



Ohio State Survives Halloween Scare, Remains Unbeaten In Big Ten Play

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Oct. 30 was the kind of day for which Big Ten football was made.

Throughout the league's footprint, which now spans from the coveted New York television market to the Great Plains, conference foes took to the field to battle it out for oh-so-valuable league wins in conditions described unanimously across television broadcasts as "Big Ten weather."

Translation: just about perfect. Columbus provided the same environment as its counterparts, playing host to its first marquee night matchup since 2019 and answering the call with gusto. Ohio State and Penn State marched on the Ohio Stadium field with the thermometer reading 56 degrees, a light breeze that fluttered flags at the top of the Horseshoe, and a brilliant night sky as clouds and rain yielded for the first time all week in central Ohio.

The play in the league was just about perfect, too. During a critical day for divisional jostling in both the East and West, new favorites emerged as former leaders crumbled. Wisconsin and Michigan State opened the day with statement wins in Madison and East Lansing. The Badgers toppled Iowa, 27-7, providing a second straight loss for the former No. 2 team in the nation and drawing even with both the Hawkeyes and Purdue for second place in the West at 3-2, trailing only 4-1 Minnesota, which throttled Northwestern by a 41-14 final in Evanston.

Meanwhile about three hours north of Columbus, the breeze stayed light, but the winds of change were gusting as Michigan State stormed back from a 30-14 deficit in the third quarter to knock Michigan from the ranks of the unbeaten. Heisman Trophy candidate Kenneth Walker III broke free from 23 yards out to give Michigan State a 37-33 lead it would not surrender, capping an upset of the formerly sixth-ranked Wolverines and moving the Spartans into a tie for first place in the East while knocking Michigan into the No. 2 spot and putting them firmly behind the eight ball.

Four hours later, the Buckeyes and Nittany Lions poured onto the fading Ohio Stadium turf in front of a sold-out and primarily scarlet-clad crowd in another matchup with major conference crown implications, though Penn State – which had already lost two straight within the league – knew it would need



SONNY BROCKWAY

PRESSURE UP FRONT - Ohio State defensive tackle Haskell Garrett (92) gets in the face of Penn State QB Sean Clifford (14) during the Buckeyes' 33-24 victory against the Nittany Lions. Clifford threw for 361 yards, but he was sacked four times, lost a fumble and was intercepted once.

more help than the unbeaten league rival Buckeyes even with a victory.

Were it not for the all-scarlet uniforms that Ohio State was wearing, it felt like the kind of day and the kind of game that would end with Earle Bruce or John Cooper fielding questions in the bowels of the Horseshoe following a hard-fought conference matchup, speaking not of potential play-off or national title implications, but of what the battle meant for Ohio State's Rose Bowl prospects and how impressive the day was for college football.

Ryan Day showed no real interest in the Rose Bowl after the game. His team had just finished its fourth straight Big

Ten victory with a 33-24 decision against the Nittany Lions, and his mind was at least partially focused on the national picture and what another win did for his team's chances to compete as one of the four final teams standing come December.

"When you look at a game like this, Penn State to me is one of the better defenses in the country and a really strong team year in and year out," Day said. "I think this is a gritty win. To win how we did, not even playing our best ball or converting in the red zone, I think it says a lot about where

Continued On Page 10

**Your Mailing Label Goes Here
Call (614) 486-2202
Today To Subscribe**

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State was challenged for the first time since early in the season and rose to the occasion Oct. 30, toppling Penn State by a 33-24 score in what head coach Ryan Day described as “a gritty win.” Which Buckeyes earned their helmet stickers after the hard-fought win according to BSB staff members and posters on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum?

Chase Brown, BSB: Noah Ruggles is an unstoppable kicking machine. When he came to Columbus in the spring, the Buckeyes already had Jake Seibert. Still, the two kickers competed throughout fall camp and Ruggles won the starting job. In Ohio State's eight games, Ruggles has yet to miss a kick – he is a perfect 11 for 11 when attempting field goals and 47 for 47 on his point-after attempts this season, including four field goals and three extra points against Penn State.

Ruggles is a model of consistency and when the Buckeyes needed him most, he showed up. There will come a time in the future when Ohio State will rely on him again, and I feel confident the North Carolina transfer will be up for the task.

After the Penn State game, he gets a Buckeye leaf from me. Maybe he'll get one down the road, too.

Patrick Mayhorn, BSB: It wasn't necessarily a day to remember for the Ohio State offense, which scored only one touchdown in its six trips to the red zone and struggled at times to stay out of its own way with procedural penalties, but wideout Jaxon Smith-Njigba was again a bright spot for the Buckeyes. He has emerged as a legitimate star at wide receiver, leading the team in receiving yards with 97 on six receptions, including a huge 58-yard catch-and-run that helped to pump up an otherwise lackluster passing attack.

Mark Rea, BSB: Ohio State's defense made some good plays against Penn State, and made some not-so-good ones, too. One that fits in the former category was Buckeye leaf-worthy. Fifth-year senior defensive tackle Jerron Cage, who goes 6-2 and 305 pounds, got to showcase a little bit of big-man speed late in the second quarter with his scoop-and-score fumble recovery of 57 yards. Cage gets two leaves for the score, but Tyreke Smith (who got credit for the sack) and Zach Harrison (who cleaned up afterward) also deserve a leaf apiece.

Michael Bauer: Noah Ruggles and Jerron Cage ... and no one else.

AnthonyBuckeye: Jerron Cage for the enjoyable run after the scoop for a TD, Tyreke Smith for aggressive line play and tackles, TreVeyon Henderson for 150-plus yards rushing when the OL was not at its best, C.J. Stroud for 300 yards passing with no turnovers, Jaxon Smith-Njigba for being Mr. Reliable, Garrett Wilson for so many catches when he looked banged up, Ronnie Hickman for being the Buckeye tackling machine, Cameron Brown for a good game and the interception, Marcus Williamson for an excellent game and Noah Ruggles for winning the game for the Buckeyes.

Poster That Harley Built: Has to be Jerron Cage. Not only did his touch-down help turn the tide, but to have not one, but two defensive linemen scoring on long runs in a season is sports entertainment at its best. The sideline celebration was also worth the price of admission.

PeyoteBuck: Ronnie Hickman consistently stopped the PSU offense in their tracks. Nothing flashy but consistently effective. And Ruggles and Mirco? Amazing.

BUCKEYE SPORTS .COM

From The Message Board

It was a nine-point victory against the No. 20 team in the nation, but there were a lot of holes in the Ohio State performance against Penn State (except for PK Noah Ruggles, of course). What worries you most about the Buckeyes moving forward into the final four games of the regular season? Here are some of the responses from the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum:

“Will the Buckeye defense be able to stop Michigan State's RB Walker III?”

– Byron McNutt

“Penalties. Championship teams don't commit that many penalties. Could have proved costly, but fortunately didn't.”

– Mcarr

“For me, four things. 1. The defense seems not to have improved as much as hoped. The D-line was getting gashed at times and they weren't getting consistent pass pressure. The back line was way too soft in coverage. 2. The O-line was pretty deficient in run blocking, and not all that great in pass protection. Just not their best night, which worries me that it could happen again. 3. The penalties were a forceful reminder that we lack discipline at times. 4. For the first time, I thought Ryan Day was his own worst enemy. He channeled his inner Harbaugh with one stubborn (and unsuccessful) run up the middle after another. He has never struck me as mule-headed before, so let's hope it was just a bad night. Some worrying things, but it was a win.”

– Michael Bauer

“I'm not very worried because I don't expect to see that choppy of a performance the rest of the season. If I had to mention one thing, it would be a team as one-dimensional as PSU so consistently completing long drives. An aberration. PSU spent two weeks preparing for OSU and that's why they looked like junk vs. Illinois.

Convert one more third down in red zone and it's 37 points. PSU misses the 47-yard FG and they have 21. 'Ifs and buts...' 37-21 would be OK.”

– Terrier Buck

“That the OL, full of 4-5 star experienced veterans, was not calm and efficient bothers me. That the defensive scheme and the DL, also full of 4-5 star players, could not generate pressure on the PSU QB without blitzing by LBs or the secondary also bothers me.”

– AnthonyBuckeye

“The Bucks' red zone offense was mediocre and play-calling too predictable. The O-line could get no push up the middle yet we keep running the same play. Stroud's inability to run near the goal line or when plays break down exposes us against good defenses.”

– Bucks89

“Too many wide-open Penn State receivers running free among Buckeye defenders playing too loose. Take away the two big plays by the Buckeye defense – which unfortunately for Penn State, you can't – and it might have been a difficult evening.”

– Poster That Harley Built

“Stupid penalties killing drives and the unwillingness of running the QB when a play breaks down. Also, keep the clown suits in the closet.”

– R1TBDBITL



DON TEQUILA
MEXICAN GRILL
AND
CANTINA AND BAR

9762 Sawmill Parkway
POWELL

5637 Woerner Temple Road
DUBLIN

3140 Kingsdale Center
UPPER ARLINGTON

\$10 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$50 OR MORE
Does not include alcoholic beverages. Dine in only. Not valid with other offers. Tax not included. Expires 12/31/21



DON TEQUILA
MEXICAN SEAFOOD
& TAQUERIA

MEXICAN SEAFOOD & TAQUERIA
6211 Cleveland Ave • **COLUMBUS**



\$6 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$30 OR MORE
Does not include alcoholic beverages. Dine in only. Not valid with other offers. Tax not included. Expires 12/31/21





SUMMIT
PERFORMANCE **SPI** INSTITUTE

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

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 EDITOR
Patrick Mayhorne

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 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 Wachsman

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 (Nov. 13 cover date) will be mailed on Nov. 9.

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

Wachsman Elite Donor:



Buckeyes Find Way To Beat Nittany Lions

Full disclosure: I thought Ohio State would blow the doors off Penn State, and I should have known better.

I gave full faith and credit to the Buckeyes for bludgeoning the likes of Akron, Rutgers, Maryland and Indiana and thought they would do the same to a banged-up Nittany Lions defense that just one week before had allowed 357 rushing yards against Illinois – arguably the worst team in the Big Ten this season.

I figured that back-to-back losses that had knocked Penn State off a perch that once had it ranked as highly as the No. 4 team in the nation, and the fact that James Franklin is mentioned at least 10 times a day as the next head coach at USC, might have left the Nittany Lions a little more than distracted.

What didn't get my full attention – and perhaps the same was true with regard to the Ohio State players – was the fact that Penn State always seems to match up favorably against the Buckeyes. There is a reason the last six games in the series have been determined by an average of only 6.3 points.

And still, Ohio State did what it had to do when it had to do it, and the result was a 33-24 victory on a night when the Buckeyes played far below their talent level. Was that a case of a relatively young team getting too full of itself after gorging on cupcakes? Or was it the sign of a maturing team, finding ways to overcome adversity and learning how to win when its A-game is nowhere to be found.

Some credit is due head coach Ryan Day, who has done just about everything he can to prove that he knows how to run a football program. From admitting a defensive course correction was needed in the middle of a season – something I cannot remember ever happening – to remaining true to what he knows will work, Day has steered a once-sinking ship off the rocks and on a path that could still take the Buckeyes to a Big Ten championship and spot in the College Football Playoff.

The game against Penn State was a microcosm of Day's philosophy and how he keeps plugging away despite early setbacks.

Ohio State rushed for exactly 19 yards in the first half. That total came on 12 carries, an average of 1.6 yards per attempt. And that was for an entire half, the kind of performance that would cause most coaches to abandon their running game. That's what Franklin did after his team had rushed for only 19 yards on 17 carries at the half. The Lions tried to run the ball only 12 more times in the game.

Not Day, though. He had apparently rationed freshman TreVeyon Henderson's attempts throughout the first half of the season for this very occasion. The coach kept calling the freshman's number until Henderson finally gashed Penn State for a 68-yard thunderbolt down the home sideline. Two plays later, he scored on a 1-yard plunge that pushed Ohio State's lead to 27-17 with 3:35 to go in the third quarter. The Nittany Lions never got closer than three after that.

Critics will point to the fact that Henderson's long run represented more than 42 percent of his team's rushing output for the entire game and that the Buckeyes averaged only 2.8 yards on their other 33 carries. So what? The ability Henderson possesses was something Day knew might eventually break the game open for his team, and the coach kept banging away until it did.

Probably like most of you reading this, I wasn't thrilled with the way the Ohio State linebackers and secondary allowed Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford to have almost carte blanche in the middle of the field.

At least the Buckeyes kept almost everything in front of them with Clifford's only touchdown a first-quarter 5-yard flip to tight end Brenton Strange.

Up front, the OSU defense sacked Clifford four times, hurried him on five other occasions, and caused him to commit a pair of costly turnovers. The first was a strip-sack fumble caused

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

by defensive end Tyreke Smith and turned into a 57-yard touchdown romp by Jerron Cage, and the second was a fourth-quarter interception by cornerback Cameron Brown when the Buckeyes were protecting a 27-24 lead.

I get it. The margin of victory was only nine points, there were some silly penalties – something that has plagued Ohio State much of the season so far – and the Buckeyes surrendered 361 yards through the air.

But the opponent was the No. 20 team in the nation, and Penn State was held to just 33 yards on the ground, Henderson was frustrated for much of the game and still wound up with 152 yards, and C.J. Stroud turned in a subpar performance and still threw for 305 yards.

In the end, perhaps we were expecting too much.

Detailed Explanation

Ask your garden-variety college football player to describe what happened during any given time on a specific play in a game and chances are pretty good you will receive a vanilla-flavored, one-sentence answer accompanied by an eye-roll.

Then again, Nicholas Petit-Frere is not your garden variety college football player. I've been doing this a long time, and I can't remember any Ohio State player (or coach, for that matter) more thoughtful and erudite than Petit-Frere.

Following his team's 54-7 win Oct. 23 against Indiana, Petit-Frere was asked about the Buckeyes' first touchdown of the game, an 11-yard run by Miyan Williams. On the play, left guard Thayer Munford took on Indiana graduate senior defensive lineman Weston Kramer and leveraged him to the ground. At the same time, Petit-Frere met IU linebacker Micah McFadden – a consensus All-Big Ten performer and third-team All-American last year – at about the 10-yard line and managed to push him out of the way. Williams took a half-step to his right, blew through the hole and scored untouched.

When asked to detail what happened on the play, Petit-Frere never paused.

"What I can tell you is that Thayer and I had a combination with that block," said the fourth-year junior from Tampa, Fla. "I think it was a three-technique or a 4i up to McFadden, who was the linebacker. I saw him rolling across over the top because we were going tempo and I was a little bit late to the play. But he's probably one of the best linebackers, not only in the Big Ten, but probably in the country in terms of reading plays, his aggressiveness and how hard he hits.

"So, seeing him come across the top, I was able to get off the block, and I knew him being one of the best players in the nation, it was going to be either me or him and someone was going to have to make a play. Luckily, I was able to get there in time and I was able to make the play and kind of steer him out of the way. Miyan

was able to make the cut off my butt and go untouched. So, that's kind of how the play went.

"McFadden is probably one of the best linebackers in the country, and we watched a lot of film on him," Petit-Frere continued. "He was one of our main keys, one of our main targets in terms of the game to make sure that we get that guy blocked because he'll make plays all across the field. So, it was a good play, not just by Thayer but by everyone on the offensive line. We all made our blocks well, and it was just a great opportunity for us to get a touchdown there."

It was a rare insight into what an offensive lineman sees before a play and how he executes his position – so rare, in fact, that veteran beat reporter Doug Lesmerises of Cleveland.com, who asked the original question, replied, "I was going to follow up there, but that was the best answer I've gotten in a year. That was awesome. Thank you."

And Finally

- Now that I have praised Day for much of this column, I'll throw a little shade his way. I thought settling for field goals on trips inside the red zone had departed Columbus with Jim Tressel and John Cooper. Tress was famous for telling his quarterbacks not to "mess up my three," while one of Coop's famous sayings was "win the surest way." In Day's defense, the four field goals kicked by Noah Ruggles more than accounted for the nine-point victory. But going for it on fourth down, and converting just once, might have changed the total complexion of the game.

- According to the letter of the law, the targeting call against OSU linebacker Steele Chambers was correct. But the letter of the law is ridiculous and needs to be changed. I realize it's difficult to know the intent in someone's heart, but football officials should have a feel for whether a player is attempting to injure an opponent. Call the 15 yards for unnecessary roughness, but save the targeting calls (and the game ejection that goes with them) for the egregious infractions.

- Maybe I'm getting old, or maybe just too old to care, but I didn't think Ohio State's all-scarlet uniforms were that terrible. If they ever try the scarlet pants again, maybe pair them with the white jerseys.

- As long as we're on the subject of getting older, I'll shout at another cloud. Do Ohio Stadium fans really need to be screamed at by the P.A. announcer? I know I'm seated in a climate-controlled press box and can hear only a muffle of sound – especially when the windows are closed on what was a comfortable late October night. But it seemed the only time the decibel level rose in the Horseshoe was when the scoreboard lit up like the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree and the stadium announcer bellowed, "Make some noise!!" It's bad enough the university has to resort to gimmicks to get people in the stands these days. With traffic and parking an ongoing nightmare and concession lines long enough to miss an entire quarter, one would think you wouldn't scream at your customers once you got them inside the gate.

- Another full disclosure: Of the two Big Ten teams from Michigan, I thought Michigan State was more overrated. But what I saw in that game was a highly motivated Spartans team continue to take it to the Wolverines, and it was Jim Harbaugh's team that ultimately blinked. The big question now: Can Sparty get as highly motivated again when he finishes the season at Ohio State and at home against Penn State?

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Ohio State Drops Spot In Latest AP Rankings

Following a 33-24 win over No. 20 Penn State on Oct. 30, Ohio State dropped a spot to No. 6 in the latest rankings from The Associated Press. But the Buckeyes managed to remain at No. 5 in the AFCA coaches' poll.

Georgia remains the unanimous choice atop both polls followed by Cincinnati, Alabama and Oklahoma. Michigan State moves up to fifth in the AP poll following its victory against then sixth-ranked Michigan and is followed by Ohio State, Oregon, Notre Dame, Michigan and Wake Forest.

The undefeated Demon Deacons, making their first-ever appearance in the top 10, continue to rise in the rankings and are the top team in the ACC this season. Wake Forest will face teams with two or more losses in each of its remaining games this year, including matchups with four-loss North Carolina and three-loss Clemson.

The previous best ranking for Wake Forest was No. 11 in 1947.

The coaches' poll has the same teams in slots five through 10, although in a slightly different order. Ohio State is fifth followed by Michigan State, Oregon, Notre Dame, Wake Forest and Michigan.

Texas-San Antonio (8-0) is the only team outside the top 10 with an undefeated record, but the Roadrunners rate only No. 16 from the writers and No. 18 from the coaches. In its final four regular-season games, UTSA plays UTEP, Southern Miss, University of Alabama-Birmingham and North Texas.

Iowa and Penn State remain ranked, giving the Big Ten five teams in the polls. The Hawkeyes are No. 19 in the writers' poll and



SONNY BROCKWAY

ALONG THE SIDELINE — Ohio State tight end Jeremy Ruckert (88) tries to elude the grasp of Penn State safety Jaquan Brisker (1) during Big Ten action Oct. 30 at Ohio Stadium. Ruckert caught three passes for 57 yards during his team's 33-24 win against the Nittany Lions.

No. 16 in the coaches, while the Nittany Lions are No. 22 according to the AP and No. 23 with the coaches.

These were the final rankings to be released before the first College Football Playoff selection committee was slated to release its first rankings of the season Nov. 2.

Senior Tight End Finally Getting Time In Spotlight

Jeremy Ruckert makes a living off doing the dirty work. He completes mentally and physically demanding tasks without much praise.

Ohio State football beat reporters love to write about quarterbacks, running backs and wide receivers. Meanwhile, Ruckert operates behind the scenes, striving to earn the

recognition of his teammates.

Through the first six games, Ruckert had only 11 catches for 139 yards and a touchdown. Rather than feel frustrated with his lack of involvement in the offense, he put his head down and found a way to contribute in ways that show up outside the box score.

"We have so many weapons, and that's a great thing to have," said OSU head coach Ryan Day. "But at the same time, guys have to be unselfish. That's part of the game, and he's done a lot of the dirty work blocking inside."

However, Ruckert's selflessness and willingness to defer to his teammates in the passing game has paid off during the last two games. The senior tight end caught five passes for 47 yards and two touchdowns

during Ohio State's 54-7 win against Indiana and then shrugged off an early lost fumble against Penn State to grab three more passes for 57 yards during his team's 33-24 win.

"There are times where the ball hasn't come his way, but when you stay positive and stay at it, things work out," Day said. "We talk about, 'What are you willing to sacrifice to be great and make this run?' Sometimes, it means sacrificing touches. But eventually, it's going to come back to you, and it has for Jeremy."

With two touchdown catches against Indiana, Ruckert tied his career high for single-game receiving touchdowns. The Lindenhurst, N.Y., native previously scored twice in the 2019 season opener with Florida Atlantic, last year's victory against Penn State and the 2020 Sugar Bowl win against Clemson.

"I've always said since I've been here, some days it's in the run game, and some days it's in the pass game," Ruckert said. "Whatever it is, just being able to make plays when your name is called (is the key)."

"Some days, the game plan is different than others. I think the biggest thing going forward is just being able to rely on each other play after play – just knowing that whoever the play is going to, we have confidence that they're going to make the play."

Ruckert will continue to do the dirty work for the Buckeyes, but he reminded Ohio State's remaining opponents that they need to keep him in the scouting report. If a defense takes away other options, Ruckert will be ready to take over.

"He's a great tight end," starting quarterback C.J. Stroud said. "Ruck has great body language and runs great routes. I'm happy for him."

Finally Healthy, Smith Dialing Up Sack Total

It might finally all be coming together for Ohio State senior defensive end Tyreke Smith.

After appearing in 13 games during his true freshman season in 2019, the 6-3, 260-pound Cleveland Heights, Ohio, product saw his playing time dwindle the last two seasons because of a litany of injuries. Then this year, after starting the first three games of the season, Smith was sidelined again before returning to the starting lineup against Indiana.

When he's healthy, he is a bona fide member of the Buckeyes' deep defensive line rotation, and it was Smith's late second-quarter sack of Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford that resulted in defensive tackle Jerron Cage's 57-yard fumble return for a touchdown. It was part of a performance against the Nittany Lions that saw Smith credited with five tackles, the sack, a forced fumble and a quarterback hurry.

"Tyreke is really a special talent, and I'm glad he got to show his pass-rushing ability tonight," fellow defensive end Zach Harrison told reporters after OSU's 33-24 victory. "We were talking during the game, saying, 'I'll race you back there to the quarterback.' We want to have an effect on the game and have fun doing it."

The sack against Penn State was his second in as many weeks after he recorded the first of his 2021 season against Indiana.

"That meant a lot, but it's just the beginning," Smith said. "Coach Day says we can always get way better than we are. I'm just

Big Games Continue For Buckeye Football Team

The meat of the Ohio State football schedule started with Ohio State's hard-fought 33-24 win over Penn State on Oct. 30, and there are more big games on the docket. You do not need to wait a full week between papers to get news of the Buckeyes. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff posts news daily at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com website. You'll get the latest from head coach Ryan Day and the Buckeyes throughout the week, along with any breaking recruiting news.

Watch for staff predictions before each game, including the game against Nebraska. The staff predictors either overestimated the Buckeyes or underestimated Penn State in the recent game with the Nittany Lions. Chase Brown called it 45-17 in favor of the Buckeyes, Patrick Mayhorn, 56-17, and Mark Rea, 52-14. And don't forget the immediate coverage after each game posted at BuckeyeSports.com as well as discussion of the game at our Fan Forum, including the "Official Game Thread" with real-time comments from BSB staff members and readers throughout the game. As you can imagine, the discussion was spirited during the game with PSU.

Please note that recent developments with the mail service have us concerned about delivery time for BSB this football season, especially as we get closer to the holidays. We remind you the complete print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted at BuckeyeSports.com at the time the issue is mailed and is available to subscribers free of charge, as is all the other content provided at the site.

In addition to daily posts, we also offer reprints from the Buckeye

Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Also, staff members man the BuckeyeSports.com Fan 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 \$12 and through the traditional recruiting season for \$22. 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	6-2, 41-14 win over Northwestern
Sept. 11	OREGON*	L, 35-28	Fox	7-1, 52-29 win over Colorado
Sept. 18	TULSA*	W, 41-20	FS1	3-5, 20-17 loss to Navy
Sept. 25	AKRON	W, 59-7	BTN	2-6, 45-10 loss to Buffalo
Oct. 2	at Rutgers	W, 52-13	BTN	4-4, 20-14 win over Illinois
Oct. 9	MARYLAND	W, 66-17	Fox	5-3, 38-35 win over Indiana
Oct. 23	at Indiana*	W, 54-7	ABC	2-6, 38-35 loss to Maryland
Oct. 30	PENN STATE	W, 33-24	ABC	5-3, 33-24 loss to Ohio State
Nov. 6	at Nebraska	Noon	Fox	3-6, 28-23 loss to Purdue
Nov. 13	PURDUE	TBA	TBA	5-3, 28-23 win over Nebraska
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN STATE	TBA	TBA	8-0, 37-33 win over Michigan
Nov. 27	at Michigan	Noon	Fox	7-1, 37-33 loss to Michigan State
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	Fox	

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

scratching the surface, and I try to keep that mentality. I'm always just trying to look for something better. I did get a sack, but there were a lot of other rushes where I could have done better. I thought I could have made even more of an impact."

Smith said he is eager to make up for lost time due to injuries.

"It sucks to be out, but your health is the most important thing, so you have to know you're all the way healthy when you step on the field," he said. "If I'm not 100 percent, I'm not going to be helping the team the way I want to."

"The only way to get through it is to make sure your faith is strong. My mom is always telling me to be humble, stay hungry and always remain faithful. Every time I get on the field, I'm going to use my God-given ability and go as hard as I can within the scheme and within what I'm supposed to do."

Smith echoed sentiments of a lot of his defensive line teammates, stressing that playing on Saturday is the reward for hard work in practice.

"A lot of times, when it's that fourth quarter and you're tired, and you're looking for some more energy in the tank," Smith said, "you go back and think about those times when you had to go through those mat drills or you had to go through those lifts or those times when you walked up to the line and thought, 'I am so tired, I don't know how I'm going to do this next rep,' but you just step up and do it anyway."

"You're just turning that mental switch on in your head, and that's what Ohio State instills in you. That mental switch that lets you know you can push through anything. You're doing for your brother next to you, your brother to the left and right of you. You just have to remember all the training you've

done and the reason why you've done it.

"My mind-set is just doing what I can for the team to go one step forward and get a win," he added. "Anything I can do - extra film work, extra treatment, extra sleep. Maybe I'll have to say something to someone if I think they're not doing what they're supposed to be doing. We're a brotherhood in here, so no one is going to be bothered by a little criticism. Our mind-set is that while we're a good team, we can always be better. We came up short last year, so that's always in our minds, too. We have to finish what we've started. We want to finish what wasn't finished last year."

While the OSU defense drew a lot of criticism during the early part of the season, the unit has played much better in recent weeks. It seemed to take a half-step backward against Penn State, giving up 361 yards through the air. But the Nittany Lions were limited to just 33 yards rushing, and quarterback Sean Clifford was sacked four times.

"I think it's just guys buying in," Smith replied when asked about the difference between the defense now and the unit that seemed clueless so much of the time in the first couple of games. "I think it's guys ripping themselves open and giving their hearts over for the love of the brotherhood. We knew we weren't playing to the standard that we needed to be playing."

"Sometimes, you just have to look in the mirror, you know? You have to ask yourself what you can do to get better. I think there was a lot of that. Also, it was a humbling experience," he said of the loss to Oregon. "You're not going to always win, and sometimes a loss is what's going to help you get to where you need to be. I just think we took it as a learning lesson. We didn't dwell on it. We just took it as a humbling experience,

BSB Podcast Now Twice Weekly

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.

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, iHeart-Radio, 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.

went back to work and we're doing better now."

Four more sacks against Penn State brought to 28 the number for the Buckeyes this season, a total that features almost evenly distributed numbers by defensive ends and tackles. Rush ends are supposed to get the glory in terms of sacks during this particular era of college football, but Smith insists he couldn't care less who gets the glory.

"I want all my guys to eat," he said. "The defensive tackles have stepped up in a huge way, and it's never like, 'Dang, he got a sack and I didn't.' We're all working together, and I feel like everything's like a bicycle chain. Whenever there's a problem in the chain, that's when the bike messes up. But when the chain is working perfectly, so is the bike."

"When they're putting pressure on the quarterback, they're forcing it out to us. When we're pressuring from the outside, we're making it better for those interior guys."

Burke Endures Growing Pains Against Penn State

Penn State wide receiver Jahan Dotson made himself a household name in college football after making a series of high-light-reel catches when matched up against former Ohio State cornerback Shaun Wade last season.

One year later, Dotson hoped to duplicate his 144-yard performance against the Buckeyes. However, OSU cornerback Denzel Burke had other plans for the Nittany Lions' top receiving option.

"He's a pretty good receiver," Burke said

on Oct. 27. "Nothing I can't handle though."

Before the Penn State game, Burke had handled a significant amount of responsibility for the Buckeyes. The first-year cornerback had started in every game and held a Pro Football Focus position grade of 70.3, which led all Ohio State defensive backs.

Burke had six pass breakups in the first seven games, which led the team. He also recorded his first-career interception against Rutgers. Even better, Burke took the ball 23 yards to the end zone, giving Ohio State six points and helping extend an early lead over the Scarlet Knights.

Since Burke's pick-six, opposing quarterbacks have looked away from his side of the field. The wide receivers he covers are seeing a significant decrease in targets compared to their previous outings. For example, Burke held Indiana wide receiver Ty Fryfogle to one catch for 30 yards on Oct. 23.

"I guess teams are starting to respect me a little more," Burke said. "At the same time, I do want them to test me. But if they don't, they don't."

Day assumed the Nittany Lions would make Dotson a focal point of their offense against the Buckeyes and had high praise for the wide receiver during his weekly press conference leading up to the game.

"I think Dotson is one of the better wide receivers in the country, and we have to know where he is at all times," Day said. "They're going to try and find ways to get him the ball, for sure. And so however we go about doing that, that's part of the schematic."

Continued On Page 6



We're Hiring!

Component Assembly

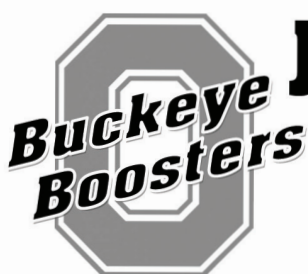
1ST & 3RD Shift Rates Starting at \$18/hr

Located in Canal Winchester, OH

Great Benefits!

Please call 614-707-5934

or email hiring@straitandlamp.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

OHIO STATE

INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

ic stuff that we'll work on this week. But we have to know exactly where he is."

Burke had his chance to cover Dotson, and the PSU receiver responded with 11

catches for 127 yards. He also took a direct snap 2 yards for a touchdown at the beginning of the second half.

While not the performance Burke was hoping for, he still had the opportunity to match up against one of college football's best receivers – a tall task for any freshman cornerback – and hopes the experience will help him prepare for future matchups.

Crowley Suffers Another Injury During Off-Week

Ohio State will be without a member of its running back room for the remainder of the season and potentially longer. Day told reporters Oct. 26 at his weekly press conference that third-year running back Marcus Crowley will be unavailable for "a long time" after suffering an injury during Ohio State's

off-week between blowout victories against Maryland and Indiana.

"Marcus is going to be out for a long time," Day said. "It's a long-term injury and certainly prayers go out to him. Something happened during the off-week and he's working toward recovery, but it's going to be a long road for him."

Ohio State is now down to four scholarship running backs following Crowley's injury and teammate Steele Chambers' move to linebacker during the offseason – true freshman TreVeyon Henderson, junior Master Teague, redshirt freshman Miyan Williams and true freshman Evan Pryor.

Day said that he remains comfortable with Ohio State's running back depth even as it has dwindled in recent weeks.

"For this point of the year, we're doing

OK," the OSU head coach said. "It's part of the game. You're going to have some guys who get bumped and bruised along the way. You're going to lose some guys, but I was excited to see Miyan get back out there (against Indiana). It was good to see Evan, too. I thought Evan had some good snaps there."

Despite Day's assertion, Crowley's absence puts a strain on Ohio State's running back position. Teague missed his second straight game against Penn State, and the Buckeyes went almost exclusively with Henderson vs. the Nittany Lions. The freshman got 28 carries to just three for Williams. Pryor did not play in the game.

"It's been a little bit (of a revolving door), but that's part of college football," Day said. "Different teams across the country deal with the same thing, and we know that it's going to be unexpected. That's what we talk to our players about all the time. You just don't know what's going to happen, and that's why you have to recruit depth and guys have to understand that their opportunity is going to come if they just continue to work because it's a rough game."

"Guys get injured and you have to be able to adapt to that. I think (running backs coach Tony Alford) has done a really good job with his room."

For Crowley, his latest setback is another during a career that has been defined by injuries. He missed two games earlier this season after being carted off the field against Oregon, and he was lost for nearly the entire 2019 and 2020 seasons after an ACL tear he sustained early in the 2019 season. He had impressed Alford during the offseason and had performed well in the playing time he did see this season, but it seems another lengthy rehab is on the docket for the Florida native.

In four games this season, Crowley had rushed for 103 yards on 20 carries, an average of 5.2 yards per attempt, as well as one pass reception for 21 yards. Over 15 career games at Ohio State, the product of Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy has rushed for 354 yards on 51 carries (6.9 yards per attempt) and has three receptions worth 32 yards.

Walk-On Backup Center Making Meaningful Snaps

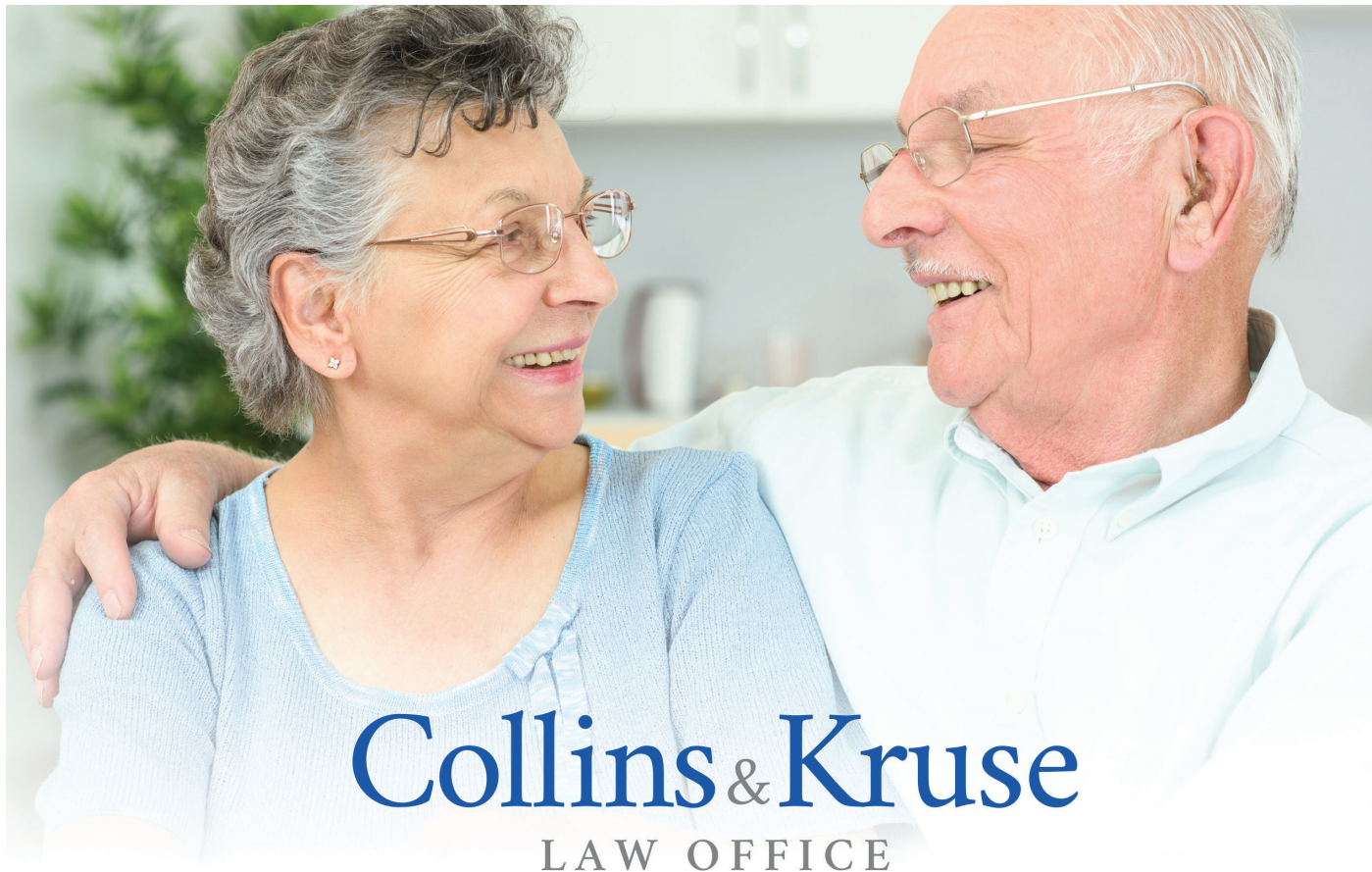
The number of injuries along the offensive line this season has forced the Buckeyes to make some personnel adjustments. In addition to rotating players to different positions, there are some new faces who have garnered playing time.

One of those is true freshman Toby Wilson, a 6-2, 298-pound walk-on from Liberty Center (Ohio) Olentangy, just north of Columbus. If the name sounds familiar, it is because he is the son of offensive coordinator and tight ends coach Kevin Wilson.

The younger Wilson made his collegiate debut in mop-up duty at center during the 59-7 win against Akron on Sept. 25 and has seen action in each of the subsequent four games. For any true freshman to get playing time on the offensive line is a notable achievement. But when that freshman is a walk-on, it's remarkable.

Still, OSU offensive line coach Greg Studrawa doesn't seem that surprised.

"First of all, he's a coach's kid," Studrawa said. "He's been around the game, he's grown up with the game. We've had some



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

injuries with backup centers, and Toby has played the position. We've put him in there and he's continued to grow and grow and grow, and he's doing a great job. He's earned where he is and he's played really well.

"In a couple of the games, he's made some really, really good blocks. Those blocks are really good for a freshman walk-on in that situation. I think he'll continue to grow and get better with hard work, and I'm pretty proud of what he's done."

Wilson has gotten work behind starting center Luke Wypler mainly due to the fact junior center Harry Miller has battled injuries all season. If there were such a thing as an official depth chart, backup left guard Matt Jones (who started the Akron game in place of the injured Thayer Munford) would be the backup center.

But Studrawa is leery of putting Jones into harm's way in true game action.

"That's kind of a touchy situation," the OSU line coach said. "You sit there on the sideline, and you look at the score, and you think if Matt Jones goes in there and somebody falls on his knee and rolls him up when

the score is 50 to whatever, the question will be, 'Why is Matt in the game?'

"So, as soon as I want to do it, something grabs me in the back of my mind and I stop thinking about that. I try to get Matt some of that work in a little safer environment in practice during the week so that he still stays sharp at that position. I just wouldn't want something bad to happen."

As far as rotating linemen at different positions, Studrawa said it was something that never entered his mind before the season began.

"I thought we would be settled on five," he said. "You want to get those five guys in there, you want to get them comfortable with each other, and you want to play them. But the fact that there are some younger guys who have come along so well ... Matt Jones is a guy who has made me do it because the kid deserves to play. Like I said, when the other guys are banged up and maybe can't go 80 or 90 plays, it gives you an opportunity to get them out and get them rested and keep them healthy for the long haul.

"We're heading into the storm now, so

they have to be as healthy as they can, and the ability to rotate allows us to not skip a beat. Those are good problems to have."

OL Coach On Mend, Discusses Spinal Surgery

Studrawa's typical scowl and gravelly voice lend him a certain indestructible aura. But the veteran offensive line coach missed some time earlier this season after a back injury he sustained on the sideline during the season opener at Minnesota required surgery.

"I got kind of banged on the sideline but didn't think anything of it," Studrawa said. "We flew home after the game, and the next morning there's a shooting pain down my back and my left leg won't work.

"The doctors looked at me, and we did some treatments, but after about a week, it still wouldn't go away, so there really wasn't any choice but to have the surgery. I had the surgery on a Thursday, missed the Tulsa game and then came back on Monday."

According to the coach, the problem was with discs in the lumbar region of his spine,

discs that were pressing against the nerve that controls the left leg.

"It wasn't a matter of putting the surgery off," Studrawa said. "I couldn't walk."

The procedure was performed by Dr. Safdar Khan, an orthopedic surgeon specializing in spine surgery at the Wexner Medical Center. And while Studrawa praised the surgeon and his staff, he admitted he wasn't a model patient, especially when forced to watch the Tulsa game from a hospital bed.

"You have no idea," he said with a smile. "I was bleeding out of my back, I was throwing the phone. I was calling cell phones, and I knew they didn't even have them (with them). I was trying to get hold of someone on the sideline. It was torture. I mean, I was taking more pills so I could calm down."

Studrawa said his players and fellow staff members took his absence better than he did.

"It was awesome," he said. "They did a great job. I missed four days and those guys did a fantastic job the whole time. (Graduate

Continued On Page 8

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago – 1981

Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce was feeling pretty confident after his team had just completed a dominant 29-10 win against Indiana on Oct. 24, improving to 3-1 in Big Ten play.

"I kind of think that we're back in the (Big Ten) race again, aren't we, fellows?" Bruce asked during his postgame press conference. "We're back in the race again, and we can determine our own destiny. There's no doubt about that. That's what I like."

The Buckeyes controlled their own destiny because league-leading Iowa dropped its first conference matchup of the season, a 12-10 decision to Minnesota.

Bruce gave credit to his defense for the win against the Hoosiers.

"I really thought that the defense did an outstanding job in the second half, shutting Indiana down – a really super job," the OSU head coach said. "It was a super job after the first drive of Indiana. They played well, came to the ball and made some good plays."

35 Years Ago – 1986

As if he were on a fishing expedition, Bruce was putting the bait on the hook as he discussed his team's one-sided 33-0 shutout of Minnesota on Oct. 25.

"For some reason," said Bruce cheekily as he feigned ignorance of his team achieving its success, "we've been getting better and playing better and looking better and feeling better about ourselves. That's a very important thing to happen for a football team this time of year. When you're going into November and you're going into the really meaty part of the schedule, that's very important."

With his team running up 439 total yards and limiting Minnesota to only 189, the Buckeyes, who started the season slowly with back-to-back losses to Alabama and Washington, were now on a six-game winning streak.

"We're improving," Bruce said. "We're playing well."

30 Years Ago – 1991

Michigan State got a mixed weather report for Oct. 26 in Columbus. While the Spartans expected unseasonably warm temperatures, what they received instead was a Snowstorm.

Ohio State senior tailback Carlos Snow and his offensive teammates simply wore out the MSU defense in the second half, moving to a 27-17 victory in front of a record Ohio Stadium crowd of 94,431.

Snow rushed for 122 of his game-high 169 yards in the second half, and the Buckeyes improved upon a 10-6 halftime lead to put away the Spartans and continue their quest for a showdown with Michigan for the right to represent the Big Ten in the Rose Bowl.

The Buckeyes' chances were enhanced greatly by an unlikely source when Northwestern upset Illinois, dealing the Fighting Illini their second conference loss and sending them one game behind OSU in the league standings.

Michigan led the league with a perfect 4-0 mark through Oct. 26 with Iowa, Indiana and Ohio State each a game behind at 3-1. The Buckeyes' destiny rested in their own hands since the Wolverines, Hawkeyes and Hoosiers all remained on the schedule.

25 Years Ago – 1996

The Big Ten was down to just two unbeaten squads after Ohio State dealt Iowa a 38-26 loss in Iowa City on Oct. 26. The win left the Buckeyes alone with defending conference champion Northwestern as the only undefeated teams in the league.

If all things remained equal – the two were not slated to play, similar to the situation in 1995 – OSU held the narrowest of advantages in the Rose Bowl race because NU had dropped a nonconference game to Wake Forest.

As such, the second-ranked Buckeyes were the only Big Ten squad that could determine the rest of the season entirely on their own.

"I think this kind of puts us in the driver's seat," said OSU line-backer Greg Bellisari after his team's win over Iowa. "I think the sky's the limit for this team. We've just got to stay focused and do what we have to do week in and week out."

20 Years Ago – 2001

Ohio State found itself on the wrong end of history Oct. 27 in Beaver Stadium, falling 29-27 to Penn State as longtime head coach Joe Paterno earned his career 324th victory in his 36th season at the helm, moving him past Paul "Bear" Bryant, whose Division I-A record of 323 wins stood for almost 19 seasons.

As the final seconds ticked off in a come-from-behind win, Paterno was doused with Gatorade. His wife, Sue, fought her way through the players and media horde to join her husband in the spotlight.

"It's just overwhelming," Paterno said. "It will take me a long time. I'm overwhelmed now."

Minutes later, Paterno was honored with a postgame ceremony. He was presented a ring with the number "324" engraved on it, and Penn State announced plans to build a 7-foot-high statue of the longtime coach.

"You never think it's going to be a big deal until it happens the way it did," Paterno said. "You see so many people who helped you get to this point."

15 Years Ago – 2006

Top-ranked Ohio State continued its methodical march Oct. 28 to a season-ending showdown with No. 2 Michigan, exhibiting offensive and defensive superiority against Minnesota while rolling to a 44-0 victory.

The Buckeyes improved to 9-0 and extended the nation's longest winning streak to 16 games by pounding on the Gophers at every turn. OSU piled up 484 yards of total offense while limiting Minnesota to only 182.

An ever-improving OSU defense limited the Gophers to 37 yards rushing after they had averaged 161.0 in their previous eight games. Meanwhile, quarterback Bryan Cupito was limited to 120 yards through the air, threw three interceptions and was sacked twice.

"We really wanted that shutout," OSU defensive tackle David Patterson said. "Toward the end of the game, we kind of saw it coming. We put the younger guys in there, and they did a really good job of keeping the same pace and tempo when those guys were making plays.

"It's a really good feeling for the defense to get a shutout because that's what we always strive for."

10 Years Ago – 2011

Left for dead just three weeks prior following an epic collapse at Nebraska, Ohio State resurrected its season Oct. 29 with a pulse-pounding 33-29 victory against No. 12 Wisconsin, treating a prime-time homecoming crowd of 105,511 in Ohio Stadium to one of the most fantastic finishes in Ohio Stadium history.

After the Badgers erased a 12-point, fourth-quarter deficit with a pair of quick-strike touchdown drives to take a 29-26 lead with just 1:18 remaining, freshman quarterback Braxton Miller moved his team 52 yards in only four plays, hitting fellow freshman Devin Smith with a 40-yard touchdown heave with 0:20 showing on the game clock.

"I'm so happy for these guys," OSU head coach Luke Fickell told reporters. "I like the way they've fought and continued to believe in each other with all the ups and downs we've had. We've learned a lot. I think a couple of weeks ago at Nebraska was something that hopefully we learned a lot from. When you can continue to fight and not lose your focus and understand what you need to do, you can still be successful."

Five Years Ago – 2016

Ohio State hadn't blown an opponent out since a 58-0 win over Rutgers to open Big Ten play, but for head coach Urban Meyer, that didn't seem to be a big concern.

The Buckeyes hardly blew the doors off Northwestern on Oct. 29 with a 24-20 win, and Meyer was braced for a negative reaction from outside his program after the game. He admitted that Ohio State had room to improve – a lot of room to improve, in fact – but he wasn't upset with a close game. He had praise for the Wildcats, and he generally put out the impression that his team was on the right path.

"Nothing was perfect," Meyer said after the game, "but we're going to enjoy that win and go."

On the surface, it seemed likely that Meyer or the Ohio State players would be frustrated by the game because for the fourth week in a row, the Buckeyes found themselves in a Big Ten dogfight. Three of those tight games were against then-unranked teams and included a loss to Penn State.

But Meyer was quick to look at the positives of the game instead, despite knowing full well that not everything went right for his team. He noted that he was happy with the fast start to the game, which the Buckeyes certainly had. After their first two drives, it seemed like Meyer's team might open up a big lead with the score 10-0. When it didn't, he felt the group responded well, doing enough to hold on for a win that counted the same as any other.

One Year Ago – 2020

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

Fields guided the Buckeyes to a quick 14-0 advantage. Then, when the Nittany Lions threatened to make it a game in the third quarter, Fields hit Chris Olave for a 49-yard TD to make it 28-13 and later added his second scoring strike to Jeremy Ruckert on a fourth-and-1 for a 38-19 lead with less than 10 minutes to play.

Fields was a masterful 28 of 34 passing for 318 yards, while Master Teague rushed for 110 yards on 23 carries and the first score of the game.

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

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 7

assistant) Kennedy (Cook) did a great job, and Kevin (Wilson) obviously knows line play, so they didn't skip a beat. We were kind of prepared because of COVID. We had the Zoom stuff already set up, so it was kind of neat. I was Zooming from the recovery room after surgery.

"It's like anything else. When you have an offensive line coach, the players get a certain comfort from seeing it and hearing it from me. I mean, they get it from the other guys, too, and it's no big deal. But to be able to get on Zoom, and I can look them in the eye and be able to watch practice, I think it gave them a certain comfort zone that things were still good. The change really wasn't that big for them."

As for his recovery, Studrawa realizes it's a long-term process.

"I'm getting better," he said. "I'm not 100 percent yet. It's a tough deal. I'm telling you, if you have a choice, don't ever have it. But Dr. Kahn was fantastic, and each day it gets a little better."

Miller Plans To Donate NIL Earnings To Relief Efforts

Miller has decided to give his newfound earnings to a cause that is close to his heart.

According to Front Office Sports, Miller has announced he will donate all of his

Name, Image and Likeness earnings to humanitarian efforts in Nicaragua. According to the announcement, Miller has been to the country on mission trips almost every year since he was in junior high school.

Over the summer, states across the country and the NCAA passed NIL legislation that allows players to financially benefit from their name, image and likeness.

Miller, a native of Buford, Ga., is currently in his third season at Ohio State. He worked his way into the two-deep rotation along the offensive line as a freshman in 2019 and was a starter for the Buckeyes last season until being placed on the COVID list and missing the national championship game.

This season, Miller has battled injuries but made his 2021 debut Oct. 30 against Penn State.

Stroud Wins Fifth Big Ten Weekly Freshman Award

They might as well just call it the C.J. Stroud award at this point because for the fifth time this season, the Ohio State quarterback earned Big Ten Freshman of the Week honors. It's the seventh win for the Buckeyes in seven games, with TreVeyon Henderson taking the win after week three and Kyle McCord claiming it after week four before passing the baton back to Stroud, who earned the honor in three straight games after returning from a shoulder injury.

His fifth honor came following a 21-of-28 passing performance against Indiana, racking up 266 yards and four touchdowns in the process on the way to the 54-7 beatdown of the Hoosiers in Bloomington.

Joining him on the accolades list for week eight was Illinois running back Chase Brown, who earned Offensive Player of the Week honors after carrying 33 times for 223 yards against Penn State on Oct. 23 and leading the Fighting Illini to a 20-18 victory in nine overtimes. It was Brown's second claim to the honor of the season.

Wisconsin linebacker Leo Chenal was



Sonny Brockway

WELCOME TO THE CLUB — Two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin (left) leads the salute to former OSU running back Keith Byars upon his 2020 election to the College Football Hall of Fame. Griffin and Byars are among the 26 former Ohio State players in the college Hall of Fame.

the conference Defensive Player of the Week after recording nine tackles, including 3½ sacks during the Badgers' win against Purdue.

Chenal's teammate, kicker Collin Larsh, earned Special Teams Player of the Week honors with three field goals and three extra points during the 30-13 win.

Buckeyes Name 28 Players As Champions Against IU

The Ohio State coaching staff named a total of 28 players — 14 on offense, eight on defense, two on special teams and four scout-teamers — as "champions" following the win at Indiana on Oct. 23.

Stroud and Ruckert were the Offensive Players of the Game, while Harrison claimed the same award for the defense.

Linebacker Teradja Mitchell and cornerback Demario McCall were named the Special Teams Players of the Game.

In addition to those five players, Henderson and Pryor graded out as offensive champions alongside Cade Stover, Chris Olave, Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Marvin Harrison Jr. The coaching staff also placed six offensive linemen on the list — Munford, Nicholas Petit-Frere, Matthew Jones, Paris Johnson Jr., Wypler and Dawand Jones.

Earning the champion grade on defense were Haskell Garrett, Lathan Ransom, Kourt Williams, Ronnie Hickman, Tommy Eichenberg, Steele Chambers and Burke.

The final group of players who graded out as champions were scout-team members Jagger LaRoe, Ben Christman, Reid Carrico and Bryce Prater.

Byars Honored With NFF On-Campus Salute

Former Ohio State running back Keith Byars was honored Oct. 30 during the Buckeyes' win against Penn State, receiving recognition for his election last year to the College Football Hall of Fame.

The National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame are honoring 2020 honorees with On-Campus Salutes this year after last season was interrupted by COVID-19.

The NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salute program, which began with the inaugural College Football Hall of Fame class in 1951, honors each new inductee as he returns to his respective school to accept a Hall of Fame plaque that will stay on permanent display at the institution. The events take place on the field during a home game, and many Hall of Famers cite the experience as the ultimate capstone to their careers, providing them one more chance to take the field and be recognized in front of their home crowd.

"I am honored and blessed to join this club," Byars said.

A unanimous first-team All-American and the Heisman Trophy runner-up in 1984, Byars led the nation that season in rushing yards (1,764), all-purpose yards (2,441) and scoring (144). The 1984 Big Ten MVP also claimed first-team all-conference honors for

Become A Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP

Now is the time for loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers to show their support through our VIP subscription program.

As most of you know, the newspaper business is challenging in the best of times and is especially so these days. BSB is now facing more challenges with recent events that have tested the economy.

"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 and what we have done the previous 40 years."

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

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 either a gift card good for \$10 off your next food purchase at Rusty Bucket, the popular neighborhood hangout, or any Cameron Mitchell Restaurant, based on availability at the time of upgrade.

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 about this program, they can call the same number.

The following are our Elite Wachsman, Elite and Scarlet VIP subscrib-

ers. 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.; Mike Heimann, Ashland, Ohio; Curtis High, Beavercreek, Ohio; Freddie and 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.

the second consecutive year while guiding the Buckeyes to the Big Ten title and a trip to the Rose Bowl. Byars' all-purpose yards from that season remain a single-season school record and rank fourth all-time in the Big Ten.

Included in his 1984 performance was a 49-42 comeback win against Illinois during which Byars rushed for 274 yards and five touchdowns, which is tied for an Ohio State single-game scoring record. On his fourth touchdown of the game, he famously lost his left shoe at the Illini 40 but never broke stride. His 354 all-purpose yards against Purdue in 1984 also remain a single-game school record.

Despite missing most of his final season with an injury, Byars remains second in Ohio State history with 50 total touchdowns and ranks in the top 10 in career all-purpose yards (4,369) and career rushing yards (3,200).

Selected 10th overall by the Philadelphia Eagles in the 1986 NFL draft, Byars played 13 seasons with the Eagles (1986-92), Miami Dolphins (1993-96), New England Patriots (1996-97) and New York Jets (1998). He earned Pro Bowl honors in 1993 and helped the Patriots to an appearance in Super Bowl XXXI following the 1996 season.

Byars, who was inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2000, becomes the 26th Buckeye player in the College Football Hall of Fame, joining Warren Amling (1944-46), Howard "Hopalong" Cassady (1952-55), Tom Cousineau (1975-78), Jim Daniell (1939-41), Bob Ferguson (1959-61), Wes Fesler (1928-30), Eddie George (1992-95), Randy Gradishar (1971-73), Archie Griffin (1972-75), Chic Harley (1916-17, 1919), John Hicks (1970, 1972-73), Les Horvath (1940-42, 1944), Jim Houston (1957-59), Vic Janowicz (1949-51), Gomer Jones (1933-35), Rex Kern (1968-70), Orlando Pace (1994-96), Jim Parker (1954-56), Chris Spielman (1984-87), Jim Stillwagon (1968-70), Gaylord Stinchcomb (1917, 1919-20), Jack Tatum (1968-70), Aurelius Thomas (1955-57), Bill Willis (1942-44) and Gust Zarnas (1935-37).

Seven former Ohio State coaches are also in the Hall of Fame – Earle Bruce (1979-87), John Cooper (1988-2000), Woody Hayes (1951-78), Howard Jones (1910), Francis Schmidt (1934-40), Jim Tressel (2001-10) and John Wilce (1913-28).

The 2020 and 2021 College Football Hall of Fame classes will be officially inducted Dec. 7 during the 63rd NFF Annual Awards Dinner at the ARIA Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

Young Temporarily Sidelined With Vestibular Dysfunction

Ohio State men's basketball coach Chris Holtmann told reporters Oct. 29 that super senior forward and team co-captain Kyle Young is currently sidelined with what Holtmann described as vestibular dysfunction.

According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, vestibular dysfunction is "a disturbance in the body's balance system due to peripheral or central causes. The symptoms of peripheral and central vestibular dysfunction can overlap, and a proper physical exam can often help differentiate between the two. The patient's symptoms typically consist of vertigo, nausea, vomiting, intolerance to head motion, nystagmus, unsteady gait, and

postural instability."

The malady is often caused by inner ear issues, Holtmann said, but the coach added he is not qualified to elaborate on the details of the issue. Young was diagnosed roughly a week and a half previous, the coach said.

Holtmann said the Buckeyes are not expecting Young to be sidelined long-term, but the starting forward has not practiced in recent weeks and wasn't expected to play for the Buckeyes in their Nov. 1 exhibition matchup with Indianapolis.

In his place, the Buckeyes are expected to try out several potential rotations, including small-ball lineups with three or four guards or a move to include Indiana transfer Joey Brunk, who Holtmann says needs to im-

prove his physicality but has impressed early on through the preseason.

Elsewhere in injuries, Seth Towns is beginning to return to action after offseason back surgery but will remain on the shelf to open the season.

COVID Claims Tackle From National Title Team

Ivan Douglas, the starting left tackle on Ohio State's 2002 national championship team, died Oct. 21 due to complications from COVID-19. He was 41.

Douglas was hospitalized Sept. 22 after contracting the virus and had remained in an intensive care unit, at one point being placed in a medically-induced coma, before

his death.

A native of University Heights, Ohio, Douglas attended Benedictine High School in Cleveland and helped the Bengals win a state championship in 1996.

His career with the Buckeyes was impacted by the development of blood clots in his lungs. While he started as a junior in 2002 for the national championship team, the condition sidelined him for the 2001 and 2003 seasons. He was a three-year letterman from 2000-02, but the reoccurrence of the blood clots led to the premature end of his football career.

Douglas was working as a social worker in recent years and was married. He also leaves behind 3-year-old and 1-year-old sons.

BUCKEYE
Cruise for Cancer

FEBRUARY 17 - 22, 2022

Celebrating **15** *Years!*

**JOIN US FOR THE ULTIMATE BUCKEYE FAN EXPERIENCE ON
ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S MARINER OF THE SEAS
AS WE SAIL TO ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S PRIVATE ISLANDS
COCOCAY & LABADEE!
VISIT BUCKEYECRUISE.COM TO BOOK TODAY!**

OSU Grinds Out Win Over Nittany Lions

Continued From Page 1

we are and how well we've played over the last month. I think you can see this thing building.

"With the teams we're about to play over the next month, as long as we keep building and staying strong, our body of work is going to speak for itself."

Ohio State won't know where it stands in the minds of the playoff committee until the evening of Nov. 2 for their first dispatch of the season, but if The Associated Press writers' and the AFCA coaches' polls are indication, the Buckeyes are still well within striking distance of a trip to either Miami or Arlington, Texas, this postseason – not quite Pasadena when it comes to history or long-held views, but a far more important destination in the modern game for better or worse.

Ohio State can thank its own play since a humbling week-two loss to Oregon that shook up both the defensive coaching staff and the starting rotation, but chaos nationally has been kind to the Buckeyes as well. The ACC, short of unbeaten Wake Forest, has removed itself from the national conversation as a post-Trevor Lawrence Clemson has tumbled directly off a cliff. The Big 12 is left with one real hope as well in the form of unbeaten Oklahoma – though both the Demon Deacons and Sooners have faced their share of adversity with multiple close wins against conference foes.

The Pac-12, too, has all but excused itself from the conversation, though those Ducks have plugged along despite a loss to Stanford and sit at 7-1, which could present a challenging debate for College Football Playoff committee members come December over that head-to-head result in Columbus back in early September.

The real potential obstacles for Ohio State's national title hopes originate, as usual, down south. This year, they come in the form of ever-present but slightly-more-mortal Alabama, the Crimson Tide's suddenly unbeatable counterparts from Georgia, and

the new face at the party, the University of Cincinnati, which has taken up residence as the nation's No. 2 team in the AP poll for nearly a month now and doesn't look to have much interest in moving out anytime soon – though a Nov. 16 matchup with SMU looms large.

Big Ten foes Michigan State and Michigan could present something of a threat as well, though both would have at least one loss on their record if Ohio State takes care of its business – easier said than done as Day will eagerly inform anyone within earshot – and a case for that would be a bit difficult to make.

That's a seven-team field (Wake Forest, Oklahoma, Oregon, Alabama, Georgia, Ohio State and Cincinnati makes seven), including the Buckeyes, battling for four spots come the end of the season. It's a gross oversimplification of the vast college football landscape, but the playoff has become the center of the sport's universe, and even the stately Day wouldn't dispute that it serves as the primary directive for his Buckeyes – though not the main focus – as they do still have four regular-season games to play.

"When you look at college football right now, it's about surviving and moving on, especially with the teams that we're playing," Day said. "That's all we can worry about. We're playing some really good teams here moving forward. Going on the road next week (to Nebraska) is going to be a big challenge for us because you have to bring it every week and that's what you're seeing across the board. The guys who do bring it every week are being rewarded."

"We have to keep doing that (because) it's one-game seasons. It's like March Madness. You win, you survive and you move on. That's where we are right now. We have to bring it every week because a lot of these teams are dangerous and capable of beating us."

Day Praises Defensive Effort

Against the Nittany Lions, Ohio State

resembled something of a squad that had taken its eye off the ball, so to speak. Despite the late kickoff, the Buckeyes seemed groggy to open their prime-time appearance, suffering a Jeremy Ruckert fumble on the first drive of the game and failing to take advantage when Penn State met the same fate a play later.

On their next opportunity, the Nittany Lions were not so generous, doing as Indiana had a week before to the Buckeye defense and churning down the field with a well-called, lengthy drive that culminated in a 5-yard dish from QB Sean Clifford to tight end Brenton Strange.

That seemed to wake Ohio State up – or at least jar it a bit – because the Buckeyes responded before the quarter's end with an 11-play, 57-yard drive capped by a 35-yard field goal from North Carolina graduate transfer Noah Ruggles, who has been as quietly excellent on the season as any Buckeye kicker in recent memory.

Penn State would find three points of its own from 47 yards out by way of Jordan Stout at the end of a sloppy first half, but not before Ohio State generated its first and second trips to the end zone of the day in rapid succession.

First, quarterback C.J. Stroud emerged from a sloppy pocket – a constant in the first half – to find Chris Olave for the senior receiver's 31st career touchdown reception. On the following Penn State drive, Tyreke Smith made his strongest appearance of the season to date, arriving with a fury into the Nittany Lions backfield and knocking the ball free from Clifford's hands. Fifth-year senior Jerron Cage, all 305 pounds of him, recovered the loose ball and rumbled 57 yards for Ohio State's second lengthy scoop-and-score of the season, joining battery mate Haskell Garrett, who made a similar trek of 32 yards in the opener at Minnesota.

It wasn't until the next crucial defensive play that Ohio State could begin to feel comfortable in securing a victory, although that

didn't truly come until Stroud was able to kneel out the game with just over a minute to play.

With Penn State driving early in the fourth quarter and trailing by just a field goal, cornerback Cameron Brown jumped a Jahan Dotson double route and nabbed his first interception of the season, returning it 25 yards and setting Ohio State up for another red-zone field goal to extend its lead to 30-24. Both turnovers proved to be crucial for the Buckeyes in a win that Day described as gritty on several occasions – though Cage's ball security did nearly give the coach an aneurysm.

"The ball security was – he was carrying it like a loaf of bread at times," Day said. "It was great to see him running down the field, though. This is a guy who has been through it in this program. He's been through a lot. I'm very proud of Jerron, but how about the play by Zach (Harrison) and Tyreke to get the ball out of there?"

"The play by Cameron Brown with the double move on Dotson was tremendous, too. That's competitive excellence right there. It was good to see our defense play the way they did. We did some good things on offense, but the defense won the game in my opinion. I thought they played hard. They got two turnovers. If our defense can play like they did tonight, I think we can be really good."

Between those book-ending breaks for the Buckeyes, there was a lot of, as Day would say, grittiness. Observers less kind than the OSU head coach – perhaps that playoff committee, for example – could say that Ohio State experienced growing pains or that it had its first real stop-and-start performance since September – back before Stroud took the Akron week to rest his shoulder and returned a Heisman contender.

The true measure of the performance was probably somewhere in between. Ohio State did have its moments of grit and the same flashes of excellence that it has shown routinely since September turned to October. Stroud's 38-yard touchdown pass to Olave, Henderson's 68-yard scamper after a first half that saw him bottled up, Jaxon Smith-Njigba turning a quick slant into a 58-yard gain and nearly a touchdown, and the pair of turnovers all showcased the kind of team Ohio State needs to be to reach its goals.

Even when the Buckeyes weren't creating big plays, they were not without production – hence that toughness that Day was so proud of after the game. They ground out tough yards late to set up the trio of Ruggles field goals in the second half that ultimately made the difference in the game, gaining 158 yards on 23 plays across 11:01 on the three drives that preceded them. The defense held firm, too, allowing Penn State only four big plays in the second half, forcing an offense without much in the way of a rushing attack to earn points through long drives.

Twice, it did, but four of Penn State's six second-half drives resulted in zero points, and with a seven-point halftime lead and 16 points from their own offense in the second half as insurance, that was enough for Ohio State to secure a victory.

"I thought we kept swinging," Day said. "We didn't have our heads down or anything

Cancer is Scary, Treatment doesn't have to be.

The Columbus CyberKnife team is here to help with precise robotic radiotherapy treatment as individual as every patient.

C O L U M B U S
CYBERKNIFE®
(380) 898-8300 | ColumbusCK.com

Prostate Cancer | Lung Cancer | Brain Cancer | Metastatic Cancer | Bone Cancer



MOUNT CARMEL
Columbus CyberKnife is a Department of Mount Carmel St. Ann's.

like that. In the hard moments, you kind of rely on the older guys to help out, and to see Chris make that big touchdown, that kind of broke things open for us. We were a little rigid there for a while. We couldn't quite get going, and that kind of helped us out. We started playing with more confidence after that.

"It's different than it was early in the season where guys could start doubting themselves. I don't think you saw any of that coming on. We knew it would be hard. They're a good defense – one of the top defenses in the country – and they've always been that way. They've been playing for a long time. It's a veteran group back there so we kind of expected some of this."

What Ohio State wasn't pleased with, though, was the re-emergence of an old foe. Several of the stalled offensive drives were a direct result of procedural penalties – the Buckeyes took seven false starts on the night – while two more helped keep one of those second-half Penn State scoring drives alive. A Steele Chambers targeting penalty and a Harrison roughing-the-passer flag gave the Nittany Lions 30 free yards on the first drive of the third quarter.

"We didn't expect some of those penalties and the lack of execution, but when you're playing against better competition, you have to be on point because little things show up," Day said. "It's awesome to learn from and to get the win."

Unforced Errors

The penalties, of which Ohio State had 10 accounting for 74 yards, were a thorn in the side of the Buckeyes all day, especially on offense. Seven false starts, in front of a friendly crowd, is never going to sit well with a coach. Those played especially poorly given the circumstances. In the first quarter, Olave flinched off the line and turned a manageable second-and-8 into a much more difficult second-and-13. Suddenly forced to pass, Stroud threw a pair of incompletions, and the Buckeyes settled for a field goal.

Center Luke Wypler ended the quarter with another early jump, this time on third-and-2. Dawand Jones opened the new quarter with a premature start of his own, setting the Buckeyes back 5 yards without a snap of the football. Stroud made it work, finding wideout Garrett Wilson for 15 yards and a first down, but he had no such luck when Wypler was dinged for an illegal snap on second-and-6 a few plays later. Smith-Njigba hauled in a pass and got 9 yards back, but Henderson was stuffed at the line on third-and-short and the Buckeyes were forced to punt from the Penn State side of the field.

In the third quarter, Henderson was so excited for his opportunity to pound the ball in from just a yard out on fourth-and-goal that he "fell out of his shoes," according to his coach, putting the Buckeyes back 5 yards and forcing another Ruggles field goal. The freshman running back did respond well to the incident and ripped off several of his best runs of the day afterward, thanks to the encouragement of his teammates.

"Really, it was just my teammates lifting me up," Henderson said. "They were patting me on the back, telling me, 'You're fine, we're OK, we all make mistakes.' I really appreciated that."

Ohio State's final pair of unforced errors didn't ultimately wind up costing it dearly, though had Ruggles' field-goal try contin-

ued its hook, as it looked at risk to do, those mistakes certainly could have. Looking to ice the game up 30-24 with only 5:55 to play, Ohio State worked its way down to the Penn State 18-yard line, despite a Wilson jump on first down that Stroud answered with his best pass of the night to Ruckert for 30 yards.

Ohio State had found something of a stride in the running game against a gassed Penn State defense, but team captain Thayer Munford got a head start, forced the Buckeyes into a first-and-15 situation from which they would not recover, Munford got something of a stern talking-to from his quarterback, and the false start led ultimately to the final Ruggles field goal of the evening.

Ohio State did enough to win the game regardless of the penalties, but it certainly wasn't a day of discipline that Day would like to remember.

"Early on, I don't know if it was jitters or what it was, but we kind of got jammed up

there," the OSU head coach said. "In that last drive there, we had a couple of double counts where guys jumped, and that's unacceptable. We have to do a better job with that if we're going to continue to win."

Day did qualify his complaints about the penalties a bit, crediting the Penn State defense for forcing Ohio State into more of a feast-or-famine approach than it is traditionally comfortable with by mixing in exotic pressure packages, speeding the Buckeye offense up and confusing it at the line of scrimmage. It led to both the mistakes and many of those flash plays.

"When you're playing against a style of defense like that, you're high-risk and high-reward," Day said. "There are going to be plays where you can get yourself off-schedule and certainly with the penalties we did that. That really bothers me. But then you also get some big hits, like the pass to Chris and Trey's big run. It's a herky-jerky game, and it gets a team like us a little out of

rhythm. We have to go back and think about it. In games like this, how we can do a better job of getting in rhythm?"

It was the kind of game that, had a few bounces gone in the other direction, could have led to a coach-speak version of "we beat ourselves," a common refrain that Ohio State coaches usually opt for following losses. Stroud is no coach, though he had no qualms with making his feelings on the matter known even in a winning effort.

"Sometimes, it was rough," Stroud said. "We got penalties and shot ourselves in the foot. I felt like on my part to be a leader and tell the guys to calm down. The only team that can beat the Buckeyes is the Buckeyes. Down through history, whenever we lose, it's the Buckeyes that beat the Buckeyes."

So, on Devil's Night (or Mischief Night, depending on your regionality), these Buckeyes held on in the battle against themselves. The next step is doing it four more times.

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

FALL FLOORING 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 10/31/21

Stroud Overcomes Shaky Start Vs. Nittany Lions

Like a baseball pitcher who doesn't have his best stuff on any particular night, Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud continued to plug away until his team managed to secure a 33-24 victory against Penn State on Oct. 30.

Stroud, who had looked like college football's version of Sandy Koufax and Greg Maddux since taking a one-week sabbatical in late September, reverted to erratic rookie status during the early stages of the game against the Nittany Lions.

While the Penn State defense dialed up a variety of pressures, Stroud misfired on 5 of 10 pass attempts at one point during the first quarter. Not only was he missing targets, he was missing them badly, and even when he connected, his throws were often low with no chance for the OSU receivers to get any extra yardage after the catch.

But when his teammates needed him most, Stroud came through with quality pitches. He completed 8 of his final 11 attempts in the game, finishing a tidy 22 of 34 that included 305 yards and a touchdown.

Stroud ran his personal streak to 121 straight attempts without an interception, while his fourth 300-yard game of the season already has him tied for the third-highest single-season total in program history. Only Dwayne Haskins with nine in 2018 and Joe Germaine with seven in 1998 have had more.

"I still feel like we're the best offense in the country, but football is not a perfect game," Stroud said after the game. "You're not going to run the ball like you want to every game; you're not going to throw the ball like you want to every game."

"But I feel like these are the types of games we definitely need. There are a lot of Big Ten teams that are great this year. This was a great win for us. We faced some adversity, but we kept going. We can do anything we set our mind to."

The redshirt freshman also credited the Penn State defense for disguising its

GAME NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

pressures and coverages, leading to some misreads and poor throws. One of those came early in the first quarter when Stroud short-hopped a throw to a wide-open Chris Olave in the end zone.

"The coverage there, I thought it was cloud coverage, and I was just afraid of the corner coming over," the QB said. "I just underthrew it, and that's on me. There were lots of times during the game that we could have and should have scored. Do I want that one back? Yes, but you just have to let it go."

Stroud said the Nittany Lions also tried to disrupt his concentration by calling out Ohio State's own plays.

"That was weird," he admitted. "But Penn State has an awesome defense left to right, corners, safeties, linebackers – they're very smart, very intelligent. They were playing hard and making plays, too. That's football."

But if Penn State knew what was coming, shouldn't Ohio State have tried something different?

"That happens just about in every game," OSU head coach Ryan Day said of Penn State calling out plays before the snap. "They have certain tendencies, and they'll call things out. Sometimes they're right, sometimes they're wrong. That's all part of it. They call run and sometimes they're right; they call pass and sometimes they're right. And we do have tendencies, but that's also what makes the play-action and the naked work."

"Penn State did a really good job. They had a really good plan coming in, and you can tell they worked hard on it because they gave us a lot of looks that we hadn't

quite prepared for. But we knew we weren't going to just get their base defense – I think they only played it a few snaps. They were coming at us every snap, and that's what you're going to get. Guys are going to come after us, and we have to handle that better."

Big Man Rumble

Defensive tackles rarely get a chance to showcase their speed, but this season, Ohio State DTs have had two such opportunities.

The first came in the opener at Minnesota when 300-pound Haskell Garrett thundered 32 yards with a recovered fumble for a touchdown. Lightning struck again vs. Penn State when 305-pound Jerron Cage scooped up a loose ball and sprinted (as best a 305-pound player can do) 57 yards for a touchdown to give the Buckeyes a 17-7 lead.

Each play came after a strip-sack. Zach Harrison was responsible for the one against the Golden Gophers, and Harrison was in on the clean-up committee against Penn State when Tyreke Smith knocked the ball loose from Penn State QB Sean Clifford.

"I hit the quarterback and then just stood there," Harrison said, a huge smile crossing his face. "I saw (Jerron) running down the field and I was like, 'What? Is he really running for a touchdown?' That was so good to see. I ran to the sideline and gave him some love."

Although the play came at the 2:24 mark of the second quarter and the Nittany Lions would eventually forge a 17-17 tie early in the third period, Day and several of Cage's defensive teammates termed the play a game-changer.

"That was huge," OSU safety Ronnie Hickman said. "Whenever we can steal points, we want to do that. We talk about that before every game. 'Who's going to be the one today?' We want to make those kinds of plays. We're looking to make those kinds of plays."

With Cage's scoop-and-score, Ohio State remains tied with Texas-San Antonio for the national lead in defensive touchdowns with six. OSU has four pick-sixes and two fumble returns for touchdowns. UTSA got a 51-yard interception return for a touchdown during its 45-16 win at Louisiana Tech on Oct. 30.

Under The Lights

Television networks like them. So do fans. Journalists on deadline? Not so much.

But the Buckeyes apparently enjoy night games. They are now 4-0 this season

and 68-28 overall in night games (contests with a 5 p.m. or later start time). OSU also ran its record to 19-5 all-time at home under the lights.

Players have mixed reactions to playing under the lights. Some believe it disrupts their normal routine, but others enjoy the extra bit of time a night game can provide in terms of preparation.

"We watch film almost every single day," OSU left tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere said. "We come in on Sunday and watch the film of the game before, and then once we finish that, we'll try to watch a little bit of the film of whatever team we have coming up."

"Night games are amazing. I love night games because we get another opportunity to watch even more film right before the game starts, so we try to watch two or three more sessions of film right before the game starts. I appreciate having more time before a night game because we get more opportunities, another bite of the apple to watch film and study our opponents."

Defensive back Cameron Brown said his fourth-quarter interception came about partly because of film study during the hours before game time. With the Buckeyes protecting a 27-24 lead, Brown stepped in front of a pass near midfield and returned it 25 yards to set up an OSU field goal.

"I saw that a lot this morning (on film), and then when I saw it happening in front of me, I just used my technique," Brown said. "The pressure really got there, and I was ready to grab it. That all came from watching film."

The game was the fourth time Ohio State had hosted Penn State at Ohio Stadium for a night game. The Nittany Lions won a 13-10 decision in 2008, while the Buckeyes have won each of the last three – 63-14 in 2013, 38-10 in 2015 and this year's 33-24 decision.

Perfection Personified

Perhaps the most unsung hero of Ohio State's victory was kicker Noah Ruggles, who connected on field goals of 35, 23, 25 and 26 yards and nullified Penn State's return game with eight kickoffs, only one of which was returned – and that went for zero yards.

During his career, the North Carolina transfer has now converted 20 consecutive field-goal attempts inside 50 yards, including all 11 of his attempts as a Buckeye.

Additionally, Ruggles was 3 for 3 in PATs against Penn State, running his streak of extra points to 47 in a row. Ohio State kickers have now made 150 consecu-

No Limits Athletics



Order your own
"It's Always
Fun to Beat
Michigan"
T-Shirt!

Medium - XL \$22 • 2X \$24 • 3X \$25 • 4X \$26

Price includes tax and shipping.

Send orders to Criss at csomerlot@aol.com

or Call **614-560-1251**

Include your name, credit card information, shipping address, and size.

Kenwel
PRINTERS

**YOUR FULL-SERVICE
PRINTING PARTNER
SINCE 1952**

Contact us at 614.261.1011 or
kenwel@kenwelprinters.com



4272 Indianola Avenue | Columbus, Ohio 43214 | www.kenwelprinters.com

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

It might not have looked like it at times, but Ohio State won the war with Penn State because the Buckeyes won the battle of the trenches on both sides of the ball.

The offensive line shot itself in both feet with repeated false-start penalties, and they couldn't manage to create any kind of wiggle room for freshman running back TreVeyon Henderson early in the game. But they kept pounding on the Nittany Lions, and Henderson eventually shot through a gap late in the third quarter for a 68-yard jaunt down the sideline.

To that point, Henderson had just 20 yards on 14 carries. The fact that the freshman's next 14 carries went for 138 yards is a testament to the resilience of the OSU offensive line as well as head coach Ryan Day's insistence to stick with the running attack.

On the other side of the ball, the Buckeyes barely let Penn State breathe. The Lions managed only 33 net yards on the ground, averaging a paltry 1.1 yards on 29 attempts, and quarterback Sean Clifford was sacked four times and hurried on at least five other occasions. One of those sacks – part of eight tackles for loss registered by OSU – led to defensive tackle Jerron Cage's highlight scoop-and-score that padded the Buckeyes' lead just before halftime.

What Didn't Work

On the night before Halloween, it almost looked like a remake of "Night of the Living Dead" as Ohio State defenders sometimes stumbled around like zombies in pass defense. As a result, Clif-

ford threw a career-high 52 times for 361 yards, the most by any Penn State quarterback against the Buckeyes, the Nittany Lions had a pair of receivers go over the 100-yard mark, and the Lions went 11 for 18 on third-down conversions. The silver lining – if there was one – was that OSU defenders kept everything pretty much in front of them. For all of that passing, Clifford still had only one touchdown toss, and most of his completions came on medium-range throws.

Play Of The Game

Tight victories usually have several candidates for play of the game, and this one was no different. The fourth-down sack by J.T. Tuimoloau near midfield early in the second quarter stunted Penn State's momentum while the Nittany Lions still held a 7-3 lead. Stroud's 38-yard touchdown pass to Olave with 3:38 to go until halftime gave Ohio State its first lead of the night at 10-7. Cage's scoop-and-score was an obvious candidate. So was a 58-yard catch-and-run in the third quarter by Jaxon Smith-Njigba that happened right after Penn State had tied it at 17. There was Henderson's 68-yard run to set up his own touchdown to make it 27-17 late in the third quarter, Cameron Brown's early fourth-quarter interception near midfield and finally Nittany Lions running back John Lovett running out of bounds before catching a pass from Clifford that nullified a 70-yard touchdown when the Buckeyes were holding onto a 30-24 lead with 6:05 to play in the game.

– Mark Rea

tive PATs with the last miss coming on the final attempt during a 76-5 win against Miami (Ohio) in September 2019.

Ruggles is a young man of few words who prefers to let his right leg do the talking. But he admitted that he was happy to do his part during the win against the Nittany Lions.

"Coach Day always says every scoring opportunity is important and to make the most of every one," he said. "I just want to give a shout-out to the guys up front, our snapper and our holder for making me look good."

Three of his four field goals appeared to split the uprights. Only his 26-yard attempt late in the fourth quarter – the one that eventually set the final score – seemed to drift before sneaking past the right upright.

"I hit it good," Ruggles said of his last kick. "The wind started to move it, but I knew it was good when it hit my foot."

When asked about his respective field goal and PAT streaks, the kicker insisted, "I don't know what the numbers are. I just try to make every one."

But when pressed on whether he knew he had rather lengthy streaks going, Ruggles replied simply, "Yes sir."

Game Notes

- The game marked the 37th overall meeting between Ohio State and Penn State, and the Buckeyes now enjoy a 23-14 advantage. That includes a 21-8 record against the Nittany Lions since they joined the Big Ten for the 1993 season.

- With the cancellation of the 2020 Ohio State-Michigan game due to COVID-19, the OSU-Penn State rivalry is now the Buckeyes' longest continuous series. The teams have met every year since the Nittany Lions joined the Big Ten in 1993.

- OSU has a 14-7 record in Columbus vs. Penn State, and that includes victories in each of the last five meetings at Ohio Stadium.

Penn State has beaten Ohio State only three times in the Horseshoe in 17 tries since 1975. Each of those wins was achieved against OSU freshman quarterbacks – 19-0 against Art Schlichter in 1978, 13-6 vs. Terrelle Pryor in 2008 and 20-14 against Braxton Miller in 2011.

- Day is now 3-0 against Penn State, including a 2-0 record at home. Nittany Lions head coach James Franklin fell to 1-7 all-time against Ohio State.

- Day upped his career record to 9-0 in October games. Meanwhile, Franklin fell to 22-18 lifetime during the month. He is 17-10 in October games at Penn State after going 5-8 during the month in three seasons at Vanderbilt from 2011-13.

- Day is now 11-3 against ranked opponents during his three-plus years at Ohio State. In eight years at Penn State, Franklin is now 11-17 against ranked teams and 2-12 against top-10 opponents.

- OSU is now 156-128-12 all-time against ranked teams, including 87-46-4 at home.

- Ohio State ran its record to 15-3 in games played on Oct. 30. The first game in program history played on that date was a 30-10 win against Case in 1896. The game was played on a Friday afternoon at Athletic Park, located on the southern part of the campus near Neil Avenue.

- Ohio State has now won 24 consec-

utive regular-season conference games. That is the longest streak in the Big Ten since the Buckeyes had a 30-game Big Ten winning streak from 2012-15.

- The teams entered the contests as two of the most penalized teams in the Big Ten – Penn State ranked 11th in the conference with 54.7 yards per game while Ohio State was 12th at 62.9 yards – and they each lived up to that billing. The Buckeyes were flagged 10 times for 74 yards, while the Nittany Lions committed seven penalties worth 56 yards.

- Dating back to the Nebraska game in 2020, Penn State has now forced a turnover in 14 straight games. In those games, the Lions have forced 21 total turnovers – 14 interceptions and seven fumbles.

- Ohio State has scored 50 or more points in four consecutive games three times in program history, and Penn State has snapped the streak each time. The Lions limited the Buckeyes to 31 points in 2014, 39 points in 2017 and 33 points this year. OSU has won all three games.

- The Buckeyes also had their program record-tying streak of six consecutive games of 500 or more yards of total offense snapped. They totaled 466 against the Nittany Lions.

- Hickman led the Buckeyes with a career-high 14 tackles, and moved his team-best season total to 66 total stops. Hickman is on pace to have Ohio State's first 100-tackle season since Raekwon McMillan in 2016.

- Before Penn State receiver Jahan Dotson's 2-yard touchdown run off a third-quarter direct snap, Ohio State hadn't allowed a rushing touchdown since week two against Oregon.

- Clifford became only the second Penn State quarterback to top the 300-yard mark against Ohio State. Matt McGloin threw for 327 yards during his team's 35-23 loss to the Buckeyes in 2012.

- Olave now has 31 career receiving touchdowns and needs four more to break

the program record of 34 set by David Boston from 1996-98.

- Olave had 44 yards receiving against Penn State, giving him 2,337 for his career and jumping him past K.J. Hill (2,332, 2016-19) and Santonio Holmes (2,295, 2003-05) into sixth place on OSU's all-time list. Next up is Devin Smith (2,503, 2011-

14).

- With seven catches for 82 yards, junior wideout Garrett Wilson extended to 29 his consecutive game streak with at least one reception. That ties him for the ninth-longest streak in program history with Cris Carter (1984-86) and Joey Galloway (1991-94).

Get Back in the Game with Columbus Mens Clinic!



Specializing in erectile dysfunction, premature issues, acoustic wave therapy, and testosterone replacement.

Get your first office visit, testosterone level, and PSA check for free! That's a \$300 value.

Don't wait! Call today!

614.300.7400

Walk-ins Welcome
1507 Chambers Rd, Ste 201
Columbus, OH 43212



**COLUMBUS
MEN'S CLINIC**

www.ColumbusMensClinic.com

Buckeyes Kick Their Way Past Nittany Lions

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As much as No. 5 Ohio State relied on the arm of C.J. Stroud and the legs of TreVeyon Henderson to amass more than 50 points in four straight games, the Buckeyes needed the foot of Noah Ruggles to provide the difference in a 33-24 victory over No. 20 Penn State at Ohio Stadium on Oct. 30.

Although Stroud passed for 305 yards and a touchdown and Henderson rushed for 152 yards and a score, it was Ruggles, a graduate transfer from North Carolina, who made all four field-goal attempts, including a late 26-yarder that provided the final margin and prevented the Nittany Lions (5-3, 2-3 Big Ten) from getting the ball back in just a one-score game as they dropped their third straight in an October to forget.

The Buckeyes (7-1, 5-0) have defeated PSU five straight times and nine of the past 11 in the series in what was a typical struggle in the rivalry. The margin of victory in the previous five meetings was just under six points.

Slow Start

Before a prime-time crowd of 102,951, the game began with a bang when the teams exchanged fumbles. OSU lost the ball on its first possession when tight end Jeremy Ruckert was separated from the

ball after a 3-yard catch. Ji'Air Brown forced the fumble and recovered it on the Ohio State 46.

On Penn State's first snap, Noah Cain was stripped by Marcus Williamson, and Haskell Garrett fell on it at the OSU 47.

Following an OSU punt, Sean Clifford engineered an 89-yard drive on 13 plays over a 4:48 span and completed a 5-yard pass to Brenton Strange for the 7-0 lead at 6:08 of the first period.

The Nittany Lions had faced a third-and-9 from their 36 before KeAndre Lambert-Smith had a 16-yard catch to the OSU 48. Parker Washington had a 32-yard grab to the 16, and Clifford connected on an 11-yarder to Keyvone Lee before the TD on the next play.

The Buckeyes then held the ball for 11 plays but settled for a 35-yard field goal to make it 7-3 at 2:02 of the first quarter.

Ohio State crossed midfield on a 10-yard catch by Garrett Wilson, and 15 were added on a personal foul by Joey Porter Jr. to put the ball on the 34. Wilson followed with a 19-yard catch. Henderson then ran for 2, but that was followed by a false start and two incompletions.

Early in the second quarter, Penn State had a fourth-and-5 from the OSU 43. Freshman defensive lineman J.T. Tuimolau sacked Clifford for an 8-yard loss, and the Buckeyes took over at the PSU 49 but gained just 3 yards and punted.



SONNY BROCKWAY

MR. PERFECT — Ohio State kicker Noah Ruggles (95) was perfect on all four of his field-goal attempts and each of his three PATs, providing 15 points for the Buckeyes during their 33-24 victory against Penn State on Oct. 30 at Ohio Stadium. Since coming to Ohio State after transferring from North Carolina, Ruggles has streaks of 11 consecutive field goals and 47 straight PATs without a single miss.

Later, the Buckeyes took the lead on a 38-yard pass by Stroud to Chris Olave to make it 10-7 at 3:48 of the second quarter.

The Buckeyes got the ball after a Lathan Ransom 7-yard sack of Clifford to the PSU 14 and subsequent punt. They went 69 yards in five plays in 1:38.

A big play was when OSU needed a yard on third down from the PSU 45. Wilson gained 7, and one play later, the Buckeyes scored.

The defense made it 17-7 with 2:24 left on a 57-yard fumble recovery and return by fifth-year senior tackle Jerron Cage after Tyreke Smith's strip sack.

Penn State pulled to within 17-10 on a 47-yard field goal by Jordan Stout on the final play of the first half. The Nittany Lions drove from their 25 to the OSU 29 before calling a timeout to set up the field goal.

Taking Charge

The Nittany Lions made it 17-17 on a 2-yard TD run by Jahan Dotson at 10:26 of the third quarter to cap a 12-play, 75-yard, 4:34 series that was aided by OSU penalties.

It started when third-year sophomore linebacker Steele Chambers was ejected for targeting on Clifford. Then, on third-and-9 from the PSU 40, Dotson made a catch of 13 yards. A roughing-the-passer penalty put the ball on the OSU 32.

PSU needed 5 yards from the 27 and got a third-down conversion of 13 yards to Washington en route to the tying score.

Ohio State got the ball and blew an opportunity to retake a 7-point lead after a 58-yard catch-and-run by Jaxon Smith-Njigba to the 17 on the first play. Henderson ran for 6, 5, and 3 yards to the 3. After a PSU offense placed the ball at the 1, Henderson lost a yard then gained it back on third down.

The Buckeyes elected to go for it, but Henderson jumped before the snap for a false start, and Ruggles made a 23-yard field goal at 6:42 to make it 20-17.

"If you finish off some of these drives in the red zone, the game looks a lot different," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said.

Henderson made up for it when the Buckeyes got the ball again when on the first play, he raced 68 yards down the left sideline to the 3. He then pushed his way for 2 yards before bulling his way in from

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

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:

Cam Brown intercepted Clifford at the OSU 47 and returned it 25 yards to the 28. The Buckeyes needed a yard on fourth down from the 19, and Henderson went off right tackle for 4 yards.

The Buckeyes reached the 7, but Mivan Williams was stuffed for a 1-yard loss, and an incompletion on third down resulted in a 25-yard field goal by Ruggles for a 30-24 lead with 7:12 to play.

The OSU defense got a three-and-out, and the Buckeyes went to work from their 22 after the punt with 5:55 to play. Henderson ripped off 22 yards, and Ruckert had a catch of 30 yards to the Lion 18.

Henderson bolted 12 yards on a second-and-13 from the 21, but he could not pick up a yard on third down and Ruggles made a 26-yard field goal for the final margin with 2:41 remaining.

Ruggles has made all 11 field-goal attempts this season.

Penn State's last chance was a missed 49-yard field-goal try by Stout with 1:19 left. The Buckeyes ran out the clock when Stroud took two kneel-downs.

Notes

Stroud completed 22 of 34 passes. ... Wilson led the Buckeyes with seven catches for 82 yards. Smith-Njigba had six catches for a team-high 97 yards. ... Olave (three catches for 44 yards) has 31 career TDs, three behind David Boston's school record. Henderson averaged 5.4 yards on his 28 carries. ... Clifford was 35 of 52 with a TD and an interception. "I feel like I could have done so much

more to change the outcome," he said. ... Dotson had 11 catches for 127 yards. ... Penn State was 11 of 18 on third down; OSU was 5 of 14. ... The Buckeyes had a TD and four field goals in six trips to the red zone. Penn State was 3 for 3, all TDs. ... OSU had four sacks for 22 yards. The Nittany Lions had none.

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.

the 1 with 3:35 left in the quarter to make it 27-17.

Penn State and its veteran QB were unfazed and marched 75 yards to make it 27-24. PSU used 11 plays that consumed 3:25.

Lambert-Smith had a third-down reception of 22 yards to the OSU 47. Dotson had back-to-back catches for 32 total yards to the 15, and Washington made a catch for 8. On third-and-goal from the 1,

Lee rushed for the TD.

OSU squandered another opportunity early in the fourth quarter and came away with no points in the red zone. A Ruckert 24-yard catch to the PSU 35 and a pass interference infraction had the Buckeyes at the 20, but they couldn't convert a fourth-and-3 from the 13 when Stroud came up short to an open Olave in the end zone with 12:51 left.

Penn State gave the ball back when



NOW AVAILABLE!

MAJOR LEAGUE CLUBHOUSE TOURS

STOPS INCLUDE:

Reds & Visitors Clubhouse, Visitors Dugout,
AND MORE!

Includes admission to the Reds Hall of Fame
and Museum presented by Dinsmore



REDSMUSEUM.ORG

• (513) 765-7923

[@REDSMUSEUM](https://www.instagram.com/REDSMUSEUM)

[f REDS MUSEUM](https://www.facebook.com/REDSMUSEUM)

[@REDSMUSEUM](https://www.tiktok.com/@REDSMUSEUM)

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 33, Penn State 24

Oct. 30, 2021 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	3	14	10	6	33
PENN STATE	7	3	14	0	24

First Quarter

- PSU** – Strange, 5-yard pass from Clifford (Stout kick), 6:08; 13 plays, 89 yards, 4:48 TOP.
- OSU** – Ruggles, 35-yard field goal, 2:02; 11 plays, 57 yards, 4:06 TOP.

Second Quarter

- OSU** – Olave, 38-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 3:48; 5 plays, 69 yards, 1:38 TOP.
- OSU** – Cage, 57-yard fumble return, 2:24.
- PSU** – Stout, 47-yard field goal, 0:00; 10 plays, 46 yards, 2:24 TOP.

Third Quarter

- PSU** – Dotson, 2-yard rush (Stout kick), 10:26; 12 plays, 75 yards, 4:34 TOP.
- OSU** – Ruggles, 23-yard field goal, 6:42; 7 plays, 69 yards, 3:44 TOP.
- OSU** – Henderson, 1-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 3:35; 3 plays, 71 yards, 0:42 TOP.
- PSU** – Lee, 1-yard rush (Stout kick), 0:10; 11 plays, 75 yards, 3:25 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

- OSU** – Ruggles, 25-yard field goal, 7:12; 8 plays, 20 yards, 4:03 TOP.
- OSU** – Ruggles, 26-yard field goal, 2:41; 8 plays, 69 yards, 3:14 TOP.
- Att.** – 102,951

Weather – 54 degrees, cloudy, wind N 2 mph

Team Statistics	
	PSU
OSU	
First Downs	27
22	
Rushing	5
5	
Passing	19
13	
Penalty	3
4	
Rushes-Yards	29-33
34-161	
Passing Yards	361
305	
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	35-52-1
22-34-0	
Offensive Plays	81
68	
Total Net Yards	394
466	
Third Down Efficiency	11-18
5-14	
Punts-Avg.	4-49.2
3-33.0	
Fumbles-Lost	2-2
1-1	
Penalties	7-56
10-74	
Time of Possession	29:50
30:10	

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – PSU: Lovett 13-20; Cain 5-13; Lee 3-9; Dotson 1-2; Clifford 7-(-11).
OSU: Henderson 28-152; Wilson 1-7; Williams 3-5; TEAM 2-(-3).
PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – PSU: Clifford 35-52-1-361-1. **OSU:** Stroud 22-34-0-305-1.
RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – PSU: Dotson 11-127; Washington 9-108; Lambert-Smith 4-49; Johnson 4-41; Strange 4-14; Cain 2-8; Lee 1-11. **OSU:** Wilson 7-82; Smith-Njigba 6-97; Ruckert 3-57; Olave 3-44; Williams 1-11; Henderson 1-7; Stover 1-7.
PUNTING (No.-Avg.) – PSU: Stout 4-49.2. **OSU:** Mirco 3-33.0.
PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: None. **OSU:** Wilson 1-(-1).
KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – PSU: None. **OSU:** None.
MISSED FIELD GOALS – PSU: Stout (49). **OSU:** None.
FORCED FUMBLES – PSU: Brown. **OSU:** Smith, Williamson.
FUMBLE RECOVERIES – PSU: Brown 1-0. **OSU:** Cage 1-57; Garrett 1-0.
INTERCEPTIONS – PSU: None. **OSU:** Brown 1-25.
SACKS – PSU: None. **OSU:** Tuimoloau 1.0-8; Ransom 1.0-7; Smith 1.0-6; Jackson 0.5-1; Gaoteote IV 0.5-0.
TACKLES FOR LOSS – PSU: Jacobs 2.0-5; Ebiketie 1.5-2; Coziah 1.0-1;lzzard 1.0-1; Luketa 1.0-1; Brooks 0.5-1; Ellies 0.5-0; Tarburton 0.5-0. **OSU:** Jackson 1.5-4; Tuimoloau 1.0-8; Ransom 1.0-7; Smith 1.0-6; Cage 1.0-1; Vincent 1.0-1; Williamson 1.0-1; Gaoteote 0.5-0.
TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – PSU: Smith 4-4-8; Brown 6-1-7; Jacobs 5-2-7; Luketa 4-3-7; Brisker 3-0-3; Hardy 2-1-3; Ebiketie 1-2-3; Tarburton 0-3-3; Porter Jr. 2-0-2; Castro-Fields 2-0-2; Tangelo 1-1-2; Ellis 1-0-1; Reed 1-0-1; Izzard 1-0-1; Lee 1-0-1; Ellies 0-1-1. **OSU:** Hickman 6-8-14; Williamson 5-1-6; Brown 4-1-5; Smith 3-2-5; Simon 2-2-4; Mitchell 2-2-4; Shaw 1-3-4; Vincent 2-1-3; Ransom 2-1-3; Banks 2-1-3; Jackson 2-1-3; Chambers 1-2-3; Harrison 2-0-2; Burke 2-0-2; Jean-Baptiste 2-0-2; Cage 1-1-2; Tuimoloau 1-0-1; Eichenberg 1-0-1; Hamilton 0-1-1; Gaoteote 0-1-1.
Players In The Game
PSU – Dotson, Lambert-Smith, Clifford, Cain, Walker, Wilson, Scruggs, Miranda, Wallace, Johnson, Strange, Brisker, Castro-Fields, Porter Jr., Smith, Brooks, Nrown, Ebiketie, Jacobs, Luketa, Tangelo, Izzard, Sutherland, Ellis, Washington, Dixon, King, Sullivan-brown, Reed, Lovett, George, Lytton, Lee, Hardy, Costantini, Hartlaubm Elsdon, Warren, Tarburton, Chizmar, Whigan, Dawkins, Effner, Fasganu, Holmes, Meiga, Eubanks, Checa, Stoll, Ellies, Vilbert, Stout.
OSU – Olave, Wilson, Stroud, Smith-Njigba, Henderson, Wypler, Munford, Johnson, Petit-Frere, Jones, Ruckert, Mitchell, Williamson, Banks, Harrison, Smith, Hickman, Shaw, Burke, Simon, Hamilton, Garrett, McCall, Williams, Vincent, Stover, Jean-Baptiste, Ransom, Egbuka, Young, Watts, Harrison Jr., Gaoteote, Chambers, Hooker, Johnson, Brown, Williams, Mirco, Sawyer, Rossi, Eichenberg, Robinson, Tuimoloau, Kacherski, Jackson, Jones, James, Leroux, Fryar, Jackson, Cage, Booker, Williams, Ruggles.

Season Statistics

2021-22 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Spt. 2	(4) at Minnesota	W, 45-31	50,805
Spet. 11	(3) OREGON (12)	L, 35-28	100,482
Sept. 18	(9) TULSA	W, 41-20	76,540
Spet. 25	(10) AKRON	W, 59-7	95,178
Oct. 2	(11) at Rutgers	W, 52,13	51,006
Oct. 9	(7) MARYLAND	W, 66-17	99,277
Oct. 23	(5) at Indiana	W, 54-7	52,656
Oct. 30	(5)PENN STATE (20)	W, 33-24	102,951
Nov. 6	(6) at Nebraska	Noon	
Nov. 13	PURDUE	TBA	
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN STATE (5)	TBA	
Nov. 27	at Michigan (9)	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	206	170
Rushing	79	53
Passing	119	98
Penalty	8	19
Average Per Game/Rush	201.9	106.9
Average Per Game/Pass	346.3	247.1
Total Offense	4385	2832
Total Plays	532	585
Average Per Game	548.1	354.0
Average Per Play	8.2	4.8
Penalties-Yards	54-514	37-306
Fumbles-Lost	6-2	10-4
Third Down Efficiency	50-92	55-127
Percentage	54%	43%
Fourth Down Efficiency	5-11	6-14
Percentage	45%	43%
Sacks-Yards	29-198	9-75
Time Of Possession Avg.	27:40	32:20

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	79	130	101	68	0	378	47.3	
Opponents	33	41	49	31	0	154	19.3	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
T. Henderson	106	838	7.9	12	68
Master Teague	44	253	5.7	3	17
Miyan Williams	43	320	7.3	2	71
Marcus Crowley	20	103	5.2	0	22
Evan Pryor	21	98	4.7	1	16
C.J. Stroud	17	18	1.1	0	15
Garrett Wilson	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jack Miller III	5	-1	-0.2	0	8
Kyle McCord	7	-25	-3.6	0	7
TEAM	4	-6	-1.5	0	0
OSU Totals	269	1615	6.0	18	71
OPP Totals	289	855	3.0	8	77

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
C.J. Stroud	147	219	67.1	2270	23-3	186.1
Kyle McCord	21	30	70.0	399	2-1	197.1
Jack Miller III	7	14	50.0	101	0-0	110.6
OSU Totals	175	263	66.5	2770	25-4	183.3
OPP Totals	179	296	60.5	1977	12-10	123.2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	43	687	16.0	6	57
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	35	648	18.5	3	58
Chris Olave	35	562	16.1	9	61
Jeremy Ruckert	19	243	12.8	3	30
TreVeyon Henderson	9	175	19.4	3	70
Emeka Egbuka	6	145	24.2	0	85
Cade Stover	5	76	15.2	0	25
Miyan Williams	4	49	12.3	0	17
Gee Scott Jr.	4	43	10.8	0	16
Marvin Harrison Jr.	3	43	14.3	0	20
Chris Booker	2	27	13.5	0	16
Julian Fleming	2	17	8.5	0	10
Master Teague	2	12	6.0	0	7
Evan Pryor	2	8	4.0	0	10
Marcus Crowley	1	21	21.0	0	21
Joe Royer	1	9	9.0	0	9
Jayden Ballard	1	4	4.0	0	4
Mitch Rossi	1	1	1.0	0	1
OSU Totals	175	2770	15.8	25	85
OPP Totals	179	1977	11.0	12	75

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
T. Henderson	15	–	–	–	–	90
Noah Ruggles	–47-47	–	–	–11-11	–	80
Chris Olave	9	–	–	–	–	54
Garrett Wilson	6	–	–	–	–	36

Jeremy Ruckert	3	–	–	–	–	18
Master Teague III	3	–	–	–	–	18
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	3	–	–	–	–	18
Miyan Williams	2	–	–	–	–	12
Haskell Garrett	1	–	–	–	–	6
Craig Young	1	–	–	–	–	6
Ronnie Hickman	1	–	–	–	–	6
Cameron Martinez	1	–	–	–	–	6
Evan Pryor	1	–	–	–	–	6
Mitch Rossi	1	–	–	–	–	6
Denzel Burke	1	–	–	–	–	6
Jerron Cage	1	–	–	–	–	6
Marvin Harrison Jr.	0	–	–	–	–	2
Dominic DiMaccio	0	2-2	–	–	–	2
OSU Totals	49	49-49	–	–	11-11	378
OPP Totals	20	19-20	–	–	5-7	154

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Noah Ruggles	5-5	4-4	2-2	0-0	11-11
OSU Totals	5-5	4-4	2-2	0-0	11-11
OPP Totals	1-1	1-1	3-5	0-0	5-7

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Jesse Mirco	19	797	41.9	0	62
OSU Totals	19	797	41.9	0	62
OPP Totals	43	1873	43.6	0	67

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Craig Young	2	88	44.0	1	70
Ronnie Hickman	2	65	32.5	1	46
Cameron Martinez	1	61	61.0	1	61
Cameron brown	1	25	25.0	0	25
Cody Simon	1	24	24.0	0	24
Denzel Burke	1	23	23.0	1	23
Tommy Eichenberg	1	0	0.0	0	0
Ryan Watts	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	10	286	28.6	4	70
OPP Totals	4	34	8.5	0	23

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	14	68	4.9	0	23
OSU Totals	14	68	4.9	0	23
OPP Totals	4	22	5.5	0	9

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	9	317	35.2	0	67
Xavier Johnson	2	37	18.5	0	22
TreVeyon Henders	1	19	19.0	0	19
Steele Chambers	1	13	13.0	0	13
OSU Totals	13	386	29.7	0	67
OPP Totals	17	276	16.2	0	23

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Ronnie Hickman	38	29	67	–	–
Teradja Mitchell	18	23	41	4.0-10	–
Cody Simon	15	21	36	2.0-13	1.0-11
Bryson Shaw	16	12	28	–	–
Tommy Eichenberg	12	13	25	0.5-3	–
Lathan Ransom	14	9	25	1.0-7	1.0-7
Steele Chambers	14	9	23	2.0-8	1.0-7
Marcus Williamson	13	8	21	0.5-3	–
Haskell Garrett	11	8	19	6.0-25	4.5-23
Denzel Burke	11	7	18	–	–
Antwuan Jackson	9	9	18	4.5-20	2.5-16
Zach Harrison	13	4	17	4.0-12	3.0-10
Tyreke Smith	8	6	14	3.0-10	2.0-9
Cameron Brown	11	3	14	–	–
Kourt Williams	9	4	13	–	–
Tyleik Williams	8	5	13	4.5-42	4.0-41
Cameron Martinez	7	5	12	0.5-4	–
Jack Sawyer	8	2	10	2.0-20	2.0-20
Dallas Gant	4	6	10	–	–
Josh Proctor	3	7	10	–	–
Craig Young	5	5	10	–	–
Cade Kacherski	6	4	10	–	–
J.T. Tuimoloau	5	5	10	3.5-27	2.5-24
J. Jean-Baptiste	4	6	10	1.0-11	0.5-6
Taron Vincent	5	5	10	2.0-4	0.5-2
Lejond Cavazos	7	1	8	–	–
Ryan Batsch	4	4	8	–	–
Marcus Hooker	2	5	7	–	–
Sevyn Banks	6	1	7	1.0-2	–
Ty Hamilton	4	3	7	2.0-7	2.0-7
Jerron Cage	3	4	7	2.5-11	1.0-6
OSU Totals	318	258	576	48.0-2452	9.0-198
OPP Totals	299	174	473	21.0-96	9.0-75

Fumbles Forced: 8 –Chambers, Harrison, Mckenzie, Ransom, Sawyer, Smith, Williams, Williamson.
Fumbles Recovered: 4 – Garrett (2), Cage, Eichenberg.

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 33, Penn State 24

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on the importance of beating Penn State: "In the second half of the season, we're 2-0, and that was the goal. The goal was to win the game. We weren't trying to get style points in a game against Penn State – that's not how it works. You just win the game, and we did that. We kicked some field goals and didn't convert down in the red zone, but we didn't go away from the running game. We kept working at it, and it was great to see us squirt some there in the second half."

Penn State head coach James Franklin on falling short vs. Ohio State: "We weren't able to drive consistently enough, and turnovers are what really kind of caught us. Give Ohio State a bunch of credit because it's a good football team. We weren't able to do it consistently the way we needed to on the road to get this win. I'm glad we came and competed. We did some good things and gave ourselves a chance to win. But at the end of the day, we didn't get it done."

Day on keeping a consistent approach against the Nittany Lions: "You can't flinch. You can't in games like this. I've been there before where all of the sudden you flinch, you start to get nervous, and that's not the way we're going to play. Guys are going to make mistakes, and we just have to keep moving on. We have to learn from those because if we clean those things up, I don't know what the score looks like. We have to do a better job in those areas. I think we'll look back and see that we made some mistakes that are going to cost us in some other games. But, that being said, we still worked through those things and got the win, and that's what I'm proud of."

Day on the offense's struggle to establish the run early in the game: "We ran for just under 200 yards. We want to be at 250, so we're a little short there, but again, when you're going against a good defense like this, that's how it goes. You don't just go down the field and score every possession – that's not how it works. But doing a better job on third down and in the red zone is how you convert and score points in big games like this, and we could have done a better job of that tonight."

Ohio State running back TreVeyon Henderson on facing a talented Penn State defense: "This was one of the best defenses we played all year. But I think I needed a game like this to prove to myself that I'm tough enough to play against a defense like that. I think that's what I did tonight."

Henderson on breaking free for a 68-yard run in the second half: "I think it was a great play, but I couldn't have done it without my O-line up front, my tight ends, my receivers – just everybody.



SONNY BROCKWAY

OFF TO THE RACES — OSU receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba (11) torched Penn State defenders for 97 yards on six receptions during the Buckeyes' 33-24 victory. Where Smith-Njigba really hurt the Nittany Lions was after he had the football in his hands. Of his 97 receiving yards, 53 came after the catch.

I knew if we kept going, we'd finally end up with a long run. We finally got it going."

Day on Henderson's performance against Penn State: "I was proud of TreVeyon, proud of our guys working through a gritty game like this. It's not atypical of a Penn State game. It's not unexpected. I thought it would be very much like it happened. It was certainly frustrating, but we will go back on the film, look at it, grow from it and pull our hair out from it, but we kept swinging away. Whether it was the offense or the defense, across the board I thought we were gritty. We didn't panic, we kept swinging and that's what these games are going to take."

Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud when asked about his apparent hesitancy to run with the ball: "I feel like our running backs do a great job, so there's really no reason for me to run. If I need to run the ball, I'll run the ball. If it's there, I'm going to run. But the plays that we run are the ones we need to run. I'm not going to do my own thing because that's how you lose games."

Stroud on how Day puts trust in him and others: "That's one of the biggest things – the trust of a coach with a player and the trust of a player

with a coach. When I first got here, when I was 17 or 18, Coach Day told me that it was just him and me. He told me, 'If you don't trust me and I don't trust you, we're not going to win.' For him to just have the confidence in me and our team, it just helps."

Ohio State defensive end Zach Harrison on how the defense stepped up against Penn State: "It's a good team win. Some games, the defense is going to make mistakes and the offense is going to have to pick it up. Other times, the offense is not going to be going well and the defense has to pick it up. I thought this was one of those games when defense had to make a few more plays. We're just trying to get better on both sides of the ball. We're building confidence every week. Every game, there are good plays and bad plays. But after those bad plays, we take pride in going back out on the field and make the corrections we need to make. We know next week's opponents will be looking at this game and looking at the mistakes we made."

Day on the defense continuing to build confidence week to week: "I think it's experience, but I also think we've done a good job with some of the schemes and changing up the looks for the quarterback, and we have to keep doing that. We have to stay a step ahead of everyone we play. But the guys are starting to make plays, guys who maybe we didn't know about a month ago. You're seeing guys show up. It's a lot of confidence that has been built over the last couple of months."

Stroud on what Ohio State can change in its approach moving forward: "I don't think we're going to do anything different. We're clicking now. I think we needed Oregon to happen. It sucks to lose, but I feel the best teacher sometimes is losing. When you trust in each other, there's nothing you can't do. We heard all the noise – we heard everything – but we just held together."

Day on the atmosphere in Ohio Stadium during the game: "I want to thank Buckeye Nation, the student section. Half an hour before the game, it was a packed house. The student section was rocking, the whole red-out scenario was great. Everybody involved with that – (athletic director) Gene Smith and the administration – I thought it was tremendous. Our guys were really excited about that, and the crowd was excellent. They were into it the whole game. That was a great atmosphere. I can't sit here and tell you that I enjoyed the whole game because it wasn't that way for me. But I know we're going to sit back and enjoy this tonight because it was a wonderful atmosphere – one of the best that there is right here in Columbus – and what a game. What a win. I'm proud of everyone involved, and I hope everyone had a great time."

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



Recruiting Overlooked Part Of OSU-PSU Rivalry

By **CHASE BROWN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Outside of Ohio State's long-standing rivalry with Michigan, Penn State holds claim for the Buckeyes' next toughest foe.

Counting this year's game, the teams have faced each other on the gridiron 37 times, with Ohio State now leading the all-time series by a 23-14 margin. Each game seems like a back-and-forth affair, keeping fans on the edge of their seats and almost certainly giving coaches their share of gray hairs.

The Ohio State-Penn State rivalry extends beyond the football field and into another arena – recruiting. Over the years, the Buckeyes and Nittany Lions have battled for the nation's most decorated and highly touted recruits.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin spoke with recruiting analysts Bill Kurelic of 247Sports and Dustin Hockensmith of PennLive to discuss the recruiting wars waged by the rival schools, including battles for such marquee names as Ki-Jana Carter, Micah Parsons, Zach Harrison and Kyle McCord.

Local Kid Gets Away

In 1992, Penn State was still independent with plans to join the Big Ten in a few years. However, ahead of schedule, the team established itself as the 11th program in the league one year later.

Before entering the conference, the Nittany Lions had already won several recruiting battles against soon-to-be rival Ohio State. The most significant victory came with the commitment of Westerville (Ohio) South running back Ki-Jana Carter, the last remaining blue-chip prospect in the state for the class of 1992.

Before his senior high school season, Carter suffered a knee injury and returned to play in five games before he broke a finger. He gained 975 yards in just five games and averaged 7.2 yards per carry despite limited time on the field. The 6-0, 212-pound tailback earned second-team All-America honors for his efforts.

Many schools came calling for Carter, asking him to lead their backfield. He had

narrowed his final choices to Penn State and Ohio State, ultimately choosing to play for the Nittany Lions.

“Carter was a dynamic running back and a dynamic recruit at the time,” Hockensmith said. “To pull him out of Columbus at that time was a big win for Joe Paterno and his staff.”

While many Ohio State fans were bewildered by any Columbus native who chose to go elsewhere, Carter said he didn't feel like a deserter.

“You need to go where you're happiest,” he said at the time. “If I had picked Ohio State and then ended up not being happy, I wouldn't have gotten anything out of my education or out of football. If you're happy, you'll do your best.”

“I was a little nervous about leaving home because my family and I are very close. But I have relatives in Washington, D.C., and Maryland, so there will be people there for me to turn to when things get rough.”

Carter's concern about adverse times was never fully realized at Penn State – at least on the football field. He made quite a name for himself as a Nittany Lion, rushing for 2,829 yards and 34 touchdowns during his career. During his third and final season with the program, he rushed 198 times for 1,539 yards and 23 scores, earning consensus All-America honors. He was also runner-up to 1994 Heisman Trophy winner Rashaan Salaam of Colorado.

During Carter's time at Penn State, Buckeye Sports Bulletin managing editor emeritus Mark Rea described the running back's dominance as a painful experience for Ohio State's coaches, players and fans, with each group understanding the team could have used Carter's talents for their favor.

“It was no fun watching that guy run the ball all over the field, especially considering what might have been,” Rea said. “It was kind of like what Desmond Howard did when he was at Michigan – only worse. Howard was from Cleveland, and Carter grew up right in Ohio State's back yard.”

Some of Carter's best games for the Nittany Lions came against the Buckeyes. He rushed for 123 yards during a 24-6 OSU win

in Columbus in 1993 and then had 137 yards and four touchdowns during a 63-14 blowout win against Ohio State in 1994 at Beaver Stadium.

“Losing Carter was a tough, tough blow for Ohio State,” Kurelic said. “He was a tremendous talent right there in the back yard, and it was hard for the Buckeyes to see him leave, especially when they had to play against him for two seasons. It was proof that Ohio State couldn't always get what it wanted.”

After Carter's dominant junior season, the Cincinnati Bengals selected him with the No. 1 overall pick in the 1995 NFL draft. He went on to play seven injury-plagued years as a professional running back – four seasons with Cincinnati, one with Washington and parts of two with New Orleans. His tenure in the league could have lasted longer, but he dealt with a litany of knee problems that inhibited his performance. In 59 NFL games, Carter rushed for 1,144 yards and 20 touchdowns.

“People around Penn State love (former quarterback) Kerry Collins, who was a first-round pick, and (former tight end) Kyle Brady, who also heard his name called in the first round,” Hockensmith said. “Around here, Ki-Jana is still a really big deal, too. But he became the poster child of Penn State running back failures in the pro ranks, which I don't think is fair.”

“He was deserving of that first-round, first overall pick. With his skill set and a healthy career, I think he could have been a really, really good player in the pros.”

'A Loose Cannon'

Micah Parsons didn't attract the attention of only Ohio State and Penn State while in high school. However, those schools sat near the top of his list alongside Georgia and Oklahoma.

The five-star defensive end had the size, strength and quickness that allowed him to shoot up college recruiting boards, and he utilized all three athletic abilities in his game, creating consistent mismatches off the edge. The 6-3, 235-pound Parsons was the No. 5 overall prospect in the class of 2018 as well as the No. 2 weakside defensive end and No. 1 player in Pennsylvania.

“He was 100-percent legitimate from the get-go,” Hockensmith said. “It was a winding road in recruiting, though, because Micah had been through some things. For his senior year, he transferred from Central Dauphin High School to Harrisburg High School, and he was an absolute stud. He played defensive end and running back. Micah enjoyed the recruiting process, and he enjoyed the attention. He kind of became known as a recruit that was a loose cannon.”

Parsons took an official visit to Ohio State on Sept. 9, 2017, where he watched the Buckeyes fall to a Baker Mayfield-led Oklahoma team by a 31-16 final. Three months later, he visited Penn State's campus – a one hour, 32-minute drive from Harrisburg – and met with head coach James Franklin to tour the program's facilities.

“Franklin saw through Parsons' act and saw what he was capable of,” Hockensmith said. “There were a lot of people who thought Micah would fizzle out in college, but Frank-

lin believed in him. They worked together and had a really good relationship throughout the recruiting process.”

On Dec. 20, 2017, Parsons committed to Penn State, signing his letter of intent to play defensive end and linebacker for the Nittany Lions. His athleticism and versatility gave the program a legitimate defensive threat that required opposing coaches to game-plan for his presence.

“He was a guy Penn State really needed to get,” Kurelic said. “Ohio State didn't really miss on him. He was a home-state guy for Penn State. That's why they needed to land him. He was a tremendous talent that ended up deciding to play for the Nittany Lions.”

Parsons played in 26 games for Penn State, collecting 191 tackles with 18 tackles for loss and 6½ sacks. He broke out during his sophomore year, winning the Big Ten's Linebacker of the Year award and becoming a consensus All-American.

Before his third year, the Big Ten canceled the 2020 football season due to COVID-19 concerns and Parsons decided to declare for the NFL. When the conference later reversed course and announced an eight-game regular season, Parsons did not return to the team and continued training for the pros.

The Dallas Cowboys selected Parsons with the No.12 overall pick in the 2021 draft. With 31 tackles and 2½ sacks in his first six games, the edge rusher-linebacker hybrid has made his presence felt and is a strong candidate for NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year honors.

Battle For Ohio DE

Zach Harrison played his high school football just 25 minutes north of Ohio State's campus, wreaking havoc at Olentangy Orange in Lewis Center, Ohio, and catching the attention of Power Five programs across the country.

The 6-5, 243-pound defensive lineman became 247Sports composite's No. 4 overall prospect, No. 1 strongside defensive end and the top-ranked player in Ohio for 2019, and he had been at the top of the Buckeyes' recruiting board for a few years.

Throughout his senior high school season, Harrison took unofficial visits to Penn State, Michigan and Ohio State – the five-star's top three choices for where he would continue his academic and athletic career.

“Those schools were the three,” Kurelic said. “It was clear that's where he wanted to go, but it was a matter of which program stood out the most on those visits. He didn't seem to be in a rush to get to any of them, though.”

Even after his trips to the schools, Harrison hadn't made up his mind. He delayed his decision multiple times throughout the recruiting process, causing significant question marks for his top schools. On Dec. 19, 2018, Harrison announced his commitment to Ohio State and finally put his name on a national letter of intent to the Buckeyes.

“I thought Zach was an incredibly important prospect for Penn State, but I thought it was kind of wishful thinking to think that Penn State would get to the finish line with him,” Hockensmith said. “He was on the fence and considering coming, but they missed. (Assistant coach) Shawn Spencer,

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.

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.

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.

who's now with the New York Giants, was leading his recruitment back then. But I think everybody around here considered it a kind of a long shot that you would get him out of Ohio."

Harrison came to Ohio State with high expectations. He was to be the next great defensive end on the trail blazed by Joey Bosa, Nick Bosa and Chase Young. Whether fair or unfair, the thought that he would become a generational talent has always been there. However, he hasn't been the game-wrecker many hoped he'd be through his first two seasons and change as a Buckeye.

Still, his performance has been good enough to catch the national media's attention. Before the 2021 season began, Harrison's name appeared on many watch lists for defensive awards, including the Ted Hendricks Award for the nation's best defensive end and the Chuck Bednarik Award, which is given to college football's best defensive player.

Through Oct. 30, Harrison had accumulated 17 tackles and was among the team leaders with four tackles for loss and three sacks.

'Had To Be Excruciating'

Justin Fields is cemented in Ohio State's rich football history as one of the best quarterbacks to play for the university. In just two seasons running the Buckeye offense, he led his team to the College Football Playoff each year, finished as a Heisman Trophy finalist and was a two-time winner of both the Big Ten Quarterback of the Year and Offensive Player of the Year awards.

Fields had a unique journey before arriving at Ohio State. On Dec. 1, 2016, he committed to play football for Penn State, but he later rescinded that verbal and wound up signing with Georgia four months later.

"That stung a little bit to people around here" Hockensmith said. "They got a commitment from him before Justin Fields really exploded and became a five-star prospect. When Penn State got him, he was a low four-star recruit, but then Georgia came knocking, and they put on the full-court press."

Fields played one season for the Bulldogs, sitting behind Jake Fromm and waiting his turn. However, when Dwayne Haskins left Ohio State for the NFL after the 2018 season, the Buckeyes needed a quarterback, and Fields left his home state and went to Columbus.

Fields took snaps as the starting quarterback for the Buckeyes for the next two seasons, setting records and making favorable impressions on NFL scouts. As Carter was a reminder to Ohio State fans about the pain of losing a talented recruit, Fields was a similar signal for Penn State fans.

The Kennesaw, Ga., native took the field against the Nittany Lions twice during his time in a scarlet and gray uniform. He completed 44 of 56 passes for 506 yards and six touchdowns while adding 64 yards on the ground against Penn State, engineering a 28-17 win in 2019 and a 38-25 victory last season.

"It had to be excruciating for Penn State to see Fields throw all over them," Kurelic said. "Not only to see him play well against them, but to have to watch him win Big Ten titles and compete for national championships. They had to play him every year and just imagine what could have been, so that made it even worse."

Fields declared for the NFL draft after last season, and the Chicago Bears selected him with the No. 11 overall pick – an investment that indicated the quarterback would be a leader of the franchise for years to come. He has struggled in his first few starts for the rebuilding Bears, but the organization is confident he will continue to improve with each opportunity.

Through his first seven games, that included five starts, Fields had completed 75 of 131 attempts (57.3 percent) for 816 yards and two touchdowns. He had also pitched six interceptions and been sacked an NFL-high 22 times.

Buckeyes Steal QB Away

Before Kyle McCord came to Ohio State to challenge C.J. Stroud for the starting quarterback position, he was a highly touted recruit from St. Joseph's Prep in Philadelphia.

The 6-3, 215-pound signal-caller earned a five-star rating in the 247Sports composite rankings, making him the No. 28 overall prospect, No. 6 quarterback and No. 2 player in Pennsylvania in 2021.

McCord quickly narrowed his top schools to Ohio State and Penn State at the beginning of his senior high school season. He attended camps and took unofficial visits to both schools throughout the recruiting process, eventually taking an official visit to Columbus in June 2020.

"Ohio State did a great job recruiting him," Kurelic said. "They had him there for an evaluation and had him at the top of their recruiting board. He was their guy."

Still, Penn State remained in the conversation to land McCord, but it was more as a long shot than a legitimate contender for his services. Hockensmith said the Nittany Lions remained invested in McCord's future and made him acutely aware of their interest. However, the recruiting analyst never saw Penn State as a landing spot for McCord, largely because Franklin's coaching staff didn't recruit well in the Philadelphia area.

"It's a little inexplicable," Hockensmith said. "How could you let (a player like that) leave the state without much of a fight? I think McCord's departure is a big reason Terry Smith, who is Penn State's assistant coach and quarterbacks coach, is retooling the program's recruiting in the Philadelphia area. I think that's happening because of a failure of not being a top consideration for McCord."

On Dec. 16, 2020 – six months after his official visit to Ohio State – McCord committed to the Buckeyes and signed his letter of intent. Twenty-six days later, he enrolled at the university and began practicing with the team, working with Stroud and Jack Miller.

"Ohio State has become a great quarterback destination for recruits," Kurelic said. "To some extent, they have their pick of who they want, and they certainly had some great options in 2021. McCord was the guy that had Ryan Day's best fit for what he was looking for. That was huge for Ohio State and Kyle. It was a great match for both parties, and I think the Buckeyes did an excellent job in landing one of the best recruits out of Pennsylvania last year."

McCord currently serves as the primary backup for Ohio State. However, when Stroud sat out the Akron game to rest his ailing shoulder, McCord filled in as a starter and performed well in his first career start. He completed 13 of 18 passes for 319 yards, two touchdowns and an interception.



*Best Taco
Al Pastor
in the City!*



MONDAY SPECIAL
Buy One Taco El Pastor
GET ONE FREE

WEDNESDAY SPECIAL
Gringas El Pastor
Only \$2 EACH

**MULTIPLE TV'S
TO WATCH THE GAMES**

**DUBLIN • 7370 Sawmill Rd.
614-726-9185**

Serving Alcohol with Full Bar

Sun-Thurs | 11am-12am • Fri & Sat | 11am-1am

**Columbus • 5221 Godown Rd.
614-538-0211**

Sun - Thur | 11am - 12am • Fri & Sat | 11am - 1am

**Gahanna • 1376 Cherry Bottom Rd.
614-471-4717**

Mon-Sun | 11am - 11pm

*New
Store!*

**Columbus • 1121 S. Hamilton Rd.
614-852-3000**

Mon-Sun | 11am - 11pm

Day Turns Dark Memory Into Mental Health Initiative

By MARK REA

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day will talk football with you all day. The intricacies of quarterback reads against different defenses, how many ways a slot receiver can be used as a primary target or decoy, the pros and cons of huddle vs. no-huddle – if it's a topic on football you wish to discuss, Day is your man.

Until recently, however, getting Day to open up about himself or his upbringing was akin to the proverbial pulling of teeth. Everyone knew he grew up in Manchester, N.H., one of the largest cities in New England, and was a high school and college star in his native state before embarking upon a coaching career. But before that?

Day never liked talking about his childhood because he harbored a secret about it. On Jan. 20, 1988, when the coach was just 8 years old, his father, Raymond, took his own life. He was 31.

"He worked at a convenience store, and he was on his way to work," Day recently told ESPN. "The next day, he was gone."

It was a pain from which the coach tried his best to distance himself.

"I don't want to call him angry, but he had a chip on his shoulder for a long time," said Day's wife, Christina. "Ryan's ambition and intensity came from always wanting to be mentally tough and not show a lot of weakness."

Sometimes that manifested itself with silence. And then there were times when it was channeled in other ways.

"We didn't talk about it at all really growing up," Day said. "Somebody made a comment to me, like making fun of me that I didn't have a father, and that ended up in a fistfight. I kind of had that edge. I would see somebody running up and hugging their dad after a game, and that was where I think the chip came from. It was like, 'OK, you've got a dad, but I'm going to beat you on the field.'"

That's when Day decided to make sports



PHOTO COURTESY OF ON OUR SLEEVES

ON OUR SLEEVES — Christina and Ryan Day have teamed with Nationwide Children's Hospital and the national 'On Our Sleeves' movement to help promote mental health issues through the Day Family Fund for Pediatric and Adolescent Mental Awareness.

his outlet. He was a standout athlete in high school, earning state player of the year honors in football, and then went on to become a record-setting quarterback at the University of New Hampshire with future college and NFL head coach Chip Kelly as his offensive mentor.

Upon graduation, Day immediately got a job at his alma mater coaching tight ends and began a career that has taken him from Boston College, Florida and Temple to Philadelphia and San Francisco in the NFL, and finally to Ohio State, where he succeeded Urban Meyer as head coach in 2019.

All along the way, though, Day tried his best to keep his past buried.

"People would ask about his family," Christina said, "and I remember him saying, 'Don't say anything about my dad.'"

Day admitted he didn't want to face the reality of what had occurred.

"You have sadness, you have anger, you have guilt," he said. "You have resentment. And then as you get older, you start to recognize that maybe he was sick."

In 2018, during his second year as an assistant at Ohio State, Day was on a recruiting trip to the Perry Local School District near Lima, Ohio. It was a trip that forced the coach to finally confront his past.

"I was with one of the high school coaches, and I walked through the hallway and nobody was in school," Day said. "I asked the coach what was going on, and he said, 'We've had another suicide. It was the seventh of the year.' And I remember calling back home to Nina and saying, 'Something is wrong. Why is this happening?'"

It was an epiphany for Day.

"I remember him saying to me over the phone, 'This has to stop. We have to get ahead of this thing. This is a crisis,'" Christina said. "That moment was a turning point in our lives because that was the point when he was like, 'I've been not talking about this, but now it's time to talk about it.'"

"It's been therapeutic the last two years for him and for our family. The conversations about mental health have to happen."

It was the genesis for the 2019 founding of the Christina and Ryan Day Fund for Pediatric and Adolescent Mental Awareness in connection with Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus. Joining with the national "On Our Sleeves, The Movement for Children's Mental Health," the Day Family Fund helps to offer support for children and young

adults living with mental illness.

At the time the fund was founded, Day said, "Growing up, I didn't quite understand what all went down. Then as I get older, I start to realize that it was a sickness and there are people out there that need help. And there is a stigma attached to it that I don't think is right. It was a stigma that maybe as a young person I bought into."

The coach didn't stop with simply putting his name on a fund and posing for some photos with his wife. The following summer, Ohio State replaced three part-time football staff positions with four full-time mental health professionals. One of the hires was Candice Williams, who holds a degree in psychology as well as a Ph.D. in counselor education. She came to Ohio State after five years as a member of the NFL Players Association Mental Health Crisis Team, providing case management and assistance to retired players in acute mental health distress.

"I knew it was important to him the day he stopped practice during training camp to introduce us," Williams said. "You have a coach who's bringing awareness to it to break that stigma, but then he's also bringing things into action."

Now in its third year, the Day Family Fund has not only helped bring awareness to mental health issues in young people, it has generated thousands of donations necessary to keep treatment available and affordable.

"We've received some great feedback from the foundation over at Nationwide," Day said. "They've received a lot of positive feedback and a lot of donations, which is really important for what they do there with the Behavioral Health Pavilion that really operates at a deficit. They don't make money on that, so they need those donations to be able to operate and serve the central Ohio area."

"I've also gotten a lot of positive feedback in messages and people reaching out. The whole idea was to bring attention and maybe help one or two people. Maybe it's more than that, but I just felt like the legacy of my father can now be felt in somebody in Ohio or across the country that asked for help or got help."

"Maybe somebody was able to help somebody that they loved, or maybe they made a call about something that would have otherwise got pushed under the rug. It wasn't easy to do, but I feel better afterward and maybe it helped somebody out there."

The coach said that, more than anything, he hopes bringing mental health issues to light can help remove any related social stigma attached to those issues. He understands that is perhaps the toughest hurdle to clear.

"Being aware of your thoughts and being aware of your mental health is important, and I can't say I always had that during my whole career," Day admitted. "There are still a few guys on the team who are ashamed to go ask for help. I certainly don't force that on anyone, but it's just a regular conversation. You don't need to be in crisis to just talk to somebody and get something off your chest. Those things go a long way."

"Life is about ups and downs, and if you can work through those times when you're down low and things aren't going well, when you're going through those challenges and adversities, they can make you stronger."

Press
Pub + on 5th
GOOD FOOD + FINE DRINKS

Press good food
fine drinks **Grill**

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

Elliott Beginning To Look Like Zeke Of Old

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ezekiel Elliott's return to his rookie form of 2016 when he topped the NFL in rushing could lead to more lean years for the former Ohio State and current Dallas Cowboys running back.

In this case, however, lean is good. At least that's the opinion of Jean-Jacques Taylor, the longtime columnist for the Dallas Morning News who now owns his own corporation called JJT Media Group.

Taylor is also an Ohio State grad who spent some time working at The Columbus Dispatch before heading to Big D, so he has a keen interest in following Elliott's career.

Taylor sees a rebirth for the new and improved, slimmer Elliott this year after what was considered several subpar seasons. His role was even reduced from the Cowboys' go-to back to sharing carries with Tony Pollard.

"A year ago, a lot of people thought Zeke was washed up," Taylor told BSB. "He was near that age (25) when running backs start falling off. He didn't have a good year. He didn't make a lot of long runs the last couple of years, so there was a lot of talk like, 'Why did we draft this guy with the fourth overall pick?'"

"He had a lot of fumbles last year, too, and that played a role in losing some games early, so there was a lot of 'Get rid of Zeke, let Tony Pollard play' as opposed to this year."

Elliott started all 15 games he played in 2020, missing the first game of his career due to injury with an ailing calf. He still logged 244 carries for 979 yards to rank 11th in the NFL. He also scored six touchdowns.

In 2019, he had a prolonged and public contract dispute with the organization and missed

all of training camp before signing just days before the season opener a six-year extension worth \$90 million with \$50 million of that guaranteed. He started all 16 games that season and ran for 1,357 yards and 12 TDs.

Still, his on-field totals didn't match his 2016 season when his 1,631 yards in 15 games (he was benched for a game) made him just the fifth rookie since the 1970 merger to lead the NFL in rushing. He also had 15 touchdowns.

Elliott also led the league in rushing with 1,434 yards in 2018.

Through the first six games of this season, Elliott has rushed for 521 yards and five touchdowns on 102 attempts. He also had 16 receptions for 105 yards and a score. That helped the early-season fortunes of an NFC East Division-leading Cowboys team filled with former Buckeyes, including safety Malik Hooker, long snapper Jake McQuaide and wide receiver Noah Brown.

"He did a hell of a job getting himself in great shape in the offseason," Taylor said,

Elliott is listed as carrying 226 pounds, but Taylor said it's more like 218.

"I think he hadn't weighed that since Ohio State," Taylor said. "He's got a burst. He's got his acceleration back. He scored on a 13-yard run (vs. the New York Giants on Oct. 10) where he broke out wide, turned the corner and got to the end zone. He hadn't done that before. He might have gotten there last year, but he wouldn't have been able to turn the corner."

"The problem was Zeke was six or eight pounds heavier than he was in 2015 or 2016, just over the course of time," Taylor added. "The first two years (in the NFL), he was a lot more explosive. His rookie year, it seemed like he had an 80-yard screen pass he took to the house."

"He owned up to last year. He called it a 's—

show,' so it's not like he's blaming other people."

Yes, that's how Elliott described it earlier this season.

"This year, a lot of it's about my body," he said. "A lot of it was just making sure I was ready to come and make up for my s— show last year."

"I just think that every year you've got to develop as a player, as a person, as a leader, as a teammate, as a boyfriend, a brother, everything. So, if I'm just staying the same from the last year, then I'm not doing my job."

Elliott and Pollard could be the first pair of running backs on the same team to rush for more than 1,000 yards since Carolina's Jonathan Stewart (1,133) and DeAngelo Williams (1,117) in 2009.

From Taylor's perspective, Elliott is doing well with the shared workload.

"He's handled it great because he's been the consummate professional, the consummate teammate since he's been here," he said. "Everybody's always talking about his blocking and stuff. I always say this about really good players – and Zeke falls into that category – they don't mind coming off the field if they believe the guy behind them is a really good player who put the work in and can help the team win."

"Now, if it's some guy who doesn't put the work in or he believes isn't worthy of playing time, then it might be different. But Tony Pollard is a really good player. Zeke really hasn't had any problems with it."

Elliott was the fourth overall pick in the 2016 NFL draft after a stellar career at Ohio State, and will be best remembered for his

2014 postseason in helping the Buckeyes win the first College Football Playoff championship.

He ran for 220 yards on 20 carries and had two TDs against Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship Game, 230 yards and two touchdowns – including an 85-yarder – vs. Alabama in the national semifinal, and 246 yards and four touchdowns on 36 carries to help defeat Oregon in the title game.

Elliott ran for 1,821 yards in 2015 and finished his OSU career with 3,961 yards in 35 games.

It was not always a smooth transition from college, and Elliott has found himself making news off the field more than on it at times. In 2017, he was suspended by the NFL for six games for violating the league's personal conduct policy due to accusations of domestic violence against his former girlfriend.

As for Elliott's long-term plans, Taylor isn't sure how long he'll be with the Cowboys after his current contract expires.

"He plays such a physical style that it will be hard for him to be a main back," Taylor said. "But because he's such a good blocker, such a good receiver, if he took on a different role, I could see that happening."

"If Tony Pollard keeps playing well, I could see keeping them both and going to Zeke and saying, 'We're not going to pay you \$15 million a year, but we'll pay you 8 or 9 million.'"

"He just has to do the math and think, 'Can I get that anywhere else?' The answer is probably no, so let me stay here and share the spotlight with Tony and be a two-headed tandem."

Join BPS for every home Buckeye game



364 West Lane, Columbus, OH 43201

Register to roll to win a
Kohler Power 8kw Generator



KOHLER
IN POWER. SINCE 1920.

Authorized Distributor

Find a dealer near you at BPSco.com

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

Home & Away Games!

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

Winning Remains Critical Hang-Up For Huskers

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Nebraska’s coaches have gotten just about every improvement out of their team they were hoping to see entering a crucial season for head coach Scott Frost. In his fourth season in Lincoln, the former national championship quarterback for the Cornhuskers was in need of several large changes within his program to avoid increased heat on his seat and perhaps even a dismissal from the program that once lauded him as a potential savior when it hired him away from Central Florida in 2018.

First and foremost, Nebraska needed to score more points. The Cornhuskers averaged 30.0 points per game in year one under Frost with then-new quarterback Adrian Martinez looking exactly like the answer Nebraska needed to its offensive questions. He completed 64.6 percent of his passes for 17 touchdowns and eight interceptions, while rushing for another 629 yards and eight scores. Martinez was the future of the program, working in tandem with Frost, the offensive genius, to rebuild Nebraska as a power in the offensively challenged Big Ten West.

But Martinez regressed in 2019 and 2020, and the offense went with him. He completed only 59.4 percent of his passes for 1,956 yards with 10 touchdowns and nine interceptions in 2019 as the offense dropped to 28.0 points per game and won only one more game than it had the previous year.

Martinez regained some of his accuracy in 2020, bouncing up to a 71.5-percent completion rate, but he threw only four touchdowns to three interceptions in eight games, and the passing offense lived within about 10 yards with Martinez unwilling and/or unable to throw the ball down the field. The offense dipped again, down to 23.3 points per game, and Nebraska went 3-5 during the pandemic year.

Entering 2021, Nebraska offensive coordinator Matt Lubick talked at length about the importance of expanding the passing attack’s scope and getting Martinez back to where he once was as a passer.

“A focal point for us in the summertime was figuring out ways to get the ball down the field,” Lubick said. “To get a quarterback that can do that, you have to be able to protect. There are a whole bunch of things that go into that like developing pass concepts that you feel comfortable with what your guys can execute. That was a big mission for us, and we have been better this year than we were last year, and I think that is going to continue to improve. The last thing we want to be to an opposing defense is one-dimensional.”

For the most part, that effort has been a success. Nebraska’s offense has bounced back into the upper half of the Big Ten, with Martinez leading a passing attack that is, if nothing else, capable. He was completing 62.5 percent of his attempts (150 for 240), had 12 TDs against only seven picks, and the offense was averaging 29.9 points per game through Oct. 30. So, mission accomplished in that regard.

Next up for Frost is reworking the defense or finding some sort of way to generate consistent stops. It had improved from its abysmal 31.2 points allowed per game in 2018 during the two seasons since – 27.8 in 2019, 29.4 in 2020 – but poor defensive line play and a shaky secondary limited the Blackshirts against better opponents in conference play. That landed defensive coordinator Erik Chinander on the hot seat, especially since he returned an experienced group in 2021.

Again, Nebraska can largely claim success here. The defensive line hasn’t improved much in the way of pressuring the quarterback (just 15 sacks through nine games) but Nebraska’s linebackers are among the best in the Big Ten, a veteran secondary has been strong in defending against the pass (211.2 passing yards per game) and the overall production has taken a large step forward, allowing just 20.3 points per game through nine matchups.

The last improvement that Frost desperately needed this season – more than any other – was for that progress to show up in the standings. After all, if a team improves significantly on both sides of the football, it should at least in theory win more football games.

However, Nebraska enters its Nov. 6 home bout with Ohio State with a 3-6 record that includes six one-score losses and just one Big Ten win – a 56-7 romp against Northwestern on Oct. 2.

The Huskers have been in every game they’ve played, coming up just short against a trio of top-10 teams in Michigan, Michigan State and Oklahoma (losing by three, three and seven points, respectively). There have been stretches of brilliance, including an explosion of 29 points against the Wolverines, a second half against the Michigan State offense that had the Spartans nearly blanked entirely from even gaining a first down, and an excellent first half of defense against the Sooners.

But every good stretch is followed by something catastrophic.

Martinez suffered a critical fumble in the final minutes against Michigan, leading directly to a game-winning field goal by the Wolverines. The special teams unit, unaware of where the ball went on a punt, allowed Michigan State’s Jalen Nailor to return a punt for six points and send that game to overtime. And although Martinez made just one mistake all game against OU, it just happened to be an interception deep in enemy territory in the fourth quarter.

“We’ve made plenty good enough plays in several games to have the outcome be different,” Frost said. “A lot of guys have had opportunities to make a play – one more play, somewhere, to get it done. We haven’t done it yet. We’ve made some game-winning plays and then had chances to stop the other team and didn’t. We stopped the other team and had chances to go win it and didn’t. We need our guys to be at their best in those situations.”

As the Huskers enter a matchup with Ohio State that they absolutely need to win to earn bowl eligibility for the first time in Frost’s tenure, avoiding disaster is about the only thing Nebraska can focus on improving. The offense has been sound in large part and the defense is among the Big Ten’s best, but it’s those details that have so often derailed Frost’s time in Lincoln.

That starts at quarterback with Martinez who, for all his flaws, has led the Nebraska offense as its most consistent playmaker all season. He’s found success behind a shaky offensive line as both a passer and a runner and looks much closer to his 2018 form than he does the 2019 and 2020 renditions. Not only do the stats support that assertion, so do his teammates.

“I love Adrian,” Nebraska cornerback Cam Taylor-Britt said. “He’s been playing lights-out. Even with the nicks and bruises, I wouldn’t want anyone else to be our quarterback. He gives 110 percent every play. But everyone has mess-ups. I have my mess-ups. But it’s about how you come back from it.”

Martinez has benefited from a trio of re-

Get To Know ... Nebraska

2020 Record: 3-6.

Team Information:

Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 3-4; Starters Returning – Offense 4, Defense 7, Specialists 1.

Head Coach:

Scott Frost, 4th year at Nebraska, 15-26.

Series History:

10th meeting; Ohio State leads 8-1-0

School Facts:

Location – Lincoln, Neb.; Enrollment – 26,079; Nickname – Cornhuskers; Colors – Red, White; Conference – Big Ten (West Division); Stadium – Memorial Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 85,458).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing

Adrian Martinez

Rahmir Johnson

Jaquez Yant

Att.

106

96

34

Net

451

448

254

Avg.

4.3

4.5

7.4

TD

11

4

0

Passing

Adrian Martinez

Comp-Att.

150-240

Pct.

62.5

Yds.

2264

TD-INT

12-7

Receiving

Samori Toure

Austin Allen

Omar Manning

Rec.

29

27

21

Net

568

371

305

Avg.

19.6

13.7

14.5

TD

3

2

2

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 29.9

Rushing Yards Per Game – 203.4

Passing Yards Per Game – 266.7

Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 470.1

2021 Schedule

Date

Opponent

Time/Result (ET)

Aug. 28

at Illinois

L, 30-22

Sept. 4

FORDHAM

W, 52-7

Sept. 11

BUFFALO

W, 28-3

Sept. 18

at Oklahoma

L, 23-16

Sept. 25

at Michigan State

L, 23-20

Oct. 2

NORTHWESTERN

W, 56-7

Oct. 9

MICHIGAN

L, 32-29

Oct. 16

at Minnesota

L, 30-23

Oct. 30

PURDUE

L, 28-23

Nov. 6

OHIO STATE

Noon

Nov. 20

at Wisconsin

TBA

Nov. 26

IOWA

1:30 p.m.

Dec. 4

Big Ten Championship

TBA

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders

Luke Reimer

Nick Henrich

JoJo Domann

Deontai Williams

Q. Newsome

Garrett Nelson

Cam Taylor-Britt

Marquel Dismuke

Ben Stille

Solo

45

32

39

23

29

20

25

14

13

Asst.

41

47

24

23

16

24

13

18

17

Tot.TFL

86

79

63

46

45

44

38

32

30

Yards

4.0-17

3.5-8

8.0-42

2.0-2

2.0-6

9.5-40

3.0-18

–

3.5-9

Sacks

1.0-6

0.5-3

2.0-19

–

1.0-4

3.0-2

1.0-12

–

1.0-5

Interceptions

Luke Reimer

Marquel Dismuke

No.

4

1

Yds

31

22

Avg

7.75

22.0

TD

0

0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 20.3

Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 137.2

Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 211.2

Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 348.4

ceiver transfers – Samori Toure (29 catches for 568 yards and three TDs) from Montana, Omar Manning from TCU (21-305-2) and Oliver Martin (10-170-1) from Iowa – as well as returning wideout Xavier Betts (16-252-0) and tight end Austin Allen. Toure serves as the deep threat for Martinez, while the other four work primarily in the underneath passing game. Allen is the most physically impressive of the bunch at 6-8 and 260 pounds, hauling in 27 passes for 371 yards and two touchdowns on the year while serving as one of the team’s foremost leaders on offense.

Where Nebraska has yet to find success is in the rushing attack, which is quite a change from recent seasons. Despite the depths of the past two seasons, Nebraska was able to rely consistently on Frost’s ability to scheme up a rushing attack, even with a rotating cast of contributors at running back. This season, though, inconsistency up front has shaken that strength as have injuries to contributors such as USC transfer Markese Stepp. He is one of five tailbacks to tote the ball most often throughout this season, but the emerging player in that spot for the Cornhuskers is freshman Rahmir Johnson.

Carrying 96 times for 433 yards and four scores through Oct. 30, Johnson has found some success, but the offensive line in front of him has limited his ability in generating big plays.

“We’ve been able to run the ball around here since I’ve been here, but this year we haven’t been able to consistently,” NU offensive line coach Greg Austin said. “You’ve got to tweak the margins. You’ve got to find a way to continue to get better every single week because that’s life. If I’m going to tell that to my daughters (at home), I’d better be going to work and telling it to the boys, too. That’s what I stress to them.”

Defensively, Nebraska is led by a strong group from front to back but really leans on a small group of freakish athletes, starting with nose tackle Damion “Boogie” Daniels. The younger brother of Darrion Daniels, who suited up for the Huskers in recent sea-

sons, Daniels is 6-3, 325 pounds and sets the tone up front in Nebraska’s 3-4 defense, even if he doesn’t rack up a lot of stats.

“We’re always fighting to play behind Boogie,” middle linebacker Luke Reimer said after Reimer had a 16-tackle performance in week two against Buffalo. “He’s the beast in that whole front.”

Behind Daniels, hybrid linebacker JoJo Domann has fully come into his own as one of the most unique defenders in the Big Ten. At 6-1 and 230 pounds, Domann looks like a standard outside linebacker but has played all over for Nebraska, including at safety, nickel, linebacker and even on the edge. He jumps around in all four roles within each game and will play a little bit of everything against the Buckeyes, likely drawing coverage assignments on tight end Jeremy Ruckert when needed.

“I’m happy for JoJo,” Frost said. “Anytime he has success, I’m really happy for him. He’s been here through a lot, seen a lot, held up through a lot. He’s a good player for us. He’s got better players around him now than he’s had before, and when plays are there for him to make, he makes them.

“He’s a key part of what we’re doing, and I’m really glad I’ve had the opportunity to coach him.”

In the secondary, Taylor-Britt is the biggest name player, but safeties Marquel Dismuke and Deontai Williams have each played well, though the latter (who leads the team in interceptions with four) suffered an injury Oct. 23 against Minnesota and is questionable to play against the Buckeyes. Cornerback Quinton Newsome has played well opposite Taylor-Britt, beating out former Buckeye Tyreke Johnson for the No. 2 cornerback spot.

“Q’s been playing well,” Frost said of Newsome. “He is doing what he’s supposed to do. People challenged him a lot early on, and he’s been playing tough and coming up and hitting. He wasn’t given a Blackshirt – he earned it.”



Ohio State at Nebraska

Saturday, Nov. 6 • Noon • Fox
Memorial Stadium; Lincoln, Neb.



Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...

9 MARQUEL DISMUKE, 6-1, 210, SR.
4 Myles Farmer, 6-1, 200, R-Fr.

8 DEONTAI WILLIAMS, 6-1, 205, SR.
21 Noa Pola-Gates, 6-0, 180, R-Fr.

S

42 Nick Henrich, 6-3, 225, R-Fr.
31 Chris Kolarevic, 6-1, 230, Jr.

13 JOJO DOMANN, 6-1, 230, SR.
23 Isaac Gifford, 6-1, 205, Fr.

S

6 Quinton Newsome 6-1, 185, So. OR
11 Braxton Clark, 6-4, 200, So.

ILB

28 Luke Reimer, 6-1, 225, So.
41 Garrett Snodgrass, 6-3, 225, R-Fr.

ILB

NICKEL

5 CAM TAYLOR-BRITT, 6-0, 197, JR.
1 Tyreke Johnson, 6-1, 190, So.

CB

2 CALEB TANNOR, 6-3, 225, JR.
0 Pheldarius Payne, 6-3, 260, Jr.

OLB

95 BEN STILLE, 6-5, 290, SR. OR
97 Deontre Thomas, 6-2, 285, Jr.

93 Damion Daniels, 6-3, 325, Jr.
91 Jordon Riley, 6-6, 310, Jr.

44 GARRETT NELSON, 6-3, 245, SO.
38 Damian Jackson, 6-2, 270, Jr.

DE

CB

DT

NT

X

78 NICHOLAS PETIT-FRERE, 6-5, 315, JR.
70 Josh Fryar, 6-6, 315, R-Fr.

LT

LG

C

53 Luke Wypler, 6-3, 300, R-Fr.
76 Harry Miller, 6-4, 315, Jr.

RG

RT

79 Dawand Jones, 6-8, 360, Jr.
66 Enokk Vimahi, 6-4, 305, So.

Y

5 GARRETT WILSON, 6-0, 192, JR.
18 Marvin Harrison, 6-3, 205, Fr.

P

29 Jesse Mirco, 6-4, 220, Fr.
96 Michael O'Shaughnessy, 6-3, 208, Jr.

RB

75 THAYER MUNFORD, 6-6, 320, GR.
55 Matthew Jones, 6-4, 310, Jr.

77 Paris Johnson Jr., 6-6, 315, So.
74 Donovan Jackson, 6-4, 300, Fr.

QB

7 C.J. Stroud, 6-3, 218, R-Fr.
6 Kyle McCord, 6-3, 215, Fr.

SLOT

TE

88 JEREMY RUCKERT, 6-5, 250, SR.
16 Cade Stover, 6-4, 255, So.

K

32 TreVeyon Henderson, 5-10, 215, Fr.
33 Master Teague, 5-11, 225, Jr.

11 Jaxon Smith-Njigba, 6-0, 198, So.
12 Emeka Egbuka, 6-1, 205, Fr.

95 Noah Ruggles, 6-2, 190, Gr.
98 Jake Seibert, 6-1, 205, R-Fr.

- Starters in bold; returning starters in all caps.

How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs.
NEBRASKA RUSH DEFENSE

Ohio State didn't exactly plow through the Penn State defense during its 33-24 victory on Oct. 30. In fact, the Nittany Lions won the early battle along the lines until freshman TreVeyon Henderson got on track in the second half. His 5.4-yard average on 28 carries was well below his 8.8 coming into the game and was radically skewed by a 68-yard run in the third quarter. Without that, he gained a mere 3.1 yards each time he touched the ball, including just 6 yards on nine carries in the first half.

The Buckeyes are 30th nationally in rush offense (201.9 yards per game) going against a Nebraska rush defense that is 49th (137.2). The Cornhuskers allowed only 116 yards on the ground during a 28-23 loss to Purdue on Oct. 30, but the Boilermakers are 128th out of 130 FBS team in rushing (79.1), so that was actually a poor performance by Nebraska. Purdue ran 86 plays, giving the Cornhuskers a lot of defensive opportunities, none more than sophomore linebacker Luke Reimer, whose 19 tackles (including 12 solo) were seventh most in school history and the most ever for a Huskers player in Big Ten play. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NEBRASKA RUSH OFFENSE vs.
OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

Nebraska's leading rusher is quarterback Adrian Martinez with 451 net yards (4.3 per carry) and 11 touchdowns. Rahmir Johnson is second with 433 yards (4.5) and four scores. Nebraska ran for 130 yards against Purdue and averages almost a yard more per game (203.4) on the ground than the Buckeyes to rank three spots ahead at 27th in the nation. OSU is 16th vs. the run (106.9) and has allowed eight TDs. The Buckeyes limited Penn State to a miserly 33 yards on 29 attempts (1.1 yards per carry), although OSU gave up rushing TDs from the 2- and 1-yard lines. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs.
NEBRASKA PASS DEFENSE

It wasn't the overwhelming performance OSU fans have come to expect from C.J. Stroud, but it was an effective 22 of 34 for 305 yards vs. Penn State. He threw only one TD and had a miserable underthrow to Chris Olave in the end zone on a fourth-down play. Garrett Wilson led the way with seven catches for 82 yards, Jaxon Smith-Njigba had 97 receiving yards on six catches, Olave added another TD, and tight end Jeremy Ruckert had three receptions. In other words, who are you going to stop? Most importantly, Stroud was not sacked. There's a reason the Buckeyes lead the country in scoring (47.3), are second in total offense (548.1) and are sixth in passing offense (346.3). Nebraska is 50th in pass defense, yielding 211.2 yards per game and 11 touchdowns while picking off eight passes. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

NEBRASKA PASS OFFENSE vs.
OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Martinez was flat-out poor against Purdue with four interceptions, including a pick-six. He was 14 of 29 for 269 yards with two touchdowns. Omar Manning was his favorite target with four catches for 75 yards and a TD. Martinez was also sacked once. For the season, he's completing 62.5 percent of his passes, good for 251.6 yards per game. He has 12 touchdowns and seven interceptions. The Buckeyes against Penn State recorded four sacks, one of which led to a 57-yard fumble recovery and TD for Jeron Cage, and five hurries. Still, Sean Clifford passed for 361 yards and a TD. OSU ranks just 93rd in pass defense (247.1), allowing 12 TDs against 10 interceptions. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Noah Ruggles made all four field goals vs. PSU and has not missed in 11 tries this season. If all goes as planned, he won't be needed much other than extra points vs. the Huskers. In desperate times, replace the kicker. That's what Nebraska head coach Scott Frost did, switching to transfer Chase Contreras from struggling senior Connor Culp. Contreras made both PATs and a 33-yard field goal during his debut against Purdue. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

Nebraska (3-6, 1-5 Big Ten) has lost three straight and is in danger of not meeting bowl eligibility requirements again. Memorial Stadium will be packed for the 381st consecutive time with more than 85,000 partisans who can look at Ohio State and dream about what Cornhuskers football used to be. Frost is likely on his way out, and it's unlikely he can pull off a colossal upset even though the Buckeyes looked sloppy and vulnerable against Penn State. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

PREDICTION

The Penn State game showed Ohio State is a long way from being a really good team. How can you have seven false starts at home among 10 penalties? Or score just one touchdown in six trips to the red zone? The Cornhuskers have nothing to lose, but they will. Again. **OHIO STATE 52, NEBRASKA 23**

WHEN NEBRASKA HAS THE BALL...

17 Bryson Shaw, 6-0, 195, So.
23 Marcus Hooker, 5-11, 200, Jr.

S

14 Ronnie Hickman, 6-1, 205, So.
15 Craig Young, 6-3, 223, So.

BLT

3 Teradja Mitchell, 6-2, 239, Sr.
22 Steele Chambers, 6-1, 225, So.

LB

30 Cody Simon, 6-2, 233, So.
35 Tommy Eichenberg, 6-2, 235, So.

LB

29 Denzel Burke, 6-1, 192, Fr.
7 Sevyn Banks, 6-1, 200, Sr.

CB

44 J.T. Tuimoloau, 6-4, 275, Fr.
11 TYREKE SMITH, 6-3, 265, SR.

DE

86 Jeron Cage, 6-2, 305, Gr.
52 Antwan Jackson, 6-2, 300, Jr.

DT

9 Zach Harrison, 6-6, 272, Jr.
8 Javontae Jean-Baptiste, 6-5, 255, Jr.

DE

26 Cameron Brown, 6-0, 190, Jr.
16 Ryan Watts, 6-3, 205, R-Fr.

CB

SLOT

WR

65 Teddy Prochazka, 6-9, 305, Fr.
66 Ezra Miller, 6-6, 315, R-Fr.

LT

LG

C

51 CAM JURGENS, 6-3, 290, SO.
75 Trent Hixson, 6-4, 320, Jr.

RG

RT

69 Turner Corcoran, 6-6, 300, Fr.
54 BRYCE BENHART, 6-9, 330, R-Fr.

WR

3 Samori Toure, 6-3, 190, Sr.
32 Brody Belt, 5-9, 185, So.

P

90 William Przysup, 6-4, 250, So. OR
40 Daniel Cerni, 6-4, 225, Fr.

RB

63 Nouredin Nouili, 6-4, 315, So.
57 Ethan Piper, 6-3, 305, R-Fr.

QB

2 ADRIAN MARTINEZ, 6-2, 212, JR.
8 Logan Smothers, 6-2, 195, Fr.

WR

TE

11 AUSTIN ALLEN, 6-9, 255, JR.
83 Travis Vokolek, 6-6, 260, Jr.

33 CONNOR CULP, 6-0, 180, SR.
92 Brendan Franke, 6-3, 215, Fr.

5 Omar Manning, 6-4, 225, Jr. OR
88 Levi Falck, 6-2, 205, Sr.

- Depth charts compiled by Patrick Mayhorm

Spartans Come From 16 Down To Topple Michigan

No. 8 Michigan State overcame a 30-14 second-half deficit for a 37-33 victory against sixth-ranked Michigan to highlight Big Ten games played Oct. 30.

The Spartans were led by tailback Kenneth Walker III, who rushed for 193 yards and five touchdowns. Michigan State quarterback Payton Thorne threw for 196 yards and overcame a pair of first-quarter interceptions.

The Spartans trailed by nine at halftime

BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

and 30-14 with 6:47 left in the third quarter before rallying as Walker boosted his chances of being invited to this year's Heisman Trophy ceremony. His fifth touchdown, a 23-yard run, lifted the Spartans to a 37-33 lead with 5:08 remaining.

Michigan seemed on its way to a win with quarterback Cade McNamara throwing for 383 yards and two touchdowns, but head coach Jim Harbaugh turned to freshman quarterback JJ. McCarthy to protect a three-point lead late in the fourth quarter, and McCarthy fumbled and lost the ball to the Spartans. Walker scored on the ensuing drive for the decisive touchdown, and although Michigan was able to get the ball back with

less than two minutes left, a McNamara interception by MSU cornerback Charles Brantley sealed the win for the Spartans at home.

The game was the first since 1964 between the two in-state rivals when both were ranked in the top 10.

The Spartans have now won 10 of their last 14 meetings with the Wolverines. Mel Tucker, a former assistant at Ohio State from 2001-04, became the first Michigan State head coach in history to beat Michigan in each of his first two tries.

Elsewhere around the league, Illinois was unable to ride its momentum from a historic nine-overtime victory against Penn State and fell to Rutgers, 20-14. The Scarlet Knights were led by 91 rushing yards from tailback Isaih Pacheco and 77 rushing yards and a touchdown from Kyle Monangai. Scarlet Knights QB Noah Vedral threw for 138 yards and added a score on the ground.

Brandon Peters, starting for the injured Art Sitkowski, completed 14 of 19 passes for 190 yards and two touchdowns for Illinois. Peters connected with Isaiah Williams for a 52-yard score, and tailback Chase Brown led the running game with 67 yards. The Illini failed to muster much offensively in the second half after leading 14-10 at the midway point.

Maryland snapped a three-game losing streak with a 38-35 win against Indiana, a game highlighted by 419 yards and two touchdowns from quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa.

The Terrapins trailed 17-14 following a 66-yard scoring scamper by Indiana tailback Stephen Carr in the third quarter, but the Terps responded with two touchdowns before the end of the frame.

Wide receiver Carlos Carriere led Maryland with eight receptions for 134 yards and two touchdowns, while tailback Challen Faa-matau added two scores on the ground.

Although they lost, the Hoosiers received a valiant effort from reserve quarterback Donaven McCulley, who started in place of the injured Michael Penix Jr. and Jack Tuttle. McCulley threw for 242 yards and two touchdowns. Tight end Peyton Hendershot reeled in both scores as part of a six-catch, 106-yard performance, and Carr added 150 yards and two touchdowns on the ground.

A dominant defensive effort led Wisconsin to a 27-7 win against reeling Iowa. The Badgers forced three turnovers and recorded six sacks.

QB Graham Mertz threw for only 104 yards and one touchdown for the Badgers, but he also scored twice on quarterback sneaks. Freshman tailback Braelon Allen rushed for 104 yards on 20 carries.

Iowa's offense was abysmal against the Badgers, totaling just 156 yards. Quarterback Spencer Petras threw for 93 yards, and tailback Tyler Goodson added 27 rushing yards on 13 carries.

Purdue used stellar defense to force four turnovers and secure a 28-23 victory at Nebraska. Boilermakers quarterback Aidan O'Connell completed 34 of 45 passes for 233 yards and two touchdowns, while wide receiver David Bell hauled in nine passes for 74 yards and tailback King Doerue added 74 rushing yards.

Nebraska quarterback Adrian Martinez threw for 269 yards and two touchdowns but was responsible for four interceptions. He also added 18 rushing yards and a score. Wide receiver Omar Manning caught four passes for 75 yards and a touchdown.

Minnesota used its dominant running game to demolish Northwestern, 41-14, sparked by a career-high 110 yards and two touchdowns from tailback Mar'Keise Irving and 106 yards from tailback Ky Thomas.

Golden Gophers quarterback Tanner Morgan threw for 134 yards and one interception and added 29 rushing yards with a score. Derik LeCaptain, who typically plays linebacker, also scored on a 24-yard run.

It was an ugly effort from Northwestern, with head coach Pat Fitzgerald benching starting quarterback Ryan Hilinski after a 1-for-5 start. The Wildcats turned to Andrew Marty, who threw for 93 yards and two touchdowns on 10-of-16 passing and added 28 rushing yards. Tailback Evan Hill ran for 107 yards on 15 carries.

Two More Badgers Headed To Portal

Wisconsin has lost two more players to the transfer portal, bringing to four the number of Badgers choosing to transfer out of the program during a 10-day period.

The Athletic reported Oct. 28 that fullback Quan Easterling and cornerback Donte Burton had entered the portal. They join offensive lineman Kayden Lyles and wide receiver Devin Chandler, who earlier chose to transfer out of the program.

The defections come as Wisconsin is ex-

BIG

2021 Standings

East Division

	Conf.		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Michigan State	5	0	8	0	1.000
Ohio State	5	0	7	1	.875
Michigan	4	1	7	1	.875
Maryland	2	3	5	3	.625
Penn State	2	3	5	3	.625
Rutgers	1	4	4	4	.500
Indiana	0	5	2	6	.250

West Division

	Conf.		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct.
Minnesota	4	1	6	2	.750
Wisconsin	3	2	5	3	.625
Purdue	3	2	5	3	.625
Iowa	3	2	6	2	.750
Illinois	2	4	3	6	.333
Northwestern	1	4	3	5	.375
Nebraska	1	5	3	6	.333

Oct. 30 Games

Maryland 38, Indiana 35
Rutgers 20, Illinois 14
Wisconsin 27, Iowa 7
Michigan State 37, Michigan 33
Purdue 28, Nebraska 23
Ohio State 33, Penn State 24
Minnesota 41, Northwestern 14

Nov. 6 Games

Ohio State at Nebraska, Noon
Illinois at Minnesota, Noon
Penn State at Maryland, 3:30 p.m.
Wisconsin at Rutgers, 3:30 p.m.
Michigan State at Purdue, 3:30 p.m.
Indiana at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.
Iowa at Northwestern, TBD

Nov. 13 Games

Maryland at Michigan State, TBD
Minnesota at Iowa, TBD
Purdue at **Ohio State**, TBD
Michigan at Penn State, TBD
Rutgers at Indiana, TBD
Northwestern at Wisconsin, TBD

Nov. 20 Games

Illinois at Iowa, TBD
Michigan State at **Ohio State**, TBD
Minnesota at Indiana, TBD
Michigan at Maryland, TBD
Rutgers at Penn State, TBD
Purdue at Northwestern, TBD
Nebraska at Wisconsin, TBD

Nov. 26 Game

Iowa at Nebraska, 1:30 p.m.

Nov. 27 Games

Ohio State at Michigan, Noon
Indiana at Purdue, TBD
Penn State at Michigan State, TBD
Maryland at Rutgers, TBD
Northwestern at Illinois, TBD
Wisconsin at Minnesota, TBD



Cucos Taqueria

The Great Taste of Mexico
only at Cucos Taqueria

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

HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY - FRIDAY 4-7PM

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

periencing a resurgence in its 2021 season. After losing three of their first four games, the Badgers are on a four-game winning streak, including their win against No. 9 Iowa on Oct. 30.

Former PSU Standout Wright To Coach WNBA Dream

Former Penn State women's basketball standout Tanisha Wright has been named the fifth head coach in the history of the Atlanta Dream franchise.

"It's an honor to be chosen as head coach for the Atlanta Dream, and I'm excited to play a role in building a successful organization centered around the player experience," Wright said. "I have been part of championship teams and understand what it takes to win in this league. I look forward to bringing my talents to this franchise and helping the Dream achieve success."

Wright, a West Mifflin, Pa., native, thrived at Penn State, averaging 14.9 points per game during her career before becoming the No. 12 overall pick in the 2005 WNBA draft. A defensive stalwart, Wright was named the Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year for three consecutive seasons from 2003-05, averaging 2.0 steals per game in her four-year career.

Wright went on to play 10 seasons as a guard for the Seattle Storm, winning a WNBA title in 2010 and making nine straight playoff appearances.

"Known for her defensive mind-set, emotional intelligence, and grit, we are beyond thrilled that Tanisha Wright is joining the Atlanta Dream," Dream owner Larry Gottesdiener said. "Tanisha demonstrates a rare depth of character that is inspiring, and we can't wait to see the positive impact she will have on this team."

Wright, who ranks fourth in Penn State history with 1,995 points, most recently served as an assistant coach for the Las Vegas Aces.

Three-Star Forward Moore Decommits From Rutgers

Braeden Moore, a three-star forward from Nashville, Tenn., announced his decision to decommit from the Rutgers men's basketball program.

After standing out at Nashville Christ Presbyterian Academy, Moore also announced his decision to transfer to Kanye West's Donda Academy in Los Angeles.

"After much prayer and conversations with my coaches and family, I'm excited to announce that I will attend Donda Academy for my senior year," Moore posted on Twitter. "I have also made the decision to re-open my recruitment. #Decommited."

Moore had committed to Rutgers, which was the first major program to offer him, over a slew of more than 35 offers in the summer. However, the 6-8 power forward picked up significantly more offers after the Scarlet Knights had received his verbal.

"It was crazy. At times, I was really up and down," Moore said. "It is a long process. It is not easy. And when you step on campuses and talk to coaching staffs, you can get an idea and see the ins and outs. You talk to your inner circle and kind of decide based on that. We prayed a lot and we talked about it. It was pretty clear."

Though the 6-8, 210-pound Moore is ranked the No. 54 power forward and No. 252 overall prospect, he is confident in his versatility and capabilities as a big guard.

"I think I would give that big element of

shooting and spacing the floor," he said. "I think that's what most people like with my size. On paper, most people might think I am a stretch-four. I am not a stretch-four by any means. I am more of a guard and a lot of people don't realize that. I am looking to be that three to two. But even four or I can also play the five. I play everything."

Following Moore's decommitment, Rutgers head coach Steve Pikiell is left with Mount Laurel, N.J., Lenape point guard Derek Simpson and Cleveland Brush power forward Antwone Woolfolk as the staples of his 2022 class.

Legendary IU Coach Knight Visits Old Team

First-year head coach Mike Woodson and the Indiana men's basketball team received a visit from a familiar face at practice in late October.

Legendary Hoosiers head coach Bob Knight, who ended a 20-year feud with the program in 2020, returned to campus to watch the team practice.

Woodson, who played for Knight from 1976-80, acknowledged Knight's impact on Indiana basketball at his introductory press conference.

"Coach Bob Knight means so much to Indiana basketball, and he took a chance on a kid out of Indianapolis many years ago to come here and play basketball," Woodson said.

Knight returned to Assembly Hall on Feb. 8, 2020, receiving overwhelming praise and ending his personal boycott of the Hoosiers program. He has been seen at numerous games since.

Knight, an Orrville, Ohio, native, who was a member of the 1960 national champion Ohio State men's basketball team, turned 81 on Oct. 25.

MSU Women Lose Pair Of Starters To Injuries

The Michigan State women's basketball team suffered a setback before the start of the season, losing two starters to season-ending injuries in practice.

Senior Tory Ozment and junior Julia Ayrault, who each were injured during October practices, will miss the entire 2021-22 campaign. Ozment suffered an ACL injury, while Ayrault tore a ligament in her foot.

"(Ozment and Ayrault) had the most aggressive summers in terms of how they worked, how they were in the weight room and gym," said Michigan State head coach Suzy Merchant. "I feel bad for them because they really did put a lot of work in."

"Tory had an ACL injury in high school, but Julia's is a freak thing. The guy that did her surgery did (Kansas City Chiefs QB) Patrick Mahomes' (surgery). In his 30 years, he can count on one hand how many basketball players have ever had that injury. Both were noncontact. Both were doing something they do every day all day."

Ayrault was the Spartans' third-leading scorer at 9.0 points per game, adding 4.9 rebounds per contest and starting 15 of the 19 games she appeared in last season. Ozment started 13 of the 21 games she played, posting averages of 6.9 points and 3.4 rebounds per game.

Following the injuries, Merchant expects younger players such as Matilda Ekh and DeDe Hagemann to take on larger roles. Tamara Farquhar, a transfer from Purdue, and junior Moira Joiner will also provide depth and compete for playing time in the Green

and White rotation.

Iowa Women's Center Suffers Torn ACL

The Iowa women's basketball lost team sophomore center Sharon Goodman to a season-ending ACL injury sustained in practice.

"That was a big loss," Iowa head coach Lisa Bluder said. "In our first practice this year, she unfortunately went down with an ACL tear. Sharon was playing great. Last year, she shot 55 percent from the field, and she was a tremendous backup to Monika (Czinano) because she was so strong. She was playing at a better level this year – this summer – than last year. So her game has really improved. I was really expecting big things from Sharon."

"It's a horrible thing to happen, especially to her," senior center Monika Czinano said. "She's one of the most caring and lighthearted people ever. So, we're all with her, the whole team, through her whole recovery. We're going to be by her side."

At 6-3, Goodman, a Lime Springs, Iowa, native, served as Iowa's backup center behind Czinano in 2020-21, appearing in all 30 games as a freshman. She averaged 3.7 points, 2.1 rebounds and 1.6 assists in 8.7 minutes per game.

Following the loss of Goodman, Bluder and the Hawkeyes will primarily turn to 6-4 freshman Addison O'Grady to back up Czinano at center. Senior forward Logan Cook could also see time at the five spot in 2021-22.

"Due to the loss of Sharon, it kind of in-

serted (O'Grady) into that center position immediately out of need," Bluder said. "And she'll do a great job there. It's not like we need her to come in and play 30 minutes. We need her to come in and play 10 great minutes like Sharon did last year. And what an awesome opportunity for a freshman to have that opportunity. I just think she's going to shine with it."

Terps Forward Named To Miller Award Watch List

Maryland women's basketball forward Chloe Bibby has been named to the Cheryl Miller Award Watch list, which recognizes the top small forwards in women's NCAA Division I college basketball as determined by a national committee of top college basketball personnel.

Bibby, a former Mississippi State transfer who is now earning a graduate degree at Maryland, ranked third on the Terrapins in scoring last season with 13.2 points per game while grabbing 6.0 rebounds per contest. She currently sits just nine points away from 1,000 for her career.

Bibby earned All-Big Ten honorable mention after she recorded four double-doubles and scored in double digits in 21 games during her first season at Maryland.

Prior to transferring to the Terrapins, Bibby played in 88 career games at Mississippi State, averaging 9.1 points and 4.8 rebounds per game in her two seasons with the Bulldogs. The small forward started all 18 games of the 2018-19 season prior to suffering an ACL tear.

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 HILLIARD INN & SUITES
3831 Park Mill Run Drive, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 • 614-529-8118

Loaded Visitor List Takes In OSU Vs. Penn State

Ohio State welcomed just about every recruiting target on its board spanning multiple classes into Ohio Stadium on Oct. 30 to witness its 33-24 victory against Penn State in easily the largest recruiting weekend of the season for the Buckeyes. With the matchup against the Nittany Lions slated for a 7:30 p.m. kickoff, Ohio State was able to

RECRUITING
OUTLOOK
Patrick Mayhorn

welcome far more national prospects than it could on Sept. 11 – the originally planned big recruiting weekend – against Oregon, with that game kicking off at noon.

Included below is as close to a complete list of visitors as BSB could compile, separated by class and organized alphabetically.

Class of 2022: Duncanville, Texas, five-star DE Omari Abor; four-star WR Kojo Antwi of Suwanee (Ga.) Lambert (commit); Las Vegas Bishop Gorman four-star S Zion Branch; four-star CB Terrance Brooks of Little Elm, Texas (commit); four star CB Jyaire Brown of New Orleans Warren Easton (commit); four-star WR Caleb Burton of Austin (Texas) Lake Travis (commit); Greenwood (Ind.) Center Grove four-star DT Caden Curry; four-star OT George Fitzpatrick of Englewood (Colo.) Cherry Creek (commit); four-star WR Kyion Grayes of Chandler, Ariz. (commit); Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star OG Earnest Greene; four-star RB Dallan Hayden of Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers (commit); three-star OT Avery Henry of St. Clairsville, Ohio (commit); four-star OLB C.J. Hicks of Kettering (Ohio) Alter (commit); Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star DL Marvin Jones Jr.; Rancho Santa Margarita (Calif.) Catholic four-star DT Hero Kanu; Altoona (Iowa) Southeast Polk four-star S Xavier Nwankpa; Chicago Marist four-star LB Jimmy Rolder; three-star ATH Kye Stokes of Seffner (Fla.) Armwood (commit); four star OT Tegra Tshabola of West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West (commit); and four-star CB Ryan Turner of Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep (commit).

Class of 2023: Baton Rouge (La.) University Lab five-star LB Jaiden Ausberry; Tampa (Fla.) Jesuit four-star LB Troy Bowles; Las Vegas Bishop Gorman four-star WR Zachariah Branch; Springfield, Ohio, four-star WR Anthony Brown; Maiden, N.C., three-star WR Chris Culliver; St. Louis DeSmet four-star CB Christian Gray; Massillon (Ohio) Washington three-star RB Willtrell Hartson; Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic four-star RB Justice Haynes; four-star TE Ty Lockwood of Thompson's Station (Tenn.) Independence (commit); Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett four-star DL Kayden McDonald; Findlay, Ohio, four-star OL Luke Montgomery; Detroit Martin Luther King five-star QB Dante Moore; Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star OL Joshua Padilla; New Bern, N.C., four-star DL Keith Sampson; Chattanooga Baylor School four-star OL Brycen Sanders; Pickerington (Ohio) Central five-star S Sonny Styles; Venice, Fla., four-star S Elliot Washington; and Lehigh Acres (Fla.) Lehigh Senior five-star RB Richard Young.

Class of 2024: Fort Mill (S.C.) Catawba Ridge four-star QB Jady Davis; Opa Locka (Fla.) Monsignor Prep four-star QB Adrian Posse; Opa Locka (Fla.) Monsignor Prep LB Vincent Shavers and Opa Locka (Fla.) Monsignor Prep four-star WR Jeremiah Smith.

Class of 2025: Findlay, Ohio, QB Ryan Montgomery.

Every visitor matters for Ohio State's recruiting efforts, but there are a few players on the lengthy list worth singling out as especially significant for the Buckeyes, and no better place to start than the first name on the 2022 visitors list – Abor (6-4, 240).

Considered the No. 24 player and No. 2 edge rusher in his class, Abor wasn't fully committed to the Oct. 30 visit until just a few days before he made it. He took a trip to Texas A&M on Oct. 23 and wasn't sure he'd be able to make the trip to Columbus. However, with both parents tagging along, Abor took in the sights and sounds on Oct. 30 and stayed through Oct. 31. He told 247Sports that the Buckeyes are joined by Alabama and Texas A&M on his final list of schools – thanks in part to the constant contact he keeps with defensive line coach Larry Johnson.

"A&M has always been there, too," Abor said. "And Ohio State and Alabama. I just talked to Coach Johnson again (a few) days ago. I think it was Oct. 23 before their game. I couldn't watch the Ohio State-Indiana game, but my dad watched it."

Abor is planning an early January commitment.

Also notable in the 2022 list is the safety pairing of Branch (6-2, 195) and Nwankpa (6-2, 190). Branch's list has dwindled primarily to Alabama, Clemson, Oklahoma, Oregon, Ohio State and USC, with the Buckeyes and Trojans fighting for the top spot. Nwankpa, as discussed in the last issue of BSB, is focusing on Iowa, Notre Dame and Ohio State, with the Oct. 30 trip to OSU serving as his final visit.

Elsewhere, Ohio State had the chance to get a better feel for its potential defensive line class, welcoming Abor, Curry (6-3, 250), Jones (6-4½, 245), and Kanu (6-5, 293) to its campus over the weekend. With four-star edge player Kenyatta Jackson Jr. of Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep already committed, Ohio State would love to take two or three of those five.

Also in attendance for 2022 was Rolder (6-2, 220), a new addition to the Buckeye board who was making his first trip to Columbus. His rise into the spotlight has been rapid. Once considered a star baseball recruit who just happened to play football, Rolder has shot onto boards across the Big Ten, and Ohio State is interested beyond just extending a courtesy offer. With only two linebackers currently committed in Hicks and Marysville, Ohio, four-star Gabe Powers (who might wind up playing on the line in college), Rolder has become a serious priority.

"Rolder's had an outstanding rise," 247Sports analyst Bill Kurelic told BSB. "He was a baseball guy, and at one point it seemed like that's all he was. Now he is a legitimate Power Five football player. Ohio State needs a linebacker after losing Bloomington (Ind.) South High School four-star Dasan McCullough from the class. They wanted four linebackers, and right now they only have two, so there is a need for another one. The only question is how will Rolder and Ohio State match when he gets to campus."

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
George Fitzpatrick	OT	6-6	285	★★★★	Englewood (Colo.) Cherry Creek
Bennett Christian	TE	6-6	235	★★★★	Acworth (Ga.) Allatoona
Kyion Grayes	WR	6-1	170	★★★★	Chandler, Ariz.
Dallan Hayden	RB	5-11	195	★★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Christian Brothers
Avery Henry	OT	6-7	305	★★★	St Clairsville, Ohio
C.J. Hicks	LB	6-3	220	★★★★★	Kettering (Ohio) Archbishop Alter
Kenyatta Jackson	DE	6-5	235	★★★★	Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna
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

"In my 35 years of covering recruiting, I'm sure someone has risen as fast. However, I can't think of a guy that's done it as much as him recently."

As for any players on commitment watch, the Buckeyes didn't expect to see much in the way of fireworks – the days of on-the-spot commitments are mostly gone from college football recruiting – but Ohio State does hope that the huge volume of visits will yield more fruit down the road.

"I think sooner or later there will be (commitments), but in this day and age, it's very difficult for a player to make an absolute commitment that quickly," Kurelic said. "They want to get their video ready and make it a production. They're going to make their announcement on social media and all those things."

"It's rare to see a kid come to campus and suddenly announce the commitment that weekend or within the day. I think at some point, I'm sure there are going to be some commitments from this weekend. I think it's just a matter of how soon those happen. I don't necessarily expect one by the end of the day. What typically happens is a player will let them know before he leaves campus, or shortly after that, that he intends to be a Buckeye. They'll know, or they'll at least have a good feel for their chances with that player so they can plan accordingly."

Stewart A No-Show For Late October Visit

Ohio State had plenty of recruits to keep entertained over the Oct. 30 weekend, but one of the biggest names once on the docket did not make an appearance and could be on his way off the Buckeyes' board.

Opa Locka (Fla.) Monsignor Prep five-star defensive end Shemar Stewart (6-5, 265), ranked the No. 8 player and No. 3 defensive lineman in the class, was originally slated to attend as an Ohio State visitor on Oct. 30 but canceled his visit prior to game day and now looks to be something of a long shot to sign with the Buckeyes.

"It looked like there was a legitimate shot for Ohio State at one point," Kurelic told BSB. "I'm not saying that there won't be now, but with him not making his official visit, I think that lessens the chance. Could he still make an official visit? Sure, but he's a guy that you'll have to get on campus."

For Ohio State, the focus now shifts to either securing a new visit date – if it really wants to make a push for the Florida pros-

pect – or toward finding a target to fill his place on the board. Jones, a fellow Florida product, did make the visit to Columbus and could now become a more serious target for the Buckeyes, as BuckeyeScoop analyst Bill Greene told BSB prior to the weekend's festivities.

"I never really thought they were (involved with Stewart)," Greene said. "I thought all along he was going to Miami (Fla.) – that it was a done deal to Miami. But the guys that I know really well in Florida are now telling me that he's starting to look sideways at Miami. That kind of throws it out for Georgia and Texas A&M, who I think are ahead of Ohio State."

"The keys are Shemar and Marvin Jones. Both of those guys, if they get them to show up on campus – but those guys have to get off the plane first. Everybody's planning on being everywhere two weeks before, one week before, four days before."

"If they get off the plane in Columbus, and they take an official visit, I would move my optimism on that because I would say Ohio State is great on official visits. If they can just get the visit to take place, they're amazing. But I have to see those guys in Columbus before I get any more optimistic. Right now, I am not that optimistic."

As for Stewart, barring an actual visit to Ohio State, Georgia and Texas A&M lead his recruitment and he'll likely land in one of those two spots.

Rice Finally Ends Secretive Recruiting; Chooses UNC

Lynchburg (Va.) Liberty Christian Academy 2022 five-star offensive tackle Zach Rice (6-6, 282) shared one of the best-kept secrets in recruiting Oct. 21, announcing his commitment to North Carolina and ending a recruitment that had for months baffled recruiting analysts and coaches.

Despite his status as one of the nation's top recruits, listed as a consensus five-star prospect, the No. 9 player and No. 1 offensive tackle by the 247Sports composite, the Virginia product had held his college decision as close to the vest as he could. There wasn't a single crystal ball prediction for his school choice prior to his donning of Carolina Blue, and very few even had a sense of the schools that he was considering among his finalists.

"This came down to just comfort," North Carolina recruiting analyst Don Callahan told 247Sports. "He obviously felt the most

comfortable at North Carolina and Virginia, but clearly felt just a little bit more comfortable at UNC. But then also he really talked about wanting to go someplace where he felt like he could be developed, and North Carolina is where he feels like he has the best chance to be developed. That's his dream. If you watch the actual announcement, he mentioned that his goal is to retire his mom, and he could easily do that with his first contract in the NFL if he's a first-round pick or if he lives up to that five-star billing."

As best can be assessed, based on the hats on the table for his big moment, the Tar Heels won out for the local product against Alabama, Notre Dame, Ohio State and home-state Virginia. He visited all five over the summer after the dead period was lifted.

However, Ohio State never seemed to be a serious contender for the services of the talented tackle. The Buckeyes offered early, getting involved in April 2020, but Rice is considered something of a homebody who never seriously entertained the thought of departing from the coastal South where he plays his high school ball.

"First of all, I wanted to play for a Hall of Fame coach," Rice told 247Sports, referring to Tar Heels head coach Mack Brown. "Second of all, the Virginia connection right there is really popping. I feel like all the players that are committed there know the lingo. And (defensive backs coach) Dre Bly, (2022 running back) George Pettaway, and a lot of the players just make me feel like at home. They are climbing up the charts. It's just something about the quarterback and the running back – (freshman QB) Drake Maye. And (starting QB) Sam Howell might stay another year.

"I wanted an offensive line coach with experience, and I know Coach (Stacy) Searels has made three-plus freshman All-Americans and that's really where I want to start off. I'm going to graduate early, so my key is getting better so that I don't have to redshirt. They really see me coming in the first day and starting. But I don't think like that. When I go down there, I have no stars. I have nothing."

Rice is now one of two top-10 prospects committed to North Carolina in the class of 2022, along with Greensboro (N.C.) Grimsley defensive lineman Travis Shaw, the No. 4 player in the nation.

This wasn't Ohio State's first brush with Brown and his staff in Chapel Hill in the elite recruiting world. Attentive fans may remember the recruitment of Virginia Beach (Va.) Princess Anne five-star corner-

back Tony Grimes.

Once a 2021 standout, Grimes was long considered an Ohio State lean, but ultimately the Buckeyes fell behind in his recruitment after the departure of defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley. North Carolina ultimately landed his commitment and then convinced him to reclassify into the 2020 class so that he could arrive on campus a year early. Grimes is now a star sophomore cornerback with the Tar Heels.

As for the impact Rice's commitment has had on Ohio State recruiting, it seems minimal. Offensive line coach Greg Studrawa was well aware that the Virginia product was a long shot for the Buckeyes, and though they would have loved the chance to get him on campus before he made a decision, losing him to a school closer to his home had been the expectation for months in Columbus.

Buckeyes Reset Focus On Offensive Line Targets

If Rice had been a serious target by the end of his recruitment, Ohio State would not have pulled the trigger on other recent offensive tackle commitments, namely those of Fitzpatrick (6-6, 285) or Henry (6-7, 305).

However, Ohio State is still on the prowl for a pair of offensive line recruits, and with Rice off the board, it's worth looking around and resetting potential targets for Studrawa heading down the final stretch into the December early signing period.

Any such list has to begin with the interior offensive line duo of Greene (6-4½, 330) and Humble (Texas) Atascocita four-star Kam Dewberry (6-4, 313). Both players remain near or at the top of Ohio State offensive line target list, and that won't change anytime soon.

However, momentum seems to have dissipated there, at least a bit. Greene has developed an affinity for Georgia and Texas after fall visits to both schools, but Ohio State is hoping that his trip to Columbus for the win against Penn State will change that and launch the Buckeyes back into the lead for good.

Dewberry, meanwhile, hasn't seen quite the same shakeup atop his list but is reconsidering some of his priorities. The Texas product has shown a renewed interest in staying close to home, taking another look at both Texas and Texas A&M. There doesn't seem to be a clear leader right now, and Ohio State won't feel better unless it can get him on campus again. His last visit was in the summer, but it was an official trip, so any

further visits will have to be paid for by Dewberry. He was expected to be on campus for the game against the Nittany Lions but was a late scratch from the list.

Beyond those two, the list becomes a bit foggier. Hammond (Wis.) Saint Croix Central four-star guard Carson Hinzman (6-4, 280) has been a fast riser on the Buckeye board in recent months, but wresting a Wisconsin lineman away from the Badgers is never an easy task. The good news, though, is that Ohio State knows its competition.

"Kind of narrowing it down to OSU and Wisconsin," Hinzman said in September. "Those two have been amazing. I'm really fortunate to have the offers I do. A lot of kids barely even get one offer, so I'm just really grateful to have those."

Also good news for the Buckeyes is that the recruiting remains ongoing. Hinzman was a candidate for a summer commitment and then for an early fall pledge, but he's held off through the end of October. For an insurgent challenger such as Ohio State, that would seem to be a good sign.

Another Wisconsin product, four-star Billy Schrauth (6-5, 285) of Fond Du Lac St. Mary's Springs, has drawn interest from OSU as well. He visited Columbus in June and has been in consistent contact with Studrawa, but another contender has entered the picture. Once considered a Wisconsin lean, Schrauth has begun to swing toward Notre Dame, picking up a crystal ball prediction from 247Sports analysts Tom Loy and Steve Wilfong on Oct. 19.

Ohio State might look to circle back on Charlestown, Ind., five-star tackle Kiyaunta Goodwin (6-7, 300) or Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star tackle Aamil Wagner (6-6, 255), but both appear to be long shots at this point for different reasons.

Goodwin has said that he'll take official visits, but that's less related to the Buckeyes and more to Alabama and Michigan State. He visited the Crimson Tide in early October and will do so again in the coming weeks. He was at Michigan State on Oct. 30.

Wagner, meanwhile, would serve as a bit of a tricky conversation for the Buckeyes. He's found plenty of interest from Kentucky, and while he was once considered an Ohio State lean, Studrawa and staff didn't push for his commitment. The Wildcats did and look to be a strong favorite right now.

As it stands, the BSB call on Ohio State's final offensive line class is Dewberry, Fitzpatrick, Henry, Hinzman and West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Tegra Tshabola.

Buckeyes Crack Branch's Top 12

Ohio State is working hard to secure the pledge of the elder Branch, but there's a new Branch brother whom the Buckeyes are beginning to track. Zachariah Branch (5-9, 172), the younger brother of Zion, is a four-star receiver in the class of 2023, ranked the nation's No. 44 overall player and No. 7 receiver. On Oct. 22, he trimmed his extensive list of suitors to 12 schools, with the Buckeyes included.

Joining them on the list is something of a who's who in college football – Alabama, Georgia, LSU, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas A&M, USC and Washington.

Branch, like his older brother, seems to be favoring the Buckeyes. Though they do not have any sort of formal package deal in place, there is a thought that the two would like to play their college ball together, meaning that the Buckeyes and Trojans should both be major factors in his recruitment. Ohio State receivers coach Brian Hartline is also a key factor here, taking the lead on Branch's recruitment in hopes of securing his 2023 slot receiver.

"Coach Hartline and I vibed well," Branch told BuckeyeScoop. "He has a great personality and is a great person to be around. There was never a dull moment while hanging out with him."

Alabama CB Harris Eyes December Commitment

Phenix City (Ala.) Glenwood School five-star 2023 cornerback AJ Harris is planning an early December commitment date or a January pledge depending on his visit schedule, he recently told On3Sports.

"I am leaning more towards committing Dec. 13, on my mother's birthday, than I am waiting for Jan. 11," Harris told On3. "I am not big on this recruiting process, so if I am ready to commit in December, I want to go ahead and make my decision."

"It is hard to talk to all the different schools, handle school, and things like that, so I am thinking a lot about going ahead and committing in December."

The primary factor that will decide his commitment date is his remaining visits. Harris would like to take trips to Clemson, North Carolina and Notre Dame before announcing his final decision. Ohio State has made its last big pitch already, hosting the talented cornerback on Oct. 9 for a blowout

Continued On Page 28

ASK AN ANALYST

With Bill Kurelic of 247Sports

Is there a favorite to be Ohio State's quarterback in the class of 2023?

"Five-star quarterback Nicholas Iamaleava of Warren High School in Downey, Calif., is the player at the top of the list for Ohio State. He is who Ohio State would be targeting at this point, and there is a legitimate mutual interest there. There's a whole group of those quarterbacks, but I kind of figure things are best with him right now. I think he's along the same lines as C.J. Stroud. He's a guy that can stand in the pocket and make nice throws."

Who do you see as the next commitment for the Buckeyes?

"It's hard to say because there are certainly some players out there that if Ohio State gave them the green light, they would say yes. Those players would answer pretty quickly. But not everyone gets the green light at this early stage,

especially when you're looking at the class of 2023. If you're looking overall, I think one guy to keep in mind is 2023 four-star lineman Josh Padilla of Wayne High School in Dayton. He likes Ohio State a lot, and they want him a lot. Another player to watch is the 2023 five-star safety Sonny Styles of Pickerington Central High School in Ohio. Earlier this week, he said he was still evaluating things, but he may decide to pull the trigger.

"I think a guy like four-star linebacker Jimmy Rolder of Marist High School in Chicago could be a commit if they pressed hard. Would he be willing to make a decision soon? I'm not sure, but he's another guy that's worth keeping an eye on at this point.

"Five-star defensive lineman Caden Curry of Center Grove High School in Greenwood, Ind., and four-star safety Zion Branch of Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas

are two more guys who will be on campus (for the Penn State game). Ohio State would certainly love to have both of those guys."

Which players do you have your eye on in the upcoming Ohio High School Athletic Association playoffs, either Ohio State recruits or otherwise?

"I'm going to see three-star offensive tackle Avery Henry of St. Clairsville, Ohio, (on Oct. 29). I have not yet seen him in person, but I'll get a chance to do that. He, of course, recently committed to Ohio State. He's in the playoffs, and he's certainly one that I am anxious to see in person, without a doubt.

"When it comes to most of the other guys, I've seen them play in person, so it's just a matter of going and seeing them again. A lot can change over time."

Continued From Page 27

victory over Maryland. His father, Daniel, broke down that visit with Eleven Warriors and said that his son came away extremely impressed.

“It was great,” the elder Harris said. “I know one thing we really learned as a family is it’s important for AJ to get around the guys. (At other visits), AJ always meets a DB or a player or two, but Coach (Kerry) Coombs invited us to the team hotel Friday night when we got there, and his mother and I got to go around and meet parents and AJ got to meet the players.

“That’s a dynamic we all really realized is important because the love from the players is more important than love from the coaches and the staff because you’re going to be around the players more than you’re going to be around the coaches and the staff. That was an important dynamic to us. That was a nice little twist.”

OHSAA Playoffs Feature Several OSU Targets

The annual Ohio High School Athletic Association playoffs kicked off Oct. 29 and featured plenty of Ohio State targets as well as five commitments from the class of 2022.

Throughout the playoffs, BSB will keep tabs on how those players and their teams perform and will highlight key matchups to check in on in the weeks to come in a box elsewhere within Recruiting Outlook.

First, from the first round of the newly expanded playoffs:

Division 1, Region 1: No. 2 Medina (10-0) vs. No. 15 Shaker Heights (3-6)

Medina quarterback Drew Allar was on

pace for a 400-yard passing game before being pulled in the middle of the second quarter, as Medina blew the doors off an overpowered Shaker Heights squad, 54-0. The Penn State commit left the game with just over seven minutes to play in the second quarter, ending his day 13 of 17 passing for 252 yards and a county-record five touchdowns. He’s up to 3,443 yards passing and 40 TDs for the season, both good enough for single-season county records as well.

“It’s super cool, but I couldn’t have done it without my teammates,” Allar told The Gazette in Medina. “My offensive line has kept me upright, and my receivers just keep making plays. Plus, the defense gets us the ball back quickly.”

Division 1, Region 2: No. 1 Marysville (9-0) vs. No. 16 Delaware Hayes (3-7)

Marysville looked the part of a top seed against Hayes, scoring 35 points in the first half on the way to a 49-7 victory. Powers, a longtime Buckeye commit, led the Monarchs’ defensive efforts but like many of the other Buckeye targets in action on the 29th, he was not needed for the entirety of an easily handled matchup.

Division 1, Region 2: No. 3 Huber Heights Wayne (8-2) vs. No. 14 Dublin Coffman (3-7)

Without a question the game of the evening, Dublin Coffman – helped defensively by Will Smith Jr., the son of the late Ohio State defensive end of 2002 national title fame – upset Huber Heights Wayne, 27-24, on a last-second Hail Mary to wideout Trey Hedderly. It was a back-and-forth matchup throughout, but Wayne – behind Padilla and Wagner – scored too soon to take the lead at 24-21, allowing Dublin Coffman time to

score its game-winner.

Division 1, Region 2: No. 6 Findlay (7-3) v. No. 11 Miamisburg (6-4)

The Montgomery brothers survived a scare from Miamisburg, narrowly avoiding a fourth quarter two-point try that would have tied the game and escaping with a 28-26 victory. Ryan Montgomery completed 17 of 26 passes for 255 yards and four scores, though he did toss an interception, and his team fumbled twice as it dealt with rough weather conditions.

“Conditions were bad, but we have no excuses,” Findlay head coach Stefan Adams told The Courier in Findlay. “We have to do better, but we showed resolve, and in the end that’s what mattered.”

Division 1, Region 3: No. 2 Pickerington Central (9-1) vs. No. 15 Grove City (2-7)

Pickerington Central led only 28-0 at the half but held Grove City scoreless through three quarters on the way to a 48-7 victory. It was a quiet day for Styles, but he was crucial in the shutout effort for the Tigers.

Division 1, Region 4: No. 3 Lakota West (8-1) vs. No. 14 West Clermont (2-8)

Led by Brown and Tshabola, Lakota West rolled to a first-round victory against the Wolves, 49-14. Directed up front by Tshabola and bolstered defensively by Brown, the Firebirds leapt out to a 49-0 halftime lead and found plenty of playing time for the reserves.

Division 3, Region 12: No. 2 Monroe (8-2) vs. No. 15 Kettering Alter (5-5):

The best performance of the night was provided by Hicks, who scored the lone touchdown of the day for Alter – a 23-yard run – and spearheaded the Knights’ defense for a 10-7 upset victory against the Hornets.

Division 4, Region 15: No. 2 St. Clairsville (9-1) vs. No. 15 Newark Licking Valley (2-7)

Playing both ways as an offensive and defensive tackle, Henry played a big role in a 55-38 victory. The Red Devils leaned heavily on Henry in the rushing attack, running behind him at every possibly opportunity.

OHSAA GAMES TO WATCH, ROUND TWO

No. 7 Cleveland Heights (9-2) at No. 2 Medina (11-0)

No. 8 Perrysburg (8-3) at No. 1 Marysville (10-0)

No. 14 Dublin Coffman (4-7) at No. 6 Findlay (7-3)

No. 7 Hilliard Bradley (6-5) at No. 2 Pickerington Central (10-1)

No. 6 Milford (7-4) at No. 3 Lakota West (9-1)

No. 15 Kettering Alter (6-5) at No. 7 Tippecanoe (9-2)

No. 7 Carrollton (8-3) at No. 2 St. Clairsville (10-1)

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1986

It was a very strong year for high school wide receivers, and Ohio State was thrilled. Identifying one top receiver in the class was a tall task, but a good place to start was Holmes High School in San Antonio, home to three major pass-catching targets.

Leading the way was Johnny Walker, a 6-1, 170-pounder who had 50 receptions for 874 yards as a junior.

Alongside him were the Cash twins, Keith and Kerry, both of whom were 6-4 and 195 pounds with the ability to line up as tight ends or wideouts.

Cory Booker, a 6-4, 220-pounder from Old Tappan, N.J., was another tweener with the ability to play in both spots. He was reportedly an excellent track athlete and a phenomenal student as well, though he was considered a Stanford lean with eyes on its political science program.

The closest star to the Buckeyes was Jeff Ellis, a 6-5, 225-pounder at Louisville (Ky.) Male. Ellis, the son of former heavyweight boxing champion Jimmy Ellis, caught 26 passes for 729 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior. He was joined in the Bluegrass State by Eddie Thomas at Fort Knox, a 6-0, 180-pound speedster, and Newport Central Catholic’s Frank Jacobs, nearly diametrically opposed in style at 6-5, 220.

30 Years Ago – 1991

For three years, Lorenzo Styles of Farrell, Pa., had everyone believing he was going to be one of the top linebacker recruits across the country. He surprised everyone in his senior season, however, when he became a running back and rushed for more than 1,300 yards.

“First of all, all of the preseason hype on Lorenzo was on his being a linebacker,” said Farrell head coach Lou Falconi. “Since we moved him to tailback, people are taking another look at him.”

The high school linebacker-turned-tailback, however, said he would like to go back to his defensive position in college. The 6-2, 225-pound senior had many schools on his list, but Ohio State and Pittsburgh were at the top.

25 Years Ago – 1996

Warrensville Heights, Ohio, prospect Darnell Sanders issued his verbal commitment to Ohio State during an Oct. 23 telephone call with head coach John Cooper and tight ends coach Mike Jacobs.

Sanders’ commitment brought OSU’s class to nine players. He selected the Buckeyes over Miami (Fla.) after the Hurricanes were unable to move him off his longtime favorite in the waning days of his recruitment.

“It’s been Ohio State for me all along,” Sanders said. “I just wanted to stay closer to home. Plus their program is really going good right now.”

Sanders said it was a thrill to commit to his home-state school

when he was offered a scholarship.

“They sounded excited about it,” he said of the Ohio State coaches’ reactions. “For me, it’s a relief from all the telephone calls from all the college coaches. This is where I wanted to go.”

20 Years Ago – 2001

OSU recruiting coordinator Bill Conley spoke with BSB about the team’s recruiting effort up through the eighth week of the 2001 season. The Buckeyes had already received commits from a number of the nation’s top 100 prospects, but there was still plenty more work to do.

“We definitely want to finish strong,” Conley said. “Of course, we want to keep all the kids we already have commitments from. Then we want to try and get a few national-caliber kids to come and visit our campus. We have to wait in some cases for those kids to finish their high school season.”

Some of the nation’s top prospects who were interested in the Buckeyes included tight end Mel Bryant of Muncie (Ind.) Central, defensive tackles Eric Fritz of Dublin (Ohio) Coffman and Kwakou Robinson of Brooklyn (N.Y.) Poly Prep and quarterback/defensive back Troy Smith of Cleveland Glenville.

15 Years Ago – 2006

With the regular season in the books, West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West defensive end Solomon Thomas could turn his attention to a few other things – namely the playoffs and the recruiting process. But first, the 6-4, 210-pound Thomas had to take care of some academic business that was holding him back from making a final decision.

Following his team’s 12-0 victory against rival Lakota East that clinched a playoff spot for the Firebirds, Thomas enjoyed the moment but began preparing for his ACT test the following morning.

“I just wrapped up a four-week course at a community college,” he told BSB. “The teacher has taken 400-plus ACTs before, so she’s a very skilled lady. I feel confident. I’ve just been studying my butt off. I look forward to committing after the ACT.”

Thomas was planning to commit to the Buckeyes as soon as the test was behind him, but he wanted to focus entirely on his grades before making a final call on his recruitment.

10 Years Ago – 2011

The Ohio State football program had held a pair of football commitments from players at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy for months, but it wasn’t until Oct. 30 that wide receiver Michael Thomas felt it was right to make his intentions known publicly.

After visiting Ohio State for its 33-29 win against No. 12 Wisconsin, Thomas couldn’t fight back his enthusiasm for becoming a Buckeye the following day.

“I have been a silent commit for quite some time now due to all the NCAA allegations and stuff going on,” Thomas said. “But after (the Wisconsin game), it is safe to say I am a Buckeye. The game kind of sealed the deal. It was electric, the atmosphere was amazing. It doesn’t get much better than that.”

Thomas revealed that despite a top three that included Notre Dame and Oklahoma State alongside the Buckeyes, it had always been his plan to attend school with Fork Union teammate Cardale Jones in Columbus.

Five Years Ago – 2016

After hosting five-star wide receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones of Detroit Cass Tech on an official visit earlier in the season, Ohio State wound up in the prospect’s top five, which he announced Oct. 30 on Twitter.

Along with Ohio State, Peoples-Jones listed Florida State, Florida, Michigan and Michigan State.

“First, I want to thank God for blessing me with all of my abilities and opportunities,” Peoples-Jones wrote in his Twitter post. “I would also like to thank each coach who has taken their time to recruit me along this process. I value the connections and relationships that I’ve encountered throughout this time. It has also been fun visiting so many new places. After praying on it, I will be moving forward with this select group of universities!!!”

Scout rated Peoples-Jones (6-2½, 190) the No. 34 overall player and No. 4 wide receiver in the 2017 class.

One Year Ago – 2020

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

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

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

A Variety Of Lodging Options To Catch The Buckeyes

Countless Ohio State fans will be visiting Columbus this fall to watch their beloved Buckeyes attempt to march to another national title. To take the worry out of figuring out where to stay while you're in town, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* offers the following suggestions.

- **Aloft Columbus University District** is open in space and spirit. Located at 1295 Olentangy River Road near both downtown Columbus and Grandview Heights, Aloft is the next generation of hotel, using technology and design to enhance your experience and move at the pace of their guests. The new hotel is conveniently located near the OSU campus, the Schottenstein Center, The Wexner Medical Center and more, and it offers the perfect place to kick back and relax with loft-inspired guest rooms featuring a modern design, platform beds, Bliss Spa bath amenities and fast & free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel.

After a great night's sleep, charge up with a quick bite from Re:fuel. End your day at Aloft's signature WXYZ bar where you can mix and mingle with other guests or colleagues while you listen to live music and sip on specialty cocktails. Take in a workout at the Re:charge gym then take the plunge in their Splash pool to cool down.

Call (614) 294-7500 or visit www.aloftcolumbus.com

- Location is a big factor when deciding where to stay, and the **Best Western Hilliard Inn & Suites** is conveniently located just seven miles from the stadium, five miles from the Hollywood Casino and just six miles from downtown Columbus, home of the Greater Columbus Convention Center, Ohio Expo Center, COSI and the Arena District. There are a number of dining and shopping options nearby as well, including several within walking distance.

Best Western offers newly renovated rooms featuring free Wi-Fi, 43-inch LED televisions, micro-fridge, in-room coffee and sleeper sofas. Start your day off with a free, full hot breakfast. Play or relax after your busy day in the indoor heated pool, or take advantage of the 24-hour business center and exercise facility. Their friendly staff is available 24 hours a day to assist your needs. Call (614) 529-8118 or visit www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.36169.html.

- **The Canopy by Hilton Columbus Short North** is located just steps away from the Columbus Convention Center in the heart of the Columbus Short North district at 77 E. Nationwide Blvd. Take in amazing views of downtown Columbus while chilling out on the outdoor patio with a fireplace, or head to the Rooftop Bar-Goodale Station for cocktails and local signature dishes. The Canopy features a rooftop state-of-the-art fitness center, offering the latest in equipment complemented by wonderful city views

Start your day with breakfast in Canopy Central or have a Breakfast Bag made with fresh, local ingredients delivered to your room. Relax in beds designed specifically for Canopy in rooms that include 55-inch flat screens, refrigerators, Nespresso machines and free Wi-Fi. The Canopy offers filtered water stations on each floor and offers complimentary Canopy Bikes to ex-

plore the neighborhood, which includes the popular North Market. Pets are allowed up to 50 pounds with a \$50 deposit, and valet parking is available. Call them today at (614) 223-1400 or visit online at columbusdowntownshortnorth.canopybyhilton.com.

- Treat yourself to the ideal blend of excellent service, thoughtful amenities and a convenient location at **Fairfield Inn & Suites Columbus Dublin**. Situated off I-270, the Fairfield Inn provides easy access to top destinations including Ohio Stadium, the Dublin Bridge Park District, shopping and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

Retreat to relaxation in their contemporary rooms, where you'll find free high-speed Wi-Fi, ergonomic work stations and pillow-top mattresses to keep you comfortable, productive and entertained near Columbus. After a refreshing slumber, stop by their complimentary breakfast buffet and fuel up with a tasty spread of hot and healthy choices. If you're looking to stay active, break a sweat at the large 24-hour fitness center or enjoy a swim rain or shine in their indoor saltwater pool. Ask about The Fairfield 100 percent guarantee, where they promise you'll be satisfied or they'll make it right. Visit www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cmhdf-fairfield-inn-and-suites-columbus-dublin or call (614) 389-3036.

- **The Hampton Inn Columbus-Airport**, located at 4280 International Gateway by John Glenn Columbus International Airport, is convenient to just about anywhere in Columbus. It's just minutes from downtown and offers easy access to campus. Every stay includes free Wi-Fi in each room, a free hot breakfast and complimentary access to the gym/fitness center. Call (614) 235-0717 or visit www.columbusairport.hamptoninn.com to find out more.

- Meanwhile, the **Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown** is in the heart of Columbus' vibrant core at 501 N. High St. Located in the Arena District and just south of the Ohio State campus, the Hampton Inn & Suites is within walking distance of the Short North, and there is no shortage of activities nearby. Guests are greeted by a beautiful rotunda, and amenities include in-room coffeemakers, irons and high-speed Internet, as well as 24-hour coffee service and a hot breakfast.

You'll love the convenience of the Hampton's valet parking. And be sure to take advantage of the indoor pool, exercise room, convenience store and business center. To find out more, call (614) 559-2000 or visit www.columbusdowntownsuites.hamptoninn.com.

- Make the most of your home away from home at the **Hampton Inn & Suites Hilliard**. Located at 3950 Lyman Drive in Hilliard, just off I-270 and just five miles from OSU, the Hampton Inn & Suites offers free parking and features a variety of suites and rooms that include a refrigerator, coffeemaker and free Wi-Fi. Enjoy a complimentary breakfast buffet and you can also visit the indoor pool and fitness center. Grab your clubs and head to the nearby Wilson Road Golf Course, or shop at The Mall at Tuttle Crossing, just seven minutes away. For more information call (614) 334-1800 or visit online at columbushilliardsuites.hamptoninn.com.

- For convenience and comfort, it's hard

to beat the **Hampton Inn & Suites University Area**, located at 3160 Olentangy River Road less than a mile from OSU. Unwind in a comfortable guest room or suite equipped with complimentary Wi-Fi, a 40-inch HDTV, a large work space and refrigerator. You can start each day with a free hot breakfast buffet or grab a free "Hampton's on the Run Breakfast Bag." Energize yourself in the 24-hour fitness center, or take a dip in the indoor pool.

To reserve your room or find out more, visit www.columbusuniversityareasuite-shamptoninn.com or call (614) 268-8700.

- **The Hilton Garden Inn Columbus Airport** is located just 10 minutes from shopping, museums and theaters and provides easy access to Interstate 270 and Interstate 670. The hotel is only two minutes' drive from John Glenn Columbus International Airport and provides a complimentary airport shuttle service. The hotel provides on-site recreation such as swimming and a fitness center, and there's even more fun nearby. Basketball and tennis courts, a walking trail and a driving range are within a few miles of the hotel. It's just a short drive to downtown Columbus, where guests will enjoy entertainment, arts and dining, or to OSU for the big game. The Hilton Garden Inn features complimentary Wi-Fi and a 24-hour business center as well as a full-service restaurant on the property providing everything you need to make your stay successful.

The Hilton Garden Inn Columbus Airport is located at 4265 Sawyer Road near the airport

- **The Hilton Garden Inn: Columbus University Area** at 3232 Olentangy River Road between Ackerman and North Broadway in Columbus wants to be your headquarters for OSU football this season. The Hilton Garden Inn offers 158 guest rooms with a host of conveniences to heighten your stay. Enjoy the Garden Grill for breakfast or dinner and room service at night. Relax in the Pavilion Lounge or use the workout facility and heated indoor pool. The Pavilion Pantry convenience mart is open 24 hours, and valet and self-laundry are available.

Guest rooms feature 55-inch HDTV and complimentary high-speed Internet access. All rooms offer microwaves, refrigerators, coffeemakers, hair dryers, irons and ironing boards. For reservation information call (614) 263-7200 or visit www.columbusuniversityarea.stayhgi.com.

- Treat yourself to a stay at the **Homewood Suites by Hilton Columbus-Dublin**, located at 5300 Parkcenter Ave. in Dublin. Each room in the all-suite hotel features a kitchenette with a full-size refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave and two-burner cook top, as well as a sleeper sofa in the living room area. Enjoy the complimentary buffet breakfast, Wi-Fi, outdoor sports court and grills, indoor pool and hot tub, fitness center and coin-operated laundry.

The Homewood Suites is convenient to Ohio Stadium and is within walking distance of a variety of restaurants and The Mall at Tuttle Crossing. Book in advance and save money through Hilton's Advance Purchase promotions. Visit www.columbusdublin.homewoodsuites.com for details or call (614) 791-8675.

- There's something special about a stay

at the **Residence Inn Columbus Downtown**, located at 36 E. Gay St. in downtown Columbus. Once known as the historic 1927 Buckeye Bank Building, the hotel pays homage to its history through preservation of the original architecture. The lobby features a 44-foot soaring cathedral ceiling, and the original bank vault door in the breakfast area offers a great photo opportunity.

The Residence Inn features apartment-style suites with free Wi-Fi; full kitchens including stove-top, dishwasher, microwave and full-size refrigerator/freezer; and Smart TVs with Netflix, Crackle and YouTube connectivity. Enjoy a free, hot breakfast, or relax in the onsite bar and restaurant, the Buckeye Bourbon House, which serves rare bourbons, craft cocktails, beer, wine and contemporary American fare. Find out more at www.residenceinncolumbusdowntown.com or call (614) 222-2610.

- Whether you're here for the night or more than a month, you'll find everything you need for life on the road at the new **TownePlace Suites Columbus Hilliard**. Conveniently located off I-270 at 4079 Lyman Drive in Hilliard, TownePlace Suites is just a short drive from OSU, downtown and other top attractions such as the Short North Arts District and Hollywood Casino.

Make yourself at home in one of their spacious suites with fully equipped kitchens that give you more room to keep up with your routine and amenities that provide more of the comforts of home. Wake up to a hot breakfast that's always fresh and free. Gather with friends in the evening to grill in the outdoor barbecue area, enjoy drinks at the hotel lobby bar, or take a dip in the pool and work out in the spacious fitness center.

TownePlace Suites' pet-friendly accommodations, guest laundry, free Wi-Fi and dedicated service give you everything you need to live life uninterrupted. Call (614) 541-9309 or visit <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cmtht-towneplace-suites-columbus-hilliard>.



TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

Flat Stomach • Weight Loss • Strength Training
• **Cardio Kick-Boxing • Boot Camp**

614-886-9331
foreverfitswan@yahoo.com

'91 Season Tough To Beat For Tumult, Turmoil

Throughout the 2021 football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is publishing historical stories from seasons ending in the numeral "1." This week, BSB looks back at the tumultuous 1991 season.

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

History tells us that the 1991 Ohio State football season was a rather nondescript one. The Buckeyes tied for third in the Big Ten standings, extending a streak to five straight years without a conference title, and their 8-4 record overall marked a 12th season in a row with three or more losses.

Raw numbers very rarely tell the complete story, and what seemed to be a forgettable season from 30 years ago packed more turmoil into a 12-month period than any soap opera writer could ever conceive. There was everything from significant staff turnover and perhaps the poorest recruiting haul on record to a controversial contract extension for the head coach and the worst loss to Michigan in 45 years, all of which was overshadowed by the star running back quitting the team just before the season began.

It was a roller-coaster ride of a season, the kind from which some programs never recover.

"I don't believe anyone would look back at that 1991 season and remember it with much fondness," OSU football historian Jack Park told BSB. "It started with a particularly poor performance in the Liberty Bowl after the season before, and things just seemed to snowball. It seemed that something bad was happening almost every day.

"Looking back, it's actually a testament to the resilience of Ohio State football. I don't know how many coaches could survive that kind of turmoil. Not many. As a matter of fact, I don't know many programs that could survive that kind of turmoil."

Practically everything that could have gone wrong had gone wrong during John Cooper's first three years at Ohio State. His inaugural season in 1988 produced the program's first losing record in 22 years. His team had lost three years in a row to archrival Michigan, and no head coach in program history had ever lost three consecutive games to the Wolverines and retained his job.

Topping things off was the particularly embarrassing loss to unranked Air Force in the 1990 Liberty Bowl, a game for which Cooper's team appeared ill-prepared and generally uninterested. The loss gave the coach a record of 19-14-2 for his first three seasons in Columbus, a lowly .571 winning percentage.

Moreover, although the Buckeyes had contended for Big Ten championships in 1989 and '90, they had not been able to produce anything better than a third-place finish in the conference standings under Cooper. It was no wonder the wolves were gathering at the door as the coach entered the pivotal fourth year of his original five-year contract.

In addition to the rising volume of criticism from Ohio State fans, university officials weren't doing their head coach any favors. Rumors had circulated shortly before the 1990 Michigan game that Cooper was in line for a contract extension, but there was no movement on the subject following the Liberty Bowl.

As a result, opposing coaches began to use Cooper's perceived lame-duck status against him on the recruiting trail. Not only did that seem to resonate with some prospective players, but the fact the Buckeyes were beginning to lose assistant coaches to rival programs seemed to provide concrete evidence that Cooper's days in Columbus were numbered.

Between the season-ending losses to Michigan and Air Force, offensive coordinator Jim Colletto – who had been with Cooper for three years at Arizona State prior to joining him at OSU – was hired as head coach at Purdue and took running backs coach Bobby Turner with him to West Lafayette.

Turner would eventually become offensive coordinator and assistant head coach under Colletto at Purdue, a position he used as a springboard for a long and successful career as an NFL assistant. But when Turner left Ohio State in December 1990, it was considered a lateral move.

"We couldn't keep our (assistant) coaches, and something like that should not happen at Ohio State," Cooper told BSB. "We lost some very good assistant football coaches, and the reason was because we weren't paying them what we should have been paying them. The first year I was at Ohio State, we were eighth in the Big Ten in what we paid our assistants.

"I know that was something that went back to when Coach (Woody) Hayes was there. He didn't care much about money, and the assistants weren't paid much. Coach (Earle) Bruce came along and he didn't care much about that, either. But we were losing assistant coaches to other schools in the same position they held with us. That just shouldn't happen at Ohio State. If they leave for a promotion, to become a head coach or a coordinator, that's one thing. I'm all for that. But to make a parallel move away from Ohio State? That just shouldn't happen."

Colletto and Turner weren't the only members of Cooper's staff to depart following the

1990 season. Inside linebackers coach Gary Blackney was hired as head coach at Bowling Green while defensive backs coach Ron Zook left to become defensive coordinator for Steve Spurrier at Florida.

The staff turnover and perceived turmoil surrounding the program eventually took its toll as the Buckeyes were effectively blown out of the water during recruiting season. Many of the top high school players in Ohio signed elsewhere, including the state's most prized recruit, running back Ki-Jana Carter of Westerville South, who wound up at Penn State.

Ohio State eventually signed a 19-player class thanks to an 11th-hour whirlwind tour of the country engineered by recruiting coordinator Steve Pederson. Still, it was a group mostly cobbled together at the last minute and one of the lowest-rated classes ever at Ohio State.

National recruiting expert Tom Lemming placed the Buckeyes sixth in the Big Ten and No. 30 in the country while SuperPrep magazine publisher Allen Wallace said he would rank the class somewhere near the bottom of his top 50, calling it "one of the most disappointing efforts in the U.S. this year."

Nine of the 19 players in the class never lettered for the Buckeyes, while only five went on to become starters – quarterback Bobby Hoying, linebacker Craig Powell and defensive backs Marlon Kerner, Tito Paul and Walter Taylor.

Coaching Staff Turnover

While Cooper was trying to put out recruiting fires, he was also tasked with restocking his coaching staff – and sometimes restocking it again. He hired Bobby April from USC to coach the secondary, but April barely got to Columbus before he moved on after accepting a job as tight ends and special teams coach for the NFL's Atlanta Falcons.

University of Houston assistant Larry Coyer replaced April, and Joe Hollis was hired off Ray Goff's staff at Georgia to help with the offensive line. Then shortly after recruiting season was over, Pederson bolted for the recruiting coordinator's position at Tennessee.

"That was another thing that shouldn't have happened," Cooper said. "Steve wanted to be an athletic director someday, so he wanted a title that was more than just recruiting coordinator. He didn't want any more money, just a title – assistant athletic director in charge of recruiting or something like that. But he didn't get it for whatever reason, and he left to go to Tennessee."

Cooper went to the high school ranks to find Pederson's replacement, prying former OSU player and assistant coach Bill Conley away from his head coaching job at Dublin Coffman in suburban Columbus.

Finally, just three weeks before the open of spring camp, Cooper replaced the open-minded Colletto with Elliot Uzelac, a no-nonsense coach with an old-school approach that included seven years as offensive line coach for Bo Schembechler at Michigan.

A product of his blue-collar hometown of Gary, Ind., Uzelac had been patrolling one sideline or another for 25 years before he arrived at Ohio State. During that quarter-century, he had twice been a head coach – seven years at Western Michigan and three more at the U.S. Naval Academy. Five of his seven

seasons with the Broncos had produced winning records, but he was just 8-25 with the Midshipmen before being let go following the 1989 season.

Uzelac spent the 1990 season on Bill Mallory's staff at Indiana before Cooper hired him, most likely as a disciplinarian in the wake of the team's lackluster Liberty Bowl preparation and performance.

There was little indication during spring practice just how much of an impact Uzelac's hiring at offensive coordinator would ultimately have on the Buckeyes as the team spent most of its time trying to determine who would replace three-year starter Greg Frey at quarterback.

Senior Kent Graham, junior Kirk Herbstreit and redshirt freshman Joe Pickens were each given equal opportunities to win the job, and the trio combined to complete 14 of 25 passes for 251 yards in the annual spring game – which was nothing more than a controlled scrimmage played in front of an estimated Ohio Stadium crowd of about 35,000. Still, none of the three was able to emerge as the clear-cut favorite to become Frey's successor.

While the quarterback position remained undecided, sophomore Robert Smith staked his claim to the starting tailback spot by rushing for 100 yards on 15 carries during the spring game. It was a performance the tailback rated only as average.

"There's always plenty of room for improvement," Smith said. "As a team, we're improving every day, and considering we've only been running this offense three weeks, I feel we did fine. Hopefully by this fall, we'll have a better understanding of Coach Uzelac's concepts and come out running like a well-oiled machine."

Smith led a parade of talented running backs that included fellow sophomore Butler By'note and senior fullback Scottie Graham. The Buckeyes also welcomed back Carlos Snow, a senior who had missed the entire 1990 season following hip surgery. Snow, who led the team in rushing in 1988 and '89, carried the ball six times for 25 yards in the spring game.

While many observers wondered whether Smith and Snow could coexist in the same backfield, Smith dismissed any notion of a problem.

"I've looked forward to playing with Carlos for two years now, and it's really great having a player like him on the field," Smith said. "He's quick, strong and looks great, plus he brings an added dimension to our team. I'm certain we'll really complement each other's performance once the season gets under way."

The kind of harmony to which Smith alluded was to be extremely short-lived.

Smith Vs. Uzelac

Fifteen days before the 1991 season opener against Arizona, Smith quit the team, alleging that members of the coaching staff – specifically Cooper and Uzelac – cared little about academics and that players were being unnecessarily injured. The sophomore tailback added that he would not consider returning to the team if the two coaches remained in their positions.

Smith later indicated his problem was not with Cooper, but that Uzelac had told the running back he was at Ohio State to play foot-

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	Digital Color Copies	Digital B&W Copies
Typesetting	Ship UPS	Rubber Stamps
NCR Forms	Fax Service	Business Cards
Laminating	Announcements	Binding
Brochures	Wedding Invitations	Labels

ball and was taking academics too seriously. On a separate occasion, Smith said he was studying in his dorm past the 10:30 p.m. curfew time for players when Uzelac told him to turn out his lights.

The allegations produced a firestorm for a head coach and his program already drowning in negative publicity. Smith had separate meetings with director of athletics Jim Jones and Cooper, after which he indicated he would consider returning to the team. The caveat, however, was that Uzelac either be reassigned or replaced.

“Robert did say he didn’t feel like we were doing enough for our athletes academically, that we didn’t care about an athlete’s academic program until he was in trouble,” Cooper said. “As far as I’m concerned, that’s completely false. I have never in my coaching career asked a young man to miss an academic appointment of any kind for anything related to football. Period.”

Things got even hotter for Uzelac. BSB interviewed Tom Banc, Smith’s high school coach at Euclid, Ohio, who indicated his former player was telling the truth about the incident.

“Robert made a comment about one of the coaches caring about football before academics,” Banc said. “I’ve talked to several people, and everyone I’ve talked to, without knowing Robert Smith, would believe that his comments are 100-percent accurate, knowing the coach that is involved.

“It’s very simple. Robert Smith will play for John Cooper, but he won’t play for Elliot Uzelac. He told me he would have no problem coming back and playing for John Cooper, but under no circumstances would he compromise his principles and play for Elliot Uzelac.”

Predictably, Smith’s allegations sharply divided a team trying to prepare for a season in which it was forecast to finish no higher than third in the Big Ten. Several players appeared to support Smith’s decision although most had problems with the way he went about it.

Junior linebacker Steve Tovar perhaps put it best when he said, “I’m concerned about my academics, too, but I want to play football. I want to graduate with a degree and I want to go on and play professional football someday. I have to keep them both in perspective and balance them any way I can.”

Cooper continued to talk with Smith, attempting to get him to rejoin the team until just a few days before the season opener. But the stumbling point was always Uzelac. Smith refused to return if the assistant coach remained in charge of the offense, and Cooper insisted that was a deal-breaker.

Years later, Jones told BSB there was no way Smith’s conditions for returning to the team were going to be met.

“I had a meeting with Coach Cooper and Robert, and we were very clear on that point,” Jones said. “I was asked if we could discuss the matter further, and I said there was nothing more to discuss. It was a short meeting as I recall.”

Smith sat out the entire 1991 season, briefly considering a transfer and even visiting the campuses at USC and Stanford during the Christmas holiday break. But he wound up staying at Ohio State and the following spring participated on the OSU men’s track team.

Meanwhile, the stress of the situation took its toll on the 50-year-old Uzelac. Six days after Smith quit the team, and just nine days before the season opener, the OSU assistant

underwent an angioplasty procedure at University Hospitals after complaining of chest pains. Uzelac returned to the practice field a few days later.

Finishing In Frustration

Despite the storm clouds created by Smith’s departure, the Buckeyes got off to their best start in seven years.

During a 38-14 victory against Arizona in the 1991 season opener, the team proved it had plenty of depth at running back even without Smith as By’not’e carried 26 times for a career-high 189 yards while sophomore fullback Jeff Cothran added 105 more on just seven attempts in his first college game. Cothran had missed the 1990 season after failing to meet NCAA academic requirements for incoming freshmen.

Graham, who had won the starting job at quarterback, was efficient if unspectacular in the opener, completing 9 of his 16 pass attempts for 124 yards. The senior didn’t throw for any touchdowns, but he didn’t throw any interceptions, either.

“To be quite honest, I thought we played a pretty good ballgame,” said Cooper, obviously relieved finally to be talking about football again. “I think you have to credit our coaches and our players. They put in an awful lot of work to get ready, and it paid off.”

The good feeling lasted exactly one week until Ohio State nearly squandered a fourth-quarter lead of 16-0 before finally securing a 23-15 win over upset-minded Louisville.

The fact that the 17-point underdog Cardinals were even in the game at the end was due more to sloppy play on the part of the Buckeyes, who established a new single-game school record by committing 15 penalties for 118 yards.

Compounding matters for the Buckeyes was the loss of their starting quarterback. Graham was knocked out of the game in the fourth quarter after sustaining a mild concussion and slight separation of his non-throwing shoulder. Herbstreit came on in relief but didn’t exactly distinguish himself. He attempted no passes and netted minus-7 yards rushing on three attempts.

The following week was a different story, however. Herbstreit took advantage of the first start of his career and led the Buckeyes to a convincing 33-19 victory over Washington State. Herbstreit ran and passed for a combined 199 yards as Ohio State moved to 3-0 for the first time in the Cooper era.

Another milestone was achieved the following week when the Buckeyes scored a 31-16 decision over Wisconsin. It marked the first win in a Big Ten opener for Cooper and gave the team its first 4-0 start since the 1984 Rose Bowl season. It also set up a trip to Illinois the following week against a team that had beaten OSU each of the previous three seasons.

Unfortunately, the game played at blustery Memorial Stadium was not unlike several others in the early part of Cooper’s tenure at Ohio State. The Buckeyes kept things close but made just enough mistakes to allow the Fighting Illini to kick a 41-yard field goal in the waning seconds for a 10-7 win.

Graham fumbled away one possession inside Illinois territory, Herbstreit and By’not’e mishandled an option pitch for another fumble, this one inside the Illini 5-yard line, and kicker Tim Williams missed a 24-yard field goal.

To Ohio State’s credit, it rallied from the stinging defeat at Illinois for back-to-back victories against Northwestern and Michigan State. But just when the Buckeyes’ mistake-filled past seemed behind them, they seemingly couldn’t do anything right in early November against Iowa.

OSU receivers dropped a half-dozen catchable balls, Graham was flagged in the fourth quarter for a controversial intentional grounding call, and the Buckeyes converted only three of 14 third-down plays. Throw in some sloppy tackling on the part of the defense, and the Hawkeyes were able to escape with a 16-9 victory.

The loss all but ended Ohio State’s hopes in the race for the Rose Bowl as the Buckeyes fell two games behind league-leading Michigan with only three games to play.

The residual effect of losing to Iowa and effectively dropping out of any chance for a Big Ten championship could have carried over the following week at Minnesota, but the Buckeyes rolled to a 35-6 rout. The following week, sophomore defensive end Jason Simmons had three sacks in the second half to key a 20-16 victory over Indiana.

That left only the traditional season finale against Michigan, although university officials livened things slightly the morning of the game when Jones announced he was recommending a three-year contract extension for Cooper.

In a news release given to reporters in the press box at Michigan Stadium 30 minutes before kickoff, Jones said, “We are pleased with the direction our program is going, and with the effort of our student-athletes on the field and in the classroom.”

Later when asked why the statement was made prior to the game when university president Dr. E. Gordon Gee had repeatedly said an evaluation on Cooper’s contract would not be made until after the regular season had ended, Jones replied, “I just came to the conclusion in my own mind what decision I wanted to recommend. There was no reason for me to sit on it for two more weeks or one more day or whatever.

“Why not today? What day is more appropriate than any of the others? For one thing, this sends a message that the decision is not based upon winning or losing to the University of Michigan. Don’t get me wrong. It’s not that I don’t want to beat the University of Michigan. It’s not that I don’t enjoy winning. But we all have to keep everything in perspective.”

Jones’ recommendation, still subject to approval by Gee and the school’s board of trustees, did nothing to help the Buckeyes on the field. Eventual Heisman Trophy winner Desmond Howard, a product of St. Joseph High School in Cleveland, accounted for 213 all-purpose yards including a 93-yard punt re-

turn for a touchdown – after which he struck his now-famous Heisman pose in the end zone – and led the fourth-ranked Wolverines to a 31-3 romp.

It marked the first time in more than 40 years OSU had lost to Michigan four straight times and represented the largest margin of victory for the Wolverines in the series since a 58-6 win in 1946.

In the home locker room, Michigan quarterback Elvis Grbac – an Ohio native and high school team of Howard – sarcastically stated, “I hope they give (Cooper) a lifetime contract.” That came on the heels of pregame comments from Michigan head coach Gary Moeller that Michigan State, not Ohio State, was his team’s biggest rival.

Grbac later offered an apology, and Moeller – a former Ohio State team captain – tried to clarify his comments, but the sentiment was clear. Michigan was on a roll in the rivalry and clearly delighted by it.

The Wolverines went on to their third Rose Bowl appearance in four years, losing a 34-14 decision to Washington, which sewed up a portion of the national championship for the Huskies.

Meanwhile, the Buckeyes took on No. 16 Syracuse in the Hall of Fame Bowl and overcame a 14-0 deficit early to tie the game at 17 when Paul recovered a blocked punt in the end zone with 8:03 remaining. But the Orange came right back with a 60-yard touchdown pass less than a minute later to provide the winning points in a 24-17 decision.

With the loss, Cooper became the first Ohio State head coach in history to lose three consecutive bowl appearances, and his record at OSU against ranked teams dropped to 2-12-1.

“That’s not really fair,” Herbstreit said when someone noted Cooper’s record against top-25 opponents. “Take today, for instance. I don’t think you can blame the coaches. It was a good game plan. We just didn’t execute it.”

The Buckeyes had 17 first downs to 16 for Syracuse, but the Orange held a lopsided 408-267 advantage in total yardage with nearly 40 percent of that total coming on just three plays. QB Marvin Graves threw touchdown passes of 50 and 60 yards and completed a 57-yard reception to speedster Qadry Ismael to set up a third score.

Meanwhile, Cooper went into the offseason much the same way he had his previous three seasons at Ohio State – forced to explain how his team continued to come up short against Michigan and in the postseason.

“I knew we were getting close to turning the corner,” Cooper told BSB in 2018. “Thankfully, I got that extension. It took a little time – a little more than all of us wanted naturally – but not too long after that, things finally began going our way.”

chocolate café

FINE CHOCOLATES • COFFEES • DESSERTS • SPIRITS & PEOPLE



1855 Northwest Boulevard
(614) 485-CAFE
chocolatecafecolumbus.com



Parties • Corporate Catering
Weddings • Baby & Bridal Showers • Tailgates

OSU Hopes Transfers Will Bolster B1G Hopes

Ohio State's first-round upset loss to Oral Roberts in the 2021 NCAA Tournament has done plenty to shape the discourse around Chris Holtmann's program this offseason. In fact, it has played as large a role in determining the way Ohio State is discussed entering the 2021-22 season as any other part of the team's makeup or recent history, along with the departure of star guard Duane Washington and the arrivals of highly thought-of transfer guards Cedric Russell and Jamari Wheeler.

The Buckeyes are the program that as a No. 2 seed lost to a 15-seed and blew their best chance at a serious tournament run since 2013, the last time they checked in with as high a seed.

Those Buckeyes also earned a spot on the No. 2 line, but they had no such issues with

Walker). Both teams returned veterans at just about every position, a nationally known face of the program (Craft and E.J. Liddell) and talented pieces who looked primed for a leap into "very good" territory from their status as "above average to good" players in years past.

The current rendition, though, earned only the No. 17 spot in The Associated Press preseason poll. They trail a trio of Big Ten foes (No. 6 Michigan, No. 7 Purdue and No. 11 Illinois), with two more top-10 foes to deal with during the nonconference slate in No. 9 Duke and No. 10 Kentucky.

Preseason assessments of the team are all but required to hit two notes in succession – the first being the difficult final stretch Ohio State ran into last season, and the second regarding the relative instabilities in the starting lineup caused by the pair of guard departures.

Those are assessments that many of the members of the team have pushed back on, insisting this is among the most stable and tight-knit groups they've been around. Still, Holtmann doesn't outright dismiss that finding a reliable rotation is still a question as his team enters the final stretch of its preseason and prepares for a Nov. 1 exhibition.

"Right now, I'm not ready to say what our rotation's going to look like," Holtmann said. "It's still very much a competitive challenge every day. Some guys have maybe established themselves through the first few practices, but we'll know more here in the next month and we'll want to keep it wide open for the first part of the season and not make any real determinations yet. There are certainly some guys that have earned some things, but there are a lot of positions still up for grabs."

The head coach does have a better idea, though, of what his ideal version of the team looks like. After a season that had Ohio State win with offense (and sometimes lose with defense), Holtmann is hoping to build more consistency in the defensive efforts of his players while trusting the individual scoring ability of such players like Liddell and Russell.

"We need more balance within our offensive and defensive numbers," the OSU coach said. "If you can be top-25 in efficiency in both, as we've been some years, you really have a chance."

"I think as much as anything, you want a

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
Brice Sensabaugh	F	6-6	240	★★★★	Orlando (Fla.) Lake Highland Prep
Bruce Thornton	PG	6-2	205	★★★★	Alpharetta (Ga.) Milton

group that believes in the importance of defense, and I think last year at times we didn't embrace that enough as a group. That was probably the biggest issue. Ultimately, that's on me. I just think we have to take another step."

Who will be offering those contributions is still somewhat up in the air, from the starting lineup to the 10-man rotation. The following is BSB's best estimation of both the starting lineup and the contributors, listed in order of projected importance within their position group.

Guard

Cedric Russell, 6-2, 190, Gr-Sr. (17.2 points per game, 3.2 rebounds per game, 1.2 assists per game at Louisiana in 2020-21) – Holtmann loves a spark-plug volume scorer. Going back to his time at Gardner-Webb, in the 10 seasons he's spent at the helm of a program, the OSU head coach has only once relied on a truly balanced offense rather than one or two elite scorers – in 2018-19, when the Buckeyes leaned on center Kaleb Wesson for points but were without a high-usage shooter to complement him.

In the other nine seasons, Holtmann has put his offense into the hands of players who could score in bunches, even if sometimes they hit cold stretches that hurt their team. Most recently, Washington served that role for the Buckeyes, preceded by Keita Bates-Diop. With Butler, the task fell to Kellen Dunham and Kelan Martin, with Jonathan Moore and Tashan Newsome taking the role at Gardner-Webb.

With Washington suiting up now for the

Indiana Pacers, the Buckeyes had a job opening this offseason and tabbed Russell to fill it. The Louisiana native has three years of starting experience under his belt with Louisiana and truly broke through during his senior season a year ago, leading his team in scoring with 17.2 points per game on the way to an All-Sun Belt nod.

Like Washington, he's a confident and comfortable shooter from deep (40.0-percent shooter from three-point range a year ago on 7.3 attempts per game) and a willing slasher to the hoop. He's less of a ball-handling threat, but his ability to score off the ball is new and valuable to the Buckeyes. He told BSB in September that he's happy in his role as a bucket-getter and that he's happy to bring that talent to Ohio State, likely as an immediate starter at the vacant shooting guard position.

The biggest question around Russell is in translating his game. Transfers have struggled in the past to find comfort within the physical Big Ten, and Holtmann is expecting a bit of a learning curve with his new microwave scorer.

"The size, length and speed of this level is just a little bit different than what he consistently saw, but he's a really good player and he's going to be fine," Holtmann said. "We'll see his best basketball probably midyear on. I could really see that with him."

Jamari Wheeler, 6-1, 170, Gr-Sr. (6.8 ppg, 4.2 rpg, 3.5 apg at Penn State) – The second backcourt transfer whom the Buckeyes will plug into their starting lineup, Wheeler will have no such adjustment period to the Big Ten having played at Penn State. The league is as physical as it is because of players like him.

A two-time All-Big Ten defensive team selection, Wheeler is the yin to Russell's yang. His Southern transplant teammate is going to be relied on heavily to lead Ohio State's offense, while he's tasked with spearheading the effort to rejuvenate a defense that often looked overwhelmed physically and in effort a season ago.

A hard-nosed point guard with a hawkish sense for turnovers, Wheeler, like Russell, is perfectly comfortable being shoehorned into something of a one-dimensional role for the Buckeyes.

"I want to speed the game up for the opposing offense and make them turn the ball over; make them play at the speed I want them to play," Wheeler said. "That's who I am, that's what I bring to the table, that's me as a person. I got experience playing in this league for four years, so (I'm) just bringing a lot of experience here."

That's exactly why the Buckeyes turned to him in the transfer portal. He plays as fast as anyone in the league on both sides of the ball, and while he has a bit of a tendency to go too fast for even his own good on offense, his defensive intensity is apparent in everything that he does. He averaged nearly two steals per game (1.8) for Penn State a season ago, along with 4.2 rebounds per contest.

If he can play up to his average career

COURT REPORT Patrick Mayhorn

15th-seeded Iona to open tournament play and advanced all the way to the Elite Eight on a wave of clutch shooting from Aaron Craft and LaQuinton Ross that lifted them above their next two matchups after that first-round battle.

After the season, Ohio State lost only two major contributors with Evan Ravenel graduating and star forward Deshaun Thomas declaring for the draft a year early. Meanwhile, Craft, Ross and a core of the once top-ranked 2011 recruiting class remained intact. The Buckeyes were dubbed one of the nation's best entering the 2013-14 season and earned a preseason No. 11 national ranking. But they collapsed in Big Ten play and crawled to a No. 6 seed and a first-round NCAA loss to Dayton.

In terms of returning production and roster makeup, those Buckeyes and the group that Holtmann finds himself in command of this season aren't terribly different. Both teams were tasked with replacing a pair of starters – one star (Thomas and Washington) and one glue guy (Ravenel and point guard C.J.

Let our friendly staff take care of you before, during & after the game.

Enjoy your favorite team on our many HD flat-screen TVs

Shade RESTAURANTS

Friends, Fun & Great Food!

NFL Ticket

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

OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

2021-22 Ohio State Men's Basketball Projected Starting Lineup

55 • Jamari Wheeler • G
Ht./Wt.: 6-1, 170 • Class: GR-Sr.



Wheeler was among the Big Ten's best defenders in four seasons with Penn State, earning a pair of Big Ten All-Defensive nods in 2020 and 2021.

2 • Cedric Russell • G
Ht./Wt.: 6-2, 190 • Class: GR-Sr.



Russell led Louisiana in scoring with 17.2 ppg in 2020-21, earning First-Team All-Sun Belt Conference honors.

14 • Justice Sueing • F
Ht./Wt.: 6-7, 215 • Class: 5th-



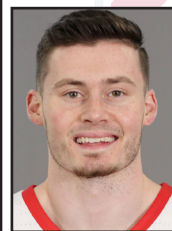
Sueing was third on the 2020-21 Ohio State Buckeyes in scoring (10.7 ppg) and tied for second in rebounding (5.5 rpg).

32 • E.J. Liddell • F
Ht./Wt.: 6-7, 240 • Class: Jr.



Liddell decided to return to Ohio State for his junior season after competing at the NBA Draft combine in June.

25 • Kyle Young • F
Ht./Wt.: 6-8, 225 • Class: GR-Sr.



Young was one of four Buckeyes to earn captaincy honors this offseason, along with Justin Ahrens, E.J. Liddell and Justice Sueing.

DBPM (defensive box-plus minutes, a quantifier of defensive impact) of 4.1, he could be one of the 20 best defenders in the nation this season, according to BartTorvik.com's DBPM projections.

Perhaps even more crucial, he averaged only a tad over two fouls per game in 2020-21 in 31.2 minutes per game, meaning that the Buckeyes should be able to rely on him to defend as a starting point guard for upwards of 30 minutes without worrying about losing him to foul trouble.

In the categories that can't be quantified so easily, Wheeler provides even more value in what he passes along to his teammates mentally, and he could prove to be quite the pickup if Ohio State's defense is as improved as Holtmann and staff are banking on.

"(I'm) just teaching them the pace of the game, how you have to play hard every night," Wheeler said, "because every night you are playing against somebody that's going to be good, a team that is going to give their all every night. Especially with the name across our jerseys, too, it makes teams play even harder.

"You need to have a great leader that's in the backcourt, just keeping everything under control – especially in the Big Ten because we are going to hard environments playing on the

road against good teams."

Meechie Johnson, 6-2, 172, Soph. (1.2 ppg, 0.4 rpg) – Look no further for this season's most obvious breakout candidate than Johnson, the second-year player out of Cleveland whom Ohio State still considers a freshman after he enrolled a year early last season to help bolster the backcourt.

With a season of play in his back pocket, Johnson has focused on progressing both physically and mentally this season – aware now of what he didn't know that he didn't know a year ago and of the level of play that he'll face in the nation's best basketball conference.

"I've been working my butt off in the summer, in the weight room, on the court," Johnson said. "This is like year one to me, honestly. I did my senior year of high school. I sacrificed and I came here to be a part of a winning culture. That helped me. I wouldn't take that back.

"I felt like I was going to play more coming in, but I also knew that I had to learn. I wouldn't take it back. I took from what I learned into the summer, and now I've got to take the summer to the season. I'm just happy to be here. I feel like I've grown in a lot of areas. I'm just ready to show it."

Ohio State will need improvement from him, too, with only a handful of comfortable ball handlers on the roster. Forward Justice Sueing is expected to pick up some of the slack, and veteran Jimmy Sotos is also around, but Wheeler and Johnson are the pairing that Ohio State expects to be able to rotate comfortably at point guard this season.

Also important, however, will be Johnson's health. He suffered a knee injury as a sophomore in high school that wiped out an entire season of play and was dealing with a lower leg injury this summer – though it isn't expected to affect his availability as the season begins.

"I feel great," Johnson said. "Coach Holtmann said they're going to need me this year to have a bigger impact and a role for the team, so it was best to treat it now – do what I can now, attack it so it doesn't linger throughout the season and I'm missing time in the season. It was nothing crazy, and I didn't want people worrying about it. I had to be careful and make sure I'm healthy for the season.

"I believe in myself, I believe in my craft and I believe in my game. I wasn't really able to show that much. You see me come in, hit a couple threes last year, but there's a lot more that I can do. I just want to do everything I can to help this team win."

Eugene Brown III, 6-6, 185, Soph. (1.2 ppg, 1.3 rpg) – Johnson's classmate in the backcourt, Brown looks to be slated for something of a Musa Jallow role this season. The former OSU winger might be off to UNC-Charlotte, but his spirit lives on through Brown – an energetic and long defender still looking for a consistent jump shot to build into his offense.

Brown all but took the job from Jallow as a freshman and even with development this offseason will likely remain as Ohio State's defensive stopper for longer shooting guards and strong perimeter threats at small forward. Russell will see the vast majority of shooting guard minutes, but as a change of pace, expect to see Brown consistently throughout the season.

Like Johnson, he too has focused on taking steps forward physically this offseason and looks like the projected primary backup shooting guard – an increased role from a season ago – with his eyes on the starting job a year from now.

"Eugene Brown has really improved on his body," Liddell said at Ohio State's media day. "He's added some weight and his defensive skill set (is tough)."

Malaki Branham, 6-5, 180, Fr. – One of the most talented players on the team and Holtmann's second highest-rated recruit of his career behind only DJ. Carton, Branham's role on this team is somewhat difficult to project, but it's even harder to find a scenario that doesn't see him earning playing time of some sort by the end of the season. A top-40 recruit out of Akron, Branham was one of Ohio's top scorers as a senior and could be a bench volume scorer to spell Russell when needed, essentially rotating with Brown as the backup No. 2 depending on the situation.

Like Johnson and Brown, he will need to adjust to the new level of play, but his teammates have been very impressed with his play

thus far.

"He is very talented," Sueing said. "Malaki is going to be a big part of our program this year. He is able to get to his spot very quickly, and he's very accurate and efficient, so it will be interesting how he adjusts to this Big Ten play."

Holtmann, however, was a bit more reluctant to name Branham as anything more than a crucial piece down the road – not a player they can or should rely on this season. The coach very rarely leans on freshmen for more than spot contributions.

"I try not to put freshmen on schedules," the OSU head coach said. "They're going to run their own race. We'll have him run his own race. He's had some really good days, and then he's had some days where he's struggled. But he had some really, really good days."

Jimmy Sotos, 6-3, 200, Gr-Sr. (1.7 ppg, 0.8 rpg, 1.1 apg) – The Bucknell transfer is likely a bench piece and a culture builder for the Buckeyes this season. A shoulder injury in his lone start of the season against Rutgers ended his first season with Ohio State, but the COVID eligibility rules have allowed him to return for one more season.

However, with the transfer pair and development among the second-year guards listed above him, playing time will be sparsely available for Sotos, who is without the outstanding shooting of Russell, defense of Wheeler or upside of his younger counterparts. Still, he told media members that he wants to contribute to a title contender in any way he can and plans to find a role with the Buckeyes even if it is more on the sidelines than it is between the lines.

"Each of us brings something different to the table, something different to the team," Sotos said. "It's going to be a lot of fun. I think we're getting each other better, and whatever Coach decides – once he decides roles – we're all going to embrace (them). We're all trying to win. That's the main goal here."

Forward

E.J. Liddell, 6-7, 240, Jr. (16.2 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 1.8 apg) – Ohio State's unquestioned leader on offense after Washington's departure and a candidate for both All-America and perhaps National Player of the Year honors entering the season, Liddell's return to Columbus could be the move that elevates Ohio State from the upper echelon of the Big Ten into serious title contention.

He was one of the nation's top power forwards a season ago and is looking to build on that season by adding a bit more of a jump shot, improving his dribbling and – though he won't admit that he's as excited about this as he is – removing center duties from his plate.

The connecting fiber there is the NBA Draft Combine and the draft process in general, which Liddell partook in fully before ultimately removing his name from consideration and returning for his junior season in Columbus. Within that cycle, he gained plenty of feedback from NBA scouts and took away two primary directives – improve your body and get better from deep. An offseason removed, Liddell feels he's done both.

"I'm not going to turn my game into a seri-

Continued On Page 34

2021-22 Ohio State Men's Basketball Roster/Schedule

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous School
0	Meechie Johnson Jr.	G	6-2	172	Fr.	Cleveland, Ohio/Garfield Heights
1	Jimmy Sotos	G	6-3	200	GR-Sr.	Elk Grove Village, Ill./Bucknell
2	Cedric Russell	G	6-2	190	GR-Sr.	Alexandria, La./Louisiana
3	Eugene Brown III	G	6-6	195	So.	Conyers, Ga./Southwest DeKalb
10	Justin Ahrens	F	6-6	195	Sr.	Versailles, Ohio/Versailles
14	Justice Sueing	F	6-7	215	5th-Sr.	Honolulu, Hawaii/California
22	Malaki Branham	G	6-5	180	Fr.	Columbus, Ohio/St. Vincent-St. Mary's
23	Zed Key	F	6-8	245	So.	Bay Shore, N.Y./Long Island Lutheran
24	Kalen Etzler	F	6-8	200	Fr.	Van Wert, Ohio/Crestview
25	Kyle Young	F	6-8	225	GR-Sr.	Canton, Ohio/Jackson
31	Seth Towns	F	6-8	230	GR-Sr.	Columbus, Ohio/Harvard
32	E.J. Liddell	F	6-7	240	Jr.	Belleville, Ill./West
42	Harrison Hookfin	F	6-6	195	Sr.	Cincinnati, Ohio/Lebanon
50	Joey Brunk	C	6-11	255	GR-Sr.	Indianapolis, Ind./Indiana
55	Jamari Wheeler	G	6-1	170	GR-Sr.	Live Oak, Fla./Penn State

Head Coach – Chris Holtmann (Taylor, 1994). **Assistant Coaches** – Ryan Pedon (Wooster, 2000); Tony Skinn (George Mason, 2006); Jake Diebler (Valparaiso, 2009).

Director of Professional Development – Terrence Dials (Ohio State). **Director of Basketball Operations** – David Egelhoff (Ohio State, 2001). **Special Assistant to the Head Coach** – Mike Netti (Syracuse, 2002). **Assistant Director of Strength and Conditioning** – Quadrian Banks (Texas, 2003). **Coordinator of Recruiting and Operations** – Kyle Davis (Ohio State, 2013). **Program Assistants** – John McCausland (Ohio State, 2019) and Robbie Rucki (Ohio State, 2016). **Graduate Assistant** – Greg Oden (Ohio State, 2019).

Schedule:

Nov. 1 Indianapolis (Exh.); **9** Akron; **12** Niagara; **15** Bowling Green; **18** at Xavier; **22** at Seton Hall; **24** at Florida/Cal; **30** Duke.

Dec. 5 at Penn State; **8** Towson; **11** Wisconsin; **18** at Kentucky; **21** Tennessee Martin; **28** New Orleans.

Jan. 2 at Nebraska; **6** at Indiana; **9** Northwestern; **13** at Wisconsin; **16** Penn State; **22** Nebraska; **27** at Minnesota; **30** at Purdue.

Feb. 3 Iowa; **6** Maryland; **9** at Rutgers; **12** at Michigan; **15** Minnesota; **19** Indiana; **24** at Illinois; **27** at Maryland.

March 3 Michigan State; **6** Michigan; **9-13** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

Improvement For Sueing, Ahrens Important To OSU

Continued From Page 33

ous point guard where I'm dribbling multiple times doing combo moves and stuff," Liddell said. "But I am going to improve on the things I'm good at – pump-fake, drive and get by a guy, create for others and score. I wouldn't take away from my regular game I have posting people up. I might shoot some more threes."

As for that sticky situation with the center position, that had Liddell beaten up badly inside by some of the Big Ten's big men and left tired entering the NCAA Tournament, Liddell toed the company line but certainly hinted at some excitement over the center role falling primarily to his teammates this time around.

"If they feel like it's the best situation for me to go out there and guard the five and play the five, I would do it to help win games," he said. "Having Joey (Brunk) and Zed (Key) and Kyle (Young), it helps the all-around team," he said. "Coach said he feels like we'll be better if I'm at the four, so that helps us win."

Wherever Liddell is on the court, Holtmann certainly feels that he'll be able to help the Buckeyes win games. In fact, he thinks that as long as the junior remembers what took him this far, he'll be one of the nation's best this winter.

"He's one of the best players in the country," Holtmann said. "I really believe that. What he can't do is lose sight of what has made him one of the best players in the country while at the same time continuing to grow and evolve parts of his game."

The stats back it up, as do the annual watch lists. Liddell was named to the Karl Malone Power Forward of the Year watch list a few weeks ahead of the season and projects as one of the most effective two-way wingers in the nation. His 16.2/6.7/1.8 line per game from a year ago will be difficult to top, but without Washington in the backcourt and with time spent mostly in the position he plays best, it doesn't seem out of the realm of possibility.

Kyle Young, 6-8, 225, Gr-Sr. (8.6 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 1.3 apg) – At this point, there are only so many ways to call Young the heart and soul of this Ohio State program. He proves it on the court as a tremendously valuable rebounder, frontcourt distributor and defender and

perhaps even more off the court, when Ohio State's production dropped off a cliff as he dealt with a litany of injuries a season ago.

"He's special. He's really special," Holtmann said. "He is the heart and soul. He's versatile, which is why losing him when we lost him was so important because of the match-up."

With Young healthy once more, Holtmann believes that his return is just as important as that of Liddell and that Ohio State – while never pushy for either player – understood how dire its situation would have become had either (or disastrously, both) forwards decided to continue their careers elsewhere.

"They can still love the school and still say, 'Hey, it's in my best interest to keep my name in the NBA draft,'" Holtmann said. "Sometimes that's hard for us to conceptualize and understand because we worked maybe under a different paradigm for a long time. But I think if Kyle would have said, 'Hey, I want to go play professional,' and E.J. would have said, 'Hey, I want to see where this NBA draft (goes) because it's in my best interest,' we'd have loved them anyway."

That love is evident in their decisions to return and in Young's approach to the season. Not only does he want to lead the Buckeyes as one of four captains and as an untouchable member of the starting lineup, but he wants to establish a legacy in Columbus that will keep him on the minds of fans and in the history books for years to come – which started in part with encouraging Liddell to return as well.

"After I decided I was coming back, I wanted him to come back for sure so it can hopefully be a special year for the both of us," Young said. "I'm hoping to be remembered as somebody people think about when they talk about Buckeye basketball."

With the first step of returning to school accomplished, now the OSU frontcourt just has to make the history. A great place to start would be with a clean bill of health, which Young insists he has. His stats will likely look similar to those he put up as a senior, but if Ohio State can get those for a full season, he will have contributed more than just his fair share.

Justice Sueing, 6-7, 215, Sr. (10.7 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 1.5 apg) – Sueing is one of the more intriguing members of the team because his question marks are less about stepping into a new role – his role as a frontcourt ball handler and scorer was well-defined last season – and more about coming into his own within that role.

Ohio State received strong but often inconsistent play from the Cal transfer during his junior season and is expecting him to move from good to great this winter, with the excuses of a transition year no longer applicable. Practically, that will mean an increase in ball-handling opportunities, and a growing need for Sueing to contribute consistent scoring outbursts. Ohio State would like him around the 12-13 points per game range, up from 10.7 last season.

"I think you'll see Justice Sueing take another step offensively, so I would point to him," Holtmann said. "I think he can definitely take another step offensively. And then I think we have a collection of guys that will help carry that load."

"I think he'll clearly play both positions – a primary ball-handling role, whether he's playing the wing spot or even potentially a backup point guard role, or a point guard role at some point. I think the ball will be in his hands a fair amount."

Sueing expects the jump, too, but saying and doing are very different in the Big Ten,

and for Ohio State to contend for a conference crown, it will need its veteran small forward to play with energy and aggression every game.

"I still think I should have done a little bit more looking back on it, but I did a pretty good job," Sueing said. "The physicality was definitely a question for me. Basketball is the same everywhere, but different conferences can be called differently. I was interested to see how that played out, but it played out in my favor. I was still able to get to the line and be productive in that way. Now I've got a year under my belt and we'll see how I can improve this coming season."

Justin Ahrens, 6-6, 195, Sr. (5.7 ppg, 1.9 rpg) – Another question of consistency, the Ahrens puzzle has been a perplexing one for years now. He burst onto the scene amid conference play as a junior and earned high praise from his coach, who said that he really put the work in during the offseason.

"Justin's been great," Holtmann said last spring. "He's done a great job for us. He had a great offseason. He had as good an offseason as I've seen. He got in great shape. He really committed himself and has understood our defensive system better and just continues to grow as a player. I'm really, really happy for him."

Then he fell back into purgatory. His once-lethal three-point shot stopped falling through the hoop, and his ability to contribute to the Buckeyes went with it. He's reworked his shot a bit this offseason in hopes of correcting those issues.

"I've been trying to speed it up a little bit," Ahrens said. "Obviously not a lot, because I feel like I've got a good-looking shot and I like it a lot. It's comfortable. I'm trying to get it off quicker from various locations, off the catch, off the dribble."

The shooting consistency needs to pair with greater defensive effort, too. Even on off-nights, an Ahrens capable of defending on the wing would be more than serviceable for the Buckeyes thanks to the threat that he provides on the outside even just as a decoy. He couldn't keep up as a junior, and his value as a decoy without those shots falling plummeted with each passing game. Ohio State doesn't have the luxury of pulling a cold Ahrens from the lineup this season, though, and will count on him for backup small forward minutes.

Seth Towns, 6-8, 230, Gr-Sr. (3.8 ppg, 2.2 rpg) – Ohio State will be without Towns for the first month or so of its season as he recovers from an offseason back surgery. It's the latest in a long line of injuries for the Harvard transfer that have seriously threatened to derail his career and that heavily limited his contributions in his first year back in his hometown.

"It's not like this is the first time he's gone through an injury," Holtmann said. "It's a separate injury than his knee. I think he'll handle it with the kind of maturity that he's handled the previous one and he's going to come out on the other end of it really well."

For Towns, getting healthy and making his final season a successful one is more important than anything else. It's hard to imagine Ohio State relying on him for consistent minutes at this point in his career, but if he can serve as a crafty bench scorer, he'll have quite a bit of value, especially in relief of Sueing.

"It's tough," Towns said of the injuries. "I could write a book about this (stuff), honestly. You've got to take it day by day. You can't get too down because hope is still alive, hope is still there. Honestly, the chances are really good for me to have a good year."

Zed Key, 6-8, 245, Soph. (5.2 ppg, 3.4 rpg) – The last piece of the lauded 2020 Ohio

State recruiting class that first took the court during the COVID-addled season, Key is perhaps the best-positioned to step into a bigger role this season. He's one of only four true bigs on the roster along with Brunk, Liddell and Young, and unlike Liddell, he's more than happy banging down low like a center.

Key did so often as a freshman, averaging 5.2 points and 3.4 rebounds in the games he did play for the Buckeyes. He expects to fill the same role this year, likely backing up Liddell at the power forward spot but moving comfortably into the center role to spell Young, especially when Ohio State is looking for a bit of extra juice in the interior offensively. His pairing with Liddell in that role was strong last season and could return this year.

"They're going to have to guard both of us now, and that puts other teams in a mismatch because their bigs have to come out," Key said of playing alongside Liddell. "If the guards have the ball, the bigs aren't going to be down there, and it opens up the paint for everyone. Me and him, it's a problem. It's a really big problem for other teams."

Harrison Hookfin, 6-6, 195, Sr. (1.5 ppg, 1.0 rpg) – Hookfin is the lone walk-on for the Buckeyes because of the super senior rules, and in traditional Ohio State fashion, he's thriving in his role as the lighthearted player at the end of the bench.

He joked around with teammates at Ohio State's media day and even took up the microphone himself, teaming with the team's social media manager and traveling around the open gym to interview his teammates, asking Key what he couldn't do after the New York native revealed his propensity for repair work and quizzing his buddies on their skill sets and dream jobs.

He won't see the court beyond the end of blowouts, but Hookfin is the next in a long line of walk-ons who find as much popularity with the fans as they do with teammates, earning cheers and high fives with every made shot on the season.

Kalen Etzler, 6-8, 200, Fr. – Etzler, a four-star from Convo (Ohio) Crestview and nephew of former OSU guard Doug Etzler (1992-95), will redshirt for the Buckeyes this season as he works to develop his body enough to compete at the Big Ten level. He's not yet anywhere near the weight listed on the roster sheet but will hope to hit that before the season ends, stepping into a role as a backup next season with more room in the frontcourt.

Center

Joey Brunk, 6-11, 255, GR-Sr. (6.8 ppg, 5.2 rpg, 0.6 apg at Indiana) – Brunk, a one-time Holtmann recruit at Butler who suited up for Indiana last season before an injury ended his campaign, is the lone center listed on the roster. At 6-11 and 255 pounds, he'll fulfill the desire among OSU fans for a true big man down low, though he's expected to contribute only as a rotation player.

The rotation will depend largely on matchups. As with the backup guards, Brunk is best suited for specific situations and will get his chance to shine when the Buckeyes draw Big Ten challengers Hunter Dickinson of Michigan, Trayce Jackson-Davis of Indiana and Kofi Cockburn of Illinois, each of whom approach 7-0 and gave Ohio State trouble in 2020.

"Between E.J., Kyle, Zed and myself, we all have something that we do well that we all uniquely can bring," Brunk said. "Depending on the matchups or circumstances, everyone's role is probably going to look a little bit different, I would think. We just need to stay ready and be ready for whatever comes with the matchups."

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.

Defenseman Vidoli Finds A Home At Ohio State

By CRAIG MERZ

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Dominic Vidoli said it was an easy decision when he decided – for a second time – that he was ready to play college hockey.

The native of Strongsville, Ohio, near Cleveland spent part of his freshman season in 2018-19 at Boston University before going to junior hockey for parts of two seasons in Iowa.

When it was time to move on with his college career, Ohio State seemed the natural choice for the junior defenseman to jump-start his career for the 2020-21 season.

"It was a no-brainer," Vidoli told BSB. "I talked to the coaches here and it felt right. I knew where I wanted to go, and it was great to come back home."

Even if the roster lists his hometown as Wake Forest, N.C., he grew up in northeast Ohio until his parents moved when he was 16. By that point, Vidoli was in the first of three years at Culver (Ind.) Military Academy.

The private school stresses leadership and citizenship skills but is also known for producing high-end hockey players over the years, with 26 alumni being selected in the NHL draft.

OSU freshman defenseman Mason Lohrei is one of them, having been chosen 58th overall by the Boston Bruins in 2019.

In Vidoli's final season at Culver in 2017-18, the Eagles were ranked No. 1 nationally. He had 55 points (17 goals, 38 assists) in 43 games.

From there, he went to perennial national power Boston University but played only six games. By midseason he had left to join the Sioux City (Iowa) Musketeers in the

United States Hockey League.

Vidoli (6-0, 190) scored twice and had 13 assists in 18 games during his first season and 16 points (three goals, 13 assists) in 19 games the following year.

Ohio State was the perfect place at the perfect time for Vidoli. The Buckeyes had some holes to fill on defense after what would have been four straight NCAA tournament appearances if not for the season being halted in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"My family's from Ohio," Vidoli said. "I grew up a big Buckeyes fan, so when the opportunity presented itself, I was really excited."

Unfortunately, last season did not go as well as he and the Buckeyes would have hoped. OSU stumbled to a 7-19-1 record, and Vidoli was limited to 16 games because of injury. He missed the final five weeks.

"It was a tough year for him," said Ohio State head coach Steve Rohlik. "We really missed him when he went out. I mean, you look at it. He was our plus-minus leader last year (at plus-1)."

Vidoli could only watch as the Buckeyes went into a season-ending tailspin.

"It was frustrating," he said. "You never want to sit in the stands. You want to be out there helping, but everyone was great with me. They were with me every step of the way and kept my morale high."

He had one assist last season but entered this season with 22 collegiate games without a goal between Ohio State and Boston University. He extended the drought another game in the Oct. 8 season opener at Bentley, but the streak ended the following night during a 7-1 victory.

"It was awesome to finally get the monkey off my back," he said. "It was a good feeling, but my teammates made it easy for me."

Matt Cassidy had a pass out of the corner to Vidoli skating up from the blue line. He used a screen in front to put the shot past the goalie.

"The guys had a great net presence, so I just had to get the puck through and it happened to go in," Vidoli said.

That represented his only point this season through games of Oct. 30.

"I'm not going to pretend that he's going to be out there being a goal-scorer, but when you put yourself in situations like he did on that goal, good things are going to happen," Rohlik said. "I really like where he is right now."

Vidoli knows his main role is to keep the puck out of the net, but under Rohlik's system, the defensemen are expected to get engaged in the attack as well.

"It's nice when we're producing from the back end and getting guys involved in the offense," Vidoli said. "Obviously, our job is to play defense, but when we can jump up and get involved in the offense it's always good."

Vidoli is one of three Boston U. transfers, joining junior forward Mark Cheremeta and senior forward Jake Wise. They were teammates for the 2018-19 season.

"I think I committed here first," Vidoli said. "Then afterward, Mark left BU and I talked to him a little bit and it was great when I found out he was coming here. With Jake, we both talked to him a little bit and kind of herded him through the process. When we found out that he was coming, Mark and I both were super-excited."

Having Cheremeta around last season helped Vidoli get through not only the usual

adjustment period of a new environment, but having to do so with strict COVID-19 protocols in place.

"At the beginning of last year, it was tough because you were not allowed to be around each other and it was tough getting to know each other and build some chemistry," Vidoli said. "At least with Mark, we've been roommates and it was nice to have each other around and kind of have someone to lean on and find our way here."

Vidoli is a biology major who hopes to attend medical school.

"Obviously, the dream is to play as long as you possibly can, and that's what you work for," he said. "But afterward, I'd like to go to medical school, so I'm on the pre-med route right now. We'll see. I've got lots of school left."

"But that's pretty much my dream – to go and work with athletes in some way, whether it's orthopedics or general sports medicine, something like that."

Opening Salvo

The Buckeyes began the Big Ten season hosting Michigan State on Oct. 29 and 30 at Value City Arena.

OSU (4-2-0, 1-1-0 Big Ten) lost the first game by a 2-1 final before rebounding for a 5-1 victory the next night.

Ohio State remains home to play Penn State on Nov. 5 at 7 p.m. and Nov. 6 at 5 p.m.

For a recap of the Michigan State series, go to the BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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

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.

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



SALES | RENTAL | SERVICE | PARTS

For all your material handling needs!



Proudly Serving Central Ohio for Over 50 Years

**1181 Refugee Road
Columbus, OH 43207**

(614) 443-4651

www.harrs-forklift.com
Fax: (614) 443-4711



KOMATSU NOBLELIFT

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2021 FOOTBALL (7-1)

Sept. 2 at Minnesota, W 45-31; **11** OREGON, L 35-28; **18** TULSA, W 41-20; **25** AKRON, W 59-7.

Oct. 2 at Rutgers, W 52-13; **9** MARYLAND, W 66-17; **23** at Indiana, W 54-7; **24** PENN STATE, W 33-24.

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., 9/17.

Oct. 1 Joe Piane Invitational at Notre Dame, Men: 6/21; Women: 9/24; **15** FSU Invite/Pre-Nationals at Tallahassee, Fla., Men: 33/40; Women: 14/33; **29** Big Ten Championships at University Park, Pa., Men: 10/12; Women: 8/14.

Nov. 12 NCAA Regional Championships at Evansville, Ind.; **20** NCAA Championships at Tallahassee, Fla.

FIELD HOCKEY (7-11, 1-7)

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, W 4-3; **19** Virginia, L, 2-1; **27** LOUISVILLE, L 2-1 (2 OT).

Oct. 3 MICHIGAN, L 1-0; **8** INDIANA, L 3-1; **10** OHIO, W 4-3; **15** at Northwestern, L 3-0; **17** at Iowa, L 3-0; **22** PENN STATE, L 4-0; **24** RUTGERS, L 3-1; **29** at Maryland, L 6-0.; **31** at St. Joseph's, L, 4-3.

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 5-7 Erin Hill Collegiate at Erin, Wisc., 12/17; **13-15** Maridoe Invitational at Dallas, 7/15; **27-28** Windon Memorial at Glencoe, Ill., 7/14.

Oct. 4-5 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio, 3/4.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 13-14 Michigan Invitational at Ann Arbor, Mich., 9/16; **24-26** Mason Rudolph at Nashville, Tenn., 6/15.

Oct. 4-5 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio, 3/4; **15-17** Tar Heel Invitational at Chapel Hill, N.C., 15/19.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (4-2)

Oct. 8 at Bentley, L 2-1; **9** at Bentley, W 7-1; **15** UCONN, W 4-3 (OT); **16** UCONN, W 3-0; **29-30** MICHIGAN STATE, L 2-1. W 5-1.

Nov. 5-6 PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **12-13** at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.; 6 p.m.; **26-27** MERCYHURST, 5 p.m.; 5 p.m.

Dec. 3-4 at Notre Dame, 7:30 p.m.; 6 p.m.; **10-11** MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **16** BOWLING GREEN, 7 p.m.; **17** at Bowling Green, 7:07 p.m. **31-Jan. 1**, LIU, TBD.

Jan. 7-8 at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.; 7 p.m.; **14-15** NOTRE DAME, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **21-22** at Michigan State, TBD; **28-29** at Penn State, TBD.

Feb. 4-5 WISCONSIN, 7 p.m., 8 p.m.; **11-12** MINNESOTA, 6:30 p.m., 6 p.m.; **18-19** at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.; 8:30 p.m.

March 4-6 Big Ten Quarterfinals; **12** Big Ten Semifinal; **19** Big Ten Championship.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (8-2)

Sept. 24 ST. THOMAS, W 6-0; **25** ST. THOMAS, W 4-1

Oct. 1 at Minnesota, W 4-2; **2** at Minnesota, W 4-1 **15** BEMIDJI STATE, W 7-0, **16** BEMIDJI STATE, W 3-1; **23** at Wisconsin, L 3-1; **24** at Wisconsin, L 2-1 (OT); **29** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 5-2; **30** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 10-1.

Nov. 5-6 at St. Thomas, TBA; **19** MINNESOTA STATE, 6 p.m.; **20** MINNESOTA STATE, 1 p.m.; **26** DC Tournament at Washington, D.C., vs. St. Lawrence, 1 p.m.; **27** DC Tournament at Washington, D.C., vs. Penn State, 4 p.m.

Dec. 3-4 at Minnesota Duluth, TBA.

Jan. 7 LINDENWOOD, 6 p.m.; **8** LINDENWOOD, 3 p.m.; **14-15** at St. Cloud State, TBA; **21** MINNESOTA DULUTH, 6 p.m.; **22** MINNESOTA DULUTH, 3 p.m.; **28** MINNESOTA, 6 p.m.; **29** MINNESOTA, 3 p.m.

Feb. 4-5 at Minnesota State, TBA; **11-12** at Bemidji State, TBA; **18** WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **19** WISCONSIN, 3 p.m.; **25-27** WCHA Quarterfinals, TBA

MARCH 5-6 WCHA Championships.

MEN'S SOCCER (6-9-1, 2-6)

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, W 1-0; **21** CLEVELAND STATE, W 2-0.; **24** MARYLAND, L 1-2; **29** BOWLING GREEN, W 2-1 (2 OT).

Oct. 3 at Northwestern, L 1-0; **8** WISCONSIN, L 2-0; **12** at Indiana, L 3-0; **17** at Michigan State, L 1-0; **22** PENN STATE, W 2-1; **26** MICHIGAN, W 2-1; **31** at Rutgers, L, 4-0.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (9-7-2; 4-4-2)

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, W, 2-1; **23** MINNESOTA, L 4-2; **26** at Penn State, W 1-0; **30** INDIANA, T 1-1 (2OT).

Oct. 3 Rutgers, L 2-1; **10** at Michigan State, L 1-0; **14** PURDUE, L 1-0 (OT); **17** MICHIGAN, W 2-1; **20** at Wisconsin, T 0-0; **24** at Northwestern, W 2-1.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (18-4, 8-4)

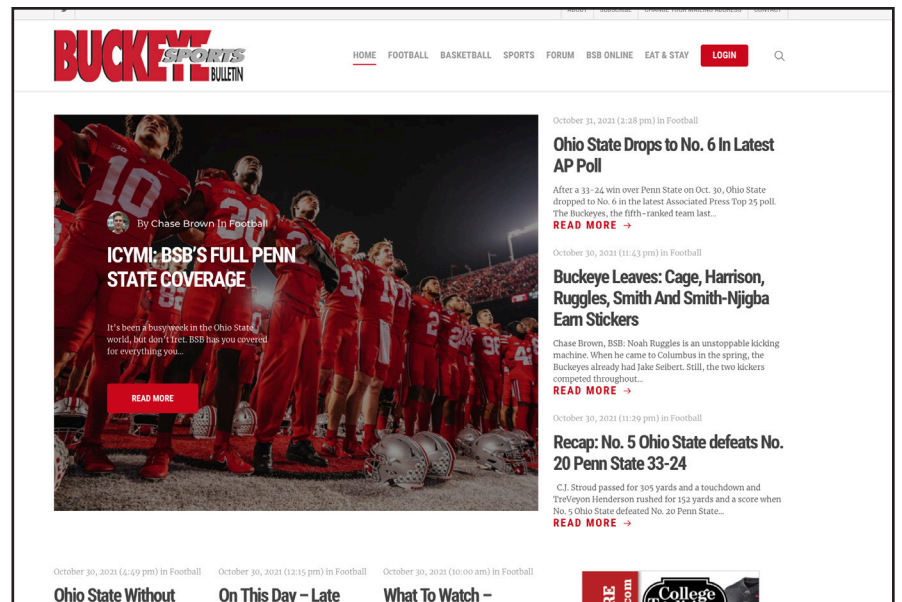
Aug. 27 NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 3-0; **28** WASHINGTON, W 3-1.

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, W 3-0; **19** NOTRE DAME, W, 3-2; **24** at Purdue, L 3-2; **26** at Penn State, L 3-0; **29** INDIANA, W 3-0.

Oct. 2 MARYLAND, W 3-0; **8** at Michigan State, W 3-0; **10** MICHIGAN, W 3-0.; **15** PURDUE, W 3-1. **16** Rutgers, W 3-0; **22** at Wisconsin, L 3-1; **24** at Minnesota, L 3-1.; **29** at Michigan, W 3-0; **31** MICHIGAN STATE, W, 3-1.

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

Traditional Rivals Stage Nontraditional Battle

The matchup between Ohio State and Penn State had everything a football fan wanted in terms of excitement, momentum swings, big plays and physicality. The mood in Ohio Stadium was at a fever pitch as the home team dressed in all scarlet took on the visitors donning their traditional white travel uniforms.

COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

It was an old-fashioned Big Ten donnybrook as both teams traded blows for four quarters in a nearly four-hour battle until one was left standing victorious, and that victor was the Buckeyes.

Ohio State was the heavy favorite before kickoff due to its continued success and improvement after the early-season loss to Oregon as well as a fall from grace by Penn State following back-to-back losses to Iowa and Illinois, the latter loss being in nine overtimes in Happy Valley.

But what made this game between the two Big Ten East rivals different from a traditional OSU-PSU matchup was the way the game was fought in the trenches. It was largely a pass-rush and pass-protection duel with the running game taking a back seat.

Where's The Run?

The Buckeyes did get close to their normal 60 percent passing yardage to 40 percent run, but that was due largely to a third-quarter breakaway of 68 yards by TreVeyon Henderson. As a matter of fact, Penn State and Ohio State each rushed for only 19 net yards in the first half. Of a combined 149 total plays, only 63 were rushing attempts, including kneel-downs at the end of the game.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day prides himself in averaging 200 rushing yards per game, and going into the Penn State contest, the Buckeyes were doing just that with a 208-yard average. The stout Nittany Lions defense had the right game plan to shut down the Buckeye running attack not counting Henderson's breakaway. The Penn State front seven seemed to have just enough helmets at the point of attack to prevent the Buckeyes from marching down the field via the ground game.

Most frustrating for the Ohio State offense was the inability to convert some third- and fourth-down short-yardage attempts to sustain drives or put the ball in the end zone. The Buckeyes had to settle for a Noah Ruggles field goal in the third quarter after hav-

ing a first-and-goal at the Penn State 6-yard line, and two more times in the fourth quarter, Ruggles had to come to the rescue after OSU drives stalled due to the inability to pick up first downs in short-yardage situations.

As disappointing as the run game was for Ohio State, it was a complete disaster for Penn State. The Nittany Lions mustered only 33 net yards for the evening with an 11-yarder by Noah Cain being their longest rush of the game. The Buckeye defense has done an excellent job the past few weeks in making opposing offenses one-dimensional, and such was the case with Penn State.

Varying Passing Attacks

It was obvious a big part of the Penn State game plan was to control the clock and keep the football away from the explosive Ohio State offense as long as possible. The only way to do that was to sustain drives with QB Sean Clifford throwing short and intermediate passes to his wide receivers, tight ends and running backs. It was a good game plan, and it nearly worked.

Even though possession time evened out for the evening (30:10-29:50 in favor of OSU), Penn State had two scoring drives of more than four minutes each and another of 3:25. Clifford completed 35 passes for the game with nearly a third of those going to his tight ends and running backs. To add to that scenario was the fact a number of his completions to his wide receivers were a variety of quick screens – high-percentage passes. Clifford played admirably for a guy who has been playing hurt the last few weeks.

The screens along with short passes over the middle and to the curl zones allowed Penn State to stay in the game offensively. Going deep was not part of the plan for Clifford, but the talented Nittany Lions receivers made one-half of Penn State's 361 total passing yards with the yardage gained after the reception (180).

C.J. Stroud entered the game as the hottest freshman quarterback in the country to the point he is now in consideration for the Heisman Trophy – a long shot, but a shot. His accuracy, game management and maturity cannot be denied. Five times this season he has won Big Ten Freshmen of the Week honors, and barring injury, he is destined to be an all-time great for the Buckeyes. He is also smart enough to know the Nittany Lions were going to come at him with some blitzes he had never seen before to try to confuse and rattle the young freshman.

Stroud responded well by completing 22 of 34 passes for 305 yards, and most importantly, without throwing an interception. At times, he wasn't as sharp as in recent weeks, but he was going up against the best defense he has seen since Oregon. Credit the Ohio

State offensive line for another superb job of protecting the young quarterback by not giving up a sack.

What the Buckeyes lacked against Penn State in terms of a ground attack was made up for in the passing game. This season, the Ohio State offense has put together sustained drives to wear down the opponent, but what makes the No. 1 offense in the country special is its ability to make explosive plays via the run, but primarily throwing the football.

Stroud connected with Chris Olave in the second quarter for a 38-yard touchdown strike capping a drive that went 69 yards in just five plays for the Buckeyes' first touchdown. Stroud came back with a 58-yarder to Jaxon Smith-Njigba in the third quarter which led to a go-ahead field goal for the Buckeyes after the Nittany Lions took the first possession of the second half on a 12-play drive to tie the score at 17.

Defensive Line Dominant

The consistency of the Ohio State defensive line in dominating the opposing offensive line was apparent against the Nittany Lions. Coach Larry Johnson's warriors up front held the line of scrimmage against the run for four quarters, sacked Clifford four times, forced a fumble, and did the near-impossible again this season by scoring a touchdown.

By rotating fresh bodies into the game, the defensive front became more destructive to the Nittany Lions' offensive scheme as the game continued. At least 10 different defen-

sive linemen played during the evening and contributed for 19 tackles.

Haskell Garrett recovered a fumble, but the highlight of the evening came when defensive tackle Jerron Cage took a fumble recovery 57 yards for a touchdown. It wasn't the fastest 57 yards on turf in history, but it was truly a thing of beauty for the Buckeyes and especially for the defensive line family.

What's Next?

It was not only important for the Buckeyes to win the game, but it was important how they won the game. For the first time since the Oregon disappointment, Ohio State had to play a full four-quarter game with its starters. It also made it clear to the players and coaching staff, there are plenty of things to still work on like their short-yardage run game, overall red-zone offense and pass defense.

The Buckeyes know their ultimate goal of winning the Big Ten championship and making it into the college playoff picture is far from guaranteed. Not only did they survive a hard-fought game against Penn State, but there are tougher opponents down the road. They know Nebraska and Purdue will give them their best shots, and the real gauntlet they must go through to accomplish their dreams comes against Michigan State and Michigan. Both the Spartans and Wolverines are for real in 2021. They both have physical defenses and dynamic offenses.

One thing is for sure. Whoever winds up winning the Big Ten will have earned it.

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



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



Do Buckeyes Truly Belong In Playoff Conversation?

Are you like me, still puzzled a bit about where Ohio State fits in the national picture this year? Yes, the Buckeyes are in serious playoff contention. But are they good enough?

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

I'm not talking simply about whether they will be upset along the way as the schedule toughens down the stretch. I'm left wondering after the Penn State game whether this OSU team can be, honestly, one of the best four teams in the country on Selection Sunday.

They could be. I just don't know.

Maybe I, along with other concerned Buckeye fans, am uncertain because we follow Ohio State too closely.

Oklahoma certainly has had far closer scares (repeatedly) than Ohio State, though no losses yet. Alabama is not the usual Alabama. Cincinnati, 1-0 the way I look at it, hasn't sold me. The raw talent level can't be ignored no matter how wonderful UC's season has been. And we don't know yet whether Oregon can run the table the rest of the way.

Outside of Georgia, undefeated Michigan State has been more impressive than any other team in the country. The question for the Spartans is whether a newcomer to the stage of playoff contention can sustain. Yes, I know the Spartans have been to the playoffs before, but not with any of these players or this coach.

For the Buckeyes, the questions surrounded the defense most of the year. But against Penn State, a new problem surfaced. OSU, outside of a couple of big runs, had real difficulty running the foot-

ball, and the quarterback play was scattered – some fine passes and some really poor passes.

Glaring case in point. Ohio State scored just one touchdown in six trips to the red zone against Penn State.

In the end, though, maybe we're being too picky.

Penn State, with a healthy Sean Clifford at quarterback, beat a good Auburn team, 28-20. And the Nittany Lions with a healthy Clifford were solidly in control at Iowa. It was only after Clifford went out with an injury at Iowa that Penn State fell apart and lost. Less explicable is losing to Illinois, with or without a healthy Clifford.

Depending on what happens for Penn State at home against Michigan on Nov. 13 and at Michigan State on Nov. 27, we might come to realize Penn State was the next best team in the Big Ten East this season – at least when healthy.

Should that wind up being the case, the 33-24 win against the Lions will become more impressive.

But playoff football is a whole different level. Ohio State must play better defense and have quicker answers on offense if it wants to contend with the likes of Georgia.

There is time to correct those issues. The semifinals aren't until Dec. 31. There's lots of young talent on the roster who will continue to get better. The Buckeyes didn't collapse in the face of a tough opponent against Penn State. They hung in there and won, convincingly so by the end of the night.

If they return to cruise control of some speed the next two weeks against Nebraska and Purdue, it's going to be one heck of a matchup in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 20 against Michigan State.

My guess is Ohio State is up to the task of winning out. But I'll feel a lot better about that guess if they make it through the Spartans without another loss.

OSU-PSU Takeaways

The offense. For much of the night, Penn State's defensive line won the war with Ohio State's offensive line. That's something I didn't expect to see this season for the OSU line, regardless of the opponent. And Penn State had the better quarterback on the night, unless the sole judge of quarterback is wins and losses. Clifford was under more pressure (sacked four times) but delivered for the most part when receivers were open. He was 35 of 52 for 361 yards. Stroud can chalk up another win (not insignificant), but too often passes to open receivers were off-target, though he did finish 22 of 34 for 305 yards.

The defense. The defense was much-improved. There were still holes there, as noted by Clifford's success. But the defense made big plays (the sacks, an interception and a big fumble recovery for a touchdown). That was the most impact the defense has had this year.

The uniforms. The all-red gear was an ugly look. Pack those red pants away for good. They didn't even pass as a nice costume change for Halloween.

The winded quarterback. While OSU had its problems in the red zone all night, there's one trip I won't put entirely on Ohio State. The officiating crew gets at least part of the blame for one failed red zone trip late. After a clearly incomplete pass, none of the officials blew the play dead. So, Stroud had to chase the Penn State player with the ball 70 yards the other way. He clearly was breathing heavy before the next two plays. That should have never been the case.

The Ryan Day look. There's a lot to like about Day, now 30-3 as the Ohio State head coach and undefeated in Big Ten play. But beyond the record, I've come to enjoy the way Day carries himself on the sideline and in interviews. It never seems to be about him. You never come away thinking he's the star of the program. It just seems to be all about doing his job and Ohio State football.

The targeting call. I like the idea of the targeting rule. Player safety should be very important. But if that targeting call on linebacker Steele Chambers was a good call – and by the rulebook, it might very well have been the right call – the rule needs tweaked. That did not seem like a dangerous play. I'm happy the rule has been revised over the years, to the point that the penalties are taken away when the replay booth rules against tar-

geting upon review. But too many of the targeting calls in college football this year seemed to have occurred on plays that were not dangerous.

One Man's Top 10

By the time you receive this issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, we'll all know how the first set of rankings from the College Football Playoff committee have shaken out.

Here's my thought on a top 10, not a prediction of how the committee will rank things.

1. Georgia (8-0) – Clearly the best team in the country so far. Could we be heading for a matchup between the best defense (Georgia) and the best offense (Ohio State)?

2. Michigan State (8-0) – I don't expect many people to rank the Spartans this high. But unlike undefeated Oklahoma, they have been solid most of the year and now have a solid victory on their résumé against previously undefeated Michigan.

3/4. Ohio State (7-1) and Oregon (7-1) – If Oregon and Ohio State win out, I'd likely have to give the edge to Oregon on the basis of its win against OSU. But based on the way the two schools have played since their Sept. 11 game, Ohio State is better. For now, we'll keep them even and make this call later if need be.

5. Oklahoma (9-0) – Winning ugly, but winning. Five games have been decided by a touchdown or less. Three top-25 teams remain on the Sooners' schedule. Stay tuned.

6. Alabama (7-1) – Alabama is not the same Alabama, but it's still Alabama. Should the Tide win out, including an SEC title against an undefeated Georgia, expect the SEC to claim two of the four playoff spots.

7. Cincinnati (8-0) – Perfect, but only one solid opponent (Notre Dame) to date. If I thought they were good enough, I wouldn't hold the Bearcats' schedule against them. But I have to believe teams one through six above would be solid favorites if they played.

8. Michigan (7-1) – Once you start looking at the choices from here on down, it's hard to find a more deserving team at No. 8.

9. Oklahoma State (7-1) – A loss to Iowa State, but the Cowboys handed Baylor its only loss of the season so far.

10. Notre Dame (6-1) – This might be too high for Notre Dame. Stay tuned.



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




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

Nittany Lions Give Buckeyes Another Tough Game

As has frequently been the case during the past few seasons, the latest edition of the Ohio State-Penn State rivalry proved to be an entertaining and exciting one. The Buckeyes ultimately prevailed, 33-24, but not without some anxious moments. I'll go so far as to say that in recent seasons, the games with the Nittany Lions, for the most part, have been more competitive than those with archrival Michigan.

As the game with Penn State unfolded and the Lions were able to forge a 17-17 tie as late as the 10:26 mark of the third quarter, I was monitoring three areas of concern – two of which had been of concern at some point previously in the season and one which had not.

The play of quarterback C.J. Stroud and that of the Ohio State defense had come under scrutiny earlier. The play of freshman sensation TreVeyon Henderson had yet to be questioned. Yet Stroud, the defense and Henderson each had Buckeye fans wondering as Ohio State faced its stiffest competition since the Oregon game in week two.

Stroud had a fairly pedestrian first half, going 15 of 24, and never really got untracked until he hit Chris Olave for a 38-yard touchdown with 3:48 to go in the second quarter. Meanwhile, the OSU defense, which had improved each game since the Oregon loss, was allowing Penn State quarterback Sean Clifford to have his way for the most part. Clifford completed 29 of 42 passes (69.0 percent) for 305 yards in the first three quarters with a score and no interceptions.

And then there was the strange case of Henderson, who at the half had nine carries for just 6 yards, surprising even the most critical of Buckeye observers.

But Stroud wound up completing 22 of 34 passes (64.7 percent) for 305 yards and the scoring toss to Olave. It wasn't the type of gaudy line he had put up during the previous three games, but it was a winning line against a solid defense, especially when you consider he did not throw an interception nor was he sacked.

As for the defense, moments after Stroud had connected with Olave for six points, the stop troops forced Clifford into a strip-sack which Jeron Cage returned 57 yards for a touchdown to give the Buckeyes a 17-7 lead. That might have proved to be the most critical minute and 24 seconds of the game. The defense would go on to shut out the Nittany Lions in the critical fourth quarter, allowing just 64 yards over the final 15 minutes, with Cameron Brown picking off a Clifford pass and returning it 25 yards to set up a Noah Ruggles field goal that made it 30-24 in favor of the Buckeyes with 7:12 to play.

The defense would force a punt and a missed 49-yard field-goal attempt closed PSU's final two possessions to secure the Ohio State victory.

Meanwhile, Henderson proved that you can't keep a good man down.

With the Buckeyes holding a narrow 20-17 lead late in the third quarter and his rushing totals still just 14 carries for 22 yards – not to mention his false-start penalty on a fourth-and-goal at the PSU 1 forcing the Buckeyes to settle for a Ruggles field goal – Henderson broke loose on a 68-yard run, the type of jaunt for which he is rapidly becoming known. The run set up his own 1-yard touchdown run to make it 27-17 at the 3:35 mark of the third period.

In the fourth quarter, Henderson had runs of 22 and 12 yards on a 69-yard drive that set up Ruggles' 26-yard field goal to ice the game.

Despite any hand-wringing by Buckeye fans, Henderson wound up with 28 carries for 152 yards and his score. Fifty years from now, it will look like just another great game in what is

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

shaping up to be a great career.

"This was one of the best defenses we played all year," the OSU freshman said after the game. "But I think I needed a game like this to prove to myself that I'm tough enough to play against a defense like that. I think that's what I did tonight."

I think a good defense like that of Penn State can hold the Buckeye offense in check for much of a game. But Ohio State has so many weapons that ultimately someone is going to break something – something like Olave's 38-yard TD reception, Jaxon Smith-Njigba's 58-yard catch-and-go, Henderson's 68-yard run or Jeremy Ruckert's 30-yard reception late in the game. Those plays alone helped account for 20 of Ohio State's 26 offensive points, and with a little bit better execution in the red zone, it could have been even more.

But those big plays – the first of which did not come until Olave broke the ice late in the second quarter – might not have come if the Buckeyes had panicked or started forcing things.

"I thought we kept swinging," OSU head coach Ryan Day said. "We didn't have our heads down or anything like that. In the hard moments, you kind of rely on the older guys to help out, and to see Chris make that big touchdown, that kind of broke things open for us. We were a little rigid there for a while. We couldn't quite get going, and that kind of helped us out. We started playing with more confidence after that."

"It's different than it was early in the season where guys could start doubting themselves. I don't think you saw any of that coming on. We knew it would be hard. (Penn State has) a good defense – one of the top defenses in the country – and they've always been that way. They've been playing for a long time. It's a veteran group back there, so we kind of expected some of this."

Quick Hitters

- Is there a more enjoyable or entertaining play in football than a huge lineman rumbling for a lengthy touchdown run? And Buckeye fans have already been able to enjoy two of them this season with Cage joining Haskell Garrett in the scoop-and-score club with his 57-yard touchdown against the Nittany Lions. Not only was Cage's fumble entertaining, it was important in the win, as was Garrett's during the 45-31 season-opening victory over Minnesota.

The strip-sack that sent Cage on his merry way was credited to Tyreke Smith. But I wanted to note that Zach Harrison was in on the action on that play, also getting to Clifford. Harrison has taken some criticism for perhaps not yet living up to his recruiting hype, not becoming the next Bosa or Chase Young. But he was in on this defensive touchdown, as well as setting up Garrett in game one.

Harrison was credited with a pair of tackles against the Nittany Lions and a quarterback hurry. Smith also had a strong game with five tackles and a quarterback hurry of his own.

- In my weekly tight end watch, Ruckert had a mixed bag against Penn State. He lost a fumble on Ohio State's first possession of the game but came back in the fourth quarter with his 30-yarder to set up Ruggles' final field goal. He also had a 24-yard reception to the PSU 35 early in the fourth quarter that was squandered when the Buckeyes turned the ball over on downs at the Penn State 13. Cade Stover added a 7-yard reception for the Buckeyes.

When you do a tight end watch with Ohio

State, sometimes you have to look at the other team as well. Just as the Buckeyes sometimes forget about the tight end on offense, frequently they get burned by opposing tight ends. Clifford exploited that weakness, completing four passes each to Brenton Strange and Theo Johnson for a total of 58 yards. Strange kicked off the game's scoring with a 5-yard touchdown reception.

- Almost since the beginning of the season, I have been meaning to mention what a great portal pickup kicker Noah Ruggles has proved to be. He has been among the most reliable Buckeyes, connecting on all of his PATs and field goals and handling kickoff duties capably.

You hate to swap field goals for touchdowns, but when Ohio State needed Ruggles against Penn State, he came through on all four of his three-point tries.

From The Pages Of BSB

Regular readers of this column know that one of my favorite features in Buckeye Sports Bulletin is "From The Pages Of BSB." I am always surprised at the things I have forgotten, but I also love the irony of certain entries with the benefit of many years of hindsight.

In this issue (found on page 7), we look back 20 years to another game between the Buckeyes and Penn State. During Jim Tressel's first year as head coach in 2001, Ohio State found itself on the wrong end of history, falling to the Nittany Lions by a 29-27 final score. The Penn State victory at Beaver Stadium was the 324th for legendary head coach Joe Paterno and allowed him to pass Paul "Bear" Bryant as the winningest coach in Division I-A history.

The irony came during the postgame ceremony. Paterno was awarded a ring with the number 324 on it, and it was announced that a 7-foot-tall statue would be erected near Beaver Stadium in his honor. Who would have guessed that less than 11 years later, that statue would come down, a casualty of the Jerry Sandusky child abuse scandal.

BSB's companion feature, "A Look Back at Recruiting From the Pages of BSB," also caught my attention in this issue.

In 1986, the Buckeyes were recruiting a couple of tight ends with well-known names. One of them was Jeff Ellis, son of former heavyweight boxing champion Jimmy Ellis, who ultimately chose Ohio State. Though he was hampered by knee injuries, he had one of the more productive seasons for the tight end-challenged Buckeyes. In 1988, Ellis caught 40 passes for 492 yards and a touchdown. His best season other than that was 12 catches for 151 yards and a score in 1990.

The other "name" tight end recruit back in the fall of 1986 was Cory Booker, a 6-4, 220-pounder from Old Tappan, N.J. Booker was a name in recruiting circles 35 years ago as one of the top prospects in the country. But he didn't really become a nationally known name until many years later when he became a U.S. Senator from New Jersey and, ultimately, a presidential candidate in 2020.

The only reason I knew that the Cory Booker referenced in the 1986 recruiting note was the current senator was that I knew he had played football at Stanford, where he was leaning in his recruitment 35 years ago. I knew that because in 2010, he gave the commencement address at my niece Helen Grove's graduation ceremonies at Pitzer College in California and referenced

his stay in Palo Alto.

At the time, I had no idea who Cory Booker, then mayor of Newark, N.J., was. I just knew that he gave a rousing and inspirational commencement address and thought, at the time, that the little-known Booker was going places. That had nothing to do with politics. Any Democrat, Republican or Independent in that audience would have known Booker was going to make some sort of impact somewhere.

In fact, through the power of Google, I was able to find a transcript of that commencement address and must admit, years later, it made me laugh, it made me cry and it inspired me, just as it did in 2010. Most of all, it made me think of the graduate, my niece Helen, who has in the passing years become a successful professional and now a mother.

As for Booker, he never lived up to his prep football press clippings. He didn't play his freshman or sophomore years for the Cardinal. He had seven catches as a junior in 1989 and 13 in his senior year. The highlight of his career came Oct. 6, 1990, when he had a 25-yard reception against top-ranked Notre Dame to jump-start Stanford from a 24-7 deficit to a 36-31 upset victory against the Fighting Irish in South Bend.

Booker, who had been recruited to Stanford by Jack Elway, had hoped to come back for a fifth year, but Dennis Green, his coach for his last two seasons, told his tight end he could maintain his scholarship but would not play that fifth year. Someone suggested that Booker, who was also his class president, apply for a Rhodes scholarship. He went on to study at Oxford before entering Yale Law School and starting on his career path.

Still Looking Back

In our ongoing series on anniversary years ending in the numeral 1, in this issue managing editor emeritus Mark Rea looks back to 1991, a tough year for almost anyone involved in Ohio State football. By the end of that season, the Buckeyes under John Cooper had dropped their fourth straight game to Michigan, which would wind up being part of what would become a 2-10-1 mark against Ohio State's rivals under Cooper.

As noted in the story, despite his early struggles with the Wolverines, Cooper was given a contract extension, which was announced just before The Game in 1991, a game that the Buckeyes went out and lost, 31-3. That prompted Michigan quarterback Elvis Grbac, an Ohio native, to sarcastically state, "I hope they give (Cooper) a lifetime contract." That came on the heels of pregame comments from Michigan head coach Gary Moeller, a former Buckeye, that Michigan State, not Ohio State, was his team's biggest rival.

I bring this up because now, 30 years later, the shoe is on the other foot with Ohio State having won 15 of the last 16 games in the storied rivalry. The Buckeyes have carried out their dominance with a little more decorum, though. They seem to let their play on the field do the talking.

In fact, it seems like talk from Ohio State players to the media is now almost completely controlled. That made it all the more surprising when freshman defensive back Denzel Burke made comments about Penn State receiver Jahan Dotson that seem almost scandalous in today's sanitized Buckeye world.

"He's a pretty good receiver," Burke said of Dotson. "Nothing I can't handle, though."

For the record, Dotson ended up leading all receivers with both 11 catches and 127 yards.

It's a good reminder that freshmen should be seen making plays, not heard.

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

FOR ATHLETES

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.



Ohio Department of Health

