletary left, it seemed to stabilize things for now.

“There’s really not anything I’m looking at right now that’s overly concerning. But again, I just go back to that you have a lot of defensive backs. Are you going to continue to kick tires elsewhere or are you going to stand pat with what you have? I think it’s worth keeping an eye on. But again, I think things have stabilized a lot more in the last month or two. They’re in better shape now with keeping this thing all together than they were a month or two ago. With the Singletary situation finally getting some resolution, that allowed everyone to relax a little bit and not worry so much about numbers and things like that.”

Elite Players Include OSU Among Top Schools

Continued From Page 27

a no-brainer, really, with Ewers reclassifying that you would try and make this happen. But I think it's going to be really difficult to be successful with that."

If Allar were to remain with the Nittany Lions, Givler said he wouldn't be surprised if Ohio State stays put and holds off pursuing a quarterback for the 2022 class. Instead, he thinks the transfer portal could be the Buckeyes' best bet to ensure depth at quarterback in the near future.

"I would think at that point they're just going to have to watch some senior film and see if anyone jumps out to them," Givler said. "It's going to be really difficult to fill the quarterback spot in 2022 right now. A lot of these guys are committed and are in situations they like, and you're trying to convince someone to enter this quarterback room right now. It's not going to be an easy task.

"It's very possible they'll have to just punt on the quarterback position in '22 and refocus their energy on 2023. And then at that point, it becomes a matter of, OK, can you get a grad transfer or something in the offseason that could give you some depth? Maybe a Gunnar Hoak 2.0.

But I don't think it's a situation where they 100 percent have to get a quarterback in '22. I just think it's one of those things where if they can find someone that makes sense for Ohio State, they're going to pursue it, but I don't think they're going to reach for a project in '22. I don't think that does anybody any good."

Buckeyes In Pair Of Top Schools Lists

Ohio State found its way into the top schools list of a pair of prospects in the 2023 class, including one of the highest-rated recruits the Buckeyes are trying to sign.

Arlington (Texas) Seguin four-star cornerback Jamel Johnson has included the Buckeyes in his top 10, along with Alabama, Auburn, Florida State, LSU, Michigan, Oklahoma, Texas, Texas A&M and USC.

Johnson ranks as the No. 187 overall prospect in the class. The 6-1, 175-pound defensive back was named the District 5-5A-II Freshman of the Year in Texas in 2019 then followed that with first-team all-district honors as a sophomore. He does not have any crystal ball predictions.

The Buckeyes also were in the top 12 schools of Des Moines (Iowa) South-

east Polk five-star offensive tackle Kadyn Proctor. Ohio State was mentioned along with Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Iowa State, LSU, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Texas and Texas A&M.

Proctor is the top prospect in Iowa, the top offensive tackle and the No. 5 overall prospect in the class. The 6-7, 330-pound tackle was projected as a future first-round pick and compared to Baltimore Ravens All-Pro tackle Ronnie Stanley by 247Sports recruiting analyst Allen Trieu.

The five-star OT also does not have any crystal balls, but another top-tier Iowa prospect, Altoona Southeast Polk four-star safety Xavier Nwankpa, tweeted, "I'm bringing (little) bro (with) me (by the way) y'all" with Proctor's top schools announcement. For what it's worth, both of Nwankpa's crystal ball predictions are in favor of Ohio State.

OSU Sends Out Pair Of Offers

Ohio State sent out offers to two top-150 prospects in the 2023 class since BSB last went to press, each of which went to SEC territory.

One was to Orlando (Fla.) Edgewater

four-star athlete Cedric Baxter Jr., the No. 16 athlete and No. 150 overall prospect in the class.

At 6-1 and 215 pounds, Baxter has seen time at running back, defensive back and linebacker during his time in high school and has shown range with 426 rushing yards on offense and 20 tackles on defense.

Thus far, Baxter has no crystal ball predictions, but he does have offers from such schools as Cincinnati, Florida, Notre Dame, Penn State, Texas and Texas A&M.

Also receiving an offer was four-star wide receiver Dalton Brooks from Shiner, Texas. The 6-1, 175-pounder is ranked the No. 48 overall prospect in the class.

Brooks helped Shiner to a 14-0 record and the Texas 2A D-I state championship, and he won title game offensive MVP honors in the process last season. He also has no crystal ball predictions but holds offers from Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Texas, Texas A&M, USC and Wisconsin.

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

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago - 1986

The high school football season was in full swing and already there were several outstanding performances to chronicle on the Ohio State recruiting trail.

Leading the way was Rickey Watters, the third member of the Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt backfield that former Pittsburgh head coach Foge Fazio said was the best he had ever seen at the high school level, who began the year with 255 yards in 24 carries and two touchdowns.

Watters played alongside Jimmy (who later became known as Jaymes) Bryant (Ohio State) and Sean Borowski (Penn State) in the McDevitt backfield the year prior but was the final man standing.

Elsewhere in the backfield, Cincinnati CAPE star Carlos Snow toted the ball 16 times for 200 yards and two touchdowns on the way to a 17th consecutive victory.

Jeff Graham of Kettering (Ohio) Alter made the move from halfback to quarterback but was up to his old tricks within his team's wishbone attack. He rushed 24 times for 152 yards in a 16-13 win over Kettering Fairmont.

30 Years Ago - 1991

After signing only three offensive linemen in two years - Mike Dully in 1990 and C.J. Kelly and Greg Kuszmaul in 1991 - the Buckeyes were trying to load up their upcoming recruiting class with offensive linemen.

Luckily for them, there was plenty of talent in Ohio in the 1992 class along the offensive line, including several preseason All-Americans and other projected standouts.

Korey Stringer of defending Division I champion Warren Harding was the best of the bunch among most experts, and several of them believed him to be one of the top prospects in the entire country. He was named to the all-state team by both The Associated Press and United Press International, and had already qualified to play as a freshman in 1992 with a 2.40 grade-point-average and 21 on the ACT.

Stringer listed several schools that interested him, including Ohio State, Georgia Tech, Michigan, Tennessee and Pittsburgh.

25 Years Ago - 1996

Although Ohio State's season opener against Rice was not a marquee matchup, a number of the region's top high school football players flocked to Ohio Stadium to take in the action.

Perhaps the biggest development on the recruiting front at the Rice game was the appearance of one of Ohio's top players who had previously committed elsewhere.

Bedford wide receiver Chris Chambers made the trek down from northeast Ohio to watch the game. He told BSB that he had committed to Wisconsin, but in the weeks since, conflicting reports had him reconsidering the commitment and opening his college choice back up to other schools, including Ohio State.

One source close to the situation said Chambers "hasn't completely shut the door to other schools, but he is committed to Wisconsin."

20 Years Ago - 2001

Two of Ohio State's verbal commitments were impacted by the injury bug early in their senior seasons of high school football. Linebackers A.J. Hawk of Centerville, Ohio, and Mike Kudla of Medina (Ohio) Highland were both hit hard. Hawk would miss at least multiple weeks after undergoing arthroscopic surgery Sept. 11 at Ohio State. At the same time, Kudla was continuing to play despite suffering a broken bone in his hand.

Hawk said his injury occurred in the season opener against Hamilton.

"I was running the ball," he said. "I planted my leg and it got knocked back. I tried to play the following week, but it started feeling really bad. The doctors said I shouldn't risk it."

Hawk was diagnosed with torn cartilage in his right knee. OSU orthopedic consultant Dr. Chris Kaeding performed the procedure.

15 Years Ago - 2006

While Ohio State had been slow to make an offer to Cincinnati Anderson offensive tackle Mark Wetterer, the time for a scholarship bid from OSU looked to be approaching for the three-star prospect.

After playing just the first half in a 56-9 victory over Cincinnati Norwood, Wetterer told BSB that he could soon be hearing from the Buckeyes about a scholarship.

"They're supposed to call me probably sometime this week," he said.

Standing 6-5 and weighing 290 pounds, Wetterer appeared to be the biggest player on the field during his team's game against area foe Norwood, leading the way for 198 yards and 16 rushes to his side of the field in the first quarter alone.

"I think the whole line works together really well," he said. "When they run the ball over to my side, I feel they're more confident in me, but the whole line really sticks it out every day."

10 Years Ago - 2011

Ohio State picked up one of the gems of its 2010 class when it received a commitment from Fort Wayne (Ind.) Paul Harding running back Rod Smith, who was serving as a backup tailback for the Buckeyes in 2011.

The OSU coaching staff was set to return to Fort Wayne again - albeit to a different school - to keep tabs on Smith's younger brother Jaylon, who was beginning to see his offer list rapidly increase.

The 2013 prospect, who was offered by Ohio State in mid-June, picked up a scholarship offer from Notre Dame, adding the Fighting Irish to a list that included the Buckeyes, Indiana, Mississippi

State, Purdue, Tennessee and others.

The younger Smith starred on both sides of the ball for Bishop Leurs High School, but planned to play linebacker at the next level despite having success at running back like his older brother.

"Notre Dame asked me if I was going to play offense or defense, and I told them defense and that's what they want me to play," Smith said. "They see me as more of a pass rusher."

Five Years Ago - 2016

The 2015 Ohio State recruiting class was loaded with talent, but only four members of that group saw playing time as true freshmen. After just one game, nine members of the 2016 class had already seen game action, including one player - left guard Michael Jordan - who was a starter.

Part of the discrepancy could be down to numbers, and head coach Urban Meyer acknowledged the Buckeyes were too deep to play many freshmen a year prior, but he also said playing guys earlier in their careers is the plan at any top program.

"I first learned that when Pete Carroll was at USC," Meyer said. "I read an article that they don't recruit a guy to redshirt them. There are too many good guys that want to come to a top-five school. And we consider Ohio State a top-five school."

Despite recent success with players who took a redshirt year - including Darron Lee and Eli Apple who went in the first round of the 2016 NFL draft - Meyer said the Buckeyes aren't looking to take commitments from project players very often, even if they have in the past.

"Years ago, you would do that," the coach said. "You'd say, 'Let's take this kid. What do you think he's going to be like in two to three years?' We're very rarely in that conversation now."

One Year Ago - 2020

Ohio State continued its strong start to the 2022 recruiting class when Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona three-star tight end Bennett Christian announced his commitment Sept. 1 to the Buckeyes.

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

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

Christian made a similar visit to Tennessee a week later, where his father had played defensive tackle, but ultimately decided that he wanted to blaze a new path, committing to Ohio State over the Volunteers.

Burrow-Led Bengals Bank On Former Bucks

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Everywhere quarterback Joe Burrow turns, he's running into former teammates from his days at Ohio State between 2015 and 2017, especially in the captains' room at the Cincinnati Bengals training complex.

Burrow and safety Vonn Bell are second-year captains while defensive end Sam Hubbard is a first-timer among the seven players voted Cincinnati captains for 2021 season.

"I think as the years have gone on, that's something I've had my sights set on," said Hubbard, who started his fourth pro season Sept. 12 against the Minnesota Vikings. "Hopefully, I can be a captain here for many years. It's a great honor."

The OSU connection goes even deeper for Burrow, the Athens, Ohio, native who spent his final two seasons at LSU, including winning the 2019 Heisman Trophy as a senior when the Tigers won the national title.

Burrow played with cornerback Eli Apple at Ohio State in 2015 and offensive tackle Isaiah Prince (2015-17). Another Bengals player with OSU ties is practice squad linebacker Keandre Jones, a Buckeye teammate of Burrow in 2016 and '17 before he finished his career at Maryland.

All told, there are seven Bengals who went through OSU's program, including Noah Spence. The practice squad defensive end played for the Buckeyes in 2012 and '13, but the following year he was banned by the Big Ten after two drug policy violations. He played at Eastern Kentucky in 2015 before entering the 2016 NFL draft and being picked 39th overall by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

There were even more former Buckeyes in the Bengals' preseason camp, and the roster number could have reached as high as 10 before some late transactions.

Center/guard Billy Price, the 21st overall pick in 2018, was traded Aug. 30 to the New York Giants. Price played at OSU from 2014-17, winning the Rimington Trophy as the best center in the nation and earning first-team All-America honors his final season.

A day later, offensive lineman Michael Jordan was waived. He started every game during his career at Ohio State from 2016-18, including 27 at left tackle and 14 at center, and was a first-team All-American as a junior.

On Sept. 7, rookie punter Drue Chrisman, a free-agent signee, was released in one of the Bengals' final cutdown moves. He was a part of Cincinnati LaSalle's Division II state titles in 2014 and '15 before punting for OSU between 2017-20.

Burrow is the most heralded of the Buckeye bunch entering his second NFL season, but Bell has had a notable career

since helping the Buckeyes to the 2014 national championship.

Drafted in 2016 in the second round by the New Orleans Saints, Bell signed with the Bengals as an unrestricted free agent in 2020 and became a captain, playing all 1,059 defensive snaps and leading the team in tackles (114) and forced fumbles (three).

Bell has ranked in the top two on his team in tackles and solo tackles in each of his five pro seasons.

Apple, the 10th overall pick in the 2016 draft by the Giants, played alongside Bell on the national title team at Ohio State. After redshirting as a freshman for the 2013 season, Apple played 28 games, including 27 starts, the next two seasons.

In addition to the Giants, Apple has also played for New Orleans and Carolina. He signed a free-agent contract with the Bengals on March 23 of this year, and an injury in the secondary moved him into a starting role against Minnesota.

"We expect great things from Eli," said Bengals head coach Zac Taylor.

Hubbard on July 26 signed a four-year contract extension through the 2025 season. Not bad for a third-round pick (77th overall) in 2018. He ranks third in sacks (16½) among all players from that class, trailing only Bradley Chubb of Denver (20½) and Harold Landry of Tennessee (19).

"He's been a tremendous leader on this team," Taylor said. "He comes to work every single day, and we look forward to him being a leader for us for years to come."

Being chosen a captain was a bonus for Hubbard.

"I think there's a lot that goes into being a captain," he said. "Every situation should be handled differently. You've got 53 guys that look to you in good times, bad times, how you carry yourself, how



FILE PHOTO

WHEN HE WAS A BUCKEYE — Before he transferred to LSU and won a national championship as well as the 2019 Heisman Trophy, current Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow (10) spent three seasons with the Buckeyes from 2015 to 2017. He left for LSU after spring practice in 2018 and, two years later, led the Tigers to the national title.

you come into work every single day."

Burrow earned his teammates' respect as well and was voted a captain as a rookie in a season cut short by an ACL tear in his 10th game.

He finished with a 65.3 completion percentage while throwing for 2,688 yards, 13 touchdowns, five interceptions and a passer rating of 89.8. Burrow had five 300-yard games, and his 264 completions were the most ever by an NFL quarterback through his first 10 games.

Vikings head coach Mike Zimmer is a fan and compared Burrow to former Ben-

gals quarterback Carson Palmer.

"I have been extremely impressed with watching Burrow," said Zimmer, who spent six seasons with the Bengals as defensive coordinator from 2008 to 2013. "This kid is competitive. He's a heck of a scrambler. He's got a big-time arm. He's not afraid to throw the ball into tight windows. He seems to see things and get the ball off really quick. It looks like, I remember, Carson in the way he could spin the ball. This guy probably will be better than him."



Eli Apple

Let our friendly staff take care of you before, during & after the game.

Enjoy your favorite team on our many HD flat-screen TVs

Friends, Fun & Great Food!

NFL Ticket

Shade on the Canal
19 S. High St.
Canal Winchester
614-837-9873

Shade on 30th St.
850 S. 30th St.
Heath
740-788-9287

Shade on State St.
994 E State St.
Athens
740-566-1009

Trailblazer Bell Led Buckeyes During '31 Season

Throughout the 2021 football season, Buckeye Sports Bulletin will publish historical stories from seasons ending in the numeral "1." This week, BSB looks back at the 1931 season and one of its star players, offensive and defensive lineman William Bell.

By MARK REA

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

If you look at the history of the 1931 college football season in terms of the Ohio State team, well-chronicled are the exploits of such All-Americans as halfback Lew Hinchman and quarterback Carl Cramer as well as team captain Stu Holcomb and junior end Sid Gillman.

Hinchman was on his way to becoming a three-time All-American, while Cramer's elusiveness and speed – not to mention his ability to run, throw, kick and return punts – reminded many Buckeye fans of the legendary Chic Harley. Holcomb was a cerebral player who would later serve as head coach at Purdue, director of athletics at Northwestern and general manager of the Chicago White Sox, and Gillman went on to an illustrious coaching career of his own, earning induction into both the College Football Hall of Fame as well as the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Hinchman, Cramer, Holcomb and Gillman were part of an explosive OSU offense that averaged 24.6 points per game in 1931 and outscored its opponents by a 221-41 margin. But as with many prolific scoring teams, the players most overlooked are often the linemen responsible for allowing the skilled position players to do what they do best.

Such was the case with senior tackle William "Big Bill" Bell, who not only had to overcome the fact that he was playing a position that received little recognition but was facing another hurdle. He was Black in a sport still dominated by white players and coaches.

During the first 40 years of its existence, the Ohio State football team had welcomed only a handful of African-American players to wear the scarlet and gray.

Frederick Douglas Patterson, the light-skinned son of a Greenfield, Ohio, carriage manufacturer, became the first Black football player at Ohio State when he joined the Buckeyes for the 1891 season. Five years later, Julius B. Tyler, the son of a prominent Columbus businessman, became the first Black player to score a touchdown as a Buckeye.

But while the achievements of Patterson and Tyler were significant, they were quickly relegated to little more than footnotes in Ohio State football history. It was certainly nothing out of the ordinary for the era, but after Tyler left the team in 1896 after only one season, it wasn't until 1929 when the Buckeyes would have another Black player on its roster.

Bell couldn't have known it at the time, but he became the man who squeezed through the crack in the racial door left ajar by Patterson and Tyler, eventually swinging it open for the modern-day history of Ohio State football that features the exploits of

Heisman Trophy winners Archie Griffin, Eddie George and Troy Smith not to mention multi-decorated All-America performers Bill Willis, Jim Parker, Bob Ferguson, Jack Tatum, John Hicks, Korey Stringer, Orlando Pace, Mike Doss, Ryan Shazier, Denzel Ward, Jeff Okudah and Chase Young.

"In my opinion, I don't believe William Bell gets the recognition he deserves in terms of what he meant to Ohio State football," OSU football historian Jack Park told BSB. "At that time, there were very few Black players in college football, and there hadn't been any Black players at Ohio State in more than 30 years.

"His background, where he came from, what he was and what he became, and all he accomplished after he left Ohio State, it's a truly remarkable story about a remarkable man."

Future educator, administrator and coach William McNeil Bell was born in the Deep South during the early part of the 20th century, the great-grandson of a former slave. He was named for William Christopher, the son of an accomplished Virginia businessman and landowner who moved to Georgia in the 1820s to seek his own fame and fortune.

Christopher apparently was not bound to the prevailing philosophy among slave owners at the time. He not only defied the laws prohibiting the education of slaves, but he also taught them how to read and write as well as such skills as masonry and blacksmithing with the intention of freeing them to become productive citizens in their own right.

Prior to enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Christopher had already freed dozens of slaves, including a 30-year-old man and his family, providing them with money, a sliver of land and, perhaps most importantly, identification papers attesting to their free status. The young man adopted his former owner's surname, and John Nathan Christopher soon began making a new life for his family as the self-taught craftsman of fine furniture.

At first, John Nathan made furniture exclusively for the William Christopher family, but his workmanship attracted such a demand that he soon opened his own shop and began to work for himself. He also dabbled in gold mining and served two post-Civil War terms as justice of the peace in Blairsville, a small town on the northern border of Georgia. His descendants eventually settled some 120 miles southwest in Polk County, Ga., where Bill was born in 1912, the fifth of nine children.

"I owe a great debt to William Christopher," Bell once said. "He taught John Nathan to read and write as well as so many other things. And he gave him his freedom. My great-grandfather in turn taught my father all his skills, and my father taught me. William Christopher had a direct influence on my life and everything I accomplished."

As a toddler, Bell spent his days as a sharecropper's son in Georgia, but his family uprooted and moved to Akron, Ohio, shortly before the outbreak of World War I. By the time he reached high school age, the war was over and Bell was looking to further his education by attending college.

In the late 1920s, most of the opportu-



FILE PHOTO

LEADING THE WAY — William Bell was one of the few African-American players in the early history of the Ohio State football program. Bell earned second-team All-Big Ten and honorable-mention All-America honors following the 1931 season. After college, Bell became an educator and national championship-winning coach.

nities for higher learning available to African-American youngsters were at historically Black colleges throughout the South. There were, however, certain allowances made if the youngster was athletically as well as academically gifted, and Bell was both.

There was no official policy at Ohio State in 1928 prohibiting Black players from participating in football, but an unwritten rule had kept the program all white during much of the preceding three decades. John W. Wilce was embarking upon the final season of a 16-year tenure as head coach of the Buckeyes, and while Wilce was becoming tired of the increasingly commercial nature of college football, he continued to view the sport as vital to the development of young men.

Although his superiors in the OSU athletic department expressed their misgivings, warning Wilce of the possible ramifications of putting an African-American player in uniform, the longtime coach agreed to allow Bell to try out for the freshman team.

Blessed with great strength and agility, Bell made a quick ascension up the freshman depth chart at tackle. He was ready to take his place on the varsity team during his sophomore season of 1929 but was forced to prove himself again that fall for a new coaching staff.

Sam Willaman, a star halfback, fullback and end for the Buckeyes from 1911 to 1913, had taken over as head coach for the retired Wilce but had received the same

warning about what might happen if the Buckeyes fielded a Black player.

But Willaman understood perhaps more than any other college coach at the time what was at stake. He had been hired following a successful four-year stint as head coach at Iowa State, where one of his star players was lineman Jack Trice, the proud son of a former slave and Buffalo Soldier.

Trice, who had played football under Willaman at East Technical High School in Cleveland and was the first Black player in Iowa State history, died of complications from injuries he had sustained during a game against Minnesota in 1923.

Trice suffered a broken collarbone on the second play of the game but reportedly insisted he was all right and continued to play. In the third quarter, while attempting to tackle a ball-carrier by throwing a rolling block, Trice was trampled by three Minnesota players in what many observers believed was a racially-motivated ploy.

Trice was removed from the game and sent to a Minneapolis hospital. Doctors there declared him fit enough to travel, and he returned by train to the Iowa State campus with his teammates. But two days later, on Oct. 8, 1923, Trice died from hemorrhaged lungs and internal bleeding as a result of the injuries sustained during the game.

Mindful of the risks of putting a Black player on the field during that era, Willaman met with Bell before the 1929 season to express his reservations.

"But it never occurred to me that I wouldn't play," Bell said years later.

As a result, the player who became known simply as "Big Bill" became the anchor of the offensive line for the Buckeyes in each of the next three seasons, opening holes for the likes of three-time All-American Wes Fesler as well as Cramer and Hinchman. During his senior season in 1931, Bell was named to the All-Big Ten second team and earned All-America honorable mention as well, a first for a Black player at Ohio State.

Roller-Coaster Ride

The 1931 season was an up-and-down one for the Buckeyes. Joining Willaman's coaching staff were a pair of graduate assistants – Fesler and Dick Larkins, who had been seniors on the 1930 team. Fesler would later coach the Buckeyes from 1947-50, leading OSU to its first-ever Rose Bowl victory after the 1949 season, while Larkins went into sports administration and succeeded Lynn St. John as Ohio State's director of athletics in 1947. Larkins held the position until his retirement in 1970.

The Buckeyes kicked off the '31 campaign with a 67-6 victory against Cincinnati at Ohio Stadium in a game that was played in midsummer heat and humidity. The stifling heat conspired to keep the opening-day crowd down to just 15,699, but those who stayed home missed a blowout that had OSU leading 40-0 at halftime and outgaining the Bearcats by a 468-32 margin in total offense.

The following week, it was the Buckeyes who were on the wrong end of a lopsided halftime score. Vanderbilt ran out to a 26-0 lead at the break and then held on for a 26-21 win. But Ohio State made things interesting in the second half. Halfback Bill Carroll, nicknamed "The Blonde Express," scored two touchdowns and appeared to have a third near the end of the game, but officials spotted the ball down just short of the end zone.

That was followed by a 20-7 upset at Michigan in front of a crowd of 58,026 at Ferry Field. It was far and away Michigan's largest crowd of the year, but it went home disappointed when Carroll scored two TDs and Cramer added a 45-yard punt return for a touchdown. It turned out to be the only loss in 1931 for the Wolverines, who shut out their final six opponents, beating them by a 100-0 margin.

Ohio State couldn't sustain its momentum from the upset of its archrivals and lost a 10-0 decision to Northwestern at home the following week. The Buckeyes rebounded the following week with a 13-6 win at Indiana, a game in which they intercepted five passes. Cramer scored both touchdowns, including one on a 70-yard punt return in the fourth quarter.

That set up a homecoming date with the U.S. Naval Academy, an early November contest played in a downpour of sleet and rain.

"That appeared to be a perfect marriage for the Midshipmen – Navy and a lot of water," Park said. "But from the very beginning, nothing went well for the sailors."

As always, the Middies were accompanied on the trip by their mascot goat, nicknamed Bill, whose color had become a somewhat dirty gray from all its travels throughout the season. Navy had taken

a live goat to each of its games since the mascot made its first appearance at the Army-Navy game in 1893. The Midshipmen won a 6-4 decision that year and elected to adopt the goat as an official mascot and good-luck charm.

A group of Ohio State students stumbled upon Bill bedded down in one of the campus agricultural buildings the Friday night before the 1931 game and decided to dye a portion of the goat with mercurochrome, the bright, red topical antiseptic used for decades by mothers to prevent cuts and skinned knees from getting infected.

As the day of the game dawned and the Midshipmen came to fetch Bill, they were stunned to find the goat now sporting a decidedly scarlet and gray hue. They tried their best to get rid of the reddish color, but no amount of scrubbing or rainfall seemed to work.

And things only got worse for Navy as the afternoon wore on.

The Buckeyes took care of the Middies by a 20-0 final in a contest that featured three unusual touchdowns. A pass from Cramer was deflected off Navy defender Larry Smith and into the hands of Gillman, who raced to the end zone. Near halftime, Martin Varner blocked a punt, which was returned 32 yards for a score by Junius Farrall. And then Farrall scored the final touchdown on a 20-yard interception return in the third quarter.

The win began a string of three straight shutout wins for the Buckeyes. They went to Wisconsin and scored a 6-0 win played at Camp Randall Stadium in a heavy fog caused by a wet field. Late in the first quarter, Varner blocked a punt and Bell recovered in the end zone for the only score of the game and the only touchdown of Bell's career.

That was followed by a 40-0 win against Illinois marking OSU's first-ever victory vs. the Fighting Illini in Ohio Stadium. It was also the biggest loss for Illinois head coach Bob Zuppke in 29 seasons at the helm of the Illini.

That game was originally scheduled as the season finale, but the Big Ten decided to extend the 1931 season by adding three charity games between the league's six teams and donate the proceeds to unemployment relief funds in the seven conference states to help families continuing to struggle through the Great Depression.

On a cold and windy late November afternoon in Minneapolis, approximately 25,000 fans watched as Minnesota handed Ohio State a 19-7 defeat. The Golden Gophers, coached at the time by future Michigan head coach Herbert "Fritz" Crisler, were led by fullback Jack Manders, who rushed for 121 yards behind a line that included All-America guard Clarence "Biggie" Munn. Munn went on to become head coach at Michigan State and led the Spartans to back-to-back national championships in 1951 and 1952.

The game contributed \$46,000 to the conference's unemployment relief effort, while similar donations came from the other two games – a 16-0 Michigan win against Wisconsin and Purdue's 7-0 upset of Northwestern.

The extra games not only counted in the league standings, they altered the championship race with Purdue and Michigan sharing the Big Ten title with Northwestern, each with 5-1 records. Without the added

games, the Wildcats would have been outright champions for the first time in school history. Northwestern would have to wait until the 1936 season to finally win an outright Big Ten title, one of only two for the program. The other came in 1995.

Educator, Coach, Leader

While a handful of members of Ohio State's 1931 team went on to play professional football, many more prepared themselves for other pursuits, and Bell was no different. He had been a member of the African-American fraternity – Alpha Phi Alpha – serving as its sergeant at arms, and he was a member of the Varsity "O" as well as the Collegiate Council and the Interracial Council. During his senior year, the Upper Class Cabinet of the OSU chapter of the YMCA selected him to lead a new committee on interracial relations.

Bell graduated from Ohio State in 1932 and embarked upon a rich and successful career in education and coaching that crisscrossed the country.

Beginning in 1936, he began an eight-year stay at Florida A&M where he was athletic director and head football coach, leading the Rattlers to three Black college national championships, a tenure interrupted by military service with the U.S. Air Force in World War II during which he served as football coach at Tuskegee Army Air Field and its famed Black Fliers Warhawks team.

He returned to civilian life in 1946 and won another national title at North Carolina A&T, a school at which he also served as athletic director for 23 years. Bell retired

from athletics in 1968, but he continued his career in education as associate dean of students and professor of physical education at Iowa State before taking over as chair of the physical education and recreation department at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina.

"That physical education department was his baby," said Ike Walker, a former high school basketball coach who studied under Bell at North Carolina A&T in the 1950s. "He never referred to it as 'phys ed.' He always said, 'health and physical education.' He wanted it to be a profession."

So much so that Bell organized physical education departments at several universities and later assisted in the development of Fayetteville's National Youth Sports Program, a summer organization for disadvantaged youths. Bell also continued his own education, earning his doctorate in health and physical education from Ohio State in 1960 and serving on numerous local and national health and physical education committees.

"Dr. Bell was part of a vanishing breed," Walker said. "In all my years with him, I never read or heard of anything shady. That's why I remember him as such a gentleman. The man was affable. He was courteous. He was kind. He didn't separate himself from students. I remember him fondly."

Bell remained active in education and community affairs until his death in 1991 at the age of 82.

We are committed to your health and safety






Fairfield
BY MARRIOTT

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES COLUMBUS/DUBLIN
7150 Sawmill Road, Columbus, Ohio 43235 • 614-389-3036




TOWNEPLACE SUITES
BY MARRIOTT

TOWNEPLACE SUITES COLUMBUS/HILLIARD
4079 Lyman Drive, Hilliard Ohio 43026 • 614-541-9309




Best Western

BEST WESTERN HILLIARD INN & SUITES
3831 Park Mill Run Drive, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 • 614-529-8118

Hoops Schedule Has Definite Football Feel

Maybe the schedule-makers for the Big Ten men's basketball season have a sense of humor or irony, but the end of the regular season for Ohio State mirrors the finish for the football team.

COURT REPORT Craig Merz

The Sept. 8 release of the conference basketball schedule for the 2021-22 season produced the fact that both the football and men's cage programs will face Michigan State and Michigan in their final games with the difference being the hoopsters hosting both in Value City Arena while the Spartans football team visits Columbus before the Buckeyes play their gridiron archrivals in Ann Arbor.

By the way, basketball opens the season with a nonconference home game Nov. 9 vs. Akron, the same school the football team plays Sept. 25.

Back to the court, the Buckeyes (21-10, 12-8 conference last season) open Big Ten play Dec. 5 at Penn State. After a nonleague game against Towson in VCA three days later, Wisconsin comes to town Dec. 11.

The remainder of the 20-game conference schedule begins with a road encounter Jan. 2 at Nebraska. The Buckeyes then travel four days later to Indiana.

Big Ten Network analyst Andy Katz puts that OSU-IU contest among his top-five most anticipated league games this season. He cites the matchup between Buckeyes power forward E.J. Liddell and Hoosiers forward Trayce Jackson-Davis, listing both as possible player of the year candidates.

Ohio State has home-only games vs. Iowa, Michigan State and Northwestern. They play one game apiece on the road at Illinois, Purdue and Rutgers. The Fighting Illini defeated the Buckeyes, 91-88, in overtime of the Big Ten tournament championship game on March 14.

The Buckeyes have home-and-home games against Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Penn State and Wisconsin.

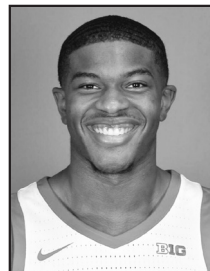
Michigan, the 2020-21 regular-season conference champions, hosts the Buckeyes on Feb. 12. The rivals split two games with then-No. 3 U-M defeating fourth-ranked OSU, 92-87, in Columbus on Feb. 21 before the Buckeyes prevailed in a 68-67 thriller in the conference semifinal played March 13.

The conference tourney will again be in Indianapolis at Bankers Life Fieldhouse from March 9-13.

Gearing Up

The Buckeyes are continuing their out-of-season schedule until their first official practice set for the last week of September. Activities include lifting, individual skill work and team workouts.

Per NCAA rules, teams are allowed 30 official practices over a 42-day period leading to the first game. OSU will host Indianapolis in a Nov. 1 exhibition game.



E.J. Liddell

Liddell said preparation this season is much better than a year ago when the COVID-19 pandemic limited interaction among team members.

"Last year was different because when we played our first game, it was very foreign," he said. "We barely got to play against each other in the summer."

"It's a lot better this year because we couldn't play open gym last year. Everybody had to have their separate basket – one person per basket. This year, I feel like it's a better time to get connected with people, learn how other people play."

Towns And Out

One member of the Buckeyes who won't be participating in workouts or games for a while is sixth-year senior forward Seth Towns, who will undergo back surgery soon. Towns isn't likely to return for three to four months, the program reported in a news release.

It has been a rough college career for Towns. He sustained a knee injury at the end of his sophomore season at Harvard in 2017-18. He underwent surgery and missed the next two seasons while recovering.

Towns then transferred to his hometown Buckeyes. The Columbus North-

2021-22 OSU Men's Basketball Schedule

Date	Opponent
Nov. 1	Indianapolis (Exh.)
Nov. 9	Akron
Nov. 12	Niagara
Nov. 15	Bowling Green ^
Nov. 18	at Xavier #
Nov. 22	at Seton Hall ^
Nov. 24	at Florida/Cal ^
Nov. 30	Duke*
Dec. 5	at Penn State
Dec. 8	Towson
Dec. 11	Wisconsin
Dec. 18	at Kentucky \$
Dec. 21	Tennessee Martin
Dec. 28	New Orleans
Jan. 2	at Nebraska
Jan. 6	at Indiana
Jan. 9	Northwestern Value City Arena
Jan. 13	at Wisconsin
Jan. 16	Penn State
Jan. 22	Nebraska
Jan. 27	at Minnesota
Jan. 30	at Purdue
Feb. 3	Iowa
Feb. 6	Marchyland
Feb. 9	at Rutgers
Feb. 12	at Michigan
Feb. 15	Minnesota
Feb. 19	Indiana
Feb. 24	at Illinois
Feb. 27	at Maryland
March 3	Michigan State
March 6	Michigan
^ - Fort Myers Tip-Off	
# - Gavitt Tipoff Games	
* - Big Ten/ACC Challenge	
\$ - CBSSports Classic at Las Vegas	

land product continued his rehab and did not debut last season until mid-December. He played 25 games, averaging 3.8 points and 2.2 rebounds in 10.8 minutes of action.

The Sept. 11 edition of Court Report chronicled the elder statesmen on the Buckeyes' roster that includes forwards Kyle Young and Indiana transfer Joey

Let our family help your family.

GEICO®

LOCAL OFFICE



614-934-3131
105 N. Hamilton Road
Kyle Haskins
Gahanna Office



614-689-8140
1730 Stringtown Road
Joshua Haskins
Grove City Office

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. 2018 GEICO

Press
Pub + on 5th
GOOD FOOD + FINE DRINKS

Press Grill
good food
fine drinks

Both locations open for lunch & dinner daily!

1505 W. 5th Ave
Near Grandview Ave
614-817-1198

Monday - Saturday:
11 AM - 10 PM
Sunday:
NOON - 10 PM

KITCHEN UNTIL 10 PM NIGHTLY

741 N. High St
In the Short North
614-298-1014

Monday - Saturday:
11:30 AM - 12:30 AM
Sunday:
NOON - 12:30 AM

KITCHEN UNTIL MIDNIGHT DAILY

presscolumbus.com

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

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
Roddy Gayle	SG	6-4	195	★★★★	Youngstown (N.Y.) Lewiston Porter
Bowen Hardman	SG	6-3	160	★★★	Cincinnati Princeton
Felix Okpara	C	6-11	210	★★★★	Chattanooga (Tn.) Hamilton Hts. Christian
Bruce Thornton	PG	6-2	205	★★★★	Alpharetta (Ga.) Milton

Brunk. Each will be 24 years old during the season.

Young and Brunk also have injury concerns. Brunk had back surgery in December 2020 and sat out his final season for the Hoosiers. But could be ready for this season's opener. Young has a history of leg issues, and in last season's Big Ten quarterfinal vs. Purdue, he sustained a concussion that cost him the final three games of the season.

"Boy, I hope he can avoid elbows," OSU head coach Chris Holtmann said. "That would be tremendous if he could see some of those coming."

Young has long since recovered from the concussion, but Holtmann is leery of pushing him too hard during the season because of his recurring lower body aches and pains. The words "load management" are used a lot for NBA players who periodically sit games or practices, and that phrase also applies to Young.

"We did it last year with him in practice," Holtmann said. "We had a whole plan in place for him because of his legs. His legs actually are feeling the best they've felt really in a couple years. You know, he's never played more than 25 minutes. I do think we could – to make sure he is ready at the end of the year –



Seth Towns

utilize the idea of just watching his minutes throughout the year.

"Whether that's load management or looking at his practice habits, he's going to do everything you ask him to. We've really tried to manage that. We'll continue to do that."

For The Future

Ohio State remains No. 1 nationally in recruiting for the 2022 cycle ahead of Kansas, Duke, North Carolina and Virginia according to the 247Sports composite, but the process never ends.

The Buckeyes still have one spot open – likely subject to change based on the wacky world of transfers now – and on Aug. 20 offered Orlando (Fla.) Lake Highland Prep three-star forward Brice Sensabaugh (6-4, 240). He is ranked 164th nationally and is expected to make a visit to the OSU campus for the Tulsa football game on Sept. 18.

Sensabaugh quickly listed OSU among his final four with Alabama, Florida and Georgia Tech.

He's considered by many of the experts as Ohio State's potential replacement for four-star wing Dillon Mitchell of Montverde (Fla.) Academy. Mitchell was thought of as a Buckeye lean and potential silent commit before he received

common experience.

Overtime Elite styles itself as "a transformative new sports league that offers the world's most talented young basketball players a better pathway to becoming professional athletes and engage and inspire a new age of young fans."

In other words, like the G-League Ignite, Overtime Elite is a squad that hopes to lure high school players to the pro ranks and away from the college game, offering what it considers to be a more direct path to the NBA – as well as a salary in the process.



Ryan Pedon

In the 2023 class, the Buckeyes will try to make inroads with Louisville Male forward Kaleb Glenn (6-6, 200), the top player in Kentucky who is ranked 38th in the nation. He has Indiana, Louisville, Tennessee and Texas A&M as his favorites but is keeping his options open.

Also, OSU assistant Ryan Pedon visited Christian Academy of Tennessee combo guard George Washington III (6-2, 165) in early September. He is ranked second in the state, eighth at his position and 40th nationally.

Collins & Kruse
LAW OFFICE

Your Elder Law, Estate Planning & VA Benefits Attorneys

Collins Law Office is headquartered in Hilliard, but we proudly serves clients all throughout Ohio, including Dayton, Findlay, Cincinnati, Columbus, Lancaster & Marion!

You need a legal advocate that is willing to put in the necessary work to ensure you get the benefits you're entitled to and the assurance you rightfully deserve. This is where Collins & Kruse Law Office thrives.

**Medicaid Crisis Planning/Applications | VA Benefit Applications and Planning
Asset Preservation | Probate | Estate Planning | Mesothelioma Claims**

Columbus Office

4010 Main St., Hilliard, Ohio 43026
614-369-8634

Findlay Office

610 N. Tiffin Ave., Findlay, Ohio 45840
419-365-6900

If you or a loved one has already entered or is expected to enter a nursing home, please call us immediately for a free consultation! For all other inquiries please call or email Jackie@CKElderlaw.com to reserve your seat in one of our workshops or to set up a free consultation.



Jackie Collins
Attorney/Army Veteran



Wren Kruse
Attorney

www.CKElderlaw.com

A Proud Member of **ELDERCOUNSEL**
Your Success. Our Commitment.
Excellence in Elder Law and Special Needs
MEMBER

Morrow Earns Promotion In Third Year At OSU

By WYATT CROSHER

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Entering her third season on Ohio State women's basketball's coaching staff, Carla Morrow was promoted to associate head coach.

The move was announced Aug. 31, along with the hiring of Florida A&M assistant coach Jalen Powell as the team's new assistant. Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff noted how hard-earned the move was for Morrow and how much she has influenced the program in her first two seasons.

"I am thrilled to announce a well-deserved promotion for Carla Morrow," McGuff said. "Her work ethic and passion for the game of basketball have been exceptionally impactful as we've continued to advance the program. Most importantly, her investment in our student-athletes has helped facilitate growth on the court, in the classroom and in the community."

When asked by BSB about what makes Morrow such an important coach on the staff, McGuff brought up her ability to help the team in a variety of ways both on and off the floor.

"She's done a fantastic job, and she's kind of been my right-hand person in terms of the X's and O's and how we play. She has a heavy hand in that," McGuff said. "She has great experience with basketball having coached in college for a long time, and also in the WNBA, and she's worked hard. She's been loyal, and those are really the reasons why she's earned this promotion."

While this is a move she appreciates, Morrow isn't reading too much into the jump to associate head coach. She told BSB her mind-set will remain the same as it has previously while entering the 2021-22 season.

"I appreciate it and I respect the confidence that Coach McGuff has in me and also the administration here at Ohio State," Morrow said. "From a day-to-day (standpoint), it doesn't change my thought process or my

approach. I'm always ready to get in the gym, wanting to be in the gym. So, I don't know. I'm probably one of the most boring associate head coaches there is, I guess."

Regardless of the importance of the move, it is a promotion that shows Morrow's importance to the Ohio State coaching staff. Morrow came to the Buckeyes following three years with the WNBA's Chicago Sky. In her final year with the Sky, she helped coach three all-stars – Diamond DeShields, Allie Quigley and Courtney Vandersloot – and helped get Chicago into the playoffs with a 20-14 record.

Though her time at the professional level was brief and she had plenty of experience in the college game prior to it, Morrow said there was still an adjustment period getting back into the swing of things when she started at Ohio State.

But she also said that those three seasons in the pro ranks proved to be valuable experience that she could utilize as a coach once she did return to the collegiate level.

"I would say mostly the day-to-day (duties are most different)," Morrow said. "In college, we're here, we're in the office. Our days are a little bit longer. In the WNBA, you do more of your work at home, so you come for practice, you come for meetings, and then you go home at 1-1:30 every day and do your scouting at home. That was a little bit of an adjustment period for me, especially having a little baby at home now. And the travel is a little different."

"I will say that my time in the WNBA, I got a lot more experience and just a big broader view of skill development, which I brought here to Ohio State. And then I just tweaked some things that are catered to our offense and our defensive concepts."

That extra experience was certainly noticed, especially by McGuff. The two had worked together when McGuff was head coach at Xavier from 2007-11. McGuff told BSB that Morrow has always been very knowledgeable but that the added time at the next level has been helpful, both when it comes to scheme and also when talking to players.

"She's continued to evolve and grow," McGuff said. "She's got a very expansive knowledge on both sides of the ball and can really help our kids grow and develop within the way we play and our style. That's been a big thing for us, too – her helping the young people grow, especially as basketball players."

OSU Women's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2022 who have verbally committed to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the ESPN rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Kaia Henderson	PG	5-6	N/A	New Hartford, N.Y.
Cotie McMahon	SG	5-11	★★★★	Centerville, Ohio
Mya Perry	SG	5-10	N/A	Reynoldsburg, Ohio

"A lot of young people aspire to play in the WNBA, and now we have somebody who's coached there and knows what it takes. She can really relay to them, 'This is how you're going to need to grow and develop the skills you're going to need.' That experience is incredibly, incredibly valuable."

All of that experience could not have prepared Morrow for the type of season Ohio State would face in 2020-21. Last year, while the Buckeyes ended the season with a 13-7 record – one that should have been more than enough to make the NCAA tournament – OSU was not there.

It was also not in the Big Ten tournament after the Buckeyes self-imposed a postseason ban due to the results of the investigation into former assistant coach Patrick Klein. Morrow said she did a lot of learning last season, specifically from McGuff and how he handled the difficult situation.

"I was really impressed with the way that Coach McGuff went about it, and everybody kind of took from him to get through it," Morrow said. "He never showed a weakness, he never showed that he was bothered by any of it, even though he may or may not have been."

"It was more, 'This is how it is. These are the things that we can control. These are the things that we can't control.' He was very matter-of-fact with what we could control, like coming to the gym every day and working as hard as we can work. And if it's not going to be seen by making the tournament this year, then we're putting ourselves in a position to make the tournament next year."

But all of that moves Morrow and the Buckeyes into this upcoming season. And though it is early, the Ohio State associate head coach has really enjoyed what she has seen from this team thus far.

"From when we started working out in late June to when we ended our workouts in early August, this is the first summer that I felt like a team that I've worked with has gotten better during the summer period," Mor-

row said. "Our players came in with great energy, great focus, and they just had the attitude that they were determined to get better on the court and in the weight room."

Beyond the good vibe she is getting from this roster in the early stages, there is another level of excitement because of what Ohio State has dealt with in each of Morrow's first two seasons with the team.

In year one, the Buckeyes solidified their spot in the NCAA tournament with a run to the Big Ten tournament championship game just for it to be canceled due to COVID-19. In year two, as mentioned, Ohio State never had a shot due to the postseason ban.

That gives year three an added jolt, with Morrow hoping to get another chance to make the 64-team NCAA field in 2022.

"I'm just excited that hopefully we get the opportunity to play in the NCAA tournament, but also knowing that it's a journey," Morrow said. "We're going to have our good days, we're going to have our bad days. We're going to have our bumps in the road, but I think the relationships and the chemistry that we've developed, we know that if we lean on each other, we can get through whatever it is."

For more news coverage surrounding the women's basketball team as it heads into the 2021-22 season, go to BuckeyeSports.com.

2021-22 OSU Women's Basketball Schedule

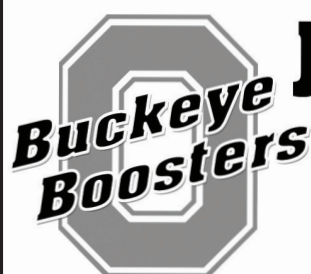
Date	Opponent
Nov. 3	Slippery Rock (Exh.)
Nov. 10	Bucknell
Nov. 14	Norfolk State
Nov. 17	Bowling Green
Nov. 23	Bellarmine
Nov. 27	Cincinnati
Dec. 1	at Syracuse
Dec. 5	at Purdue
Dec. 7	Mount St. Mary's
Dec. 12	Indiana
Dec. 15	Alabama State
Dec. 19	at UCLA
Dec. 21	at San Diego State
Dec. 31	at Michigan
Jan. 3	Penn State
Jan. 6	Illinois
Jan. 9	at Northwestern
Jan. 12	Michigan State
Jan. 15	at Minnesota
Jan. 20	Maryland
Jan. 23	at Rutgers
Jan. 27	Michigan
Jan. 31	at Iowa
Feb. 7	Rutgers
Feb. 10	Nebraska
Feb. 14	at Illinois
Feb. 17	at Maryland
Feb. 20	Wisconsin
Feb. 27	Michigan State



TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

Flat Stomach • Weight Loss • Strength Training • Cardio Kick-Boxing • Boot Camp

614-886-9331
foreverfitswan@yahoo.com



Join Us!

\$100/Year 614-326-3300
buckeyeboosters.com

...as we support the Buckeyes on the road and more!

Kick-Off Dinner

Travel to Away Football Games

Annual Celebrity Golf Outing

Meeting with Coaches, at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail check to:
Buckeye Boosters, 921 Chatham Ln., #301F, Columbus, OH 43221

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2021 FOOTBALL (1-1)

Sept. 2 at Minnesota, W 45-31; **11** OREGON, L 35-28; **18** TULSA; **25** AKRON.

Oct. 2 at Rutgers; **9** MARYLAND; **23** at Indiana; **30** PENN STATE.

Nov. 6 at Nebraska; **13** PURDUE; **20** MICHIGAN STATE; **27** at Michigan.

Dec. 4 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

2022 FOOTBALL

Sept. 2 NOTRE DAME; **10** ARKANSAS STATE; **17** TOLEDO; **24** at Michigan State.

Oct. 1 at Penn State; **8** RUTGERS; **15** IOWA; **29** INDIANA.

Nov. 5 at Northwestern; **12** WISCONSIN; **19** at Maryland; **26** MICHIGAN.

2023 FOOTBALL

Sept. 2 at Indiana; **9** SAN JOSE STATE; **16** WESTERN KENTUCKY; **23** at Notre Dame.

Oct. 7 MARYLAND; **14** at Purdue; **21** PENN STATE; **28** at Wisconsin.

Nov. 4 at Rutgers; **11** MICHIGAN STATE; **18** MINNESOTA; **25** at Michigan.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 3 Evansville Opener at Indiana, Men: 1/6; Women: 1/7; **10** Spiked Shoe Invitational at Penn State, Men: 6/6; Women: 5/6; **23** Bill Dellinger Invite (Women Only) at Eugene, Ore.

Oct. 1 Joe Piane Invitational at Notre Dame; **15** FSU Invite/Pre-Nationals at Tallahassee, Fla.; **29** Big Ten Championships at University Park, Pa.

Nov. 12 NCAA Regional Championships at Evansville, Ind.; **20** NCAA Championships at Tallahassee, Fla.

FIELD HOCKEY (5-1)

Aug. 27 at Ball State, W 1-0; **31** at Kent State, L 3-1.

Sept. 3 BUCKEYE INVITATIONAL vs. LAFAYETTE, W 4-3 (2OT); **6** BUCKEYE INVITATIONAL vs. MIAMI, W 1-0; **10** at Wake Forest, W 2-1; **12** at Appalachian State, W 2-0; **17** at Michigan State, 3 p.m.; **19** VIRGINIA, Noon; **27** LOUISVILLE, 4 p.m.

Oct. 3 MICHIGAN, Noon; **8** INDIANA, 3 p.m.; **10** OHIO, 1 p.m.; **15** at Northwestern, 4 p.m.; **17** at Iowa, 1 p.m.; **22** PENN STATE, 3 p.m.; **24** RUTGERS, Noon; **29** at Maryland, 7 p.m.; **31** at St. Joseph's, 1 p.m.

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 5-7 Erin Hill Collegiate at Erin, Wisc., 12/17; **13-15** Maridoe Invitational at Dallas; **27-28** Windon Memorial at Glencoe, Ill.

Oct. 4-5 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 13-14 Michigan Invitational at Ann Arbor, Mich.; **24-26** Mason Rudolph

at Nashville, Tenn.

Oct. 4-5 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio; **15-17** Tar Heel Invitational at Chapel Hill, N.C.

MEN'S SOCCER (1-3-1)

Aug. 27 WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. MEMPHIS, W 3-2; **29** WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. UAB, L 2-1 (OT).

Sept. 3 IU Classic vs. Xavier at Bloomington, Ind., L 2-1; **6** IU Classic vs. Creighton at Bloomington, Ind., T 1-1 (2OT); **10** at West Virginia, L 1-0; **15** AKRON, 7 p.m.; **21** CLEVELAND STATE, 7 p.m.; **24** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **29** BOWLING GREEN, 7 p.m.

Oct. 3 at Northwestern, 4 p.m.; **8** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **12** at Indiana, 7 p.m.; **17** at Michigan State, TBA; **22** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **26** MICHIGAN, 6 p.m.; **31** at Rutgers, 1 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (5-3)

Aug. 10 at Notre Dame (Exh.), L 3-2; **13** PITTSBURGH (Exh.), L 2-0; **19** at BYU, L 3-0; **22** AKRON, W 4-1; **26** BOWLING GREEN, W 3-1; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, L 2-0.

Sept. 2 CENTRAL FLORIDA W 4-2; **5** NAVY, W 2-1; **9** Dayton, W 2-0; **12** TCU, L 4-1; **19** at Maryland, 2 p.m.; **23** MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **26** at Penn State, TBA; **30** INDIANA, 7 P.M.

Oct. 3 RUTGERS, Noon; **10** at Michigan State, 1 p.m.; **14** PURDUE, 7 p.m.; **17** MICHIGAN, Noon; **20** at Wisconsin, 6 p.m.; **24** at Northwestern, 2 p.m.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (8-0, 0-0)

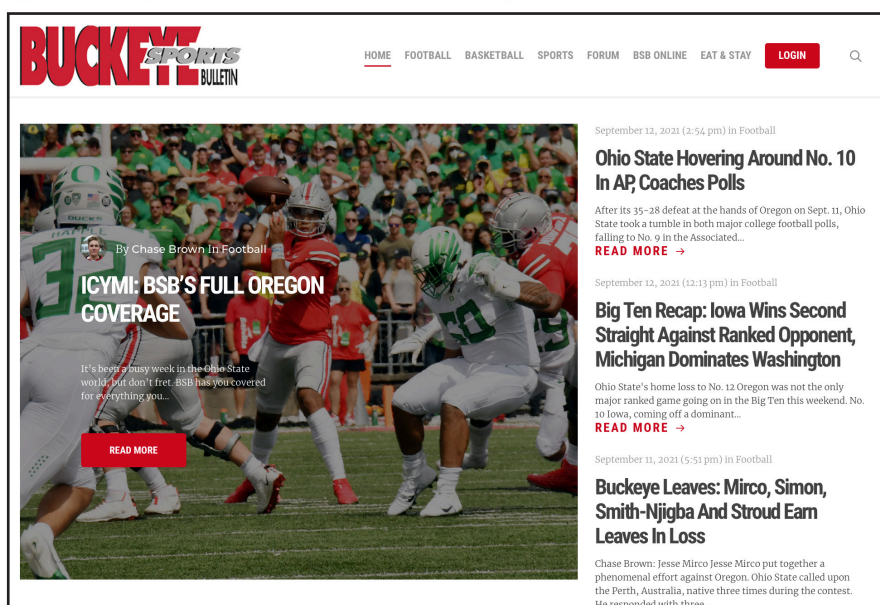
Aug. 27 NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 3-0; **28** WASHINGTON, W 3-1.

Sept. 3 Red Raider Classic at Lubbock, Texas, vs. Rhode Island., W 3-0; **4** Red Raider Classic at Lubbock, Texas, vs. Texas State, W 3-1; **4** Red Raider Classic at Lubbock, Texas, vs. Texas Tech, W 3-0; **10** VCU Invitational at Richmond, Va., vs. James Madison, W 3-0; **11** VCU Invitational at Richmond, Va., vs. VCU, W 3-0; **11** VCU Invitational at Richmond, Va., vs. Virginia, W 3-0; **17** at Notre Dame, 7 p.m.; **19** NOTRE DAME, 2 p.m.; **24** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **26** at Penn State, 4 p.m.; **29** INDIANA, 6 p.m.

Oct. 2 MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **8** at Michigan State, 7 p.m.; **10** MICHIGAN, 1 p.m.; **15** PURDUE, 6 p.m. **15** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.; **22** at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.; **24** at Minnesota, 5 p.m.; **29** at Michigan, 7 p.m.; **31** MICHIGAN STATE, 1 p.m.

Nov. 4 MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **6** NEBRASKA, TBA; **13** at Northwestern, 2 p.m.; **14** at Illinois, TBA; **19** IOWA, 7 p.m.; **21** PENN STATE, 3 P.M.; **24** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **26** at Maryland, 7 p.m.

SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING ON BUCKEYESPORTS.COM Free To Print Subscribers



Buckeye Sports Bulletin has expanded its online presence to a full-service website to complement the 24 annual print editions. Access to BuckeyeSports.com is free to all print subscribers and includes numerous great features like:

- Daily features, analysis and breaking news stories
- A fan forum where readers can interact with the BSB staff and other subscribers while catching up on the latest Buckeye news
- Rosters, scholarship charts, schedules and commit lists for the football team to keep up to date with the Buckeyes
- Electronic versions of the BSB print editions
- The BSB Quickly archive

To sign up for this free service send an email to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send you easy-to-follow instructions on how to enjoy reading Buckeye Sports Bulletin online

Women's VB Team Builds Winning Culture

By **CHASE BROWN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In Jen Flynn Oldenburg's first season as Ohio State women's volleyball head coach, the program experienced abundant success.

There were many moving pieces – Oldenburg at the helm, three new assistant coaches and four incoming freshmen – but the team rallied to a 16-4 record, finishing fourth in the hyper-competitive Big Ten and making a trip to the round of 16 in the NCAA tournament.

After bursting onto the national scene, the Buckeyes are determined to create a culture of accountability, consistency and trust to prove that they are more than a one-season wonder.

"This team has a good mind-set on what's next," Oldenburg said. "As we go through the season, we're going to be in a good place. We're going to show that last year wasn't a fluke."

So far this season, Ohio State has helped its head coach keep her word. Through Sept. 12, the Buckeyes (8-0) were the No. 4 team in the nation, representing the program's highest-ranking since 1994 when it held the fourth spot for the final three polls of the regular season.

In its first match this year, Ohio State defeated Northern Kentucky before an ear-

ly-season test against then-No. 4 Washington at Nationwide Arena in Columbus.

"(Washington is) a team that returned pretty much everybody," Oldenburg said. "They went to the Final Four last year and have had success in their conference for years. Their staff is very good and very prepared. Heading into the match, they are supposed to be the better team because of their history of success."

"But I also know how focused we were as a group. They put in so much work over the summer. We were playing at a high level in the preseason, so I didn't have expectations of winning or losing. In the first set, we had nerves – we were a little bit unsure – finding out if we belong."

Ohio State and Washington battled back and forth in the first set before the Huskies strung together a 12-4 run to take their largest lead of the set at 18-10. Oldenburg called a timeout, brought her team together and offered a simple message.

"The nerves are over," Oldenburg said. "Let's start playing."

The Buckeyes came out of the timeout a different team. They looked loose and free, relentlessly pursuing defensive balls, hitting the floor, taking big swings on a system and working hard on the block – each

adjustments that translated to high play.

"Once we did that, I think we surprised a team like Washington," Oldenburg said. "I think they knew we were going to be a good opponent, but I think they were surprised at how well we played. We took care of business."

After dropping the first set, 25-23, Ohio State went on to win the final three sets by scores of 25-19, 25-22 and 25-18 to defeat the Huskies.

OSU carried the momentum from that victory into the Red Raider Classic, a three-match tournament against Rhode Island, Texas State and host Texas Tech. The Buckeyes handled each of the three teams, defeating the Rams in three sets, the Bobcats in four and the host Red Raiders in three sets.

Sophomore middle blocker Rylee Rader was named the tournament MVP after not committing a single hitting error during the tournament. Sophomore opposite hitter Emily Londot and junior defensive specialist Kylie Murr joined Rader on the all-tournament team.

Following the three wins, the Buckeyes shot up the rankings to No. 4 in the AVCA Division I coaches' poll behind Texas and Big Ten rivals Wisconsin and Nebraska.

As one of the top teams in the country, it could be easy for Ohio State to rest on its laurels, but Murr said the Buckeyes have their eyes set on bigger goals.

"We see this No. 4 ranking and we can't take that for granted," Murr said. "We have to keep working. Where we are now doesn't mean that we're going to make it to the Final Four. We have to keep pushing each other to get to where we want to go."

Ohio State junior outside hitter Gabby Gonzales said she tries to remind her teammates to keep a level head, reminding them that there is a long process toward becoming a good volleyball team. To Gonzales, establishing the Buckeyes as a genuine threat to win a national title will take more than a marquee victory and tournament crown.

"I'm proud of everything this team has accomplished so far this year," she said, "but we can always work on things. We can always get better. We know there is room for improvement – personally and as a team, on and off the court. I think is going to help us improve throughout the year."

It is the kind of thing Oldenburg loves to hear from her players. She wanted to build this type of culture when she start-

ed as head coach at Ohio State in 2020, and now she's seeing it become a reality. She admires how the players care for each other and desire to be with one another. Oldenburg couldn't always say that about her teammates or players throughout her playing and coaching career.

She claims that's what makes this iteration of the Ohio State volleyball team unique. Not only will the relationships they build and the memories they make help them grow as players, but as people, too.

"They're all competitive. They like to win," Oldenburg said. "But they have created memories that will last a lifetime. I mean, we are still laughing about things that happened during the whole trip (to Texas Tech) and on the way back. Even after a long weekend being together, they still enjoy being around each other."

"There's lots of laughter and a lot of sharing in what's going on. I think those experiences are what you take away from the season besides the play on the court."

Gonzales agreed with Oldenburg's beliefs about her team. She said she is looking forward to more opportunities to develop relationships with her teammates.

"To win, we need to do it all as a team, making sure that we have each other's backs and that we can rely on one another," Gonzales said. "I think something important in volleyball and important in life is to be able to rely on others when things aren't going well and celebrate with them when things are going well."

Murr thinks having those kinds of relationships is one of the best ways to show the team's capabilities. When she looks back on the season, she wants one thing to be true about her team – that win or lose, they walk off the court with no regrets and keep their heads held high.

"I think the thing that really excites me the most is the kind of experience that we have with each other and with the coaching staff," Murr said. "I think last year we made a good run, but it also was all fresh and we were still learning how to play with each other. This year is more comforting because we know the groove of things, and we're able to show our potential because of how comfortable we are with each other."

"Volleyball is not who we are. It's what we do. We get to play the game that we love and stay true to ourselves. That's what makes this team such a tight-knit group and why we will continue to improve."



Jen Flynn Oldenburg

The Ohio State University Alumni Association

GUIDE YOUR CAREER

3,200+

active employers working with Alumni Career Connection

4,500+

AlumniFire members ready to network

The Buckeye Network reaches **9,000+** active members on LinkedIn

BOND WITH FELLOW BUCKEYES

Join one of **121** Regional Clubs

Connect with one of **48** Societies supporting your interests



Attend special events – **168** hosted in FY16

PAY FORWARD



More than **150** volunteer projects done by Buckeyes in 2016

TRAVEL THE WORLD

Join one of **30+** trips with Alumni Tours



GET SOCIAL

Follow along to stay up to date with The Ohio State University Alumni Association



32,515 Likes



34,300 Followers



540,000+ alumni across the globe



YOU'RE A BUCKEYE FOR LIFE



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

You Can Count On These Services From

THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

1350 W. 5th Ave., Suite 14, Columbus, OH 43212
614-488-2683 • FAX 614-488-0059 • qpoh@aol.com

Offset-Printing
Typesetting
NCR Forms
Laminating
Brochures

Digital Color Copies
Ship UPS
Fax Service
Announcements
Wedding Invitations

Digital B&W Copies
Rubber Stamps
Business Cards
Binding
Labels

Myriad Lessons To Be Learned In Oregon Loss

The Oregon Ducks entered Ohio Stadium in the hopes of ending a nine-game losing streak against the Buckeyes. Not only had Oregon never defeated Ohio State, but the Buckeyes ruined the Ducks' hopes of capturing the 2014 national championship with a 42-20 victory in AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, in the first-ever College Football Playoff title game. Ezekiel Elliott scored four rushing touchdowns and ran for 246 yards in leading the Scarlet and Gray to their sixth recognized national championship, something Oregon has yet to experience.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

On paper, the two teams seemed very similar prior to kickoff this year. Offensively, the Buckeyes and the Ducks have an experienced line, depth at running back and outstanding wide receivers. The big difference was at the quarterback position.

Ducks signal-caller Anthony Brown is a graduate transfer from Boston College, where he started 28 games and threw for over 4,900 yards and 42 touchdowns, and he is a real threat running the football. Compare that to redshirt freshman C.J. Stroud for the Bucks, who started his first collegiate game at Minnesota a week before. Stroud can run the ball, but his real forte, by design, is as a dropback quarterback. He performed well in the season opener in Minneapolis.

Defensively, both the Ducks and the Buckeyes have talented fronts but youth on the back end of their defenses. They had the same goal this week – pressure the opposing quarterback and prevent the big play. Even though it was only the second game of the season, the winner was going to take a huge step toward getting in the playoff picture for 2021.

The Buckeyes were picked to beat the Ducks by two touchdowns, but somebody forgot to tell Oregon. The 35-28 loss not only put Ohio State behind the eight-ball in terms of the playoff picture, but the manner in which the Buckeyes lost was embarrassing, and in some ways, inexcusable, especially in terms of defensive play.

Defensive Concerns

To say the Ohio State defense played poorly is an understatement. The quality of play on the defensive side of the ball was baffling for several reasons. First of all, to let an offense run and pass the football successfully to the short side of the field is unacceptable – especially when the Oregon offense did just that, not for just one series or one quarter of play, but for four quarters. OSU coaches were simply out-schemed the entire game and had little success in making the necessary adjustments to the boundary-side attack.

The basics of defensive play were practically nonexistent. To let an offense run the perimeter without containing the play by

turning it in to your help, or not attacking the play before it gets to the outside, is just what the opponent wants. There are a variety of run-support systems which can be utilized to stop the outside run to the short side, but we didn't see the execution of those basics.

Whether it was a lack of communication, lack of understanding of the defensive scheme, or simply poor adjustments in the heat of battle, one thing is for certain – the Oregon offensive staff found a Buckeye weakness and exploited it to the fullest. The Ducks rushed the football for 269 yards and 7.1 yards per carry, and a ton of those yards came to the short side of the field.

As ugly as the rush defense was for Ohio State into the boundary, the Oregon passing attack to the same area was just as devastating. Whether a wide receiver, tight end or back out of the backfield was used to exploit the Ohio State defense, the same confusion existed for the Buckeyes in terms of covering the right man. At times, coverages were completely busted, and Brown delivered easy pitch-and-catch strikes to his intended targets. As with the running attack, the Oregon passing attack put up over 200 yards of offense, making it a balanced attack that did in the Buckeyes.

As the Oregon offense rolled, feeling inspired and gaining more confidence, the more physical they played. It isn't very often a team coming into Ohio Stadium plays more physical than the Buckeyes, but that was the case. The Oregon offense ran 73 plays, moving the ball up and down the field and going 4 for 4 in the red zone, all touchdowns. Brown played to a very high level, putting up 301 yards of offense himself, running and passing the football.

It was quite an all-around offensive display in giving the Ducks their first-ever victory against the Buckeyes.

OSU Offense Spotty

The offense didn't have its best day, either. There were some positives, and Stroud again proved he has exceptional potential at the quarterback position. Though not perfect, the redshirt freshman threw for 484 yards and three touchdowns, and despite throwing a late interception, he performed admirably for starting only his second collegiate football game ever. He overcame some early errant throws to put in a solid performance.

The offensive line didn't play to the same level as it did against the Gophers the week before, but it did give Stroud time to throw the ball even though the team was playing catch-up most of the game.

The main issue up front for the Buckeyes was in the rushing the football. The O-line didn't dominate the Oregon defensive front in terms of movement at the point of attack. Ohio State rushed for only 128 yards and an average of 4.1 yards per carry, 3 yards less per carry than the Oregon offense.

Again, largely due to having to come from behind, the Buckeyes were forced into passing the football almost twice as much as they ran it. Also, the inability to execute on fourth down, converting only 2 of 5 of those attempts, stalled Buckeye drives and turned the football over to the Ducks.

On the plus side of the ledger, Ohio State receivers caused fits for the Oregon defense. Eight different players hauled in a total of 35 receptions. The dynamic duo of Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson led the way with 12 and eight receptions, respectively, for a total of 243 yards. Jaxon Smith-Njigba had his best day as a Buckeye, making seven catches for 145 yards and two touchdowns.

In short, the Buckeyes had some outstanding individual performances on the offensive side, but not nearly enough balance to affect the outcome of the game.

Looking Forward

As disappointing as the day was for the men of the scarlet and gray, the season is still young and the opportunity to redeem themselves is indeed possible. More than likely, it's probable.

Let's face it. The next two weeks are "feel-good" games against Tulsa and Akron. They should provide a chance for the Buck-

eyes to regain some of their mojo as long as they improve in the basics of offensive and defensive football.

After a tough loss, it's going back to the basics that helps heal the wounds of defeat. It's a chance for the coaching staff to teach and reteach their systems and schemes. The experienced players can fine-tune their skills, the young players should be eager to learn, and everyone – players and coaches alike – should work hard to take their games to a higher level. That's why the Buckeyes have every chance to bounce back, win the Big Ten East, and the conference championship.

It won't be easy, but college football isn't meant to be easy.

Bill Conley played football at Ohio State under Woody Hayes and coached under Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel.

Ohio State Fans!



Weekly September through November
Five times from January through mid-March
Biweekly mid-March through mid-May
Monthly December, June through August

Some Ohio State sports fans need more information on the Buckeyes than they can find in their local newspaper. Buckeye Sports Bulletin is for those fans. By subscribing to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, they receive 24 issues a year featuring:

- In-depth coverage of all Ohio State sports
- The latest comments from coaches and players
- The latest in recruiting information
- Personality profiles
- Features on former Buckeye greats
- Rosters, schedules, statistics, photos
- Check us out on the Web at www.BuckeyeSports.com



- ☐ 1 Year, \$99.95 ☐ 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$159.95
☐ 2 Years, \$169.95 ☐ 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$279.95

I want to know more about Ohio State sports. I am enclosing \$_____

☐ Money Order ☐ Check ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ Amer. Express
Credit Card # and Exp. Date _____

Credit Card Orders Accepted 24 Hours A Day
Call (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____
PHONE: _____

Mail To: **Buckeye Sports Bulletin**
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
www.BuckeyeSports.com

Are Buckeyes Good Enough To Still Make Playoff?

Ohio State still has time to recover and make the playoffs. The question is whether this team can become good enough to do so.

And here's the thing: It's going to be more than a month, perhaps two months, before we really begin to get a solid idea – given the weak opponents that lie ahead in the short-term.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

This year's team, even as it stands now, is perfectly capable of looking good against lesser opponents, but doing so against teams as good as or better than Oregon will be an entirely different test.

The first regular-season loss in nearly three seasons – extending through Ryan Day's tenure and back into the final season of Urban Meyer – was no fluke.

Oregon exploited a flawed Ohio State team that has looked nothing like a national championship contender through eight quarters of football this season.

Weak Defense

The defense has been weak. Big play after big play have served up more than just anecdotal evidence, and the stats bear it out.

And the defense has lacked big plays – particularly OSU's traditional ferocious pass rush. Against Oregon, there were no quarterback sacks. And there was just one play in which a runner was tackled for a loss – that being for a loss of just 1 yard.

OSU has allowed 33.0 points a game so far this year vs. 25.8 in 2020 and just 13.7 in 2019.

Two-Headed Problem

It's been a balanced assault against the OSU defense. Minnesota and Oregon have combined to average 236.0 yards rushing and 220.5 passing.

The 456.5 in total yards per game permitted compares to 401.9 in 2020 and a mere 260.0 yards per game in 2019.

Surely Ohio State has more defensive talent than their offensive counterparts in games one and two. That leaves room for improvement while also calling into question the schemes and executions thus far.

But while the biggest problem has been with the defense, having a 1-1 record at this stage of the season isn't entirely the doing of the defense.

Ohio State has not had the elite passing game fans have become accustomed to – first with the record-smashing season Dwayne Haskins had in 2018 and then the incredible talents of Justin Fields in 2019 and 2020.

Those are high standards.

Both were first-round NFL draft picks. Haskins might have come out of college too early for the NFL, considering his struggles in

Washington. But Fields appears to be as advertised, given the rave reviews from Chicago after his impressive preseason.

High standards? Yes, but that's where the bar is for Ohio State and its highly touted group of quarterbacks. Will C.J. Stroud get there as well? Perhaps.

There have been too many misses of wide-open receivers by a wide margin, and at this stage, that's what separates Stroud from the type of passing OSU enjoyed when Haskins and Fields were behind center.

At this time, Buckeye fans have to hope Day made the right call in picking Stroud as the starter over Kyle McCord and Jack Miller.

Fans don't get to see these guys in practice. Neither does the media, outside of a quick glimpse here and there. Only the coaches and their teammates are there to see the battle day after day.

Based strictly on the quick look offered by the spring game, I wasn't alone in thinking McCord showed the most upside, as I did about Joe Burrow when he was losing out to Haskins in their competition.

That's only a brief look. The coaches, obviously, make their decisions with far more information and expertise. But, many coaches have said, game day and performance over a season can be very different from training camp.

Maybe the most prepared player in training camp isn't the player with the highest ceiling in terms of playing national championship football. The hope is that the same player is both.

Maybe that is Stroud and will continue to be Stroud. But the two games so far haven't provided the answer.

This is the question that lingered throughout J.T. Barrett's nearly four full seasons as a starter – even among the coaching staff early in the 2015 season. Barrett was the conference quarterback of the year three times. But the national title in 2014 came after Barrett was sidelined by injury.

Too Many Misses

There are a lot of ways to look at quarterbacks.

Four touchdown passes in the opener against Minnesota was an impressive stat in Stroud's favor. So are 484 yards passing and three more TD passes against Oregon.

But one also has to consider that with the game on the line, and needing a touchdown to tie, the Buckeyes were stopped twice by the Ducks.

They got the ball with 7:04 remaining against Oregon, 71 yards from the end zone, and couldn't score. Then OSU got another chance, this time with 4:43 left and 72 yards away. Again, the Buckeyes were stopped with everything on the line.

That was the end of the game. But consider the beginning.

For the first time in Day's head coaching career, OSU did not reach the end zone in the first quarter.

OSU's first TD came on a 27-yard pass from Stroud to Garrett Wilson midway through the second quarter – a play in which Wilson was wide open for the easy TD because the cornerback who was supposed to be defending Wilson was looking down at his play list as Wilson raced by just after the snap.

Outside of that play, OSU didn't reach the end zone until 10:25 remained in the third quarter.



SONNY BROCKWAY

ATHLETIC CATCH – OSU receiver Garrett Wilson (5) goes up to make one of his eight receptions against Oregon. Wilson's catches were worth 117 yards and one touchdown, a 27-yard reception in the first quarter that opened the scoring for the Buckeyes. Unfortunately, they didn't have enough of those plays and wound up losing a 35-28 decision to the Ducks.

That's too late for a team that has what could be the best and deepest collection of receivers in school history – led by veterans and future pros Wilson and Chris Olave.

Stroud missed on 19 passes (18 incompletions and an interception) against Oregon and missed on nine against Minnesota (eight incompletions and an interception).

The 19 off-target throws were the most by an Ohio State QB in a single game since the Buckeyes were shocked at Purdue in 2018 by a 49-20 final. Haskins missed on 24 passes in that one, completing 49 of 73 attempts vs. Stroud's 35-of-54 outing against Oregon.

Fields missed on just seven passes through the first two games a year ago. The most he ever missed on in a single game was 16 – doing so twice in season-ending playoff losses to Clemson in 2019 and Alabama last year.

Note that all these games with high numbers of missed passes were losses, making it pretty clear that the Ohio State offense (there were a couple of drops) has to be more efficient in the passing game going forward if it hopes to become an elite team capable of competing for a national title.

Next Up On Tap

Tulsa, Akron, Rutgers and Maryland are next on the schedule – in that order – through early October.

That should mean there's time to clean things up before getting into the tougher part of the schedule. The second half, in order, features Indiana, Penn State, Nebraska, Purdue, Michigan State and Michigan.

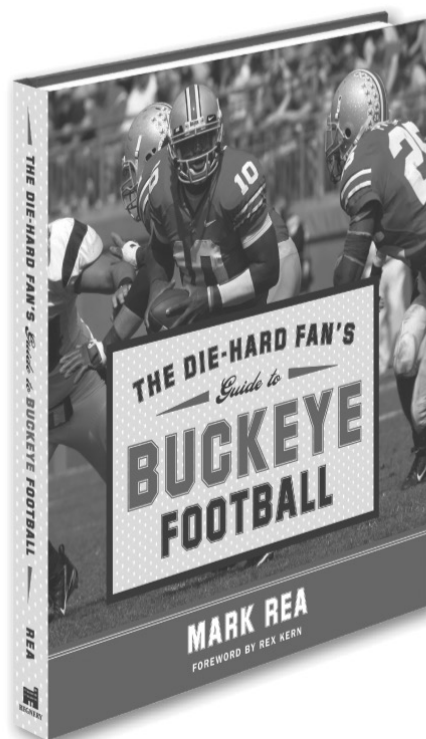
Things could look pretty good over the next few weeks.

But is this defense, this passing game and this team capable of competing against the best of the best such as Alabama and Georgia?

Check back in November for a better idea.

CALLING ALL BUCKEYE FANS:

YOUR INDISPENSABLE OSU FOOTBALL GUIDE IS HERE!



Do you bleed scarlet and gray year round?

If so, then *The Die-Hard Fan's Guide to Buckeye Football* by Buckeye football expert Mark Rea is for you! This must-have book works its way "Across the Field" through nearly 120 years of Buckeye football, including complete coverage of the national championship seasons and Heisman Trophy winners.

Full of color photos, amusing anecdotes, and little-known facts, *The Die-Hard Fan's Guide to Buckeye Football* is unlike any other book you've read. One minute you're reading about legendary coaches like Paul Brown and Woody Hayes and the next you're visualizing stories of the Horseshoe's greatest games and discovering who Woody Hayes referred to as his "greatest booster."

It is for you, the fans, that this book has been created—the ultimate guide for the most diehard members of the Buckeye Nation! **GO BUCKS!**

Available in bookstores, online, or call
(614) 486-2202

Since 1947
REGNERY PUBLISHING, INC.
An Eagle Publishing Company • Washington, DC
www.Regnery.com

Coombs Squarely In Crosshairs Of Buckeye Fans

After last season's disappointing defensive showing that left Ohio State ranked 122nd of 127 teams in the country in passing yardage allowed, a figure exacerbated by a humiliating performance by the back seven against Alabama in the national championship game, defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs was on the hot seat. When the Buckeye defense showed little improvement in the season opener against Minnesota, that seat got even hotter.

As the big matchup with Oregon unfolded and the defense was still struggling, you knew Coombs was about to get fried.

As one of the posters on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum "Official Game Thread" put it, "It's a bad sign when the TV shows Kerry Coombs on the sidelines more than they were showing P.J. Fleck last week." When they are showing a coach a lot on the sidelines, it is either good or bad, but rarely indifferent. In this case, I think we know which one of the three was the case.

In my 40-plus years on the Ohio State beat, I don't recall a time when an assistant coach was the hot topic in the postgame interview session with the head coach. But media members were ready to question Ryan Day about Coombs and question him aggressively. As you would expect from any head coach, especially one as diplomatic and team-oriented as the current Ohio State skipper, Day was not about to throw Coombs under the team bus.

"I think everybody on our staff works really, really hard," Day said. "We all make decisions together as a group, but ultimately it comes back on me because I'm the head coach."

Still, you could tell that he wasn't happy, and while it's true the buck ultimately stops with the head coach, Day is not the one who runs the defense. There was one play Oregon ran repeatedly that seemed to particularly bother him. The play first popped up on a fourth-and-1 for the Ducks that CJ Verdell turned into a 14-yard touchdown run.

"Somebody had man-to-man coverage, they were in conflict and they hit it for a touchdown," Day said. "Then later, they hit the same one for another touchdown. Then there was the perimeter run play where we didn't get the crack – that showed up a couple of times. If they hit you with it once, you have to make an adjustment. If they hit you with it twice, then there's an issue you have to fix."

And Coombs is obviously the man who is supposed to fix it.

"Those plays where we didn't set the edge were plays in man coverage, and the guy who we were in man coverage against was cracking the linebacker," the OSU defensive coordinator explained. "We have to get off that block and make a play there. I don't want you to hear that and say that we're blaming a player. I take full responsibility for that. That doesn't fall on the player. We have to do a better job setting the edge on the defense."

"I'm responsible," Coombs added. "That's my job. We have to play better. When I say we have to play better, I'm not blaming our players. The standard for our defense is one of excellence. I have to do a better job."

But let's give a little credit where credit is due. When the game was on the line in the fourth quarter, and the Buckeyes were trailing by just 35-28 with an ample 7:55 to play and the crowd going wacko, Coombs' defense stopped the Ducks three times in a row. But the offense could muster nary a point. And the offense is Day's bailiwick.

"At the end, (the defense) got good stops for us and then we didn't do anything with them," Day admitted. "The offense has to do

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

their part in this thing as well. I don't think we established the run, and when the defense did give the offense the ball back, we didn't do anything with it. We had two opportunities that we didn't score on. There's enough blame to go around here."

The offense's woes were evident long before the final minutes of the game, despite a freshman record-setting passing day by C.J. Stroud, who hit for 484 yards through the air and three touchdown passes, with three receivers – Jaxon Smith-Njigba (145), Chris Olave (126) and Garrett Wilson (117) – each tallying more than 100 receiving yards. The Buckeyes crossed into Oregon territory four times in the first half, including their first three possessions, on drives that didn't yield any points. It would be five times if you count the final possession of the half when the Buckeyes took over at their 20 with just 34 seconds before the intermission.

Even that drive seemed flawed. With arguably the best receivers in the country in the lineup, Ohio State nickled and dined its way forward 62 yards on four passes but didn't seem to take a real shot at putting points on the board. The mini-drive padded the Buckeyes' passing stats but still left them trailing by a 14-7 score heading into the locker room with Oregon set to get the ball to start the third quarter.

All in all, it seemed like the OSU offense regressed, while the defense continued to struggle – unless the spirited play on that side of the ball at the end of the game is a sign of improvement to come.

The Buckeyes are almost sure to look better in the coming weeks, heading into a stretch of the schedule that includes Tulsa, Akron, Rutgers and Maryland. In theory, it should give Ohio State plenty of opportunities to improve on its deficiencies on both sides of the ball before the Buckeyes enjoy an off-week and then hit the meat of the schedule with a trip to Indiana and a home game against Penn State in back-to-back weeks.

But can we really gauge if Ohio State is improving when it plays the likes of the Golden Hurricane, Zips, Scarlet Knights and Terapins? As associate editor Patrick Mayhorn said to me after the Oregon loss, those games could give Buckeye optimists the chance to say the team is improving, something we won't really know until the team plays the Hoosiers and Nittany Lions. And I am not writing off any of the opponents, least of all Rutgers under Greg Schiano, and Maryland, which almost pulled off the major upset in 2018 when OSU had a similarly dysfunctional defense.

Other optimists are already reminding us that Ohio State suffered a similar loss in Ohio Stadium to Virginia Tech in 2014 and went on to win the national championship. That's a good point to remind us that there is a lot of football to be played yet in 2021. The 2014 edition of the Buckeyes entered a similarly easy stretch of their schedule following the loss to the Hokies, and they rallied with a 66-0 win over Kent State, a 50-28 victory over Cincinnati, a 52-24 win at Maryland and a 56-17 domination of Rutgers. The Buckeyes parlayed that stretch into a season-defining, 31-24 win at Penn State in double overtime.

Let's see what this group of Buckeyes can do in 2021.

Other Trouble Spots

While some – or many – may question

Coombs' credentials as a defensive coordinator, no one questions the bona fides of Larry Johnson as coach of the Ohio State defensive line. Yet for the second week in a row, what is supposed to be the strength of the Buckeye defense struggled.

Ohio State did not record a single sack against Oregon, though the Buckeyes were credited with five quarterback hurries (Tyreke Smith and Javantae Jean-Baptiste with two each and Taron Vincent with one). Pressure from the line was supposed to help protect the inexperienced backfield, but so far it hasn't seemed to develop.

It was also the second week in a row that the defensive line allowed an opposing running back to have a big day, with Verdell rushing for 161 yards on 20 carries for an impressive 8.0-yard average. It's hard to believe, but not only did the Buckeyes not record a sack, they had only one tackle for loss.

On the bright side, highly-touted freshman J.T. Tuimoloau dented the stat sheet when he tipped an Anthony Brown pass to help the defense make its stand late in the game. The other freshman defensive line phenom, Jack Sawyer, has yet to dent the stat sheet.

On the other side of the ball, I was surprised to see the Ohio State running game generate only 128 yards on 31 carries.

"That's something we have to go back on as an offensive staff and get fixed," Day said. "We want balance, and we don't have balance on the sheet. We had 484 yards passing and 128 yards rushing, but that's not balanced. When we're not balanced, we're out of whack."

The Buckeyes seemed to fine-tune their running back rotation for the game with the Ducks. Master Teague appeared to be the odd man out, failing to get a carry after getting the ball six times for 29 yards in the opener against Minnesota. Miyan Williams and TreVeyon Henderson were the only backs to carry the ball against Oregon, with Williams rushing 14 times for 77 yards against the Ducks and Henderson adding 54 yards on 12 tries.

While the boys in the office seem ready to go with Henderson as the lead back, I'm a little surprised that, with a huge game on the line, Day and staff went as much with the freshman phenom over the more experienced Williams.

In the second half, with the Buckeyes needing to score on virtually every drive, Henderson got the call nine times for 48 yards (averaging 5.3 yards a carry) and Williams three times for 19 yards (6.3 yards). Williams did not carry the ball at all in the third quarter, which the Buckeyes entered trailing by seven at 14-7 and finished behind by two scores at 28-14.

Which back is more likely to break off a big play? If you can get him in the open, it's obviously Henderson, as we saw in his blink-of-an-eye 70-yard touchdown reception against Minnesota. But Williams is no slouch in big-play potential as demonstrated by his 71-yard run to open the scoring against the Gophers.

The Buckeyes seemed to lean toward running the ball inside against the Ducks, and Williams may have the edge there. I would be working to get Henderson to the outside or get him the ball in space via the pass.

"I think that they're going to come up with clever ways to use him and not get him banged up between the tackles and maximize what he can give them because they have

backs that they can slam in there," former BSB editor Steve Helwage says of Henderson elsewhere in this issue. "They don't need to do that with him. And I can't imagine why you would. That's just not his niche. He's got amazing vision, and he has amazing footwork, and he can make people miss. I think you want to take full advantage of that."

In fairness to Henderson, he was the featured back on three of Ohio State's four touchdown drives.

I can't say that the outcome would have changed had Williams gotten more carries. Regardless, I think at some point you have to pick one or the other as the lead back.

And finally, speaking of running the football, Stroud needs to be a little less tentative about tucking and running. If space opens up in front of you, go for it. He had a fine 15-yard run in the first quarter which turned into a 30-yard gain when he was hit out of bounds.

Quick Hitters

There was a lot of talk within Buckeye Nation during the week leading up to the Oregon game about Ohio State approaching the big contest with about 10,000 unsold tickets. Some said it was because of people afraid of the spike in COVID cases, while others blamed the price tag in the \$150 range for some of the lesser seats in the house.

I think it was a combination of both. I found it interesting that the eventual attendance was listed at 100,482. I can't help but think the Ohio State powers-that-be manipulated that number so they would not have to go through the embarrassment of having attendance dip below 100,000 for such a big game.

You have to give credit to those who did show, however, because it was one of the more enthusiastic crowds in recent memory, and they did their part to try to spur their team to victory.

"I want to thank the crowd and everybody coming out today and being really loud in the fourth quarter," Day said. "I'm sorry that we weren't able to pull out the victory for everybody who came today. This was a great crowd."

• In my regular tight end watch, Jeremy Ruckert had three catches for 36 yards and a long of 21. But much of the attention paid by Buckeye fans centered on Cade Stover, who moved from defense to tight end amid much fanfare during the offseason. On Ohio State's second drive of the game, Stover couldn't handle a third-down pass from Stroud after the Buckeyes had marched 61 yards from their own 5, helping to snuff off a potential scoring march.

• Finally, kudos to my players of the game, Smith-Njigba and punter Jesse Mirco. Smith-Njigba had a breakout game with his seven receptions and game-high 145 yards and two touchdowns, and Mirco twice buried Oregon at its own 1-yard-line. Too bad their teammates couldn't parlay those outstanding performances into a big Buckeye victory.

First-Class Upgrade?

By now, you have had a couple of chances to see how your mail delivery of Buckeye Sports Bulletin looks to be this football season. If delivery has not been timely, we suggest upgrading to first-class mail in an envelope for football season for just \$24. You can upgrade through recruiting season for \$34. We especially recommend the upgrades for BSB readers living outside Ohio.

Give us a call at (614) 486-2202 to upgrade immediately with a credit card or send your check or credit card information to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212.

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 after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that causes your brain to rapidly move inside your skull.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

- Headache, nausea, vomiting, balance problems, dizziness, double or blurred vision, sensitivity to light or noise, feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy, just not "feeling right" or "feeling down," memory problems, confusion, and trouble sleeping.

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 healthcare 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 it harder to do everyday activities, such as concentrating at school. 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 AND 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 and can even be fatal.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/concussion>

This work is funded either in whole or in part by a grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Health as a sub-award of a grant issued by Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant under the Injury Prevention Program by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, grant award. Number 1 NB01OT009358-01-00.

