



## Strike A Pose

## Stroud Stakes His Heisman Trophy Claim In Top 10 Tramplung

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

BSB Associate Editor

For years, the consensus thought has been that the player who ultimately claims the Heisman Trophy – awarded to college football's best player – needs a signature play or game, a Heisman moment of sorts, to truly earn the honor.

It's an idea that's come into its own with the rise of the 24-hour news cycle and the Internet, which offer the ability for fans and prospective voters to see any highlight from any college football game, but the first documented usage of the term "Heisman moment" in its current form comes via Mark Anderson, writing for the Tallahassee (Fla.) Democrat on Nov. 28, 1993. Then, the distinction went to Florida State signal-caller Charlie Ward, whose moment had come on a critical third down against Florida the day before.

The Seminoles led by six points, 27-21, but were pinned deep in their own territory and in need of a big play to build some insurance against a Gators offense that had surged in the second half. Ward took the snap, drifted out of the pocket, broke into a scramble and finally found halfback Warrik Dunn, who broke through the defense for a 79-yard touchdown that would secure a 33-21 victory, the Heisman Trophy for Ward and eventually a national championship for Florida State.

Ever since, the final weeks of almost every college football season have produced a sideshow to complement the main event of the national title race, as media and fans hunt for that defining Heisman moment that will secure the trophy for the next player to hoist it above his head.

A year after Ward's heroics, Colorado tailback Rashaan Salaam earned his moment with a 67-yard scamper in the final game of the regular season against Iowa

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**HEISMAN HOPEFUL** — Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud (7) thrust himself firmly into the Heisman Trophy race with his performance during a 56-7 romp over No. 7 Michigan State. Stroud connected on 32 of 35 passes for 432 yards and a program record-tying six touchdowns.

SONNY BROCKWAY

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# FAN FORUM

## Buckeye Leaves

*Following a shocking blowout victory against No. 7 Michigan State, Ohio State earned Buckeye leaves for just about every member of the two-deep from BSB staff and posters on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum.*

**Chase Brown, BSB:** The Buckeyes' run defense excelled on Nov. 20, keeping Heisman Trophy contender Kenneth Walker III from making a significant impact for the Spartans.

Ohio State jumped out to an early lead against Michigan State, with quarterback C.J. Stroud connecting with Chris Olave for a deep touchdown. The Silver Bullets forced a stop on the Spartans' first possession, allowing the offense to extend its lead to 14-0. On the following Spartans drive, the defense remained solid, and before you could blink, Stroud had his team up, 21-0.

From there, Ohio State kept Michigan State and its talented running back from finding any consistency, which led to a lopsided win for the Buckeyes in Columbus.

**Patrick Mayhorn, BSB:** The offense is going to earn the headlines for the Buckeyes, and for good reason, but I'd like to take my turn on the soapbox to give some shine to the defense, and specifically to cornerback Denzel Burke. The freshman from Arizona has drawn some tricky assignments this season, including back-to-back matchups against true No. 1 receivers, first in David Bell for Purdue and then against MSU's Jayden Reed.

Bell hauled in 11 receptions for 103 yards, certainly not a terrible showing, but Burke was largely able to keep him under wraps, especially because Ohio State dropped eight players into coverage on nearly every down to handle the Boilermakers' passing attack. Against Michigan State and Reed, Burke had no such luxury, and still he shone brightly as one of Ohio State's best defenders despite his age.

Reed was held to only two receptions and 28 yards, and though his afternoon was cut short by an injury, Burke was excellent against every player the Spartans offense threw at him. MSU quarterback Payton Thorne was only 14 of 36 passing for the game, and Michigan State's other top receiver, Connor Heyward, wasn't Burke's responsibility. Give that freshman a sticker.

**Braden Moles, BSB:** Against a top-10 team, quarterback C.J. Stroud delivered one of the top passing performances in Ohio State history, throwing for 432 yards (fifth all-time) and six touchdowns (tied for first), not to mention going 32 for 35 on his passing attempts, good for a 91.4 percent completion rate.

Stroud was no doubt assisted by his trio of game-changing receivers, but he put the ball where it needed to go on nearly every single throw against the Spartans – his three incompletions were courtesy of two drops and a miscommunication with his receiver.

He's had up-and-down performances this season, but Stroud solidified himself as one of the top quarterbacks in the nation as well as the front-runner for the Heisman Trophy, putting on a flashy performance while fellow candidate Kenneth Walker III was eliminated from contention with just 25 yards on six carries.

You can't ask for a stronger performance to help Stroud build momentum as Ohio State enters the final stretch of its season.

**Mark Rea, BSB:** It would be easy to dump the entire box of Buckeye leaves in C.J. Stroud's lap after another 400-yard performance and an OSU record-tying six touchdown passes. But those passes didn't catch themselves, so I'll save some of my leaves for the Terrific Trio.

Chris Olave caught two touchdown passes to break David Boston's 23-year-old record for career receptions, Garrett Wilson caught two more TDs to give him five for the last two weeks, and Jaxon Smith-Njigba had 105 yards and moved into the third spot in OSU single-season receiving yards with 1,132.

For the game, the trio caught 24 passes for 371 yards and five TDs. And that raises their combined total for the 2021 season to 187 catches for 2,919 yards and 30 TDs ... so far.

**Michael Bauer:** Well, this is Chris Olave's big day, so I'll start there. C.J. Stroud had another legendary afternoon. The O-line was impenetrable, and for the first time, the entire defensive unit looked like world-beaters ... so all of them, too.

**Terrier Buck:** Did anyone perform poorly? I think the coaching staff deserves much credit for game-planning on how to attack MSU on both sides of the ball. The opening drive of 86 yards, beginning first-and-15 with no negative plays (as I recall) was the game in microcosm.

**AnthonyBuckeye:** C.J. Stroud for displaying leadership and excellence on the field, the fabulous all-world wide receiver trio of Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba for another display as good as any. The OL for showing again why they are the best in the country, Haskell Garrett for showing up from the first defensive snap and riding roughshod over the Spartans.

The whole DL for so much harassment of the Spartan QB, Kourt Williams for energetic tackles all over the place with some for a loss, Tommy Eichenberg and Steele Chambers for the run D, Tyleik Williams and all his DL buddies for batting down so many Spartan passes, the whole D for a scoreless Spartan first half, and Coach Day and all his staff for such a fabulous exhibition of talent, speed and power.

**Poster That Harley Built:** Forget the three receivers and Stroud. Way too obvious and expected. I give my leaves to the entire defense. Now that was unexpected. And a bonus farewell leaf to Master Teague. He has been a good soldier and it was great the way the crowd acknowledged him.

**bstu9:** My Buckeye leaves go to Master Teague. In these times, it would have been very easy for him to enter the transfer portal when he lost his starting position, but he hung with the Buckeyes through that as well as some injury adversity this season. It was nice to see him score a TD in his final game in "The Shoe."

**PeyoteBuck:** A farewell hat's off to Mr. Teague. He is a true Buckeye and I give him my goodbye leaves for a job well done.

**Frank Moskowitz, BSB:** In a program as well-stocked as Ohio State's, there are many players who don't reach stardom but contribute to championships – even if it means helping run out the clock to protect the stars the week before The Game. Here's to all the unsung heroes, from the scout team on up to those such as Teague.

rivalry when they met again, hopefully cementing the 2021 team another opportunity for a championship season and another possible Heisman Trophy winner, C.J. Stroud, and his record-breaking receivers who created my latest memorable memory.

**Nelson Bell  
Toledo**

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## From The Message Board

***Following Ohio State's 56-7 romp over Michigan State, things quickly segued into Michigan week. We asked readers of the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum to offer some of their favorite memories of the archrivalry with The Team Up North. Here are some of the responses:***

"I could list a dozen favorite memories, but I'll mention two off the top of my head. Tressel's 310 days game at Ann Arbor and Carlos Snow catching a short pass near the sideline and taking it to the house early in the second half of the 1987 game, the year of the EARLE headbands."

**– Terrier Buck**

"Curtis Samuel 2016."

**– Tiffin Buckeye**

"My best memory is '310 Days' Tressel, who was made to start his backup QB at Ann Arbor because his starting QB was suspended for drunk driving, making the Buckeye fans 'proud on the field as in the classroom' as he had promised. That 2001 game changed the rivalry in the last two decades."

**– AnthonyBuckeye**

"Building on this, it was the actual game when Jonathan Wells scored his third TD late in the first half to put Ohio State up, 21-0. The John Cooper years were finally behind us and brighter days were ahead in the rivalry. But to this day, I still have PTSD from all of the games we were favored to win but did not during the Cooper era."

**– bstu9**

"1968. 50-14 and the campus erupted. A great year and my start to the Buckeyes."

**– John Lanning**

"The 2006 'Game of the Century.' Was the championship game with Florida anticlimactic after that and one of the reasons for the loss to Urban? Actually any of The Games that Troy Smith played in. He was at his best against TSUN and one of the greatest players vs. our rivals."

**– Poster That Harley Built**

"My favorite memory is when TTUN last came here in 2018 certain of an upset. Instead they got a woodshed whippin' and went home limpin'."

**– Peyote Buck**

"I would have to say Earle Bruce's last game vs. Xichigan. I barely remember Woody as the coach but really have great memories of Coach Bruce. I was so devastated that he was fired before the game. Seeing him carried off the field by his players at the end of the game seemed so appropriate and a great sendoff for such a great coach."

**– Harry Hanna**

"Three years ago, Coach Meyer had a special package for a young, skinny WR by the name of Chris Olave. Whatever became of him? I believe Olave scored two touchdowns that day, to go along with a

blocked punt, and showed what Buckeye fans could look forward to in future seasons. Last Saturday, Emeka Egbuka was unavailable for the MSU game. He has bided his time this season returning kickoffs. I'm wondering if Emeka was working on a special package of pass patterns that have been designed for him to spring on Michigan this Saturday? They may resemble the patterns that Olave ran or be entirely unique to take advantage of Emeka's skills. Could Saturday be the coming-out party for Egbuka?"

**– Byron McNutt**

"My first memory was in Ann Arbor in 1959. My mom had just remarried, and my new dad was a fanatic Ohio State fan and passed along to me his love of the Buckeyes (and later my first subscription to BSB). The Buckeyes lost that day in the rain, but we made fun of the fact that the Xichigan band wore raincoats. My biggest memory is being allowed to sing 'We Don't Give a #####...' As an 8-year-old from a strict family, that was a big deal. I still laugh at how cool I thought it was.

"Beyond that, the actual agony of stressing through every game, at least until the last few years – 1968, the 10-10 tie in 1973, Earle's final win, Tressel's first win, 2006, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 ... oh wait, the weenies didn't even show for that last one. Also, as a boy, being allowed to sit with my dad, uncles, and grandparents to watch The Game each year.

"I LOVE this rivalry! It has been an integral part of my life for 62 of my 70 years. My dream is to live long enough for Ohio State to take the overall lead in the series. After that, I can die happy."

**– Michael Bauer**

"It has been my great fortune to cover nearly 40 Ohio State-Michigan games through the years, but I will never forget watching Craig Krenzel being carried to the locker room on a sea of scarlet following the 2002 game. The memory of that scene will be forever etched in my mind."

**– Mark Rea, BSB**

"These are all great memories and I agree with every one of them. I guess for me, it's my earliest ones – 1979, my first year on the beat, when Jim Laughlin blocked the U-M punt to help win the game, and the first year of BSB in 1981 when Vaughn Broadnax threw the mega-block to spring Art Schlichter for the winning touchdown. The fact that I have become friends with Jim and Vaughn over the years makes those games and memories even more special. Great Buckeyes both.

**– Frank Moskowitz. BSB**



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

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

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

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## 2021-22 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 41)

No. 1	Sept. 11	No. 13	Dec. 18
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No. 10	Nov. 20	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 27	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 4	No. 24	August

The next issue (Dec. 4 cover date) will be mailed on Nov. 30.

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



# Bucks, Dawgs, Bearcats And ... Irish?

Oregon? Thanks for playing. Michigan State? Here are your lovely parting gifts. Wake Forest? Buh-bye.

For all the hand-wringing, consternation and soapbox oratory concerning the logjam of teams trying to make it to the College Football Playoff, the system always seems to correct itself just in time for the four best teams to play for the national championship.

Coaches approach the grind of a full season in different ways, including Ohio State's Ryan Day, who divided the 2021 campaign in half – six games before an open week in which to mold a gaggle of young high school stars into some semblance of a team, and then a six-game gantlet of ranked opponents and archrivals to see if that cream really could rise to the top.

You might remember after the demoralizing Oregon loss that national pollsters punished the Buckeyes by dropped them to No. 9 in The Associated Press rankings and No. 11 in the AFCA coaches' poll. That was back when defending national champion Alabama was still a nearly unanimous No. 1 – back before the Crimson Tide lost to an unranked Texas A&M team but never fell out of the top five.

Day successfully navigated his way through questions about his coaching acumen, a coaching staff shakeup and midseason player defections that might have wrecked other programs, and a fabulously fickle fan base bent upon swallowing recruiting hype about which first-year quarterback should play over another.

Meanwhile, Day allowed his offseason beard to return and his team became more grizzled, too. C.J. Stroud, once the scourge of Columbus media and talk radio, is now perhaps the Heisman Trophy front-runner. A high-flying offense continues to soar, averaging 47.2 points and 559.9 yards per game, both tops in the nation. A much-maligned defense sometimes bends and sometimes breaks, but it has improved enough to smother opponents' running games, including holding Michigan State running back Kenneth Walker III to just 25 yards. He entered the game as the No. 1 running back in the country with an average of 147.3 yards per game.

So, now after all of the naysayers who foisted the opinion that Ohio State did not deserve to be in the playoff discussion, here we are. The Buckeyes are poised to return to the playoff for the fifth time in its current incarnation, trying to join Alabama and Clemson as the only teams to win the championship more than once.

I might be biased – truth to tell, I'm incredibly biased – but I don't see how Michigan can beat Ohio State. Yes, Jim Harbaugh might have the best team of his seven-year tenure, and the Wolverines have proved they can score some points. While the Buckeyes were hanging 56 on Michigan State, U-M was putting up 59 of its own against Maryland and owns the second-best scoring offense in the Big Ten at 36.9 points per game.

But this is the same Michigan team that allowed Michigan State to score 23 points during an epic second-half meltdown that led to a 37-33 loss in late October. With all due respect, the Spartans could have played Ohio State until early Monday morning and wouldn't have scored 37 points. What makes anyone believe the Wolverines will play any better in their latest rivalry game than they did in their last?

Assuming the Buckeyes come home from Ann Arbor with a victory, that sets up a chance for another league title at the Big Ten Championship Game. If a resurgent Wisconsin can successfully navigate its way to Minnesota and

back with a win, the Badgers will represent the West in Indianapolis by virtue of their late-October victory against Iowa. Raise your hand if you believe Wisconsin has the slightest chance to beat Ohio State in the Big Ten title game.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

That puts the Buckeyes firmly into one of the four College Football Playoff spots with the other three teams likely to be Georgia, Cincinnati and Notre Dame.

Stop worrying about Alabama knocking off Georgia in the SEC Championship Game, the playoff committee placing two SEC teams in the tournament and leaving some other deserving team out of the mix. Put the Crimson Tide alongside such other tightrope walkers as Oklahoma and Oregon, who eventually fell from their respective perches. Alabama is good enough to beat nearly every other team in the nation, but it's not good enough to beat Georgia, and a second loss of the season will end the Tide's hopes of defending last year's championship.

With a 48-14 dismantling of a pretty good SMU team, Cincinnati finally got the style points head coach Luke Fickell has been searching for the last month and a half. The Bearcats finish their regular season against a decent East Carolina team before a matchup against a pretty good Houston team in the AAC title game. If the Bearcats run the table and finish at 13-0, they're in the playoff – no questions asked.

That leaves the fourth spot, and in case you haven't been paying attention, the selection committee has been throwing crumbs Notre Dame's way the past few weeks. The Fighting Irish appeared at No. 10 in the first CFP rankings of the season and have advanced one spot in each of the past two weeks.

In the wake of losses by No. 3 Oregon and No. 7 Michigan State, you can likely expect the next rankings to feature a top six of Georgia, Alabama, Ohio State, Michigan, Cincinnati and Notre Dame when they are released Nov. 23. Then, if the Buckeyes beat the Wolverines on Nov. 27 and the Bulldogs take care of the Crimson Tide on Dec. 4, who slides into the fourth spot in the playoff? That would be mighty Notre Dame, which completes its season Nov. 27 on the road playing a seven-loss team at Stanford.

If all of the aforementioned comes to pass, the natural extrapolation would find the final playoff rankings with Georgia in the top spot followed by Ohio State, Cincinnati and Notre Dame. And, yes, that means the Buckeyes vs. the Bearcats in one of the semifinals. Even the playoff selection committee wouldn't want to mess with that dreamy scenario.

## How To Win A Heisman

Perhaps Nick Saban realizes his team faces an uphill battle when the Crimson Tide face Georgia in the SEC title game, and maybe that's why he unleashed QB Bryce Young during his team's 42-35 shootout win against Arkansas.

Young, already the Heisman darling of the ESPN set despite trailing other QBs such as Stroud, Kenny Pickett of Pitt and Will Rogers of Mississippi State in several key stats, exploded for 559 yards against the Razorbacks,

breaking the single-game Alabama record that had stood since 1969.

Along with his yardage, the second most in SEC history behind K.J. Costello of Mississippi State, who threw for 623 yards against LSU in 2020, Young completed 31 of 40 passes with five touchdowns.

So, tell me, which was the more impressive game? Young going 31 for 40 (77.5 percent) for 559 yards and five touchdowns in a seven-point win against the No. 21 team in the nation, or Stroud completing 32 of 35 attempts (91.4 percent) for 432 yards and six touchdowns during one half of action in a seven-touchdown blow-out of the No. 7 team in the nation?

Yet, when I woke up Sunday morning, my email inbox contained a detailed account of Young's performance, courtesy of the Alabama sports information department. I'm still waiting for something along the same lines from Ohio State.

Ohio State remains tied with Oklahoma and Notre Dame with the most Heisman winners at seven each. But in case you're counting, an Alabama player has taken home the stiff-arm trophy three times since Troy Smith won OSU's most recent one in 2006.

## Some Final Thoughts

- There were more than a few "Overrated!" catcalls cascading from the Ohio Stadium crowd as a dejected Michigan State team trudged toward the locker room after its 56-7 loss to the Buckeyes. It was the most lopsided win for either side in a 51-game series that dates back to 1912. Perhaps the seventh-ranked Spartans were overrated. But maybe, just maybe, that's because fourth-ranked Ohio State made them look that way.

- How unusual was Stroud throwing for 432 yards against the Spartans? Just five seasons ago, during a 17-16 win in East Lansing, J.T. Barrett finished the game with 86 passing yards. The year before that, during a 17-14 home loss to Michigan State, Barrett threw for only 46 yards.

- Garrett Wilson has now caught at least one pass in 31 consecutive games in which he has played, and that ties for the fifth-longest streak in OSU history. K.J. Hill (2016-19) and Gary Williams (1979-82) share the record at 48 with Michael Jenkins (2001-03) third at 39. David Boston (1996-98) is fourth with a 32-game streak, and Wilson is now tied with Ted Ginn Jr. (2004-06) at 31.

- During the 59-31 win Nov. 13 against Purdue, Wilson pulled off a rare feat. He became the first Ohio State player at least since 1960 to score three receiving touchdowns and one rushing touchdown in the same game. The only other OSU player to tally three scores through the air and another TD via a different route in the same game was Jalin Marshall, who had three receiving TDs and a punt return for a touchdown during a 42-27 win against Indiana in 2014.

- A case could be made that two of the most productive SEC players in the last three years began their careers at Ohio State. Joe Burrow, of course, won the 2019 Heisman Trophy while leading LSU to the national championship. And this year, OSU-turned-Alabama receiver Jameson Williams is torching opponents to the tune of 59 catches for 1,218 yards and 13 TDs. If Young wins this year's Heisman, it will be in no small measure due to the fact that Williams saw an overcrowded receivers' room at Ohio State and transferred to Alabama.



# OHIO STATE INSIDER

## OSU Celebrates Senior Day Against Spartans

Just before the 56-7 thrashing of No. 7 Michigan State at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 20, Ohio State honored 21 seniors and three redshirt juniors as part of the school's annual Senior Day festivities.

The three redshirt juniors honored were Master Teague III, Nicholas Petit-Frere and Cameron Brown. While they have not yet exhausted their eligibility, their inclusion indicated they might be moving on from Ohio State following this season.

The 21 seniors were Sevyn Banks, Ryan Batsch, Chris Booker, Robert Cope, Aaron Cox, Haskell Garrett, Antwan Jackson, Jack Jamieson, Cade Kacherski, Austin Kutscher, Jagger LaRoe, Demario McCall, Thayer Munford, Chris Olave, Corey Rau, Bradley Robinson, Mitch Rossi, Jeremy Ruckert, Tyreke Smith, Sam Wiglusz and Marcus Williamson.

Multiple seniors or honorees made their presence known during the win against the Spartans.

Olave led all receivers with 140 yards and scored two touchdowns, passing David Boston to become Ohio State's all-time leader in touchdown receptions.

Garrett had one of Ohio State's two sacks on the afternoon, finishing with two tackles. Smith had two tackles, including one for loss, and a pass breakup, while Brown and Williamson finished with one tackle and one pass breakup each.

Ruckert had one catch for 28 yards on the offensive end, Wiglusz finished with



SONNY BROCKWAY

**THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES — Ohio State super senior defensive tackle Haskell Garrett (92) takes part in annual Senior Day festivities at Ohio Stadium before the Nov. 20 game against Michigan State. Garrett was one of 24 players honored by the Buckeyes for their contributions to the football program.**

two receptions for 14 yards, and Rossi had one reception for 5 yards. Cope, a walk-on for the Buckeyes, got the first two rushing attempts of his career and finished with 4 yards.

Teague was Ohio State's leading rusher in the game with 95 yards on 21 car-

ries, including a late-game touchdown, much to the home crowd's delight who chanted for Teague to receive the ball near the goal line. Munford and Petit-Frere helped pave the way for Ohio State's offense that piled up 655 yards.

## Boston Acknowledges Olave's TD Record

Olave made history against Michigan State when he hauled in two touchdown passes to bring his career total to 35, surpassing Boston's long-standing record of 34.

Boston took to Twitter to congratulate Olave for breaking his record, which Boston had held for 23 seasons since 1998. He complimented the senior wide receiver's ability and exciting play style.

"Congratulations on breaking the touchdown record!" Boston posted. "You

are one hell of a football player, love watching you play."

Olave scored on 23- and 43-yard passes from quarterback C.J. Stroud, who finished with six touchdowns on the day. Olave came into the season with just 22 receiving touchdowns but has found a connection with his redshirt freshman quarterback that has allowed him to rise in the record book.

Against the Spartans, Olave finished with seven receptions for his 140 yards, and he is tied for second in the nation with 13 receiving touchdowns.

## OSU Makes Poll Vault, No. 2 in AP Rankings

College football coaches and The Associated Press think Ohio State keeps getting better with each game.

After starting the year as the No. 4 team in the nation, the Buckeyes took a nosedive, falling as far as No. 11 after a loss to Oregon and a shaky win against Tulsa. Since then, Ohio State has steadily climbed back up the rankings, reaching No. 2 in the AP writers' poll and No. 3 in the AFCA coaches' poll after week 12.

The Buckeyes are coming off consecutive wins against ranked opponents, including a 28-point win over then-No. 19 Purdue on Nov. 13 and a 56-7 defeat of then-No. 7 Michigan State the following week. The string of victories helped Ohio State move behind Georgia and Alabama in the coaches' poll and leapfrog the Crimson Tide to take the second spot behind the Bulldogs in the AP rankings.

With its blowout loss in Columbus, Michigan State fell outside the top 10 in both polls. Michigan is the sixth-best team according to both polls, setting up a premier matchup on Nov. 27 in Ann Arbor.

The last time Ohio State and Michigan played in a top-10 matchup was Nov. 25, 2016, when the No. 6 Buckeyes claimed a 30-27 overtime victory against the No. 10 Wolverines thanks to a game-winning, 15-yard touchdown run by Curtis Samuel.

Georgia continues to hold down the No. 1 spot in both polls. Cincinnati and Notre Dame are fourth and fifth, respectively, in both rankings.

Spots six through eight in both polls are occupied in order by Michigan, Oklahoma State and Ole Miss with Baylor and Oklahoma a respective ninth and 10th, according to the writers. The Bears and Sooners flip positions in the coaches' poll.

In the third College Football Playoff rankings released Nov. 16, Ohio State



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## Who Is The Greatest Quarterback In Ohio State History?

### Options:

J.T. Barrett \_\_\_\_\_  
 Justin Fields \_\_\_\_\_  
 Joe Germaine \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cornelius Greene \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dwayne Haskins \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bobby Hoying \_\_\_\_\_  
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 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](mailto:bsb@buckeyesports.com) or subscribers can vote on the forum at [BuckeyeSports.com](http://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:

was No. 4 behind Georgia, Alabama and Oregon. With the Ducks suffering their second defeat of the season with a 38-7 loss to Utah on Nov. 20, they will undoubtedly be out of the top four, allowing the Buckeyes to further solidify their spot in the CFP in the next rankings, scheduled for a Nov. 23 release.

### Backup Quarterback Miller Reinstated

Ohio State announced Nov. 19 that backup quarterback Jack Miller had been reinstated to the team after a charge against him for operating a vehicle while impaired was reduced to a misdemeanor earlier in the day.

Miller's OVI charge was dropped during a morning arraignment at the Franklin County Municipal Court, and he instead pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor or traffic ticket charge of reckless operation, for which he paid a \$150 fine. A charge for driving in marked lanes was

also dismissed.

Before his suspension, Miller was Ohio State's third-string quarterback. In four games this season, he has seven completions in 14 attempts for 101 yards with no touchdowns or interceptions.

True freshman Quinn Ewers had been Ohio State's third-string quarterback behind C.J. Stroud and Kyle McCord for the past two games but didn't see any action until he took his first two career snaps against Michigan State – both of which were handoffs to walk-on running back Cope on the final two plays of the game.

Ewers, the former Southlake (Texas) Carroll five-star prospect, was the No. 1 recruit in 2022 before reclassifying to the class of 2021 at the end of the summer. His decision to forgo his senior year in high school and head to Columbus came with its pros and cons. He signed a \$1.4 million Name, Image and Likeness deal within his first weeks on campus, but Ewers is the fourth-string

## 2021 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 2	at Minnesota	W, 45-31	Fox	7-4, 35-14 win over Indiana
Sept. 11	OREGON*	L, 35-28	Fox	9-2, 38-7 loss to Utah
Sept. 18	TULSA*	W, 41-20	FS1	5-6, 44-10 win over Temple
Sept. 25	AKRON	W, 59-7	BTN	2-9, 38-0 loss to Kent State
Oct. 2	at Rutgers	W, 52-13	BTN	5-6, 28-0 loss to Penn State
Oct. 9	MARYLAND	W, 66-17	Fox	5-6, 59-18 loss to Michigan
Oct. 23	at Indiana*	W, 54-7	ABC	2-9, 35-14 to Minnesota
Oct. 30	PENN STATE	W, 33-24	ABC	7-4, 28-0 win over Rutgers
Nov. 6	at Nebraska	W, 26-17	ABC	3-8, 35-28 loss to Wisconsin
Nov. 13	PURDUE	W, 59-31	ABC	7-4, 32-14 win over Northwestern
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN STATE	W, 56-7	ABC	9-2, 56-7 loss to Ohio State
Nov. 27	at Michigan	Noon	Fox	10-1, 59-18 win over Maryland
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	Fox	

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

quarterback at Ohio State when he could have been an all-state signal-caller in Texas.

With his team up by 49 points, Day felt comfortable giving Ewers his first career snaps, much to the Ohio Stadium crowd's

delight. He will likely redshirt this season and continue to progress in the winter, spring and summer with the program's developmental staff.

**Continued On Page 6**



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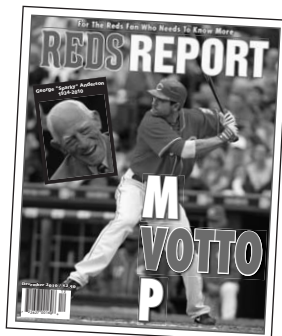


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# OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

## College GameDay Headed to Ann Arbor

"ESPN's College GameDay" will be at an Ohio State game for the second week in a row, as the pregame college football show travels to Ann Arbor on Nov. 27 for the top-10 matchup between OSU and Michigan. The game will mark the seventh time ESPN's pregame show has covered The Game.

Ohio State is 36-15 all-time when GameDay is on hand, picking up its latest win Nov. 20 when it defeated Michigan State. The Buckeyes are 5-1 against Michigan when the GameDay crew are on either campus.

## Buckeye Trio Named Award Semifinalists

Petit-Frere has been named one of five semifinalists for this year's Outland Trophy, awarded to college football's best interior lineman.

The other semifinalists are Alabama tackle Evan Neal, North Carolina State tackle Ikem Ekwonu, Kentucky tackle Darian Kinnard and Iowa center Tyler Linderbaum.

In his second season as a full-time starter for Ohio State and his first year as a left tackle, Petit-Frere has been a brick wall for the Buckeyes. According to Pro Football Focus, he has allowed only one sack on 360 pass-blocking snaps in 2021. He's also been a significantly better run blocker than a season ago and continues

## VIP Subscribers Save \$10 On New Kern Book

Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP subscribers can receive \$10 off on the purchase of "The Road to the Horseshoe and Beyond," by Rex Kern and Lee Caryer. To purchase the new Kern book for just \$24.50, send your check to Lee Caryer at 975 Atlantic Ave., #676, Columbus, Ohio, 43229, and identify yourself as a BSB VIP. Checks should be made out to Rex Kern.

This is just another way that 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 tavern, or any Cameron Mitchell Restaurant, based on availability at the time of upgrade.

"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."

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](http://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 subscribers. Brutus level VIPs will have their names listed at a later date.

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

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**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.

to road grade for the running backs.

Joining Petit-Frere as semifinalists for national awards at their respective positions are Olave and running back TreVeyon Henderson.

Olave is one of 10 semifinalists for the Biletnikoff Award, an honor that recognizes college football's most outstanding receiver. Meanwhile, Henderson is one of 10 semifinalists for the Doak Walker Award, given to the nation's top running back.

Other semifinalists for the Biletnikoff Award include Jameson Williams of Alabama, David Bell of Purdue, Jahan Dotson of Penn State, Jordan Addison of Pit-

t50Josh Downs of North Carolina, Drake London of USC, A.T. Perry of Wake Forest, Jerreth Sterns of Western Kentucky and Deven Thompkins of Utah State.

Henderson, the only true freshman among the Walker Award semifinalists, is Ohio State's leading rusher this season with 1,098 yards and 14 rushing touchdowns. He is also second in the nation with an average of 7.32 yards per carry.

Other semifinalists for the Walker Award include Tyler Allgeier of BYU, Tyler Badie of Missouri, Breece Hall of Iowa State, Sincere McCormick of UTSA, Bijan Robinson of Texas, Abram Smith of Baylor, Sean Tucker of Syracuse, Deuce

Vaughn of Kansas State and Kenneth Walker III of Michigan State.

Finalists for each of the awards will be announced Nov. 23.

## Stroud Pushes To Lead In Heisman Trophy Odds

The Heisman Trophy race is beginning to heat up with just one regular-season game and a potential conference championship game on the horizon, and Stroud has found himself in the thick of it.

According to SportsBetting.ag, Stroud is at plus-190, which makes him the favorite to win the Heisman, given annually to the top player in college football.



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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.

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SONNY BROCKWAY

**TOP OFFENSIVE HONORS — Ohio State receiver Garrett Wilson (5) won Big Ten co-Offensive Player of the Week honors following his Nov. 13 performance against Purdue that included three receiving touchdowns and one rushing TD. Wilson had two more touchdown catches vs. Michigan State during his team's 56-7 win against the Spartans.**

Stroud is ahead of Alabama quarterback Bryce Young (plus-200) and Walker (plus-300).

The other closest odds are Ole Miss quarterback Matt Corral (plus-900) and Pitt quarterback Kenny Pickett (plus-1,800). Henderson is listed at plus-5,000.

Other oddsmakers list Young as the favorite, but Stroud is projected to be

among the finalists announced in December. He has passed for 3,468 and 36 touchdowns this season while tossing only five interceptions, and his 186.7 passer rating is among the best in the country.

Though he has played in one fewer game than Young, Stroud is ahead in passing yards and yards per attempt but

## Ohio State-Michigan Game Is Finally Here

Ohio State's biggest game of the year is finally here. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff will be capturing the excitement of college football's biggest rivalry and posting any breaking news at our BuckeyeSports.com website. Many of the best prep players will be watching developments as well, and any breaking recruiting news will also be posted.

Additionally, the BSB staff will be posting their predictions before The Game. As you can imagine, those same predictors did not see the domination of Michigan State coming, though they predicted that the Buckeyes would score on the Spartans. Chase Brown predicted a 56-24 Buckeye victory, Patrick Mayhorn 42-34, Braden Moles had it 45-31, and Mark Rea predicted a 45-21 Buckeye win.

And don't forget the immediate coverage after The 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 traditional battle.

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 sub-

scribers free of charge, as is all the other content provided at the site.

In addition to daily posts, we 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.

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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.

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

trails slightly in passer rating and passing touchdowns. Walker, meanwhile, has 1,498 yards and 17 rushing touchdowns through 11 games.

Heisman finalists will be announced Dec. 6 with the winner to be announced at the annual trophy presentation ceremony on Dec. 11.

### Wilson, Stroud Earn Weekly Big Ten Honors

After a week away from the weekly Big

Ten awards, Ohio State returned in full force, reclaiming its spot atop the Freshman of the Week line and earning a second nod for a co-Offensive Player of the Week.

Junior wide receiver Garrett Wilson earned his first career co-Offensive Player of the Week nod with his 10-reception, 126-yard, three-touchdown receiving performance with another 51

**Continued On Page 8**

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# OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 7

yards and a score on the ground against Purdue. He was the first Buckeye to win the award since Stroud claimed it in early October after a win against Rutgers.

Wilson shared the honor with Wisconsin running back Braelen Allen, who

rushed 25 times for 173 yards and three scores during a 35-7 win against Northwestern.

Meanwhile, Stroud notched his sixth weekly freshman honor of the season and is essentially a lock for Big Ten Freshman of the Year. Against the Boilermakers, he completed 31 of 38 passes for 361 yards and five touchdowns.

Michigan defensive end Aidan Hutchinson earned Defensive Player of the Week honors after racking up seven tackles, including a career-high three sacks, during his team's 21-17 win against Penn State.

That game wasn't a total loss for the Nittany Lions, though. Penn State kicker/punter Jordan Stout was named Specialist of the Week, thanks to three field goals, a perfect 4-for-4 performance on punts landing inside the 20 yard-line (with a 51.0-yard average) and even an 18-yard pass off a fake punt.

## Ex-OSU Baseball Coach Finn Passes Away At 88

Former Ohio State baseball coach Dick Finn, who led the Buckeyes from 1976 to 1987, died Nov. 16 at his Columbus home under the care of Ohio Health Hospice. He was 88.

Finn was a native of Lima, Ohio, and captain of Ohio State's Big Ten championship baseball team in 1955. After graduation, he attended the University of Toledo, where he earned a master's degree, and then became a high school coach in the Toledo area. Finn returned to the University of Toledo to become head baseball coach in 1964, remaining with the Rockets until 1969 when he became an assistant on Marty Karow's staff at Ohio State.

After seven years as an assistant, Finn took over as head coach of the Buckeyes and compiled a 310-262-5 record in 12 seasons. His best season was in 1982 when Ohio State finished with a 45-14-1 overall mark and 13-3 league record.

Finn later spent time in the OSU athletic department as special assistant to athletic director Jim Jones until his retirement in 1994.

## BSB Subscribers Save On New Kern Book

Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers can receive \$5 off on the purchase of "The Road to the Horseshoe and Beyond," the new book by Buckeye great Rex Kern. To purchase the new Kern book for just \$29.50, send your check to Lee Caryer, Kern's co-author, at 975 Atlantic Ave., #676, Columbus, Ohio, 43229, and identify yourself as a BSB

subscriber. BSB VIP subscribers pay just \$24.50. Checks should be made out to Rex Kern.

## Tiffin Subscriber Wins Michigan State Tickets

Jim Schleter, a loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscriber from Tiffin, Ohio, was the winner of BSB's Michigan State prize package. Not only did Mr. Schleter win two tickets to the big game, but he also won a victory dinner at Roosters.

## Stroud, Henderson, Burke Aid 'Feed The Need' Event

Stroud, Henderson and true freshman cornerback Denzel Burke were scheduled to be among several other notables in downtown Columbus on Nov. 22 to serve 4,000 free turkey dinners to those in need.

TownHall, a 100-percent non-GMO restaurant in the city's Short North district, is leading the initiative.

"TownHall has hosted 'Feed The Need' for the last eight years and is proud to continue supporting the local community," TownHall owner Bobby George said in a news release. "This event is the highlight of our year."

This year, TownHall is furthering its efforts to support the community by launching an outerwear upcycling program. TownHall and its sister restaurant, Rebol, are collecting gently used hats, scarves, sweaters, mittens, and jackets that will be distributed to those in need during "Feed The Need."

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**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.



## 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 editor Patrick Mayhorn and staffer Wyatt Crosher, 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.

especially St. Augustine.”

For more information, visit [TownHall-FeedtheNeed.com](http://TownHall-FeedtheNeed.com).

*Chase Brown, Patrick Mayhorn, Braden Moles and Mark Rea contributed to this report. For up-to-the-minute Ohio State coverage, be sure to check out BSB online at [BuckeyeSports.com](http://BuckeyeSports.com) and on Twitter @Buckeye\_Sports.*

## A Message From BSB Publisher Frank Moskowitz

As most of you know by now, after the postal rate increase implemented Aug. 29, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is in the process of raising its subscription rates. This is not a decision we made lightly. Postage remains our largest expense, far and away outpacing labor or printing. Postal rates used most frequently by BSB have gone up as much as 11.1 percent.

The base cost for each issue mailed to your home or business will still only be \$4.37.

You have many options as to where to spend your entertainment dollar, and I respectfully ask that you compare the price of BSB to some of these options: a ticket to the Ohio State-Michigan State game, \$144; a New York strip steak at Urban Chophouse, a la carte, \$59; a round of golf with cart at Raymond Memorial Golf Course, \$47; a glass of Oberon Napa Valley Cabernet at Cameron's American Bistro, \$15; a 14-inch pepperoni pizza at Donato's, \$14.59; 10 wings at Rooster's, \$12.99; a movie ticket at the Gateway Film Center, \$12; one line of bowl-

ing at Columbus Square Bowling Palace, \$7; a craft beer at Urban Meyer's Pint House, \$7; one scoop of Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream, \$5.25; a McDonald's Big Mac, \$4.49; an issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin, \$4.37.

Readers will have to place their own value on each issue of BSB. For those who are especially price sensitive, two-year subscriptions bring the rate down, and we will offer specials throughout the year, as we have always done. However, we ask that those of you who can do so try to pay full rate to help offset the cost for our many readers who are on fixed incomes. Becoming a VIP subscriber is another way to help keep BSB vibrant while holding the subscription price line.

Subscribers who have concerns or questions about Buckeye Sports Bulletin pricing should feel free to call me at (614) 486-2202. I look forward to hearing from you.

– Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

## From The Pages Of BSB

### 40 Years Ago – 1981

During his senior season at Ohio State, linebacker Mike D'Andrea had finally achieved the goal he set when he first arrived in Columbus.

“Your goal as a player is to improve each year and get higher up on the depth chart,” the Akron native said. “I finally got a chance to start as a senior, and I've held onto my spot. It was a goal and I achieved it.”

Not that the 6-4, 220-pounder hadn't seen action before the 1981 season. He played in all 12 OSU games as a sophomore, logging 15 tackles. He repeated the feat of playing every game as a junior, registering 29 stops with two behind the line of scrimmage.

But as a senior, starting all 10 of Ohio State's games to that point, D'Andrea had emerged as a serious contributor, notching 48 tackles and three TFL and recovering a pair of fumbles. Yet he still saw room for improvement as his college career came to its final weeks.

“I need to get into my drop a little quicker, to read the play a little faster,” D'Andrea explained.

### 35 Years Ago – 1986

Ohio State and Michigan were slated to collide in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 22 with the winner gaining the coveted Rose Bowl berth. The Buckeyes, atop the Big Ten standings at 7-0 after the Wolverines stumbled a week earlier against Minnesota, were assured of no worse than a co-championship. But gridiron gurus in the Buckeye State and faithful Ohio State followers everywhere winced at the thought of sharing anything with anyone from the land of Maize and Blue.

One could just ask Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce.

“That's the way it should be,” said Bruce, minutes after his Buckeyes polished off Wisconsin, 30-17, to advance to the final game of the season unbeaten in Big Ten play. “I'm happy to say they're coming to Ohio State and we're going to play for the Big Ten championship and the Rose Bowl berth.”

Players on the OSU team who grew up in Columbus knew the meaning of The Game.

“This is what it's all about,” said linebacker Michael Kee, a product of Eastmoor High School. “You grow up here, and if you're any kind of football fan, you've watched the Griffins, the Schlichters and guys like that. This is what you come to Ohio State for – to play in the Michigan game.”

### 30 Years Ago – 1991

Confirming what had been rumored for a week, and what BSB had first speculated following Ohio State's Nov. 2 loss to Iowa, Ohio State would make its second trip in three years to Tampa, Fla., to play in the Hall of Fame Bowl on New Year's Day.

The Buckeyes were set to take on Syracuse in 74,350-seat Tampa Stadium, in a game that would be broadcast nationally on NBC.

Bob Sutton and John Adcock of the Hall of Fame Bowl selection committee made the official invitation to OSU athletic director Jim Jones one day after the Buckeyes' 20-16 victory against Indiana on Nov. 16. But Adcock was quick to point out that the bowl committee would have taken Ohio State regardless of its record down the stretch and that it had extended the offer prior to the team's annual matchup with Michigan.

“Absolutely we would have taken Ohio State,” Adcock said. “That was a discussion we had, and we answered it real quick. We have full confidence in Ohio State. We think they could be undefeated with a break here or there.

“There was no doubt in our minds who we wanted. Ask Jim Jones or John Cooper. They were our No. 1 choice.”

### 25 Years Ago – 1996

After 12 years of heartache, it only figured that Ohio State had to fight tooth and nail for its long-awaited Rose Bowl berth.

Even more fitting was the fact that it was the OSU defense – the team's true strong point – that carried the Buckeyes past Indiana and on to Pasadena.

The second-ranked Buckeyes used a pair of late defensive touchdowns to sidestep the upset-minded Hoosiers, 27-17, on Nov. 16 in Bloomington and earn their first trip the Rose Bowl since Jan. 1, 1985.

“This is an incredible feeling,” said Ohio State defensive end Matt Finkes, who returned an IU fumble 45 yards for the go-ahead touchdown with a little more than six minutes left.

Finkes reflected on all of the close calls the OSU program had endured – including the 1993 and 1995 seasons – as he reveled in the win.

“We've been working hard for this,” he said. “This had been ours for four years. We just had to come out and take it today. We've been so close so many years, especially this senior class. It's a great feeling to finally realize your dreams.”

### 20 Years Ago – 2001

Quarterback Steve Bellisari was arrested by campus police and charged with drunken driving early in the morning of Nov. 16, one day before Ohio State was scheduled to take on 12th-ranked Illinois.

Later that day, the QB was suspended indefinitely by OSU head coach Jim Tressel while athletic director Andy Geiger was left to sort out the mess at a heavily populated press conference.

That would be the same Bellisari who was one of four co-captains for the Buckeyes, a three-year starter who was being praised weekly for his work ethic and attitude, especially in light of intense scrutiny from a legion of fans. Tressel had often defended the QB, almost holding him up as the poster boy for a more resilient, academic and community-conscious program.

As word began to circulate in Columbus and beyond that arguably the school's most recognizable athlete had been arrested, university officials put together a statement saying that Bellisari had been indefinitely suspended for violation of a team policy.

Reports flew that Bellisari had been out on the town with several teammates prior to his arrest but that he was alone when he was pulled over. He allegedly squealed his tires before realizing that he had run a stop sign.

“He made a turn that caused a police car with two officers to take note of how the car was being driven, and they stopped him,” Geiger said.

The following day, the Buckeyes dropped a 34-22 decision to the Fighting Illini.

### 15 Years Ago – 2006

Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith was sporting a wide grin on the afternoon of Nov. 18, and for good reason. He was grinning after the Buckeyes' third straight victory against Michigan capped a perfect 12-0 regular season and clinched a berth in the BCS Championship Game in Glendale, Ariz.

“I'll probably be wearing this smile for the rest of the week,” Smith said following the game. “You've got to fight through, persevere, and the 2006 Ohio State Buckeyes did that. Outright Big Ten champs, baby.”

Smith and his teammates had plenty to grin about after what happened in Ohio Stadium. Facing an also-unbeaten Michigan team that had lost legendary head coach Bo Schembechler on the eve of the game, the Buckeyes utilized nearly every offensive weap-

on at their disposal and withstood the Wolverines' best shot at ruining OSU's title hopes, taking a 42-39 victory that was every bit as a dramatic as the final score indicated.

### 10 Years Ago – 2011

As of BSB's press time, Ohio State had not announced any decision regarding its head football coach for the next season and beyond, but there were plenty of people suggesting that was merely a formality. Multiple sources indicated former Florida head coach Urban Meyer had agreed upon a deal to become the next head coach of the Buckeyes.

There were reportedly a few issues to iron out, but the consensus was what had been rumored for months – since shortly after Jim Tressel was forced out in late May – as a possibility about to come to fruition.

Meyer had been widely believed to be interested in the position because of his ties to the state as an Ohio native. Before he left the Gators following the 2010 season, his Florida contract included a provision that allowed him to leave for Ohio State, Michigan or Notre Dame, and he was quoted in a 2008 biography about growing up idolizing legendary head coach Woody Hayes.

When asked about the rumors, Meyer denied that he had been offered any job or that he had accepted any position, saying that there was “no truth to that.”

### Five Years Ago – 2016

Ohio State played a game Nov. 19 that proved each participating team's record irrelevant. A previously 9-1 Buckeye squad dispatched a 3-7 Michigan State team that had lost to such Big Ten cellar-dwellers as Maryland and Illinois by just one point, 17-16.

While the win in East Lansing set second-ranked Ohio State up for a showdown with archrival Michigan on Nov. 26, it also continued a trend toward a fierce rivalry on the field between the Buckeyes and Spartans. And with that rivalry budding, the records went straight out the window.

As such, Ohio State players and coaches alike preached that Michigan State's previous problems were irrelevant even before the game began. After the result was final, that tune didn't change.

“We have a lot of respect for the team we just played,” Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer said. “Tough day at the office right there.”

### One Year Ago – 2020

A win over the ninth-ranked team in the country would usually be cause for celebration, but following Ohio State's 42-35 victory against Indiana on Nov. 21 – which gave the Buckeyes sole possession of first place in the Big Ten's East Division – head coach Ryan Day seemed unsatisfied.

“I thought the start of the game was ridiculous,” Day said after the game. “The energy that we came out with was as good as I've seen all year. We played really, really well in the first half. We really dominated.

“But then we gave up some big plays and let them back into the game. We have to figure out a way to close out games. This is the second game in a row now where we let a team hang around a little bit, and we have to get that fixed.”

Ohio State's much-maligned defense was impressive during the first two quarters, holding Indiana to just seven points and minus-6 yards rushing. The final two frames were a different story, however. The Hoosiers outscored the Buckeyes by a 28-14 margin in the second half and had the ball late in the fourth quarter with the chance to score the game-tying touchdown – or possibly the game-winning score had they gone for two – in the final minute.

“I'm definitely not pleased,” Day said. “A long way from pleased.”



# Even Head Coach Impressed By Stroud's Play

Continued From Page 1

State that pushed him over the 2,000-yard mark rushing for the season and ahead of Penn State's duo of Kerry Collins and Ki-Jana Carter for the Heisman.

Moments have been abundant for Ohio State, too. Since the spread of the phrase really took off, the Buckeyes have sent two players to New York who returned with the stiff-arm hardware, first in 1995 with running back Eddie George and then 11 years later with quarterback Troy Smith.

George shone brightest on Nov. 11, rushing for 314 yards on 36 carries against Illinois, with a performance that all but drained the drama from the award race for the final month of play.

"We probably gave him the Heisman today," said Illinois defensive coordinator Denny Marcin at the time. "I've been coaching for 32 years, and I've never seen a back do that."

For Smith, the trophy wasn't in the bag until the final moments of Ohio State's regular season, when he orchestrated a 42-39 victory vs. No. 2 Michigan to pull the top-ranked Buckeyes into a national title game berth. Smith completed 29 of his 41 passes for 316 yards – capped with a game-sealing touchdown pass to Brian Robiskie – and left little doubt in the minds of those in attendance that he would be crowned the sport's best player.

"I would think he clinched the Heisman Trophy," OSU head coach Jim Tressel said of Smith. "I don't think there would be any question about that."

Their moments were obvious. For Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud on Nov. 20, with No. 7 Michigan State in town, it might prove difficult to trim the list of moments down to single digits, let alone pick just one to elevate the redshirt freshman to the Heisman heights the Buckeyes haven't reached since Smith donned the Scarlet and Gray. Stroud put up a performance for the ages against the Spartans during a 56-7

Ohio State victory, one that well exceeded what the moment – a top-10 matchup with a potential College Football Playoff berth on the line – called for. And in so doing he might have secured himself a spot among college football's most exclusive list, especially given that his primary trophy competition, MSU tailback Kenneth Walker III, was held to 25 yards on six carries.

As Walker spent the afternoon bottled up by Ohio State's defense, which put forward its finest game of the season, Stroud delivered one of the greatest efforts that Ohio Stadium has seen from a quarterback in a century of play. In just the first half, the redshirt freshman accumulated 29 completions on 31 tries, 393 yards and six scores.

With Ohio State's lead firmly in place at 49-0 as the two sides entered their locker rooms after 30 minutes, Stroud would see only one second-half possession – an opportunity to rack up a few more stats, finishing the day 32-of-35 passing with 432 yards and six scores – before ceding the reins of the offense to the freshman pairing of Kyle McCord and Quinn Ewers.

Their stats can be broken down on a different day.

This one belonged to No. 7, as he managed to turn Senior Day into something of a coronation, barring anything extreme in Ohio State's final game of the regular season against Michigan on Nov. 27 and in the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 4.

"(C.J.'s) anticipation is off the charts," OSU head coach Ryan Day said after the game. "He sees things really well, his touch is excellent, when he needs to put a little extra on it he does, and he's accurate downfield. He doesn't make the guys work for the ball – he plays catch."

"Certainly our receivers are excellent, and they create a lot of separation, but C.J. is special, too."

If searching for one specific play to escalate as Heisman-worthy, one need look no further than the punch directly into Michigan State's sternum that Stroud delivered

on the second drive of the game. In what was touted as a heavyweight bout between two squads fighting for Big Ten East supremacy, Stroud knocked the Spartans out early with a 77-yard strike to Garrett Wilson on a go route, extending Ohio State's lead to 14 points barely seven minutes into the game.

"At the snap, they were in a two-high (safety) look, and as I called for the ball, they kind of rolled the safety down to the weak side," Stroud said of the touchdown. "Then they were pressing (Garrett) with man coverage, so we had the shot called, but if it wasn't there, I was going to go through the rest of my reads. But Garrett did a great job of beating his man. All I had to do was hold the safety – keep him in the middle of the field with my eyes – and just to give Garrett the best shot to go score."

For a riled-up and young Spartans group, Ohio State's winding 12-play, 86-yard drive to open the game, a subsequent three-and-out by the MSU offense and then that dagger to Wilson seemed too much to handle.

But just about any play during which Stroud was on the field could qualify for his one shining moment. That first drive saw him complete all but one of his 10 attempts for 76 yards with a 23-yard dart to Chris Olave to cap it off. If that second score wasn't the knockout blow, Stroud delivered a no-doubter a drive later from 43 yards out, again hitting Olave for a score that pushed Ohio State's senior wideout past David Boston's career receiving touchdowns record of 34.

Even his trio of second-quarter scores, while nowhere near as spectacular as their counterparts in the first period, showcased the mastery of the offensive attack Day always wants to see from his No. 1 quarterback – the kind that Ohio State feared it would lose with Justin Fields' departure at the end of the 2020 campaign.

Though Stroud was not quite as ready-made as his predecessor to open the season, struggling through early game jitters in each of the first three matches of the season and seeing similar issues against Penn State and Nebraska, Day saw something very close to mastery from his quarterback against Michigan State. The coach was so impressed that he offered the closest thing to an individual award endorsement that Ohio State – not exactly known for its willingness to promote individual players – might ever produce.

"His preparation has allowed him to be in these situations," Day said. "When you look at the way he's playing – not that this really matters to our team – when you only

play one half of football and throw for six touchdowns, that matters when you look at statistics. The level he's playing at right now is very high, and I think that needs to be taken into consideration."

And perhaps, if the remainder of the college football season continues to break as it has through 12 weeks, with no obvious favorite emerging in the race for the most coveted individual award in the sport, Stroud might be able to claim something that J.T. Barrett, Fields, Dwayne Haskins, Braxton Miller, Terrelle Pryor and countless other Ohio State quarterbacks never could in early December.

If his showing against Michigan State is any indication, it might be time for Ohio State to clear out some space in the trophy cabinet – so long as it does so after the Michigan game, because the man in charge doesn't want to see a single person in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center looking ahead or listening to the chatter – least of all his quarterback.

"I've told C.J. all along that praise and criticism are the same and that he has to treat it the same way," Day said. "The same people who thought that he shouldn't have been playing are the ones who are telling him that he's going to be the Heisman Trophy winner. You can't listen to it."

"C.J. has to stay focused on having a great night tonight, getting some rest, getting back here in the morning and starting on Michigan. He has to learn from what happened in this game and stay focused, and I hope he can do that because so far, he's been really steady even though there's been a lot of ups and downs. Right now, we're on an upswing, and being able to handle that is critically important – almost more than when things go bad. He just needs to keep putting one week in front of the other, learning, staying strong and not riding that roller coaster. That's put him where he is."

To his credit, the young passer is heeding that advice as best someone in his position likely could. While he struggled to contain his excitement while speaking to media after his performance, he took the same tack as his head coach on the importance of maintaining focus ahead of the biggest test of the season for the Buckeyes to date.

"I felt like we could do anything we wanted to today," Stroud started. "We had a great week of practice, a great week of preparation. They did some good things on defense, but everything we thought we were going to get, we kind of got it today. It was definitely good to go out there and execute at a high level."

"But I think everything could be better."



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"It all feels good, but we're already on to the next week."

### The Main Event

Though the Heisman Trophy remains one of the sport's largest side attractions, it is still just that – a side attraction – and Ohio State isn't willing to let it derail the main event as one regular-season game and potentially one conference title game stand between it and a third consecutive playoff berth and fifth overall since the CFP opened for business in 2014.

Before the Buckeyes can think about any of that, though – before they can even dream of a trip to Indianapolis for Dec. 4, which would mark the fifth consecutive conference title trip – they have that all-too-familiar foe to deal with Nov. 27. Its name echoed through every answer that the Buckeyes who took to the podium provided.

Day painted a picture of the matchup with Michigan State being only the first half of Ohio State's biggest two-game battle of the season. He even concluded his Heisman pitch for Stroud with a note about the archrivals to the north, shifting his team's gaze from its huge win against one top-10 foe onto its matchup with another almost as quickly as his squad had ended the game against Michigan State.

"Our focus is on 'The Team Up North'

right now and getting ready for those guys," Day said.

In fact, even the man in charge of the 10-1 Buckeyes found his focus drifting during the waning moments of Ohio State's blowout victory, away from Mel Tucker's top-10 squad and toward Jim Harbaugh's. Though the coach preaches living in the moment at every chance he gets, it's hard to fault him for thinking about what will easily be the most hyped regular-season matchup he's seen in his time at Ohio State.

"There's so much more here – we're right in the middle of it right now," Day said. "To take a step back and start to appreciate everything that's going on, you start to lose focus on what's going on. We have a huge game with everything riding on it coming up around the corner. The game wasn't over yet, and I was already thinking about it.

"We knew this run was going to be real, and I'm very proud of how we played today, but now it's time for the Wolverines."

That shift in focus is well-founded. Three hours to the north of Columbus, Harbaugh has quietly built one of the finest squads of his six-year tenure in Ann Arbor. Hours after Ohio State ran out the clock on Michigan State, Michigan moved to 10-1 on the season with a 59-18 dismantling of Maryland.

With comfortable game manager Cade McNamara running the offense, a pair of talented tailbacks in Blake Corum and Hassan Haskins, a young but talented pass-catchers room buoyed by wideout Cornelius Johnson and tight end Erick All, and a new-look defense led by coordinator Mike Macdonald, the Wolverines have of-

ten looked every bit their top-10 ranking this season.

They shredded Pac-12 rival Washington in week two by a 31-10 final, blasted a 38-17 hole in Wisconsin on Oct. 2, made narrow escapes against Nebraska and Penn State, and took care of business everywhere else with the exception of their lone loss against Michigan State after squandering a two-score, third-quarter advantage.

Their rushing attack is among the nation's best – 15th with 218.4 yards per game – and their defense has rebounded in a major way after the departure of man coverage-heavy coordinator Don Brown, who had often found himself the butt of jokes among Ohio State fans over his performances in The Game, including the 62-39 drubbing that Michigan suffered in 2018.

Now, Ohio State has one week to concoct a formula for winning in Ann Arbor, which no team has done this season but which the Buckeyes have succeeded in doing eight times in their last 10 trips.

"We've watched Michigan a little bit here and there, but you can't get too far ahead of yourself in the season because if you start doing that, you're going to lose the game at hand," Day said. "I've watched them a little bit, and they're a very good team. I have to watch more film to get a better idea, but I know that they're very strong, they have some really good players, and they're playing at a high level.

"When you play in the rivalry game, all the records go out the window. And now we're playing on the road, so there's a lot going into this week."

The Buckeyes and Wolverines are promised nothing beyond the opportunity to play each other at the end of the regular season, and a year after that was taken away by the coronavirus, the importance of this year's game can be felt in every step, every word, everything that both squads will do for the seven days between Nov. 20 and Nov. 27.

But for Day's troops, the five games that preceded The Game have been as much in preparation for it as they were games in themselves. The Buckeyes are – as they've said for the entire second half of the season – in survival mode. The time for warming up, for making changes, for talk of the playoff or the Heisman or anything else, is over. Michigan Week has descended upon Columbus.

"In the off week, we talked about a six-week season, and we knew it was going to be hard," Day said. "I have a lot of respect for the teams that we've played so far this year, when you look at how Penn State played us, how Nebraska, Purdue, Michigan State played us. These are all really good conference teams. We knew we were going to have to bring it every week. When you look at college football this year, that helped us understand it even more – there was evidence.

"Now, here's another one. Everything gets ramped up this week because of what it is and what's on the line all the time, but even more this year. The opportunity to go to Indianapolis and everything else. It's all on the line. We knew it was going to be like this. It's just the survival of the fittest."

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# Olave Chases Down Boston's Career TD Record

Chris Olave has played alongside some of the best receivers in Ohio State history, usually content to let others grab most of the spotlight. But when the junior receiver gathered in a 43-yard touchdown strike from C.J. Stroud late in the first quarter of a 56-7 rout of Michigan State, Olave chased down a program record that had been on the books longer than he has been alive.

David Boston amassed 34 touchdown re-

## GAME NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

ceptions during a three-year career at OSU from 1996-98, a record not seriously challenged since Devin Smith finished his days in scarlet and gray in 2007 with 30. Then along came Olave in 2018, sort of a recruiting diamond in the rough found in the San Diego area by OSU head coach Ryan Day while Day was scouting another prospect.

Beginning with three touchdowns in 2018, Olave steadily built on that total. He had a dozen during the 2019 season and seven more during last year's COVID-shortened campaign before has exploding this year thanks to the superlative season being enjoyed by Stroud.



SONNY BROCKWAY

**IN THE RECORD BOOKS — OSU senior receiver Chris Olave (2) caught two touchdown passes against Michigan State, giving him 35 for his career and moving him past David Boston on the program's all-time list for touchdown catches. The Big Ten career record is 39, held by former Michigan receiver Braylon Edwards.**

A perfect toss from Stroud over two Michigan State defenders to a waiting Olave in the back of the end zone not only got the Buckeyes off and running with their first touchdown of the romp. It also was the

12th TD catch of the season – matching his career best from 2019 – and the 34th of his career to tie Boston's record.

The record-breaker was a thing of absolute beauty. Stroud stepped into a pass that traveled nearly 60 yards on the fly and pinpointed a waiting Olave in the end zone. The official distance was 57 yards, but the touchdown catch was No. 13 of the season and No. 35 of his career for Olave.

Although he hasn't said much about the career record, it was clear what finally achieving it meant to him.

"I had to get the ball," a smiling Olave said during the postgame press conference, the record touchdown football tucked safely under his arm. "I broke the record, which was a huge blessing, but I forget to keep the ball. Somebody had to go get it for me, and they gave it to me after the game."

Making history isn't much of a new thing for Olave and his running buddies Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba. Before the 2021 season began, Ohio State had never had a single game in which it had three receivers each top the 100-yard mark. Olave, Wilson and JSN have now done it twice.

Smith-Njigba finished with 10 catches for 105 yards and a touchdown, while Olave had a game-high 140 yards and two scores on seven receptions. Wilson added 126 yards and two TDs on seven catches.

Perhaps best of all, at least in their quarterback's eyes, the trio combined to catch 24 of the 26 passes on which they were targeted.

"Chris, being a veteran and the older guy in the room, he brings a sense of leadership," Stroud said. "He has great speed, his routes are amazing and he just always beats his man. He's also great with yards after the catch."

"Garrett is just a freak athlete. He can do anything he wants to. He really doesn't get credit for it, but he's also a great blocker when other guys get bubbles or things of that sort. He's just a great player to play

with.

"Then Jaxon is probably the best route runner I've ever played with in my life. He's so crisp and so clean, and his body control is unbelievable. He jukes people out of their socks on a regular basis."

In addition to getting the touchdown record, Olave is closing in on several other OSU career marks. He now has 169 receptions, jumping him into third place all-time past Michael Jenkins (165, 1999-2003) and Cris Carter (168, 1984-86). He trails only K.J. Hill (201, 2016-19) and Boston (191, 1996-98).

Meanwhile, Olave now has 2,578 receiving yards, and that is good enough for sixth on the all-time list.

Smith-Njigba has caught fire the past three games, totaling 34 catches for 484 yards and four touchdowns against Nebraska, Purdue and Michigan State. His 1,132 yards this season now ranks third on the single-season list, and he is up to 79 career receptions for 1,181 yards and eight scores.

Finally, Wilson has caught five touchdown passes in his last two games, increasing his career total to 22. He is bearing down on a 1,000-yard season with 939 yards, and he has become the 10th player in program history to eclipse 2,000 career receiving yards.

So, who is the best of the bunch?

"We don't discuss the best player," Olave said. "We just try to get better every day. We've got a lot of talented receivers, but we've all got a different but similar skill set. We're all dangerous with the ball in our hands, but I feel like we're dangerous in different ways."

## Much-Improved Run D

Back when Minnesota tailback Mohamed Ibrahim gashed the Ohio State defense for 163 yards and two touchdowns in the season opener, and then Oregon running back CJ Verdell added 161 yards and two touchdowns of his own the following week, there must have been opposing running backs licking their chops at the chance to do their own kind of damage against the Buckeyes.

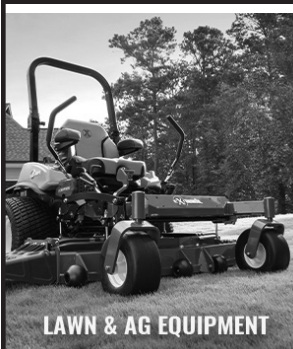
Kenneth Walker III of Michigan State had to be one of them. The Wake Forest transfer entered the Nov. 20 game against Ohio State with a Big Ten-leading and second-in-the-nation 1,473 yards on the ground as well as 17 touchdowns. Walker was riding the crest of three straight games during which he had cracked the century mark, and he had broken the 200-yard mark twice this season.

All of that production made Walker one of the favorites in this year's wide-open Heisman Trophy race, but that candidacy all but withered away against the new-and-improved Ohio State run defense. Walker was limited to a season-low 25 yards on just six carries. His previous low this season was 57 yards during a 42-14 blowout of Youngstown State on Sept. 11.

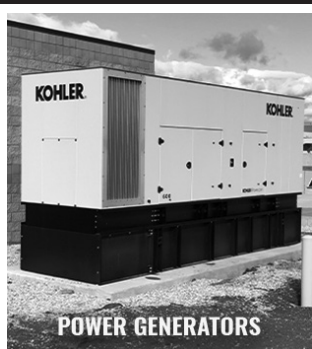
"The D-line and the linebackers took it as a challenge to stop the run," said OSU head coach Ryan Day. "We certainly had a lot of respect for Walker coming into the game and wanted to do a good job stopping the run to make them play one-dimensional,

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and I thought we did that.”

After the first two games of the 2021 season, the Buckeyes were surrendering an alarming average of 236.0 yards rushing per game. Since then, they have allowed an average of 74.1 yards to nine opponents. Not only has no single player gained 100 yards against OSU, only two teams – Rutgers and Nebraska – have cracked the century mark as a team.

Some point to the change in defensive philosophy Day initiated after the loss to Oregon when he supplanted defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs with secondary coach Matt Barnes in terms of play-calling duties on game day. But the players swear it is simply a matter of logging game experience.

“We have a lot of new faces – or we had a lot of new faces,” said OSU defensive tackle Haskell Garrett. “Now those guys have experience. They have experience with the older guys, and chemistry has been built on the field. These guys that were new faces aren’t new faces anymore. They’re known.”

As for the unique challenge of trying to stop one of the top running backs in college football, senior defensive end Tyreke Smith said it was mind over matter.

“We just decided to have a different mind-set about this week,” said Smith, who finished with two tackles, including one for loss, and a batted-down pass that was very nearly a pick-six. “We didn’t want to be one of those teams that (Walker) did what he wanted against, so we just had that mind-set that we were going to shut him down the whole week.

“We were playing the scout team like we were playing Kenneth, so we just took that mind-set and took it into the game. We took what we did in practice, put it into the game, and it paid off for us.”

### Game Notes

- The game marked the 51st overall meeting between Ohio State and Michigan State, and the Buckeyes now enjoy a 36-15 advantage. That includes a 17-9 record against the Spartans in Columbus – 17-8 at Ohio Stadium and 0-1 at Ohio Field.
- Michigan State has lost each of the last three and seven of the last nine times it has played at Ohio Stadium. The only wins for the Spartans in Columbus since 2000 are a 10-7 decision in 2011 and a 17-14 victory in 2015.
- Day is now 3-0 against Michigan State. The OSU head coach was not on the sideline in 2020 after testing positive for COVID-19, but the team’s 52-12 victory still counts on his record. Spartans head coach Mel Tucker fell to 0-2 all-time against Ohio State.
- Tucker was also 1-3 against the Buckeyes as a defensive back at Wisconsin during the early 1990s. As a graduate assistant on Nick Saban’s coaching staff at Michigan State in 1997 and ’98, Tucker was 1-1 against Ohio State.
- Tucker was defensive backs coach on Jim Tressel’s staff at Ohio State from 2001-03 and defensive coordinator in 2004. The Buckeyes were 2-0 against Michigan State during that time, winning a 33-23 decision in Columbus in 2003 and a 32-19 victory in East Lansing in 2004.
- Day upped his career record to 9-0 in November games. Meanwhile, Tucker fell to 4-6 lifetime during the month. He is now 2-4 in November games at Michigan State after going 2-2 during the month in his lone sea-

### What Worked Well

It is difficult to believe Ohio State’s offense could execute much better than it has the past two weeks. After rolling up 59 points and 624 total yards against Purdue, the Buckeyes followed with 56 points and 655 yards against Michigan State. The Spartans hadn’t given up that many points since a 56-21 loss to Wisconsin in the 2003 and hadn’t surrendered that many yards since a 50-10 loss to Nebraska in 1995 during which they gave up a devilish 666 yards.

OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud had his fourth 400-yard game of the season and equaled a program single-game record with six touchdown passes. The receiving trio of Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba each cracked the century mark, and even the running game got untracked late against a worn-out Michigan State defense.

The Ohio State defense was credited with only two sacks and no quarterback hurries, but ask Spartans QB Payton Thorne if he felt any pressure and his answer would likely be in the affirmative. He managed to complete only 14 of 36 attempts, a percentage of 38.9 against Stroud, who connected on a dizzying 91.4 percent of his 35 throws.

Add in a complete smothering of Heisman Trophy hopeful Kenneth Walker III (six carries, 25 yards) and you get a pretty clear picture of the complete domination of the Buckeyes.

### What Didn’t Work

Since Ohio State played a nearly flawless first half, it’s difficult to find fault with a team that got a little bored in the second half

son at Colorado in 2019.

- Day is now 13-3 against ranked opponents during his three-plus years at Ohio State. That includes a 5-2 mark vs. top-10 teams. In two seasons at Michigan State, Tucker is now 4-3 against ranked teams and 2-3 against top-10 opponents.
- Ohio State ran its all-time record to 10-7 in games played on Nov. 20. The first game in program history played on that date was a 26-6 loss at Oberlin in 1909.
- Michigan State’s all-time record dropped to 5-8 in games played on Nov. 20. The first game the Spartans played on that date was a 35-7 loss at Nebraska in 1920.
- The 56 points scored by Ohio State represented its largest total ever against Michigan State. The previous high was set during a 54-21 win against the Spartans in 1969.
- In its 132-year history, Ohio State had beaten an opponent only once by a 56-7 score. That was in 1973 vs. Minnesota.
- Ohio State has now won 26 consecutive regular-season conference games. That includes 13 games at Ohio Stadium and 13 on the road. The last time the Buckeyes lost a conference game was the 49-20 defeat at Purdue in 2018.
- OSU also ran its winning streak to 22 against ranked Big Ten opponents. The last time the Buckeyes lost to a ranked conference opponent was the 17-14 home loss to Michigan State in 2015.
- Ohio State is now 114-0 all-time when scoring 50 points or more.
- The Buckeyes are now 36-15 all-time when playing at a site hosting “ESPN College GameDay.” With 51 appearances in front of ESPN’s long-running kickoff show, Ohio State has now appeared more than any other program. It has hosted the GameDay crew a record 21 times.
- Stroud turned in the third-best single-game performance in terms of completion percentage in OSU history. His 32-for-35 performance gave him a .914 completion

## Game Analysis

playing cat to Michigan State’s mouse.

Backup QB Kyle McCord completed only 4 of 8 passes for 17 yards and telegraphed an interception early in the third quarter. And “Mr. Perfect” suddenly became human again when kicker Noah Ruggles finally missed a kick, pushing his 38-yard field-goal attempt wide to the right on OSU’s opening possession of the second half.

But if you have to point out the struggles of a backup quarterback and a missed field goal during a seven-touchdown victory, it was probably a pretty good day at the office.

### Play Of The Game

Ohio State was in attack mode from the get-go, immediately going for Michigan State’s jugular. Spartans defensive coordinator Scottie Hazelton had indicated he was going to try to implement much the same kind of coverage package that Stroud had picked apart the week before against Purdue. This time, though, the QB was even more precise, playing a game of pitch-and-catch with his open receivers. Stroud barely worked up a sweat completing 9 of 10 attempts on OSU’s opening drive, finishing things off with a perfect throw to Olave after the Ohio State receiver had split a pair of Michigan State defenders. That touchdown was followed by two more in rapid succession, and the Spartans were down 21-0 before they even knew what hit them.

– Mark Rea

percentage, trailing only Tate Martell (1,000, 10 for 10) vs. Rutgers in 2018 and Justin Fields (.952, 20 for 21) against Nebraska in 2020.

- Stroud became only the second Ohio State quarterback to reach the 300-yard mark in a game against Michigan State. JT Barrett threw for 300 during a 49-37 win against the Spartans in 2014.
- Stroud’s six touchdown passes also set a record for Ohio State QBs against the Spartans. In fact, only four quarterbacks had ever thrown for as many as three touchdowns against MSU – Barrett (2014), Troy Smith (2005), Craig Krenzel (2003) and Rex Kern (1969).
- Stroud fell one touchdown pass shy of

the Big Ten single-game record of seven set by Chuck Hartlieb of Iowa during a 52-24 win at Northwestern in 1987.

- Olave’s 140 receiving yards were the most for an OSU player in the Michigan State series since Santonio Holmes had 150 yards during a 35-24 win in 2005.
- With the game against the Spartans, Ohio State completed its 100th season playing its home games at Ohio Stadium. The victory moved OSU’s all-time record in the Horseshoe to 459-113-20, good for a .792 winning percentage. Since 2000, the Buckeyes are 137-15 at home, a .901 winning percentage.



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# Stroud, Olave Have Record Games In Rout Of Spartans

**By Craig Merz**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If this was a statement game, then Ohio State sent a clear message that the road to the Big Ten title still rolls through Columbus.

Using an epic performance from redshirt freshman quarterback C.J. Stroud and a record-setting performance by senior receiver Chris Olave, No. 4 Ohio State flattened No. 7 Michigan State 56-7 in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 20 to control its own destiny in the Big Ten East heading to the Nov. 27 showdown at Michigan.

Stroud played nearly perfectly in throwing six first-half touchdowns, and the Buckeyes (10-1, 8-0) made quick work of the Spartans (9-2, 6-2) by taking a 28-0 lead early in the second quarter before 101,858 fans for the noon kickoff and stretching it to 49-0 at the break.

Stroud's third TD late in the first quarter was the second of the game to Olave, breaking the OSU career record of 34 receiving touchdowns set by David Boston from 1996-98.

The six TDs for Stroud tied the school record, and he set a program record with 17 consecutive completions in the first half to break the mark of 16 by J.T. Barrett in 2017 and Justin Fields in 2020.

Stroud played one series in the third quarter and finished 32 of 35 for 432 yards.

"When we are out there clicking, getting first downs and catching the ball, we can score seven touchdowns in seven possessions at any time," Olave said.

## Fast Start

The game started ominously for the Buckeyes after Julian Fleming, subbing for the injured Emeka Egbuka, struggled with the opening kickoff before returning it 11 yards to the 14. On the first snap, Olave was called for a false start.

From there it was an almost flawless drive that featured Stroud completing nine



SONNY BROCKWAY

**PLENTY OF PROTECTION** - Thanks to protection like that pictured here with Ohio State center Luke Wypler (53) keeping Michigan State defensive lineman Maverick Hansen (97) at bay, OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud (7) threw for 432 yards and six touchdowns during a 56-7 win against the Spartans.

of 10 passes for 76 yards, concluding with a 23-yard strike to Olave across the middle at 10:42 for a 7-0 lead. The drive covered 86 yards in 4:12 and 12 plays and included six first downs.

TreVeyon Henderson had a 10-yard run, and Garrett Wilson had a 12-yard catch before Olave tied Boston's record with TD No. 34.

It took just four plays after an MSU punt to make it 14-0 at 8:03 on a 77-yard TD catch by Wilson. Henderson converted a third-and-2 from the OSU 20 by gaining 3 yards before Stroud found Wilson.

Michigan State drove into OSU territory but got nothing thanks to a play by freshman cornerback Denzel Burke. The Spartans faced a third-and-10 from the Buckeye 29

when Jayden Reed made a contested catch at the 19.

Burke was able to punch the ball away and after a review, it was ruled an incompleteness. Matt Coghlin then missed a 46-yard field-goal try.

The Buckeyes took over at the 29, and four plays later it was 21-0 with 2:31 left in the first quarter. Jaxon Smith-Njigba had



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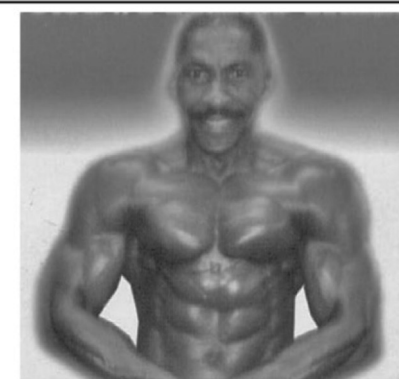


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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE



SONNY BROCKWAY

**SPREADING THE WEALTH - OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud connected with favorite receivers Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba for five touchdowns against Michigan State, but he also completed a 4-yard scoring strike to Julian Fleming (4), who notched his first career touchdown catch.**

catches of 6 and 15 yards to the 50. Henderson ran for 7 before Olave's historic 43-yard grab to surpass Boston.

Stroud and friends took advantage of a turnover for a 28-0 lead 55 seconds into the second quarter on a 4-yard TD catch by Julian Fleming, his first career touchdown.

OSU got the ball at the Spartans 44 after Ronnie Hickman forced a fumble by Jordon Simmons that Ty Hamilton recovered. On the ensuing scoring drive, Smith-Njigba had a grab for 16 and Henderson rushed 9 to the 16 on the final play of the quarter.

Stroud opened the second with a scramble for 7, and Henderson gained 5 more to set up the TD.

Another MSU punt after a three-and-out led to another score to make it 35-0 with a six-play, 70-yard 2:46 drive that ended with Miyan Williams' 1-yard run and featured an outstanding over-the-shoulder 27-yard catch at the 1 by Olave on the preceding play for Stroud's 17th straight completion.

During the possession, Williams had a

14-yard carry and Smith-Njigba's two catches totaled 22 yards.

Michigan State entered the game last in pass defense among the 130 FBS schools at 329.0 yards allowed per game, and Stroud surpassed that number by 1 yard at 7:01 of the second quarter with his 12-yard TD toss to Wilson to increase the margin to 42-0.

Henderson started the six-play, 57-yard, 2:15 series by ripping off 18 yards to the MSU 39. Stroud then ended his completion streak by being off target to Wilson, but it was only a temporary setback. Henderson gained 3, Smith-Njigba added 8 off a catch, and Olave got the ball to the 12 with a 16-yard reception prior to Wilson's score.

Stroud's sixth TD came with 1:37 remaining before halftime, a rollout and 5-yard sling to an open Smith-Njigba. The Buckeyes used 10 plays to go 85 yards in 3:52.

Tight end Jeremy Ruckert fueled the drive with a 28-yard catch on the first snap. Later, Williams had a 19-yard tote, and

Olave snagged a 15-yarder from Stroud.

Stroud in the first half was 29 of 31 for 393 yards as the Buckeyes outgained the Spartans 500-116.

### Finish It Out

The Buckeyes failed to score on their first possession of the second half when Noah Ruggles missed a 38-yard field-goal try, his first failure after making his first 16 this season. Master Teague had 37 yards on five carries during the drive.

Michigan State made it 49-7 five seconds into the final quarter on a 12-yard pass from Payton Thorne to Keon Coleman at the end of a 51-yard drive that used eight plays and 2:32. MSU got the ball after Kyle McCord threw an interception during his first series, giving the Spartans the ball at their own 49.

Teague – in likely his final home game – scored from the 1 with 3:30 left for the final 56-7 score. On the 16-play, 75-yard drive in 8:32, he carried 10 times for 48 yards.

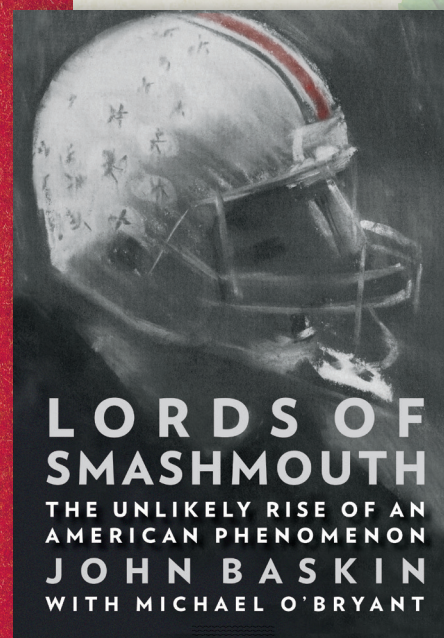
He led the Buckeyes with 95 yards on 21

carries.

Following MSU's ninth punt, heralded freshman QB Quinn Ewers made his debut to a roaring ovation and handed off twice to Robert Cope for 2 yards each to end the game at the Ohio State 6.

### Notes

Olave had 140 yards on seven catches, Wilson's seven catches went for 126 yards, and Smith-Njigba had 105 yards on 10 receptions. ... MSU's Kenneth Walker III was the nation's leading rusher at 147.3 yards per game but was held to 25 in six carries. ... Ohio State had 655 total yards (449 passing, 206 rushing) with 36 first downs. MSU gained 224 (158, 66) and 12 firsts. ... The Buckeye were 5 of 6 in the red zone with the FG the only blemish. ... The Spartans had two sacks for 11 yards. OSU had two for 10 by Haskell Garrett and Tyleik Williams.



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# The Numbers Game

## Ohio State 56, Michigan State 7

Nov. 20, 2021 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MICHIGAN STATE	0	0	0	7	7
OHIO STATE	21	28	0	7	56

### First Quarter

**OSU** – Olave, 23-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 10:42; 12 plays, 86 yards, 4:12 TOP.

**OSU** – Wilson, 77-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 8:03; 4 plays, 88 yards, 1:16 TOP.

**OSU** – Olave, 43-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 2:31; 4 plays, 71 yards, 1:24 TOP.

### Second Quarter

**OSU** – Fleming, 4-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 14:05; 6 plays, 44 yards, 1:48 TOP.

**OSU** – Williams, 1-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 10:02; 6 plays, 70 yards, 2:46 TOP.

**OSU** – Wilson, 12-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 7:01; 6 plays, 57 yards, 2:15 TOP.

**OSU** – Smith-Njigba, 5-yard pass (Ruggles kick), 1:37; 10 plays, 85 yards, 3:52 TOP.

### Fourth Quarter

**MSU** – Coleman, 12-yard pass from Thorne (Rusnak kick), 14:45; 8 plays, 51 yards, 2:32 TOP.

**OSU** – Teague III, 1-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 3:30; 16 plays, 75 yards, 8:32 TOP.

**Att.** – 101,858

**Weather** – 40 degrees, cloudy

Team Statistics		
	MSU	OSU
First Downs	12	36
Rushing	5	13
Passing	7	21
Penalty	0	2
Rushes-Yards	21-66	43-206
Passing Yards	158	449
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	16-38-0	36-43-1
Offensive Plays	59	86
Total Net Yards	224	655
Third Down Efficiency	5-16	6-9
Punts-Avg.	9-49.7	1-50.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-0
Penalties	3-30	1-5
Time of Possession	22:02	37:58

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – MSU:** Collins 3-29; Walker III 6-25; Simmons 7-23; Joiner 1-(-2); Thorne 4-(-9). **OSU:** Teague 21-95; Henderson 9-63; Williams 4-35; McCord 2-9; Wilson 1-5; Coper 2-4; TEAM 1-(-1); Stroud 3-(-4).

**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – MSU:** Thorne 14-36-0-158-1; Russo 2-2-0-0-0. **OSU:** Stroud 32-35-0-432-6; McCord 4-8-1-17-0.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – MSU:** Heyward 4-20; Coleman 3-27; Hunt 2-30; Reed 2-28; Mosley 1-46; Walker III 1-4; Collins 1-3; Fitzpatrick 1-2; Simmons 1-(-2). **OSU:** Smith-Njigba 10-105; Olave 7-140; Wilson 7-126; Williams 3-16; Wiglusz 2-14; Henderson 2-8; Fleming 2-8; Ruckert 1-28; Rossi 1-5; Scott Jr. 1-(-1).

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.) – MSU:** Baringer 9-49.7. **OSU:** Mirco 1-50.0.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MSU:** None. **OSU:** Smith-Njigba 4-27.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) MSU:** Reed 4-72; FOster 2-39. **OSU:** Fleming 1-11.

**MISSED FIELD GOALS – MSU:** Coghlin (46). **OSU:** Ruggles (38).

**FORCED FUMBLES – MSU:** Williams Jr. **OSU:** Hickman.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES – MSU:** None. **OSU:** Hamilton 1-0.

**INTERCEPTIONS – MSU:** White 1-10. **OSU:** None.

**SACKS – MSU:** Hansen 1.0-8; Beesley 1.0-3. **OSU:** Garrett 1.0-8; Williams 1.0-2.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS – MSU:** Hansen 1.0-8; Beesley 1.0-3; Harvey 1.0-3; Snow 1.0-2; VanSumeran 1.0-1; Jordan 0.5-1; Mallory 0.5-1. **OSU:** Williams 2.0-3; Garrett 1.0-8; Smith 1.0-4; Williams 1.0-2; Vincent 1.0-1; Cage 0.5-1; Eichenberg 0.5-1; Jean-Baptiste 0.5-1; Ransom 0.5-1; Young 0.5-1; Chambers 0.5-0.

**TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – MSU:** Snow 13-3-16; Grose 8-0-8; Henderson 5-2-7; Kimbrough 4-3-7; Harvey 3-2-5; Williams Jr. 3-1-4; VanSumeran 3-1-4; Dowell 1-3-4; Mallory 1-3-4; Hansen 1-3-4; Lowery 3-0-3; Haladay 2-1-3; Cruch 1-2-3; Beesley 2-0-2; Gaoteote 1-1-2; Pietrowski 1-1-1; Slade 0-2-2; Joiner 1-0-1; Mosley 1-0-1; Brooks 1-0-1; Pepper 1-0-1; Jordan 0-1-1; Fletcher 0-1-1. **OSU:** Williams 5-2-7; Eichenberg 2-5-7; Martinez 3-1-4; Hickman 2-1-3; Shaw 2-1-3; Young 1-2-3; Chambers 1-2-3; Vincent 2-0-2; Smith 1-1-2; Garrett 1-1-2; Ransom 1-1-2; Williamson 1-0-1; Simon 1-0-1; Harrison 1-0-1; Burke 1-0-1; Hancock 1-0-1; Mitchell 1-0-1; Wiglusz 1-0-1; Williams 1-0-1; Cowan 1-0-1; Cage 0-1-1; Brown 0-1-1; Jean-Baptiste 0-1-1; Hamilton 0-1-1; Cavazos 0-1-1; Carrico 0-1-1; Sawyer 0-1-1.

### Players In The Game

**MSU** – Reed, Walker III, Thorne, Heyward, Mosley, Allen, Duplain, Bueter, Jarvis, Arcuri, Hunt, Henderson, Booth, Grose, Snow, Wright, Lowery, Harvey, Slade, Beesley, Panasiuk, Hansen, Coleman, Jordan, Joiner, Lockett, Hayes, Coghlin, Fletcher, Crouch, Carr, Dowell, Williams Jr., Gaoteote, Kimbrough, VanSumeren, Crump, Russo, Fitzpatrick, Brown, Flowers, Simmons, Collins, Haladay, Hallock, White, Pepper, Eaglin, Brooks, Rowland, Harmon, Berghorst, Pietrowski, King, Brown, Samac, Campbell, VanOpstall, Ohonba, Foster, McDonald, Mallory, Rusnak, Hunt, Baringer.

**OSU** – Olave, Wilson, Stroud, Henderson, Rossi, Wypler, Munford, Johnson Jr., Petit-Frere, Jones, Ruckert, Harrison, Smith, Hickman, Young, Shaw, Chambers, Brown, Burke, Simon, Jackson, Garrett, McCall, Williams, Mitchell, Ewers, Fleming, Cavazos, Williamson, Vincent, McCord, Stover, Jean-Baptiste, Martinez, Smith-Njigba, Ransom, Scott Jr., Hancock, Watts, Harrison Jr., DiMaccio, Johnson, Williams, Carrico, Mirco, Teague, Sawyer, Eichenberg, Robinson, McFarquhar, Cope, Batsch, Tuimolouau, Kacherski, Hall Jr., Jones, Cox, Hamilton, Vimahi, James, Fryar, Jackson, Rau, Wiglusz, Mitchell, Hamilton, Royer, Kutscher, Cage, Booker, Williams, Cowan, Ruggles.

## Season Statistics

2021-22 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 2	(4) at Minnesota	W, 45-31	50,805
Sept. 11	(3) OREGON (12)	L, 35-28	100,482
Sept. 18	(9) TULSA	W, 41-20	76,540
Sept. 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	W, 26-17	84,426
Nov. 13	(6) PURDUE	W, 59-31	101,009
Nov. 20	(5) MICHIGAN STATE (7)	W, 56-7	101,858
Nov. 27	(2) at Michigan (6)	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	297	228
Rushing	109	71
Passing	175	135
Penalty	13	22
Average Per Game/Rush	197.6	102.3
Average Per Game/Pass	362.3	252.1
Total Offense	6159	3898
Total Plays	771	780
Average Per Game	559.9	354.4
Average Per Play	8.0	5.0
Penalties-Yards	68-634	50-427
Fumbles-Lost	8-2	14-7
Third Down Efficiency	69-128	67-166
Percentage	54%	40%
Fourth Down Efficiency	6-13	8-17
Percentage	46%	47%
Sacks-Yards	36-240	13-106
Time Of Possession Avg.	29:30	30:30

Score							
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	121	199	114	85	0	519	47.2
Opponents	40	61	70	38	0	209	19.0

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	
	Long				
T. Henderson	149	1091	7.3	14	68
Master Teague	67	355	5.3	4	21
Miyan Williams	62	471	7.6	2	71
C.J. Stroud	25	0	0.0	0	15
Evan Pryor	21	98	4.7	1	16
Marcus Crowley	20	103	5.2	0	22
TEAM	9	-10	-1.1	0	0
Kyle McCord	9	-16	-1.8	0	7
Jack Miller III	5	-1	-0.2	0	8
Garrett Wilson	4	76	19.0	1	51
Robert Cope	2	4	2.0	0	2
OSU Totals	373	2174	5.8	23	71
OPP Totals	363	1125	3.1	9	77

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
C.J. Stroud	246	346	71.1	3468	36-5	186.7
Kyle McCord	25	38	65.8	416	2-2	164.6
Jack Miller III	7	14	50.0	101	0-0	110.6
OSU Totals	278	398	69.8	3985	38-7	181.9
OPP Totals	251	417	60.2	2773	18-11	125.0

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	69	1132	16.4	6	75
Garrett Wilson	60	939	15.7	11	77
Chris Olave	58	848	14.6	13	61
Jeremy Ruckert	23	284	12.3	3	30
TreVeyon Henderson	18	231	12.8	3	70
Miyan Williams	8	68	8.5	0	17
Julian Fleming	7	51	7.3	1	17
Emeka Egbuka	6	145	24.2	0	85
Cade Stover	5	76	15.2	0	25
Marvin Harrison Jr.	5	68	13.6	0	20
Gee Scott Jr.	5	42	8.4	0	16
Mitch Rossi	3	6	2.0	0	5
Chris Booker	2	27	13.5	0	16
Sam Wiglusz	2	14	7.0	0	9
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
OSU Totals	278	3985	14.4	38	85
OPP Totals	251	2773	11.0	18	75

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Noah Ruggles	-65-65	-	-	-	16-17	113
T. Henderson	17	-	-	-	-	102
Chris Olave	13	-	-	-	-	78
Garrett Wilson	12	-	-	-	-	72
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	6	-	-	-	-	36
Master Teague III	4	-	-	-	-	24
Jeremy Ruckert	3	-	-	-	-	18
Miyan Williams	3	-	-	-	-	18
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
Julian Fleming	1	-	-	-	-	6
Marvin Harrison Jr.	0	-	-	-	-	2
Dominic DiMaccio	0	2-2	-	-	-	2
OSU Totals	67	67-67	-	-	16-17	519
OPP Totals	27	26-27	-	-	7-12	209

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Noah Ruggles	6-6	6-7	4-4	0-0	16-17
OSU Totals	6-6	6-7	4-4	0-0	16-17
OPP Totals	1-1	3-4	3-7	0-0	7-12

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Jesse Mirco	25	1049	42.0	0	62
OSU Totals	25	1049	42.0	0	62
OPP Totals	62	2714	43.8	0	74

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
Steele Chambers	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	11	286	26.0	4	70
OPP Totals	6	48	8.0	0	23

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Garrett Wilson	14	68	4.9	0	23
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	7	55	7.9	0	21
Chris Olave	1	4	4.0	0	4
OSU Totals	22	127	5.8	0	23
OPP Totals	5	24	4.8	0	9

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	13	417	32.1	0	67
Xavier Johnson	2	37	18.5	0	22
TreVeyon Henderson	1	19	19.0	0	19
Steele Chambers	1	13	13.0	0	13
Julian Fleming	1	11	11.0	0	11
OSU Totals	18	497	27.6	0	67
OPP Totals	28	424	15.1	0	23

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Ronnie Hickman	49	36	85	1.0-4	1.0-4
Cody Simon	19	28	47	2.0-13	1.0-11
Bryson Shaw	24	20	44	0.5-1	-
Teradja Mitchell	20	24	44	4.5-12	-
Tommy Eichenberg	20	22	42	3.5-9	-
Steele Chambers	20	16	36	4.0-11	1.0-7
Lathan Ransom	19	14	33	2.0-8	1.0-7
Denzel Burke	22	7	29	-	-
Zach Harrison	21	7	28	7.0-22	4.0-17
Marcus Williamson	16	9	25	0.5-3	-
Antwuan Jackson	11	11	22	4.5-20	2.5-16
Tyreke Smith	10	12	22	5.0-24	3.0-19
Kourt Williams	15	6	21	2.0-3	-
Haskell Garrett	12	9	21	7.0-33	5.5-31
Cameron Brown	15	5	20	-	-
Cameron Martinez	11	6	17	0.5-4	-
Taron Vincent	8	8	16	3.5-6	0.5-2
Tyleik Williams	9	5	14	5.5-44	5.0-43
Craig Young	6	8	14	0.5-1	-
J. Jean-Baptiste	6	7	13	2.5-19	1.5-13
J.T. Tuimolouau	5	7	12	3.5-27	2.5-24
Jack Sawyer	9	3	12	3.0-24	3.0-24
OSU Totals	420	340	760	70.0-314	36.0-240
OPP Totals	437	262	699	35.0-142	13.0-106

**Fumbles Forced:** 11 – Harrison (2), Booker, Chambers, Hickman, McKenzie, Ransom, Sawyer, Smith, Williams, Williamson.

**Fumbles Recovered:** 7 – Cage (2), Garrett (2), Eichenberg, Gaoteote IV, Hamilton.



# BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 56, Michigan State 7

**Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on his team's offensive explosion:** "When you stay on schedule like we've done, stayed away from penalties and then finished off drives, (that makes a difference). I thought the running game was efficient. For the most part, when we were hitting our runs, they were really good. There was one point where we took a sack, it was second-and-long and then we ran for a big gain and got a first down. Those are the things, when you get back on schedule like that, that gets us going. When we get a new set of downs, we're dangerous. Another set of downs means open space. The more we can keep the chains moving, the better we are."

**Michigan State head coach Mel Tucker's assessment of the game:** "That's a very talented team. In all three phases, they outplayed us. They were the much better team today, and that was obvious. We knew what they were capable of doing, and we knew we had to stop them. We didn't stop them. They can score early, get up on you, get the crowd into it and then it's a wrap."

**Tucker on what he told his players after the game:** "I told them, 'I don't want to hear a word on the bus or on the plane. We've got a 30-minute plane ride (and) there's nothing to talk about.'"

**Ohio State defensive tackle Haskell Garrett on playing with a lead:** "It comes down to getting the ball. That team that we're playing, when we get 14-0 up, we need to play better defense. We need to go out there and stop them because that's when teams are highly motivated to come out and score and get in the red zone. When that happens, we just really need to be on our P's and Q's when it comes to us getting up that fast."

**Garrett on how his early third-quarter sack set the tempo for the second half:** "I truly believe that once anyone on the defense sets the tone, it's just like a ball of snow. Once it gets rolling down the hill, everybody gravitates to it. I just feel that by me coming out and setting the tone, it gravitated to everybody else on the team."

**OSU defensive end Tyreke Smith on if the defense feeds off the offense's energy:** "I think both sides of the ball feed off each other. When we're doing good, we come out there and get a three-and-out, that helps the offense (with field position). When they come out scoring, getting points on the board early, we're coming

out with three-and-outs, that's just good chemistry coming together. Like Haskell said, it's like a snowball effect. We keep bouncing off each other, bouncing our energy off each other. The more it happens, the more we get better."

**Day on getting his starters out of the game after Ohio State went up big:** "At one point, we wanted to get some guys rest in the second half. We were up seven touchdowns and felt like it was smart going into next week. The guys wanted to keep playing, and I had to talk some of them off the ledge because they were upset about not getting back into the game. But it was the right thing to do."

**Day on the skill sets of his wide receivers:** "Chris (Olave) is such a weapon down the field. He did a nice job on a couple of other things today – bubble screens and things like that. His running after the catch has been really good. He's just fast – zero to 10, off the charts. Garrett (Wilson) is just so strong and so sudden. His catch radius is extraordinary. Jaxon Smith-Njigba is so quick inside with his spatial awareness, ability to set guys up and then change directions. He has tremendous ball skills as well and really knows how to run routes."

**Day on who else stood out on offense:** "I was impressed with the way Julian Fleming played today. He stepped up in a big way. He blocked and we ran a pop pass right behind him, and that was great to see him contributing. He's been in and out with injuries. He's another guy who's strong, makes strong strides and can play the ball up high."

**OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud on the offensive line giving him time to throw:** "My O-line did a great job the whole game with pass pro. (Michigan State) did some things like trying to twist the two linebackers internal and bringing the ends off the rush, and we did a great job of keeping them out of there. Seriously, I was just back there chilling in a sense. That all came about because of the preparation we had done all week. I wish I could have gotten Ruck (tight end Jeremy Ruckert) the ball a little more, but I thought everybody did a great job."

**Stroud on what he saw from the Michigan State defense:** "They gave us a little bit of pressure, some different coverages like Cover 6, some 3-Fire, some Cover 1 – we really didn't get too much man (coverage). They played a little more Cover-2 than we thought we

were going to get. But there were just a lot of things I could see before they happened, but that's because of preparation. We had another great week of practice."

**Smith on the Ohio State defense building momentum off turnovers and stops:** "It puts it through the roof. The more we get turnovers, stops and three-and-outs, I feel like that just raises our attributes. I feel like when we're doing that, it just makes me want to go out there, play hard and get another one – get another three-and-out, get another fumble. We thrive off that, so when we get that, you see the sideline getting turned, you see the sideline jumping and getting hyped. So when we see that, we just want that to keep happening. We're just always trying to do what we can for our teammates to make the other side thrive. It's been working for us."

**Stroud on what he said to quarterback Kyle McCord after his interception:** "I just told him to trust himself, believe in his ability and just to let it go. I saw from the sideline what he saw, and it was a tough coverage. I told him that was a great learning aspect in the game. It was good for him to get something like that under his belt so he can learn from it."

**Garrett on his experience during Senior Day:** "It was very emotional during the week, but I knew the first objective was to beat this team and put my brothers first. I soaked it all in, looked around, saw the fans while I had my pads on, and when I come back, I won't have my pads on. It was truly a special moment, and I just thank all the fans and all of the love they give us."

**Smith on how Ohio State prepares for the Michigan game:** "We've just been preparing for that team all winter and all summer. We just have that game always on our minds and in the back of our heads, and now it's here. We've just got to do what we've been doing – practice hard and go into that game with a good mind-set."

**Garrett on the upcoming rivalry game:** "We're really excited. This is what this game is always about. There are always big stakes in the rivalry. They're a good team every year, and they bring it. We're excited to play them."



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# Harbaugh Having Fun Again With Young Group

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

BSB Associate Editor

Michigan never looked as though it was having a particularly good time during the shortened 2020 campaign. Without several projected stars, either through injury in the case of defensive end Aidan Hutchinson or by way of opt-outs by wideout Nico Collins and cornerback Ambry Thomas, the Wolverines were lethargic and lacking in top-end ability throughout the season.

At times, it even looked as though head coach Jim Harbaugh – in his sixth season on the job after being hailed as a program savior when he was hired before the 2015 season – was something of a lame duck, the likelihood of his impending firing increasing with each loss. Speculation reached a peak during what proved to be the final week of the COVID-shortened season with a 10-point loss to a 4-5 Penn State squad to drop U-M to a 2-4 finish, the worst winning percentage since Rich Rodriguez’s debut season in 2008.

Rather than move on from the prototypical Michigan man, however, the Wolverines offered Harbaugh a small vote of confidence, extending his contract – which had been set to expire after the season – through 2025. With that, however, the man in charge in Ann Arbor took a 50-percent pay cut (from \$8 million in 2020 to \$4 million this season) and moved on from several longtime assistants.

No move was more significant than the release of defensive coordinator Don Brown, who had been in Ann Arbor since 2016 and worked to build top units in 2016 and 2018 but had struggled to adapt with a depleted group in 2019 and 2020.

The changes in staff and approach were enough for Harbaugh to survive the most tumultuous season of his Michigan tenure, but the coach entered 2021 on a seat as hot as any other coach in the Big Ten and in need of a big season to rid his program of the anxiety over a potential firing that had loomed for the entire 2020 campaign. With a young team and a new-look defensive staff led by former NFL assistant Mike Macdonald as the defensive coordinator, playoff and Big Ten contention wasn’t necessarily a must, but imperative were positive improvement, easy bowl qualification and the elimination of the malaise that had set in over the program.

The remade Wolverines responded with an 8-0 start to the season and now enter their annual matchup with Ohio State sitting at 10-1, a win away from representing the Big Ten East in the conference title game for the first time. It seems a little heat under the seat can get the job done.

Even more than by a pressure-inspiring improvement, Michigan has been helped along in its resurgence by the emergence of young stars at almost every position. A team that entered the season with major questions all over the field sits now with answers for nearly every one of them, from quarterback to the defensive backfield and everywhere in between.

In that ever-important spot atop the offense, Harbaugh has turned to his bread and butter, entrusting his offense to a quarterback who has embraced the game manager tag that so many Harbaugh quarterbacks have earned.

Cade McNamara, the undersized (6-1, 212 pounds) Nevada native, earned the job late in 2020 after bursting onto the scene as the only member of the team capable of comfortably commanding the system of offensive coordinator Josh Gattis. Although five-star 2021 signee

JJ. McCarthy has come on strong this season and is seeing spot duty, McNamara remained the only QB that Harbaugh felt he could trust on the roster this season, even as he’s dealt with a few minor injuries.

Michigan has been rewarded in its trust of McNamara. Though he’s still certainly not John Elway or Brett Favre, launching the ball on a rope 60 yards down the field, McNamara has been masterful at his best and competent at his worst in leading his RPO-heavy attack. Through Nov. 20, he had completed 64.2 percent of his passes this season, racked up 2,142 yards and tallied 14 touchdowns against only two interceptions. Beyond that, he’s been cool-headed when the Wolverines have needed him most, delivering a game-winning drive against Penn State on Nov. 13 and doing more than enough to topple Michigan State on Oct. 30 when the Wolverine defense faltered during a 37-33 loss.

“He’s just poised,” U-M offensive lineman Trevor Keegan said of McNamara. “He knows his work. He knows everything that the defense is going to do. He stays and watches film until like 9:45-10 o’clock (at night) during the week. He’s always prepared, and that’s what makes him so poised. It’s awesome. We feed off that. We want to work as hard as him.”

McNamara has impressed his coach, too, and not just in his throws and improvement as a passer. The quarterback makes the entire offense go, working as an extension of Harbaugh and Gattis on the field to make sure the offense has made the correct call for any given defensive look.

“Some of the things you don’t see in the running game are the quarterback getting us into the right play,” Harbaugh said. “We don’t have a lot of sacks, and a lot of times that’s the quarterback getting us in the right protection. He’s earned the starting job. He’s doing a very good job.”

On the other end of McNamara’s passes has been a rotating cast of wideouts.

Michigan is without its top receiver after an early-season injury to Ronnie Bell ended his 2021 campaign, but in his place, the Wolverines have been able to rely on someone new to step up each week, be it junior wideouts Cornelius Johnson (34 receptions, 539 yards and three touchdowns) and Mike Sainristil (19, 267, 2), junior tight end Erick All (31, 324, 1), sophomore WR Roman Wilson (20, 241, 2) or impressive freshman wideout Andre Anthony (9, 202, 2).

Against the Nittany Lions, All earned the nod and delivered, snaring a McNamara pass on a mesh play and taking it the distance from 47 yards out despite a bum ankle to deliver Michigan a 21-17 victory that kept it in the hunt for the Big Ten East crown. Two weeks prior against the Spartans, it was Anthony who made his presence felt as the freshman pulled in six receptions for 155 yards and the first two scores of his career.

None of the wideouts has emerged as a star, but Michigan’s offense, designed around getting everyone involved, has not been without contributors it can trust. For Harbaugh, who has talked at length about how he’s having fun again after that miserable 2020 season, the rotating cast of characters is a feature, not something to be concerned about.

“We’re just going about it every day to have good days – at the beginning of the season, the middle of the season and now (after the Penn State game),” Harbaugh said. “We’re just trying to have good days, good meetings, good practices and then go play the games. It’s great. I love the team.”

## Get To Know ... Michigan

**2021 Record:** 10-1.

**Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters Returning – Offense 2, Defense 8, Specialists 2.

**Head Coach:** Jim Harbaugh, 7th year at Michigan, 58-23.

**Series History:** 117th meeting; Michigan leads 58-52-6.

**School Facts:** Location – Ann Arbor, Mich.; Enrollment – 44,718; Nickname – Wolverines; Colors – Maize, Blue; Conference – Big Ten (East Division); Stadium – Michigan Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity – 107,601).

### Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Hassan Haskins	216	1063	4.9	13
Blake Corum	129	778	6.0	10
Donovan Edwards	27	149	5.5	2

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Cade McNamara	170-265	64.2	2142	14-2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Cornelius Johnson	34	539	15.9	3
Erick All	31	324	10.5	1
Roman Wilson	20	241	12.1	2

### Team Offensive Stats

**Points Per Game** – 36.9

**Rushing Yards Per Game** – 218.4

**Passing Yards Per Game** – 229.5

**Total Offense Avg. Per Game** – 447.9

### 2021 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Sept. 4	WESTERN MICHIGAN	W, 47-14
Sept. 11	WASHINGTON	W, 31-10
Sept. 18	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	W, 63-10
Sept. 25	RUTGERS	W, 20-13
Oct. 2	at Wisconsin	W, 38-17
Oct. 9	at Nebraska	W, 32-29
Oct. 23	NORTHWESTERN	W, 33-7
Oct. 30	at Michigan State	L, 37-33
Nov. 6	INDIANA	W, 29-7
Nov. 13	at Penn State	W, 21-17
Nov. 20	at Maryland	W, 59-18
Nov. 27	OHIO STATE	Noon
Dec. 4	Big Ten Championship	TBA

### Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds	Sacks
Josh Ross	41	39	80	7.5-18	0.5-4
Daxton Hill	33	20	53	3.5-13	0.5-4
Junior Colson	23	28	51	0.5-4	0.5-4
Aidan Hutchinson	27	20	47	11.5-51	10.0-49
N. Hill-Green	32	11	43	2.0-5	–
Brad Hawkins	28	12	40	3.0-5	–
David Ojabo	20	10	30	10.0-73	10.0-73
Vincent Gray	22	8	30	3.5-32	1.0-7
Mazi Smith	13	17	30	1.5-3	–

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg TD
DJ Turner	2	23	11.5 0
Daxton Hill	2	5	2.5 0
Gemon Green	1	27	27.0 0

### Team Defensive Stats

**Points Per Game Allowed** – 16.3

**Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed** – 128.3

**Passing Yards Per Game Allowed** – 178.4

**Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed** – 306.6

Heisman candidate in a year with no obvious front-runner.

“We’re going to be biased on this one,” Harbaugh said after Hutchinson notched three sacks against PSU. “Can there be a better guy, a better player than him out there anywhere? I don’t know. I haven’t seen it. I’m probably biased, but he’s that kind of player.”

Do-it-all outside linebacker David Ojabo has been the biggest surprise of the year for the Wolverines, teaming with Hutchinson to create one of the nation’s most lethal pass-rushing combos, racking up 30 tackles and a Big Ten-leading 10 sacks of his own. Born in Nigeria and raised in Scotland, Ojabo started playing football only a few years before he arrived in Ann Arbor, and though he’s far from a complete linebacker – that job falls to veteran ILB Josh Ross – he’s been a menace off the edge all year.

“Ojabo, he’s crazy,” senior defensive back DJ. Turner said. “He can come off the edge, tackle, force fumbles. He does it all, for real. I don’t know anyone that I’ve seen personally grow as fast as he did.”

The secondary is led by another star in junior safety Daxton Hill, an All-America candidate who, along with secondary partners Gemon Green and Vincent Gray at cornerback and Brad Hawkins at safety, has seen a significant jump this season with Macdonald’s implementation of zone defenses. The pass rush and front seven have been the story for the U-M defense, but the secondary looks rejuvenated after its struggles in 2020.

“We just have a lot more calls,” Hill said. “Last year, we didn’t really have much (freedom) to show our true talents. Now, I feel like we have more freedom to do whatever we want. We have a lot more tools to pull from. Whether it’s our talents or the coach’s calls. We’ve got a good year going for us.

“I love it. I know what I can do on the field, and I know what my teammates can do. I feel like that’s a good thing with Coach Macdonald.”





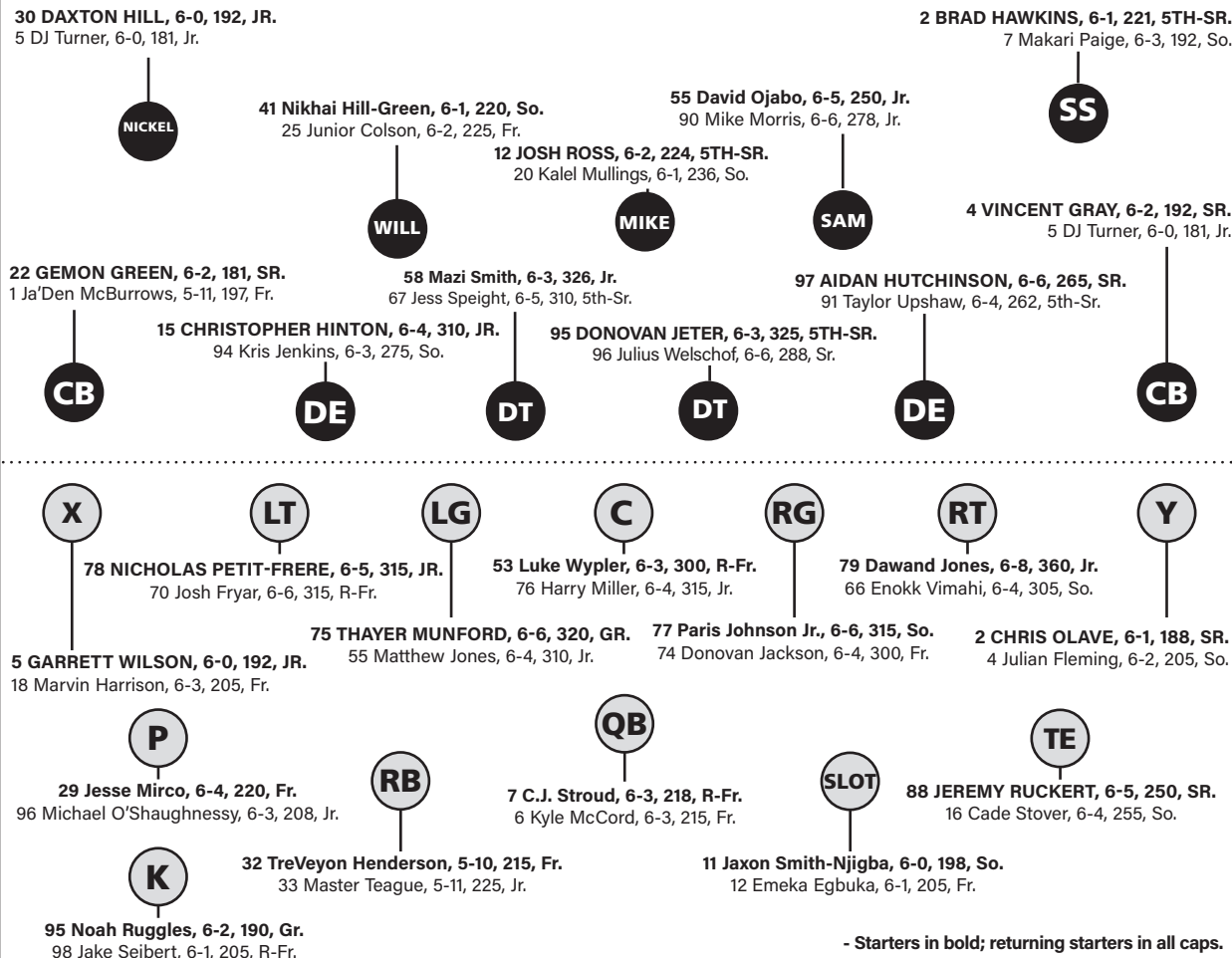
# Ohio State vs. Michigan

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## Projected Depth Charts

### WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



### How We See It

#### OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. MICHIGAN RUSH DEFENSE

The Buckeyes ran for 206 quiet yards during the 56-7 win against Michigan State. With C.J. Stroud throwing for six touchdowns in the first half, establishing a running game wasn't needed. Master Teague led the way with 95 yards on 21 carries. All but one of Teague's carries and 6 yards came in the second half when Ohio State was literally running out the clock. TreVeyon Henderson chipped in with 63 yards on nine carries, and Miyan Williams gained 35 yards on four carries. Another positive sign is each back broke a long run with Teague going for 21, Henderson 18 and Williams 19. OSU averages just under 200 yards per game while Michigan was allowing just 123.1 entering the game against Maryland but gave up 181 to the Terrapins on a 4.1 yards-per-carry average. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

#### MICHIGAN RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Wolverines love to run the ball and do so to the tune of 218.4 yards per game utilizing a multitude of players who help them rank third in the conference in time of possession at nearly 33 minutes per game. Blake Corum, who has 778 yards and 10 TDs, did not play against Maryland because of an ankle/foot injury, but the Wolverines still have Hassan Haskins, who had 78 yards on 20 carries vs. the Terrapins to surpass 1,000 yards for the season. Ohio State limited Kenneth Walker III, the nation's second-leading rusher at 143.7 yards a game, to a season-low 25. The Spartans gained 66 yards on a 3.1-yard average against the Buckeyes' improving rush defense. **EDGE: EVEN**

#### OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. MICHIGAN PASS DEFENSE

Stroud was an amazing 32 of 35 for 432 yards and six TDs. It's easy to scoff at those numbers since Michigan State has the worst pass defense in the country, but give Stroud and his receivers credit for creating separation in the secondary. Chris Olave (140 yards, two TDs), Garrett Wilson (126, two) and Jaxon Smith-Njigba (105, one) were spectacular again, and the line protected Stroud well enough for him to complete a school-record 17 straight passes. Michigan has forced a turnover in nine consecutive games with multiple turnovers in five games. Maryland QB Taulia Tagovailoa was 19 of 33 for 178 yards, a TD and a pick while being sacked twice. U-M has a top-10 pass defense, and a little pressure on Stroud would go a long way to maintaining those standards. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

#### MICHIGAN PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

The Wolverines start Cade McNamara at quarterback but will utilize J.J. McCarthy if they think they need a change of pace. Against Maryland, McNamara was 21 of 28 for 259 yards and two touchdowns, one a 77-yarder to Donovan Edwards, who had 10 catches for 170 yards. McNamara has thrown multiple touchdowns in four straight games (nine TDs, one interception). He has TD passes of 70-plus yards to four different receivers. McCarthy was 5 for 5 for 58 yards with a TD and a 14-yard rushing touchdown vs. the Terps. Tight end Erick All is another in the talented receivers group as evidenced by his 10 catches against Michigan State earlier this season. Ohio State must be leery of the Wolverines' tight ends, who have scored in three straight games. **EDGE: EVEN**

#### SPECIAL TEAMS

Noah Ruggles finally missed a field goal after 16 consecutive makes for the Buckeyes. It can be looked at as he was due, or he picked a heck of time to have a crisis of confidence. Michigan kicker Jake Moody has made 17 of 18 field goals. The Wolverines had some trickery on a Maryland kickoff when A.J. Henning took a cross-field lateral from Michael Barrett for an 81-yard TD. OSU leading returner Emeka Egbuka was unavailable against MSU. He wasn't needed against the Spartans, but his absence would be felt vs. the Wolverines. **EDGE: EVEN**

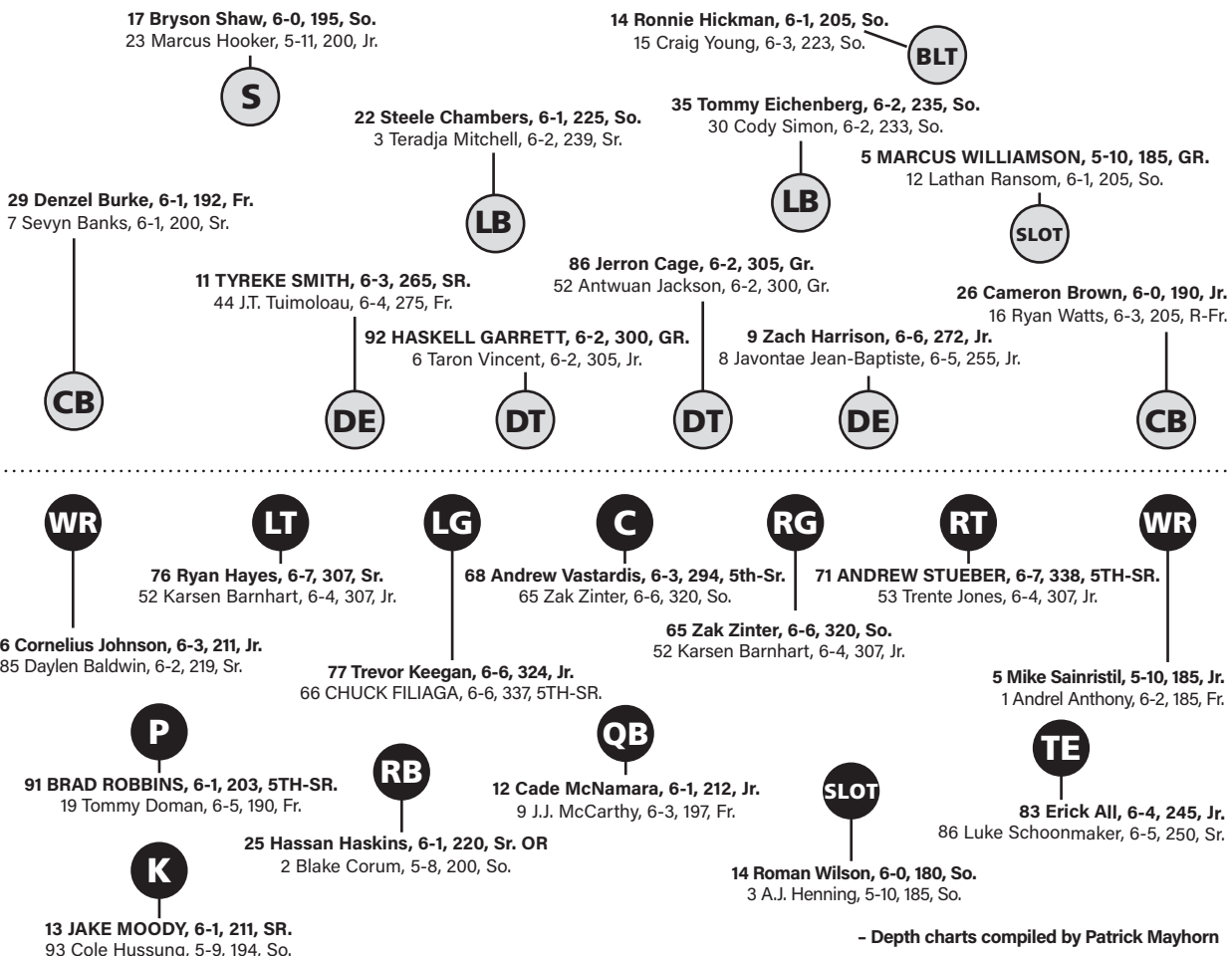
#### INTANGIBLES

Michigan will play the Buckeyes at home for a second game in a row after last season's game in Columbus was canceled because of the pandemic. It's a huge advantage for U-M because this year's freshmen and last year's rookies don't know what it's like to lose to Ohio State. The Buckeyes are young and improving but will look to the upperclassmen who have beaten the Wolverines and know what it's like to win in Ann Arbor. **EDGE: EVEN**

#### PREDICTION

There's no question this is the strongest challenge the Wolverines will present in years. Based on the Buckeyes' demolition of Michigan State, they should be heavy favorites, but U-M and head coach Jim Harbaugh are desperate – really desperate – for the first win in the series since 2011. The talent gap seems to be closing, but the Buckeyes still have more big-time players. If they come through, so will OSU. **OHIO STATE 42, MICHIGAN 26**

### WHEN MICHIGAN HAS THE BALL...





# Sanders Recalls Woody, Bo And That 50-Point Game

**BY CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Daryl Sanders knows a thing or two about the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry, having been a part of three victories while developing lifelong friendships that superseded wins and losses in The Game.

Sanders, now 80, became close to head coach Woody Hayes as well his offensive line coach, Bo Schembechler, and didn't have a problem cheering for either one of them when the two squared off on opposite sidelines.

Sanders had a full and fulfilling three years as a tackle for the Buckeyes from 1960-62. In addition to playing for Hayes, he blocked for Tom Matte and Bob Ferguson and protected quarterback Joe Sparma, among others.

His teammates included Paul Warfield, Matt Snell and Gary Moeller, who would become head coach of the school the Buckeyes most despised, just as Schembechler did.

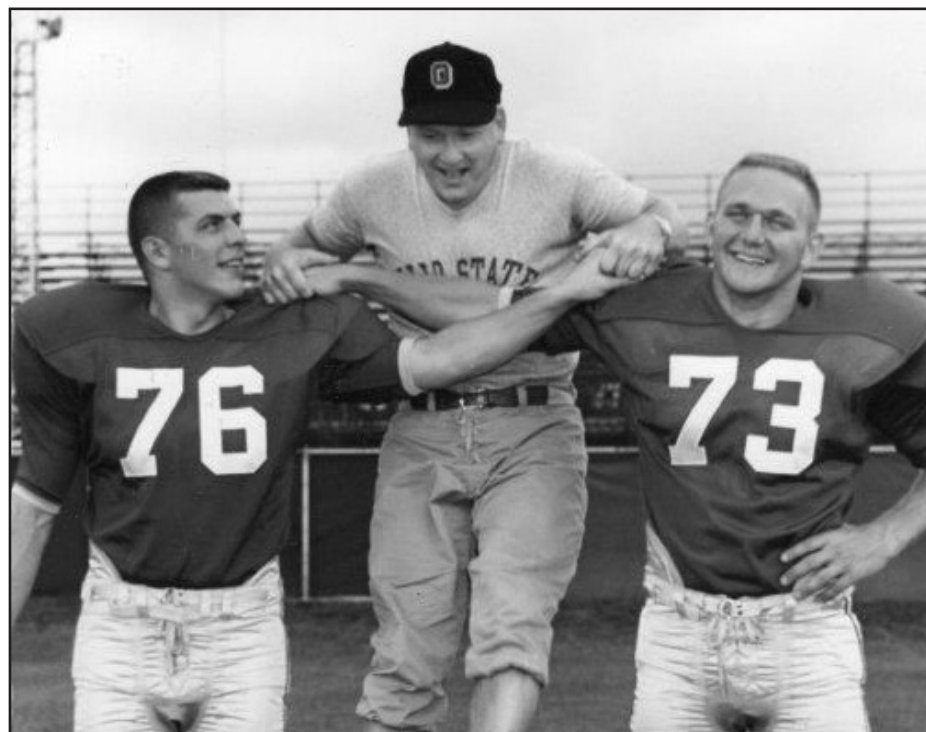
Sanders spoke to BSB by phone from Cape Coral, Fla. The author of eight books – seven on Christian spiritual values, the other on business – is a consultant to auto dealers in the southwest Florida area. Book No. 9 is in the works.

"Oddly enough, I fly to Michigan once a month because that's where my clients are," he said.

Sanders has three sets of Gold Pants and possibly would have had four had freshmen been eligible in 1959 when U-M was 4-5. The following three seasons under head coach Chalmers "Bump" Elliott, the Wolverines were 5-4, 6-3 and 2-7.

"Michigan was in a bit of a doldrums during that period," Sanders said. "Bump became a friend of mine later in life. I really, really liked the guy, but he was not a great recruiter.

"We felt very dominant when we were playing Michigan. We just beat them up. We just ran up and down the field, and there was



**GOOD OLD DAYS — OSU offensive tackles Daryl Sanders (76) and Bob Vogel (73) hoist assistant coach Bo Schembechler into the air for a publicity photo just before the 1962 college football season. Sanders said he learned a lot from Schembechler, who served on Woody Hayes' staff from 1958 to 1962 before becoming head coach at Michigan.**

FILE PHOTO

extreme confidence in what we were doing. We felt like there was no way they were stopping us."

The Buckeyes in 1960 defeated the Wolverines by a 7-0 score to finish with a 7-2 record.

"We beat the crap out of them on the line," Sanders said. "That's how you shut people out. You shut them out because your offensive line and defensive line were superior."

The result was the same but the score vastly different the following season when OSU steamrolled to a 50-20 victory in Ann Arbor in a game remembered for adding vin-

egar to the rivalry when Hayes decided to go for two points after the final touchdown.

It wasn't all fun and games, though, as days later the school's Faculty Council famously voted not to send the Buckeyes to play in the Rose Bowl, ending the Big Ten champions' season with an 8-0-1 mark.

Sanders completed the trifecta in 1962 when the Buckeyes again routed the Wolverines, 28-0, to complete a 6-3 season.

It was a bit ironic that Sanders continued his post-OSU playing career in That State Up North, becoming the first-round draft pick (12th overall) of the Detroit Lions in the 1963 NFL draft. He played four seasons in the Motor City and also lived in Michigan from 1963-70.

After his playing days ended, Sanders, who graduated with a marketing degree, became a corporate executive and a Cadillac dealer and found a church, all by the age of 44. His missionary work took him around the world as well as extensively working with inner-city ministries in Columbus as an advocate for the poor and disadvantaged.

He fondly recalls playing for Hayes, although to no one's surprise, the coach was an intimidating factor, especially when it came to beating Michigan.

## Sanders vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1960	Columbus	W, 7-0
1961	Ann Arbor	W, 50-20
1962	Columbus	W, 28-0

"Every year on the first day of camp, Woody would tell us about the upcoming season, and he would always pick out – or at least when I was there – he would pick out three games, the highlight games that really meant a lot and, of course, Michigan was always the No. 1 game," Sanders said. "You also have to remember in those days we certainly didn't have social media, so I'm an 18-year-old kid and, yeah, I heard about the Michigan-Ohio State rivalry. But it doesn't mean a whole lot initially, so Woody would tell us a whole background to make sure we got it.

"He would always tell us that Ohio State was the graveyard of coaches and guys would get fired for losing to Michigan. That's what he said to us. He said when he took the job at Ohio State – that was less than 10 years prior – he would only come to Ohio State if they hired him as a professor because, as he said, 'They couldn't fire me as a professor.'"

Hayes then went through the history of the series that saw the Wolverines win a vast majority of the early games, implying that no matter the records when the teams played, Ohio State was always the underdog.

"So, what I'm saying to you is that he would very cleverly through storytelling make this a real big deal to us," Sanders said.

Sanders noted, as any player who ever played for Hayes did, that preparation for Michigan was never-ending.

"Every week, we would run a series of Michigan plays," he said. "We would take 10 to 15 minutes every practice the whole year."

The extra reps must have paid off in 1960, although neither team excelled during the Buckeyes' 7-0 win.

In 1961, as would be the case several more times over the years when the teams met, Hayes was the center of controversy. The Buckeyes hammered the Wolverines in Ann Arbor and capped the game when Sparma tossed a 10-yard touchdown pass to Sam Tidmore with five seconds left, then connected again with Tidmore for a two-point conversion.

Legend has it that Hayes wanted the final score to equal 70, to honor assistant coach Ernie Godfrey, who turned 70 the following spring.

"That story came out early, but it was an excuse," Sanders said. "Woody wanted



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to pour it on. That's all it was and we knew that. Woody never once told us why he did it. To my recall, he never got up in any meeting and said, 'The reason I did this was because Ernie Godfrey was 70.' He never said that or anything like that whatsoever.

"That quickly became speculation by sportswriters because they were trying to figure out why Woody did it, but those of us on the team didn't think along those lines. We knew he just wanted to pour it on and bury them."

The story took on new life in 1968 when the "Super Sophomores" pounded U-M by a 50-14 final en route to winning the national championship following a Rose Bowl victory against USC.

Jim Otis scored on a 2-yard run with 1:23 to play vs. the Wolverines and Hayes again went for two, although this time a pass to make it 52-14 failed.

Legend has it that when Hayes was asked why he went for two, he replied, "Because I couldn't go for three."

Soon that quote was also attached to comments by Hayes after the 1961 game.

"I think it became part of the history after the fact," Sanders said. "I think it was first attributed to '68. Then they came to the conclusion he must have felt that way in '61 also."

The joy was short-lived after that game when several days later the Ohio State Faculty Council voted not to send the team to the 1962 Rose Bowl. Even though the Buckeyes were awarded the national championship by the Football Writers Association of America, the sting lingers 60 years later.

"What I know about the situation is, No. 1, the faculty hated Woody Hayes for a number of reasons," Sanders said. "A major reason was their jealousy. Every (faculty) conference – and I heard this from more than one professor – every conference they went to, all anybody wanted to talk about was Woody Hayes, and they got sick of it. They felt like we were becoming known as a football school."

"These are guys who were trying to build their reputations. I majored in marketing, and at the time the business school was considered one of the top five business schools in the country. We had some great professors at Ohio State, but they got no recognition. Looking back, it was a last gasp to reduce the impact sports was having upon the university."

Sanders said Hayes' stance was that it was football that was building the buildings and football that was drawing people for donations. He reasoned that the university was not only making money from the football program but drawing contributors because people identified with football.

Sanders a year later ended his college career with the 28-0 win vs. U-M in Columbus. He credited the second shutout in the rivalry in three seasons to defensive coordinator Bill Gunlock.

"He was a big reason for Ohio State's success there in the early '60s because he was such a great defensive coach," Sanders said. "He's still alive, by the way. He was at our 60th reunion. He's 92 years old. He sat next to me, and he's still talking defense."

The reunion was another example of the bond between the players, one that is shaken every time a former teammate passes away, as was the case when Matte succumbed to a fight with leukemia on Nov. 2.

"He was a lifelong and very dear friend of mine," Sanders said. "I'll never forget the one time – Woody called every play – so Tom's in the huddle. We get the play, Tom gets the play, and he takes the ball from his center and rolls to his right. Everybody else went left, but the defense came with us."

"Tom was on his own and he gained about 15 or 20 yards. The next day, it was called the naked reverse and was put in the playbook. Tom turned the wrong way, but the only reason Woody didn't chew him out was because he gained so many yards. It was probably our biggest gain from the line of scrimmage in the game."

"Tom was always encouraging, positive. I'll never forget him."

The same with Schembechler and Hayes.

"I became very close to Woody," Sanders said. "When he got fired, Archie Griffin and I were the first ones to go to his house. Then I became like a counselor to him for the next couple of years. I helped him through life and how to negotiate with the university."

Sanders was also friends with Schembechler until his death from a heart attack the day before the 2006 Michigan-Ohio State game.

"Bo was so near and dear to me because he was my coach. He coached me every day," Sanders said. "I was scheduled for a lunch with him, but he died the day before the lunch."

Sanders said he never felt conflicted watching games between his two coaches.

"What happens to you in football when you're playing against best friends is you let the best man win," he said. "It's not like, 'Oh, I hope we beat Bo' or anything like that. It's like, 'Man, this is going to be a great game. Let's see which one of them comes out on top.' In a way, I was rooting for both of them during that period of time."

"I learned from them during that 'Ten-Year War' (from 1969-78). I'm proud and privileged to have been coached by both of them. It's a real honor when you stop to think about how many people were coached by two of the top 10 greatest coaches. It's a pretty amazing privilege."

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# Sander Experienced A Little Bit Of Everything

**BY MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

If the Ohio State-Michigan game in 1950 was "The Snow Bowl," former OSU fullback Will Sander believes the 1964 renewal of the rivalry game should be known as "The Freezer Bowl."

Playing conditions were not quite as brutal as they were in 1950 when the teams tried to play on a snow-covered Ohio Stadium turf turned to ice by gale-force winds that sent wind-chill temperatures well below zero. The teams combined to punt an NCAA-record 45 times before Michigan secured a 9-3 victory despite never getting a first down.

Nearly 14 years to the day later, the Buckeyes and Wolverines again waged their annual rivalry war at the Horseshoe, this time under sunny skies. But that did little to mitigate a recent cold snap, and when game time rolled around, the mercury never rose above 20 degrees while steady 20- to 30-mph winds kept everything in the deep freeze.

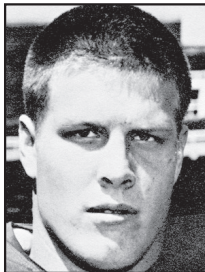
"I was never so cold in my life, and I've never been that cold since," Sander told BSB. "Nowadays, they have special gloves, bench warmers and those gas-powered heaters on the sideline. We had none of that. It's pretty hard to grip a football when your fingers are so numb you can't feel them."

Despite the brutal conditions, Ohio State head coach Woody Hayes showed up in his normal gameday attire – black ballcap, trousers with the cuffs rolled to the ankles, black

cleats, scarlet-and-gray striped tie and a white, short-sleeved shirt. But as a sort of psychological counterstroke, Michigan line coach Tony Mason donned much the same attire, including the short shirtsleeves. Mason, described in a 1964 issue of Sports Illustrated as being "shaped much the same as Woody – something like the Liberty Bell," was a two-time state high school championship coach at Niles (Ohio) McKinley before joining Chalmers "Bump" Elliott's staff at Michigan in 1964.

Elliott was tired of losing to Ohio State – he was only the second Michigan head coach ever to lose four games in a row to the Buckeyes and the first since Harry Kipke in the mid-1930s – so when Mason got to Ann Arbor, Elliott immediately put him in charge of figuring out how to dissect Hayes' game plan. Part of Mason's approach apparently included dressing like the legendary head coach.

"Psychological stuff, pure and simple," said Sander, who possessed what Hayes once described as "an astronomical IQ" and graduated from Ohio State with a 3.81 grade-point average in industrial engineering. "I don't know if going out there in short sleeves made any kind of impression on the opponent. It was just something Woody did. It was part of the psychological package where he was concerned."



Will Sander

Sander was a 6-2, 212-pound fullback out of McNicholas High School in Cincinnati, part of an All-Ohio backfield for the Buckeyes that included quarterback Don Unverferth (Dayton Chaminade), halfback Tom Barrington (Lima Senior) and wingback Bo Rein, who had played his high school ball for Mason at Niles McKinley.

Ironically, Michigan also had nothing but native Ohioans in its starting backfield – quarterback Bob Timberlake (Franklin), fullback Mel Anthony (Cincinnati Roger Bacon), halfback Carl Ward (Cincinnati Taft) and wingback Jim Detwiler (Toledo DeWitt).

The first quarter was scoreless with neither team able to get a grip on its offense mainly because they couldn't get a grip on the football. The first break of the game came when Timberlake fumbled on his own 29-yard line. But the Buckeyes couldn't cash in because Unverferth's third-down sideline pass to end Bob Stock was knocked away by Michigan defensive back Rick Volk, who would go on to enjoy an All-Pro career in the NFL mostly with the Baltimore Colts.

Michigan got its first break late in the second quarter when Rein fumbled a punt return and John Henderson of Michigan recovered on the Ohio State 20. The Wolverines pushed ahead to the 17 before Timberlake pulled off what was ultimately the play of the game.

The Michigan QB tried to roll to his right but met a wall of Ohio State defenders that caused him to reverse his field. Timberlake had wanted to get the ball to Henderson, his split end who was sprinting down the sideline. But Henderson was double-covered, so Timberlake stopped and found a wide-open Detwiler, who managed to gather in a wind-swept spiral at about the Ohio State 3 before turning into the end zone.

U-M kicker Forest Evashevski, son of the legendary Iowa head coach of the same name, tacked on the PAT, and Michigan had a 7-0 lead with just 44 seconds remaining in the first half.

The second half was nearly a carbon copy of the first with Arctic winds whipping through the stadium and Hayes never wavering from his original game plan. The Buckeyes ran an unbalanced line for most of the game, sending Sander on straight off-tackle dives and occasionally trying to spring Barrington wide or Rein on a misdirection play. But the defensive game plan devised by Mason countered nearly everything OSU tried and limited the Buckeyes to just 122 yards on the ground.

Sander was the game's leading rusher with 65 yards on 14 carries, but Barrington and Rein combined for only 9 net yards on 10 attempts. Meanwhile, Unverferth struggled with

## Sander Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1963/So.	Ann Arbor	W, 14-10
1964/Jr.	Columbus	L, 10-0
1965/Sr.	Ann Arbor	W, 9-7

the frigid, windy conditions and completed only 6 of 20 pass attempts for 59 yards with two interceptions.

Michigan tacked on a 27-yard field goal from Timberlake early in the fourth quarter and went on to post a 10-0 victory. It was the first time the Buckeyes had been shut out in the series since a 19-0 loss in 1956.

Up in the press box, reporters were fighting their own battle against the elements.

According to longtime Football News publisher Roger Stanton, the Ohio Stadium press box was so cold that the copy machine used to provide statistical information to reporters stopped working. A variety of solutions was tried until an industrious reporter tried pouring vodka onto the machine's gears and the unusual lubricant allowed the copier to, according to Stanton, "hum along reasonably during the remainder of the afternoon."

## Hollow Victory

The brutal weather conditions that plagued the Buckeyes during the 1964 Michigan game were much different from the mental anguish the team had experienced the year before.

One day before the rivals were scheduled to play in Ann Arbor in 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated as he rode in a motorcade in downtown Dallas, Texas. The Ohio State team was already in Michigan and learned of the tragedy while preparing for the following day's game. Many college games scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 23 were immediately postponed or canceled altogether. But there was no immediate decision concerning the OSU-Michigan game.

"That was such an emotional time," Sander said. "We were already up there, but when we heard the awful news of what had happened in Dallas, no one wanted to play. Football seemed to be the last thing on anyone's mind."

Still, when the morning of the game arrived, no postponement or cancellation had yet been announced. The decision to finally postpone the game was not made until 10 a.m. that morning, just a little more than three hours prior to the scheduled kickoff. The Buckeyes learned of the postponement while on their way to Michigan Stadium from their hotel in nearby Ypsilanti.

Meanwhile, the Ohio State marching band had departed by bus for Ann Arbor well before

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dawn on Saturday morning, and when news of the postponement was made official, university officials enlisted the help of the Michigan Highway Patrol to inform the band that the game would not be played. Patrolmen sighted the buses just north of the Ohio-Michigan line and informed the band of the postponement, and the buses immediately turned around and headed back to Columbus.

The following week, on Nov. 30, Ohio State defeated Michigan by a 14-10 final before a crowd of 36,424, the smallest ever to attend an OSU-Michigan game in Michigan Stadium.

The Wolverines jumped out to a 10-0 lead midway through the second quarter, but the Buckeyes rallied just before halftime with a 35-yard scoring pass from Unverferth to halfback Paul Warfield. Michigan continued to protect its 10-7 lead into the fourth quarter until Unverferth tallied the game-winning touchdown on a 5-yard run.

Unverferth accounted for 157 yards from scrimmage, rushing for 52 yards and a touchdown while throwing for 105 yards and another score. Halfback Matt Snell added 52 yards on the ground on 16 carries, and Warfield totaled five receptions for 76 yards.

The victory marked the fourth straight for OSU against the Wolverines, equaling its longest streak in the series. But the Buckeyes didn't feel much like celebrating.

"It was very surreal," said Sander, who rushed for 17 yards on five carries in the game. "We were really just going through the motions."

Two years later, the mood was much more celebratory as Ohio State used a superlative defensive effort to carve out a 9-7 win in front of a crowd of 77,733 at Michigan Stadium. During the game, the Wolverines were turned away four times inside the red zone without scoring.

OSU drove 76 yards and scored first on a 5-yard touchdown pass from Unverferth to Billy Ray Anders. Normally reliable kicker Bob Funk missed the PAT, however, and the score remained 6-0 at the 5:09 mark of the opening period.

Late in the second quarter, Michigan defender Mike Bass picked off Unverferth and returned the interception to the OSU 15-yard line. Four plays later, fullback Dave Fisher bulled his way into the end zone from the 2 to provide Michigan with its only touchdown of the afternoon. U-M's Rich Sygar came on to kick the extra point, and the Wolverines enjoyed a 7-6 halftime advantage.

That's the way it stayed until midway through the fourth period when Unverferth engineered one of the most memorable game-winning drives in OSU-Michigan history.

Starting at its own 9-yard line with 7:25 remaining, Ohio State drove all the way to the Michigan 11 before facing a fourth down. A key play to ignite the drive was Sander's carry for a first down when Hayes elected to go for a fourth-and-2 at his own 16.

"We all wanted to go for it, of course, but we were a little surprised when Woody sent in the call," Sander said. "After that, we knew we couldn't fail. It was just an off-tackle play – one we'd run a thousand times before – and they had it defended pretty well. But we knew we had to get that first down, and we did."

Elliott challenged the first-down spot, calling for a measurement that proved Sander had gotten the necessary gain, a scenario that repeated itself more than 50 years later when an irate Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh vehemently challenged an Ohio State first

down during a 30-27 double-overtime loss to the Buckeyes in 2016.

In both cases, the Buckeyes did what they needed to do in crunch time.

After Sander picked up the crucial first down, Rein picked up 20 yards on a reverse before Sander stormed up the middle for an 11-yard gain to put the ball at midfield. Two more runs from Sander set up a third-and-2 which Unverferth converted with a 3-yard scramble.

Sander followed that with another burst up the middle for 16 yards to give his team a first down at the U-M 13. The OSU fullback continued to pound ahead on the next three plays, but the Wolverines held him to just 5 yards on the three attempts to set up fourth-and-5 at the

11-yard line. Mindful that he had gambled and won on the earlier fourth-down play, Hayes decided not to tempt fate and sent Funk into the game to try a 28-yard field goal.


With backup quarterback Arnold Fontes holding, the snap was a bit high, but Fontes got it down and Funk split the uprights to give the Buckeyes a 9-7 lead with 1:15 remaining in the game.

Michigan had one last gasp when quarterback Wally Gabler quickly advanced his team to the Ohio State 33-yard line. But with time running out, Elliott had no choice but to send kickoff specialist Paul D'Eramo into the game to try a 50-yard field goal. The kick was straight but landed harmlessly short in the end zone, and the Buckeyes had their 9-7 victory.

Funk became the first kicker in Ohio State history to kick a game-winning field goal to beat Michigan. That wouldn't happen again until 1987 when Matt Frantz booted a 26-yard field goal to provide the winning points in a 23-20 victory for the Buckeyes.

In his three seasons with the Buckeyes, Sander finished with a 2-1 record against Michigan. In those three games, he rushed for 180 yards on 42 carries (an average of 4.3 yards per carry) and also had three receptions for 13 yards.

"I have a lot of fond memories of those times," Sander said. "We made lifelong friendships and got to play for the greatest coach in the history of college football. I don't know how you could ask for a whole lot more."



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# Provost Says Rivalry Renewed Following '69 Loss

**BY BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It was called “The Upset of the Century.”

Ranked the No. 1 team in the nation and riding a 22-game winning streak, defending national champion Ohio State was favored by 17 points as Woody Hayes and company traveled to face Michigan and first-year coach Bo Schembechler in their final game of the 1969 season.

Due to a conference rule at the time forbidding teams from repeat trips to the Rose Bowl, there was no other game on the horizon for Ohio State. All that was left was a date with the Wolverines on Nov. 22, 1969, with a second straight national championship likely on the line.

And all the Buckeyes were left with was regret as the season ended with a heartbreaking 24-12 loss to Michigan.

“It’s been a long time,” former Ohio State safety Ted Provost, who played from 1967-69, told BSB. “You think about that game every once in a while. You think about it and you’re sitting there going, ‘What the hell happened that day? What could have been different?’ I know what I could have done differently. I should have been ready to play better than I did.”

After going up 12-7 early in the second quarter following a 22-yard touchdown pass from Rex Kern to tight end Jan White, Ohio State surrendered points on each of the next three possessions as Michigan took a 24-12 lead going into the half. It was the first time Ohio State had trailed since the second quarter of the 1968 national title game against USC and the first halftime deficit faced by the Buckeyes in more than two years.

“There wasn’t much said at all,” Provost said of the mood in the locker room at the half. “It was one of those days. We got the (bleep) kicked out of us in the first half. We weren’t moving the ball on offense. We did stop them the rest of the second half, but it was already over by then.”

In total, the Wolverines created seven turnovers, including intercepting Kern four times and backup QB Ron Maciejowski twice. Ohio

State actually won the battle of total yardage, 377-374, but the turnovers killed any chance to win the game.

Provost emphasized that the result hurt more since that was the last game of both the 1969 season and his career with the Buckeyes.

“There wasn’t any title because we couldn’t go to a bowl game,” he said. “We weren’t going anywhere after that game, so it’s probably a little bit of a letdown there. You know, that was my last game, so I don’t know if I should have been better prepared to play. I don’t know what you could have done differently. Nobody played a good game that day.

“It wasn’t a happy time coming back,” he said of the return home after the game.

It was Provost’s third matchup against the Wolverines, and after wins in his first two attempts in 1967 and 1968, he said the rivalry truly began to take off after Michigan’s win in 1969.

“When I was growing up, Michigan was kind of on a downturn,” the 1969 All-American said. “I don’t know why they were, but Ohio State had some lean years there, too. I don’t think the rivalry was as big as what it ended up being after my senior year. My sophomore year, we beat them pretty bad up in Michigan, and then my junior year, we destroyed them here in Columbus. My senior year was Bo’s first year in Michigan. That’s when the big rivalry really took off again.”

During his sophomore season, Provost got off to a hot start with seven interceptions through the team’s first four games. Despite starting 2-2 with losses to Arizona and No. 2 Purdue, Ohio State turned things around, winning four straight games to finish the season with a 6-3 record, including a 24-14 win at Michigan.

Provost played two of his three games against the Wolverines on the road, and the game in '67 was his first taste of playing in what was later dubbed The Big House.

“The big shock was just seeing how massive that stadium was – getting over that,” he said.

His sophomore year is also when “Teddy the Tree” earned his nickname. Though his 6-2, 195-pound stature would lead you to believe he gave off the appearance of tall tree, it was due

## Provost vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1967/So.	Ann Arbor	W, 24-14
1968/Jr.	Columbus	W, 50-14
1969/Sr.	Ann Arbor	L, 24-12

to the rate at which he earned the Buckeye leaf helmet decals that are now synonymous with Ohio State’s program.

“My sophomore year in 1967, when I got seven interceptions in the first four games, that was when I got nicknamed ‘The Tree,’ ” he said. “That was the first year we came out with the Buckeye leaves.”

During the 1968 championship season, Ohio State picked up wins against SMU and Oregon before a 13-0 upset of No. 1 Purdue, spurred in part by Provost’s 35-yard pick-six to get the Buckeyes on the board. Then, entering The Game with a 12-game winning streak, the second-ranked Buckeyes dominated Michigan with a 50-14 romp in Columbus, still the second-largest margin of victory for Ohio State in the rivalry behind a 38-0 blanking of the Wolverines in 1935.

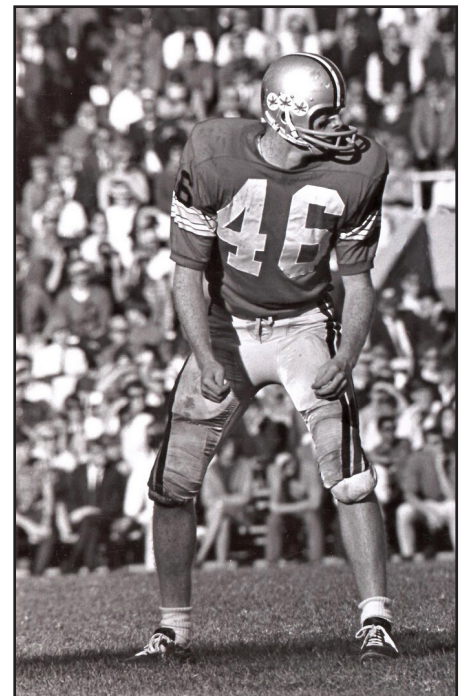
“The Rose Bowl was on the line at that time and multiplied the factor of everything,” Provost said. “I think everybody was just ready to play. We showed it that day. It was one of the best games we had all year.”

The Buckeyes would go on to knock off defending national champion USC, 27-16, to win the program’s first national championship in 11 years.

“Southern Cal was ranked ahead of us for a long time, and then they got tied by Notre Dame the last week of the season,” Provost said. “We knew that they were good. They had O.J. Simpson, they had a big offensive line – all those kinds of things. But we were ready for that game.”

Ohio State continued the dominant run into the next season, but it all came crumbling down in the loss to Michigan that would permanently alter the rivalry between these two teams.

“I think it renewed the rivalry,” Provost said. “It was kind of hard for me because that was my senior year and that was my last game. There was nothing I could do to come back and



FILE PHOTO

**TEDDY THE TREE — Former OSU defensive back Ted Provost (46) got his nickname for collecting so many Buckeye leaf stickers for his helmet. Provost participated in two victories against Michigan during his career, but it was the loss in 1969 during his senior season that continues to bother him more than a half-century later.**

redeem myself. It was kind of a bad feeling. You know, after the game was over, you just sit there and say, ‘Well, geez, we weren’t ready to play this game.’ ”

Including the 1969 contest, the Wolverines slightly edged the Buckeyes with a 5-4-1 record over the next 10 games (including six that were decided by one score) during what is now known as “The Ten-Year War” between Hayes and Schembechler. Over the previous 65 rivalry games, only 15 had been decided by one score.

That stretch of games began with Schembechler’s hiring in 1969 and was bookended by Hayes’ firing following the 1978 season, ending his 28-year career as Ohio State’s head coach with three national championships and 13 Big Ten titles, while Schembechler would go on to coach through the 1989 season, securing an equal 13 conference championships.

Provost watched the majority of “The Ten-Year War” from the sidelines following his final game in 1969. He still resides among the record-holders at Ohio State, tied for third in career interceptions with 16 picks along with William White (1984-87) and behind Fred Bruney (17, 1950-52) and teammate Mike Sensibaugh (22, 1968-70).

In addition to being named All-Big Ten in 1968 and 1969, he went on to play two seasons in the NFL for the Minnesota Vikings and St. Louis Cardinals, and he played for the Saskatchewan Roughriders of the Canadian Football League from 1972-77.

The rivalry between Ohio State and Michigan dates back to the teams’ first meeting in 1897, but Provost contends that the loss in 1969 that kicked off “The Ten-Year War” is what made the rivalry what it is today.

“That really picked the rivalry right up,” Provost said. “After that, you just hated Michigan. I still do to this day. There’s no good feelings toward Michigan.”

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# Rivalry 'Like Rocky Vs. Creed' For Sanders

BY CHASE BROWN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Chris Sanders played during an era when Ohio State beating Michigan wasn't all that common. The former wide receiver was in Columbus from 1990-95 and held a 1-3-1 record against the Wolverines.

It's almost surreal, as the Buckeyes have won 17 of their last 19 meetings against their archrivals, including the vacated win from the 2010 Tattogate season, but there was a time not that long ago when The Game looked much different.

"It was like Rocky vs. Apollo Creed," Sanders said. "You needed all your pads – your hip pads, your knee pads, your mouthguard. We traded punches and we landed blows. When the game was over, you were lucky to be without a few bumps and bruises. They were the toughest and most physical games. You were fighting for your life."

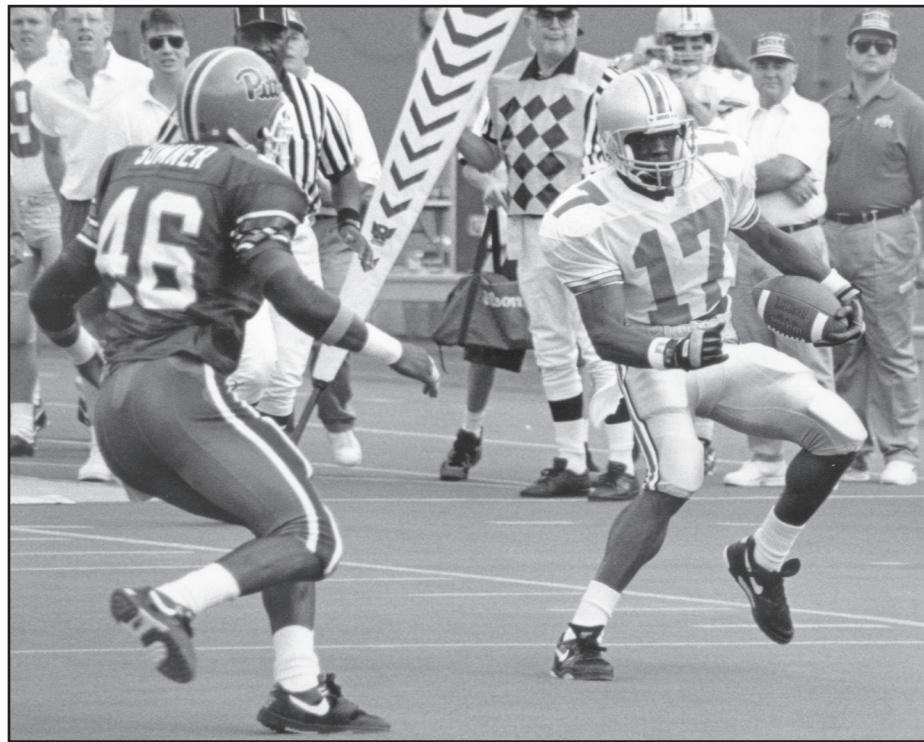
Sanders, an eight-year NFL veteran with the Houston Oilers/Tennessee Titans, believes the Ohio State and Michigan game featured some of the hardest contests of his long-tenured career, including his professional seasons.

BSB talked with Sanders to hear his many memories against Michigan, from losses and a tie at the start of his Ohio State career to a triumphant win at its conclusion.

Sanders went to Montbello High School in Denver, Colo., and was one of the first verbal commitments in the 1990 Ohio State recruiting class. He was a standout receiver and defensive back at Montbello, becoming a first-team all-state senior when he caught 30 passes for 650 yards and 11 touchdowns. Sanders was also a standout performer in track, winning two state titles.

He thought he was headed to Arizona State for college, but a visit to Columbus changed his mind. Sanders wanted to play football, and he knew the place to do that was at Ohio State.

"When I first got to campus, I started to



FILE PHOTO

**TOUGH COMPETITION** – Former Ohio State receiver Chris Sanders (17) experienced the highs and lows of competition against archrival Michigan. Sanders played for the Buckeyes during the early 1990s when wins against the Wolverines were at a premium.

understand the tradition of what Ohio State meant," Sanders told BSB. "Paul Brown, Woody Hayes, John Cooper – I didn't know that until I got here and felt the tradition. I wanted to be in a place where everybody loves football. At Ohio State, the fans love football, the students love football, and it's an amazing experience."

Although he was one of the first in his class to arrive in Columbus, Sanders missed his first year because of academic ineligibility. The following year, he received a medical redshirt due to a partially torn ACL. When he finally got on the field, Sanders played the remainder of his games at Ohio State.

He had 71 receptions for 1,120 yards and

eight touchdowns during his career, with the bulk of his production coming in his final year in 1995 when he caught 35 passes for 533 yards and all eight of his touchdowns.

In three games against Michigan, Sanders had modest production. But while his five receptions for 50 yards when facing the Wolverines are not game-wrecking, they don't encapsulate his big-play potential as a Buckeye.

Sanders, affectionately nicknamed "Tippy Toes" because of his running style, ran routes with fellow wideouts Joey Galloway and Terry Glenn as well as tight end Cedric Saunders during his career. His lethal speed and quickness served as severe threats to any defender facing the Ohio State offense. Sanders also ran track at the university – something his opponents knew full well – and used his athleticism to create separation and secure catches.

In four seasons on the track team, Sanders became an 11-time All-American. He famously broke the legendary Jesse Owens' indoor long jump school record of 26 feet, 9½ inches, setting a new mark of 26 feet, 9¾ inches – a mark that still stands. Sanders also set records with the 4x100 and 4x200 relay teams.

## View From Sidelines

Sanders missed the 1990 season because the NCAA deemed him academically ineligible under Proposition 48 guidelines after receiving a low ACT score in high school. He spent the entire season on the sidelines, waiting for his turn to contribute to the team.

Third-year head coach John Cooper led Ohio State to a 7-2-1 record before its final regular-season game against Michigan. Cooper relied on quarterback Greg Frey to lead the offense and leaned heavily on running back Robert Smith, who rushed for 1,126 yards and won Big Ten Freshman of the Year, to move the ball down the field.

When the Buckeyes faced the Wolverines, they entered the matchup on a five-game win-

## Sanders Vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1992/So.	Columbus	T, 13-13
1993/Jr.	Ann Arbor	L, 28-0
1994/Sr.	Columbus	W, 22-6

ning streak and had defeated an eight-loss Wisconsin team, 35-10, the week before. Michigan had won its last four games and came to Columbus with a 7-3 record.

"Even though I didn't get to play, I remember how intense it was," Sanders said. "When Michigan came out of the locker room, I was sitting on the sidelines and I remember thinking how intimidating they looked."

"I watched both teams warm up, and they were taunting each other. We were mocking Michigan, and they were giving it right back to us. I thought, 'What did I get myself into?' I knew it was going to be a fight."

Sanders' premonition became confirmed as the teams duked it out in a back-and-forth battle. Ohio State went for broke near the end of the game, attempting to convert a fourth-and-short at midfield, which Michigan's defense stuffed at the line of scrimmage.

The Wolverines took the football and moved into a field-goal range, setting up J.D. Carlson's 37-yard kick for a 16-13 win as time expired.

"I think this was a Woody Hayes type game and the way it should be played," then-Michigan head coach Gary Moeller said. "I am sure Bo Schembechler would agree."

In 1991, Sanders felt strongly that he would carve a role in the Ohio State offense. He paid his dues after being ineligible and was ready to make an impact at wide receiver. Unfortunately, Sanders suffered a partially torn ACL in the first game of the year, and he was forced to miss the remainder of his redshirt freshman season.

The Buckeyes turned to Kirk Herbstreit at quarterback and Galloway at receiver after Frey and wide receiver Bobby Olive graduated. Smith left the program for a year when he switched his scholarship from football to track and was replaced in the starting backfield by Carlos Snow.

Ohio State went into The Game with an 8-2 record – a step above the previous season. The games they won were blowouts, and the ones they lost were highly contested, close-scoring contests.

Still, the 1991 Michigan team was a different breed. Its only slip-up prior to facing the Buckeyes was a 51-31 loss to then-No. 1 Florida State in Ann Arbor. The team wouldn't lose again until falling, 34-14, to No. 2 Washington in the Rose Bowl.

"It's kind of like today's Ohio State and Michigan games," Sanders said. "The Buckeyes dominate the Wolverines each year. Michigan has to figure out a way to beat Ohio State, and they haven't done that yet. In '91, we had some dominant players like Joey Galloway and Terry Glenn, but at that time, Michigan was the dominant team. They were great. They had some great players. We had to find a way to beat them."

Michigan was led by Heisman Trophy winner Desmond Howard, who caught 62 passes for 985 yards and 19 touchdowns during the season. He also took 13 carries for 180 yards and two scores while adding two touchdowns as a kick and punt returner.

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While working to return from his knee injury, Sanders played as Howard on the Ohio State scout team. His athleticism was the closest thing Cooper had to replicate the best player in college football that season.

"The week before the Michigan game, I had on the jersey that played Desmond Howard," Sanders said. "I had a lot of speed and quickness, so it gave them a good enough look. I don't think it worked all too well, though."

When Ohio State faced Michigan, Howard exploded during his team's 31-3 win. While he caught three passes for 96 yards, his legacy-defining play came in the second quarter when he took a punt return 93 yards to the end zone. Once he crossed the goal line, Howard struck a Heisman pose and sent the Buckeyes home with a loss.

## More Tough Times

Sanders played all 12 games during the 1992 season and was the team's third-leading receiver behind Saunders and Brian Stablein. He caught 22 passes for 360 yards, and his 16.4 yards per catch led the team, outgaining Saunders (12.2) and Stablein (12.1) by more than four yards with each reception.

Herbstreit led the Buckeyes for the second consecutive season, and Smith returned to take the bulk of the carries. Ohio State's offense averaged 349.5 yards per game, with 186.0 yards coming on the ground and 163.5 yards through the air. Cooper's balanced offensive approach kept the team steady, and the group entered its final regular-season game with an 8-2 record.

Michigan entered the Ohio State game undefeated, but not in the traditional sense of the word. It had tied then-No. 3 Notre Dame in the season opener before ripping off eight straight wins against Oklahoma State, Houston and a string of Big Ten opponents. A matchup with unranked Illinois led to a 22-22 tie the week before The Game.

The Buckeyes handed the Wolverines their third tie when the rivalry game ended 13-13. Ohio State had a chance to win the game late after Herbstreit connected with Greg Beatty for a 5-yard touchdown, cutting the Michigan lead to 13-12. Instead of attempting a two-point conversion, however, Cooper elected to kick an extra point that left the game all square.

"Michigan was good back then," Sanders said. "We spent a lot of time trying to figure out ways to win. The only reason we would have gone for a two-point conversion is if we didn't think we could stop Michigan. We kicked the extra point to tie the game and then figured we'd get a stop and then go score either a field goal or touchdown to win."

The Ohio State defense held up its end of the bargain, stopping Michigan from putting points on the board. However, the offense

failed to score on its final drive of the game.

"We were in a position to win, but we didn't execute," Sanders said. "Back then, every game with Michigan was so close. They were dominant, so it took a lot to win those games. We didn't play for a tie, but that's how it ended up, and with how good they were, it was kind of like a win."

University president Dr. E. Gordon Gee certainly agreed, claiming the tie to be one of Ohio State's "greatest wins ever" and sharing his confidence in Cooper, who had yet to beat Michigan during his five-year tenure.

The 1993 team had four wins against ranked opponents, including victories vs. Washington, Michigan State, Penn State and Indiana. Ohio State also tied a ranked Wisconsin team that claimed a share of the Big Ten championship with the Buckeyes that season.

Ohio State had a 9-0-1 record entering the Michigan game, while the Wolverines came into the final week with a 6-4 mark. It was the most significant difference in the record during Sanders' five seasons with the Buckeyes. Still, previous wins and losses were not indicative of what would happen Nov. 20, 1993.

"We were the better team that year," Sanders said. "We had everything clicking, and we were the Big Ten co-champions with Wisconsin. But it all fell apart against Michigan."

The Wolverines shocked the college football world with a 28-0 domination of the Buckeyes in Ann Arbor. Ohio State quarterback Bret Powers threw three completions and three interceptions, each coming in the first half, and Michigan ran away with the game.

Ohio State mustered only 212 yards of total offense compared to Michigan's 421. Bobby Hoying also threw an interception in the game, giving the Buckeyes four turnovers in the contest.

"After they beat us, their cornerback Ty Law came up to me on the field and said, 'Good luck in the Holiday Bowl,' and that wasn't a compliment," Sanders said. "That meant we lost our spot in the Rose Bowl, and we got the lesser bowl game of the two possible outcomes."

Wisconsin held the advantage in the tie-breaker, and the Badgers went to Pasadena while Ohio State went on to face BYU in the Holiday Bowl, beating the Cougars 28-21. While the Buckeyes won their final game, Sanders said the team ended the year with a sour taste.

"I always wanted to experience the Rose Bowl," he said. "Everybody dreams about playing in the Rose Bowl, especially if you played for a team in the Big Ten. That's what made the loss to Michigan so bad. I didn't get a chance to experience it because of that Michigan loss. I would have played in my first

Rose Bowl, and that was tough. We always talked about goals and dreams. Our team talked about getting to the Rose Bowl a lot. I wish I could have played in one."

## A Triumphant Finale

In 1994, Ohio State had a rough season. The Buckeyes lost their second regular-season game to Washington and would fall two more times in losses to Illinois and Penn State.

But each defeat left the team's memory when its high-powered offense led by running back Eddie George, Sanders and Gallo-way helped Ohio State claim its first victory against Michigan since 1987.

The Buckeyes rolled to their third straight victory to finish the regular season, a 22-6 win against the Wolverines. Michigan managed only two field goals, failing to score a touchdown for the first time in 111 games.

It was a day on which Ohio State earned every yard and point. Sanders and Gallo-way each caught four passes from Hoying, totaling 38 yards and 46 yards, respectively. George carried the ball 27 times for 71 yards and a touchdown. When time expired, Ohio State students and fans rushed the field to celebrate the team's victory over the school's rival from up north.

"The most exciting part of our win was when everybody ran on the field and picked up Coach Cooper," Sanders said with a laugh. "They held him up for a little, but then they dropped him. When we got to the locker room, the seniors were in tears because for four years we tried to beat Michigan, and that year we finally did. So we sat down and we cried."

The emotional outpour was justified.

Ohio State's veterans had left everything they had on the field when they squared off with Michigan, and Sanders said the win was a dream come true.

"Our team was going to go out and enjoy our win, but we were so tired, so beat up and we just went to sleep," Sanders said. "We did something special. As a team, we did something special by beating Michigan. When you first come to Ohio State, you have that dream to beat That Team Up North, and we saw our dream fulfilled by that '94 team."

If Sanders had an opportunity to speak with current Ohio State players about the significance of the Michigan game, he said he would have a simple message that focuses on remembering the ones that came before.

"The Game is a legacy," he said. "You have to understand that you are a part of the legacy when you play Michigan. Archie Griffin, Eddie George, Joey Galloway – even me. This is not a place where you take a rivalry for granted. When you beat Michigan, you are a part of something great."

Sanders hopes the rivalry between Ohio State and Michigan is not lost in the lopsided number of Buckeye wins over the last two decades. While he is not advocating for the Wolverines to win, he wants The Game to return to the same toughness and grit it featured during his career.

"Beating Michigan is something you dreamed about when you came to The Ohio State University," Sanders said. "If the players understand the significance of Ohio State playing Michigan, then the game and its legacy mean a whole lot more. It's a fight, and it always should be."

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# Archrivalry Held Extra Importance For Cook

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

BSB Associate Editor

Shortly after Ohio State rattled off 10 points during the final quarter of play against Michigan in 1992 in front of a sold-out Ohio Stadium crowd – a crowd that was desperate for success against its rivals to the north who had bested their Buckeyes in each of the previous four matchups between the two – university president Dr. Gordon E. Gee declared the game one of Ohio State's greatest victories of all time.

Head coach John Cooper had finally broken his losing streak to the Wolverines, and the Buckeyes had reclaimed some of their pride in a series that had become all too lopsided at the back end of Earle Bruce's tenure heading into the beginning of Cooper's. It was the end to an eight-win regular season, which certainly wasn't spectacular, but which showed signs of life moving into a new decade.

The only issue? The Buckeyes didn't win. They tied the Wolverines, 13-13.

"This tie is one of our greatest wins ever," Gee said at the time. "You don't need to read through the lines to see that (Cooper) is doing a hell of a job, right?"

It's a quote that found instant infamy among Ohio State and Michigan fans alike, playing up a perceived (and tangible) gap between the two sides that the Wolverines delighted in while Buckeye fans yearned for the days before the "Ten-Year War" when it was Ohio State that ruled the roost.

Gee's sentiment wasn't especially popular

## Cook vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
1989/Fr.	Ann Arbor	L, 28-18
1990/Soph.	Columbus	L, 16-13
1991/Jr.	Ann Arbor	L, 31-3
1992/Sr.	Columbus	T, 13-13

among players, either, as former Ohio State defensive back Bryan Cook told BSB.

"It was definitely not the case," Cook said with a chuckle. "Growing up in northeast Ohio, the Michigan-Ohio State rivalry is huge. Not only from being an Ohio State fan to being a kid in Ohio and seeing it on TV, but a lot of the guys I played against in high school, and even a couple of the ones that I played with in high school, were on that team. To call a tie a win is nothing short of embarrassing, but it is what it is."

For Cook, who suited up for the Buckeyes from 1989-92 (though he missed the 1991 rendition of The Game due to a leg injury), the Michigan game always took on more importance than any other. And on the field, he felt that importance in every game.

"It's like backyard football because, again, we know these guys," Cook said. "We either played with them, played against them, or had some type of relationship just from being athletes. Like I said, a lot of guys from northeast Ohio were – some of these guys, you played against always since Pop Warner and high school. It's about playing for bragging rights."

"Every game, you want to bring your best, but just the rivalry of it, the history behind it, and the fact that you're in this game and you're



FILE PHOTO

**REVERED RIVALRY** – Former Ohio State defensive back Bryan Cook (29) didn't have the most success against Michigan during his career, but he still has reverence for the rivalry. Cook said he and his wife try to attend The Game every year.

playing against someone that you probably see on Thanksgiving or are going to see during the break, it really kind of intensifies the magnitude of the experience."

That 1992 tie was the closest that Cook ever came to beating the Wolverines. He redshirted in 1988, played for the Buckeyes in 1989 and 1990, and then served a large role on the 1991 group before the injury cut his season short. But that did little to dampen the significance of the game for Cook or his teammates.

Nowhere did he feel that more, interestingly enough, than in Ann Arbor. Nicknamed "The Big House," Michigan Stadium has a reputation as one of the nation's most impressive and intimidating stadiums, and though Cook had only one chance to play there, it more than exceeded the hype.

"Everything that it was built up to be, it is," he said. "It's one of the greatest places to play football. You just feel like a gladiator because of the way the stands are. They go straight up, and you're in a bowl. You feel like you're a gladiator going out to battle in that place. I think 'The Shoe' has a similar feeling, but 'The Big House,' the way it's shaped, when you're the opposing team, you get all the energy and the emotions of the fans in the stands against you. It's a great place to play football."

In those games that he did get the chance to play against Michigan, Cook saw more than

his share of drama. In 1989, the Buckeyes delivered a valiant effort in Ann Arbor but ultimately fell short, 28-18.

A year later, Ohio State took the ball in the final minutes with the game tied 13-13, and when faced with a fourth-and-short, dialed up an option play for Greg Frey. Frey kept the ball and ran into a mass of defenders, giving Michigan a short field that it would use to its advantage, winning the game with a last-second field goal. In retrospect, Cook would have liked to see a different call on the option, but he said he knew that the game was not decided by that play.

With those experiences painting his time as part of the game, Cook takes extra joy in Ohio State's recent run of domination over the Wolverines. He attends every game with his wife, and though he won't be able to make it this season, he'll be sure to root just as hard as he always does for a Buckeye victory.

"It's beautiful," Cook said. "It's a beautiful thing. My wife and I, we go to the Michigan game every year. We have season tickets, but we go up to Ann Arbor every time we're up there to play. Unfortunately, we're not going to make it this year. But to see how things have changed over the last 15 to 20 years where we went up there and lost, and then now we go in on the streak where we're just winning every time, it is remarkable."

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# Miller Still Has Fun With OSU-Michigan Rivalry

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

From cutting-edge cell phone technology to all facets of the cryptocurrency craze, Braxton Miller has made a smooth transition from football to the business world. But don't think for a minute the former Ohio State quarterback and receiver has divested himself from the game completely.

Miller enjoys hosting tailgate parties before home games at Ohio Stadium, weaving his way through adoring fans with almost as much ease as he did opposing defenses. And each year about this time, he takes to Twitter to post video of his teammates torching Michigan during his five-year career with the Buckeyes.

"It's all in fun," Miller told BSB. "Of course, it's a whole lot more fun when you're winning those games."

Miller was the starting quarterback for Ohio State from 2011-13, and the Buckeyes won two of those three games. Two surgeries on his throwing shoulder sidelined him for the 2014 season – he still received a pair of Gold Pants for being part of the team that beat the Wolverines that year – and then he returned as a receiver in 2015 to earn his fourth pair of Gold Pants.

"It never got old," he said of beating Michigan. "Growing up in Dayton, you know all about the rivalry – at least you think you do until you get to Ohio State. Then things get ratcheted up to a whole new level. But you can talk about it all you want. Until you actually play in that game, you don't know how intense it is."

Miller came to the Buckeyes as a much-decorated high school quarterback at Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne. He graduated early and joined the team for spring practice drills in 2011 just about the time the Tattoo-gate scandal was gaining traction. OSU head coach Jim Tressel was eventually forced out after 10 years at the helm, and starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor left school in the wake of the NCAA investigation.



SONNY BROCKWAY

**BIG-TIME BRAXTON —** Former Ohio State quarterback Braxton Miller (5) saved some of his best performances for Michigan. During his OSU career, Miller threw for 557 yards and five touchdowns, and ran for 317 yards and four more scores vs. U-M while enjoying four victories against the Wolverines.

That left Miller to battle fifth-year senior Joe Bauserman for the quarterback job in fall camp. Bauserman began the season with an excellent game in the opener against Akron, but his performance fell off steadily over the next few weeks and Miller was the team's starter beginning in week four.

"That's why I came to Ohio State – to be the starting quarterback," Miller said. "When I first got there, and all the stuff about tattoos and Coach Tressel and all that other stuff was going on, I did my best to try and block that out. I had other stuff on my mind like trying to learn the plays. I didn't even know half the players. I was just trying to keep my head above water."

The 2011 season produced some lofty

peaks, including a last-second comeback win vs. No. 15 Wisconsin, as well as several deep valleys such as blowing a 21-point, third-quarter lead in a loss at Nebraska. But the Buckeyes went into their regular-season finale at Michigan with a purpose.

"You talk every year about how that game can make your season," Miller said. "That was the only thing on our minds when we went up there in '11. Beat them and nobody cares what else happened."

Ohio State was working on a seven-game winning streak in the series, but the Buckeyes were eight-point underdogs to Michigan in a game that was supposed to turn the tide in the ancient rivalry. Brady Hoke was in his first season as head coach of the Wolver-

## Miller vs. Michigan

Year/Class	Location	Result
2011/Fr.	Ann Arbor	L, 40-34
2012/So.	Columbus	W, 26-21
2013/Jr.	Ann Arbor	W, 42-41
2014/Sr.	Columbus	W, 42-28
2015/5th-Sr.	Ann Arbor	W, 42-13

ines, and he had already wiped away most of the despair connected with the three years of futility under predecessor Rich Rodriguez. U-M was on its way to an 11-2 record in 2011, its best in five years.

But the Wolverines were clearly not ready for Miller, who guided the Buckeyes to a touchdown on the game's opening possession, putting an exclamation point on the drive with a 54-yard scoring pass to receiver Corey "Philly" Brown.

That triggered an entertaining back-and-forth afternoon that featured enough big plays and momentum swings for an entire season.

Michigan forged ahead by a 16-7 advantage before the end of the first quarter, but the Buckeyes came back with a 45-yard field goal from Drew Basil and a 19-yard touchdown run from Miller to grab a 17-16 lead. The Wolverines retook the lead on a 6-yard scoring run by quarterback Denard Robinson, but back came Ohio State when Miller connected with DeVier Posey for a 43-yard score to give the Buckeyes a 24-23 lead at halftime.

The Wolverines got the upper hand in the second half and led by as many as 10 points at 37-27 with 8:32 remaining in the game. But Miller engineered an 80-yard touchdown drive in only five plays, completing passes of 36 yards to tight end Jake Stoneburner, 16 yards to running back Jordan Hall and 20 yards to tight end Reid Fragel along the way.

When tailback Dan "Boom" Herron scored from the Michigan 4, Ohio State had pulled back within three points at 37-34 with 7:09 to go. The Wolverines responded with a possession that lasted more than five minutes and culminated in a field goal, but they left 1:59 on the game clock for Miller and the Buckeyes to pull off a comeback.

It appeared for a time that something magical was in the works, especially when Miller barely converted a fourth-and-6 with a successful dive for the first-down marker. But four plays later, on another fourth-and-6, the clock struck midnight on the fairy tale ending when Miller's throw to Posey bounced off the receiver's fingertips and into the arms of Michigan cornerback Courtney Avery for the game-clinching interception.

"I thought we were going to win that thing," Miller said. "Right up until the end, I thought we were going to win it. That last pass to DeVier, it was a tough pass but one I still should have made. There are a lot of passes over my career that I'd like to have back, but I'd put that one at or near the top of the list."

Miller accounted for 335 yards from scrimmage in the game, rushing 16 times for 100 yards and a touchdown while completing 14 of 25 passes for 235 yards and two more scores.

In the end, though, Robinson was just a little bit better. He rushed for 170 yards and two touchdowns and added 167 yards and three touchdowns on 14-of-17 passing. The

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Wolverines also got 120 yards on the ground from Fitzgerald Toussaint, giving Michigan its first pair of 100-yard rushers against Ohio State in 23 years. Leroy Hoard (158) and Tony Boles (103) did it during a 34-31 win against the Buckeyes in 1988.

## Back-And-Forth Games

The following year, the Buckeyes rebounded from a 6-7 finish to an undefeated 12-0 season under first-year head coach Urban Meyer. The season was not without its close calls, however, as the team barely squeaked past Michigan State and Indiana before overtime wins against Purdue and Wisconsin.

But knowing there was no Big Ten Championship Game or bowl contest to play for after NCAA sanctions banned the Buckeyes from postseason play, it left the Michigan game as the final chance for the 2012 team to make a statement.

Protecting only the sixth perfect season in program history as well as a No. 4 ranking in The Associated Press writers' poll, Ohio State overcame a 21-20 halftime deficit and shut Michigan out in the second half for a 26-21 victory.

As they had done the year before, the Buckeyes scored on the game's opening possession when a 3-yard touchdown run by Carlos Hyde gave his team an early 7-0 lead. OSU threatened to score again when defensive end Adolphus Washington strip-sacked Michigan quarterback Devin Gardner and middle linebacker Zach Boren recovered at the Ohio State 33. But the Buckeyes couldn't do anything with the turnover, touching off what turned out to be a game-long struggle between the defenses.

U-M receiver Ray Roundtree got behind the OSU secondary and reeled in a 75-yard touchdown pass from Gardner midway through the first quarter to tie the game at 7-7, and Robinson came in at quarterback for the Wolverines and broke off a 67-yard touchdown run late in the second quarter to give his team a 21-17 lead. But those two plays represented more than 50 percent of the Wolverines' 279 total yards in the game. They averaged just 3.0 yards on each of their other 45 offensive plays.

Meanwhile, the Buckeyes chipped away

with Basil field goals, perhaps none more important than a career-long 52-yarder just before halftime. Robinson's long TD run had given his team a four-point lead with just 40 seconds remaining before the break before Miller rushed for 17 and connected on passes to Brown and Hyde to get Basil in range to cut OSU's deficit to 21-20 at the half.

Basil hit two more three-pointers in the second half while the Ohio State defense clamped down on the Wolverines. U-M was stopped on a fourth-and-3 early in the third quarter and fumbled away two other possessions, and then Ohio State safety C.J. Barnett's interception of Gardner with 4:50 remaining sealed the game.

Miller was an efficient 14 of 18 in the passing department for 189 yards and one touchdown, and he added 57 yards rushing. But while he was happy with the victory, he wasn't satisfied with his own performance and was looking forward to something a little better.

"We were undefeated again when we went up there (in 2013) and they'd already lost four games," he said. "I remember we were favored by a couple of touchdowns (actually 16 points), and we were going to go up there and take care of business. We did eventually, but we had to work harder than maybe we thought we'd have to."

Miller accounted for 286 yards of total offense, including 153 yards and three touchdowns on the ground. But Michigan simply would not go away. The Wolverines overcame a 14-point deficit late in the third quarter to tie the game at 35 with 5:01 remaining in the game. But a 1-yard touchdown run from Hyde at the 2:20 mark seemingly clinched things for the Buckeyes.

Gardner then engineered an 11-play, 84-yard drive that ended with a 2-yard touchdown pass to Devin Funchess with 32 seconds remaining. Sensing the OSU defense was exhausted, and knowing his own team had nearly nothing left in its emotional tank, either, Hoke elected to go for the victory with a two-point conversion try. But Ohio State linebacker Tyvis Powell stepped in front of Gardner's pass at the goal line to preserve a 42-41 victory for the Buckeyes.

"Honestly, there was never a time in that game when I thought we were going to

lose," Miller said. "Even there at the end, I just knew somebody was going to make a play. Didn't know who, but I knew somebody would, and it turned out to be Tyvis."

Hyde rushed for 226 yards in the game, breaking the record set by Chris "Beanie" Wells in 2007 for most yards rushing for an OSU player against Michigan. Wells had run for 222 yards in '07 during a rain-soaked 14-3 win in Ann Arbor.

## Two More Victories

Unfortunately, Miller's appearance in the 2013 game would be his last significant contribution against Michigan. He injured his shoulder in the Orange Bowl that followed the 2013 season and then missed the 2014 national championship run after tearing the labrum in his throwing shoulder just before that season began.

With Miller watching from the sideline, the Buckeyes broke open a 21-21 tie game in the third quarter before rolling to a 42-28 win against the Wolverines. Running back Ezekiel Elliott rushed for 121 yards and two touchdowns while quarterback J.T. Barrett threw for 176 yards and a score. But Barrett was injured on the first play of the fourth quarter, and Cardale Jones finished the game for the Buckeyes before helping lead them to postseason wins vs. Wisconsin, Alabama and Oregon and the team's first national championship in 12 years.

There was speculation prior to the 2015 season that Miller would transfer, but he returned to Ohio State, albeit as a receiver because of continued shoulder problems. He made an effortless transition, totaling 26 receptions for 341 yards and three TDs while

adding another 260 yards and a touchdown on the ground.

Miller caught only one pass for 5 yards and ran the ball three times for just 7 yards in his final Michigan game, but the Buckeyes stomped their way to a 42-13 victory, their third straight 42-point output in the series. Before that streak, Ohio State had scored 42 or more points only four times in the entire series – wins of 50-20 in 1961, 50-14 in 1968, 42-39 in 2006 and 42-9 in 2008.

The 2015 game was dominated by Elliott and Barrett, who combined to rush for 353 yards and five touchdowns. Barrett added another 113 yards and one TD through the air.

For his career against Michigan, Miller finished 34 of 58 passing (58.6 percent) for 557 yards with five touchdowns and two interceptions. On the ground, he added another 317 yards and four scores with a 5.8-yard average on 55 carries. More importantly, however, he celebrated four victories in five tries against the Wolverines and was part of beginning an unprecedented winning streak for Ohio State that currently stands at eight games.

"We should have been 5 for 5, so what would that have made the streak?" Miller asked with a laugh. "I'm proud of those games I played in, but mostly I'm proud of my teammates. We started out every year with the goal to beat those boys up there, and with that one exception, we got it done."

"That's why I always like to post some of those big plays every year. I wouldn't ever want them to forget what we started – the big (winning) streak that just keeps on going."

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# Greatest Rivalry Known Simply As 'The Game'

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

There are rivalry games throughout college football. Pittsburgh and West Virginia square off in the Backyard Brawl, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State take on one another in the Bedlam Series, and Oregon and Oregon State wage an annual Civil War.

Iowa State and Kansas State meet in Farmageddon, BYU and Utah face off in the Holy War, Alabama and Auburn lock horns in the Iron Bowl, and the Red River Shootout has been waged between Texas and Oklahoma since 1900.

And then there is Ohio State vs. Michigan. No pretense, no catchy nickname. When the Buckeyes and Wolverines meet every fall, their contest is known simply as The Game.

The archrivals have been doing battle for 125 years in what has become one of college football's greatest rivalries. In 2000, the game was ranked by ESPN as the greatest North American rivalry in all of sports.

Michigan dominated the early part of the series that began in 1897 before the Buckeyes finally broke through in 1919 behind All-America halfback Chic Harley. Since that time, the teams have faced one another boasting some of the greatest college players of all time including Tom Harmon, Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, Ron Kramer, Jack Tatum, Archie Griffin, Anthony Carter, Eddie George, Desmond Howard and Troy Smith.

Since the game was moved to the final Saturday of the Big Ten season in 1935, the game has had the potential for major impact in the conference standings nearly 50 times. That includes 25 contests in which the two schools have decided the division or league championship between themselves, including a streak between 1972-81 when the Ohio State-Michigan game determined the conference's Rose Bowl representative each year.

The rivalry was already a hotly contested



FILE PHOTO

**VICTORY RIDE — OSU head coach Woody Hayes gets a triumphant victory ride on the shoulders of his players, including quarterback Dave Leggett (22), after a 21-7 victory against Michigan in 1954. The Buckeyes went on to beat USC in the Rose Bowl and captured the first national championship of Hayes' career.**

one when a brash young coach named Bo Schembechler took over at Michigan prior to the 1969 season. Schembechler was an Ohio native and a former member of Ohio State head coach Woody Hayes' staff, and he knew what the rivalry meant to so many people in both states.

On Nov. 22, 1969, Hayes led his top-ranked team into Michigan Stadium riding the crest of a 22-game winning streak and with sights firmly set on a second consecutive national championship. But behind a stifling defensive

effort that intercepted Ohio State six times, Schembechler and his team engineered a stunning 24-12 upset win.

That touched off "The Ten-Year War" between Hayes and Schembechler, and it raised the frenzy of the OSU-Michigan rivalry to a fever pitch. During the following decade, either Ohio State or Michigan won the Big Ten championship every year, and the rivals shared the title six times during the decade.

The "War" ended after Hayes' final season in 1978, but the battles continue. Because of

its early dominance, Michigan continues to lead the overall series with a 58-52-6 advantage against the Buckeyes. But over the past 110 games, things couldn't be more even. Since 1906, each school has 52 victories and there have been six ties.

Here are some of the most memorable moments in the history of The Game.

## Stadium Dedication (1922)

Michigan served as the opponent as Ohio State dedicated its new Ohio Stadium on Oct. 21, 1922. The largest crowd ever to witness a football game in the Midwest was officially announced at 72,500 although there might have been thousands more than that inside the Horseshoe. Many fans unable to secure tickets for the sold-out game forced their way through a fence at the south end of the stadium.

The dedication game festivities were wonderful, both the Ohio State and Michigan marching bands performed at halftime, and more than 30 former OSU team captains were seated together on the sideline. The only disappointment was the final score as the Buckeyes dropped a 19-0 decision, breaking their three-game win streak in the series.


Future U-M head coach Harry Kipke was the star for the Wolverines, scoring a touchdown at halfback and keeping the Buckeyes pinned deep in their own territory most of the afternoon with his precision punting.

## Seesaw Battle (1944)

Before a homecoming crowd of 71,958 in Ohio Stadium, the third-ranked Buckeyes won an 18-14 classic over the No. 6 Wolverines.

The lead changed hands four times in the back-and-forth contest that started with Olie Cline's 1-yard touchdown plunge to give Ohio State a 6-0 lead late in the first quarter. Michigan grabbed its first lead at 7-6 just 22 seconds before halftime on a short TD run by Dick Culligan and the subsequent extra point.

Gordon Appleby recovered a Michigan



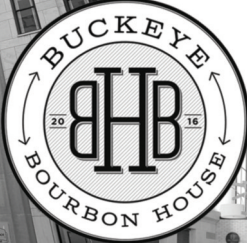
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fumble midway through the third period, setting up a touchdown run by Heisman Trophy winner Les Horvath to give the Buckeyes a 12-7 advantage. But the Wolverines came back with an 83-yard march in the fourth quarter topped by another Culligan TD to regain the lead at 14-12.

Michigan couldn't hold the advantage, however, and Horvath capped a 14-play, 52-yard drive with a 1-yard touchdown at the 3:16 mark of the fourth quarter. OSU defensive halfback Dick Flanagan ended the Wolverines' hopes for another comeback when he intercepted a pass from Culligan in the waning seconds, preserving the 18-14 victory for the Buckeyes.

Horvath rushed for 106 yards and helped keep Ohio State undefeated for the season, and the Buckeyes were declared the National Civilian Champions for 1944. They finished second to Army in the final Associated Press poll.

### Goal-Line Stand (1954)

Another Big Ten championship was on the line when the undefeated Buckeyes took on the once-beaten Wolverines.

The teams played to a 7-7 tie after three quarters before Michigan opened fourth-quarter play with a first-and-goal at the OSU 4-yard line. Spearheaded by 6-3, 275-pound lineman Jim Parker clogging the middle, the Buckeyes made one of the classic goal-line stands in school history.

Michigan pounded the ball to the 1-yard line on its first two plays, but the Buckeyes would not budge after that. Parker, along with teammates Jim Reichenbach, Frank "Moose" Machinsky and Hubert Bobo, stopped the Wolverines on third down and again on fourth down inside the 1.

After taking over on downs, the Ohio State offense took the ball and marched more than 99 yards the other way for a go-ahead touchdown. They added one more score to put the finishing touches on a 21-7 victory, a win that helped propel the team into the Rose Bowl and an eventual national championship.

### So Long, Hop (1955)

All-America halfback "Hopalong" Cassady completed his college career with a thrilling final performance on his archrival's home turf.

Cassady rushed for 146 yards and scored his final collegiate TD early in the fourth period as the Buckeyes shut out the Wolverines, 17-0. The performance helped solidify Cassady as college football's best player in 1955, and a month later he captured the Heisman Trophy by a wide margin over runner-up Jim Swink of TCU.

Michigan crossed midfield only once in the game as Ohio State's stifling defense denied the Wolverines a Rose Bowl bid. Instead, OSU picked up the conference championship with its first win in Ann Arbor since 1937.

The Buckeyes were barred from playing in Pasadena due to the Big Ten's no-repeat rule, and Michigan State was the conference's representative to the Rose Bowl. There, they defeated UCLA with a thrilling 17-14 win.

### Title Clincher (1961)

The Buckeyes erupted for 512 yards of total offense and rolled to a 50-20 victory over the Wolverines, sewing up the Big Ten championship as well as the national championship from the Football Writers Association of America.

Senior fullback Bob Ferguson rushed for

152 yards and became the first OSU player to score four touchdowns in a game against Michigan. The Buckeyes also scored on an 80-yard pass from Joe Sparma to Bob Klein, the longest scoring pass play in The Game's history.

Ohio State blew open the game with a 29-point explosion in the fourth quarter, including a late two-point conversion after the final touchdown.

### Lucky Chinstrap (1968)

National championship implications were on the line as the No. 2 Buckeyes hosted the fourth-ranked Wolverines. After spotting the visitors an early 7-0 lead, Ohio State rolled to a 50-14 victory, clinching the Big Ten championship and a Rose Bowl berth against USC and Heisman Trophy winner O.J. Simpson.

On the night before the game, during a huge on-campus pep rally, fullback Jim Otis was approached by a Buckeye fan. The fan said that Ferguson had given him his chinstrap as a souvenir following the 1961 OSU-Michigan game, a contest during which Ferguson had scored four touchdowns against the Wolverines. The fan, who referred to himself only as "Scooter," said he wanted Otis to have the strap for good luck the next day.

Otis carefully taped the chinstrap inside his shoulder pads the next morning and proceeded to rush for 143 yards and four touchdowns against Michigan.

### 'War' Begins (1969)

Ohio State was poised for a second consecutive national championship when the Wolverines pulled off one of the greatest upsets in college football history. Michigan entered the game as a 17-point underdog and came away with a 24-12 shocker.

Schembechler, in his first year in Ann Arbor, was well-schooled in the tendencies of a Hayes team after spending five years on staff at Ohio State from 1958-62. As a result, the Wolverines virtually shut off the Buckeyes' vaunted option play, forcing OSU to throw the ball. That played right into Schembechler's hands, and his team picked off six interceptions to aid in the victory.

The game was a nip-and-tuck affair with

the lead changing hands three times in the first half with the Wolverines clinging to a 14-12 lead. But after Barry Pierson returned a punt 60 yards for Michigan to set up another touchdown, the Wolverines never looked back. The Buckeyes moved past midfield only once in the second half as the U-M defense was stifling. In addition to his big punt return, Pierson was also the defensive star of the game, grabbing three of his team's six interceptions.

### Sweet Revenge (1970)

To say Hayes was obsessed with beating Michigan in 1970 would be like saying the Grand Canyon is a hole in the ground. Hayes had a huge rug made with the 1969 score woven into it and had it installed just outside the Buckeyes' locker room. Every day, Ohio State players and coaches had "Michigan 24, Ohio State 12" staring them in the face.

By the time the two teams met Nov. 21, 1970, the Buckeyes were at a fever pitch and responded with a stifling 20-9 victory.

The teams traded field goals for a 3-3 tie early in the second quarter before OSU quarterback Rex Kern hit split end Bruce Jankowski for a 26-yard touchdown, giving the Buckeyes a 10-3 advantage at the half.

Michigan threatened to tie the game on a third-quarter touchdown pass from Don Moorhead to Paul Staroba, but Ohio State defender Tim Anderson blocked the extra point, and that was as close as the Wolverines got.

Kicker Fred Schram booted a 27-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter to widen Ohio State's lead to 13-9, and then linebacker Stan White intercepted Moorhead deep in Michigan territory, setting up a 4-yard touchdown run by tailback Leo Hayden.

Hayden rushed for 117 yards in the game, leading the Buckeyes' offensive attack that ground out 329 total yards. The Wolverines committed three turnovers and were limited

**Continued On Page 34**



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# Big Blocks, Headbands, Speeches Mark Rivalry

Continued From Page 33

to 155 yards.

The victory put the finishing touches on a perfect 9-0 regular season for Ohio State and served as the final home game for the "Super Sophs," who finished their careers with an unblemished 16-0 record in Ohio Stadium.

## 'Other' Griffin (1975)

The Buckeyes and Wolverines were meeting for the seventh time in eight seasons to determine the Big Ten's Rose Bowl representative, and an NCAA-record crowd of 105,543 squeezed into Michigan Stadium, where the Wolverines were working on a 41-game unbeaten streak.

Ohio State was trailing 14-7 with 7:11 remaining in the game and hadn't registered a first down since early in the second quarter. But quarterback Cornelius Greene drove the team 80 yards for the game-tying score with 3:18 left to play.

With the score knotted at 14 - and the Wolverines knowing a tie would send the Buckeyes to Pasadena - Schembechler was forced to try to create something on offense. On third-and-19 at his own 11, quarterback Rick Leach tried to find a receiver past the first-down marker down the middle but threw too far and in the vicinity of OSU sophomore safety Ray Griffin.

The younger brother of two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin snagged Leach's pass at the Michigan 32 and streaked his way

back down the sideline to the 3-yard line. On the next play, fullback Pete Johnson thundered into the end zone, and the Buckeyes had secured a 21-14 victory.

In the game, Archie Griffin had his NCAA-record streak of consecutive 100-yard rushing games snapped at 31. But brother Ray had a coming-out party with 14 tackles, including 10 solo stops and two sacks, and the all-important interception.

After the game, Hayes told reporters, "I'd have to say this is our greatest comeback, so this has got to be the greatest game I've ever coached."

## Block Party (1979)

There was a lot riding on Earle Bruce's first Michigan game as Ohio State head coach. The Buckeyes, unranked at the beginning of the season, had rattled off 10 straight victories and invaded Ann Arbor as the nation's No. 2-ranked team.

Thanks to a fourth-quarter blocked punt by linebacker Jim Laughlin, OSU squeezed out an 18-15 victory and earned the right to play for the national championship in the Rose Bowl.

The game was a seesaw battle with Ohio State grabbing a 3-0 lead in the second quarter before Michigan seized a 7-3 advantage. The Buckeyes cut the deficit to 7-6 by halftime and then went back in front when sophomore quarterback Art Schlichter threw an 18-yard touchdown to Chuck Hunter. The two-point

conversion try failed, leaving OSU with a 12-7 lead.

Michigan quickly responded, thanks in part to a 66-yard pass play from QB John Wangler to fleet receiver Anthony Carter, and running back Roosevelt Smith scored on a 1-yard run to put the Wolverines back in front at 13-12. Smith also ran for the two-point conversion, pushing his team's lead to 15-12 with 3:50 left in the third quarter.

That was the way things stayed until just over four minutes left to play in the game. With Michigan protecting its three-point lead and forced to punt, Bruce called for an all-out attempt to block the kick. The Wolverines got everyone blocked except for Laughlin, who ran through untouched to smother punter Bryan Virgil at the U-M 23-yard line. Ohio State teammate Todd Bell scooped up the loose football and scampered 18 yards to pay dirt, sending the Buckeyes to Pasadena for the first time in four years.

## Big Broadnax (1981)

Ohio State ruined Michigan's planned trip to Pasadena with a 14-9 victory in Ann Arbor.

The Buckeyes entered the game with a pass defense that ranked among the worst in the nation, but they picked off Michigan quarterback Steve Smith three times.

In all, the Wolverines got inside the OSU 10-yard line four times but were turned away with a single touchdown. Meanwhile, the Buckeyes got a 1-yard touchdown dive from

Schlichter for a 7-3 halftime lead. Michigan got two field goals in the third quarter from kicker Ali Haji-Sheikh to take a 9-7 lead, but that simply set the stage for one of the most famous blocks in Ohio State history.

With 2:50 to play and facing third-and-goal on the Michigan 6, Schlichter rolled out on an option play. As he moved toward the sideline, fullback Vaughn Broadnax locked on a line-backer then pushed him backward into the safety, paving the way for Schlichter to dance into the corner of the end zone.

The Wolverines could have claimed an outright Big Ten championship with a win, but the Buckeyes helped send Iowa to the Rose Bowl. The Hawkeyes, however, were shut out 28-0 by Washington.

Ohio State wound up in the Liberty Bowl, where it defeated Navy 31-28, while Michigan fell all the way to the Bluebonnet Bowl, where it took a 33-14 win over UCLA.

## EARLE's Game (1987)

Fired after nine seasons as head coach, Bruce received a final tribute from his players with a come-from-behind 23-20 victory in Michigan Stadium.

Wearing headbands emblazoned with "EARLE" across the front, the Buckeyes overcame a 13-7 halftime deficit thanks to some inspired play in the second half.

On the team's first possession of the third quarter, quarterback Tom Tupa connected on a short pass to tailback Carlos Snow, who

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FILE PHOTO

**GOING IN STYLE —** Earle Bruce finished his coaching tenure at Ohio State in style when his team engineered a come-from-behind 23-20 victory against Michigan at Ann Arbor in 1987. The game began with OSU players wearing “EARLE” headbands and ended with Bruce being hoisted on his players’ shoulders in victory.

made one fake and then outraced the rest of the Wolverines to the end zone for a 70-yard touchdown.

OSU pushed the lead to 20-13 on Tupa’s 1-yard plunge midway through the third period, but kicker Matt Frantz missed the PAT. That extra point loomed large when Michigan running back Leroy Hoard burst up the middle for a 10-yard touchdown to tie the score.

But Frantz got a chance at redemption and made the most of it, booting a 26-yard field goal with 5:18 to play in the game.

OSU’s defense held for the remainder of the game, and Bruce triumphantly pumped his fist in the air as he was carried off the field on the shoulders of his team.

#### ‘Greatest’ Tie (1992)

When it has been five long years between victories, you might be forgiven for characterizing a tie as a huge moral victory. Still, when OSU president E. Gordon Gee said the 13-13 tie with the Wolverines was “one of our greatest wins,” it was a statement met with equal parts incredulity and ridicule.

A tie wasn’t exactly a victory, but after Cooper had lost four in a row to That Team Up North, it certainly beat another loss.

Even the tie got the coach’s critics going, though, because after pulling to within one at 13-12 with 4:24 to play in the game, Cooper elected to kick the extra point and tie the game rather than gamble and try for a two-point conversion.

“It never crossed my mind,” he said. “The idea was to hold them, get the ball back and kick a winning field goal.”

Unfortunately, that chance never came. The Buckeyes did get the ball back but moved only 6 yards on three plays, and Cooper instructed his team to punt the ball away with 1:28 remaining. They never got another chance.

Despite the tie, Michigan still went to the Rose Bowl where it beat Washington 38-31, avenging a loss to the Huskies the year before. Meanwhile, the Buckeyes fell 21-14 to Georgia in the Citrus Bowl.

#### Tunnel Of Pride (1994)

Cooper was 0-5-1 against the Wolverines but got a little help to secure his first victory

in the series – some of it from an unwanted source.

Early in the week, Michigan receiver Walter Smith boasted, “We want to get Cooper fired. That’s what I want to do. We want to keep on beating them and beating them until he’s not there.”

The comments so incensed OSU alumni that several hundred former players lined up on the Ohio Stadium field during pregame festivities to show their support of the program, forming the first-ever “Tunnel of Pride.”

In Cooper’s six previous games against Michigan, the football always seemed to bounce the Wolverines’ way. This time, it was the Buckeyes who got all the breaks in a 22-6 victory.

OSU took a 12-3 halftime lead on a safety, a 4-yard touchdown scramble by quarterback Bobby Hoying and a 26-yard field goal by Josh Jackson.

In the second half, OSU defensive back Marlon Kerner blocked a field goal and defensive lineman Luke Fickell grabbed a fourth-quarter interception at the Michigan 16-yard line.

Five plays later, tailback Eddie George ran into the end zone from 2 yards out, and the monkey was finally off Cooper’s back.

#### Title Hopes Fall (1996)

This game was supposed to mark a turn in the series in Ohio State’s favor but will likely forever be remembered as the contest during which All-America cornerback Shawn Springs fell down.

The Buckeyes had already sewn up the Big Ten championship and their first Rose Bowl berth in a dozen seasons. They simply needed to beat Michigan at home to preserve an undefeated regular season and a shot at the national championship.

It appeared that OSU would accomplish that feat, getting three Jackson field goals in the first half for a 9-0 lead.

But Michigan struck quickly in the third quarter when quarterback Brian Griese connected with split end Tai Streets on a 69-yard touchdown pass on the second play of the second half. Springs slipped down on the play, enabling Streets to run untouched into the end zone.

The Wolverines later took the lead at the end of the third quarter on a Remy Hamilton field goal then tacked on another three points with 1:19 to go. Ohio State had one final possession, but quarterback Joe Germaine’s desperation heave on a fourth-and-23 play was intercepted, ending any hopes of a miracle comeback, with the Buckeyes falling, 13-9.

The Buckeyes went on to beat No. 2 Arizona State, 20-17, in the Rose Bowl, scoring the winning touchdown on a 5-yard pass from Germaine to David Boston with just 19 seconds left in the game. But OSU had to settle for finishing second in the final polls, watching Florida take the national championship.

#### Most Satisfying (1998)

Cooper had arguably his best team in 1998, but the Buckeyes had suffered an upset loss to Michigan State two weeks earlier to knock them out of the national championship picture. The team desperately wanted to salvage its season with a win over Michigan,

and it did so with a convincing 31-16 win that really wasn’t that close.

The contest featured more passing yardage than any other game in the series. Germaine threw for 330 yards for Ohio State while Michigan quarterback Tom Brady completed 31 of 56 attempts for 375 yards. Both totals represented series highs for the respective teams.

OSU broke out on top early when Michael Wiley ran 53 yards for a touchdown on his team’s second possession of the game. The Buckeyes set up their next two scores with special teams play, forcing a minus-yardage punt on one play and blocking a punt on another. Germaine later hooked up with Boston for a 43-yard touchdown following an interception by OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski.

The Buckeyes completely shut down the Michigan rushing attack, limiting the Wolverines to a net of 4 yards on the ground.

Especially gratifying for Ohio State was the fact the victory broke Michigan’s Big Ten winning streak at 16 games.

#### 310 Days Later (2001)

When Jim Tressel was hired to replace Cooper in January 2001, one of his stated objectives was to reverse Cooper’s 2-10-1 record against Michigan. But no one expected Tressel to say what he did in front of a basketball crowd at Value City Arena just a few hours after being introduced as the new coach.

“I can assure you that you’ll be proud of our young people in the classroom, in the community and, most especially, in 310 days in Ann Arbor, Michigan,” the new coach said.

The crowd erupted, but after the initial frenzy died down, many wondered if the Buckeyes could back up Tressel’s assertion.

As things turned out, they needn’t have worried. The Buckeyes scored a 26-20 victory, their first in Ann Arbor since Bruce’s final game in 1987.

Senior tailback Jonathan Wells continued his breakout season, rushing 23 times for 122 yards and three touchdowns. All three scores came in the first half when Ohio State jumped out to a 23-0 lead over the 11th-ranked Wol-

**Continued On Page 36**

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# Close Games Mark Recent OSU-UM Contests

Continued From Page 35

verines.

Not that there weren't some anxious moments in the second half. Michigan scored on an 11-yard pass from John Navarre to receiver Marquise Walker with 2:26 left in the game to get the home team within six points of the Buckeyes.

But OSU receiver Chris Vance recovered the ensuing onside kick, effectively ending Michigan's hopes of coming all the way back. Navarre did get a few seconds at the end of the game, but his Hail Mary pass was intercepted by freshman cornerback Dustin Fox to cement Ohio State's victory.

## On To The Title (2002)

Before an Ohio Stadium-record crowd of 105,539, the Buckeyes overcame a fourth-quarter deficit to beat Michigan and secure the Big Ten's first-ever spot in the Bowl Championship Series national title game.

Freshman tailback Maurice Clarett energized the crowd when he shook off a shoulder injury to run for 119 yards, breaking the school's single-season rushing record for freshmen.

But it was a 26-yard pass reception in the fourth quarter that could have been Clarett's biggest play. It helped set up a 4-yard touchdown run by sophomore tailback Maurice Hall, giving the Buckeyes a 14-9 lead with 4:55 remaining in the game.

Michigan had two more chances to pull the game out of the fire. Navarre drove his team to the OSU 30-yard line, but he fumbled after a hard sack by defensive tackle Darrion Scott and defensive end Will Smith pounced on the loose football.

Then in the final minute, the Wolverines got the ball back and got all the way to the OSU 20 before safety Will Allen picked off Navarre near the end zone to end the threat.

The victory gave the Buckeyes a share of the Big Ten championship with Iowa, preserved their undefeated season and put them into the BCS Championship Game against defending national champion Miami (Fla.). Then, on Jan. 3, 2003, at the Fiesta Bowl in Tempe, Ariz., Ohio State defeated the Hurricanes 31-24 in double overtime to capture the school's first consensus national title since 1968.

## Troy Story (2004)

Troy Smith totaled 386 yards from scrimmage and three touchdowns during a relatively easy 37-21 victory for the Buckeyes.

The Wolverines entered the Nov. 20 contest on an eight-game winning streak, boasting a 9-1 record and ranked No. 7 in the country. They were already on their way to a Rose Bowl date against Texas and installed as a 4½-point favorite to beat the unranked Buckeyes.

But Michigan had no answer for Smith.

He directed one touchdown drive of 99 yards and another measuring 97 yards and turned in the finest running and passing day ever for an Ohio State quarterback against the Wolverines.

The sophomore QB rushed for 145 yards and one touchdown and threw for 241 yards and a pair of scores. The Buckeyes had never had a quarterback rush for more than 100 yards and throw for more than 200 in the same game in program history.

Smith's game overshadowed several other fine individual performances, including freshman sensation Ted Ginn Jr. His 82-yard punt return for a touchdown in the third quarter was his fourth of the 2004 season, tying the all-time NCAA record for the most in a single season and establishing new single-season and career records at Ohio State.

## Titans Clash (2006)

Meeting for the first time as the two top-ranked teams in the nation, the old rivals squared off in what some called "The Game of the Century." And for once, the game lived up to the hype with the No. 1 Buckeyes holding on for a 42-39 victory.

Second-ranked Michigan drew first blood on an early first-quarter touchdown run from Mike Hart, but Ohio State tied the score before the opening period had ended and then took a 28-14 lead into halftime when Smith connected with Anthony Gonzalez on an 8-yard TD pass with 20 seconds left before the break.

But the Wolverines would not give up, scoring 25 points in the second half and drawing within three points at the 2:16 mark of the fourth quarter after Chad Henne and Tyler Ecker hooked up for a 16-yard touchdown pass.

That was Michigan's last gasp, however. The Buckeyes ran out the clock for the victory and a trip to the BCS National Championship Game.

Smith was masterful in his third career victory against Michigan, throwing for 316 yards and four touchdowns while sewing up the Heisman Trophy. Antonio Pittman rushed for 139 yards and a touchdown, and Ginn grabbed eight receptions for 104 yards and a score.

Hart did about all he could in defeat, carrying 23 times for 142 yards and three touchdowns.

## To The Edge (2013)

Perhaps proving once and for all that records mean nothing in the OSU-Michigan rivalry, the unranked, four-loss Wolverines pushed the undefeated No. 3 Buckeyes all the way to the edge before failing on a two-point conversion try in the final second to give Ohio State a 42-41 victory.

OSU tailback Carlos Hyde had broken a 35-all tie with a 1-yard touchdown plunge to give the Buckeyes a 42-35 lead with just 2:20 to play, but Michigan responded with a quick-strike, 84-yard touchdown march capped by 2-yard TD pass from Devin Gardner to Devin Funchess, making it 42-41 with just 32 seconds remaining.

Michigan head coach Brady Hoke elected to go for the win, but OSU defensive back Tyvus Powell stepped in front of a Gardner pass at the goal line to make the game-saving inter-

ception.

Hyde led a punishing run game for the Buckeyes with 226 yards and a touchdown on 27 carries while quarterback Braxton Miller added 153 yards on the ground and scored three times. Miller also threw for 133 yards and two touchdowns.

Meanwhile, Gardner established a new series record with 451 yards through the air. The Michigan QB also threw for four touchdowns, including one to wide receiver Jeremy Gallon, who caught nine balls for 175 yards.

At the end of the game, ABC play-by-play announcer Brad Nessler summed things up nicely when he said simply, "They don't come much better than that."

## Double OT (2016)

The teams played their first (and still only) overtime game, one that continues to stick in the craw of Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh. OSU quarterback J.T. Barrett converted a fourth-and-1 by inches during the second overtime, but Harbaugh was convinced his team had stopped Barrett short of the line to gain.

Officials initially ruled Barrett had nudged the nose of the football just past the first-down marker, and replay eventually upheld that decision. Had the Wolverines held, they would have won a 27-24 decision. As things turned out, Curtis Samuel took a handoff on the next play and skirted into the end zone from 15 yards out to give the Buckeyes a 30-27 victory.

"I thought there were some outrageous calls, including the one that would have ended the game," Harbaugh said after the game. "I was bitterly disappointed with the officiating."

Barrett rushed 30 times for 125 yards and one touchdown, and he added 124 yards through the air. But Michigan intercepted him once and sacked him eight times.

Meanwhile, OSU kicker Tyler Durbin sent the game into overtime with a 23-yard field goal with just 0:01 showing on the game clock. It made up for a 21-yard miss by Durbin earlier in the fourth quarter.

## Pass Happy (2018)

Dwayne Haskins threw for 396 yards and a series-record six touchdowns to help the No. 10 Buckeyes roll to a 62-39 victory against the fourth-ranked Wolverines. Haskins threw scoring passes of 24, 24, 31, 78, 1 and 16 yards as Ohio State scored its most points ever against Michigan. It was also the highest combined total of points for a single game in the series.

The contest was a tight one through the first half with OSU holding only a 21-19 lead in the final seconds of the second quarter. But the Buckeyes got a field goal right before the break and then scored 17 straight points in the third period to pull away. Among the third-quarter outburst was a 33-yard touchdown return of a blocked punt by Sevn Banks.

Parris Campbell caught six balls for 192 yards and two touchdowns, while Mike Weber led the OSU running attack with 96 yards and a touchdown.

Michigan QB Shea Patterson threw for 187 yards and three scores, but he was intercepted once and sacked three times. The Wolverines turned the ball over **twice** and had the blocked punt returned for a touchdown.

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# Michigan Win Sets Up East Rivalry Showdown

Michigan stayed one game out of the Big Ten East Division lead with a 59-18 rout of Maryland, setting up a traditional for-all-the-marbles showdown Nov. 27 against Ohio State.

The Wolverines dominated Maryland in every phase of the Nov. 20 game, marching down the field on their second possession to take their first lead on a 2-yard touchdown pass to Luke Schoonmaker from Cade McNamara and never looking back.

McNamara threw for 259 yards and two scores while backup QB J.J. McCarthy was a perfect 5 for 5 for 58 yards and a touchdown. Tailback Hassan Haskins finished with a game-high 78 rushing yards and a pair of touchdowns, and McCarthy added a rushing touchdown among his two carries for 19 yards.

Receiver Donovan Edwards caught 10 passes for 170 yards and one TD as Michigan rolled up 352 yards through the air.

Maryland quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa was limited to 19 completions on 33 attempts for 178 yards, one touchdown and one interception.

Linebacker Josh Ross led Michigan with eight tackles (seven solo), and standout defensive end Aidan Hutchinson tallied five solo stops, including one for loss. Freshman defensive end T.J. Guy also recorded a sack.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin maintained its advantage in the West Division race with a 35-28 win against Nebraska. The Badgers, now winners of seven straight, need to defeat Minnesota on Nov. 27 to secure the West berth in the Big Ten Championship Game.

Wisconsin freshman tailback Braelon Allen rushed for 228 yards and three touchdowns – including a tiebreaking 53-yard

scamper with 3:50 left – to lead the Badgers.

## BIG TEN NOTES Joe Dempsey

The Cornhuskers drove to the Wisconsin 11-yard line in the final minute, but Badgers cornerback Faion Hicks broke up Husker quarterback Adrian Martinez's fourth-down pass to Xavier Betts with four seconds left, after which Nebraska head coach Scott Frost drew an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for voicing his displeasure at the lack of a call for pass interference.

Martinez threw for a season-high 351 yards and one touchdown with two picks, adding 23 yards and a score on the ground. In the process, he passed former Huskers QB Tommy Armstrong (10,690, 2013-16) to become the all-time program leader in total yardage with 10,693.

Nebraska's Austin Allen (143) and Samori Toure (113) each cracked the century mark in receiving yardage.

Wisconsin QB Graham Mertz was an efficient 12 for 18 in the passing game for 145 yards and a touchdown.

Iowa stayed tied with Wisconsin for first place in the West with a 33-23 win against Illinois. The Hawkeyes must beat Nebraska on Nov. 27 and hope Minnesota upsets Wisconsin since the Badgers hold the tiebreaker courtesy of their late October win against Iowa.

First, though, the Hawkeyes had to erase an early 10-0 deficit thanks to a 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by senior Charlie Jones. Iowa enjoyed a 17-13 half-time lead and then steadily built on that advantage in the second half.

Iowa got field goals of 51, 48, 29 and 30 yards from kicker Caleb Shudak and a 32-yard interception return for a touchdown by linebacker Jack Campbell at the 1:36 mark of the fourth quarter to seal the victory.

Tailback Tyler Goodson led the Iowa rushing attack with 132 yards on 27 carries, while Gavin Williams added 56 yards on 10 attempts. Iowa quarterback Alex Padilla completed just 6 of 17 attempts for 83 yards.

Illinois quarterback Brandon Peters completed 16 of 36 passes for 248 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions. Running back Chase Brown, who had averaged 145.7 yards rushing over his previous three games, was held to just 42 yards on 13 carries.

Elsewhere, Minnesota scored two touchdowns during the final 46 seconds of the first half and ran away with a 35-14 win against Indiana.

The Golden Gophers were led by running backs Ky Thomas and Mar'Keise Irving, who combined for 175 yards and three touchdowns. Minnesota QB Tanner Morgan threw for 196 yards and a pair of scores.

IU was held to 218 total yards, including only 77 through the air as quarterbacks Grant Gremel and Donaven McCulley combined to complete just 8 of 19 passes with one touchdown and two picks.

Minnesota left guard Conner Olson became the Big Ten's career leader in games started, breaking a tie with former Ohio State center Billy Price by making the 56th consecutive start of his career.

Penn State backup quarterback Christian Veilleux led the Nittany Lions to a 28-0 victory against Rutgers after starter Sean Clifford left in the first quarter due to an injury.

The true freshman Veilleux completed 15 of 24 passes for 235 yards and three touchdowns and added 36 rushing yards. Wide receiver Parker Washington was his favorite target with six catches for 72 yards and one score.

The Scarlet Knights managed only 160 yards of offense, including 67 rushing yards on 32 attempts.

And Purdue took care of business with a 32-14 victory against Northwestern in a game played at historic Wrigley Field in Chicago. The Boilermakers benefited from a career day by wide receiver Milton Wright, who corralled career highs of eight catches for 213 yards and three touchdowns from quarterback Aidan O'Connell.

O'Connell threw for 423 yards and three

## BIG 2021 Standings

### East Division

	Conf.		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct
Ohio State	8	0	10	1	.909
Michigan	7	1	10	1	.909
Michigan State	7	2	9	2	.818
Penn State	4	4	7	4	.636
Maryland	2	6	5	6	.455
Rutgers	2	6	5	6	.455
Indiana	0	8	2	9	.182

### West Division

	Conf.		Overall		
	W	L	W	L	Pct
Iowa	6	2	9	2	.818
Wisconsin	6	2	8	3	.727
Purdue	5	3	7	4	.636
Minnesota	5	3	7	4	.667
Illinois	3	5	4	7	.364
Nebraska	1	7	3	8	.273
Northwestern	1	7	3	8	.273

### Nov. 20 Scores

Ohio State 56, Michigan State 7  
Purdue 32, Northwestern 14  
Penn State 28, Rutgers 0  
Iowa 33, Illinois 23  
Michigan 59, Maryland 18  
Wisconsin 35, Nebraska 28  
Minnesota 35, Indiana 14

### Nov. 26 Game

Iowa at Nebraska, 1:30 p.m.

### Nov. 27 Games

Maryland at Rutgers, Noon  
Ohio State at Michigan, Noon  
Indiana at Purdue, 3:30 p.m.  
Penn State at Michigan State, 3:30 p.m.  
Northwestern at Illinois, 3:30 p.m.  
Wisconsin at Minnesota, 4 p.m.

### Dec. 4 Game

Big Ten Championship Game, 8 p.m.

scores on 29-of-39 passing. The fifth-year signal caller also linked up 12 times with wide receiver David Bell for 101 yards, extending the standout receiver's school record to 17 career 100-yard games.

Northwestern tailback Evan Hull led the Wildcats with 96 yards and a touchdown.

### Tucker: No Plans To Leave East Lansing

During the days leading to his team's top-10 showdown with Ohio State, Michigan State head coach Mel Tucker shot down rumors that he was interested in pursuing other openings, saying MSU is a destination job and that he never intended to just

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pass through East Lansing.

While chatting Nov. 18 with former Michigan State basketball star Draymond Green on Green's radio show, Tucker responded to a report the day before in the Detroit Free Press that Michigan State was prepared to offer a 10-year contract extension to the coach worth \$95 million.

The Free Press reported that Michigan State alumni Mat Ishbia and Steve St. Andre were ready to help fund the new contract, which would make Tucker one of the nation's highest-paid coaches.

"I made it clear in my initial press conferences that I thought Michigan State was a destination job and not a steppingstone," Tucker told Green, who now plays for the NBA's Golden State Warriors. "It was never my intention to come here and just pass through. I believe that we're building something special here. I have tremendous support here to do that, and we're on the right track."

The 49-year-old Tucker, in his second year with the Spartans, talked about his Big Ten roots as a former Wisconsin player and a native of Cleveland who started his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Michigan State for then-head coach Nick Saban. He also spent 2001 to 2004 as a defensive assistant on Jim Tressel's staff at Ohio State.

Michigan State has yet to announce any new agreement with Tucker, who currently earns \$5.56 million and is signed through the 2024 season.

Tucker's name has been mentioned as a potential candidate for several coaching vacancies, most prominently the one at LSU, which announced Oct. 17 that head coach Ed Orgeron would not return in 2022.

#### Kahn Named Big Ten Women's Basketball VP

Megan Kahn was recently named the Big Ten's vice president of women's basketball to lead the women's basketball efforts for the conference along with conference commissioner Kevin Warren and deputy commissioner/chief sports officer Diana Sabau.

Warren announced the creation of the position in October at the conference's combined Basketball Media Days in Indianapo-

lis, marking the first senior-level position at the conference dedicated specifically to the growth of women's basketball.

Kahn will work with the conference's head coaches and campus administrators as well as Big Ten Network and national television partners in addition to assisting in the development of conference scheduling and coordinating day-to-day women's basketball operations.

"Megan has been a leader and innovator in women's college basketball for many years," Warren said. "She has an extraordinary amount of experience in various roles and has developed a wide network of strong relationships in the women's basketball community. Her ability to work collaboratively, while also thinking creatively and strategically, will be a tremendous asset to the Big Ten Conference, and we are thrilled to welcome her to the Big Ten family."

Kahn was most recently executive director and chief executive officer of WeCOACH, a nonprofit organization committed to the educational and professional development of women's coaches across all sports and levels (which rebranded from the Alliance of Women Coaches in 2018). While with WeCOACH, Kahn cultivated national partnerships with numerous organizations including adidas, Hudl, Jostens, Morgan Stanley, NCAA, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association, Women's Sports Foundation and many others.

Additionally, Kahn has served as an administrator at numerous national and regional championship events, including her role as tournament manager for game operations at both the 2015 and 2019 NCAA Women's Final Fours.

Kahn began her career as a women's basketball coach, starting as a graduate assistant at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley from 2000-02, and then as an assistant coach at Texas State University from 2002-04.

"I am excited and energized to take on this new role as the Big Ten's first vice president of women's basketball," Kahn said. "Big Ten women's basketball is trending in an extremely positive direction, making this an ideal time to join our student-athletes, coaches, fans and the whole Big Ten community in taking our sport to new heights."

#### COVID Cancels Cancun Trip For Iowa Women

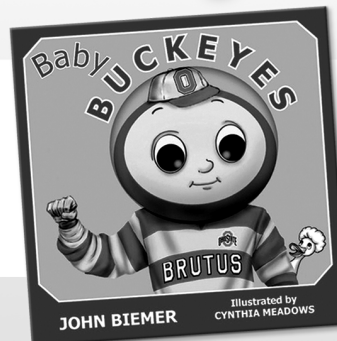
The Iowa women's basketball team canceled its home game against in-state rival Drake on Nov. 19 and withdrew itself from the Cancun Challenge in Mexico set for Nov. 25-27 after positive tests for COVID-19 in the program.

The No. 8 Hawkeyes (4-0) were next scheduled to play at Duke on Dec. 2 in the

Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

"We're obviously disappointed but understand this is the right decision," Iowa head coach Lisa Bluder said. "Our team and staff have followed best practices. But unfortunately, a number of individuals experienced symptoms and tested positive. We will continue to follow the guidance of our medical staff and look forward to returning to the court."

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# OSU Reassessing LBs As Early Signing Nears

The recruiting landscape was issued a shock last week when Chicago Marist four-star linebacker Jimmy Rolder (6-2, 220) committed to Michigan following a break-neck rise through the rankings.

After the state of Illinois canceled its 2020 high school season, Rolder played a six-game season in the spring, and his recruitment took off in recent months. His

## RECRUITING OUTLOOK Braden Moles

first offer came Sept. 17 from Ball State, followed three weeks later by Illinois on Oct. 9. Over the subsequent nine days, he received offers from Michigan, Purdue, Cincinnati, Iowa and Ohio State, with offers later coming in from Florida and LSU.

"Five weeks ago, I would've never thought I would have the opportunity to make this decision," Rolder posted on Twitter. "I'm a true believer that everything happens for a reason and that God has a plan for everyone. With that said, I'd like to announce that I will be committing to the University of Michigan to continue my academic and football career!"

Rolder is now ranked in the 247Sports

composite as the No. 364 overall prospect and 39th linebacker in his cycle. In just a matter of weeks, he rose from unranked to one of the more sought-after linebackers for 2022.

"With that kid, he just became a big-time recruit in the last month or so," Buckeye Scoop recruiting analyst Bill Greene told BSB. "I mean, he went from nowhere to all of a sudden pulling offers from everybody. Michigan really did a great job of recruiting him there."

"I don't think it was too much of a surprise, really. I didn't think he would end up going to Indiana or to Illinois, so it wasn't a big surprise to me. I kind of thought Michigan or Ohio State had a great shot to get that kid."

Though Rolder was not considered a lock to Ohio State by any means, it's another target off the board for the Buckeyes who are thought to be looking to add another linebacker for 2022.

Currently, Ohio State has commits at that position from Kettering (Ohio) Alter five-star C.J. Hicks (6-3, 215) and Marysville, Ohio, four-star Gabe Powers (6-4, 230) with Pickerington (Ohio) Central five-star Sonny Styles waiting in the wings in 2023 as a potential contributor at the position.

The Buckeyes were also looking into three-star athlete Carson Tabaracci (6-2, 225) of Park City, Utah, but he canceled a scheduled visit to Ohio State for the Michi-

## 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

gan State game and then committed to Utah on Nov. 19, removing one more name from the list for Ohio State.

"I don't know that there's (any other linebacker) right now on their board that is coming in for a visit or looks like a possibility," Greene said. "The one thing they could do is just kind of sit back and observe. The first signing period is coming up here soon. For the kids that don't sign early, the recruiting starts over then because you've got until early February for anybody that doesn't sign in December."

Greene said there are a number of factors to consider, including the potential for movement on the coaching carousel that could cause prospects to reconsider.

"There may be kids on there that are committed right now to other schools that don't sign," he said. "(They) might be worried about their situation or about their coach possibly leaving. If you look at James Franklin at Penn State. I don't know that his situation will be clarified before the first signing period."

"For Ohio State right now, with nobody

else really looming on the board, they might be better off just to either target guys right now that they think could flip from the school they're currently committed to, or wait and see who doesn't sign. Anybody who doesn't sign in the first period, they're looking to be re-recruited before the second signing period. If you're not signed, then there's a reason you're not signing."

That strategy doesn't guarantee Ohio State will find a fit at linebacker for 2022, however, presenting the possibility the Buckeyes will stand pat knowing there are reinforcements coming in 2023.

"They've already got Sonny Styles locked in for 2023," Greene said. "C.J. Hicks is an amazing player. There are a lot of young guys coming back next year in that room. I don't think they would stand pat. I think they'll get another linebacker and I think they've got some time to get that figured out, but I would guess there's going to be another linebacker in the class."

Greene added there are questions about whether Powers stays at linebacker or bulks up and moves down in the trenches.

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# ASK AN ANALYST

## With Buckeye Scoop's Bill Greene

**Ohio State currently has just three commits on the offensive line for 2022 – West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Tegra Tshabola, Englewood (Colo.) Cherry Creek four-star George Fitzpatrick and St. Clairsville, Ohio, three-star Avery Henry. They lost out on Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star Aamil Wagner, so where do things stand with their remaining targets?**

"There's really three (more) that they're going after, and they'd like to have five (total). Four, I think they'd be OK with. Three is totally unacceptable. The three guys left on the board (are) Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco four-star Ernest Green, Hammond (Wis.) Saint Croix Central four-star Carson Hinzman and Humble (Texas) Atascocita four-star Kam Dewberry. Those three would be the targets right now.

"They'd love to get all three, for sure. You get one of those three, you settle for it. You're OK. You really need two more, though. They need five in this class, both from a talent standpoint and also from a numbers standpoint. Two would be ideal of those three guys. But if you don't get any of those three, then you're probably looking at trying to flip another one of those Ohio projects like they did with Avery."

**Des Moines (Iowa) Southeast Polk four-star safety Xavier Nwankpa's decision day is rapidly approaching Dec. 8 with a top three of Ohio State, Notre Dame and Iowa. What is the final verdict on where he lands?**

"I like Ohio State here. No lock or anything like that, but I think Ohio State can win this one. It just seems all along we've heard that it was Ohio State and Texas A&M, then it was Ohio State and Notre Dame, then it was Ohio State and Iowa. But it's always been Ohio State. The second team has changed a lot for

him, but Ohio State has always been the one constant there, and that kind of gives me the feeling that it's going to be Ohio State."

**When might 2023 Phenix City (Ala.) Glenwood four-star cornerback A.J. Harris commit, and where does Ohio State stand with him?**

"That's a weird one. There are a lot of differing opinions if you read different recruiting analysts across the board. I think Ohio State is in great shape for that kid, but if you read around, you'll see Alabama, Georgia and Clemson, so that's an interesting one where this kid has really been able to keep things pretty much under wraps and keep people guessing.

"I saw him in camp at Ohio State this summer, and I saw the way he interacted with Matt Barnes and Kerry Coombs and Ryan Day. His dad was there, and boy, it just seemed like such a fit for me in a lot of ways. Now, I haven't seen him interact with Georgia, Clemson, those coaches, but boy, he just seemed so comfortable at Ohio State. He really seemed to click with those defensive back coaches, and those guys are going to be his daddy for the next four years, wherever he goes. Those DB coaches and the defensive coordinator, those are the guys that are going to be getting him into the NFL one day. I like Ohio State's chances here, I really do."

**Medina, Ohio, four-star quarterback Drew Allar has been committed to Penn State since March, but that was before James Franklin's association with a number of potential head coach openings. If Franklin and/or offensive coordinator Mike Yurcich leave for USC or LSU, is Ohio State back in play, or does the focus remain on Draper (Utah) Corner Canyon four-star Devin Brown, who is committed to USC but was planning an official visit to Ohio State for the Michigan State**

**game?**

"Ohio State wants a quarterback in this class. Once (Quinn) Ewers reclassified, that kind of forced their hand. I think the way the situation is with Drew Allar and Devin Brown, they would take the first one to commit. With Drew, I think he's obviously been their first choice. They offered him before Devin Brown and chased him earlier, but he told them, 'Thanks, but no thanks,' and then when the Franklin rumors started popping up, Ohio State doubled back with him and touched base and there's been communication there.

"If Franklin and Yurcich stay at Penn State, Drew Allar is going to stay at Penn State. The interesting thing becomes if they leave, I don't think Drew would go to either LSU or USC with Franklin, so I think that throws it open. I think Drew's a Midwest kid, and I think he wants to be here in the Midwest.

"There's a lot of variables with Drew Allar right now. Had he not committed to Penn State, had Penn State not offered, I think he'd be committed right now to Iowa State and Matt Campbell. That throws them into the mix. Ohio State has tried real hard with Drew, but he looks at that quarterback room and sees a lot of talented quarterbacks there, whereas if he goes to Penn State, there's a good chance he'll be their starter next year. With Devin Brown, he's going to look at that room, too, and see a lot of talent there, where if he goes to Ole Miss with (Lane) Kiffin, maybe he takes Matt Corral's job and starts next year, too. That's the thing with the QBs. They're always looking at their path to the field, and you come to Ohio State right now, you're going to be waiting a while."

"Is he a linebacker or is he a defensive end? Does he grow into a 265-pound defensive end, or does he stay in the 235-240 range and play linebacker?" the analyst said. "I don't think anyone knows that right now. You've got to see what happens to Gabe when he gets in that strength and conditioning program."

### Pair Of Offers Issued Following MSU Visits

Ohio State hosted a number of visitors for its 56-7 win against Michigan State on Nov. 20, and in addition to the more than 101,800 fans packed into Ohio Stadium, the Buckeyes also had a number of potential recruits on-site for the win.

A major visitor was four-star linebacker Sammy Brown (6-2, 215) of Jefferson Ga., whom 247Sports currently has ranked as the top linebacker for the 2024 cycle. He holds offers from nine schools, and following his weekend visit with the Buckeyes, he received another offer from Ohio State.

"After a great visit and weekend, I am honored to receive an offer to play football at Ohio State University!" Brown posted on Twitter.

Brown had previously said it would be a great offer to have, and he had positive reviews after his visit.

"This weekend was a super-fun experience and I definitely want to get back up in the spring sometime," Brown told Buckeye Scoop recruiting analyst Alex Gleitman. "I really, really like what they have going (on) and everyone up there.

Ohio State also hosted a 2023 prospect in Atlanta Woodward Academy four-star defensive lineman AJ Hoffer, ranked the No. 256 recruit in his class and 40th at his position.

Following his visit, the Buckeyes offered Hoffer, joining his list that includes Auburn, Michigan, Michigan State, Tennessee and Utah, among others.

"Blessed beyond belief to receive my DREAM offer from THE Ohio State University," Hoffer posted in a tweet.

### Montgomery Lists OSU In Top Six

Ohio State remains in the running for 2023 four-star lineman Luke Montgomery (6-5, 260) of Findlay, Ohio, who released a

top six Nov. 18 featuring Clemson, Michigan, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Penn State and the Buckeyes.

Montgomery is rated the No. 59 prospect in his class, the sixth-best offensive tackle and the third-best recruit in Ohio, behind only Mentor four-star lineman Brennan Vernon, who is committed to Notre Dame, and Styles, who committed to Ohio State on Nov. 13.

While Montgomery listed six teams, experts have indicated they believe his decision will come down to Ohio State and No-

tre Dame. He'll have one more chance to see the Buckeyes in person this season, as he told 247Sports that he will be in attendance when Ohio State visits Michigan on Nov. 27.

Gleitman indicated to BSB that while he believes Ohio State is in a good position to get Montgomery, the prospect is taking his time making a decision and a final verdict may not be issued until closer to National Signing Day.

"Spring, hopefully," Montgomery told 247Sports recruiting analyst Steve Wiltfong

**Continued On Page 42**





## Continued From Page 41

of a decision timeline. “I want to be done before my senior year and go out there and have fun. I’m going to enroll early, that’s for sure. Possibly sooner than the spring, but I wouldn’t count on it. I might take officials, I might not. I’m really not sure yet.”

Montgomery currently has a crystal ball projection for the Buckeyes by 247Sports recruiting analyst Bill Kurelic.

It’s always important to note with Montgomery’s recruitment that Ohio State has also offered his younger brother, Ryan, a freshman quarterback at Findlay who is in the class of 2025.

## Big Visit Weekends Critical For Buckeyes

Recruiting visits, both official and unofficial, are the lifeblood of Ohio State’s program under the direction of head coach Ryan Day and recruiting coordinator Mark Pantoni, a staple of the Urban Meyer era that Day retained when he assumed the head coaching position in 2019. Pantoni has long been considered one of the nation’s top recruiters – look no further than the team recruiting rankings for proof – and he has no stronger weapon on the trail than his skill with campus visits.

The Buckeyes have for years held the title as dangerous closers in the recruiting game, and that comes back almost entirely to their ability on those visits. In late October, Ohio State played host to dozens of targets as part of its most important weekend of the entire year, welcoming prospects from the next four recruiting classes in hopes of securing

some commitments in the near term and establishing relationships in the long term. A full list of those visitors can be found in the Nov. 6 issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

Though that weekend has yet to bear fruit in the form of commitments, Day spoke at length about the importance of getting prospects on campus, especially for marquee night matchups such as the Penn State game, which allows for out-of-state recruits to make the trek to Columbus unlike a noon kickoff.

“They’re able to see the best environment there is in college football on Saturday night,” Day said. “That’s important for families to see because that’s part of the process. They understand how important football is here, and how Buckeye Nation supports us. I tell the guys all the time, you come to Ohio State for games like this.”

Although Ohio State did host a batch of prospects for the Oregon game in September, that was largely for commitments and prospects closer to home – meaning that the Oct. 30 gathering was the first real powwow that Pantoni had hosted since early June, when the dead period was lifted, and Ohio State worked to welcome as many recruits as it could to campus for the first time. Day said that in many ways, those summer trips were as important as the fall version, though their value was more in scouting than it was in truly pitching the school and hunting for commitments.

“What that (June event) really allowed us to do was to gather information that we would typically get when we’re in the schools,” Day said. “We hadn’t met most of

these people in person, so it was great to get them here. We were very aggressive early on to learn about what the right fit is because now more than ever in recruiting, it’s about the right fit for a lot of reasons.

“That was a great opportunity to learn a lot about these guys, so getting them back now is great because you’re building that process. That’s something that would have happened naturally if it wasn’t for the pandemic. We would have had guys on campus more and more and built those relationships, which I think we’re doing now. I feel much more comfortable about the class than I did six months ago.”

A large part of that evaluation process leans on program fit, which has an outsized importance now in the current college football landscape, with the transfer portal always just a step away for players who don’t feel they are being deployed appropriately and who see brighter situations available elsewhere.

“We’re really in search of the fit,” Day said. “We’re really competitive about who we bring in and rankings and all those types of things. But at the end of the day, it’s about the right fit. We want to have the right guys who want to be here.

“It’s not about just coming and if they don’t get on the field, they want to go transfer out or enter the portal. We want guys who want to be Buckeyes and understand what it means to be a Buckeye because the sustaining of that throughout the development process is how you sustain a program, and that’s something we’re very focused on.”

## 2023 Four-Star DB Puts OSU In Top Five

Venice (Fla.) four-star safety Elliot Washington II (5-11½, 190) released a new top five on Nov. 17 that features Alabama, Georgia, Michigan State, Ohio State and Penn State. He is ranked the 182nd overall prospect in 2023 and the 18th-best safety in his class.

Washington trimmed his top schools down from a number of other offers, including Florida, Oklahoma and Oregon. After receiving an offer from the Buckeyes on May 10, he camped at Ohio State on June 16 and took an unofficial visit for the game against Penn State on Oct. 30.

Washington is one of several safeties offered by Ohio State in 2023, joining Styles and five-star prospects Caleb Downs (6-0, 185) of Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek and Joneel Aguero (6-0, 195) of Lynn (Mass.) St. John’s Prep, among others.

## LSU, USC Departures Not Crucial To Buckeyes

Ohio State might be looking to continue to establish itself as a recruiting threat in the Deep South and on the West Coast, but don’t expect coaching changes at powers in both regions to impact those efforts too much.

The ousters of Ed Orgeron at LSU and Clay Helton at USC could be meaningful for Ohio State down the road – depending on their replacements – but for the current batch of recruits, the Buckeyes weren’t in enough battles with those schools to make a dent on Ohio State’s recruiting board in either direction.

“I don’t think so,” Greene told BSB when

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

### 35 Years Ago – 1986

Soon-to-be Ohio State tailback Carlos Snow of the Cincinnati Academy of Physical Education posted his best performance of the season in the Division III state semifinal game against Fostoria. He ran for 301 yards on 26 carries (good for an 11.6-yard average) and scored on runs of 95, 37 and 53 yards to help his Crusaders to a 21-8 win.

John Spencer of St. Clairsville played in the other Division III state semifinal game vs. Chagrin Falls Kenston.

Spencer, who was the younger brother of former OSU running back Tim Spencer, amassed 106 rushing yards on 19 attempts and two touchdowns. Spencer’s efforts weren’t enough, though, as Kenston eked by St. Clairsville, 22-21.

### 30 Years Ago – 1991

Jeff and Steve Hubbard of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, did just about everything together – so much so that they were adamant about attending the same college.

“We’re a package deal,” Jeff said. “We have lived together all of our lives. We get better by pushing each other.”

However, the two did not initially play football together at Columbus Whitehall as Jeff wanted to pursue endeavors other than football.

“Freshman and sophomore years,” he said, “I didn’t play because I decided I was going to be an artist.”

The duo’s top choices were Kansas, Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State and Penn State.

### 25 Years Ago – 1996

Seven out-of-state recruits made their official visits when Ohio State hosted Michigan.

They were lineman Ronald Boldin of Pahokee, Fla.; Spokane (Wash.) West Valley linebacker Ty Gregorak; wide receiver Brian Haugabrook of Wildwood, Fla.; defensive end Austin Lee of Post Falls, Idaho; Federal Way (Wash.) Decatur lineman Victor Rogers; and Detroit Pershing lineman Maurice Williams.

The Buckeyes also hosted junior college running back Jabari Jackson of City College of San Francisco. When Gregorak returned to his home on the West Coast, he raved to his head coach about his visit to the Buckeye campus.

“He very much enjoyed his visit,” CCSF head coach Steve Kent said. “I think a good word to use would be giddy. He liked Columbus. He liked the players a lot.”

### 20 Years Ago – 2001

Baltimore Gilman School linebacker Stan White Jr. verbally committed to Ohio State.

White, the son of former OSU linebacker Stan White, finally made his decision between the Buckeyes and Stanford. The younger White told BSB he recently had a conversation with Ohio State recruiting coordinator Bill Conley and was planning to have Conley over for an in-home visit during the weeks following the end of the regular season, which had seen the Buckeyes take a 26-20 win against Michigan.

“I just got off the phone with Coach Conley,” White said. “He’s already down in Florida recruiting. Obviously, he’s really pleased with how the team played at Michigan. They took it to them. We talked about the game a little. We had a good conversation.”

### 15 Years Ago – 2006

Pittsburgh Woodland Hills tight end Rob Gronkowski was one of nearly 100 recruits in attendance for Ohio State’s 42-39 victory against Michigan Nov. 18, and he came away tremendously impressed ahead of the final stretch of his recruitment.

When asked what had the biggest impact on him, Gronkowski said, “Talking to Jim Tressel right after the game. It’s a great thing to do for a recruit. It just feels like you should be (playing) there.”

At 6-6 and 250 pounds, Gronkowski was listed by Scout as the No. 3 tight end prospect in the nation.

He said he was not surprised by the result of the game, although the gameday atmosphere was more impressive than he had expected.

“I knew they were going to win,” Gronkowski said. “I just knew. They’re No. 1. It just makes you want to be a part of it.

“It was a real crazy game (and) an awesome atmosphere. I expected it to be good, but it was even better than I thought it would be.”

### 10 Years Ago – 2011

Ohio State had included Canton (Ohio) GlenOak running back Bri’onte Dunn on its list of verbal commitments for the 2012 class since September 2010, but that pledge to the Buckeyes seemed to be on increasingly shaky ground.

That was because Michigan was gaining momentum in its pursuit of the five-star back, particularly after Dunn took a visit to Ann Arbor the weekend of Nov. 19 to watch the Wolverines’ 45-17 win against Nebraska.

“I think they are very good,” Dunn said of the Wolverines. “I think they are very young, and in the future they are going to be pretty good. I was surprised the score was like that.

“They ran the ball pretty well, too. I think the coaches said that (junior running back Fitzgerald Toussaint) got the ball 29 times. That’s a nice amount of carries. The Michigan coaches said that they need me to come, they’ll use me a lot and I’ll fit into the offense.”

### Five Years Ago – 2016

After spending the majority of the past few years winning most recruiting battles, Ohio State lost one Nov. 17 when four-star offensive tackle Jake Moretti flipped his commitment.

The Arvada (Colo.) Pomona prospect decided to stay in-state and play for Colorado after having been committed to the Buckeyes for a year and a half. Moretti (6-5, 265) announced his decision with a note posted on his personal Twitter account.

“After a great deal of thought and discussion with my family and (Pomona head coach Jay) Madden, I have made the decision to attend University of Colorado in January 2017,” Moretti posted. “I’m grateful for my experience with Ohio State and a sincere thank you to Urban Meyer and the Ohio State staff.”

### One Year Ago – 2020

In a move that seemed like a foregone conclusion once he decommitted from Texas on Oct. 28, Southlake (Texas) Carroll five-star quarterback Quinn Ewers pledged his services to Ohio State on Nov. 19.

The 6-3, 195-pound Ewers – who was considered the top-rated quarterback and No. 2 prospect overall in the class of 2022 – grew up rooting for the Longhorns and had been committed to Texas since April. But upon reopening his recruitment, Ewers said he hadn’t had the opportunity to explore all of his options before making his initial decision.

Thanks to constant contact with head coach Ryan Day and first-year quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis, the Buckeyes convinced him to reconsider his pledge.

Ewers became the sixth five-star prospect from the state of Texas to commit to Ohio State since the 2017 recruiting cycle, joining cornerback Jeff Okudah and linebacker Baron Browning in 2017, wide receiver Garrett Wilson in 2019, wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba in 2020, and offensive guard Donovan Jackson in 2021. The home-state Longhorns had secured just four such commitments in that same time frame.



asked if those firings would impact the Buckeyes. "LSU isn't battling Ohio State for any recruits, so I don't think there's much effect there at all."

USC is a slightly different case, but only for one player – Draper (Utah) Corner Canyon 2022 four-star quarterback Devin Brown (6-3, 189). Covered at length in the pages of BSB in mid-October when Ohio State extended an offer, the nation's No. 59 player has seen little movement in his recruitment in recent weeks. But Helton's departure and USC's ultimate replacement will play a strong role in where Brown lands, as he's currently committed as a Trojan. If the next head coach in Los Angeles is a good fit for the Utah product and Arizona native, the door is all but closed for other programs.

If not, Brown might continue his efforts to look elsewhere, but it's unclear if Ohio State would be a serious candidate even in those circumstances. He visited Ohio State for the Michigan State game on Nov. 20 but has been focusing primarily on Ole Miss (which he visited on Oct. 9), Texas (which he visited on Nov. 13) and the high school football playoffs, from which his team was eliminated in the finals on Nov. 19. His team was ranked No. 43 in the nation by MaxPreps, thanks to Brown and a number of other top targets on his squad, including four-star BYU wide receiver commit Cody Hagen, Oregon three-star linebacker commit Harrison Taggart (no relation to former Ducks head coach Willie Taggart) and BYU three-star linebacker commit Micah Wilson.

Beyond Brown, the Buckeyes will continue to assess potential targets but have not found any players who were committed to or leaning toward the pair of power programs whom they feel compelled to pursue at this point.

"Ohio State does a great job anticipating what's going to happen and reacting when it happens," Kurelic told BSB. "They know the list of commitments to schools that lost their coach or will make a coaching change this offseason. Then you look at the fit if any of those players are what they need and if the player would have an interest in Ohio State. If there's a fit, then they're going to go after those players."

### Ohio State Prospects Fall In OHSAA Playoffs

Here is a recap of the latest round of Ohio high school football playoffs featuring teams with Ohio State prospects, each of whom saw their seasons end in the regional finals.

**No. 1 Lakewood St. Edward vs. No. 2 Medina** – Medina saw its run through the Division I, Region 1 playoffs come to an end Nov. 19 as Lakewood St. Edward stunted the Drew Allar-led Medina offense during a 41-6 victory. Allar is committed to Penn State but has been an Ohio State target at quarterback for 2022.

Medina's only points of the game came in the first quarter, after which St. Edward held a 21-6 lead.

**No. 1 Upper Arlington vs. No. 2 Pickerington Central** – Pickerington Central and Styles fell 21-14 in triple overtime in the Division I, Region 3 finals to end their season.

Central had 12 penalties and, according to The Columbus Dispatch, had a holding call that negated what would have been a game-winning 16-yard touchdown run in the

first overtime period. An earlier interception return for a touchdown was called back as well.

**No. 1 Marysville vs. No. 2 Springfield** – Powers and No. 1 Marysville will watch from the sidelines for the remainder of the playoffs as No. 2 Springfield pulled off a 27-0 upset in a regional final.

After a scoreless first quarter, Springfield and senior quarterback Te'Sean Smoot, who holds offers from Air Force, Bowling Green, Kentucky and Ohio, among others, got on the board with a 7-yard touchdown run. The 7-0 lead lasted until the half, and Springfield added three more touchdowns in the second half.

"I'm proud of our kids," Marysville head coach Brent Johnson told the Dispatch. "It

was a heck of a ride and a heck of a year for our kids. They played hard for 48 minutes all year long. I told them after the game they deserve to walk out of here because they did it the right way. This senior group did a great job for us. They moved our program forward."

**No. 1 Cincinnati Moeller vs. No. 3 Lakota West** – Two Ohio State verbal commits – four-star cornerback Jyair Brown and tackle Tegra Tshabola, both seniors at Lakota West – had their seasons come to an end with a 21-17 loss to top-ranked Moeller.

The Crusaders took a 14-9 lead at the half, but Lakota West responded with a touchdown in the third to take a 17-14 lead. Another touchdown by Moeller in the fourth, however, made the difference. Lakota West

ended its season with an 11-2 record.

"Losing ain't fun, brother. It's tough," Lakota West head coach Tom Bolden told the Cincinnati Enquirer. "Hats off to Moeller. They made more plays than we did tonight. We just didn't make the plays, from the first play of the game (a dropped touchdown pass) to later on. I feel so bad for those kids. We just missed making those plays – plain and simple."

**No. 1 Bloom-Carroll vs. No. 2 St. Clairsville** – St. Clairsville and three-star tackle Avery Henry, who is committed to Ohio State for 2022, saw their season end in a 14-3 loss to No. 1 Bloom-Carroll in Division IV, Region 15.



# Sueing's Injury More Significant Than Expected

Were it not for the box scores floating around the media room Nov. 15 at Value City Arena that stated otherwise, one might have thought Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann was delivering a post-mortem on his team's first loss of the season rather than offering his thoughts on the first dominant win of the season for the Buckeyes.

## COURT REPORT Patrick Mayhorn

Despite the result on the scoreboard – a resounding 89-58 victory for Ohio State against Bowling Green, which saw the

Buckeyes jump out to a 24-4 lead and never look back – Holtmann looked and sounded like a coach dealing with frustration and disappointment, both for his group on the floor and his staff to the side of it.

As he would explain before any breakdown of the BG affair, the ominous cloud that hung in the air and seemed to paint every answer the coach could offer was fully merited.

During the days before Ohio State's matchup with the Falcons, the Buckeyes learned that senior wing Justice Sueing, the team's third-leading scorer a year ago and a projected star for this season, would not be available for the foreseeable future.

After several weeks of what seemed like solid progress following an offseason of work, Sueing is facing another setback with the abdominal injury that held him out

for much of the preseason and limited him significantly in each of the first two games the Buckeyes played.

"It's a bit of a moving target here as we deal with Justice," Holtmann said. "I have no real word on him right now other than just that he had to be evaluated. He was not able to play, did not feel that he was healthy enough. We sent him to a specialist in Cleveland and he had a productive meeting. But the plan we're going to have for him moving forward, all of that's still an open question.

"I don't know right now that it's season-ending (but) it is significant. I don't know what to make of that. It had gotten better – considerably – almost to 100 percent in his words. But then right before the Ole Miss scrimmage, he started to feel some of the same issues and he's been

managing it ever since then."

For the Buckeyes, facing a significant portion of this year's schedule without Sueing will be a tremendously tall task. Ohio State's lineups had already been shaken up significantly by his limitations, and without him against the Falcons, or vs. Xavier on Nov. 18, Holtmann and staff had to find creative answers to fill space in the Cal transfer's vacated small forward position.

For now, that role has fallen to fourth-year winger Justin Ahrens, whom Holtmann has described as one of the hardest workers on the team.

"With Justin, he's just been really consistent, and that's what you want to see from a fourth-year guy," Holtmann said. "He's played and had an impact every year, his role has grown every year and his consistency in his work has been, honestly, just what you'd expect. I would be disappointed if he wasn't that because I know him and his family, I know what he wants and what's important to him. That's why we love having him in our program.

"I do believe he and E.J. (Liddell) have been our most consistent guys, and I'd put Jamari (Wheeler) there as well."

However, through four games Ahrens has been as limited offensively as he was during his first three seasons. Through Nov. 18, he had taken only 16 shots and converted seven of them, shooting all but once from beyond the arc. The Ohio native is Ohio State's best three-point shooter, but defenses have focused on crowding him off the line without much to worry about from inside the arc.

To make matters worse, though Ahrens has been more engaged on the defensive side of the floor, his DBPM (defensive box plus/minus, a stat to measure defensive effectiveness) is among the worst of any consistent Buckeye contributor, down at minus-1.0, a drop-off from 2020-21.

In other words, the loss of Sueing is significant. The Buckeyes are without an obvious replacement for his minutes and have leaned heavily on Ahrens and sophomore Eugene Brown III, who are still working to find their comfort zone.

"I'm not going to minimize the importance of Justice or his health to this team," Holtmann said. "We certainly anticipated a healthy Justice to start the season. We planned around all of what he could give us. He's unique because there's not another Justice-type player on our roster, who has the ability at his size to play downhill and guard multiple positions.

"I'm hopeful and optimistic that we can have him and Seth (Towns) back. We really need those guys. We know Seth's timetable while we don't know Justice's. To say it's not a significant hit, that wouldn't be honest. It is."

As the Buckeyes enter one of the most difficult stretches of the season fresh off a demoralizing loss to Xavier – one that will include Duke, Kentucky, Seton Hall and Wisconsin, among others – they're disappointed for Sueing and for the team at large, but they're working at the same time to keep everything on track. That next stretch will say a lot about their ability to pull that off.

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"I'm disappointed for Justice and for our team because it's going to be hard for us to reach our potential without one of our best players," Holtmann said. "And again, I don't know when he'll be back. I believe he's going to return. I just don't know when that is. I'm disappointed for him. I know how badly he wants to be out there."

"In a season like this, there are so many things that come at you as a head coach and you have to move forward. You have guys that are more than capable, so we're going to coach those guys, get them ready, move forward and hope that our medical staff gets Justice ready to go as soon as possible."

### Big Man Rumbblings

Fifth-year senior forward Kyle Young is back to full health after a bout with vertigo held him out of the end of Ohio State's preseason and its first game of the season, but interestingly, the player described often as the heart of the Buckeyes has yet to find his way back into Ohio State's starting lineup. Through four games, Liddell has been joined in the frontcourt not by his usual battery mate, but by sophomore Zed Key.

Although Holtmann said that he wouldn't extrapolate a whole lot about future lineups from the group that the Buckeyes are showing to open the season, he did allude to other experienced players making similar moves this season, including Purdue's Trevion Williams, who has spent the early stage of the season coming off the bench for the Boilermakers.

Would the Buckeyes consider the same

move for Young?

"I like Kyle starting, off the bench, playing early, playing late, playing in the middle – I like him playing," Holtmann said. "I'm not ready to make any big statements right now on what our lineups are going to look like. It's interesting with some of these super seniors, guys like Trevion Williams, are first-team all-league coming off the bench. You're seeing some of the best players in the league that might be coming off the bench. I don't know if I'd say this will be that way, but it could change in a week. It could change next game."

As for Young's current replacement at the No. 5 spot in the starting lineup, Key has provided, if nothing else, reason for Ohio State to trust him as a potentially viable frontcourt starter. The sophomore from New York was averaging 10.8 points and 5.8 rebounds through Nov. 18 and has looked physically up to the task, thanks to his work in the offseason with the program's strength staff.

"He's in the best shape of his time here," Holtmann said. "His body composition is the best it's been, and I give (director of strength and conditioning) Quadrian Banks a lot of credit for that as well as Zed, but that has to be a continual thing all season for him. He worked hard in the summer and in the preseason."

"Fitness is so important for a guy that size with how he plays. Competition and the kind of size he goes against will change, and he has to be able to continue to take steps forward against bigger, longer guys."



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# Buckeyes Roll Past Falcons, Fall To Muskies

By **PATRICK MAYHORN**

BSB Associate Editor

The second full week of the 2021-22 season for the Ohio State men's basketball team featured an easy home victory and a tough road loss, disparate outcomes that perhaps might be a harbinger of things to come for the Buckeyes.

It wasn't until just under the 16-minute mark of the first half that Ohio State's shutout bid came to an end Nov. 15 against Bowling Green. The Falcons, who entered Value City Arena with a 1-1 record, finally snapped their dry spell with 15:44 to play on a Gabe O'Neal layup, but the damage had already been done at the other end, with Ohio State leaping out to an 11-0 lead, a streak that featured a pair of three-pointers from point guard Jamari Wheeler as well as a trey from forward E.J. Liddell.

That start for the Buckeyes set the tone for their first comfortable win of the season, dodging the same fate they'd met in each of their first two games of the season – first in a 67-66 win vs. Akron and then with an 84-74 win against Niagara – and rolling over Bowling Green with ease, 89-58, to improve to 3-0 on the season in front of 9,808.

Following O'Neal's layup, the next eight minutes of that first frame weren't a whole lot friendlier to the Mid-American Conference squad.

With Ohio State playing like a team trying to make a point after it was dropped two spots in the latest national rankings, Bowling Green found itself in the wrong place at the wrong time, trailing 24-4 with 7:48 to play in the half.

It fell even deeper into the gully by the time the first 20 minutes mercifully came to a close, with Ohio State holding a resounding 41-18 advantage. The story of the half, outside of some marvelous defense (and dreadful Bowling Green shooting) was the suddenly balanced OSU offense.

After leaning heavily on Liddell in each of the first two games, five Buckeyes had at least six points in the opening half against

## Ohio State 89, Bowling Green 58

Nov. 15, 2021 Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio							
		1	2	F			
Bowling Green (1-2, 0-0)	18	40	58				
Ohio State (3-0, 0-0)	41	48	89				

Bowling Green	Total	FG	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Diggs	18	1-5	0-0	0-0	0	1	3
Reece	20	5-8	1-5	3-3	0	1	11
Plowden	16	0-6	0-0	0-1	0	1	0
Mills	20	2-5	0-0	1-2	1	1	5
Gordon	16	1-6	0-0	0-3	1	2	2
Young	24	2-4	0-0	1-3	1	1	4
O'Neal	14	1-1	1-2	1-1	0	3	3
Fulcher	20	2-10	0-0	0-1	0	0	4
Turner	22	5-8	0-0	1-6	1	0	12
Curtis	24	4-6	1-1	0-1	3	3	11
Elsasser	6	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>24-61</b>	<b>3-8</b>	<b>11-21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>58</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 39.3%. FT: 37.5%. **Three-point field goals:** 7-21 (Turner 2-3, Curtis 2-4, Elsasser 1-1, Mills 1-1, Diggs 1-4, Reece 0-1, Young 0-1, Fulcher 0-2, Gordon 0-2, Plowden 0-2). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 4 (Mills, Plowden, Turner, Young). **Turnovers:** 18 (O'Neal 4, Young 4, Curtis 3, Fulcher 2, Plowden 2, Reece, Turner). **Steals:** 4 (Curtis 2, Gordon, Young).

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Ahrens	18	3-4	2-3	0-5	1	0	11
Key	20	6-9	0-0	3-6	0	2	12
Liddell	20	6-8	0-0	2-1	4	0	13
Branham	22	3-8	2-2	2-0	3	0	8
Wheeler	18	2-6	0-0	1-4	5	1	6
Brunk	17	0-3	1-2	1-4	3	2	1
Johnson Jr.	25	5-12	0-0	0-1	3	3	13
Young	14	4-5	0-0	1-4	2	1	8
Brown III	22	5-9	0-0	0-0	7	1	12
Sotos	14	2-3	0-0	0-1	3	2	5
Russell	8	0-2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Hookfin	3	0-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>36-70</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>13-30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>89</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 51.4%. FT: 71.4%. **Three-point field goals:** 12-32 (Ahrens 3-4, Johnson Jr. 3-8, Brown III 2-5, Wheeler 2-5, Sotos 1-2, Liddell 1-3, Russell 0-2, Branham 0-3). **Team rebounds:** 6. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Brunk, Young). **Turnovers:** 12 (Johnson Jr. 3, Ahrens 2, Branham 2, Liddell 2, Brown III, Key, Wheeler). **Steals:** 8 (Johnson Jr. 4, Young 2, Branham, Sotos). **Officials:** Garrison, Young, Walton. Attendance: 9,808.

BG. Justin Ahrens led the way with a pair of three-pointers and two free throws, followed by Liddell with seven points, while Ohio State got six points each from Zed Key, Wheeler and Kyle Young.

That offensive balance remained into the second half, much to the delight of head coach Chris Holtmann, who has talked at length about the need to take the scoring pressure off Liddell.

After another 20 minutes, in which the Falcons were outscored only 48-40, the Buckeyes had five players with at least 11 points – a far cry from the 25- and 29-point outings Liddell had to put in for his team to survive its first two games. Liddell and guard Meechie Johnson Jr. tied for the team lead with 13 points followed by Key and Eugene Brown III with 12 each while Ahrens finished with 11.

"I think it was (ball energy)," Holtmann said. "Our guys really shared the ball. The way Bowling Green played defensively and the way they scrambled allowed for us to get in rotation a little bit. I think, as much as anything, our guys did a really good job hitting a lot of one-mores. With 27 assists to only 12 turnovers, that's outstanding of-fensive ball distribution and turnover ratio."

Wheeler led Ohio State with five assists against just one turnover, and Johnson chipped in four steals. The Buckeyes were 51.4 percent from the field (36 of 70) and held a 43-32 edge on the boards.

Chandler Turner led Bowling Green with 12 points.

## Xavier Topples Buckeyes

Ohio State wasn't especially good at hiding its jitters to open its first matchup of the season against a high-major opponent – although the high-energy crowd of 10,379 at the Cintas Center at Xavier University shone the spotlight on a visiting squad that wasn't quite locked in.

Against the Musketeers on Nov. 18, OSU looked every bit like a team playing its first road game of the season, opening with defensive lapses and shaky offense that led to just two points in the first four-plus minutes of play on the way to a 71-65 loss, the first loss of the season for Holtmann's squad.

Thankfully for the rattled Buckeyes, their opponents weren't much cleaner to open the Gavitt Games battle. A pair of turnovers and a missed dunk kept Xavier from taking advantage of OSU's slow start, scoring only six points of its own before the opening media timeout.

The Ohio State offense, led by the second-year duo of Johnson and Key, would rebound, but the defense – save for Liddell, who had six first-half blocks – never really did.

The Musketeers offense wasn't particularly potent to open the game, shooting just 33.3 percent (10 of 30) in the first half, but Ohio State's struggles in finishing off defensive possessions – and nine turnovers on the other side of the court – gave Xavier a 35-26 halftime edge.

OSU opened the second half with signs of life, notching a 9-3 run to answer a pair of Xavier free throws and cutting the deficit to five at 40-35 at the 14:48 mark, but the Musketeers were again ready with a response, scoring six straight to answer the Buckeyes' spurt and push the lead back to 11.

A trio of Ahrens free throws and Young's first three-pointer of the season pulled Ohio State back into the picture, 48-41, but as was the case in the first half, it just never

## Xavier 71, Ohio State 65

Nov. 18, 2021 Cintas Center • Cincinnati, Ohio							
		1	2	F			
Ohio State (3-1, 0-0)	26	39	65				
Xavier (3-0, 0-0)	35	36	71				

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Ahrens	16	0-2	3-3	0-0	1	2	3
Key	17	3-7	0-1	1-1	1	3	6
Liddell	32	7-14	2-3	3-4	1	3	17
Branham	28	3-11	0-0	1-3	1	2	7
Wheeler	36	2-5	0-0	1-4	6	3	6
Young	31	3-6	5-5	0-6	1	1	12
Johnson Jr.	24	5-12	1-1	0-1	3	3	14
Brown III	11	0-4	0-0	4-4	1	0	0
Brunk	5	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>23-61</b>	<b>11-13</b>	<b>11-24</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>65</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 37.7%. FT: 84.6%. **Three-point field goals:** 8-21 (Johnson Jr. 3-6, Wheeler 2-3, Branham 1-2, Liddell 1-3, Young 1-3, Ahrens 0-2, Brown III 0-2). **Team rebounds:** 1. **Blocked shots:** 9 (Liddell 8, Young). **Turnovers:** 13 (Johnson Jr. 3, Branham 2, Liddell 2, Wheeler 2, Young 2, Ahrens, Brown III). **Steals:** 3 (Wheeler 2, Brown III).

Xavier	Total	FG	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Hunter	21	1-6	2-2	1-4	0	0	4
Miles	9	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	4	2
Scruggs	34	5-13	4-5	1-5	4	3	14
Jones	36	2-7	2-2	6-6	3	0	7
Johnson	27	5-9	0-0	0-3	2	2	12
Nunge	31	5-12	4-5	6-8	0	1	14
Kunkel	23	3-11	2-3	0-1	4	4	10
Odum	18	4-6	0-0	0-0	1	3	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>26-65</b>	<b>14-17</b>	<b>16-27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>71</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 40.0%. FT: 82.4%. **Three-point field goals:** 5-24 (Johnson 2-5, Kunkel 2-8, Jones 1-2, Scruggs 0-2, Hunter 0-3, Nunge 0-4). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 5 (Jones 2, Nunge 2, Miles). **Turnovers:** 11 (Jones 3, Scruggs 3, Hunter 2, Johnson, Odum). **Steals:** 10 (Nunge 3, Jones 2, Odum 2, Kunkle, Johnson, Scruggs). **Officials:** Boroski, Carstensen, Green. Attendance: 10,379.

seemed that the Buckeyes could string together enough good possessions on both sides of the floor to make a dent.

A three-pointer by Wheeler cut it to 50-44 at 9:04. Holtmann's squad got it down to three at 57-54 with 3:29 to play after a pair of big-time Johnson baskets. A Jack Nunge slam expanded the Xavier lead back to five, and although Liddell hit a layup to bring the difference back to three at 59-56 at the 2:55 mark, Paul Scruggs and Nunge added four more points for XU to move back in front by seven points with two minutes to play.

Johnson delivered again for the Buckeyes, hitting Young on a backdoor pass to set up an and-one opportunity, which Young would cash in on to make it 63-59 with 1:34 to play.

A possession later, after another Scruggs bucket to answer Young's layup, Liddell knocked down his first triple of the game to move the Buckeyes back within a possession, 65-62. After a Scruggs dunk, Wheeler cut OSU's deficit to two with a three of his own, but the Buckeyes wouldn't get a chance at a game-tying bucket.

Scruggs hit a pair from the line, and after the Buckeye offense faltered, two more Scruggs free throws put the finishing touches on a 3-0 start for Travis Steele's squad and the third win for a Big East group against a ranked Big Ten opponent already this season.

Scruggs finished with 14 points, 10 in the second half. Liddell led all scorers with 17 points, while Wheeler dished out six assists for the Buckeyes.

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# Buckeyes Get Early Contribution From Transfer

The transfer of senior guard Taylor Mikesell to Ohio State was a major splash over the offseason, but it was unknown whether she'd be able to take the court for the Buckeyes this season.

## DOUBLE DRIBBLE Braden Moles

Those fears were assuaged, however, when it was announced four days before the season started that she would be eligible to suit up for the 2021-22 campaign.

Mikesell and the team were told of her eligibility after practice, shown in a video on Twitter. Head coach Kevin McGuff gathered the team, seemingly to deliver bad news, but revealed that the Oregon transfer's eligibility waiver had been accepted, and she was mobbed by her teammates.

Now, just three games into the season, she's established herself as one of the top players for the Buckeyes.

Despite joining a veteran team with multiple scoring threats, Mikesell is already among the team leaders. Through Nov. 17, she was averaging 15.0 points per game, trailing only junior guard Jacy Sheldon's team-leading 15.7-point average, and was

also the team's top three-point shooter at a 57.1-percent clip on 12-of-21 shooting.

In addition to starting all three contests this year, she was averaging 25.3 minutes per game, second most on the team behind Sheldon's 26.8.

"Taylor brings a huge impact," Sheldon said. "She's jelling with us amazingly on and off the floor. She is fitting in and should be here. Off the floor, she's a great person, and then on the floor, she's an amazing player and amazing shooter. She really opens up lanes for us because people stick to her. And she's smart. She can pass and she's getting better defensively every day, so she's really helped us a lot."

Mikesell's scoring ability is what attracts eyes to her game, but, as mentioned, she's also helping to open lanes for Ohio State, presenting herself as a scoring threat both from beyond and inside the arc who draws the defense all over the court.

"I know that my shot is going to open up other shots for myself and then for my teammates," she said. "When I use my shot, they're going to run out at me, and then I have looks for my teammates and for me depending on what the rest of the defense does."

The ability to help open Ohio State's offense became especially important with the loss of junior Madison Greene for the season due to a knee injury. Greene had been expected to start at point guard for the

Buckeyes.

"Taylor's been awesome," said OSU senior guard Braxtin Miller. "It's great to have another guard in there who can handle the ball and shoot it really well. It's been really great to have her and being able to get her cleared. Unfortunately, Madison being out was huge for us."

While Mikesell missed the team's exhibition game due to her waiver not yet clearing, she had been able to practice with the team ever since she got to Columbus.

"It was great," she said after Ohio State's 71-48 win in the opener against Bucknell Nov. 10. "I've been practicing with them every day. Being able to cheer them on at the exhibition, see the game from a different perspective being on the bench – coming in there was pretty seamless."

McGuff said Mikesell looked really good against Bucknell, and before their matchup with Bowling Green, he said she was beginning to look more comfortable.

"It's going to take a little bit to get her to catch her stride and be the player I think she's capable of being," McGuff said, "but I do have very high expectations for her."

### Sheldon, Miller Providing Veteran Backcourt Presence

Lineups have shifted often for Ohio State with seven different players earning a start for the Buckeyes through just three games, but the constants in each of the lineups have been Sheldon, Miller and Mikesell.

Mikesell is the newest addition while Sheldon and Miller are entering their third season as members of the starting backcourt. Greene had joined them in the two preceding years, but with her knee injury, Sheldon and Miller have remained as the consistent presence.

"They've done a really good job," McGuff said. "Braxtin's a great communicator. She really knows the game and what we're trying to do and she's done a good job with that. Jacy is also being a little bit more vocal than she has been in the past."

Sheldon said she and Miller have been at Ohio State the longest, so they best understand McGuff's system.

"We try to rub off on the younger players (who) maybe don't understand it as well," she said.

Sheldon and Miller have been among the team leaders in minutes, averaging a respective 26.8 and 23.8 minutes per game. Sheldon has also scored consistently for the Buckeyes, and while Miller has yet to take off in the box score, her career average of 11.3 points per game indicates it's a matter

of time before she gets involved on that end.

"Braxtin's a huge presence defensively and offensively, but defensively she's probably our best perimeter defender," Sheldon said. "She's been helping the younger girls and pushing everybody to get better. Our main focus this year is making sure we're holding everybody accountable and keeping everybody disciplined."

Miller said the team is still looking to adjust in the wake of Greene's injury.

"We have a totally different team and a totally different dynamic this year than we'd had in the past," she said. "We're all adjusting and getting used to it. I'm trying to fill that role and help anybody out that needs it. We've done a good job so far. Everybody's starting to settle in, so I'm excited to see how that all plays out."

### OSU Transfers Getting Early Action Elsewhere

Ohio State had had a number of players transfer out of the program in recent years.

Then-junior forwards Dorka Juhasz and Aaliyah Patty each transferred from Ohio State following the 2020-21 season to Connecticut and Texas A&M, respectively, and three more – Kierstan Bell (Florida Gulf Coast), Janai Crooms (Providence) and Aixa Wone Aranaz (Georgia Tech) – left after the 2019-20 season.

Juhasz played 12 minutes Nov. 14 during UConn's season-opening 95-80 win against Arkansas, third most off the bench, and scored three points to go along with three rebounds. Through no fault of her own, it doesn't appear Juhasz will be able to contribute to a loaded roster outside of being a potential spark off the bench this season.

Patty has been an early contributor for the Aggies, playing 17 minutes in their season-opening 87-54 win against Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and starting in a 92-32 rout of Southern University, scoring six points on 3-of-6 shooting and tying the team lead with seven rebounds.

Bell has led Florida Gulf Coast to a 5-0 record, averaging 26.6 points per game on 56 percent shooting. She has been the team's leading scorer and top rebounder in each game.

Crooms, who transferred to Providence for the 2021-22 season following a one-year stint at Michigan State, is one of the top players on her 1-3 squad. Through four games, she topped the Friars' per-game average in minutes (38.6), points (16.8), rebounds (10.5) and assists (5.0).

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# OSU Moves To 3-0 With Win Against Falcons

**BY BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Unlikely heroes stepped up for No. 21 Ohio State (3-0) in senior guard Taylor Mikesell and junior forward Rebeka Mikulasikova, who propelled the Buckeyes to a 94-63 win against Bowling Green on Nov. 17 in front of 3,418 fans at Value City Arena.

Ohio State quickly lit up the scoreboard in the contest, taking advantage of four "and-one" opportunities during the first quarter to take a 15-5 lead just less than four minutes into the game. Mikesell later added a three-pointer, followed by a pair of baskets by graduate forward Tanaya Beacham, to give the Buckeyes a 26-14 lead at the end of the first quarter.

"A lot of people got it going early," Mikesell said. "It wasn't just one person making shots. We were sharing the ball. It started on the defensive end. We started getting stops in our trap and our pressure, and it had them a little out of sorts at the beginning. We wanted to pressure them and just get up-tempo, and it worked in our favor and ended up turning into easy points on offense for us."

The defensive press for Ohio State caused problems for the Falcons early on with the Buckeyes scoring nine first-quarter points off nine turnovers.

Additionally, Bowling Green committed eight personal fouls during the first 10 minutes, leading to a double-digit deficit despite shooting 54.5 percent from the field.

## Ohio State 94, Bowling Green 63

Nov. 17, 2021 Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio								
		1	2	3	4	F		
Bowling Green (1-2, 0-0)	14	19	13	17	63			
Ohio State (3-0, 0-0)	26	26	21	21	94			
Bowling Green	Total	FG	FT	Reb.				
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.	
Hempfling	23	1-5	0-0	0-3	3	2	3	
Miller	23	5-7	2-3	1-1	0	1	12	
Velasco	18	1-5	0-0	0-0	2	4	2	
Hampton	28	1-7	1-2	0-2	5	1	3	
Lewis	24	0-0	4-7	0-1	3	5	4	
Tate	19	2-7	2-5	3-4	1	1	6	
Parker	21	2-3	0-0	0-0	0	2	6	
Dziekian	8	3-5	0-3	0-1	0	2	6	
Sharps	17	8-11	0-0	0-4	0	0	21	
Hill	6	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	1	0	
Dever	4	0-3	0-0	1-0	0	1	0	
Clerkley	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>23-54</b>	<b>9-20</b>	<b>8-18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>63</b>	

**Percentages:** FG: 42.6%. FT: 45.0%. **Three-point field goals:** 8-18 (Sharps 5-8, Parker 2-3, Hempfling 1-3, Hampton 0-2, Velasco 0-2). **Team rebounds:** 4. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Dziekian, Hampton). **Turnovers:** 25 (Hempfling 5, Lewis 3, Hampton 3, Tate 3, Team 3, Dziekian 2, Miller 2, Clerkley, Hill, Parker, Sharps). **Steals:** 7 (Velasco 3, Hampton 2, Dziekian, Lewis).

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.				
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.	
Mikulasikova	21	8-13	3-4	1-4	1	2	19	
Sheldon	27	8-11	0-0	1-0	1	2	17	
Poole	23	3-5	4-5	0-5	3	2	11	
Miller	25	2-4	2-3	3-6	7	0	6	
Mikesell	24	6-10	3-4	0-3	0	0	19	
Bristow	18	1-4	4-6	0-3	1	1	6	
Harris	21	1-5	0-2	2-0	3	3	2	
Beacham	16	4-6	0-0	2-1	0	3	9	
Hutcherson	5	1-1	2-2	1-0	0	2	5	
Thierry	8	0-1	0-0	1-2	0	1	0	
Costner	4	0-0	0-0	0-2	1	1	0	
Jones	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>34-60</b>	<b>18-26</b>	<b>12-28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>94</b>	

**Percentages:** FG: 56.7%. FT: 69.2%. **Three-point field goals:** 8-14 (Mikesell 4-6, Beacham 1-1, Hutcherson 1-1, Poole 1-2, Sheldon 1-2, Harris 0-1, Miller 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 7 (Harris 3, Thierry 2, Beacham, Bristow). **Turnovers:** 19 (Poole 4, Beacham 3, Sheldon 3, Bristow 2, Mikulasikova 2, Mikesell 2, Miller 2, Costner). **Steals:** 13 (Harris 6, Miller 2, Poole 2, Bristow, Costner, Thierry). **Officials:** Camy, Cross, Enterline. **Attendance:** 3,418.

"That's part of our identity, and we wanted to get off to a good start (by) really speeding the game up and putting full-court pressure on them to make them play against that," said Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff. "We forced them into a lot of turnovers that converted into points."

In total, Ohio State scored 27 points off 25 turnovers by the Falcons.

Mikulasikova, in just her fourth career start, took over in the second quarter, scoring seven points via 2-of-4 shooting and two trips to the free-throw line resulting in three points, plus picking up four rebounds. Junior guard Jacy Sheldon (six points), sophomore guard Kateri Poole (five) and Mikesell (five) each contributed during the quarter as well to make it 52-33 at the half.

For the game, Mikulasikova tied her career high of 19 points.

"She's getting an increased opportunity this year with minutes and (her) role, and she's taking advantage of it so far," McGuff said. "She's got room to grow and continue to get better, but we need her presence to give us a little balance in how we play, especially on offense."

After picking up four fouls in the season opener against Bucknell, Mikulasikova has played a much cleaner game with just four total fouls in the next two games.

"I had to really focus during practice on defense and not making mistakes like easy fouls," she said. "If I want to play, I have to really make sure that I do not get into foul trouble."

The offense kept rolling in the third quarter as Sheldon (five), Mikesell (four) and Mikulasikova (four) led the Buckeyes to a 21-point frame, but the Falcons started picking up steam on offense. On a run that began with 4:50 remaining in the third, Bowling Green connected on 12 of its next 15 shots – including four buckets from three-point range – to make it 85-63 with less than five minutes remaining.

While Ohio State's shooting paved the way to a significant lead throughout most of the contest, the Buckeyes' intense press led to a number of open drives and looks from beyond the arc for the Falcons, who finished 8 of 18 (44.4 percent) from three-point range.

"We've been stressing (the press) a lot since we're a little bit undersized," Mikesell said. "We have to put people in tough situations and pressure them full-court, and I think it plays to our strength being predominantly guards."

Ohio State's aggressive approach on defense worked against the Falcons, but McGuff said it's an area the Buckeyes will need to improve.

"We also had some good possessions where we didn't turn them over, but we got (them) matched up so they're playing against the press and then getting matched up trying to run offensively," he said. "But we also had some possessions where we didn't communicate and we didn't get matched up, and they made us pay."

Despite the late run, the deficit was far too much for the Falcons to overcome as the Buckeyes added 21 points in the final frame to run away with the victory.

Mikesell joined Mikulasikova as the team's leading scorers with 19 points each. Mikesell finished 6 of 10 from the field, while Mikulasikova was 8 of 13. Sheldon was the team's best shooter, finishing with 17 points on 8-of-11 shooting, and senior guard Braxtin Miller had a team-high nine rebounds and seven assists to just two turnovers.

"Braxtin's assist-to-turnover (ratio) is always really good," McGuff said. "She has a really high basketball IQ. She's a team player. She always makes the extra pass and throws it to people where they're supposed to be, and

we really need that out of her. She makes other people better."

As a team, Ohio State shot 56.7 percent from the field (34 of 60) while holding the Falcons to just 42.6 percent (23 of 54). The Buckeyes also finished 57.1 percent from beyond the arc on 8-of-14 shooting. Morgan Sharps led

Bowling Green with 21 points.

Ohio State had two games remaining in its season-opening homestand with a contest against Bellarmine on Nov. 23 and Cincinnati on Nov. 27 at the Covelli Center. The Buckeyes are scheduled to hit the road for the first time Dec. 1 at Syracuse.

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# OSU Icers Have Unique International Flavor

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

There is a bit of a United Nations feel to the Ohio State men's hockey team with players from European backgrounds blending with the mix of Americans and Canadians.

Freshman goalie Jakub Dobeš is from the Czech Republic, freshman forward Georgii Merkulov hails from Russia and there are two Swedes – senior forward Gustaf Westlund and sophomore forward Travis Treloar.

But looking deeper, junior forward Mark Cheremeta was born in Belarus and junior forward Kamil Sadlocha is a native of Poland, although each came to the United States as an infant.

"I don't have many memories now, but I'm going back this summer," said Sadlocha, who was just 2 years old when his parents emigrated. "Other than my parents and my brother, all my family lives there."

"I Skype with my grandparents weekly and speak to them in Polish. The same with my aunts, my uncles and cousins, so I definitely have the Polish language down."

Cheremeta arrived in this country as a 1-year-old but knows enough Russian to help when Merkulov visited campus on a recruiting trip.

"It was nice to have someone to be able to speak the language, but Georgii is the first one to tell you he's here to speak English," Ohio State head coach Steve Rohlik said.

"He wants to speak English. But it was good to have someone to fall back on. If Georgii didn't understand something, he and Mark would be able to communicate."

Rohlik made it a point before the season to make sure the team, which includes players from 14 U.S. states and two Canadian provinces (Alberta and Ontario), got to know each other better, especially since six freshmen and three transfers were new to the program.

It started with the non-North American-born players addressing the team in their native languages.

"No one else knew exactly what they were saying except for maybe Cheremeta with Georgii," Rohlik said, "but my point was that there's one thing we can all understand and that's if you go out there and work hard, you can understand that language."

Sadlocha found it enlightening.

"It was awesome," he said. "It's just great to see other guys come from all over the world and everyone asks, 'Well, how do you say this word in this language?' It's always cool to learn new languages, and I'm happy that I can pass that forth with the Polish language."

All the players did presentations in which they discussed their backgrounds and interests.

"You put this group together and you certainly learn a lot," Rohlik said. "We did a video, a team thing early in the year where each

guy had to do a PowerPoint on who they are, where they're from, what food do you like, something about their family, their pets."

"It was really interesting. That's what makes us all special individually because of where you grew up – where and how you were raised."

Added Sadlocha, "That was one of the coolest things that I've done here. I really liked that Coach did that. It helped to learn about guys. You don't really get to talk about random stuff, what people do in the summers or where they're from or what you like to do, so I think that was really special."

"It was cool to be able to share some of my past that many people really didn't know."

In addition to Cheremeta, Sadlocha also knows some Russian. He was a junior hockey teammate of Russian forward Eugene Fadyeyev in Madison, Wis., before both came to Ohio State. Fadyeyev was a senior last season.

"It was obviously hard for me going to Madison and moving away from home, but having another person here from Europe, he kind of gets it," Sadlocha said. "That made it easier, so I've tried to make it easier on Jakub and the new guys that are coming in, especially Georgii."

"The languages are pretty similar. There's some words that Georgii or Jakub will say that I can kind of know what they're talking about, but I wouldn't be able to respond in a way that they know."

Sadlocha tries to get back to Poland every two or three years.

"Every time, I probably stay for a month to a month and a half, but now it's getting to the point where I can only stay for two to three weeks because I've got to train and there's no ice in Poland over the summer."

Because he couldn't travel overseas last summer due COVID-19 restrictions, Sadlocha relies on his mother's red beet soup with noodles when he goes home to Carpentersville, Ill., to get a taste of Poland.

He also makes regular trips to Hubert's Polish Kitchen in the Short North Market in

downtown Columbus.

"I know Hubert," Sadlocha said. "I speak Polish to him, and I order in Polish."

## Czech Mate

Dobeš, who played for the Omaha (Neb.) Lancers of the United States Hockey League last season, speaks English well and has no problems explaining the adjustment to college from junior hockey.

"The players are older, more skilled and more experienced than me," he said. "The players are better. Teams are deeper and just better overall. I just try to figure it out during the game."

Dobeš has made the transition look easy for the No. 17 Buckeyes, who were 7-3-0 overall and 4-2-0 in the Big Ten to start the season. Through games of Nov. 17, he was tied for second nationally in save percentage (.946), fifth in goals-against average (1.39) and eighth in win percentage (7-2-0, .778).

## Tough Luck

Former All-America forward Tanner Laczynski, who as a sophomore helped the Buckeyes reach the 2018 Frozen Four, continues to be injury-plagued since departing Ohio State after the 2019-20 season for the Philadelphia Flyers organization.

He is expected to miss all of the 2021-22 season after undergoing surgery on his left hip in September following an injury sustained during training camp.

Just prior to the injury, Laczynski was cleared to resume training after surgery to repair a torn labrum in his right hip in April following the first five games of his NHL career.

Going further back, he had core muscle surgery that caused him to miss training camp last season.

## Looking Ahead

The Buckeyes were off Nov. 19 and 20. They host Mercyhurst in nonconference games on Nov. 26 and 27 at 5 p.m. before resuming Big Ten play on Dec. 3 and 4 at Notre Dame.

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# Ryan Proves Prescient About Virginia Tech Dual

By **CHASE BROWN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Before the Ohio State wrestling team hit the road to battle Virginia Tech, head coach Tom Ryan remarked briefly on the importance of winning each bout.

"All 10 matches are going to be close," Ryan said. "All the matches will be huge for our guys, and we are going to come out of the dual better wrestlers because of it."

The coach was correct with his prediction. The eighth-ranked Buckeyes (2-0) defeated the No. 10 Hokies (1-1) by a 17-13 final in a Nov. 19 dual that went down to the final match with Ohio State heavyweight Tate Orndorff securing a 3-2 decision against Virginia Tech's Nathan Traxler.

Orndorff, ranked No. 7, battled the 14th-ranked Traxler in a low-scoring affair. The first point favored Orndorff, who escaped after starting in the down position at the beginning of the second period. He earned another two points from a takedown with a minute remaining in the third to take a 3-1 lead. Orndorff was called for stalling as time expired but held on for a one-point match win.

Ohio State earned three points from Orndorff's decision, allowing the team to leave with a four-point road victory in a top-10 dual meet.

The match started at 125 pounds between No. 14 Malik Heinselman of OSU and No. 12 Sam Latona of Virginia Tech. Neither wrestler scored in the first period, but Heinselman earned an escape to take a 1-0 lead in the second period. The Buckeye lightweight then secured two takedowns with less than 40 seconds remaining to secure a 5-2 decision.

At 133 pounds, Dylan Koontz fell to No. 4 Korbin Meyers in a 10-2 major decision. Koontz's only points came from escape points as Meyers dominated the match from start to finish.

Dylan D'Emilio made his first regu-

lar-season start at 141 pounds and took on Virginia Tech's Collin Gerardi. Despite an action-packed opening period, the match remained scoreless heading into the second. D'Emilio collected more than two minutes of riding time, earned an escape point and then scored a late takedown in the final four minutes to win a 4-0 decision.

The 141-pound division looked like the deepest room on the Ohio State roster before the season began, but D'Emilio seems to be the last man standing. Anthony Echemendia is no longer with the team after he was arrested on Nov. 9 for felonious assault, and the Buckeyes will also be without Jordan Decatur until January while he recovers from surgery for an undisclosed injury.

After D'Emilio's win, No. 2 Sammy Sasso battled No. 9 Bryce Andonian at 149 pounds. Sasso scored first with a takedown and added two more points from escapes, giving the redshirt junior a 6-4 lead. He escaped to start the third and was awarded a takedown before an Andonian reversal made it 9-7. But Sasso iced the match with an escape and a point for riding time to make for an 11-7 win by decision.

Bryce Hepner took the mat for the first time in a dual at 157 pounds when he faced No. 29 Connor Brady, a former teammate of OSU wrestler Carson Kharchla at Powell (Ohio) Olentangy Liberty. Hepner wrestled from behind the entire match, trailing Brady after each period. He earned an escape to bring the match within one point in the third, but it wasn't enough and he lost a 3-2 decision.

The Buckeyes held a 9-7 lead at halftime.

After the break, Kharchla — the No. 10 wrestler at 165 pounds — took on Clayton Ulrey and scored the first takedown, allowed an escape and then took Ulrey down again to grab a 4-1 lead after the first period. Ulrey got his second point from another escape at the beginning of the third, but that was the bout's final point as Kharchla secured a 5-2 decision.

At 174 pounds, No. 6 Ethan Smith took

the mat against No. 4 Mekhi Lewis. Lewis scored the first takedown, followed by a reversal from Smith. After an escape, the Virginia Tech wrestler went into the second period with a 3-2 lead. Smith got a quick exit at the beginning of the third to tie the match, but Lewis had one of his own before adding a takedown to win a 6-4 decision.

Rocky Jordan failed to get the Buckeyes back on track at 184, losing a 7-1 decision to No. 9 Hunter Bolen. After the first period, Bolen held a 2-0 lead, and he doubled that heading into the third after Jordan was called twice for stalling. A takedown and riding time finished the match, putting Virginia Tech in the lead at 13-11.

No. 24 Gavin Hoffman put the Buckeyes back on top with a bout against Dakota Howard. Hoffman scored the first takedown but allowed an escape for a 2-1 lead. Howard tied it after Hoffman let him loose for the second time. Hoffman earned his first escape to take the lead in the third period, and he held on for a 3-2 decision.

That meant the match came down to the heavyweights, with Orndorff winning the 3-2 decision and sending his team home with its second win of the season. Ohio State claims a 14-3 all-time record against Virginia Tech and an 8-1 mark in Blacksburg.

## OSU Dominates Open

The NCAA did not allow wrestling programs to compete in regular-season tournaments last year because of COVID-19 restric-

tions. Therefore, the Ohio State coaching staff was forced to progress through dual and triangular meets to see improvement.

When Ryan learned that opens — also called invitationals in some circumstances — would return to the Buckeyes' schedule this season, he was more than pleased.

"Opens help us adapt throughout the season," he said. "We like keeping all of our options open, so the tournaments are important to gauge progress throughout the year and see how our wrestlers are doing. We didn't get that last year, and it hurt us a little bit."

When the Buckeyes traveled to Tiffin, Ohio, on Nov. 14 to compete in the Ohio Intercollegiate Open, Ryan must have been giddy, as his team earned several titles in multiple divisions. In the gold division, Heinselman (125 pounds), D'Emilio (141), Sasso (149), Hepner (157), Kharchla (165), Smith (174), Hoffman (197) and Orndorff (HW) each won a trophy in his respective weight class.

In the freshman and sophomore division, Ohio State first-year wrestler Paddy Gallagher went undefeated and claimed a title at 157 pounds while fellow first-year Buckeye Mike Misita ran the table in the heavyweight division.

## Up Next

The Buckeyes were scheduled to host Notre Dame College on Nov. 23 at the Covelli Center. After a quick break for Thanksgiving, Ohio State is slated for action Dec. 3 at the Cliff Keen Invitational in Las Vegas.

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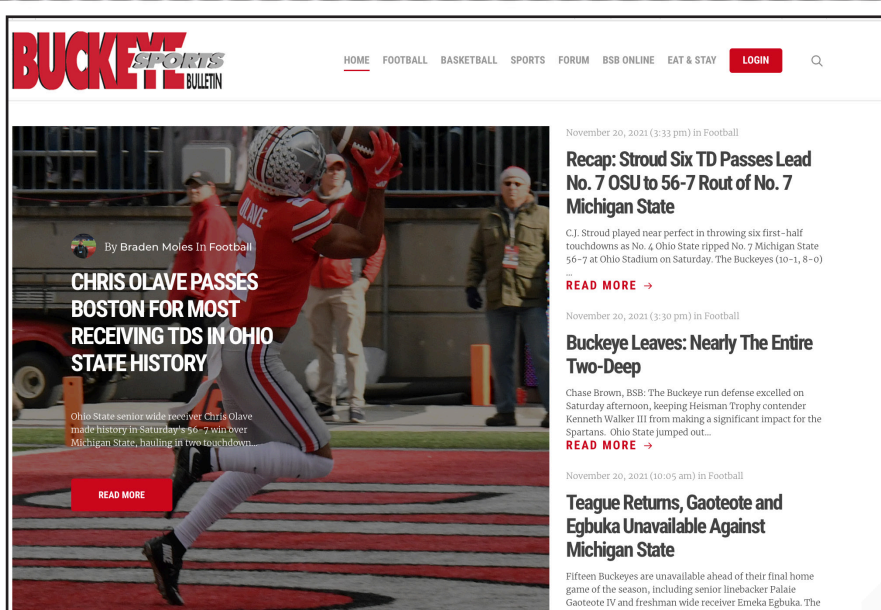
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## BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

### 2021 FOOTBALL (10-1)

**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; **30** PENN STATE, W 33-24.

**Nov. 6** at Nebraska, W 26-17; **13** PURDUE, W 59-31; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, W 56-7; **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.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (3-1)

**Nov. 1** INDIANAPOLIS (EXH.), W 82-46; **9** AKRON, W 67-66; **12** NIAGARA, W 84-74; **15** BOWLING GREEN, W 89-58; **18** at Xavier, L 71-65 **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.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (3-0)

**Nov. 3** SLIPPERY ROCK (EXH.), W 96-48; **10** BUCKNELL, W 71-48; **14** NORFOLK STATE, W 86-48; **17** BOWLING GREEN, W 94-63; **23** BELLARMINE; **27** CINCINNATI.

**Dec. 1** at Syracuse; **5** at Purdue; **7** MOUNT ST. MARY'S; **12** INDIANA; **15** ALABAMA STATE; **19** at UCLA; **21** at San Diego State; **31** at Michigan.

**Jan. 3** PENN STATE; **6** ILLINOIS; **9** at Northwestern; **12** MICHIGAN STATE; **15** at Minnesota; **20** MARYLAND; **23** at Rutgers; **27** MICHIGAN; **31** at Iowa.

**Feb. 7** RUTGERS; **10** NEBRASKA; **14** at Illinois; **17** at Maryland; **20** WISCONSIN; **27** MICHIGAN STATE.

**March 3-6** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

### 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., Men: 12/30; Women: 6/31; **20** NCAA Championships at Tallahassee, Fla.

### MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (7-3-0, 4-2-0)

**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** PENN STATE, W 5-2; **6** PENN STATE, W 4-1; **12** at Minnesota, W 4-3; **13** at Minnesota, L 2-0; **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 (12-2)

**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** at St. Thomas, W 8-1, **6** at St. Thomas, W 6-2; **19** MINNESOTA STATE, W 6-3; **20** MINNESOTA STATE, W 9-0; **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.

### WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (23-5, 13-5)

**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, L 3-1; **6** NEBRASKA, W 3-0; **13** at Northwestern, W 3-1; **14** at Illinois, W 3-0; **19** IOWA, W 3-1; **21** PENN STATE, W 3-0; **24** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **26** at Maryland, 7 p.m.



# Spartans Unable To Survive Buckeyes' Onslaught

Michigan State head coach Mel Tucker probably wished college football had the same running clock rule as Ohio high schools. The rule states that any team behind by 30 points or more beginning the second half will face a running clock. The purpose of the rule is to not prolong a game that has already been determined as to who is going to win and to not completely humiliate the other team.

I am being slightly sarcastic because

## COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

colleges have the talent to make a big comeback, but to recover from a 49-point deficit, as Michigan State faced Nov. 20 in Ohio Stadium, is more than a monumental task.

The game, which was supposed to be a real slugfest featuring two Heisman Trophy contenders, wound up a complete domination by the Buckeyes over the Spartans. The potential Heisman winner faceoff left one, Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud, with one hand on the coveted trophy and the other, Michigan State running back Kenneth Walker III, all but eliminated from contention.

### Quick Start

Michigan State hoped to beat the Buckeyes with a balanced attack highlighted by a running game led by Walker. If the Spartans could control the tempo of the game with long, time-consuming drives, they could keep the football away from the explosive Buckeye offense.

Ryan Day's squad put that theory to bed immediately by putting together a 12-play, 86-yard opening drive capped off with a 23-yard Stroud-to-Chris Olave touchdown pass. As bad as it started for Michigan State, it soon got even worse. The only extended first-half drive the Spartans put together wound up in a 46-yard missed field goal.

Michigan State punter Bryce Baringer actually touched the football more times than Walker. Baringer, who probably needed ice on his leg after the game, punted nine times while Walker carried the ball just six times with one short reception. The Heisman hopeful spent most of the game watching from the sideline as the Ohio State offensive onslaught continued.

After the first 12-play offensive drive, things got even easier for the Buckeyes. The Stroud-led unit scored on six more consecu-

tive touchdown drives of 10 or fewer plays, five of six plays or less, each capped off by Noah Ruggles extra points for that 49-0 half-time lead. As for Ohio State punter Jesse Mirco, he didn't see the field at all in the first half and only once the entire game.

### Arsenal Of Weapons

As efficient as Ohio State is at putting the football in the end zone, the most impressive quality of the offense is its quick-strike ability.

The receiving trio of Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba continually strike fear into the hearts of opposing secondaries due to their route-running, separation skills, leaping ability, body control, speed and, obviously, soft hands to haul in passes and then dart to the end zone.

Olave, who broke David Boston's career touchdown record with two scores against the Spartans, has the ability to make the difficult reception seem ordinary. Not since Cris Carter and Terry Glenn played for the Buckeyes has a wide receiver shown the acrobatic ability to catch anything in his vicinity. But the entire trio is a scoring machine for the Buckeyes, and all three will likely have more than 1,000 yards worth of receptions by season's end.

Stroud not only has a wealth of go-to receivers around him, but a stable of running backs as well. TreVeyon Henderson is the most explosive and complete running back on the team. Once he has the ball in his arms whether via handoff, pitch or reception, he can instantly accelerate and make defenders miss in the open field. Miyan Williams is both powerful and elusive, and he has the speed and quickness to make big plays every time he touches the ball. Fan favorite Master Teague is the most physical runner with deceiving speed himself. Those three talented running backs could start for nearly every college football team in the country, and the Buckeyes are lucky to have them all.

Meanwhile, Stroud has matured more quickly than any quarterback I can remember. His ability to read defenses is uncanny. He can recognize coverages, anticipate potential blitzes and understand defensive schemes like a seasoned veteran – and he is only a redshirt freshman. His technical skills have also improved significantly. He has developed into a precision passer with pinpoint accuracy and superb touch. He can fit the football into small windows or lay the pass over the top of defenders if necessary. He displays excellent timing on his release to match the talents and abilities of each of his receivers.

Against the Spartans, Stroud completed 32 of 35 passes for 432 yards and six touchdowns. His potential is unlimited, and if he

has similar performances against Michigan and in the Big Ten Championship Game, he'll have that Heisman Trophy in both hands.

### Defense Dominates

The Silver Bullets lived up to their name as they flew to the football to make play after play and completely shut down the Michigan State offense. They corralled Walker and forced the Spartans to try to beat the Buckeyes by passing the football much more than they wanted.

Spartans quarterback Payton Thorne found himself rattled by pressure from the Buckeye defensive front and tight coverage from the OSU secondary. Thorne completed fewer than 50 percent of his passes for 158 yards, and only after Day called off the dogs did he find the end zone with a touchdown pass against Ohio State's second-team defense.

The entire Buckeye defense played exceptionally well in all phases of the game. Linebackers Tommy Eichenberg and Steele Chambers led their unit by combining for 10 tackles. Most importantly, they led to the shutdown of the Michigan State running game to the point that the Spartans amassed only 66 net yards on the ground. MSU came into the game as the fourth-ranked rushing offense in the conference.

Thorne was on his heels for four quarters due to the Buckeyes' defensive front that swatted down four of his pass attempts and sacked him twice. Ohio State went nearly three-deep on the roster with defensive linemen while shutting down the Spartans.

Meanwhile, the secondary played its most complete game of the season both in coverage and open-field tackling. A Spartans offense that had to start throwing the ball early made only seven first downs through the air for the day. Even though Thorne wasn't intercepted, he was visibly frustrated by the Ohio State coverage unit that broke up several more of his passes and allowed only the 158 yards with less than 100 of that being after contact.

### Keys To Beating U-M

As good as the offensive line has played this season, and especially against Michigan State, it will have to step it up a notch in Ann Arbor on Nov. 27. Ohio State has a ton of offensive weapons at the skilled positions, but let's make it clear. Their success is directly due to the outstanding job the offensive line has done for the entire season. A team doesn't become the top offense in the country and amass more than 6,000 total yards at this point without a great offensive line. Stroud has had the time to read coverages and find his receivers due to exceptional pass protection.

The offensive front has given up just a little over one sack per game – second best in the Big Ten and one of the top protection units in the country. For the Buckeyes to continue to have that type of offensive success and productivity, the offensive line will have to take on the two top sack masters in the conference – Michigan edge rusher Aidan Hutchinson and linebacker David Ojabo. Those players have accounted for 20 – 10 each – of the Wolverines' 33 sacks for the season.

The Michigan defense is No. 2 in the Big Ten in pass defense and second in sacks, largely due to their men up front. The Ohio State offensive line must play all out for four quarters to keep Stroud protected, especially from the blind side.

The Buckeye defense leads the conference in sacks with 35. Even though those sacks are distributed more evenly than is the case with Michigan, the constant pressure and push by the defensive line has made them a truly intimidating force on opposing quarterbacks. Coach Larry Johnson's big, quick, and athletic players such as Haskell Garrett, Tyreke Smith, Zach Harrison, and Tyleik Williams must play their best to counter the size and strength of the Michigan offensive line.

The team that wins the Big Ten East championship will be the team that wins the battle in the trenches.

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# Michigan Should Prove Tough Test For Buckeyes

This seems strangely familiar. The Big Ten's two best teams fighting it out for supremacy in a storied rivalry game with huge implications, and both appearing to be worthy of the moment.

## THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

Like contests of the somewhat distant past, this year's Ohio State-Michigan showdown is gearing up to be a pretty big deal. Yeah, yeah, satisfaction would be gained no matter the records or the postseason destination, but when there is so much on the line, it feels even bigger.

And make no mistake. This Michigan game appears – on paper anyway – to be the biggest threat to the Buckeyes' recent stretch of series supremacy. Only Rip Van Winkle wouldn't know that OSU has turned the tables since the beginning of the century after years of futility. Someone could have gone to sleep after the 2000 contest – the latest in a string of 13 wins in 20 games for the Wolverines – and awakened to find the series had done a complete 180. Michigan has won only twice since 2001, with teams that looked the part record-wise but really weren't.

This year seems different, however. Michigan's on-field performance has been solid, and save for an improbable second-half collapse against little brother Michigan State, it ranks among the top five or six teams in the nation.

In ESPN's Football Power Index – a team strength metric that measures not only talent but on-field results (inclusive of game play efficiency, margin of victory and a few other factors) – the Buckeyes are second in the nation (25.4) while the Wolverines are fourth (18.8). If you throw in the typical 2½-3 points for home-field advantage, the upcoming game is little more than a field-goal edge for the Buckeyes. So anyone just automatically assuming that OSU waltzes into Ann Arbor and puts together a repeat of its Michigan State performance – anything is possible, of course, but I wouldn't hold my breath.

"Carmen Ohio" had barely started playing after the win against Sparty when Ryan Day's mind shifted to the Buckeyes' hated rival.

"There's so much more here – we're right in the middle of it right now," he said. "We have a huge game. Everything is riding on this thing coming up right around the corner. The game wasn't even over yet, and I was already thinking about it. All of the focus goes to the Wolverines."

As it should.

Ohio State has won the last five meetings by an average score of 44.2 to 25.2, but it could be wishful thinking for another Buckeyes blowout.

For one thing, this year's Jim Harbaugh edition has shown toughness (third in the league in yards per carry on the ground), has exhibited more discipline (middle of

the pack in penalty yardage, compared to OSU's 12th) and has two pass-rushing stars in Aidan Hutchinson and David Ojabo, who have each netted 10 sacks this season. Ohio State's offensive strength has been up front, but the Wolverines will be a real test for that unit. The Buckeyes have been very ordinary when put behind the chains on early downs, so if Michigan can throw OSU off-kilter, it could have an excellent chance.

There is no doubt the Buckeyes have had this game circled on their calendar – especially after the Maize and Blue threw in the towel on last year's contest. Ohio State felt it would have had yet another series victory, so it wants to pick up where it left off in 2019.

"We just have been preparing for that team all winter, all summer," OSU defensive end Tyreke Smith said. "We've just got to have that game always on our mind and in the back of our head. Now that it's here, we have to do what we've been doing – practice hard and go into the game with a good mind-set."

Should the Buckeyes' offense falter, the defense could actually be a vital part of the equation. To think that's something anyone would utter after the way the unit played during the first three games of the season is almost unfathomable. But changes were made, and most of the issues have been fixed. OSU has climbed from the mid-70s to No. 26 in defensive efficiency (according to ESPN), and it certainly made Michigan State one-dimensional.

Michigan enters the game with that same kind of run-heavy mind-set, so if the Buckeyes can stifle the ground game and force Cade McNamara into throwing the football, it could be another long day at the office for Harbaugh and company.

While it's a bit early to be offering up predictions, I will say that it's good to have this game back. Of all of the games missed in 2020, missing The Game hurt the most. It seemed as if the season ended with a lack of fulfillment because there was no Michigan game.

But now Michigan week is here, and it looks very much like it did in the not-so-distant past.

### Talk Of The Nation

One of the advantages to having Saturdays to watch college football is getting to listen to opinions and reactions from other parts of the country. Whether in SEC land or ACC country, there was one thing most of the announcers were talking about – Stroud's performance against Michigan State.

Most sounded incredulous, the numbers put up against Sparty appearing almost video game-like. And it was done in just one half of football.

Even Gary Danielson, who champions the SEC first, second and always, took notice, saying that while Alabama QB Bryce Young has put together a magical season, what Stroud has done the last few weeks is nothing short of incredible.

How good has he been?

Over the last three games, against Nebraska (21st in opponents' yards per pass

attempt), Purdue (55th) and Michigan State (55th), Stroud has completed 79.9 percent of his passes with a 9.76 YPA, 13 touchdowns and just two interceptions. Of his three incompletions against Sparty, one was a drop and one was a throw-away. There was just one throw that was truly on Stroud as a misfire, and that appeared to be a miscommunication problem with his intended receiver. That's dealing, folks.

Stroud has been on the fringes of Heisman Trophy talk in recent weeks but might have just thrust himself to the head of the class after the Michigan State performance.

Day knows for whom he would cast his vote.

"When you only really play one half of football and you throw for six touchdowns – I think that matters when you're looking at statistics," Day said. "The level he is playing at right now is very high, and that needs to be taken into consideration."

Stroud obviously couldn't do it without his receivers, and it's not hyperbole to say that not only is it the best group in Ohio State history, it could also be the best in Big Ten history – certainly from a statistical standpoint.

OSU's trio of Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba has combined for 187 grabs, 2,919 yards and 30 touchdowns. Only Western Kentucky – which runs an Air Raid offense – has comparable numbers with its top three receivers. And the Hilltoppers don't have anything resembling a rushing threat, the way the Buckeyes do with TreVeyon Henderson.

Smith-Njigba is already over 1,000 yards, and it's a good bet that Wilson and Olave will reach that mark by season's end. Henderson has also eclipsed the 1,000-yard mark rushing, so it's likely that OSU will have four players with more than 1,000 yards of offense.

Think about that. Four guys, three of them receivers. Ohio State has only had five wideouts with 1,000-yard seasons coming into this season. And it will most likely have three in one year.

Stroud knows just how valuable his good hands guys are.

"Chris, being a veteran and the older guy in the room, he brings a sense of leadership," Stroud said. "He has great speed, his routes are amazing and he just always beats his man. He's also great with yards after the catch."

"Garrett is just a freak athlete. He can do anything he wants to. He really doesn't get credit for it, but he's also a great blocker when other guys get bubbles or things of that sort. He's just a great player to play with."

"Then Jaxon is probably the best route-runner I've ever played with in my life. He's so crisp and so clean, and his body control is unbelievable. He jukes people out of their socks on a regular basis."

Olave, who nabbed a pair of scoring catches against Michigan State to become the school's all-time leader in touchdown catches, has tallied three scores against Michigan and would no doubt love to end his career as a Wolverines killer.

### Ducks Grounded

One of the chief complaints of the early CFP rankings was Oregon being ahead of Ohio State, even though it was obvious to anyone who understood football that the Buckeyes had evolved into the better team at this point of the season.

The thought was that the Ducks' victory vs. Ohio State in September was a tiebreaker of sorts, since both teams had only one loss.

No longer.

Oregon was blasted by Utah later in the evening after Ohio State's beatdown of MSU, erasing all doubt about which is the better outfit. Head-to-head results matters, for sure, but it is only one facet of the entire puzzle. And the Buckeyes had really taken off, while Oregon had sputtered a bit.

The losses by Sparty and Oregon provided a little bit of a shakeup in my rankings, though nothing all that wild. And yes, much to the delight of the younger members of the BSB staff, a second Group of Five team has broken through.

### Dandy Dozen

1. Georgia (11-0)
2. Ohio State (10-1)
3. Alabama (10-1)
4. Cincinnati (11-0)
5. Michigan (10-1)
6. Notre Dame (10-1)
7. Oklahoma State (10-1)
8. Baylor (9-2)
9. Oklahoma (10-1)
10. Pittsburgh (9-2)
11. UTSA (11-0)
12. Ole Miss (9-2)

A lot of people think the fix is already in and that the committee will do all in its power to shoehorn Alabama into the playoff at the expense of Cincinnati because the Bearcats don't fit the "brand" narrative.

One word of wisdom – it's not going to happen.

If Cincinnati runs the table and Alabama has two losses, the Bearcats get in over the Tide. Same can be said for a one-loss Big 12 champ, and maybe even Notre Dame. UC currently has the No. 2 strength of record in ESPN's CFP résumé metric, and it's irrelevant whether or not anyone believes it's a good measure of a team's strength. What it remains is an indicator – no team with an SOR of 2 has ever been left out of the playoff. I know this year features a different committee, but even with different members, a few things have been extremely consistent – the committee values league championships and it leans heavily on strength of record as a determining factor.

Oh, yeah. If OSU wins out, it will be no worse than No. 2 in the final rankings, which could set up a showdown against Notre Dame, the Big 12 champ or the aforementioned Bearcats. How much fun would that last one be?

Still a bit of ball left to be played, but at least we know what's at stake – beat Michigan and win the Big Ten title game and it's another playoff berth. Split those games and it's murkier.

But with the way the Buckeyes have been playing, it wouldn't be wise to bet against them.



# OSU Needs To Duplicate MSU Effort In ‘The Game’

What an impressive victory against Michigan State. I was fairly confident Ohio State was going to win, but I didn't see that type of domination coming.

But let's get this straight right away. That big win over the Spartans will be rendered completely meaningless if the Buckeyes don't take care of business Nov. 27 against Michigan.

Anything can happen in The Game – and frequently does – but even Jim Harbaugh would have to admit Ohio State has a pretty good football team after the exhibition the Buckeyes put on against the Spartans, though I have felt for some time that Michigan State (and Michigan, for that matter) have been a little overrated. Not overrated to the tune of a 56-7 demolition, which could have been a lot worse if Ryan Day hadn't called off the dogs, but overrated nonetheless.

Let's look at Ohio State's supposed weakness – the defense.

The Buckeyes bottled up Kenneth Walker III and dealt a serious blow to his Heisman chances to the tune of just six carries for 25 yards. Walker had entered the game averaging 147.3 yards per contest.

Often lost in Walker's shadow is quarterback Payton Thorne, who was ranked 21st in the country in passing efficiency before he met up with a fired-up Ohio State defense. Thorne finished the game 14 of 36 passing (that's just a 38.9 completion percentage in today's 60-percent-plus passing world) for only 158 yards, dropping him to 44th in just one outing. The Spartans had been averaging 251.8 yards through the air and 449.6 yards in total offense before being limited to just 224 yards (almost exactly half of their average) by the Buckeyes and their “suspect” defense.

Even if the defense hadn't turned in its most impressive performance of the season, Michigan State would have had a hard time outscoring the Buckeyes, as would virtually any team.

Quarterback C.J. Stroud deserves every accolade he gets. His performance against MSU was one for the ages.

But any discussion about the Ohio State offense has to start with its three star receivers – Chris Olave, Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Garrett Wilson. There has been plenty of discussion on our BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum about which one of the three is the best. There is no wrong answer to that question. Put them in any order or just call them equal, but they are all among the best to ever don the scarlet and gray – and they are all on the same team.

Poor Michigan State got a heavy dose of the trio, which combined for 24 receptions, 371 yards and five touchdowns, almost all of which was accumulated in just the first half. The Spartans never really knew what hit them.

Which brings up the dilemma for Harbaugh and his Wolverines. It is virtually impossible to defend all three of them. I'm not sure even Georgia could account for all three of them.

If you did, something or someone else – TreVeyon Henderson or Jeremy Ruckert, perhaps? – would be open. Ryan Day and Kevin Wilson know how to call the right plays to exploit any weaknesses, and Stroud knows how to see the whole field and execute those plays.

On paper, Michigan would seem to have no prayer. The best team it has played this season was Michigan State, and the Wolverines lost that game while Ohio State took “Little Brother” to the woodshed.

But this is The Game. Ohio State had better be ready to bring it in all facets, just like it did against the Spartans.

One facet of Stroud's incredible abilities

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

that continues to be the subject of discussion is his willingness – or lack thereof – to run with the football. I think I can speak for all the critics on that one because I am one of them. No one expects Stroud to be another Braxton Miller or J.T. Barrett. The days of Ohio State relying on and beating on their quarterbacks in the ground game are long gone. It is no coincidence the Buckeyes are bringing in quarterbacks they never dreamed of grabbing previously because of their prolific passing attack just as it is no coincidence that neither Miller nor Barrett made it in the pros.

I think what the critics are asking for is that when Stroud has a lot of very green space in front of him, he should take it rather than force a pass.

Stroud's only run of the game with Michigan State was a perfect example. He rolled out, found open field in front of him, but when he got to the line of scrimmage, he hesitated while looking for a receiver. He then ran for a 7-yard gain and a first down. But if he had just gone for it initially, he could have had even more.

I bring that up because if The Game becomes a slugfest, field position becomes critical. A couple of yards here or there can make a difference.

If the Buckeyes steamroll the Wolverines like they did the Spartans, however, my “run the ball, C.J.” compatriots and I are just nitpicking. And nitpicking is about all you can do with Stroud's recent play.

Just to show you how nearly flawless Ohio State was against the then No. 7-ranked Spartans, the Buckeyes were flagged for just one 5-yard penalty, and it was on the first play from scrimmage of the game. Nary a yellow hanky after that. The frequently undisciplined Buckeyes jumped from 82nd to 66th in number of penalties nationally and from 98th to 80th in penalty yardage – not an easy task this late in the season.

Not giving away foolish yards would be another plus in Ohio State's efforts to dispatch That Team Up North.

Nothing could help salve the wounds of Michigan's horrible streak against its rivals more than derailing the Buckeyes' trip to the College Football Playoff and maybe even earning a trip to the playoff of their own. However, I think the Wolverines will see when they pop in the tape that they are going to have their hands full with OSU. Couple that with the emotional burden of their stunning streak of futility against Ohio State, and you can see that the Wolverines will be presented with a major challenge.

But again, anything can happen in The Game. Just ask members of the 1969 Buckeye team, who were rolling toward an undefeated season and possible repeat national championship, when Bo and his boys scored one of the most memorable upsets in the rivalry.

Ohio State can't take its foot off the gas now.

### Tight End Watch Plus

One of the longest ongoing discussions among Ohio State football fans is the use of the tight end. If it weren't an enduring discussion, I wouldn't be tracking tight end production in this space every week. An Ohio State tight end emerges as a consistent receiver from time to time, but more often than not, regardless of who the coach is, the tight end becomes just

another blocker who occasionally grabs some glory with a reception.

Current tight end Ruckert came to Columbus noted for his receiving skills. It was thought he might break out this season, but he currently has only 23 receptions on a pass-happy ballclub – more than the nine that tight end and former defensive coordinator Fred Pagac led the team with in 1973, but certainly less than, say, the 57 that Kellen Winslow II caught in 2002, the year his Miami Hurricanes played Ohio State for the national championship. I wouldn't consider Ruckert a go-to guy on the offense any more than I would any tight end I can think of dating back to John Frank in the early 1980s. Frank actually led the Buckeyes in receiving in 1983 with 45 catches, as did, interestingly, Jeff Ellis in 1988 with 40. While hardly a “go-to” receiver, Jake Stoneburner remarkably tied for the team lead in receptions in 2011 with 14, joining Devin Smith and Corey “Philly” Brown. But none of those tight ends after Frank was a consistent primary target.

Let me digress and then circle back around.

Everyone knows I love the “From the Pages of BSB” feature, as well as “A Look Back at Recruiting From the Pages of BSB.”

A note in the recruiting retrospective caught my attention this issue. I had forgotten the Buckeyes had recruited NFL great tight end Rob Gronkowski back in 2006. In fact, he attended the epic No. 1 vs. No. 2 “Game of the Century” that year against Michigan.

First off, some trivia. Where did Gronk – out of Pittsburgh, and before that, the state of New York – wind up going to college?

The Buckeyes won the '06 game by a 42-39 final to advance to the BCS National Championship Game, and the 6-6, 250-pound Gronkowski, who was listed by Scout as the No. 3 tight end prospect in the nation, was not surprised by the outcome.

“I knew they were going to win,” Gronkowski said of OSU after the win. “I just knew. They're No. 1. It just makes you want to be a part of it.”

“It was a real crazy game (and) an awesome atmosphere. I expected it to be good, but it was even better than I thought it would be.”

Had Gronk wound up at Ohio State, would he have been just another in the long line of under-used tight ends as receivers? In that battle with the Wolverines, OSU tight end Rory Nicol, also from the Pittsburgh area, had two catches for 8 yards. I'm sure opposing recruiters pointed that out to Gronkowski.

The note in BSB made me wonder how Gronk did as a college receiver from his tight end position. In answer to the trivia question, I'm sure many of you knew he went to Arizona, and Wildcats head coach Mike Stoops didn't waste his receiving talents. Gronkowski caught 28 passes for 525 yards as a freshman, good for a strong 18.8 yards per catch and six TDs. Despite missing the first three games of his sophomore season, he caught 47 passes for 672 yards and 10 more scores with a 14.3-yard average.

He missed his junior year due to back surgery and was then off to the NFL, where he was drafted in the second round by – no trivia question needed here – the New England Patriots.

Nice words from Gronk after his visit to Columbus, but somehow I don't think he was ever destined for Ohio State.

By the way, in that 2002 national championship game between Ohio State and Miami, Winslow had 11 catches for 122 yards and a touchdown. His Buckeye counterpart, Ben Hartsock, did not have a catch in the game. In fact, Ohio State quarterback Craig Krenzel completed just seven passes on 21 attempts.

As for the tight ends during Ohio State's destruction of Michigan State, Ruckert had just one catch, but he made good use of it for 28 yards. Mitch Rossi chipped in a catch for 5 yards and caught a break when the ball was jarred loose but rolled harmlessly out of bounds.

I have this hope that Day and company have been saving Ruckert for The Game.

### Woody Astounds Me

Regular readers of this space know I am predictable. Like clockwork, I am going to say how much I love “Michigan Memories” each November. I always learn something new, something insightful, something funny.

In this edition of Michigan Memories, I have to say I read probably the most astounding thing I have read in more than 40 years of editing Buckeye Sports Bulletin, in Will Sander's memory.

With roughly seven minutes to go in the 1965 Ohio State-Michigan game and the Buckeyes trailing, 7-6, OSU faced a fourth-and-2 at its own 16 and Woody Hayes *went for it – in Ann Arbor, no less!* With that much time remaining, I would have thought the old coach would have punted and played defense.

“We all wanted to go for it, of course, but we were a little surprised when Woody sent in the call,” said Sander, who carried the mail on the play. “After that, we knew we couldn't fail. It was just an off-tackle play – one we'd run a thousand times before – and they had it defended pretty well. But we knew we had to get that first down, and we did.”

Fearing the wrath of Woody must have given the Buckeyes that little extra oomph they needed.

The Buckeyes, with fullback Sander doing much of the dirty work, drove all the way to the Michigan 11-yard line, where they faced a fourth-and-5. Hayes didn't tempt fate a second time, and Bob Funk nailed a 28-yard field goal to secure a 9-7 Buckeye victory.

It's vignettes such as that which make the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry (and Michigan Memories) so great.

Sander led Buckeye rushers in that game with 23 carries for 96 yards.

Here's one from the stat sheet for you. The game was played in a brisk two hours and 23 minutes. Compare that to the staggering four hours and one minute it took Ohio State to defeat Tulsa earlier this season.

### Sanders Gets Last Word

As we head into the most important and exciting game of the year for any Buckeye fan, I'll let Chris Sanders sum things up for all of us in his message to the team from his Michigan Memory in this issue.

“The Game is a legacy,” he said. “You have to understand that you are a part of the legacy when you play Michigan. Archie Griffin, Eddie George, Joey Galloway – even me. This is not a place where you take a rivalry for granted. When you beat Michigan, you are a part of something great.”

“Beating Michigan is something you dreamed about when you came to The Ohio State University,” Sanders added. “If the players understand the significance of Ohio State playing Michigan, then the game and its legacy mean a whole lot more. It's a fight, and it always should be.”



# 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

