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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

October 24, 1998

Boston Comes On Strong

Junior Split End Starting To Put Opponents Away

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

People who saw David Boston from the moment he arrived on the Ohio State campus from Humble, Texas, knew he was marked for greatness.

The precise routes, long strides and willingness to go after the ball were all there at an early age.

So it shouldn't surprise anyone that Boston, now a junior for the Buckeyes, is approaching marks once thought untouchable. The incomparable Cris Carter may have company in the OSU record books as soon as Oct. 24, when the Buckeyes face Northwestern. Boston caught two touchdown passes in OSU's 45-15 rout of Minnesota, giving him 26 career scores. That's just one behind Carter, a perennial All-Pro for the Minnesota Vikings.

Boston finished his afternoon burying the Golden Gophers with 10 catches for a career-high 191 yards, putting him at 2,040 yards for his career. That's fourth on the OSU all-time list, and all three players ahead of him — Doug Donley, Carter and Gary Williams — are regarded as among the best in school annals. He was named the Big

Bear Buckeye Of The Week for his exploits against the Gophers.

Boston is ready to place his name right there next to the others, but there are a few other things on his mind right now.

"I'm not trying to pay attention to the records," Boston said. "If you go out and just play, things will happen. I can reflect after the season's over, after we try to get the national championship. But right now I'm not worried about that stuff."

There are plenty of great receivers vying for national attention this season, including Florida State's Peter Warrick, Louisiana Tech's Troy Edwards, North Carolina State's Torry Holt, and Georgia Tech's Dez White. All four have better numbers than Boston, but they may not impact their team as much as the 6-3, 215-pounder does the Buckeyes.

Teams can't choose to double him because of the lethal Dee Miller on the other side. That means a lot of one-on-one coverage, which Minnesota tried. Even the folks up in Ohio



JEFF BREHM

In This Issue Of BSB

• Bucks Down Minnesota 45-15

The top-ranked Buckeyes jumped out to a 31-3 lead and cruised to a 45-15 win over Minnesota Oct. 17 at Ohio Stadium. Cornerback Ahmed Plummer (right, defending against UM's Luke Levenson) led OSU with 9 tackles and an interception.

• Offense, Defense Assessed In Exams

With OSU passing the midpoint of the season, the BSB staff issues grades for the Buckeyes on both sides of the ball. The offense's Midterm Exams are on pages 38-39, while the defense is featured on pages 40-42.



JEFF BREHM

POLISHING UP HIS ROUTES — David Boston is rapidly becoming a household name around America with his play. His breakout game against Minnesota featured plenty of big plays, including a 53-yard touchdown grab from Joe Germaine.

Stadium's C-Deck could see Boston's eyes light up.

"Every receiver loves that," Boston said. "When you have a chance to go one-on-one with a DB, that's the best thing there is."

Wide Beyond His Years

Boston has done some growing up since becoming a Buckeye. He was thrust into the role of go-to receiver as a freshman, tying a school record with 13 catches against Indiana and later playing Rose Bowl hero by making the game-winning catch that propelled the Buckeyes to a 20-17 win over Arizona State.

Then there were the not-so-well-received comments about Charles Woodson leading into Michigan week a year ago. Boston was taken out of his game immediately by Woodson, and even on his 56-yard touchdown catch

Boston drew a 15-yard penalty for taunting, waving the ball at his nemesis.

Now, though, a much more reserved, thoughtful Boston prowls the halls of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

"I learned how to handle situations," Boston said, noting his summer workouts with former Buckeye and idol Joey Galloway helped immeasurably. "I learned a lot from the mental aspect, watching him go through things and how he responded. It's helped me a lot to be around so many great athletes."

Boston's work ethic has never been questioned, but some little things about his game have. Until now.

Some said Boston didn't always make yards after the catch, didn't turn routine plays into, as OSU coach John

Continued On Page 12

OHIO STATE VS. MINNESOTA

Buckeye Blah Party

OSU's 45-15 Win Wasn't Perfect, Cooper Says

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

When you are the nation's No. 1-ranked team, it's hard to accept an effort that included a blocked punt, two interceptions, and enough poorly timed penalties to make the Oakland Raiders blush.

But when Ohio State was able to wrap those mental and physical errors around an otherwise dominant 45-15 win over Big Ten foe Minnesota, there was cause for at least celebration, right?

"We're getting spoiled around here," said OSU coach John Cooper, moments after the Buckeyes disposed of the Gophers before 93,183 Oct. 17 at Ohio Stadium.

"I went into the locker room after the game and our players came in and were acting like it was another day of practice.

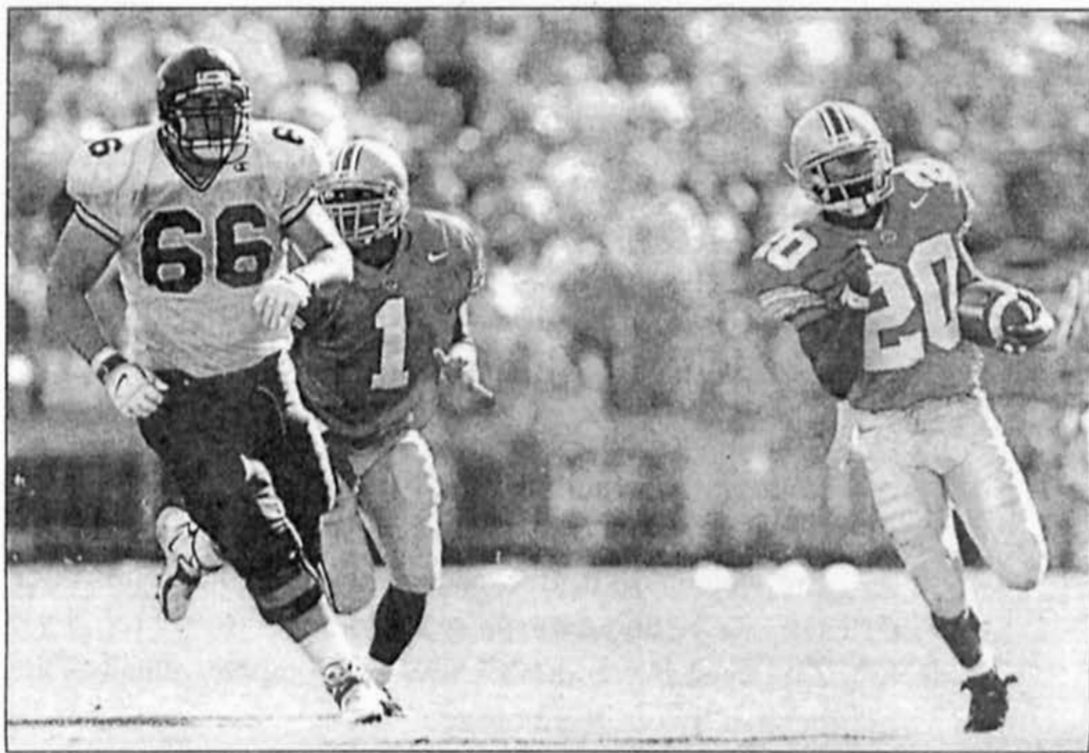
"I said, 'Guys, you just won. You beat a pretty good football team 45-15. You should be happier than you are.'"

At face value, Ohio State (6-0, 3-0) dominated the game. The Buckeyes piled up a season-high 586 yards. But the plucky Gophers (3-3, 0-3) did not give in after falling behind 31-3 late in the first half.

"We had a lot of yardage, but we didn't get the point production that you should have with that kind of yardage," said Cooper, whose team was stymied by penalties seven times for 74 yards.

Minnesota's offense produced a touchdown and a pair of field goals. The Gophers' remaining two points were the result of a blocked OSU punt that went out of the end zone for a safety.

"We're nitpicking the defense, and they just gave up 13 points," Cooper said. "But,



CENTER OF ATTENTION — Ohio State defensive back Central McClellion begins his 60-yard jaunt to the end zone against Minnesota Oct. 17 as teammate Gary Berry (1) looks to block. The interception return was the senior's first touchdown as a Buckeye.

anyway, I think we can play better."

Quarterback Joe Germaine became the first player in OSU history to throw for 300 yards in consecutive weeks. He hit on 27 of 39 passes for 339 yards and two touchdowns.

But even the steady Germaine — who

also became the first OSU passer to ever have four 300-yard days — had problems, throwing a pair of interceptions.

"I don't know what it is," Germaine said of his team's satisfaction level after their sluggish performance. "We have all the rea-

son to be happy with the game we played. We scored 45 points, and the defense scored a touchdown.

"But I just think we have so much going on this season, we want everything to be perfect."

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OHIO STATE VS. MINNESOTA

Germaine's main target was split end David Boston, who caught 10 passes for a career-high 191 yards and a pair of scores.

"David is a great athlete, and today was a day when we thought he might get some opportunities," Cooper said.

After previous opponents Penn State and Illinois had stacked the line of scrimmage, OSU used four-receiver sets to spread the Gophers out.

"We were trying to spread them out a little bit, and when you do that you create some vertical holes," Cooper said. "When you're going to run verticals and get the ball upfield, you may as well have your best players in the game."

Boston added, "We watched a lot of film on them. We watched what Purdue did (in a 56-21 win). We thought four receivers would work."

Tailback Michael Wiley netted 119 yards — his fourth 100-yard game of the year — and a touchdown on 12 carries. Backup Joe Montgomery also was effective with 67 yards and a score on five carries.

And the OSU defense got into the scoring column for the third game in a row as nickel back Central McClellion returned an interception 60 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Blow By Blow

Ohio State opened the scoring on its second possession, driving 52 yards in nine plays. Germaine hit flanker Dee Miller for pickups of 11 and 14 yards, setting up his 6-yard touchdown pass to Boston. The score came on third-and-goal with Germaine holding the ball until his top receiver came open in the back of the end zone. The play put OSU up 7-0 with 6:46 left in the first quarter.

Minnesota responded with a field goal, a 24-yarder by Adam Bailey to cut the lead to 7-3 with 3:48 left in the first quarter. The kick resulted from an 11-play, 71-yard

march, prolonged by an OSU pass interference penalty on Ahmed Plummer.

The Buckeyes answered with an eight-play, 77-yard scoring drive of their own. Germaine hit Boston for a 17-yard gain before Wiley ripped off a 36-yard pickup down to the UM 12 on a huge hole up the middle. Three plays later, fullback Matt Keller took a handoff on a draw and made a nifty cutback to find the end zone from eight yards out and put the Buckeyes up 14-3 with 43 seconds left in the first quarter.

"I got some great blocks downfield, and I was able to cut back and score," Keller said.

Ohio State pushed the lead to 21-3 early in the second quarter after taking over on its own 20 after a punt. The Buckeyes needed four plays to cash in, beginning with Germaine's 22-yard pass to Boston down the middle.

Three plays later, the same combination went deep down the left sideline. Boston hauled in the pass on a seam post route, avoided UM's Willie Middlebrooks, and outraced Keith Dimmy to the end zone on the 53-yard touchdown play.

"I worked real hard on trying to make yards after the catch during the off-season," Boston said. "It paid off there."

The Buckeyes scored again on their next possession, driving 70 yards in nine plays. Tailback Joe Montgomery brought the crowd to life with his hard running up the middle, breaking several tackles on a 30-yard gain down to the UM 12. On first down there, Montgomery went up the middle again and broke a couple of tackle attempts on the 12-yard touchdown run. That upped the lead to 28-3 with 6:57 left in the first half.

"I was kind of disappointed because I didn't get the touchdown," Montgomery said. "I got it on the next play, but I wanted it on the first one."

Kicker Dan Stultz tacked on a 19-yard field goal to make it 31-3 with 4:35 left in the

half after OSU failed to take advantage of Wiley's 40-yard run down to the UM 9.

Minnesota did not mail in the rest of the half, though. The Gophers struck for a touchdown and a field goal to trim the halftime lead to 31-13.

The touchdown came first as the Gophers moved 73 yards in seven plays. Quarterback Andy Persby's 35-yard pass to Antoine Henderson, beating OSU cornerback Antoine Winfield, got the Gophers into the end zone and cut the lead to 31-10 with 2:27 left in the half.

The Gophers got the ball back after an OSU punt and moved to the Buckeye 14 before Bailey kicked a 32-yard field goal to trim OSU's halftime advantage to 18 with 41 seconds left.

"We set high standards at Ohio State," said OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski. "We want to keep teams to a minimal number of points. Allowing them 13 points in the first half, that comes out to 26 for the whole game."

"I want to give credit to Minnesota. This shows that we do have a bull's-eye on our chest. Even though they fell behind, they came back out like all the other teams and gave us their best shot."

Ohio State moved ahead 38-13 midway through the third quarter after an eight-play, 52-yard drive. OSU overcame a holding penalty on the drive, which was aided by Montgomery's 22-yard gain. Wiley came on to finish it, taking a pitch left and breaking several tackles on a 1-yard TD run with 8:31 left in the third.

Germaine threw an interception and Stultz missed a 37-yard field goal to thwart scoring chances on OSU's next drives.

Minnesota's Trevis Graham then blocked a punt by OSU's Brent Bartholomew. The ball careened 35 yards backward and, after a mad scramble, out of the end zone for a safety, making it 38-15 with 8:21 left in the game.

"It is inexcusable for the No. 1 team in the country to get a punt blocked," Cooper said. "It's embarrassing, and we need to work on it a little harder than we have and hopefully it won't happen again."

Billy Cockerham then relieved Persby as the UM quarterback. But on his first pass attempt, Rudzinski hit him and his flutter pass was easily intercepted by McClellion. The OSU senior returned it 60 yards down the sideline for the score with 7:57 left, accounting for the 30-point final spread.

Game Notes

- Sophomore receivers Ken-Yon Rambo and Reggie Germany were in the starting lineup on offense for the first time as OSU employed a four-receiver set.

- Safety Gary Berry replaced Rambo on punt return duties.

"It felt good," Berry said. "I've been returning punts (in practice) all year, working in and out. But I had a couple injuries. Ken-Yon came in and did it. We've just all been alternating. We've got great returners back there."

"Anybody could do it. It's just who's up for that week."

Berry returned five punts a total of 38 yards.

- Cornerback Plummer led OSU with nine tackles. He also intercepted a pass and broke up four others.

"That's a first," Plummer said of his game-high total.

- The safety was the first scored against Ohio State since Robert Smith was tackled in the end zone in a 16-14 loss to Illinois in 1992.

- OSU won over Minnesota for the 15th consecutive time, dating to a 35-31 loss at Minneapolis. OSU also improved to 18-2 at home in the series. The only losses to UM in Ohio Stadium came in 1940 and '49.

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COVER STORY: DAVID BOSTON

Hard Off-Season Work Helps Boston

Continued From Page 1

Cooper is fond of saying, home runs.

That all changed the last two games. Against Illinois, Boston ran a simple curl pattern and hauled in quarterback Joe Germaine's pass. He turned upfield and was able to sprint away from Illinois' Muhammad Abdullah for the 30-yard touchdown.

A week later against the Gophers, Boston ran a skinny post before leaping to catch Germaine's spiral. He deftly avoided blanketed safety Willie Middlebrooks and outsped the other safety, Keith Dimmy, to the end zone for the 53-yard score.

After the play, ESPN's cameras captured a stunned Boston on his return to the OSU sideline.

"I just said, 'Oh my god,'" he said. "I was just happy to make a play."

Or, perhaps, he was happy to add that type of game-changing, breakaway running ability to his game.

"I worked real hard on trying to make yards after the catch," Boston said. "I think I'm doing a good job of that this year."

Boston — and Miller, too — got glowing praise from Minnesota coach Glen Mason after his performance.

"They have the moves and the hands like the little guys, but they happen to be big guys," Mason said.

Ready For The Spotlight

Any more games like Minnesota and Illinois and Boston will be hearing the All-American whispers again. He hasn't quite been at that level this season, but he may be ready to break out.

But whether it's Boston, Miller or tailback Michael Wiley, the Ohio State offense has many weapons to showcase.

"I'm just one of the 11 guys out there trying to make a play and help the team win," Boston said.

Boston's teammates realize just how valuable he is to the cause.

"It's a great advantage having a guy like David," said Germaine, who became the first passer in OSU history to enjoy back-to-back 300-yard passing games with his play against the Illini and Gophers. "We feel there aren't many corners in the country who can stay with him for the course of a whole ball game."

"The catch and run he made on that 53-yard touchdown was spectacular. That just shows what kind of an athlete he is."

With 38 catches this season, Boston could eclipse his single-season mark of 73 catches set a year ago. As teams continue to load up at the line to try to stop the Buckeyes' rushing attack, there should be more opportunities for Boston to massacre foes.

"David is a great athlete, and today was a day we featured him a little bit more," Cooper said. "If they don't double

him, we're going to go to him a lot. David will make what we consider an ordinary play and we'll be a little upset with him, then boom, he comes back and makes a great play."

The presence of Miller, who blossomed last year after two years of non-productivity, takes the burden off Boston.

"It helps a lot," Boston said. "Anytime you have a great receiver on the other side of you it opens up the offense, takes pressure off both of us, and we can go out and have fun."

Though Boston claims Galloway and Terry Glenn are his favorite receivers, he's compared more often to the man he's chasing in the OSU record books — Carter.

There are some similarities, but Boston can't quite understand the fuss or comparisons.

"We're both big receivers," Boston said. "You can't compare me to Cris Carter. He's a Pro Bowl receiver; I'm just in college."

While in college, Boston will continue working toward his ultimate goal — getting to the NFL, where his father, Byron, is in his fourth year as an official.

Boston is looked at as a surefire first round pick, and with his play elevating, who knows how much his stock may rise.

For now, though, Boston is intent on the season to have a different ending. He liked the feeling of his freshman year, when a bowl win led to an off-season of euphoria.

"We realized after the bowl game last year what we had to do," Boston said. "We saw the kind of athletes Florida State had and what it took to compete



BOSTON MASSACRES GOPHERS — Ohio State junior receiver David Boston came up big against Minnesota, latching onto 10 passes for 191 yards and a touchdown. Boston is quickly approaching many of Cris Carter's school records.

nationally.

"We did a good job of working hard in the winter, spring and summer. Now we're letting that hard work pay off."

The conditioning, with Galloway, Eddie George, Bobby Hoving and Shawn Springs, did a lot for Boston physically. But he was more concerned with the cerebral facet of the game.

"The things I learned from all those guys, I just can't say enough," Boston said. "From the winter to the spring, just running in the morning with those guys, it helped me out so much. I know the standard where I need to be."

If he continues at this pace, Boston will become the standard.

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OHIO STATE VS. MINNESOTA

Buckeyes Borrow 4-Receiver Set For Gophers

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Purdue must be feeling pretty high about now.

Top-ranked Ohio State borrowed liberally from the Boilermakers playbook, throwing for 350 yards and rolling up 586 yards of total offense on the way to a hum 45-15 victory over Minnesota.

Surprising the Gophers with a four-receiver set out of the box, the Buckeyes rolled off six straight pass plays and put Minnesota back on its heels. Only a sack, one of three allowed on the day by the offensive line, put the brakes on the drive, but the Buckeyes went back to the four wides — affectionately known as Quads — often during the course of the day.

"We haven't really shown that, and it threw them for a loop," tackle Tyson Walter said. "They'd seen that look from Purdue, and it really burned them. We looked at that, and the coaches thought it would be good for us to go into. It confused them and hurt them because we were able to march the ball down there before a sack hurt us."

OSU came into the game wanting to establish a ground presence, but quarterback Joe Germaine didn't make his first handoff until nearly six minutes had elapsed.

The new wrinkle was installed during the week, put in place especially for the Gophers.

"We put that (four receivers) in on Tuesday," Germaine said. "We saw that teams had had some success against them by doing that. That's really not our

INSIDE THE OFFENSE with Mike Wachsman

style, but with the receivers we have, we can do that."

Minnesota didn't have the luxury of stacking the line, as so many OSU foes have done, with the odd formations and emphasis on going vertical.

"The way it affects their defense is they know we're capable of putting a formation like that out there," said Germaine, who finished with 339 yards, his second straight game of more than 300. "They have to honor that with the right personnel, bring in a nickel package. It kind of keeps them off-guard as to what kind of formation we'll come out in."

Purdue's Drew Brees torched the Gophers for over 500 yards in just over three quarters of work earlier this season, and OSU used a lot of the same looks and plays as the Boilermakers.

The difference is Purdue is known as a pass-first, run-second team and OSU is just the opposite.

"I don't think they anticipated us going right to four wides," coordinator Mike Jacobs said. "Last year we gave some of that, but we used the tailback (in motion) to get into it. Today we decided to go with it, and that gave them a little bigger hassle."

Not Passing On Running Game

Ohio State has admittedly fallen flat in the rushing department the last couple of games, so getting back on track against Minnesota was important. The Gophers came in ranked eighth in the country and second in the Big Ten against the run, but those numbers are somewhat bogus because the Gophers are so easy to pass on.

Teams don't need to run, so the numbers will be down.

That said, Ohio State did do a solid job establishing the ground game. Michael Wiley scored once and led the way with 119 yards, complemented nicely by Joe Montgomery's 67 yards on five carries, one a 12-yard scoring burst up the middle.

Matt Keller also got into the act, scoring from 8 yards out on a draw play. OSU's early reliance on the pass made Minnesota susceptible to the run.

"It was a regular straight up draw," Walter said. "They'd been wanting to rush upfield all day, their ends wanted to play contain-type style. We let them come upfield, and Keller broke it and put it in."

Minnesota had to be aggressive with its scheme if it had a chance to win, or so thought Gophers coach Glen Mason.

"I don't think we were intimidated by Ohio State," he said. "But you have to play more aggressive against a team you have little chance against."



JEFF BREHM

DENYING DEE — Minnesota cornerback Craig Scruggs (2) blankets Ohio State receiver Dee Miller, keeping him from making this catch. Miller finished the afternoon with five catches for 43 yards.

Getting Wiley back over 100 yards — his fourth trip to the century plateau in six games — was paramount for the Buckeyes, who still haven't tipped their hand much offensively.

"We talked about rushing the ball bet-

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ter today, and against an opponent that was formidable against the run, to me that was the brightest star," Jacobs said. "To get it going again was great."

Minnesota strong safety Tyrone Carter was busy, finishing with 18 stops.

"They were intent on throwing the strong safety up there to stuff us," Walter said. "We wanted to run the ball, and the passing game really helped us there."

Woe is the defense that hits Ohio State on a day when the Buckeyes truly put it all together.

"We don't think we've put the whole thing together yet, had that big crescendo," Jacobs said. "That's what we're building for."

Wiley used his finesse and Montgomery his power in subduing the Gophers, and though there aren't enough footballs to keep both totally happy, there's no animosity between the pair.

"Mike and I have a great relationship," Montgomery said. "We live right across the alley from each other, and we're competitive in everything we do. I remember the kid when he came in as a freshman weighing 160 pounds wet, and now he's a great talent. He can take it the distance every time you give the kid the ball. Every time."

Piling It On

Ohio State's offensive totals came in handy on a day when the defense wasn't sharp. The secondary was subpar, and Minnesota marched right down the field to score on two separate occasions. A special teams gaffe — Brent Bartholomew's first blocked punt of the season — didn't help matters, either.

The 586 yards marked the fifth time in six games OSU has eclipsed the 500-yard mark and showed that Ohio State has too many weapons to keep entirely in check during the course of a game.

"You'd hope they can't commit enough players to our guys," Jacobs said. "We have a lot of guys who have big-play capabilities, and we showed that today."

Germaine's 53-yard scoring strike to Boston on a skinny post was a textbook example. Boston got behind freshman corner Willie Middlebrooks and ran a perfect route. Germaine put the ball right into Boston's bread basket, and the junior loped into the end zone for the score. Boston's final catch was another beauty as he caught the ball and juke a defend-



JEFF BREHM

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE — Ohio State fullback Matt Keller (23) isn't often a ball carrier, but when he is there's often damage done. Here he eludes Minnesota cornerback Craig Scruggs. Keller scored a TD in OSU's 45-15 win over Minnesota.

er lunging for his legs.

"Those are routine patterns we run every day in practice," Boston said. "We called an out route on my last catch, and anytime you have bump coverage on an out route, you just throw it up top. We work on that every day in practice. The touchdown was just a post, which I've run many times. It just comes natural for me."

Even with two interceptions and a

couple of misreads, Germaine was successful, hitting on 27 of 39 passes.

"Joe made the right reads for the most part, and the receivers made some great catches," Walter said. "They took short passes and broke them for long gains, and that makes everyone's job easier."

Minnesota learned a lesson many before them had — it's almost impossible to defend everything Ohio State can do.

Try to stop the pass, OSU runs.

Commit to the run, OSU throws the ball all over the yard. It's a veritable pick your poison for foes, and it always results in a slow death.

"It wasn't a matter of them having the league's best run defense and us trying to exploit them (by passing)," Montgomery said. "We just go out and play our game. We're very confident. We have a lot of talent on this team, and we just go out and play our game."

The Buckeyes wanted to rebound from what they considered a less-than-stellar offensive showing a week earlier in a 41-0 whitewash of Illinois.

"We were happy with our performance today," Keller said. "Last week at Illinois we weren't sharp. All we heard all week was about how Minnesota was real good and tough against the run."

"We can't rely on Joe Germaine all the time. We came out and established the run."

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OHIO STATE VS. MINNESOTA

Defense Still Looking For Flawless Effort

You'd think a 45-15 win would be more than enough to sate the appetites of a homecoming crowd starved for a championship and an Ohio State defense that put its opponent on the carving board the entire second half.

Think again.

The Buckeyes left the field in search of their dominance and were still none too pleased with allowing two field goals and a touchdown in the first half. After all, when you're the No. 1-ranked team in the country and you're coming off a shutout, you expect near-perfection.

When told many of his players were disgruntled with not completely shutting down Minnesota, defensive coordinator Fred Pagac forced a smile.

"That's our goal every time," he said. "What the hell. That's what we're here on defense for. If our kids feel like they can play better, then they shouldn't be happy with today."

"Do I wish we had a shutout today? Yes. There's nothing wrong with setting a high goal."

The performance was so underwhelming to the defensive players that All-Americans Andy Katzenmoyer and Antoine Winfield stayed away from the interview room afterward, although it should be noted that Katzenmoyer has made a habit of that off and on this season.

The more approachable Winfield was the victim on the UM touchdown, a 35-yard bomb from Andy Persby that found second-team receiver Antoine Henderson streaking down the sideline. That's a sight OSU fans and Winfield simply aren't used to seeing.

Some players even hung their heads in apparent disappointment when Minnesota's Adam Bailey nailed the first of his two field goals in the first quarter.

"I don't think you're ever happy unless you get the shutout, which is the

INSIDE THE DEFENSE

with
Jeff Rapp

ultimate goal, and the next goal is to keep them out of the end zone," linebacker Jerry Rudzinski said. "We were really upset to give up the touchdown."

"I've said from the start, West Virginia on, that our defense hasn't really shown its best shot yet."

Fellow outside backer Nail Diggs seemed to give an A effort with eight tackles and three sacks, but he gave the defense a fairly harsh overall grade of C-.

"We have a lopsided team sometimes," he said. "It seems like when the offense plays well, the defense doesn't play too well; and when the defense plays well, the offense doesn't play well."

That may have been a factor in the disappointment as the offense rolled up nearly 600 total yards. The performance could have been much more dominating if the pass defense was up to par. Instead, the Gophers completed 22 passes for 225 yards and moved the chains with 16 first downs.

"We still haven't played our best game yet," cornerback Ahmed Plummer said, echoing Rudzinski. "We know that. What you all are seeing now is really just a taste of what our potential is. Sure we're talented, and sure we've got a lot of ability, but we haven't shown it all yet."

"Hopefully we'll get it together because we're going to need to down the line."

Added safety Gary Berry, "We need to get better and show the world that we are the best defense in the nation. We're trying to be perfect, so it's great that no one's satisfied."

Surprisingly, the least-fumed person associated with the defense was the fiery Pagac, who believes his squad still

played well, all things considered.

"I thought they made a couple nice plays against us," Pagac said. "A couple of their receivers put a couple good moves on and came up with the ball."

"But overall I was pleased with our defense. We're flying around pretty good right now and we're showing good effort."

Pass Defense Took A Hit

The 225 yards passing — 213 by Persby — was the most by an opponent this year and may have given future foes some measure of hope since much of it came off quick drops and timing plays.

To get a feel for what UM could do and to contain emerging receiver Luke Levenson, the Buckeyes backed off their press coverage in the early going and allowed Persby to toss for 153 yards in the first half.

"We may have played a little more zone than normal, but they made some good plays," Pagac said.

Added Rudzinski, "We go into the game saying we don't want to be beat by the run. They tried to attack us in the air and had some success."



HOLDING DOWN JOHNSON — Minnesota receiver Ron Johnson made three catches against Ohio State in the Gophers' 45-15 loss, but not on this occasion. OSU's Ahmed Plummer (left) and Damon Moore were defending on the play.

Plummer and Winfield elected to play a few yards off the line early to better read plays and bait the young Persby into a mistake. But the Gophers countered with quick outs, and Persby also made a few connections down the

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OHIO STATE VS. MINNESOTA

field off pump fakes.

Whenever OSU was in 2-under, or zone, the Minnesota receivers found the seams on the outside.

"We're going to give up the out in that coverage," Berry said. "But in the second half we started playing a little tighter and locking them down, and that's all you can ask. We played our hearts out and went for the ball."

Still, the Gophers had no recourse but to keep cranking passes. Persby threw 42 times and reserve QB Billy Cockerham put up seven more.

"I wasn't so surprised (with the number of passes)," Persby said. "Their corners are great corners. Their front seven with the linebackers they have are hard to run against. I figured we would throw a little bit more than usual."

Gophers Tried To Pick A Plum

Winfield and Plummer sometimes stay to a particular receiver and switch the sides they play. Against UM, they simply stayed on a side.

That allowed Levenson, a slippery 6-0, 175-pound junior, to line up away from the imposing Winfield. The result: The Gophers peppered Plummer with pass attempts all day.

"I couldn't keep count if I tried," Plummer said. "From the very start they were throwing."

Unofficially, Minnesota threw to Plummer's side 27 times. That would explain Levenson's 12 catches and Plummer's team-high nine tackles. The junior cornerback also picked off a pass for the third time this season, which leads the team, but not before letting a couple of others slip through his fingers.

"I had a couple opportunities again and I wasn't able to capitalize on those, but at least I was able to get one interception," he said with his trademark smile.

"As far as being picked on, I think that's out of necessity. I think teams are just trying to 'hulk' to me to sleep and then go deep at him every once in a while. But I expect it. That's why I work hard in practice, and that's why I'm trying to get better each and every week."

"I love the challenge," he added. "That's why I came to Ohio State — to compete and play in big games and play against the best players in the country. When teams come at you, you have to be ready."

Plummer's technical approach to the game puts him in good position to make several plays on the ball per game. That's why, even with Winfield's reputation, it's a little surprising to defenders to see Plummer get tested down after down.

"I don't know why they do that," Berry said. "I don't know why they'd want to pick on Ahmed. He should have had two (interceptions) against Illinois, and he should have had three today."

He's a great player."

Diggs Continues To Shine

Another player who seems to be benefiting from a lack of respect is Diggs, who arguably is the best of the Ohio State linebackers right now. The sophomore from Los Angeles seemingly is at least playing as well as Katzenmoyer, the reigning Butkus Award winner, and Rudzinski, a senior captain.

"I'm just making plays. I don't know if it has anything to do with people paying more attention to Andy or what," he said. "I don't even notice it, to be honest with you. I don't know if he's getting cut, double-teamed or what. I just play my hardest."

When teams try to run outside, Diggs seems to be one of the initial pursuers. When teams don't show much threat to hit running backs out of the backfield, Diggs has even more freedom to roam. And when Pagac elects to line up Diggs tight to the line, he has a knack for getting in the backfield.

That was the case late last season, when Diggs overtook the team lead in sacks by lining up at defensive end. Against Minnesota, Diggs disrupted several plays by shooting through the "A" gap between the guard and center.

"That worked pretty well for us," Pagac said. "A couple times we had Jerry and Andy lined up on the strong side off the tight end, Andy was even in a three-point stance one time, and Na'il was able to get to the ball from the back side."

"We kind of knew what protection they were going to use, and that's what let me through," Diggs said of the maneuver. "It was that easy."

Diggs has been making the game look easy all season.

"I don't know if I'm making more plays," he said, "but I'm a lot more comfortable, and the guys that I'm playing with are very talented. I know if I mess up, they'll cover me and vice versa."

When asked if this was another in a half-season full of good games, Diggs said, "Yes. And there are plenty more to come after this."

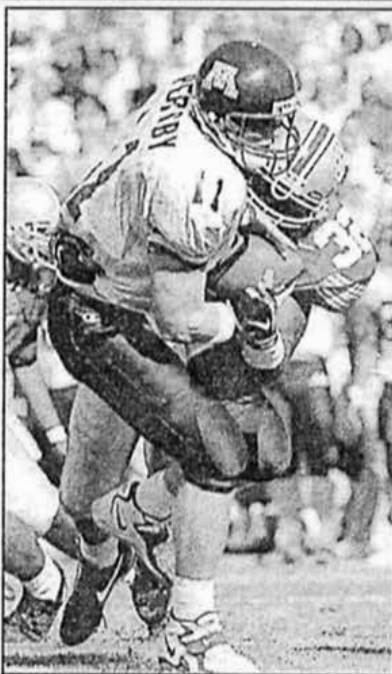
That sounds good to Pagac, who knows he's got a star in the making in Diggs.

"I think he's a very good athlete, a great young man, and his confidence is building and building," he said. "He's getting better each week. But, again, it goes back to how well the other guys are playing for us."

Miscellaneous Notes

• Not only did Persby become the first quarterback to record 200 yards against the OSU defense this season, but Levenson became the first rusher or receiver to top the 100-yard plateau vs. OSU with 108 yards on his dozen catches.

"He's their play-maker," Plummer



JEFF BREHM

POUNDING PERSBY — Ohio State linebacker Na'il Diggs was a terror all afternoon in the Buckeyes' 45-15 victory over Minnesota. He registered three sacks on Gopher quarterback Andy Persby, including the vicious lick shown here.

said. "He's the guy they think can take over and be a feature guy in their offense like (graduated) Tutu Atwell."

• The Buckeye defenders figured to rattle Persby, a sophomore who relies on a strong right arm, but came away rather impressed with the youngster.

"Whenever you face a young quarterback, you want to get in there and take him out of his game early and try to get in his mind a little bit with some pressure," Rudzinski said. "It's a little disappointing we didn't do that, but I give credit to their offensive line, and he hung around in the pocket and picked away at us. He's going to be a great quarterback in the Big Ten."

Added Diggs, "I would have never thought they'd pass so well, especially being a three-step team. I guess I have to give them some credit for that."

On the other side, Persby also left the field with a growing appreciation of his opponent. He commented earlier in the week that he thought Minnesota would be more successful offensively against Ohio State than the Gophers fared the previous game vs. Penn State. He retracted that statement moments after losing to No. 1 OSU.

"They probably are the No. 1 secondary in the nation," he said of the Buckeyes. "I thought Penn State last week was really good, but Ohio State's safeties and corners are awesome."

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Cooper 'Embarrassed' By Blocked Punt

Throughout the football season, BSB is publishing excerpts of Ohio State head coach John Cooper's postgame press conferences. Here is what Cooper had to say following the win over Minnesota.

COOPER: "Obviously we're very happy to win the football game 45-15. I told you last week that Minnesota was a scrappy defensive football team. I thought they played real hard, I thought they played a good game plan, they were extremely well-coached."

"I think we can play a little better defensively than we played. Maybe I need to give them a little more credit with the way they throw the football. I told Coach (Glen) Mason after the game I thought his freshman quarterback really showed a lot of poise, and really played well against us."

"We missed two or three interceptions that I thought we should have gotten. They converted some third-down plays and kept the ball for longer periods of time than we would have liked. We had too many penalties in the ball game, and the most disappointing thing by far in the ball game — I think it's the most disappointing thing that's happened to us all year long — is getting a punt blocked. It's inexcusable for the No. 1 football team in the country to have a punt blocked against them. That's something we work on every day in practice, and I guarantee you it's something we'll work on this week."

"I don't care if you make some subs or you've got some other people in the ball game — it's embarrassing. Probably we need to work on it a little bit harder than we have. Hopefully it won't happen again."

"I think we came out of the ball game in good shape injurywise. I don't know of anybody who had a serious injury, although we got quite a few kids banged up. We need to get those guys healthy and regroup and get ready for Northwestern next week."

Q: You came out with four wide receivers right off the bat. What was the message there?

COOPER: "Well, the message was we want to throw the ball down the field. You look at all the tapes of the other teams against Minnesota ... Purdue used that a lot. We've got four wide receivers and everybody's wondering why we don't get all four of them in the game at one time and have everybody run verticals and get the ball up the field. You might as well put your best people in the ball game."

"I think we caught them a little off-guard there, although they made some adjustments real quickly and got in the nickel package and slowed it down a little bit. That's something that you'll see us use if you've got to

throw the ball to your wide receivers down the field."

Q: Can you assess how you did today on punt returns?

COOPER: "Their punter, I thought, did a real good job. We worked real hard on the return game and, of course, put Gary Berry on the return this week. Certainly we haven't been pleased with the production we've gotten out of the return game. Ken-Yon (Rambo) was nicked a little bit during the week and Gary can catch those punts, so we put him back there."

"I thought he did a good job on one of them, maybe he should have caught one or two more. We let the ball bounce, and sometimes that gives them yardage against you. That's an area we'll continue to work on. One time we went after the punter and roughed the kicker, and I don't like to see us do that."

"Give them credit. I thought their kicking game was pretty sound."

Q: What did you think of Na'il Diggs today?

COOPER: "Na'il is really playing good football for us. We've got him for three sacks for 14 yards, and I don't know how many tackles he made, but he's flying around and making things happen. He's having a good year for us."

Q: Coming out with the four wides, was that a scripted situation?

COOPER: "It wasn't a scripted situation, it's some-



JEFF BIRCH

WELCOME BACK, GLEN — Ohio State's John Cooper (right) chats with former Buckeye player and assistant coach Glen Mason before the Buckeyes met the Gophers Oct. 17 at Ohio Stadium. It was a bad homecoming for Mason's team, 45-15 losers.

player, he's working hard, he does what he's told to do, he takes coaching, and he's a very valuable part of our team."

Q: Did you say anything to the defense at half-time?

COOPER: "I thought we made some good adjustments at half-time. Sure, we said something to them, but I think it was more of us looking at what they were doing than anything else. We were trying to play a little more Cover-2 to take their quick passing game away."

"When you put those corners out on an island like we do and other people do and don't get to the quarterback, it's hard. It's hard because you're not playing the ball, you're playing the man. If the ball is thrown over your shoulder on what we call a fade route, it's hard to make a play on that pass."

Q: How would you rate your overall performance?

COOPER: "It's hard to do right now. Obviously we came out with a good, solid victory. I don't know whether it was an A or a B or a C or what. I'd be able to grade it a lot more after I see the film. That's when we can criticize things and make corrections."

Q: They've been doing well against the run. Why were you able to run it on them, and did you soften them up with the passing?

COOPER: "That's probably part of it. We spread them out, and anytime you spread them out like that and throw the football, it creates some vertical seams in their defense. I think we challenged our offensive team a little bit in practice to block a little bit better. We weren't very happy with the rushing yardage we got in last week's ball game. And I thought both of our running backs, both Michael (Wiley) and Joe, did a good job of running and breaking tackles."

"No. 22 (strong safety Tyrone Carter) for them, as I mentioned during the week, is a good football player. He was making tackle after tackle, and from his position he's got to make that play and he's got a lot of responsibility. So we went with a few more play-action passes and ran a few draw plays and got some

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good yardage."

Q: Did you get an explanation on some of the holding calls, especially from some of your interior guys?

COOPER: "Guys never hold. You ought to see us go up to the linemen after they call it. I think they called that on you. 'Coach, I wasn't holding.' I don't know."

"I told the officials at one point in the game that it's amazing that we hold and other teams don't. I'm not being critical. Anytime we win, I'm happy. But I'm not happy with penalties."

Q: You mentioned the defense not playing so well. What concerns do you have for the way the defense played?

COOPER: "I thought they had more yardage throwing than they normally do. They probably had a better third-down conversion than what we've usu-

ally allowed this year. Obviously I wasn't very happy with them catching as many passes as they did."

"They made a nice throw and a nice catch on the touchdown there that Antoine (Winfield) gave up, but I wasn't very happy with that."

Q: Are you worried at all about (Dan) Stultz with some inconsistency there with the field-goal kicking?

COOPER: "I'm worried a lot about that. Absolutely. When you put the ball down at that end of the field in good field position and with as much as we work on field-goal kicking, you ought to make them."

Q: Is there some comfort, though, in the fact that no one seems to be extremely satisfied with this win?

COOPER: "Well, I like that. I don't want us to be satisfied."

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OSU offensive tackle Tyson Walter on how the offense faltered on several scoring chances: "For the most part, we started in our own territory and we had some long drives. We just stalled out at their 20 a few times. That happens. We just have to take it one play at a time. We had some silly mistakes go against us, and we can't afford those."

OSU offensive guard Rob Murphy on the offensive line's motivation for the Minnesota game: "You guys (the media) fired us up this week. Keep on writing bad stuff about the offensive line, and we'll come out and keep doing what we're doing."

Minnesota coach Glen Mason credited his team's resolve for not giving up when it fell behind 31-3: "We hung in there and kept battling. The final score was a little more lopsided than it could have been."

OSU offensive coordinator Mike Jacobs on some of the game plan against the Gophers: "The way we've been passing the ball, they were probably more conscious of the passing game. They've had some problems against the pass, so we felt the draw would work for us."

OSU split end David Boston shared the rationale on his team's early four-receiver sets: "We tried to come out and do some four-receiver sets and try and get it so they had a linebacker covering one of our receivers. We just wanted to go out there and make something happen. The first time we lined up in it I saw the linebackers talking and talking and they didn't know where to go. That's what we wanted."

OSU fullback Matt Keller on why the Buckeyes went with the four-receiver set: "It came down to our game plan. We figured why not spread them out and get the passing game going. We were successful last year on some vertical routes, and we just thought the quads would work. It did for the most part."

OSU quarterback Joe Germaine also illustrated why the four-receiver scheme could be effective: "We like to think that with them having to



JEFF BREHM

BERRY ON THE RETURN — OSU safety Gary Berry handled punt return duties for the first time this year. Here, he sidesteps Minnesota's Trevis Graham (13) and Luke Braaten (52).

sometimes walk out a linebacker on one of our receivers, we could take advantage of that. We did a pretty good job with the four wide receiver set."

OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski on what happened when he hit Minnesota quarterback Billy Cockerham as he threw, leading to Central McClellon's interception for a touchdown: "We lined up and tried to bluff around and make them think I have the tight end. I got through clean on that play, and when that happens, you've got to make something happen. Luckily the ball popped up in the air and Central was able to make a play."

OSU cornerback Ahmed Plummer credited McClellon for his first career touchdown: "I can't forget Central's interception. That lifted me up. He's worked so hard, and to get an interception and to score with it, he deserves congratulations."

OSU safety Gary Berry on the defense's viewpoint in giving up a late first-half touchdown to the Gophers: "I was upset. Our team as a whole gets

upset when anybody scores on us. That's just a simple reaction for our defense. Them scoring was a little bit disappointing."

Walter shared what he said to kicker Dan Stultz after he missed a 37-yard field goal: "I was just telling Dan to keep his head up and do the best he can. He was just a little frustrated. He's been real positive about the whole thing, and he's been working hard at it. That's all we can ask him to do."

Mason said he believed his defense could have been stronger after allowing OSU a season-high 586 yards: "I was a little bit disappointed in our defense today. We knew we would have our hands full with all the talented guys they have, and they play a good scheme, but I thought we played tentative."

Minnesota safety Keith Dimmy, a Columbus Eastmoor graduate, on playing in his hometown: "It was exciting coming back and knowing a lot of my family and friends would be here and also to play against the No. 1 team in the country. It was a great experience. They're a great team and they showed it today."

Minnesota quarterback Andy Persby was making just his second career start, but he believed he handled it well: "I wasn't too nervous. This is a great place to play with 93,000, a great field and a great atmosphere. I played all right. There were a couple plays, like the pick at the end, I'd like to have back."

Persby admits he baited OSU's eager secondary with play fakes, including one on his 35-yard touchdown pass to Antoine Henderson: "Their corners are so aggressive. We just tried to fake them and hit them deep."

Plummer on Minnesota's passing attack, which struck for 225 yards against the Buckeyes: "I think they were trying to mix it up. They tried to catch us coming up on the short ones and then throw deep. Then they tried to catch us waiting back on the deep one and throw short. They had a good offensive plan. But our coaches were able to get us in position to make plays."

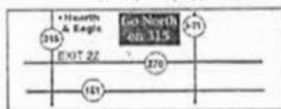
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First Quarter

OSU — Boston, 6 pass from Germaine (Stultz kick) 6:46; 9 plays, 48 yards, 3:06

MINN — Bailey, 24 field goal 3:48; 11 plays, 71 yards, 2:58

OSU — Keller, 8 run (Stultz kick) 0:43; 8 plays, 77 yards, 3:05

Second Quarter

OSU — Boston, 53 pass from Germaine (Stultz kick) 11:35; 4 plays, 80 yards, 1:10

OSU — Montgomery, 12 run (Stultz kick) 6:57; 9 plays, 70 yards, 3:30

OSU — Stultz, 19 field goal 4:35; 6 plays, 47 yards, 1:36

MINN — Henderson, 35 pass from Persby (Bailey kick) 2:27; 7 plays, 73 yards, 2:08

MINN — Bailey, 32 field goal 0:41; 8 plays, 41 yards, 1:11

Third Quarter

OSU — Wiley, 1 run (Stultz kick) 8:31; 8 plays, 52 yards, 2:34

Fourth Quarter

MINN — Safety, Bartholomew punt blocked out of end zone 8:21

OSU — McClellion, 60 interception return (Stultz kick) 7:57

Att. — 93,183

Weather — Sunny, 70 degrees. Wind 5-10 mph from S

Team Statistics

	MINN	OSU
First Downs	16	26
Rushing	5	12
Passing	9	14
Penalty	2	0
Rushes-Yards	27-46	40-236
Passing Yards	225	350
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	49-22-2	43-28-2
Offensive Plays	76	83
Total Net Yards	271	586
Third Down Efficiency	5-20	8-17
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-3	1-1
Punts	8-40.0	4-26.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties	3-21	7-74
Time of Possession	28:41	31:19

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — MINN: Cockerham 6-22; Evans 4-21; Hamner 10-20; Bruce 3-2; Persby 4-19; OSU: Wiley 12-119; Montgomery 5-67; Wells 5-20; Keller 5-17; Germaine 6-13; Combs 4-3; Martin 2-2; Garcia 1-5.

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — MINN: Persby 42-19-1-213-1; Cockerham 7-3-1-12-0. OSU: Germaine 39-27-2-339-2; Garcia 4-10-1-10.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — MINN: Levenson 12-108; Henderson 4-54; Johnson 3-43; Hamner 1-9; Evans 1-9; Bruce 1-2. OSU: Boston 10-191; Miller 5-43; Wiley 4-27; Keller 3-29; Germany 2-19; Rambo 2-16; Griffin 1-14; Wells 1-11.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — MINN: Rindels 8-46.0-58. OSU: Bartholomew 3-34.7-40; Team 1-0.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — MINN: Smith 1-7; T.Carter 1-5; Richard 1-2; Michaels 1-2; Williams 1-1.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — MINN: Henderson 3-63; T.Carter 2-37; Bruce 1-22. OSU: Wiley 2-57.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) — MINN: None. OSU: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — MINN: Scruggs 1-0; Middlebrooks 1-0. OSU: McClellion 1-60; Plummer 1-0.

SACKS — MINN: Smith 1-7; T.Carter 1-5; Michaels 1-2. OSU: Diggs 3-14; Johnson 1-5.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — MINN: Smith 1-7; T.Carter 1-5; Richard 1-2; Michaels 1-2; Williams 1-1. OSU: Diggs 3-14; Johnson 1-5; Plummer 1-2; Katzenmoyer 1-2; Moore 1-2.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.) — MINN: T.Carter 12-6-18; Williams 8-2-10; Dimmy 6-3-9; Scruggs 7-1-8; Middlebrooks 5-1-6; Poole 2-4-6; Mezera 4-1-5; Graham 4-1-5; Hoffman 3-1-4; Braaten 3-1-4; Smith 3-0-3; Harden 1-2-3; Richard 1-2-3; Hall 2-0-2; D.Jones 2-0-2; Rackley 1-0-1; Anderle 1-0-1; Michaels 1-0-1; Schlecht 1-0-1; Griffin 1-0-1; Wilkinson 0-1-1. OSU: Plummer 8-1-9; Diggs 8-0-8; Winfield 7-0-7; Katzenmoyer 6-1-7; Moore 4-2-6; Johnson 3-2-5; Berry 4-0-4; Cheatwood 1-2-3; Pickett 2-0-2; McClellion 1-1-2; Cooper 1-1-2; Simpson 1-1-2; Cotton 1-1-2; Clements 1-0-1; Homa 1-0-1; Queen 1-0-1; Bellisari 1-0-1; Mitchell 1-0-1; Wells 1-0-1; Wayne 0-1-1; Brown 0-1-1; Ross 0-1-1; Rudzinski 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — MINNESOTA: Starters: Defense, Haayer, Hamilton, Roth, Hau, Persby, Hamner, Henderson, Defense, Schlecht, Anderle, Poole, Smith, Williams, Harden, Graham, Middlebrooks, Scruggs, T.Carter, Dimmy. Reserves: Keller, Hutton, Cockerham, Henry, Levenson, Rackley, Bailey, D.Jones, Bruce, Prigge, Griffin, Grate, Hagman, Rindels, Evans, Hall, Hoffman, Bean, Osei, Braaten, Richard, Wilkinson, E.Jones, Wasurick, Dettman, Duerr, Russ, Rawlings, Michaels, Mezera. OHIO STATE: Starters: Defense, Bailey, Pickett, Brown, Johnson, Diggs, Katzenmoyer, Rudzinski, Winfield, Berry, Moore, Plummer. Offense, Boston, Germany, Walter, R.Murphy, K.Murphy, Gilbert, Burris, Germaine, Wiley, Miller, Rambo. Reserves: Mitchell, Bellisari, Cooper, Moherman, Garcia, King, Clements, McClellion, Cacchio, C.Sanders, Keller, Wells, Ott, Montgomery, Simpson, Ross, Nickey, Martin, Bartholomew, Griffin, Combs, Kirk, Stultz, LaVar, Cheatwood, Cotton, Hopkins, Gurr, Bentley, Fleming, Elford, Warnke, Wisniewski, Lumpkin, Payne, Houser, Wayne, Wilson, Homa, Eisenhard, Queen.

Season Statistics

1998 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent (AP Rank*)	W/L	Score	Crowd
Sept. 5	(1) at West Virginia (11)	W	34-17	68,409
Sept. 12	(1) TOLEDO	W	49-0	93,149
Sept. 19	(1) MISSOURI (21)	W	35-14	93,269
Oct. 3	(1) PENN STATE (7)	W	28-9	93,479
Oct. 10	(1) at Illinois	W	41-0	46,390
Oct. 17	(1) MINNESOTA	W	45-15	93,183
Oct. 24	at Northwestern			
Oct. 31	at Indiana			
Nov. 7	MICHIGAN STATE			
Nov. 14	at Iowa			
Nov. 21	MICHIGAN			

*Number in parentheses before opponent's name is OSU's game day AP ranking; number after opponent's name is opponent's game day AP ranking.

Team Statistics	OSU	Opp
First Downs	147	77
Rushing	73	34
Passing	72	36
Penalty	2	7
Avg. Per Game/Rush	222.2	90.5
Avg. Per Game/Pass	281.5	137.2
Total Offense	3022	1366
Total Plays	405	389
Average Per Game	503.7	227.7
Average Per Play	6.5	3.5
Penalties-Yards	47-429	23-187
Fumbles-Lost	16-4	7-4
3rd Down Efficiency	47-98	19-63
Percentage	48.3	30.2
4th Down Efficiency	5-6	4-12
Percentage	83.3	33.3
Sacks	12-63	15-85
Time of Possession Avg.	31:36	28:24

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	62	43	45	232	387	5.8
Opponents	6	34	6	9	55	0.9

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	4	373,060	93,270
Away	2	114,799	57,400
Total	6	487,879	81,313

Individual Statistics	Att.	Net.	Avg.	TD	Long
Michael Wiley	103	749	7.3	6	76
Joe Montgomery	52	326	6.3	4	30
Jonathan Wells	28	128	4.6	2	14
Matt Keller	17	62	3.6	1	12
Derek Combs	22	60	2.7	0	12
Dee Miller	2	14	7.0	0	10
Jerman Jackson	2	8	4.0	0	10
Jamar Martin	5	6	1.2	0	4
Jerry Westbrooks	1	3	3.0	0	3
Brent Bartholomew	1	-4	-4.0	0	0
Joe Germaine	20	-13	-0.6	0	22
Mark Garcia	5	-19	-3.8	0	7
OSU Totals	264	1468	5.0	14	76
OPP Totals	184	543	3.0	2	34

Receiving	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
David Boston	38	620	16.3	5	53
Dee Miller	29	463	16.0	2	42
Michael Wiley	13	68	5.2	1	20
Reggie Germany	11	176	16.0	3	47
John Lumpkin	8	123	15.4	1	28
Matt Keller	5	45	9.0	0	15
Jamar Martin	4	52	13.0	0	17
Ken-Yon Rambo	3	55	18.3	0	39
Jimmy Redmond	2	25	12.5	0	15
Dan Warnke	2	21	10.5	0	17
Kevin Griffin	1	14	14.0	0	14
Jonathan Wells	1	11	11.0	0	11
Jerry Westbrooks	1	7	7.0	0	7
Joe Montgomery	1	5	5.0	0	5
Steve Wisniewski	1	3	3.0	0	3
Derek Combs	1	1	1.0	0	1
OSU Totals	121	1689	14.0	12	53
OPP Totals	98	823	8.4	3	49

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPP	EPR	FG	PTS
Den Stultz	0	29-29	—	—	7-14	50
Michael Wiley	7	—	—	—	—	42
David Boston	5	—	—	1	—	32
Joe Montgomery	4	—	—	—	—	24

Player	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	INT	TD	Rating
Joe Germaine	110	175	.629	1521	3	11	153.2
Mark Garcia	8	19	.421	144	0	1	123.1
Steve Bellisari	3	5	.600	24	0	0	100.3
Austin Moherman	0	1	.000	0	0	0	0.0
Jonathan Wells	0	1	.000	0	0	0	0.0
OSU Totals	121	201	.602	1689	3	12	147.5
OPP Totals	98	205	.478	823	9	3	77.6

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Dan Stultz	2-2	3-5	2-5	0-2	7-14
OSU Totals	2-2	3-5	2-5	0-2	7-14
OPP Totals	1-1	1-2	2-2	0-0	4-5

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk.	Long
Brent Bartholomew	27	1139	42.2	1	56
Team	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	28	1139	40.7	1	56
OPP Totals	82	2239	43.1	2	68

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ahmed Plummer	3	0	0.0	0	0
Central McClellion	1	60	60.0	1	60
Na'il Diggs	1	18	18.0	0	18
Percy King	1	3	3.0	0	3
Tim Cheatwood	1	0	0.0	0	0
David Mitchell	1	0	0.0	0	0
Damon Moore	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	9	81	9.0	1	60
OPP Totals	3	0	0.0	0	0

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ken-Yon Rambo	19	128	6.7	0	24
David Boston	8	77	9.6	0	37
Gary Berry	8	52	6.5	0	13
Percy King	1	8	8.0	0	0
Joe Cooper	0	0	0.0	1	0
OSU Totals	36	265	7.4	1	37
OPP Totals	17	123	7.2	0	21

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Michael Wiley	4	105	26.3	0	34
Ken-Yon Rambo	4	90	22.5	0	26
Jonathan Wells	3	63	21.0	0	23
Reggie Germany	1	14	14.0	0	14
OSU Totals	12	272	22.7	0	34
OPP Totals	32	534	16.7	0	29

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TP/L	Yds.	Sacks
Damon Moore	26	11	37	9-18	1-1	1-1
Andy Katzenmoyer	31	5	36	4-6	—	—
Antoine Winfield	31	5	36	3-15	1-6	—
Na'il Diggs	28	7	35	8-28	3-14	—
Jerry Rudzinski	14	10	24	4-27	2-22	—
Ahmed Plummer	22	1	23	3-10	—	—
Brent Johnson	12	10	22	3-11	2-6	—
Gary Berry	16	5	21	2-14	1-10	—
Joe Cooper	13	7	20	1-3	—	—
Central McClellion	7	9	16	—	—	—
Mike Collins	7	4	11	1-3	1-3	—
Tim Cheatwood	5	6	11	1-3	—	—
Ryan Pickett	7	3	10	1-6	—	—
Joe Brown	5	5	10	2-7	—	—
Percy King	6	3	9	—	—	—
David Mitchell	6	3	9	—	—	—
Steve Bellisari	7	1	8	—	—	—
James Cotton	6	2	8	3-11	1-7	—
Randy Homa	5	2	7	3-4	—	—
Derek Ross	5	2	7	—	—	—
Clinton Wayne	3	4	7	—	—	—
Kate Clements	5	1	6	—	—	—

Fumbles Forced
1 — Joe Cooper, Jerry Rudzinski, James Cotton.

Fumbles Recovered
1 — Tim Cheatwood, Ahmed Plummer, Jerry Rudzinski, Na'il Diggs.

Blocked Kicks
1 — Steve Bellisari, Percy King.



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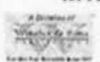
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THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

OSU Definitely Getting Everybody's Best Shot

I know that they lost by scores of 41-0 and 45-15, but I think Illinois and Minnesota played about as well as they could play against Ohio State in their recent games.

The talent gap between the Buckeyes and teams like the Illini and Gophers is so huge that even when clubs like OSU's latest two victims turn in a strong effort, they are still looking at a loss of 30 points or more.

The Buckeyes have the great fortune of having a really strong team in a year when the Big Ten — a conference that I usually feel doesn't get its due — is pretty weak. Oh, upsets are always possible. But the Buckeyes have so many weapons on both sides of the ball that the chance of a majority of their weapons having a bad day on the same Saturday are pretty slim. And even if a bundle of players had a bad day, how many teams are there in the Big Ten that have the weapons of their own to take advantage?

With the various penalties, fumbles and now a blocked punt that the Buckeyes have suffered, and with the periodic inability to grind out needed short yardage, it's true that the Buckeyes have not played as crisply as one might expect a championship team to play.

The Buckeyes are undefeated, however, ranked No. 1 in the nation, and in six games have yet to have a team get closer than 17 points. More important, the remaining opponents have still not shown they are ready to contend with the Buckeyes, although the sloppy track at the Michigan-Northwestern game on Oct. 17 proved that inclement weather might be an equalizer against Ohio State.

No, I haven't made my reservations to Tempe yet. And I doubt I will unless proved necessary at the end of the regular season. But you have to like the Buckeyes' chances the rest of the way.

Bring on Northwestern.

Fullback Of The Present

One of the freshmen who has really caught the fancy of Buckeye fans is big full-

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

back Jamar Martin. The Canton, Ohio, native has worked his way into the rotation faster than many might have predicted.

But let's not forget to give incumbent Matt Keller his due. People tend to write him off as a fullback trapped in a tailback's body. But if you go by listed heights and weights (which admittedly can be questionable), he is of comparable size to Martin. The Minnesota game-day two-deeps had Keller at 6-0, 238 pounds and Martin at 6-1, 235.

Besides, the bottom line is that Keller is doing the job. Run the video on some of Ohio State's big running plays against Minnesota and see how many of those plays started with a key block from Keller. And Keller even got to show off some of the moves from his tailback days on his 8-yard touchdown run in the first quarter.

Martin will have his time in the OSU fullback spotlight, but right now let's enjoy Keller, who's a fine model for Martin to emulate.

The Other Side Of Boston

David Boston showed, once again, what an outstanding and athletic receiver he is with his 10-catch, 191-yard performance against the Gophers. Like all the great Ohio State receivers of recent years, Boston is also willing to throw a block downfield. And at 6-3, 215 pounds, he can be an effective force moving opposing players.

I can remember when that was good size for a tight end. Starters at tight end in the Buckeye-Gopher game were John Lumpkin at 6-8, 260 and Alex Hass for Minnesota at 6-5, 270.

More Ohio State Speed

In this space last issue, I mentioned the emphasis the Buckeye staff puts on recruiting speed. Interestingly, The Sporting News recently did a cover story on the importance

of speed in all sports these days.

In the section on speed in football, TSN listed the players they determined to be the fastest in the NFL. With all the burners that John Cooper and company have brought to Columbus and then sent to the pros of late, I figured some ex-Buckeye had to be on the list and, sure enough, Joey Galloway checked in tied for sixth at 4.23 in the 40. The player Galloway was tied with was none other than Deion Sanders.

Kevin Mathis, a cornerback for the Cowboys, tops the list at 4.19, followed by Rocket Ismail of the Carolina Panthers at 4.20.

TSN is quick to point out that recording 40 times is an inexact science, noting that Galloway's 4.23 was from a workout at Ohio State in 1995 and Sanders' most recent "official" time was clocked in 1989.

The article also lists former Buckeye "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson as one of the defensive tackles in the NFL who parlayed his speed into a big-money contract (\$21.4 million) over this past off-season.

"Mamas, have your sons grow up large and fast," the article suggests.

Rating The Tackle Tandems

In an article on the 1973 OSU football team that appeared in our last issue, noted Buckeye historian Jack Park suggested that John Hicks and Kurt Schumacher, who anchored the Buckeye offensive line that season, may have been the best pair of tackles OSU has ever had.

When reading that, I quickly thought of the tandem of Korey Stringer and Orlando Pace — both now in the pros — from a couple of seasons back. Someone else suggested Dave Foley and Rufus Mayes from the 1968 national championship team. What do some of you letter writers think?

Seeing as some of you tend to not write when the team is doing well (are we all in agreement that the Buckeyes have played well so far?), I also solicit your opinions on one of the questions I seem to be asked the most lately: "Is Andy Katzenmoyer having a good season?"

Write us at P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212, fax us at (614) 486-3650, or send your e-mail to us at bsb@buckeyesports.com.

Mail Service Blues

I know you've all heard this refrain from us before, but postal service seems to have really taken a downturn with the past two issues. Once again, I strongly urge those of you having trouble getting your paper in a timely fashion to upgrade to first-class mail in an envelope. We can upgrade your existing subscription for \$1 per remaining issue.

As the Buckeyes get closer and closer to their intended destination of Tempe, getting your paper in a timely fashion will become more and more critical. For more information on a first-class upgrade, give us a call at (614) 486-2202.

Looking Ahead

In an interesting quirk of the schedule, Ohio State will quickly see the two conference teams it hasn't played the past two seasons.

The Buckeyes open the 1999 Big Ten season at home against Wisconsin Oct. 2 and then get their first look at a Joe Tiller-led Purdue team in Columbus on Oct. 9. The Buckeyes do not play Indiana or Northwestern next season.

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