

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

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# Sweet Redemption!

## Buckeyes Down Michigan 31-16

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Redemption, vindication, call it whatever you want: Ohio State achieved it by defeating rival Michigan 31-16 in The Game Nov. 21 at Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes claimed their 28th Big Ten championship — they actually will share the title with Michigan and Wisconsin — by virtue of the win. OSU jumped on Michigan for a quick 14-0 lead, capitalizing on several Michigan miscues and stuffing the Wolverines' ground attack.

It was how a team once ranked No. 1 nationally should play in a rivalry game.

"I felt like we were going to win the game all week," OSU coach John Cooper said afterward. "I had great confidence in our football team, I thought our assistant coaches did a great job of preparing the football team, and I was probably as relaxed around here this week as I've been in a long, long time — certainly the most relaxed I've been before the Michigan game."

"I think the approach we took this week really paid off."

Unlike previous years, Ohio State kept a muzzle on its players prior to this game. Then, as the week wore on, everything built toward stopping Michigan, and the Buckeyes did at nearly every turn.

"I could tell before we even took the field how the players felt, and on the field I could tell we weren't going to let up," said linebacker Na'il Diggs.

OSU quarterback and captain Joe Germaine saved one of his best performances for his final home game, tossing for 330 yards and three touchdowns.

"It definitely is a great feeling," he said, savoring the win. "It's the first time I've experienced it. This is what it's all about. This is why you come to Ohio State and Michigan, to be able to come to these kind of games. This is what it's all about. It teaches you things, not only for football but for life."

This result was redemption on at least three fronts for the Buckeyes:

- The team itself won The Game just two weeks after a crushing defeat at the hands of Michigan State on that same Ohio Stadium field. That defeat essentially knocked the top-ranked Buckeyes out of the hunt for the Fiesta Bowl and their first national championship since 1968.

- The win was also big for Cooper, whose 10 previous OSU teams had mustered just a 1-8-1 record in the season's most important game.

- And it served as sweet revenge for split end David Boston, who was embarrassed during and after last season's 20-14 defeat at the hands of the eventual national champions. This time around it was Boston who had the last laugh, if not the last taunt.

### The Thrill Of Victory

In recent years, Ohio State had lost to Michigan just about every conceivable way.

It didn't matter if it was home or away, it didn't matter if the



JEFF BRECH

**BOSTON CONTROLS THE WEATHERS** — David Boston, frustrated during last year's loss to Michigan, turned out to be the star of Ohio State's 31-16 victory over the Blue Nov. 21. Here he drags UM's Andre Weathers along on a 43-yard touchdown.

Buckeyes were favored or underdogs, it didn't matter what was at stake: Ohio State, more times than not, found a way to lose to the Wolverines.

Just since 1993, Michigan had cost Ohio State two Big Ten championships, three Rose Bowl berths and three cracks at the national championship. This time, though, OSU denied Michigan

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## OSU Waits For Word On Bowl

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

You won't find many Ohio State coaches, players or fans looking for something to quibble about when the Buckeyes crush rival Michigan on a sunny November Saturday in the Horseshoe.

But if only Penn State had beaten Wisconsin ...

The Badgers cruised to an easy 24-3 win over Penn State to join OSU and Michigan as Big Ten co-champions. Due to the conference's tiebreaking procedures, Wisconsin (10-1, 7-1) earned the Rose Bowl berth.

Since OSU (10-1, 7-1) and the Badgers did not play this year and they finished with identical records, UW got the nod because the Buckeyes had been to Pasadena more recently than the Badgers. OSU played in and won the Rose Bowl after the 1996 season while UW played in the Rose Bowl following the 1993 campaign.

When asked whether a Wisconsin win would cloud his opinion of this particular football Saturday, OSU coach John Cooper replied, "Not at all."

"Obviously we'd love to have gone to the

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## This Is Last Weekly Issue Of BSB

This is the last weekly issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin planned for the 1998 football season.

BSB will return with the December issue, which will contain a full bowl preview. That issue will be mailed on Monday, Dec. 14.

After that issue, BSB will return with the first of 10 weekly issues for basketball season. The first of those issues will be mailed after OSU's bowl game.

COVER STORY: SWEET REDEMPTION

# Buckeyes Celebrate Win Over Michigan

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the Rose Bowl berth.

And, instead, on this sunny Saturday in Columbus, it was the Buckeyes who made all the right plays and capitalized on nearly every Michigan mistake.

"I really can't put into words how I feel right now, but I'm going to enjoy this for a long time," said OSU safety Damon Moore. "(Michigan safety) Marcus (Ray) and them beat us three years, but this is the one that's really going to mean something."

"I wouldn't say this makes up for the three losses, but it's going to do a lot to help ease the pain."

Ohio State snapped a three-game losing streak against Michigan, dating to a 22-6 win at Ohio Stadium in 1994. That win was OSU's only home win in the series dating to 1984.

"The fact we went out and beat Michigan is just a big relief for all of us," said fullback Matt Keller.

OSU guard Rob Murphy said this win was a long time in the making.

"It feels so good," he said. "We've worked so hard. This is our keynote game every year. I've been here four years, and we've lost three of them. This definitely washes away everything that happened in the past."

Tired of the annual embarrassments at the hands of their bitter rival, the Buckeyes took matters into their own hands.

"It was personal," revealed OSU linebacker and captain Jerry Rudzinski. "This is a game we think about all year. It takes a yearlong commitment to beat a premier

team like Michigan. It was sweet to get them down, and I felt we beat them soundly.

"This is the greatest moment I've had as a Buckeye."

Ohio State teams can reach double digits in wins — as the 10-1 Buckeyes just did for the fourth year in a row and fifth time in six years — but if they do not include one win over Michigan, many feel the season was a loss.

"I can remember the last two years where we lost, especially my freshman year (1996)," said OSU tailback Michael Wiley, who rushed for 120 yards including a 53-yard touchdown that set the tone in the first three minutes. "Everybody thought we were big losers. We were 11-1 and finished No. 2 in the polls, but people thought we were losers."

Questions arose as to why the Buckeyes could not beat their rival. Who was to blame? What would it take to win The Game?

"We have to answer a lot of questions about what's wrong," Rudzinski said. "We need to turn the thing around. Hopefully over the next several years we'll get the ball rolling and they'll be the ones that have to answer those questions."

"When the media ask you questions like 'What's wrong with this team?' it's not a lot of fun."

Moore hopes the winning feeling carries over to future renditions of the Buckeyes.

"I told the younger guys, 'Remember this feeling, remember this taste and keep it in your mouth,'" he said.

And as one Michigan player pointed out, the past really isn't a factor once the ball is

kicked off.

"The past doesn't matter," UM linebacker Sam Sward said. "They made the plays today. That's all that matters."

## Coop Stops Skid

Counting a win his Arizona State team had over Michigan in the 1987 Rose Bowl, Cooper is now 3-8-1 against Michigan.

The coach, however, doesn't feel he is totally at fault for the previous losses or should get full credit for this win. It is a team effort, he reminded reporters.

"See, I look at this differently than what you guys do," Cooper said afterward. "I don't feel like I've lost a game and I'm not going to take credit for winning this game today."

"It was our football team that lost (in the past) and our football team that won."

But Cooper, who notched his third Big Ten title, deserves some praise for signing off on the most aggressive game plan a Buckeye team has probably ever taken into a Michigan game.

Sure, OSU threw a scant 28 passes. But many of them were of the vertical variety. With the offensive line providing ample protection, Germaine and his receivers stretched the UM defense.

"I don't think you saw us playing tight or playing not to lose," Cooper said. "We played to win. And that's why we threw the ball down the field so many times, in particular on third-down situations. It's just a great feeling."

While Cooper shied away from the hero's role in the postgame press conference, his players put him on the highest pedestal.

"Hopefully this will take some of the pressure off Coach Cooper," Rudzinski said. "He has taken a lot of heat for his record against Michigan, but he's not the one out on the field. He puts together a great game plan and gets us mentally ready to go out there."

"Once again, he got us ready to play. We had a great week of practice and that proved to be the difference. This team was as focused as I've seen since I've been here. The coaches did not have to raise their voices this week."

"He gets a bad rap for the Michigan game. It was sweet to go out and win for him. It meant a lot to go out and have a good game for our leader and the man we all look up to."

Keller chimed in, "Most people don't know what kind of man he is or what kind of coach he is. He's just a great coach."

## From Goat To Hero

Boston became the butt of the joke a year ago when he commented prior to the Michigan game that eventual Heisman Trophy winner Charles Woodson was not as good as some of the cornerbacks he faced every day in practice.

Woodson answered the challenge. Except for one long touchdown grab by Boston, he almost single-handedly lifted the Wolverines to victory with a key reception, an interception and a punt return for a touchdown.

Woodson belittled Boston in the postgame press conference, saying, "I was like a father out there, chastising my son for running his mouth to the wrong people."

The Heisman winner moved on to the NFL after last season, but another Boston nemesis, Ray, whose crushing hit landed Boston on the cover of Sports Illustrated, still lingered.

This time, though, it was Boston who lifted his team to victory. He caught 10 passes for a career-high 217 yards and two touchdowns.

"I watched the game from last year," Boston said, noting his motivation for this game. "I was a little upset when I was watching game films. I said some things before that game I shouldn't have said."

"There were comments after the game where one of their players was chastising me as a father. I didn't understand what that meant."

"I just went out there and showed I'm a human being who matures just like every other college player. I learned my lesson last year, and that's what happens."

After two years in this rivalry — and a pair of painful defeats — Boston understood finally what this rivalry and The Game were all about.

"I'm a junior," he said. "My first two years we lost to Michigan. I learned about the rivalry and I learned about what this means to everybody."

"I just wanted to go out there and play as hard as I could and leave all of my effort on the field. I worked real hard in the off-season for a game like this."

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COVER STORY: BOWL SITUATION

# Buckeyes Await Nod On Bowl

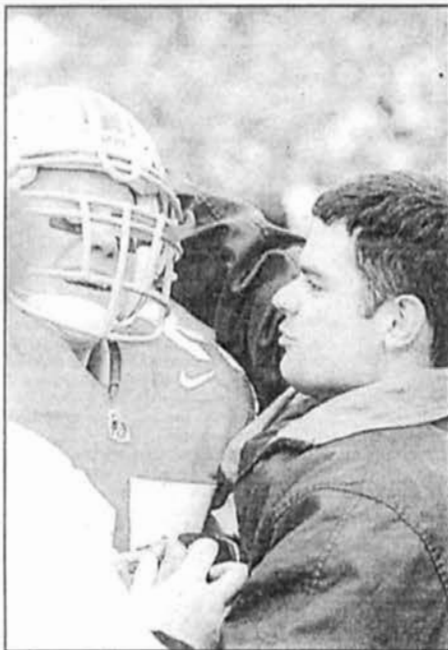
Continued From Page 1

Rose Bowl, guys, but who knows what's going to happen? There's a lot of football to be played. We're sitting here now 10-1 and we've got a chance to win another football game somewhere. We're going to go to some nice bowl game," he said.

Instead of making plans for Pasadena, Ohio State will not know its bowl destination until after the various conference championship games are played Dec. 5. One day later — after the Bowl Championship Series computes its rankings for the Fiesta Bowl berth — the Buckeyes will learn their fate.

As the nation's No. 1-ranked team for the season's first nine weeks, OSU had the inside track toward locking down a Fiesta Bowl berth.

Now, though, three unbeaten — UCLA, Tennessee and Kansas State — stand at the head of the class in the Fiesta Bowl hunt. Barring at least two major upsets in their remaining games, it appears OSU will have to settle for an at-large bid to either the Sugar Bowl or the Orange Bowl. Other schools vying for the two at-large spots available in the BCS bowls are Arizona (9-1), Notre Dame (9-1)



JEFF BREHM

**HAPPY MOMENT — OSU captain and linebacker Jerry Rudzinski fights back the tears as a fan congratulates him after the win over Michigan.**

and Texas A&M (10-1).

If that doesn't come through, OSU could be relegated to the Citrus Bowl for the

fourth time in seven years. "I feel like we'll play in one of the Bowl Championship Series games," said Cooper, whose 10-2 OSU team merited a Sugar Bowl invitation a year ago when Penn State dropped a season-ending game at Michigan State.

ABC will televise all four bowls in the BCS this season, and while color commentator Bob Griese is not intimately involved in selecting teams for those bowls, he thinks OSU has earned its spot.

"Even if they don't go to the Rose Bowl, Ohio State will be selected for one of the Bowl Championship Series bowls," Griese said as the final seconds ticked off in OSU's 31-16 win over the Wolverines.

The OSU players met with the media as the Penn State-Wisconsin game was only in its early stages. The Buckeyes dutifully answered questions based on both possible scenarios.

But even with the Rose Bowl out of reach, they believe they've done enough to snag a BCS bowl berth.

"I don't know if we will or not," said OSU guard Rob Murphy. "But I really think we should based on our performance today. Michigan is a damn good football team. I think we have to be considered in the top three or four teams in the

nation."

"All we can do is hope for the best," added OSU split end David Boston, who helped key the win with a pair of long touchdown catches. "You never know how all this will shake out."

For more on the politics surrounding the bowl selection process, see the story on page 10.

## Bounce Back Champs

OSU's decisive win over Michigan gave rise to questions after the game about what this team could have accomplished had it not stumbled at home against Michigan State two weeks earlier.

"No, I don't even think about that," Cooper said.

OSU quarterback Joe Germaine expanded on that theme.

"Obviously we were very disappointed," he said. "Our goal from the beginning of the season was to go to Tempe and the Fiesta Bowl. For us to be able to do that, a lot of things have to happen and it's not likely."

"But this is a great win. We're not hanging our heads at all. We put that behind us on the Sunday after the game."

"I hope that people realize the way we bounced back and the way we played against a very good football team like Michigan today."

OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski believes his team has made its case.

"A sign of a good team is coming back from adversity, and we did that today," he said.

"We started out highly touted this year and proved we are one of the best teams in the country. We lost a game and our dream was to go undefeated. That didn't happen."

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

# OSU Solves The Maize

## Air Game Spurs Buckeyes To 31-16 Defeat Of Wolves

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Unlike so many Ohio State-Michigan games down through the years, the team's Nov. 21 battle for Big Ten supremacy was fought mainly through the air and not on the ground.

Ohio State may have stumbled across a formula for success against its nemesis. The seventh-ranked Buckeyes wiped away years of heartache and misery at the hands of the "Team Up North" as they rolled to a 31-16 win over No. 11 Michigan before a season-high 94,339 at Ohio Stadium.

The long-awaited victory clinched Ohio State (10-1, 7-1) a share of the Big Ten championship with Michigan (8-3, 7-1) and Wisconsin (10-1, 7-1). But with Wisconsin defeating Penn State a few hours later to clinch the Rose Bowl berth, the Buckeyes will not know their bowl destination until sometime in early December.

Still, the Buckeyes were not concerned about that after beating their rival for just the second time in 11 years under coach John Cooper.

"I am so happy for our team," Cooper said. "I'm happy for our senior football players. I thought our captains did a great job, and I salute our senior football players."

Ohio State actually drew first blood on the ground after tailback Michael Wiley ripped off an early 53-yard touchdown run. But after that it was the passing combination of quarterback Joe Germaine and split end David Boston that took center stage.

"I thought we played a great game



JEFF BREHM

**BLUE BOBBLE** — Michigan punter Jason Vinson barely gets the ball away as Ohio State's Kevin Griffin (42) and Steve Bellisari (8) provide pressure. This kick resulted in a net loss of 13 yards, and Vinson later had one blocked by Derek Ross.

today," said Germaine, who completed 16 of 28 passes for 330 yards and three touchdowns. "We were well-prepared for the

game, and they didn't have any surprises for us. That in itself was the biggest thing.

"We had a lot of big plays. We got some wide receivers behind their defensive backs and we were able to connect on some."

Boston caught 10 passes for 217 yards — the most receiving yardage in history against a Wolverine team — and two of those were touchdowns.

"What can you say about David Boston?" Cooper said. "We moved David around from flanker to split end and really looked to him to make the big play."

OSU's wide-open offensive approach was a breath of fresh air in a series that has relied, perhaps too heavily, on smash-mouth football.

"I knew we were going to make plays,"

Boston said. "I didn't know when they were going to come or who was going to make them, but I knew we were going to make plays. When you start off like that with Michael going up the middle, that just gets everything rolling."

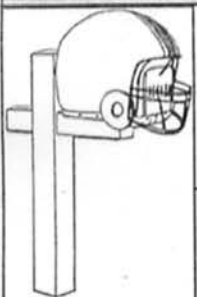
Three of OSU's four touchdowns were longer than 30 yards, a fact that weighed on Michigan coach Lloyd Carr.

"Through the years we've been a team and a defense that has prided ourselves on not giving up the big plays," he said. "Certainly we gave up too many of them today."

"The touchdown run to start the game should not happen. But Boston is a great football player and Germaine is a senior quarterback."

Wiley, who gave way to Joe

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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Montgomery as the starter at tailback for this game, also had a big day with 120 yards on 12 carries.

Defensively, the Buckeyes slammed the door against UM's ground game. Michigan finished with just four net yards rushing on 28 carries.

Michigan also looked to the air with quarterback Tom Brady setting school records for attempts (56), completions (31) and yards (375). He connected on one touchdown but also threw two interceptions and was sacked seven times.

"We shut their running game down almost to nothing," Cooper said. "They had about four yards running the football. They're a dangerous passing team, and I thought (Tom) Brady played a good ball game."

And with both the offense and defense going against them, the Wolverines' special teams play was also lacking. UM punter Jason Vinson was tackled as he punted one ball and had another kick blocked. Both mistakes resulted in OSU touchdowns.

"The kicking game kept it from being the kind of game we wanted it to be," Carr said. "We wanted it to be tight going into the fourth quarter. We took ourselves out of the opportunity to play that type of game."

"But you can't have two punts (virtually) blocked and beat a good football team."

### Blow By Glorious Blow

The teams traded punts to open the game before the Buckeyes struck gold — or Maize — on their second possession. OSU needed four plays to move 69 yards.

Wiley carried on two of the plays, first picking up 15 yards through a big hole over the right side. Two plays later he took a toss sweep right, followed blocks by Matt Keller, John Lumpkin and Ben Gilbert and rolled for the 53-yard touchdown to stake the Buckeyes to a 7-0 lead just 2:40 into the game.

Wiley was thankful after Keller cut down linebacker Dhani Jones at the point of attack and Gilbert got ahead of the play to control safety Marcus Ray.

"It was a pitch," Wiley said. "I cut it up and Keller made his block, all the offensive linemen made their blocks, and I had to make one guy miss."

"Everybody got their blocks. It was just great."

Ohio State then capitalized after a major UM miscue. Punter Vinson allowed the snap to go through his hands and Buckeyes Kevin Griffin and Steve Bellisari swarmed him as he punted the ball. The ball spiraled out of bounds at the UM 16 — a net loss of 13 yards — and the Buckeyes took over there.

OSU needed three plays to convert the error into points. On third-and-10, Germaine hit Dee Miller on a post pattern. The flanker — catching his first touchdown since the Toledo game — went over UM's Andre Weathers and Ray to pull the ball in and give the Buckeyes a 14-0 lead

with 9:44 left in the first quarter.

"Dee did a good job of keeping his route coming," Germaine said. "He got up behind the safety and made a great catch. That was a lot of momentum to us."

Miller added, "The coaches put a lot of good plays in there today. We had a lot of four wide receiver sets. We felt we could exploit some holes in their defense, and I think we did that today."

The Buckeyes appeared to have UM reeling late in the first quarter when Germaine hit Boston in stride for an apparent 58-yard gain. Although replays showed both of Boston's knees were on the ground, UM's Tommy Hendricks stripped him of the ball and returned it 33 yards to the OSU 29. An OSU late-hit penalty gave the Wolverines possession at the Buckeye 14.

The OSU defense stiffened, though, holding UM to a 27-yard Jay Feely field goal to trim the lead to 14-3 with 14:15 left in the second quarter.

The Buckeyes missed an opportunity midway through the second after Germaine and Boston hooked up on a 31-yard gain to the UM 21. But Germaine was sacked and the Buckeyes were penalized for a false start, pushing kicker Dan Stultz back for a 46-yard field goal. The kick sailed wide left with 6:12 left in the half.

But the Buckeyes capitalized on another UM kicking game mistake when Derek Ross blocked Vinson's punt and teammate Jonathan Wells recovered at the UM 20. The Buckeyes were penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct, but they were still in business at the UM 35.

After Wiley picked up five yards on first down, Germaine threw to Boston short in the left flat. He spun around UM's Weathers and Hendricks whiffed on the play as Boston sprinted down the sideline.

As he neared the end zone, he pointed to his UM nemesis Ray, who was powerless to stop the 30-yard touchdown. Boston was hit with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty of his own, but Stultz's 35-yard extra point put OSU up 21-3 with 3:15 left in the half.

"The one to David was an out pass left," Germaine said. "I got hit and didn't get a chance to see it. I could just hear the crowd roar when he scored."

Michigan rallied just before halftime, going on a nine-play, 80-yard scoring drive. Brady enjoyed his best success of the day, hitting Tai Streets for a 34-yard gain and Marcus Knight for 24 more to set up his 3-yard TD toss — a lob to Streets over OSU's Ahmed Plummer — to trim the gap to 21-10 with 25 seconds left in the half.

Michigan had the ball to open the second half, but OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski intercepted a Brady pass at the OSU 46. The senior tipped the ball to himself and caught it while lying on his back.

"Late in the season we were getting beat on some digs across the middle," said Rudzinski, who notched his second career interception. "I was back there seeing if

they would run any of those dig routes. It got tipped before it got to me. I bobbed it a little bit and then I came down with the ball."

OSU needed four plays to cover the remaining 54 yards and extend the lead to 28-10. Wiley picked up 12 yards on first down. Three plays later, Germaine went deep down the middle to Boston on a post route. He got behind Weathers and fought him off at the 5 to complete the 43-yard touchdown with 9:51 left in the third.

Michigan mustered a pair of nice possessions but could only net Feely field goals of 34 and 30 yards to eventually cut the lead to 31-16 with 14:47 left.

The sack-happy OSU defense then came up big with a pair of sacks, one by Clinton Wayne and the other by Ryan Pickett, to force a UM punt with 8:36 left.

OSU's Plummer snuffed another threat with his interception of a Brady pass on fourth down at the OSU 15 with 6:20 left.

"I really didn't have to work too hard on that one," said Plummer, who has four INTs on the year and nine in his career. "Gary (Berry) made a great play on the receiver. He cut him off and I was trailing. He made a great play and tipped it right into my hands."

And, for the record, Plummer broke up a fourth-down pass on Michigan's last-ditch possession with just under two minutes left.

Brady bemoaned the fact that Michigan had to rely almost solely on the pass.

"We got very one-dimensional, but we were forced to," he said. "Anytime you do that against a good team, they'll make you pay."

### Game Notes

- Fans swarmed the field with 23 seconds left and, after Carr moved onto the field to try to shake Cooper's hand (that never happened) and concede the game, OSU did not have to run a final play.

- Safety Damon Moore notched a career high with his team-high 12 tackles. Cornerback Antoine Winfield and linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer also came up big with 10 tackles each.

- OSU tallied seven sacks of Brady with Brent Johnson getting two.

- OSU's second-half touchdown was the first surrendered by Michigan in Big Ten play.

The 31 points represent the most UM has allowed since losing to Syracuse 38-28 on Sept. 12. No team had scored more than 10 points on UM since Michigan State scored 17 in a 29-17 loss on Sept. 26.

"We knew they were an outstanding football team," Carr said. "I thought we did a decent job on the running game after the first touchdown."

"You have to stop the rush to beat Ohio State. But on the pass plays, you have to keep the ball in front of you, and we didn't do that."

- The loss snapped Michigan's 16-game conference winning streak, dating to the 1996 win over OSU in Columbus.

While Michigan netted its Big Ten-high 39th conference championship, the Wolverines saw their string of 10 consecutive wins over top-10 ranked opponents snapped.

- Ohio State shortened UM's advantage in the overall series to 54-35-6 and in Ohio Stadium to 20-18-1.

Over the last 47 games (1952 to '98), OSU actually enjoys a 23-22-2 advantage.

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

# OSU Game Plan Becomes Passing Fancy

Woody Hayes might not have approved of the midweek decision by Ohio State coaches to emphasize the pass against Michigan — he did say three things happen when you pass, and two are bad — but reliance on the pass erased demons of the past as the Buckeyes tossed their way to victory over Michigan.

Michigan's young secondary was turned into a sieve by an Ohio State offense clicking on all cylinders. Most notable among the stars was receiver David Boston, who caught 10 passes for 217 yards and two touchdowns, setting a new school record for single-season catches with 74.

Ohio State passed three times on its first possession, setting the tone for the afternoon. Even with three incompletions, the Buckeyes knew the surest route to play dirt was the pass.

"We had seen Purdue and some other teams spread them out and have success," said flanker Dee Miller, who grabbed four passes, including his first touchdown in Big Ten play this season. "Syracuse did that, too. We saw a couple plays those teams ran and we put those in."

A subtle change by the Buckeyes made for a big change in the result.

The offensive coaching staff figured Michigan didn't have anyone playing like Charles Woodson, so therefore a little gimmicky might work.

"We waited for this game to flop David and Dee between flanker and split end the whole game," offensive coordinator Mike Jacobs said. "That was something we wanted to do, and it worked well. That added to our passing game. (The defense)

## INSIDE THE OFFENSE with Mike Wachsman

didn't seem like they always knew where they should be."

Quarterback Joe Germaine finished with 330 yards and three touchdowns and got better as the game went on. After the break he was nearly unstoppable.

He as much as anyone embraced the coaches' philosophy.

"There were meetings on Tuesday where the coaches presented a game plan to us," Germaine said. "From there I was excited about it. We went out and executed."

Ohio State's defense had taken center stage against Michigan most of the decade.

For once, it was time for the offense to do its share.

"All week we talked about how for the last five years we haven't had anyone offensively make any big plays," Miller said. "We knew we were going to throw the ball, and Joe did a great job with that."

### Lining Up For Target Practice

The talk was heard all week around Columbus. Everyday fans, radio and television talking heads, and national columnists were all saying the Buckeyes stood little to no chance of beating the improving Wolverines for a simple reason.

The OSU offensive line was a liability, they said.

That talk smarted and turned what had been a timid bunch into a unified unit intent on beating back Michigan's charge.

Though the Wolverines sacked Germaine four times on the afternoon, the Buckeyes were able to amass yardage — precisely 462 yards.

"It was a big challenge," guard Rob Murphy said. "All I can say is we showed them. Look at the scoreboard."

Michigan's defensive front, stellar all season, was barely heard from as the Buckeyes blew off the ball and sealed the Wolverines to the outside.

That enabled OSU to utilize space between the tackles, which is precisely where Michael Wiley went on the game's opening score. Murphy and guard Ben Gilbert played their best games of the season, making heralded Michigan tackles Rob Renes and Josh Williams nothing more than rumor.

"It's like day and night watching our line from last year to this year," Gilbert said. "We wanted to come out and prove that we could move the ball on their defensive line."

Though Murphy admits to being a grunt — liking the hand-to-hand combat of run blocking over the finesse of pass protecting — he knew the line would play well.

"I'm an old-fashioned guy, I guess. I like to run the ball," Murphy said. "But if you're lighting people up with the pass ... Joe, Dee and David were clicking all week in practice. We were probably 60 percent in practice on deep balls, and if you do 40 percent you're doing well."

Michigan isn't a very fancy team. It doesn't blitz very much, though that changed in the second half as the Wolverines tried to force big plays.

Renes and Williams were taken down repeatedly; one reason Germaine had so much success via the air route.

"We needed to protect Joe and give him time to get the ball out there," Gilbert said. "We gave him the time and picked up on their pressure."



JEFF BREHM

**BRINGING IT DOWN** — Ohio State senior Dee Miller wanted to finish his career as a Buckeye with a bang, and he reached that goal here by scoring his first Big Ten touchdown of the season against Michigan.

explosiveness against the Wolverines than he had in some time, netting 120 yards on just 12 carries. His 53-yard scoring jaunt set the tone for the rest of the afternoon and showed the Buckeyes they could break big plays on what had been a stern Michigan defense.

Usually a little anxious, Wiley showed great patience waiting for holes to open. On his run, fullback Matt Keller wasted one defender and Gilbert sat UM safety Marcus Ray on his behind, allowing Wiley to eat up the necessary real estate.

The play was a check at the line by Germaine, who saw Michigan change defenses just before the snap.

"That wasn't the called play," Gilbert said. "We had to get out of our play because they went into a Bear defense. Joe made a good adjustment on the line and Mike busted it."

Wiley knew Michigan held Wisconsin's Ron Dayne in check a week earlier in a 27-10 victory, so getting yards on the ground would be difficult.

Even Wiley was surprised at how well the offense played.

"I didn't believe they were susceptible to the run," Wiley said. "They've been playing great defense all year, but our guys got fired up, our fullback, our line-

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**BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 31, Michigan 16**

OSU fullback Matt Keller on his team's wide-open offensive approach: "I don't know if it was that they wanted to feature anyone. We knew what our game was. We have great receivers and great backs. It's not a secret that when people play us, they'll put eight up in the box. You're playing right into their hands if you run the ball at them the whole time. If you've got a great quarterback and great receivers, it opens the running game and spreads things out."

OSU flanker Dee Miller on the importance of players stepping up for this game: "All week we've been talking about how in the last four or five years we haven't had anybody offensively make any big plays. We knew we had to come out and throw the ball. Joe (Germaine) just threw a great pass to me (on his touchdown)."

OSU linebacker Jerry Rudzinski talked about his thinking on the play where he intercepted a tipped pass by Michigan's Tom Brady: "We watched last year's film and they threw a dig to Charles Woodson that helped set up one of their touchdowns. It proved to be the deciding touchdown in the game. We knew they would try and pop a pass across the middle, and we were there on that play."

OSU linebacker Na'il Diggs on the efforts of OSU's special teams, which blocked a punt: "Special teams is the first stage of any game. There's no offense or defense on the field. We count on them to help us for when we get on the field."

OSU split end David Boston on perhaps his worst play of an otherwise fine day — a long catch ruled as a fumble when UM's Tommy Hendricks stripped him of the ball as he was going down: "What can I say? I ran a post pattern, the same play we've run all year, and caught the ball down the middle of the field. Then the DB came up and made a great play."

OSU cornerback Ahmed Plummer thanked the crowd for its support: "I give a lot of props to the crowd. They were as fired up as the team. While we were in here



JEFF BREHM

**THE BRADY PUNCH** — OSU linebacker Na'il Diggs applies a big hit to Michigan quarterback Tom Brady during the Buckeyes' 31-16 victory Nov. 21 at Ohio Stadium. Brady threw for well over 300 yards but was sacked seven times by a ferocious defense.

during pregame getting ready, we could hear the crowd roaring and getting ready. That helps us. Today the crowd was the 12th man out there on the field."

UM quarterback Tom Brady did not think the crowd affected his team, although he agreed it helped lift the Buckeyes: "To tell you the truth, I don't think we had any problems with communication. We got all the plays in and got them called. They had a great crowd here. They got us down and with 95,000 people behind them they had the momentum and they didn't give it up."

OSU safety Damon Moore on how the Buckeyes had to stay within themselves: "We had to keep reminding ourselves to calm down. You don't want to burn up all your adrenaline, but emotions are going high when you look up in the stands and see all those fans. We just had to settle down and play."

OSU quarterback/special-teamer Steve Bellisari on his five-tackle performance, which included a key pressure on UM punter Jason Vinson: "I was just having fun out there. I was just having a good time. I have no clue how many tackles I had. I was just doing what I had to do. When we had kickoffs, they just didn't pick me up. They left me free."

Brady on Michigan's lost afternoon in Columbus: "We came down here for one reason, and we just didn't get it done today."

Michigan linebacker Sam Sword admitted it's tough to face the fact the Wolverines lost their Rose Bowl bid as a result of this defeat: "It's just a sick feeling. If you don't come to play, that's the end result. I hope the young guys learn from that. We knew the only way we could get to the Rose Bowl was with a victory, and that's not going to happen now. We're still co-Big Ten champs, but it would have been better if we could have come out of here with a victory."

OSU coach John Cooper on how he's happy to be done with one Michigan player who enjoyed another big day against the Buckeyes: "Tai Streets is a great receiver. I'm glad to see him leave here."

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### OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

## Wiley Comes Off Bench, Responds

Continued From Page 14

men. We were ready to go today."

Wiley looked like a man on a mission for Ohio State, and he did have a little extra incentive.

He had been replaced in the starting lineup by senior Joe Montgomery, who went out after the first play. Michigan wasn't the only foe Wiley wanted to prove something to.

"I felt like I had to have a big game today," Wiley said. "The media and the press were down on me a little, they didn't see me doing anything today. So I wanted to go out and show what I could do."

Jacobs was careful not to harness OSU's horses, something that's been done in the past when anything maize and blue gets within striking distance.

"Players make plays in big games," Jacobs said. "That's what we tried to focus on."

The Wolverines hadn't allowed a Big Ten touchdown in the second half all season and were giving up just 82.1 yards per game in the second half. The Buckeyes torched those numbers, putting up 10 points and 224 second-half yards.

"In the back of our mind we knew we had a big game ahead of us," Germaine said.

### Happy Happy, Joy Joy

The exuberance in the Buckeye locker room was unmatched by any scene in recent memory. A stirring rendition of "Buckeye Battle Cry" segued into whoops and hollers, with smiles all around.

No matter what the postseason destination, OSU seemed relieved to get the Michigan orangutan off its back.

"This was the most emotional I saw the team after a game," Wiley said. "Even more so than the Rose Bowl."

The series between the Buckeyes and Wolverines is littered with big plays by little-known players, but on this day it was Ohio State's veterans who stepped up.

"The experience of our team helped," Jacobs said. "Sometimes you can't do what you want to do. We were able to do it because we have more of a veteran team this year."

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

# Buckeyes Grind UM Running Game To Halt

Fred Pagac has been around the OSU-Michigan rivalry for a lot of years. In fact, nobody on the Ohio State sideline is more attuned to the magnitude and emotion of The Game.

So when the Buckeyes played well in every facet and churned out a memorable 31-16 win, the usually gruff Pagac, a hard-nosed tight end in his day, couldn't help but beam like a third-grader at Six Flags. He even was spotted smiling in the latter stages of the game, including seconds after he was doused with water from the Gatorade cooler by team members.

After the OSU victory, he answered reporters' questions while holding a large Cuban cigar.

"It's a Felipe something, I don't know," he said with a wide grin. "It was a gift."

As usual, Pagac had goals and strategies and personnel groupings to sort out, but he had two main objectives for his defense: Keep the Wolverines under 20 points and play smart football. Intensity, he knew, was going to be a given.

"Our kids played hard the whole game and I'm just happy for them," he said. "Anytime you can hold Michigan to 16 points, I think we'll take that and be happy with it. I tell you what, I feel pretty good right now."

OSU has allowed 20 or more points just six times in the three years Pagac has been defensive coordinator, and that includes last year's 20-14 loss to Michigan when the Wolverines scored just one offensive touchdown. The one time the OSU defense slipped this year was costly — a 28-24 loss to Michigan State two weeks earlier.

This time there was no way the Buckeyes were going to sit back and try merely to contain their foe.

"To stop Michigan, you've just got to be physical," senior outside linebacker Jerry Rudzinski said. "You can't be a finesse player. You've got to take on the block and take it on thick. You've got to get them going east and west."

"Some of their running plays have been run for decades in college football. It's a simple philosophy: They're going to come and try to knock you off the ball."

"We knew if we were stout up front it would work out."

## INSIDE THE DEFENSE with Jeff Rapp

It's a challenge that is particularly trying to linebackers like Rudzinski since Michigan generally likes to pound the running game and swing passes in the flat to backs and over the middle to the tight end. But, hey, OSU-Michigan is a linebacker's game.

And OSU has three good ones in Andy Katzenmoyer (10 tackles, a shared sack and a pass breakup), Na'il Diggs (seven tackles) and Rudzinski (four tackles, a shared sack, two pass breakups and an interception).

"We were afraid of overpursuing the ball," Diggs said. "We knew that they were going to try to use our speed to get us outside and try to cut it back, which they tried to do. I think we played very smart, played blocks well and blitzed all right."

With OSU's backers on the spot throughout the afternoon, and OSU getting surprising penetration up front, Michigan was held to a paltry four rushing yards on the day.

"I wouldn't have believed we could do that, but I do now," Diggs said. "It happened. We thought they were going to try to run the counter, run the counter, run the counter, run an iso and maybe pass a little bit. They had a different game plan. It didn't work."

### Where's The Cloud Of Dust?

The OSU defense forced a three-and-out on Michigan's first two possessions — with UM quarterback Tom Brady throwing incompletions on second and third down both times. By the time the Wolverines got their hands on the ball again, OSU had forced a 14-0 lead.

That put the Wolves in an altered state for the remainder of the afternoon and took them away from a grind-it-out attack that worked to the tune of 257 rushing yards a week earlier in a win over Wisconsin.

"They did not run the ball a whole lot," Pagac said. "They tried running a couple traps on us early, they might have run four or five counter plays. I'm not sure if they ran the lead play all day."



JEFF BREHM

**INTERCEPTION BY PLUMMER** — OSU safety Gary Berry (1) tips a pass intended for Michigan's Marcus Knight. OSU cornerback Ahmed Plummer (left) intercepted the pass at the OSU 15 to end a Michigan threat with just over six minutes left.

Added Diggs, "We wanted to concentrate a lot on the run, mainly the isos and counters, which there wasn't much of. They came out with a couple new plays. They had a couple running plays we had no idea they ran."

"But we played great today. They didn't have any long runs on us at all."

In fact, Michigan's longest jaunt by a ball carrier was a 6-yard run by Clarence Williams, who led UM with 13 net yards in 11 attempts. The more physical Anthony Thomas, like Williams a 100-yard rusher vs. Wisconsin, took just five handoffs and managed 12 yards. Brady was sacked seven times for a loss of 34 yards off an already underwhelming rushing effort.

"We went out there with the main objective of stopping the run and I think we were

effective," said Rudzinski, who helped hold Michigan to 42 yards in as many carries in 1997.

In an attempt to get back in the game, the Wolverines went to an open passing attack, even showing four-wide sets on occasion, including the first series of the second half. OSU countered by assigning free safety Gary Berry as a cover man and brought in freshman corner Nate Clements as a nickel back. Even swift defensive end James Cotton saw time to help cover a tight end.

UM's All-American candidate at tight end, Jerame Tuman, left the game in the second quarter with a concussion that many thought was caused by a jarring hit from 5-9, 180-pound cornerback Antoine Winfield.

With Tuman, also a key to the run game, out of commission, Michigan relied on the

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**OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN**

pass and lined up Brady in shotgun for much of the second half.

"They had an injury to one of their tight ends, and we kind of figured they were going to adjust their game plan and throw the ball a lot more," Rudzinski said.

**Defense Thrives With Lead**

Making UM one-dimensional allowed Pagac to turn his dogs loose and the Buckeyes, coming from all angles, registered five of their seven sacks in the second half.

"I thought that Fred Pagac did an outstanding job mixing his coverages and his blitzes," UM head coach Lloyd Carr said. "They had a good pass rush, too."

Michigan ended the second quarter with a touchdown by Tai Streets and started moving the ball via the air on the opening drive of the second half after a pair of Brady connections for first down.

But OSU quashed the momentum with an acrobatic Rudzinski interception after a corner blitz. OSU quickly cashed in with a David Boston touchdown and the defense took over from there by changing up coverages and holding UM to just a pair of field goals.

"It lets you be a little more free-lanced when you've got the lead," Pagac said. "We were turning them loose on different situations and obviously we were trying to mix things up."

In the last home meeting with Michigan, OSU let a 9-0 halftime lead literally slip away with a 69-yard Streets TD that tightened up the team and home crowd. The Buckeyes were determined not to let that happen again.

"We didn't bring up specific games in the past that have come back to haunt us, but we did say that we've got to treat it like it's 0-0," Rudzinski said of the halftime chatter. "They wanted to go to the Rose Bowl and



JEFF BREDEN

**MORE OF MOORE** — OSU safety Damon Moore (13) wrapped his career at Ohio Stadium with a team-high 12 tackles in the win over Michigan. Here, he shrugs off a blocker to wrap up UM tailback Anthony Thomas for one of his 10 solo tackles.

win out in the Big Ten very, very bad, so we knew we were going to get their best shot."

**Brady-Streets Combo A Handful**

With Brady flinging passes left and right, Michigan unwillingly allowed him to set school records for attempts (56) and completions (31) in a game. He also clipped the previous single-game yardage mark of 372 set a few years ago by Scott Dreisbach with a total of 375.

That meant a workout for the Ohio State cover men, particularly Ahmed Plummer, who often was matched up with the 6-4 Streets. Both players traded off making rather impressive plays in the match-up, but Streets had the upper hand with nine catches for 118 yards and the first-half TD, most of that production against Plummer.

"You can't look at who you're defending," Plummer said. "You have to play your technique and play your game. He's a good wide

receiver, no question about it. It was important for us after he made plays to come back and make the next play."

Streets couldn't muster much yardage in the early going on short outs and receiver screens but began to free up on crossing routes and beautifully hauled in a 40-yard Brady bomb with Winfield with him hip to hip.

Michigan also worked Marcus Knight into the act to the tune of seven catches for 116 yards, and five other Wolverines caught at least two passes.

"It wasn't surprising to me," Plummer insisted. "Once teams start attacking you passwise, they have to mix it up. They can't just keep doing the same thing."

But even in posting record numbers, Brady came away impressed with OSU's vaunted defensive backfield.

"They are a very good secondary," he said. "They have fast guys out there and they are experienced players."

**Miscellaneous Notes**

• OSU wasn't giving its rival much hope by snuffing out Michigan's first seven third-down attempts. The Wolverines, however, converted their next four third-down plays and finished 9 of 22 for the day. UM was 0-for-2 on fourth down.

• The other key member of the OSU secondary, strong safety Damon Moore, played his last home game in style with a team-high 12 tackles. Winfield and Katzenmoyer both checked in with 10. Moore vaulted into the team lead in total tackles with 76, but Diggs is right behind with 74 and Winfield has 72. Katzenmoyer, a finalist for the Lombardi Award, maintained his hold on fourth place with 69.

Winfield also had 10 tackles last year against Michigan to lead the team and Katzenmoyer had nine.

**AFTER TAILGATES AND TOUCHDOWNS.**

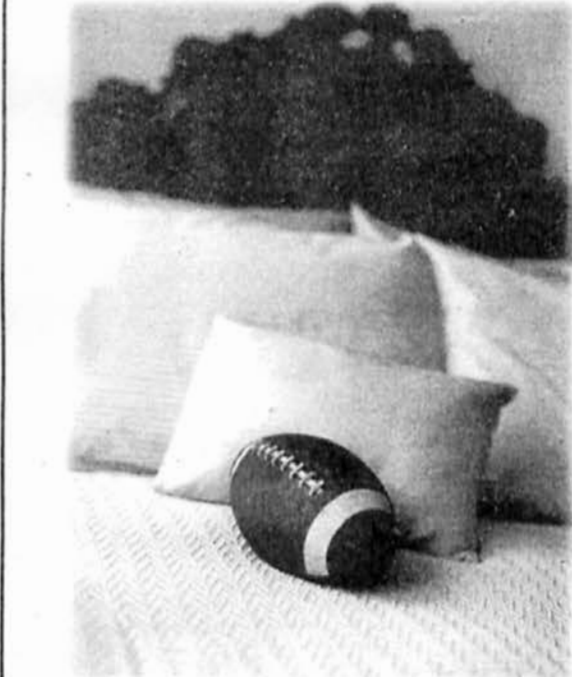
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**OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN**

# Cooper Thanks Those Who Stood Behind Him

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 Michigan.

**COOPER:** "You're looking at a happy football coach. I just got through addressing our football team and I'm so happy for the team, and I'm especially happy for our senior football players. Our guys have worked extremely hard all through the winter conditioning program, in spring practice, in the summer and throughout the fall. I thought the captains did a great job and all the seniors, and also those underclassmen.

"I thought Michael Wiley played maybe his best ball game. He set the tone early. And what can you say about David Boston? David had another great ball game for us, and it was just a great team victory.

"I told them on the radio there that I want to thank everybody that stood behind John Cooper through the years — Dr. (Gordon) Gee and Jim Jones, and certainly Andy Geiger, Bill Myles, Archie Griffin and other people I've worked for. I'm just so proud of everything we accomplished out there today.

"We beat a good football team. I thought Michigan was very, very well-prepared, and I told Lloyd Carr before the game that I think he's done a fabu-

lous job of bringing his football team back this year. They're a dangerous team.

"The kicking game was a factor again today. We blocked a punt and what can I say? Just a great victory.

"And also, give credit to the fans today. That is the loudest by far I've ever heard that stadium. That place was rocking, and that helped us win the football game."

**Q:** Field position is vital. You pinned Michigan back deep all game long, and Steve Bellisari on the coverage was incredible.

**COOPER:** "Well, we pinned them back on the kickoffs except for the one time when they got a 50-yard kickoff return on us. But they had us pinned back. As a matter of fact, they had us pinned back when we threw the long pass to David. I think you'll see that was a bad call. I think David was down when the ball came out. It was a game of field position between two outstanding football teams, and the team that makes the fewest mistakes in a game like that usually wins."

**Q:** What is the play that sticks out in your head right now where you knew things were going your way?

**COOPER:** "I don't know if I can single out one play like that. I think that play Matt Keller made when



JEFF BROWN

**LLOYD LEAVES BLACK AND BLUE —** Exchanging handshakes and pleasantries before the 95th renewal of The Game, Ohio State's John Cooper and Michigan's Lloyd Carr prepare for battle.

he caught the ball coming out of the backfield was a big play in the game. Matt did a great job, but, of course, he's been doing that all year long. Michael's touchdown run early in the ball game set the tone. We got the ball right back and got the pass to Dee Miller that made it 14-0.

"I had a feeling that once we got out to more than a two-touchdown lead that they were going to have a tough time coming back on us. When a team has to throw the football as much as they did to catch up, usually you're going to make some mistakes. They didn't convert a fourth-down play and Jerry Rudzinski made the interception."

**Q:** Even though you had some stars step up today, the special teams play was outstanding.

**COOPER:** "Derek Ross blocked a punt, but that goes to the whole punt-block unit. That's something we worked on during the course of the week and Jim Heacock coaches that part of the game. We felt like we could block a punt. Their snapper had a little trouble getting the ball back and we came after him with pressure.

"The one time, their punter just dropped the football. That was an unforced mistake on their part and gave us great field position. But the blocked kick was something we worked on all week and it came open."

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**OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN**

**Q:** You're up 14-0 and get the fumble and there was an opportunity for the whole game to swing around, yet you held them. How critical was that series right there?

**COOPER:** "Obviously, momentum was a factor in the ball game. Once we got up by more than two touchdowns, they had to play catch-up and get a little bit out of their game plan."

"You go back to last week and Michigan ran the football right down Wisconsin's throat. They had well over 200 yards rushing. As a matter of fact, they had two backs with over 100 yards each rushing the football. They couldn't run the ball against us. In a situation like that, it takes a great quarterback and great wide receivers to win the ball game."

**Q:** How does this victory compare to the victory in '94?

**COOPER:** "They're all special. But this was the most important one we've had in a long, long time because of the situation it put us in."

**Q:** You said going into this week that your team had to make plays, make big plays, and they did that today.

**COOPER:** "Absolutely. We didn't sit back and wait on stuff to happen. We tried to force the issue. We came out smoking from the get-go. We felt like we had to throw the ball down the field and we spread the field. By the same token, we felt like we had to run the ball a little bit, too, and that's why Michael's run earlier in the game was such an important part of the ball game."

**Q:** The wide-open attack, did that start at the beginning of the week or did you

decide later in the week that that's what you wanted to do?

**COOPER:** "No, we've been doing that all year. We're not going to go against Michigan and tighten up or try to do something we hadn't done. We did the same thing today we've been doing all year long."

**Q:** My question then would be predicated on the fact that in the past against Michigan you've had a lot of off-tackles and today you didn't run one for a quarter and a half.

**COOPER:** "Well, we hadn't been spreading the field like that in past years, either. This is the offense we're running this year. I mean, we haven't had a quarterback around here with six games over 300 yards. When you throw for more than 300 yards against a secondary that Michigan has, you're doing something. I think they've got some of the better defensive backs I've seen, particularly the safeties."

"I think (Tommy) Hendricks is a great football player, No. 41. He might be more of a run-type football player, but he's a great player, and Marcus Ray is a great player who's had four great years against us, and their corners are good."

**Q:** I see you holding a ball, John.

**COOPER:** "That's a ball we played the last play of the game with. We'll probably put that one in the trophy case. That's not my ball. They gave it to me, but it's a team ball."

**Q:** Are you feeling more happiness or relief?

**COOPER:** "It's both. Obviously I'm happy, but I'll be honest with you — I'm more happy for the program. I'm happy for

myself, don't get me wrong, but I'm happy for Andy Geiger and Archie Griffin and Bill Myles and the administration, Dr. (Brit) Kirwan. And obviously I'm happy for the senior football players and our football team. This is a great win for the Ohio State football program."

"And for the seniors who are leaving, they're the winningest senior class in Ohio State football."

**Q:** With about four minutes to go in the game, you really got demonstrative on the sideline, then they had that long pass play and immediately you had the headphones back on. Did you think to yourself, "Maybe I did that a little too soon?"

**COOPER:** "No, no. I didn't think that way at all. I was encouraging the crowd because the crowd helped us win the football game. Thank you all a lot."

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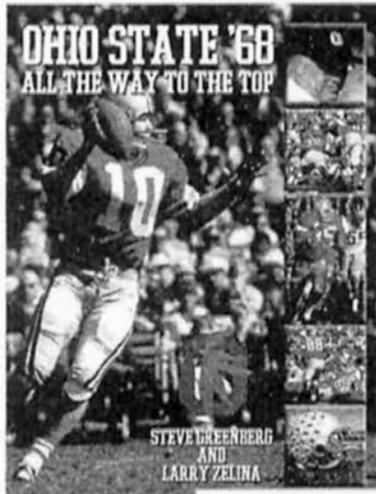
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## OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

## Boston's Long Touchdown Deflates Michigan

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Anytime an Ohio State team defeats a Michigan team, there will be a number of big plays that helped determine that outcome.

OSU's 31-16 win over the Wolverines followed that pattern with a bevy of gigantic plays.

That list includes, but is not limited to:

- Michael Wiley's 53-yard touchdown run just over two minutes into the game;

- Joe Germaine's 16-yard touchdown pass to Dee Miller — a score set up by a botched punt snap by the Wolverines;
- Derek Ross' blocked punt, a play that also set up a touchdown;

- David Boston's catch, spin and run of a short Germaine pass for a 30-yard score;

- Jerry Rudzinski's tipped pass interception, denying UM a scoring chance on its first drive of the second half; and

- Ahmed Plummer's interception with just over six minutes left that also thwarted a UM scoring threat.

But perhaps the game's biggest play came early in the third quarter as the Buckeyes clung to a 21-10 lead.

Facing a third-and-11 predicament at the Michigan 43, OSU offensive coordinator Mike Jacobs went for broke. He called a pass play for Boston, split wide right, to go deep and Miller, in a slot right, to cross

## PLAY OF THE GAME

underneath.

The result was a 43-yard bomb down the middle of the field to Boston, a touchdown that pushed OSU's lead to 28-10 with 9:51 left in the third quarter.

Most important, the Buckeyes had served notice they were not going to be tentative — they intended to win this Michigan game going away.

"The long touchdown pass in the third quarter was probably as big a play as there was in the game," lamented Michigan coach Lloyd Carr.

### Touchdown By Design

As Boston lined up at right end, he encountered UM cornerback Andre Weathers.

"I saw him kind of get down in that little Deion (Sanders) stance like he was going to try and jam me up all crazy-like," said Boston, who caught 10 passes for 217 yards and a pair of touchdowns on the day. "I wasn't going to have any of that."

Weathers attempted to jam Boston, even grabbing his face mask. But the 6-3, 215-pound receiver just outmuscled the defender, shoved him aside and immediately got three yards of separation as he

headed downfield.

Germaine locked in on Boston almost as quickly as he faked a handoff to Wiley and took a deep drop. OSU's pass protection worked well as right tackle Brooks Burris and fullback Matt Keller teamed to control UM rush specialist James Hall and left tackle Tyson Walter protected the backside by blocking nose tackle Rob Renes.

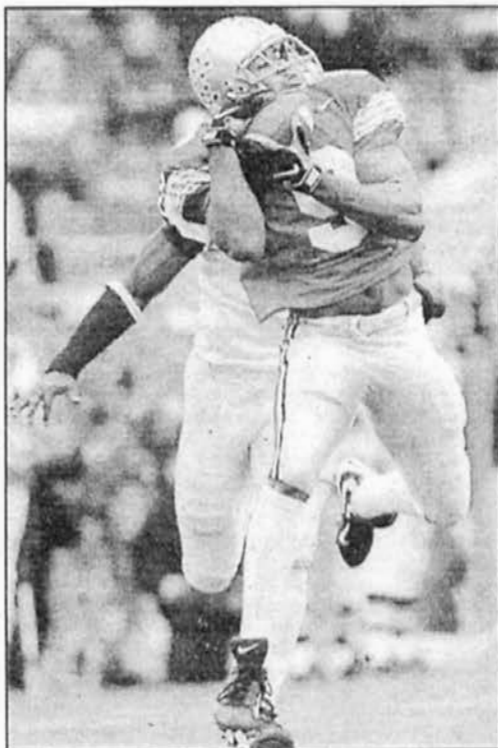
Meanwhile, there was confusion in the UM secondary as strong safety Tommy Hendricks hesitated as Miller crossed in front of him.

"I thought it was one-on-one on the outside, but the coach said the safety bit up on the dig (by Miller)," Boston said. "I knew if I ran the right route I could be open."

Germaine added, "David just got behind the receiver. The inside receiver, Dee Miller, did a good job of occupying that safety so he couldn't come over and help. He was more or less one-on-one with their cornerback."

Carr admitted his safety's miscue proved fatal.

"We were supposed to have Boston double-covered there, but we missed the check and didn't get it covered," Carr said. "Andre looked bad there, but he was



JEFF BREHM

**TAKING IT TO THE HOUSE** — Big players make big plays in big games, and no one came up bigger than OSU receiver David Boston, shown here torching Michigan in OSU's 31-16 win. Boston grabbed 10 passes for 217 yards and scored twice.

expecting help from the middle and didn't get it."

All that was left for Germaine to do was step up and fire the ball. His pass covered roughly 45 yards in the air. Boston had to slow up a step or two to haul it in at the Michigan 6, but Weathers still couldn't stop the play.

Weathers dove for a last-ditch tackle attempt, but Boston powered his way into the end zone for the touchdown.

Germaine was hit as he threw as defensive tackle Josh Williams came free.

"I was on my back," Germaine said. "But I had a chance to see the ball go into his hands. I just hoped there were no flags."



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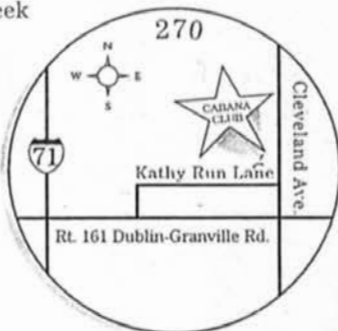
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## THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

## Happiness Should Abound After Big Win

I don't want to hear it!

There was plenty of time after the Michigan State game and there will be plenty of time during the off-season to wonder what could have been or what should have been. Any of you who are unhappy right now because Ohio State is not in line for the Fiesta Bowl can tell it to someone else.

Now is the time to savor an impressive victory over Michigan. In fact, it's a victory that is, perhaps, sweeter because of past Ohio State failures, both this season and in previous seasons against the hated Wolverines. This was a game to make Buckeye fans proud again. A game that would give the long-suffering Buckeye fans in Toledo a full year of peace. A win that truly should be enjoyed.

And all those Buckeye fans who have been saying that they don't care about the results during the rest of the season as long as Ohio State beats Michigan *have* to be happy. Not a peep from you people about the Michigan State game.

Every aspect of the Buckeye game was working on this glorious afternoon. The OSU defense was stifling. The passing game — it was nice to see the Buckeyes use it in a Michigan game — was magnificent. The running game was effective enough with Michael Wiley setting the tone for the game with a 53-yard touchdown run to put the Wolverines in an early hole. And the special teams did as much as any unit to secure the win, setting up two scores off botched Michigan punts, forcing the Wolverines to play catch-up.

Here are some random thoughts on the game.

• Many had suggested — myself included — that Joe Montgomery start at tailback

## The Facts Man Poll

Rivalry Saturday has come and gone, and while it was once again a grand spectacle, there was something of a pall cast over it.

USC super fan Giles Pellerin, who had seen over 800 consecutive Trojans games, including every one against UCLA and Notre Dame, died in the Rose Bowl parking lot at age 91. Devotion like that to a team is what college football is all about. There's even a passage in the USC media guide about Pellerin. What a shame.

With Ohio State's win over Michigan, there should be 364 days of exuberance for Columbus and every outpost where Buckeye fans normally hang their heads in shame. About the only one who won't be happy is a certain gentleman in Sacramento, who must be ripping his hair out because John Cooper slayed the big blue demon. Let us know how you feel, Mr. Wauben.

As a tribute to Keith Jackson, who made his final trip to the Horseshoe Nov. 21, we'll present the top 10, replete with big uglies and whoa Nellies. We'll miss you, Keith.

1. Tennessee (10-0)
2. Kansas State (10-0)
3. Florida State (11-1)
4. UCLA (10-0)
5. Ohio State (10-1)
6. Texas A&M (10-1)
7. Arizona (10-1)
8. Notre Dame (9-1)
9. Florida (9-2)
10. Georgia (8-2)

A few biggies remain, including Georgia Tech-Georgia (Bulldogs scrape by), Texas-Texas A&M (Aggies win but don't shut down eventual Heisman winner Ricky Williams), and Virginia-Virginia Tech (both have defense, but Cavs have some offense, too).

— Mike Wachsman

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH  
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

against the Wolverines to help spark the Buckeyes at the beginning of the game. Montgomery did start, a well-deserved honor in his final home game, but the OSU staff quickly went to Wiley. And it was Wiley who provided the lift for Ohio State with his long touchdown run.

• Freshman Steve Bellisari was everywhere for the Buckeyes on special teams against the Wolverines, recording five tackles. I know he wants to be Ohio State's quarterback next year and, from all reports, has a good shot at getting the nod to replace Joe Germaine. But Bellisari has shown such a willingness to mix it up and such a nose for the football that wouldn't you love to see him on defense?

• Speaking of Germaine, he was brilliant in a big game on a national stage, so perhaps he, along with the explosive David Boston, will get a little more of the respect they are due. I don't mean to keep harping on Germaine's mobility in this space, but I thought his ability to scramble better than Michigan quarterback Tom Brady made a difference in the outcome of the game.

Both defenses were bringing pressure on the quarterback and both quarterbacks were able, at times, to avoid the rush. Review your videotape and note how on several instances Brady avoided the sack but was uncertain as to what to do once he took off running. Once Germaine decides to run, he's pretty decisive about it.

• The victory over Michigan helped Germaine secure his place among Ohio State's great quarterbacks. While I said no "what ifs" about the Fiesta Bowl, I know there's not a Buckeye fan out there who hasn't wondered what the previous two seasons would have been like if Germaine had been OSU's starting — and only — quarterback.

Certainly he'd own virtually every Ohio State passing record. As for the team's record in 1996 and 1997? We'll never know.

• It continues to amaze me how strong Antoine Winfield is on run support. When he goes one-on-one with bigger running backs, Winfield, at 5-9, 180 pounds, usually gets the better of it. Did you see him stop Michigan's 6-5, 251-pound fullback Aaron Shea dead in his tracks?

• I sure didn't hear Marcus Ray's name called very much during the game. The Columbus native was credited with three tackles, one for a loss, and had no interceptions or passes broken up. Ray was unable to turn the game the way Charles Woodson had in the past. Tai Streets, on the other hand, was once again a thorn in the side of the Buckeyes with nine receptions for 118 yards and a touchdown, but it was hardly enough.

• I was stunned when I realized that Dee Miller's touchdown reception in the first quarter was his first scoring catch in Big Ten play this season. His play has been so consistent that I guess I never really noticed that he hadn't hit pay dirt since the Toledo game on the second weekend of the season.

• While much has been made of Cooper's now 2-8-1 record against Michigan, his Buckeyes have not fared nearly as poorly at home as they have in Ann Arbor. Cooper is 2-3-1 at home against Michigan. The losses were by an average of just over three points a game. Next season's contest at Michigan, where Cooper is 0-5, will be really important to prove that the monkey is finally off Coop and the Buckeyes' back.

## And Now We Wait

I'm sure I said this last year, but the current system of bowl selection that keeps

many of the key teams from knowing their bowl destination until after conference championship games in early December needs to be modified.

It puts a lot of pressure on participating schools and their fans to try to throw a major trip together on such short notice.

While we're not sure of Ohio State's bowl destination, our Buckeye Bowl Bonanza continues. It's your opportunity to get two gift subscriptions to Buckeye Sports Bulletin for the price of one and automatically be entered in our contest to win a trip for two to whatever is the Buckeyes' bowl destination. For more information, see our ad on page 37 or give us a call at (614) 486-2202.

## Buckeyes In The Draft

Mel Kiper Jr.'s look elsewhere in this paper at the prospects for various Buckeyes in the upcoming NFL draft is interesting reading. In the wake of all the discussion about junior linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer's play this season, it is not surprising that Kiper has him falling from an early pick to somewhere closer to the middle of the first round if he elects to declare for the draft.

The difference in money between those first-round draft slots is pretty substantial, so if Katzenmoyer is smart, he might want

to give more thought to sticking around another year if that has not been his intention. Then again, he could slip even more next season, so maybe he's best to take the money and run. Katzenmoyer was no slouch against Michigan, recording 10 tackles, seven of the solo variety, with a sack.

Boston, projected as the 10th to 15th pick overall by Kiper if he comes out, certainly didn't hurt his draft cause with his sensational performance against Michigan, which featured one of the best defenses in the country. You have to wonder if that wasn't the last time we'll see the dynamic Texan in Ohio Stadium.

Kiper listed tight end John Lumpkin and punter Brent Bartholomew as dropping in draft value over the course of their senior season. I would have to agree with his assessment, as neither had particularly consistent or spectacular senior seasons.

## Rally 'Round The Flag

Webster's definition of "ubiquitous" should be those Ohio State car flags, which seem to be everywhere these days. Why wasn't I the one to think to invest something so simple?

I pulled out of my driveway the Saturday evening after the big Michigan victory. It was dark, but I could see that the car approaching me had two flags fluttering, and I honked in victory salute. As the car passed me, I saw that the two car flags were actually Michigan flags.

I'm even more glad I honked.

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