The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, BSB Editor

Variety The Difference In OSU's Offense

By now you know that Ohio State's victory over Oklahoma was a big one.

But what stands out in my mind is how impressive the victory was. This was no victory on a last second field goal by Uwe Von Schamann. This was total domination.

If you like Woody Hayes-style football, the Bucks showed that for you. Ohio State totally mastered

both lines of scrimmage and really dished out the punishment. It became clear that if Oklahoma was going to win the game, it was going to have to do it early, because with all the punishment the Sooners were taking, they weren't going to have much left in the final 15 minutes.

And remember, this was no weak team that Ohio State was pushing around.

On the other hand, if power football bores you, if you like the multiple offenses that are so popular today, Ohio State showed it could display that, too.

The Buckeyes both ran and passed well against the Sooners and showed that their offense is so potent that if you try and take one thing away from them defensively, they can get you somewhere else.

In this case, Oklahoma seemed to be concentrating on shutting down OSU's talented wide receivers, Cedric Anderson and Thad Jemison. The Sooners did that. Neither of the Buckeye flyboys had a reception.

No problem. The Buckeyes still rolled up 412 yards in total offense, running and passing to the backs and the tight ends.

After two games, the varied attack that Ohio State is showing is the most striking feature of the 1983 team.

In the past, Earle Bruce-coached teams liked to give the ball to the tailback or pass to the wide receivers. That certainly made these teams easier to defend than

Subscribe To BSB Now! Don't Miss Any Buckeye Grid Action the 1983 Buckeyes who will, as Mike Tomczak keeps saying, take what the defense gives them.

To give you an idea of how radically different this offense is from those in the past, consider these numbers.

In 1979, Earle Bruce's first year in Columbus, the Buckeyes completed 19 passes to Cal Murray and six to Jimmy Gayle at tailback; four to Brad Dwelle, three to Bill Jaco and one to Ron Barwig at tight end; three to Ric Volley at fullback, and two to Paul Campbell, who played both fullback and tight end.

That's 38 receptions to backs and tight ends for 370 yards and five TDs in 12 games.

Last year, Ohio State completed 26 passes to John Frank and one to Judd Groza at tight end; 13 to Tim Spencer, seven to Jimmy Gayle and one each to Kelvin Lindsey and Mike Lanese at tailback, and

one to Keith Byars at fullback.
That's 48 receptions for 560
yards and three TDs in 12 games.

In just two games this season, Frank has grabbed 10 passes at tight end; Byars and Lindsey both have six, and John Wooldridge one at tailback, and Vaughn Broadnax (in his first three years at OSU, Broadnax had just one reception for minus seven yards) has two and Barry Walker one from the fullback spot.

That's 26 receptions for 329 yards and four touchdowns by the backs and tight ends.

You make the comparison.

And while all these newly discovered receivers were pulling in passes, the Buckeyes still averaged better than four yards a crack from the tailbacks against

the number two team in the nation.

Many schools now have potent passing attacks. And the Michigans and Oklahomas can still (usually) grind it out on the ground. But this OSU offense may be able to do it all. And if it can, look out.

By the way, upcoming Ohio State opponents. Don't forget about Cedric Anderson and Thad Jemison. You can bet they're both more than ready to take what the defense gives them.

· · · ·

Barry Smith, who worked in the OSU sports information office the past two years, has been hired by Fresno State University as an assistant sports information director.

Among the things Smith, a Deleware, Ohio, native, will handle at Fresno State are volleyball, women's basketball and softball.

Smith, 24, who has both an undergraduate degree and a master's from Ohio State won second place in the nation honors with his 1982 men's tennis brochure, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Another former OSU sports information staffer, Rick VanBrimmer, who is now the assistant SID at Mississippi, dropped us a line recently.

He is enjoying his new job, but says, "I wish we could win a few games. That's the biggest difference between here and Ohio State — we are not going to go 9-2 and appear in a Rose Bowl or anything."

You'll just savour it more when it

comes, Rick.

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Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Tailbacks Back In Bruce's Good Graces

After the OSU football team's season opener with Oregon, coach Earle Bruce said he was going to have a talk with his two main tailbacks, Kelvin Lindsey and Keith Byars.

"Our tailback position didn't gain anything (today)," were his exact words.

Whatever the coach said to the players must have had some lasting effect, for the coach's words after the Sept. 17 game with Oklahoma were much more positive.

"Our tailbacks did an exceptionally fine job today," he said. "They were better today. They improved."

The statistics will fully back up

Bruce's boasting. After combining for only 54 yards on 17 carries against Oregon, Byars, who started, and Lindsey combined for 112 yards on 32 carries. They also had six receptions for 104 yards.

More importantly, however, they held onto the ball. In the Buckeyes' opener, Lindsey fumbled twice and Byars once, but against the Sooners the balls stuck in their guts like glue. According to Byars, the running backs' surehandedness was helped by nonfumble drills conducted by the OSU coaches during practice.

"They poured it on to us a little more: 'Hold the ball with two hands,' Byars said. "Before the Oregon game we hardly ever heard it. This week they made sure we

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held onto it. And we did a couple of more drills last week (than in previous practices). It paid off, too."

To describe their improved play, the tailbacks used the same word that quarterback Mike Tomczak used to describe his transformation into the No. 1 passer in the nation after the Oregon — confidence.

"Coming off a game like the running backs had against Oregon, we definitely had to have our confidence up higher," Lindsey said. "I felt really comfortable coming into Oklahoma, and we all had confidence in ourselves too. That's what the game's about.

"The running game is going to come along — you're going to see some long runs." Lindsey continued. "When you first do something, you don't do it good. You just have to practice and practice until you get better."

Byars attributed the mistakes against Oregon to mental errors.

"Last week we were pressing too much, trying to have a good debut," he said. "We got hung up with trying to have a great start.

"I spent a lot of time thinking about it. I was just praying to the Lord to help me relax, just so I wouldn't get too jumpy and start to press."

One factor that made a

difference in the tailbacks' improvement was the play of the OSU offensive line. For most of the game, it dominated the Sooner defensive line, opening huge holes.

And once the holes were open, all the tailbacks had to do was step through them. The players referred this physical type of aggressiveness the team utilized as "hard ball."

If that was the case, the Sooners certainly were swinging and missing.

"More or less it would be Bill Roberts saying 'Come on guys, let's play some hard ball — backs, just run it up in there.' When the linemen give you that kind of confidence, you don't want to let them down," Byars said.

Byars doesn't know if he will

Byars doesn't know if he will start every game for the Buckeyes, but he does know that what Bruce said to him had immediate effect.

"Play the type of ball I know Keith Byars is capable of playing, he said to me," Byars said. " 'We recruited you because you were a great football player out of high school.' Last Saturday, he said I didn't play up to those capabilities. He said that's forgotten about now. He just wanted me to go out and play the game I know I'm capable of playing."

And that, as Keith Byars would agree, certainly paid off.



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Bucks Wanted To Go To Wide Receivers

By Mike Pramik

Ohio State quarterback Mike Tomczak completed all 15 of his passes against Oklahoma to his backs and to tight end John Frank. Commentators attributed that reception monopoly to the Sooner defense, which was keying on the Buckeye wide receivers.

Buckeye wide receivers.

But OSU coach Earle Bruce admits that it may not entirely have been the Sooners who kept OSU speedsters Cedric Anderson and Thad Jemison in check:

"I have to confess, we planned to go to the outside because we've got skilled people over there — fine, skilled people. But on Saturday, in many cases, it was their own fault they didn't get the ball.

"On a couple of instances, we could have run better routes on the outside."

Despite that performance by the wide-outs against Oklahoma, however, look for Iowa, which has lost 16 in a row to OSU, to be keying on Anderson and Jemison just the same on Sept. 24.

Tomczak will be going up against a former high school all star from Illinois when the Buckeyes play the Hawkeyes. Junior quarterback Chuck Long was an all-conference player in 1980 at Wheaton North High School in Wehaton, Ill. Tomczak isn't over-awed however since he

was an Illinois all-stater in 1980.

The junior from Thornton Fractional North High School in Calumet City, Ill., says he met Long once at a banquet but has never faced him on the playing field. It promises to be a fierce quarterbacking battle, since Long has completed 62 percent of his passes this season (29 of 47 for 549 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions).

Tomczak is still leading the nation in passing efficiency, by the way, averaging 253 yards per game. He has completed 36 of 50 passes for an excellent 72 percent. He has racked up six touchdowns, already more than one-third of the way to Art Schlichter's single-season record of 17 set in 1981.

With the hot playing conditions that OSU has faced in its first two games, it seems that the extensive preparation in the heat the Buckeyes have had has paid off.

"They paid the price to stay even with them in the heat," Bruce said of the Buckeyes' fourth-quarter performance against Oklahoma. "It did not take as much a toll as it could have had we not practiced in the hot weather during two-a-days this August."

Inside linebacker Rowland Tatum leads the team in tackles with 30, a pace that would give him 180 at the end of the season (including a bowl game). That total would place him second on the all-time Ohio State single-season tackle list. Tom Cousineau had 211 in 1978, and Marcus Marek, the all-time career tackle leader with 572, had 178 in 1982.

Bruce has been bragging about the improvement of the Big Ten this season in non-conference games. A year ago, the conference record was 8-14, highlighted by OSU, Purdue, Michigan, Iowa and Michigan State all losing twice.

The Big Ten's 1983 nonconference record is now complete at 12-8. Included in those games are OSU's win over Oklahoma, Michigan State's victory over Notre Dame and Iowa's win over Penn State.

"I don't think anyone can say the Big Ten is a softy league (this year)," Bruce says. "You can't write about the Big Ten being the Sisters of the Poor."

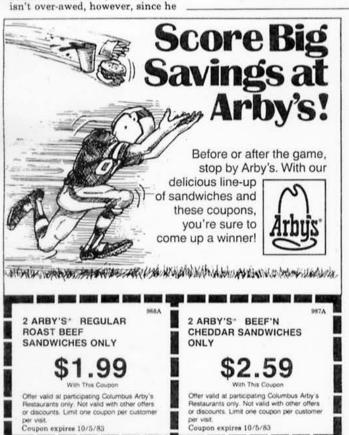
They may have been calling for the Red Cross in Minneapolis on Sept. 17, however, when No. 1 Nebraska pasted the Gophers 84-13. There were other big losses by conference schools. Michigan lost to Washington, Illinois lost to Missouri and Indiana was defeated by Kentucky.

Purdue and Northwestern by far fared the worst of all Big Ten schools in pre-season play. The Boilermakers (0-2) were outscored 87-6 by Notre Dame and Miami (Fla.), while the Wildcats haven't scored a point, losing to Washington 34-0 and to Syracuse 35-0.

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Groza Relishes Role As Second Tight End

By Mike Pramik

The scene is sure to become a familiar one for the 1983 Ohio State football team: third and one, Buckeye's ball. Off the bench comes the second tight end, Judd Groza.

More often than not, the strategy will result in a first down.

"It's fun to get into that situation," Groza says. "I look forward to an offense like that. We've only used it a few times this year, but I'm happy about it."

As happy as anyone can be who has the awesome task of playing behind John Frank, that is. Yet that has been Groza's role since he enrolled at OSU in 1980.

The way Groza feels now, he will contribute in any way he can. Being the second tight end on short-yardage situations is one of them. He defines his role in simplistic terms.

"You just have to come off the ball like a stud — as hard as you can," Groza says. "You have to keep low and block him faster than

he can shed you.
'You have a couple of advantages. You know the starting count, and you know where the play is going. The only thing you have to do is master the techniques follow through with your block".

The fact that the junior from

Berea, Ohio is able to come in at all can be attributed to successful surgery techniques. Doctors performed surgery on Groza's back in January of 1981, to correct a spinal disc problem. He was redshirted the 1981 season.

And now, the back isn't a problem.

"It's completely healed," Groza says of the back. "The only problem I have is I get a lot of lower back pain every so often. When I get up in the morning it's awful

"It's mostly mental right now. I have to get over it. I keep on thinking 'I've had back surgery.' It's just something I have to forget about."

That Groza did recover from the surgery is no surprise. When he came to Ohio State, he was recognized not only as a standout football player, but also as an exceptional all-around athlete. He picked up nine varsity letters in high school in three sports: football, basketball and track.

After sitting out 1981, Groza came back last year and was the third-string tight end behind Frank and Brad Dwelle. He caught but one pass for 18 yards. This season, however, Groza has moved up a notch from third team to second team tight end.



Tight End Judd Groza (Left) With Father, Lou

picnic.

"It's funny. John is one of my best friends here," Groza says. "We get along really well. He's a great asset to this team.

"It's tough playing behind him, but he's really taught me a lot. He's a great athlete, and it will be tough to fill his shoes next year.'

If one fact was apparent after the Buckeyes' first two games, it was that the squad is playing with a renewed enthusiasm. Nine straight wins, Groza believes, will do that to a team.

"Enthusiasm and intensity are contagious on a football team. When one individual gets pumped up, it tends to spread throughout the whole team.

Groza thinks most of the reason

But being behind Frank is no that the 1983 Buckeyes have had a better start than the 1982 Buckeyes is because of the quarterback, the one who will throw him his passes.

Not many will argue that Mike Tomczak is the key.

"He's really improved from last year," Groza says. "I think the main factor in him improving himself is his confidence. He seems to be more confident of himself. And in practice, he's just spectacular. He throws the ball just perfectly.'

Blocking is all very well for Groza, but he may have to wait for next season to do what he likes to

do the best.
"I tell you what I like to do catch the ball and run and hit people after I catch the ball."

The only problem is, so does Frank.



Here's the "take out" food value that's making Buckeye Fans cheer.





Lowdermilk Leaves Defense For Starting Role On Offense

By Mike Pramik

One of the drawbacks that seems to go along with being a lineman in college football is that you can get shifted around like so many pounds of beef.

Ask Ohio State offensive tackle Kirk Lowdermilk about it, and he'll tell you that statement is no bull. But it isn't necessarily bad, either.

During summer practice, Lowdermilk was moved from the defensive line, where he played this spring, to the offensive line, where he has started the first two games this season.

The last two weeks have been happy ones for the junior from Salem, Ohio. The offensive line has solidified and has helped the Buckeyes to a 2-0 record.

But Lowdermilk wasn't crazy about his last-minute change of

"I didn't know anything about playing offense until a week before I came back for summer camp," he says. "They gave me a call and ask me if I wanted to.

"I wasn't really sure. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I had my doubts, but I went along with

Actually, Lowdermilk has had some experience on the offensive line. He was an offensive lineman his freshman year, but played in only three games, for eight minutes. He was moved to defense during spring drills his sophomore year, because the Buckeyes needed some backup at the middle guard position.

He played in all 12 games and figured to fight for a starting position on the defensive line this year, when coaches called on him to make the switch.

"They have more depth on defense," Lowdermilk says. "All they had on the offensive line were the 'ones.' That's how they felt about that. They needed somebody who could help out right away. That's why they moved me.

"Now, I want to start all 12 games. I'm sure (offensive guard) Jim Lachey doesn't like playing second string either. My work's just begun.'

Lowdermilk also wrestles on the OSU team, and it was his participation in this sport that, indirectly, led to his enrollment at Ohio State. He was not recruited extensively by Buckeye coaches, since after his senior football season at Salem (Ohio) High School, Lowdermilk weighed only 205 pounds.

But after he won the state high school heavyweight wrestling title in the spring, he had gained 30 pounds and drew all the attention he needed.

'I got recruited by the University of Toledo and the University of Cincinnati," Lowdermilk says. "It was past the signing date, and Toledo and Cincinnati both wanted me to sign, and I told them I wanted to wait. My father said to wait until I saw what I did in wrestling.

"I had heard they (OSU) were going to sign one more big person, and my dad said 'That could be you.' I said, 'Yeah, right.' But it happened. It's all been a dream come true, really."

Lowdermilk's high school wrestling experiences were more exciting than his football memories. He wrestled against Notre Dame defensive end Mike Golic from Cleveland St. Joseph High School and against current

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Buckeye starting defensive end Crecelius, from Ashland (Ohio) High School - who is now Lowdermilk's roommate.

Lowdermilk now gets his chance for further competition against Crecelius during practice. And the weekly practices are strenuous experiences for Lowdermilk, the midget on the offensive line at 6-3,

"I can relax when the game comes," he says. "During the week it's all-out. For those two days we have pads on, I can't let down a second. If I do, somebody's going to beat me out.

"And I don't like that."



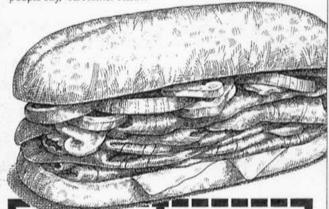
Kirk Lowdermilk

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Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Lachey Scores His Points In 'Three-Guard Offense'

By Dave Kelch

No, we're not talking about Eldon Miller's basketball team when we say that the Buckeyes are employing a three-guard offense.

That's been the case the past several years for Miller's wintertime Buckeyes, but this is a different season and a different sport we're talking of now football.

Coach Earle Bruce, overseer of the largest offensive line in Buckeye football history, is threedeep at both the guard and tackle positions, thus the luxury of rotating players at those positions.

One of those players in Bruce's rotation scheme is 6-foot-6, 260pound junior guard Jim Lachey, a native of tiny St. Henry in Mercer County, Ohio.

"Right now, we're basically using three guards," said Lachey, of the offensive line that helped OSU to two big wins in its first two

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"The way they (the coaches) explained it to us was that we had three starters. Both Kirk (6-3, 250 junior Kirk Lowdermilk) and I can play both sides (right and left guard), and they are keeping Scott (6-3, 258 junior Scott Zalenski) on the right side.'

Lachey, 20, saw 87 minutes of action in 1982 in a reserve role and has lettered twice, mostly for his work on special teams. The owner of 11 prep varsity letters in football, basketball and track, Lachey is the fastest Buckeye lineman with a time of 4.8 in the 40yard dash.

Lachey earned first-team status with his performance in spring practice, but the OSU coaches made a commitment with Lowdermilk, who had jumped back and forth between offense and defense (middle guard) to keep him on offense. That move gave Lachey more competition heading into autumn camp.

"It (preseason camp) was just a

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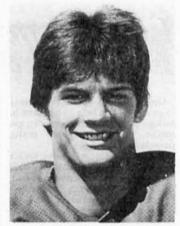
outings. "There's a lot of lot of competition, real competiunderstand that no matter what, who starts, we're all going to get the same amount of time. It's (the platooning) convenient for us because you can get a break and get your air, then when you're in the game you can go all out on every play.

Lachey came to OSU from Class A St. Henry as a two-time all-Ohio lineman and played center on the Redskins' 1979 state champion basketball team, but there were questions: (1) his mental toughness, and (2) his upper body strength.

"It has improved a lot," said Lachey of his upper body strength.
"Steve Bliss (OSU's conditioning supervisor) has worked with me tremendously. There's no comparison.

"We never had any weight training program at St. Henry. Coming from a small school, (because of his size) I just had to go through the motions (to get the job done).

On his mental conditioning in stepping to a major college program, Lachey said, "You can never be too aggressive; that's one thing you have to be." During the first quarter of the Oregon game, Lachey got into a brief shoving match with an Oregon defensive



Jim Lachey

lineman - an act of aggression you probably would not have seen in Lachey two years ago.

"It's hard to remember those things," Lachey, who owns a 2.9 grade average in business finance, said of the incident. "I don't even remember why it happened."

Lachey said that despite the competition between him, Lowdermilk and Zalenski for playing time, there is no animosity

present.
"We're always helping each other out," he said. "We have one goal in mind - to have the best line possible. There are no hard feelings between us."

Lachey has learned to harness any "hard feelings" aggressive energy to be used against the opposition on Saturdays.



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