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BSB's 1988 Ohio State Football Preview

Cooper Era Set To Begin For Bucks

By Mark Rea

It takes but a quick glance at his resume to tell that John Cooper is a winner.

He won five Missouri Valley Conference titles in eight years at Tulsa and one Pacific Ten championship in three years at Arizona State.

How many Big Ten conference championships are in his Ohio State future? As many as the 13 captured by Woody Hayes? More than the four recorded by Earle Bruce?

Rest assured that any Big Ten titles under Cooper will not be the product of any three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust offense. He has essentially torn up the offensive playbooks left by his predecessors.

Cooper's offensive scheme will undoubtedly look unfamiliar to OSU fans, so they had better brace themselves for a wide-open offense including slant passes, running fullbacks and even the shotgun formation.

Something Cooper will borrow from great OSU teams of the past is an emphasis on a strong defense.

The 21st head football coach in the storied football history at Ohio State University, Cooper says the first championship of his regime may be down the road a bit as he assesses the chances of the 1988 Buckeyes. He says they are a long way from the glorious national championship teams of the past.

Still, the huge task of returning the Scarlet and Gray to college football prominence after last year's disastrous 6-4-1 season is one that Cooper is anticipating with great expectations.

"There's no question about it," Cooper said. "I'd rather be loaded and people know about it. But we're not loaded and maybe people think I'm playing a little coy with them. That's not my style at all. I try to be honest with people."

"I'm not trying to hide in the bushes. I mean, where do you pick us? You pick us in the middle of the pack too, don't you? That's where most people pick us. And that's probably realistic as where we ought to be."

"And, in a way, that's not too bad. I hope we can be pleasantly surprised at the end of the season. And don't get me wrong. Even though we're not picked to win the Big Ten championship, I think we'll have a say in who does."

That kind of up-front attitude has translated into success for the 51-year-old Cooper at his many coaching stops around the country.

Cooper was named head coach at Ohio State last Dec. 31, succeeding Bruce who was fired despite an 81-26-1 record and four Big Ten titles or co-



First-year head coach John Cooper talks to reporters at photo day regarding the Buckeyes' chances during the 1988 season. Cooper replaces former OSU coach Earle Bruce, who spent nine years at the Ohio State helm.

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Cooper Welcomes 12 Returning Starters

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titles in nine years.

The 1986 National Coach of the Year while at Arizona State, Cooper has prepared for his job at OSU with head coaching stops at ASU and Tulsa and assistant jobs at Iowa State, Oregon State, UCLA, Kansas and Kentucky.

This year, he has the services of 44 returning lettermen including 12 starters from a squad which posted a 4-4 Big Ten record. Seven starters return on offense and five are back on defense.

"I think we'll have a good solid offensive football team," he said, "and we'll have an offensive line that will get better as the season goes on."

The line is anchored by senior center Jeff Uhlenhake (6-4, 268 pounds), who Cooper calls "as good a center as I've ever been around. Jeff is one player that we will definitely push for all-conference honors as well as national recognition. We think he'll be an

"This is one of the premier jobs in college football and when the job came open, I went after it. I bet if other coaches from other conferences had a chance to get a coaching job at a Big Ten school, they'd be here."

— John Cooper



outstanding player for us this fall."

The starting guards will be senior Greg Zackeroff (6-5, 265) and junior Jeff Davidson (6-6, 285). Sophomore John Peterson (6-4, 285) is slated to get plenty of playing time as a backup guard.

Returning starters Joe Staysniak (6-5, 287) and Tim Moxley (6-7, 300), both juniors, will be the starting tackles. Staysniak missed all of spring practice while battling mononucleosis but Cooper said he is confident the big lineman will return healthy.

Backups at the tackle positions will be junior Mike Kuri (6-5, 270) and junior Karl Coles (6-5, 289), a starter at guard last season.

At tight end, Cooper will start sophomore Jeff Ellis (6-4, 230), the son of former heavyweight boxing champion Jimmy Ellis. Juniors Jim Palmer (6-5, 240) and Rich Huffman (6-2, 230) will also see some playing time at tight end.

The wide receiver position is a question mark in light of senior Everett Ross' eligibility problems. The team does not hold out much hope for the return of Ross, who tried to retain his eligibility during summer school and apparently failed to do so.

Ready to move into the void is junior transfer Marc Hicks (6-3, 210). Hicks sat out last year in accordance with NCAA rules following his transfer from the University of California and has spent most of his time in school trying to accumulate enough credits for full eligibility. In two years with California, Hicks was primarily a tailback but still managed to catch 53 passes for 656 yards.

Also trying to take the starting job at wide receiver is speedy freshman Greg Beatty (5-11, 175) from Missouri City, Texas. He has impressed coaches in early preseason drills. More help will come from sophomore Jeff Graham (6-2, 185), a Proposition 48 casualty last year, and sophomore Wes Siegenthaler (6-0, 182), a speedy receiver who impressed Cooper's staff in spring practice drills.

Playing time at flanker will be split between sophomore Bobby Olive (6-1, 154) and freshman redshirt Bernard Edwards (6-5, 195).

"We may not have the speed and experience at that flanker position that I would like, but those two gave us a real good effort this spring and we're going to get by at that position," Cooper said.

At quarterback, the Buckeyes will rely upon sophomore Greg Frey (6-2, 197), a former high school star at Cincinnati St. Xavier High School. However, he has attempted only 20 passes on the collegiate level, completing eight of them. Nonetheless, Cooper remains unfazed.

"I feel real good about Greg Frey at quarterback," he said. "He's intelligent and has a pretty good grasp of what we're trying to do. He doesn't have the strongest arm in the world, but I think we can win with Greg Frey at quarterback."

Frey's backups at quarterback will be two more sophomores, 6-3, 207-pound John Wagoner of High Point, N.C., and Chris Stablein, a 6-3, 210-pounder from Erie, Pa.

Cooper also feels good about his starting backfield. Fullback will be the property of senior Bill Matlock (5-9, 220), one of the strongest players on the Buckeyes this year. Matlock has proved himself every year, starting his collegiate career as a walk-on before earning a scholarship and ultimately a starting role.

Although Matlock is the starter, he will get plenty of help from junior Jaymes Bryant (6-0, 221) and redshirt freshman Jim "Scotty" Graham (5-10, 215).

Cooper also promised a change for Ohio State as far as the fullback position is concerned.

"Fullback is going to be a little bit different from what you're used to at Ohio State," he said. "We like for the fullback to be more of a ball carrier. At Arizona State, our fullbacks averaged something like six yards a carry and that's something we'd like to continue here."

Another obvious strength will be at tailback where senior Vince Workman (5-11, 195) returns full time after a stint at wide receiver last year. Workman has totaled more than 1,800 yards for the Buckeyes and has his sights set on a repeat of his sophomore season when he rushed for more than 1,000 yards.

Also returning to the backfield will be exciting sophomore Carlos Snow (5-9, 200). Snow electrified fans with several big plays last year including a 70-yard touchdown pass reception against Michigan. Also available for duty at tailback are sophomores John Spencer (6-0, 200) and Lance Price (6-0, 185).

On the defensive side of the football, Cooper has several big pairs of shoes to fill.

"I'm a firm believer that you win with defense," he said, "and unfortunately most of our heavy graduation losses were on defense. When you lose players like Eric Kumerow, Chris Spielman, Ray Jackson and William White, you obviously have some holes to fill."

"We're a little bit short on talent but we hope to make up for it with intensity, technique and enthusiasm,"

Cooper added. "We won't make any excuses for our defense."

There should be no excuses necessary for the defensive line in Cooper's 34 defense, with a couple of veterans returning.

Mike Sullivan (6-0, 241) will start his senior year at nose tackle while junior Mike Showalter (6-4, 265) will line up at one of the defensive tackle slots for another year. Senior Derek McCready (6-5, 265) saw limited action last year as one of the front three and has earned a starting assignment this season.

The outside linebackers should be a good tandem led by senior Mike McCray (6-3, 225), the fifth leading tackler on the 1987 squad. He will be joined by sophomore John Kacherski (6-3, 245), a physical player with good quickness who moves from a down lineman position. Another outside linebacking prospect is freshman Patrick Rogan (6-2, 218) of Urbana, Ohio, brother of former Buckeye Greg Rogan.

Cooper has concerns about the inside linebacker positions, especially because of the loss of Spielman, a four-year player and the acknowledged team leader on defense. Taking over inside will be a pair of sophomores, Andy Gurd (6-3, 215) and Brian Benio (6-2, 230). The Buckeyes chances would also improve if senior John Sullivan (6-0, 237) can return from knee surgery.

"I'm optimistic that we're going to get John back," Cooper said.

The secondary will consist of two returning starters and a pair of new faces. Junior David Brown (6-0, 180) returns at free safety while junior Zack Dumas (6-2, 190) will line up at right corner again. The strong safety will be sophomore Jim Peel (5-11, 196), while left corner will go to senior Dwight Smith (5-11, 180). The chief backups will be a pair of Proposition 48 returnees, Vince Clark (6-2, 185) and Tim Rutledge (6-1, 224), two naturally gifted athletes.

Place-kicking chores will be handled by junior Pat O'Morrow (5-11, 180). Last year's kicker, Matt Frantz, attempted to gain an additional year of eligibility from the NCAA but failed. Frantz is now a volunteer graduate assistant coach on Cooper's staff.

O'Morrow has spent two years as the Buckeyes' kickoff specialist. As a freshman, he converted on four of nine field goal attempts, but he attempted no three-pointers last year. However, in the OSU spring game, O'Morrow was three-for-three in field goal attempts including a 43-yarder.

"I think we'll be OK with Pat," Cooper said. "He has an adequate leg — not a great one — but he does manage to get the job done and that's what we're looking for."

Punting remains a question mark

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*Cooper Lists Lofty Goals For OSU***New Head Coach Set To Pilot Bucks**

By Mark Rea

If Earle Bruce was the Jimmy Carter of Ohio State, then John Cooper may well be the Buckeyes' Ronald Reagan.

In nine years as head coach, Bruce won more than 75 percent of his games and guided OSU to four Big Ten Conference titles or co-titles. However, during the games in which Bruce's teams lost, he nearly always got the blame, sometimes deservedly so.

Near the end of his tenure, much like Carter, grumblings were that the things which went right did so not because of Bruce, but in spite of him.

Nevertheless, he posted eight straight seasons of at least nine victories. Then disaster struck in 1987.

There was the first loss to Indiana since 1951, the first loss to Michigan State in nine years, a fifth loss to Wisconsin in the last seven meetings and a last-second 29-27 loss to Iowa on an inexcusable long pass play, the Hawkeyes' first victory in Columbus since 1959. Bruce was fired with one year left on his contract.

In his place, the university looked long and hard before settling upon John Cooper, a 51-year-old east Tennessee native who likes a wide-open offense, preaches defensive toughness and possesses tremendous skills when it comes to public relations.

Exit the good ol' boy who lost his ability to lead. Enter the great communicator. See the Carter-Reagan connection?

Cooper began his stay in Columbus by telling the natives exactly what they wanted to hear.

"I'm a great believer that you're better off aiming for the sky and hitting an eagle than you are aiming for an eagle and hitting the ground," he said shortly after his Dec. 31 hiring. "Our goal will be to win the national championship, the Big Ten championship and the Rose Bowl."

Fran Curci, head coach at the University of Kentucky when Cooper was the defensive secondary coach there, said Ohio State will notice a drastic change in coaching personalities from what they've been used to since a guy named W.W. Hayes was hired in 1951.

"For all of those years, Ohio State had Woody and Earle," Curci said. "It was a sourpuss-type thing. John Cooper is a very effervescent, refreshing guy. Strange as it sounds, he's a defensive coach whose strength is offense, wide-open offense. But his biggest strength will be in recruiting. I think they'll love him for that."

Nearly nine months after his hiring, Buckeyes fans are preparing for the 1988 season with the same enthusiasm they had when Cooper was hired. Cooper says he feels that enthusiasm and it makes him even more eager to begin the season.

"The most positive thing since I've been here is the way our coaching staff and my family has been accepted by the whole state of Ohio," he said. "The fans, administrators and, more importantly, the players have accepted the new system. I have not heard one negative comment from anybody since we've been here."

Cooper has fit well into the central Ohio landscape. He, along with his family, have been visible throughout the spring and summer, making themselves available to all types of functions. "When you hire me, you hire my family," he has said on more than one occasion. He genuinely seems to like it here and the area is responding in kind.

Cooper grew up in Powell, Tenn., and played college football at Iowa State. He was a tailback and a safety, earned three letters and served as the Cyclones' captain as a senior.

Following graduation in 1962, Cooper began his coaching career the following fall as the freshman coach at his alma mater. The next year, he became an assistant to Tommy Prothro at Oregon State. He helped the Beavers to a Rose Bowl appearance in 1964 and then left to join Prothro at UCLA as secondary coach.

Two successful years at UCLA, one leading to another Rose Bowl appearance, and Cooper was off to join Pepper Rodgers' staff at Kansas. The Jayhawks used his services as defensive coordinator and recruiting coordinator to good measure, posting a 9-2 season in 1968 and a berth in the Orange Bowl.

In 1972, Cooper returned to the defensive backfield when he became an assistant at Kentucky. He remained there until receiving his first head coaching assignment in 1977 at Tulsa.

After a rookie season of 3-8, Cooper led the 1978 Golden Hurricane to a 9-2 record and a second-place finish in the Missouri Valley Conference. Then, in 1980, he guided Tulsa to the first of five consecutive MVC championships. The most memorable season came in 1982 when his team finished 10-1 and was nationally ranked as high as 16th. While at Tulsa, Cooper's teams posted an eight-year MVC record of 33-6. The Hurricane was an undefeated 17-0 in the conference during his last three years there.

Then, in 1985, Cooper moved on to the head coaching post at Arizona State. He was an immediate success, coming within three points of a Pacific-10 championship his first year before settling for a Holiday Bowl bid.

The next year, Cooper guided the Sun Devils to the school's first-ever Pac-10 title and topped it off with a 22-15 Rose Bowl victory over Michigan. As a result, he earned nearly all of the post-season coach of the year awards.

One more year at ASU produced a 7-4-1 record including a win in the Freedom Bowl. Then, he found out about the coaching vacancy at Ohio State.

"I won't lie to you. When this job came open, I went for it. I wanted it," Cooper said. "When one of the top three or four college coaching jobs in the country comes open, you go after it. I make no bones about it. I wanted this job."

After an exhaustive nationwide search, OSU decided it wanted Cooper as badly as he wanted OSU. So far, it's been a marriage made in heaven. And the honeymoon continues.

In seven short months, Cooper has managed to do something Bruce could not accomplish in nine years — he has endeared himself to the Buckeye faithful.

He has done it in a variety of ways, not the least of which is his special brand of homespun humor and his quick wit. Some early examples:

- "We want our players to work hard in preseason so it will pay off later. We tell them, 'Don't tell us about the pain, just show us the baby.'"

- "People ask if there's pressure being the head football coach at Ohio State. My answer to that is 'Only 24 hours a day.'"

- "There are two kinds of football coaches — those who have been fired and those who are going to get fired."

Don't think Cooper is all play, though. He is deadly serious when it comes to football. He has even written his own list of Ten Commandments:

1. The team that makes the fewest mistakes wins the game.
2. Play for and make the breaks. When one comes your way, score.
3. If at first the game or breaks go against you, don't slow down.

4. Press the kicking game for it is here the breaks are made.
5. Linemen, protect your passer and kicker, rush their passer and kicker. Backs, protect your passer and kicker.
6. Be mentally alert at all times. Leave nothing to chance.
7. Be determined to carry out your assignment.
8. Intercept, pursue and cover relentlessly. Here is the winning edge.
9. Carry the fight to opponents and keep it there all afternoon. Hit hard and hit fast.

10. Win the surest way.

Cooper has assembled an outstanding staff of assistants to help him guide the Buckeyes.

- Assistant head coach and offensive coordinator Jim Colletto is regarded as one of the top offensive coaches in the nation, proving that point at Arizona State and Purdue. Colletto's 1986 Arizona State team averaged 31 points, 404 yards and 21 first downs per game. His 1984 Purdue team ranked seventh in the nation in passing offense.

- Defensive coordinator Bill Young also came to OSU from Arizona State. Young's connection with Cooper dates back to 1980 at Tulsa when Young was the defensive line coach and later defensive coordinator. His 1985 defensive line at Arizona State allowed just six rushing touchdowns all season.

- Wide receivers coach Gene Huey was another member of Cooper's staff at ASU. Huey also spent nine years as receivers coach at Nebraska and also coached at Wyoming and New Mexico.

- Ron Hudson is the running backs coach, joining the Buckeyes from Illinois. Hudson also served as an assistant coach for the Memphis Showboats in the USFL and coached on the collegiate level at Oregon, UCLA and Notre Dame.

- Quarterbacks coach Bill Dudley came from UCLA, where he coached wide receivers. Before that, he was offensive coordinator at the University of Wisconsin.

- Ron Zook is the new defensive secondary coach, moving to OSU from Virginia Tech, where he was defensive coordinator and assistant head coach. Zook is an Ohio native and a graduate of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Three holdovers from last year's staff are Bob Palcic, Gary Blackney and Fred Pagac.

Beginning his third year at OSU, Palcic is in charge of guards and centers. Blackney, the inside linebackers coach, is in his fifth year as a member of the coaching staff. And, Pagac is the veteran of the group, beginning his seventh season as a member of the staff. A tight end on the 1972 and 1973 Ohio State conference champions, Pagac coaches the outside linebackers.



John Cooper will lead the Ohio State football team into its season opener against Syracuse at Ohio Stadium on Sept. 10. Cooper is the 21st head coach in OSU's storied gridiron history.

Sophomore Is Starting QB

Frey Prepared To Assume Command

By Mark Rea

Greg Frey will be the first to tell you he's no Art Schlichter or Rex Kern. He doesn't profess to be a Mike Tomczak, Jim Karsatos or Tom Tupa either.

"I'm Greg Frey, pure and simple," he said. "I know what I can do and I try to be myself."

There seems to be an inner confidence which emanates from the 20-year-old sophomore who will be the starting quarterback for Ohio State when the Buckeyes kick off their 1988 season Sept. 10 against Syracuse.

"This is my chance," said the 6-2, 195-pounder from Cincinnati St. Xavier High School. "Now I've got to go out, show the people I can do the job and justify the confidence the coaching staff has showed in me."

Frey solidified his position as the number one quarterback with a strong spring practice, beating out a pair of fellow sophomores, John Wagoner and Chris Stablein, for the starting assignment. He was quick to grasp the new offense introduced by head coach John Cooper and was voted the most improved offensive player at the end of the spring practice session.

"I like Greg as our quarterback," Cooper said. "He's not a great athlete. He's not an Art Schlichter or a Tom Tupa. He doesn't have that kind of athletic ability."

"But he does a good job of running our offense. He's got a good knowledge of what we're trying to do. He can audible at the line of scrimmage, check out and throw the football. I'm very comfortable with Greg as our quarterback."

Frey had a storybook high school career, getting named to several prep All-American teams as a senior. During his career at St. Xavier, he threw for 4,702 yards and 47 touchdowns. His biggest game was a showdown against perennial powerhouse Cincinnati Moeller his senior year. Although his team lost a wild 56-42 decision, Frey distinguished himself by completing 28 of 55 passes for 487 yards and four TDs.

He chose to play college football at Ohio State and, after spending his freshman year as a redshirt, got a taste of playing time in 1987 as backup to Tupa. He played a total of only 20 minutes in six games and completed eight of 20 passes for 94 yards.

His biggest moments came in games against Michigan State and Michigan. He replaced Tupa late in the fourth quarter against MSU and completed a third-down pass play to set up a fourth-and-12 situation. He then threw a 15-yard strike to flanker Vince Workman,



Greg Frey won the Buckeyes' starting quarterback job with an excellent spring and has continued to dazzle the OSU coaching staff throughout preseason practice. The Cincinnati native starred in high school for St. Xavier High School.

but Workman dropped the ball. OSU went on to lose 13-7 to the eventual Big Ten champions.

In the Michigan game, he spelled the injured Tupa on a third-down play late in the game. He went to Workman

again in the critical situation and this time the flanker held onto the ball, setting up Ohio State's winning field goal.

Situations like that give Frey confidence going into the 1988 season.

"It's not like I don't have any experience at all," he said. "I've got some experience. Of the other guys at quarterback, I'm the only one who has played. And I think that's going to help me. It helped my confidence to have been able to play a little bit last year."

Frey admitted he spent some sleepless nights between the time former head coach Earle Bruce was fired and Cooper was named the new Buckeye coach.

"I like passing the ball. I'm not really a gifted runner, but if I have to run, I can get the job done," he said. "But I knew if they hired an option coach at Ohio State, I was done."

"When I heard they had hired Coach Cooper, I was happy. I knew the kind of emphasis he placed on the offense at Arizona State and I was eager to see what kind of offense he would bring here."

Frey immediately endeared himself to the new coaching staff through his work habits.

"Right away in the spring, we came to the conclusion that Greg is a quick learner," said quarterbacks coach Bill Dudley. "He is a guy who can master the mental things quickly. He has mastered the new system very well."

"That's what really jumped him ahead because the other quarterbacks are good athletes. The other kids just don't have as much experience as he has — not that he's had a lot. But he also has responded very well to the early mental gymnastics of the offense, like thinking on his feet in spur-of-the-moment, pressure situations."

Dudley mentioned that Frey has also worked on becoming a better player in practice sessions, another reason the coaching staff made him the number one signal-caller.

"I have all quarterbacks list their strengths and their weaknesses and then list their goals based on those strengths and weaknesses," Dudley said. "One of the weaknesses Greg put down was that he didn't feel he was a good practice player. We had heard that about him but he wrote it down as a weakness and he wrote down as one of his goals to become a better practice player."

"I believe quarterbacks have to be great practice players. If he isn't a good practice player, he doesn't set a good tone for practice and therefore his not being a good practice player maybe forces the rest of the guys into practicing poorly."

Dudley says the bad practice rap against Frey no longer holds true.

"He has improved that because he's worked real hard at it," the coach said. "I would say there was only one day in the spring that he had a poor practice and that was during a testing period on campus and he had to miss a meeting that day."

Frey's hard work and ability has not gone unnoticed by the coaching staff or by his fellow players.

"Greg's a fine quarterback," said senior center Jeff Uhlenhake. "Greg is a very smart quarterback, very intelligent. He can get the job done and that's what counts. We have the utmost confidence in Greg."

Workman added, "He has very little experience but he has very fine potential. We have a lot of confidence in him. With our strong offensive line and running backs, I think as the season goes on, he's going to get even better."

Offensive coordinator Jim Colletto is impressed by Frey's unflappable nature.

"Greg has a real poise about him in the huddle," Colletto said. "For a coach, you want a quarterback who's a relaxed type of guy. The quarterback we had at Arizona State, Jeff Van Raaphorst, who had such a great game in the Rose Bowl, was a hyperactive guy. It took awhile to calm him down and get him to do the things we wanted him to do. Greg's not like that."

"Now, I'm sure come September 10th he's going to be awfully nervous. But we think he'll get over it quickly. It's just his temperament. He's not somebody that goes nuts. You need a quarterback who has a great deal of poise about him and I think Greg fills

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Cooper Sees MSU As The Team To Beat

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with the loss of All-American Tom Tupa.

"I think the Ohio State fans were spoiled the last four years with the best punter in the country in Tom Tupa. He's the kind of punter you'd like to have every year," Cooper said.

"If we were starting the season tomorrow, though, I'd go with (sophomore) Jeff Bohlman (6-3, 205). He did the job this spring."

The Buckeyes will also give a look at Hicks, who could get the job based upon prior experience at Cal. "And we'll look at just about anyone else who thinks he can perform at that position," Cooper said.

The new Buckeye coach said he did not expect any of the 21 incoming freshmen to have an immediate impact on the starting lineup.

"My position on freshmen," he said, "is if any of them can help us win a ball game, we'll play them. But there won't be any token appearances just to get

them in the game."

Three members of the recruiting class will absolutely see no action for the Buckeyes this season. Corey Pargo of Toledo Rogers and Buster Howe of Zanesville, Ohio, are Prop 48 casualties while Chris Roy of Columbus DeSales is out after reconstructive knee surgery Aug. 12.

As for the Big Ten championship hunt, Cooper looks at several teams with excellent chances to win a trip to the Rose Bowl.

"Michigan State is the defending champion," he said, "and I've always been of the opinion that you're the champion until someone knocks you off. I think we have some other strong teams in the conference including Indiana, which beat us last year, and Iowa, who we have to play on the road. And, as always, we'll have a knock-down, drag-out affair with Michigan at the end of the year."

Despite the overall balance and strength of the Big Ten, Cooper has no

second thoughts about taking the OSU job.

"This is one of the premier jobs in college football and when the job came open, I went after it," he said. "Big Ten football is what it's all about. I'm not trying to belittle the other conferences, but there's just something special about the Big Ten. I bet if other coaches from other conferences had a chance to get a coaching job at a Big Ten school, they'd be here."

Cooper said he realizes that Bruce started his nine-year tenure at OSU in much the same way, taking a team in turmoil into an opener against Syracuse and emerging a point away from a national championship.

He also knows the problems Bruce encountered in the seasons following that first season and the things which go along with coaching in a pressure-cooker situation.

"Heck, I've never been anywhere where they expected you to lose," Cooper said. "There's going to be a certain amount of pressure anywhere

you go. People ask me if there's pressure at Ohio State and I tell them, 'Only 24 hours a day.'

"But I learned a long time ago not to worry about things I couldn't do anything about. All we want is for our players to do it our way, give us an all-out effort and give it their best shot at all times."

Buckeye QB

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that bill for us."

Perhaps Frey's calm attitude is because he is getting to work an offense for which he is best suited.

"The thing that Greg has always wanted to be was a drop-back quarterback," Colletto said. "That's what he was in high school and we're giving him that chance."

"It's going to be a whole lot different style of passing game. We're going to do some shotgun, some drop-back and sprint outs. You're not going to see a repetitive-type passing game at Ohio State. We have some naked bootlegs and those types of plays. We want to keep the defense off-balance."

Frey loves the set-up.

"As a quarterback, you couldn't ask for a better offense. It's not an especially flashy offense but it has everything you need to get the job done. It's not that much different from the way we've done things the past two years except that we do a lot of little things differently."

Colletto said he will always look for a good balance of running and passing each game. But don't look for any aerial circuses in Columbus.

"Our Arizona State team that went to the Rose Bowl ran the ball almost 67 percent of the time because we had such a dominant running game," he said. "If we can dominate teams, you won't see a whole lot of passing."

Frey agrees because of the talent-laden Buckeye backfield featuring such players as Workman, Carlos Snow, Bill Matlock and Jaymes Bryant.

"Sure, it's fun to throw the ball 60 times a game, but teams which throw that much very seldom win a lot of games," Frey said. "With the talent we've got in the backfield, we'd be crazy not to run the ball."

Frey said he expects a winning season from the Buckeyes despite a tough non-conference schedule and a bruising Big Ten campaign.

"We've got our work cut out for us, but if we're going to have a good season, we're going to have to beat those teams," he said of the non-conference foes. "And we can beat them."

"As for the conference, it seems that parity is back in the Big Ten. Every game is going to be tough, especially the road games and we have Indiana, Iowa, Michigan State and Minnesota all away. That's a lot of tough games right there. But right now, we're just worrying about Syracuse."

And with the worry goes the added pressure of being the starting quarterback and being looked to for leadership.

"That's something that comes with the territory," Frey said. "I'd like to be a leader on this team. I'm not really an outgoing, vocal type. The guys know what's right and what's wrong and I'll show them what's right."

"I just want this team to win and I'll do whatever I have to do to get these guys ready to play and ready to win."



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The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, BSB Publisher

Sizing Up The Buckeyes Proves No Easy Task

This is the time of year when people always ask me how I think the Buckeyes are going to do this season.

Usually, I have a pretty good idea what to expect from the Bucks. This year, when queried, I give some vague answer because, frankly, I just don't know. Nothing would surprise me.

On the plus side, Ohio State has a pretty good football team with an excellent, enthusiastic coaching staff. The Bucks are coming off a 6-4-1 campaign (not bad for many schools) that could just as easily have been 10-1, as only the Indiana loss was by more than a touchdown.

On the negative side, Ohio State is thin in several key areas, must tackle a grueling non-league schedule while trying to learn a new system and must overcome any negative side effects from last year's troubled campaign.

So let's take a look at these 1988 Buckeyes.

One of the things that really stands out (and how can you miss these guys) when you look at the team is the offensive line. This is one of the biggest, deepest, most experienced offensive lines the Buckeyes have fielded in years. Jeff Davidson, Jeff Uhlenhake, Greg Zackeroff, John Peterson, Joe Staysniak, Karl Coles and Tim Moxley all have starting experience. If football games are won in the trenches, then the Ohio State offense has an awfully solid foundation.

Particular mention should be given to Uhlenhake, who was always considered a good football player. But many said the Newark, Ohio, product, who came to OSU as a 230-pounder, was too small to be a great college lineman. Now, at 270 pounds, Uhlenhake is a legitimate contender for conference and national honors.

If the line opens the holes it should, OSU has an outstanding crop of running backs to slip through them. All running backs aspire to gain 1,000 yards and Vince Workman has already proven he can reach that mark. Carlos Snow is one of the most dynamic backs in the country. And even with preseason injuries to Bill Matlock and Chris Boddie, the Bucks should still be solid at fullback.

The passing attack is a bigger question mark. For the second year in a row, OSU's top two wide receivers will not be returning to their positions. Everett Ross did not make grades and Workman has moved back to tailback.

And for the second year in a row, a new quarterback will have to break in with all new starting receivers. This situation proved detrimental last season when Cris Carter and Nate Harris did not answer the bell on opening day.

If the OSU offense is to reach its potential, some quality receivers are going to have to emerge from a group that includes Wes Siegenthaler, Jeff Graham, Bernard Edwards, Bobby

Olive, Greg Beatty and, one hopes, Marc Hicks.

Tight end appears deep with Jeff Ellis leading the way.

Ohio State suffered some huge losses on defense. Players like Chris Spielman, Eric Kumerow and William White, along with the likes of Ray Holliman, Fred Ridder, Ray Jackson and Greg Rogan are not easy to replace.

Nonetheless, Ohio State should field a scrappy defensive unit this season. The problem appears to be depth. The Buckeyes simply cannot afford any injuries on defense.

Top players on the defensive side of the ball include Mike McCray and David Brown. McCray, who plays a lot like Eric Kumerow, appears ready to step out of the shadows cast last year by Kumerow and Spielman. A big-play man, the 6-3, 230-pound senior from Dayton had three interceptions, two fumble recoveries and six tackles for losses last season. He was fifth on the club with 71 tackles.

Brown, only a junior, has already logged 24 starts and 652 minutes of playing time and should be the leader of the young secondary. A sprinter in high school, Brown is best remembered for his 100-yard run with an interception against Purdue in 1986.

Emerging as top support for Brown in the secondary is sophomore Zack Dumas, who caught the attention of Buckeye fans with a savage hit on Michigan quarterback Demetrius Brown last season. When asked recently if Dumas was a hard hitter, Cooper responded, "Is a fat pig greasy?"

Also slated to start are Dwight Smith and Jim Peel.

Plugging the holes at linebacker are some young, but hard hitting players — John Kacherski on the outside and Brian Benio and Andy Gurd on the inside. The defense would get a major boost if John Sullivan can return at linebacker following a knee injury.

His twin brother Mike, a nose guard, will anchor a defensive line that includes Mike Showalter and Derek MacCready.

If the defense avoids injury, if some players emerge at receiver and if the Buckeyes can survive their tough non-league schedule, there could really be some excitement generated out of Columbus.

Those are some pretty big ifs.

WHILE THERE are plenty of question marks this year, one of the reasons that many Buckeye fans are enthusiastic is that they recall the last time a new coach came on board after a tumultuous season. Earle Bruce led a fairly nondescript Buckeye club to within a point of the national championship.

Cooper has been fairly low-key in his selling of the team to the public, which is a good way to play it. By perhaps selling the team a bit short, Cooper is keeping expectations down. If the Bucks do well, he looks great. If they struggle a bit, no one is disappointed.

IT'S INTERESTING that three of the four players who were sidelined by Proposition 48 last season will be on the spot this year because they play at especially thin positions. Vince Clark

and Tim Rutledge will have to emerge in the defensive backfield and Jeff Graham will be of great assistance if he lives up to his advance billing at wide receiver.

As one of our readers pointed out to me, if Clark emerges, and quarterback Greg Frey and the dazzling Carlos Snow can keep their names in the headlines, perhaps Ohio State will be able to improve its image in the critical Cincinnati area. Shoring up OSU relations in the Queen City should be a top priority for John Cooper.

EACH SEASON we seem to hear more complaints from Buckeye fans who are unable to get football tickets. One way for you to see the Bucks is to see them on the road.

Buckeye Boosters is again sponsoring trips to all away games. A few spots remain for the three-day trip to Pittsburgh and there are plenty of seats left for the overnight trip to Michigan State and the one-day charter flight to Iowa. Tickets and many extras are included with all these trips.

If you are not already a member of the Boosters, the away trips are just one of many reasons to join. The best reason is a chance to share good times with people just like you — people who love their Buckeyes. Call Carole

Miller at (614) 431-2323 for membership and trip details.

Travel, Travel Tours is offering another chance to see the Buckeyes as they have put together an overnight trip to the Indiana game. This will be a real grudge game and this is a trip you won't want to miss. Give Dick Swabby or Denny Lund a call at (614) 459-3008 for trip details.

Dick and Denny have also put together a trip to the Maui Classic in November that's a real winner.

THIS ISSUE marks the start of our eighth publishing year. It seems like only yesterday that we first opened the doors. I wanted to thank all of the people who have helped make us one of the oldest and largest publications of our kind in the country. I wanted to thank the many outstanding writers, photographers and other staff members we have had through the years, to thank our loyal advertisers, several of whom have been with us in every issue, and most of all, you our loyal subscribers. Without you, none of this would be possible.

I also wanted to give special thanks to our computer whiz kids Steve Rothman and Bob Roehm. Believe me when I tell you that without them, you would not be reading this issue right now. Good job, guys!



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