

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Oct. 17, 1992

## Ohio State Loses To Illinois For Record Fifth Straight Time

# Jinx Sinks Buckeyes' Chances Against Illini

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Everyone made so much over the "Badger Jinx" when Wisconsin beat Ohio State five times in seven seasons from 1981-87.

Well, after the Buckeyes lost 18-16 to Illinois on Oct. 10, the fifth straight loss and the seventh in the last 10 meetings to the Illini, Ohio State is in the midst of a full-fledged "Illini Jinx."

How else could you explain a game in which the Buckeyes fumble twice at the one-yard line, one of which is returned for a touchdown? How else could you explain the Buckeyes holding the opposing team to just 270 total yards, the lowest total in the last 10 games, and still losing? And how else could you explain a missed 44-yard field goal attempt by a kicker who had previously kicked a 50-yarder in the game?

"It must be a jinx," said OSU senior cornerback Bryan Cook, who has been a witness to all five consecutive losses to the Illini. "I don't know what else it is. When you have a better team, you're supposed to win and we didn't do it."

OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young debunked that theory, saying the outcome was simply another example of what can happen on any given Saturday in college football.

"I'm not sure this has anything to do with who is the better team," Young said. "I'm not sure Northwestern had a better team last year when they beat Illinois. You just have to get up every week to play. It's how you play that day that counts."

"I'm not sure that if Florida State and Miami played 10 times, Miami wouldn't lose more than they'd win. But they only play once, and Miami won that game. It's not a jinx; that's the way things go in this crazy game."

Young was talking about football in general with that "crazy game" statement, but he just as easily could have been talking about the OSU-Illinois game.

It was a game fraught with mistakes by both teams, although the Buckeyes made theirs at the most inopportune times.

The first came less than four minutes into the game. Ohio State had taken the game's opening possession and, thanks to being set up with a 41-yard kickoff return by Butler Byrnot'e, a 20-yard burst by junior tailback Raymont Harris and a personal foul penalty on Illinois, was threatening to score an early touchdown.

The Buckeyes got first and goal, then went to their short-yardage lineup, the one that had previously netted four touchdowns for freshman running back



Ohio State junior fullback Jeff Cothran (8) appears to have broken the plane of the end zone on this fourth-quarter play against Illinois. However, Cothran was ruled to have stepped out of bounds at the one-yard line and, on the next play, the Buckeyes fumbled the ball away. That was one of many costly mistakes OSU made on its way to an 18-16 defeat at the hands of the Illini.

Eddie George. On third-and-goal from the one, George got the call and was met immediately by Illini linebacker Dana Howard and defensive back Jeff Arneson.

George lost the handle on the football and it dropped to the turf, where Illini defensive back Derrick Rucker tried to smother it. But as Rucker went for the ball, OSU quarterback Kirk Herbstreit hit him and Rucker inadvertently tossed the ball into the air.

That's when Arneson entered the picture again. He scooped up the loose ball and, getting a block from teammate Kevin Hardy on OSU receiver Greg Beatty, ran 96 yards for an Illinois touchdown.

Ohio State head coach John Cooper said that was a tough play for him to watch.

"I've never had that happen to me in my career," he said. "We're going in for a touchdown, and all of a sudden, boom. That's a 14-point swing. Instead of us scoring and being up 7-0 early in the

game, all of a sudden we're down 7-0."

But the Buckeyes came back. Later in the first quarter, they drove to Illinois' 33-yard line and got a 50-yard field goal from kicker Tim Williams. The scoring drive still had its strange moments — senior split end Brian Stablein dropped two passes, extremely uncharacteristic for the normally sure-handed receiver.

Ohio State's defense allowed the team to pull in front with a good stand at the end of the first period. Illinois took a possession at its own 17-yard line and wound up having to punt from its 16. A short punt put the Buckeyes in business at the Illini 47 and it took them only four plays to score the go-ahead touchdown and make it 10-7.

But something strange happened just minutes later when OSU tailback Robert Smith was tackled in the end zone for a safety, making the score 10-9. On the play, the Buckeyes were simply trying to get some breathing room after an Illinois punt had backed them up to

their own one-yard line. But Illini defensive tackle Ken Blackman blew through a hole in the OSU line to stuff Smith in the end zone.

Illinois got good field position after the free kick and moved the ball 54 yards in 14 plays for a touchdown that put the Illini back in front 15-10.

But things got strange again on the PAT. Richardson had already booted the extra point, but Ohio State was offside on the play. Just like Cooper did against Wisconsin the week before, Illini head coach Lou Tepper elected to take the point off the board and go for two. And, just like the Buckeyes the week before, the Illini's try for two failed when quarterback Jeff Kinney was tackled by OSU defensive end Derrick Foster short of the goal line.

The Buckeyes got the ball back and drove to the Illinois nine before stalling. They tried to draw the Illini defense offside with a long snap count on fourth-

Continued On Page 13



*Miss Spoils Performance Which Included Three Other FGs***Williams' Potential Game-Winner Sails Wide**

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Tim Williams had often talked about being in a situation where he would be called on to win a game with a field goal.

The Ohio State junior place-kicker finally got his wish against Illinois Oct. 10 in front of a national television audience and nearly 94,000 fans in Ohio Stadium.

But the scenario did not turn out the way Williams had envisioned it time and time again in his mind. The snap was good, the hold was good, and the kick was a good one, too.

But Williams' field goal try from 44 yards out with 53 seconds left in the game sailed a few feet outside the left upright, leaving the kicker face down on the stadium turf and the Buckeyes with an 18-16 loss to the Fighting Illini.

"I was wanting that situation to happen," a soft-spoken Williams told reporters after the game. "I was very, very confident that I was going to make it. I mean, I was extremely, extremely confident, and I was not overconfident at all. I was extremely confident."

"I went out there and was very relaxed. I was more tense on the 31-yarder that I missed earlier; so I was not nervous at all. I hit the ball and I hit it well. You saw the ball travel. I don't know if it hit the net or not, but I hit the ball well. I just played it wrong."

Williams appeared to be kicking with a 13-mph wind at his back. But while the flags on top of Ohio Stadium indicated that, it was a different story on the field.

"The wind was coming left to right a little bit; so I thought the wind would help it move right a little bit," Williams explained. "I kicked it left and thought the ball would come back to the right, but it never did."

"The wind changes every play. At one point, the wind was blowing toward the open end, and another time it



Ohio State junior place-kicker Tim Williams (23) rises dejectedly from the Ohio Stadium turf after missing a 44-yard field goal attempt in the final minute of an 18-16 loss to Illinois. Williams had earlier kicked three field goals in the game, including a 50-yarder in the first quarter.

wasn't. You get screwed sometimes if you start playing the wind. But I kicked it as well as I thought I could kick it. It just wasn't there for me."

It was the culmination of a bittersweet day for Williams. For the first time in his life, he converted three field goals in a game, booting kicks of 25, 29 and 50 yards.

The 50-yarder came in the first quarter and tied a kick he had at Michigan last season as the second-longest of his career. He kicked a 52-yarder as a freshman against Boston College.

"That was a great moment for me," Williams said of the 50-yarder. "It's kind of hard to look back right now and

tell how happy I was."

"I thought I was going to have a great day. In warm-ups, I didn't miss any kicks. I came out and hit a 50-yarder right away. Then, this is the first time I've ever kicked three field goals in a game, high school or college."

But the game came down to a try from 44 yards in the final minute of



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play. It would have topped off a drive by Ohio State that would have answered a 15-play, 86-yard march by Illinois which resulted in the Illini taking the lead with a 21-yard field goal by Chris Richardson.

Williams looked as though he might not get a chance at the game-winner when the Buckeyes were faced with fourth down and 10 at the Illini 43. But OSU quarterback Kirk Herbstreit scrambled 11 yards for the first down, and then the Buckeyes used three straight running plays to put the ball in the middle of the field for Williams' attempt.

Ohio State head coach John Cooper said he thought his team had won the game at that point.

"I thought Timmy would make the field goal," Cooper said. "We kick nine field goals every day in practice and I know what his range is. He kicked a 50-yard field goal against the wind. I never thought he wouldn't make the kick."

Before Williams had a chance, though, Illinois called timeout to try to ice him.

"That didn't bother me at all," Williams said. "It gave me another chance to go to my (practice) net, which was what I needed to do."

"It was just one of those days. I kicked the ball and hit it really, really well. It would have gone 60 yards; it just didn't go between the goal posts. The snap, the hold, everything was fine. It just didn't go through for me. I kept thinking it would come back to the right

and it just never did."

"I really thought I had made it when I kicked it. Before I brought my head up, I thought, 'Gosh, this is a great feeling.' Then I brought my head up and the only thing to do then was start praying for it to go to the right a little bit, but it didn't."

Williams fell face down on the turf in disbelief. Then finally, after making his way to the bench, he appeared inconsolable on the sideline.

"The players and the coaches were great," he said. "They supported me, but of course, they're all going to come up to me and say, 'It wasn't your fault' and 'We didn't make a play here.' A guy didn't make a catch here, a guy fumbled here."

"But that's not what people are going to remember. That's not what I am going to remember. I'm going to remember that last play. The coaches and players tried to make me feel better by saying stuff like that, and I appreciate it and it shows me that I have their support and they have confidence in me, but as far as I'm concerned, I lost the ball game."

It was an especially tough loss for the Buckeyes in light of losing to Illinois the four previous seasons. But for Williams, it was like a lifelong dream had been dashed.

"This is the first time I've ever been in this situation," he said. "I started four years in high school, this is my third year starting here, and this is the first time I've ever had a game come

down to me. I didn't know what the feeling was like. Like I said, I wasn't nervous. I know what it's like now and I'll learn from this."

Asked what he could learn, Williams replied, "I guess I'll learn from the feeling afterward, I'll learn that I shouldn't feel like that after a kick, I'll learn to

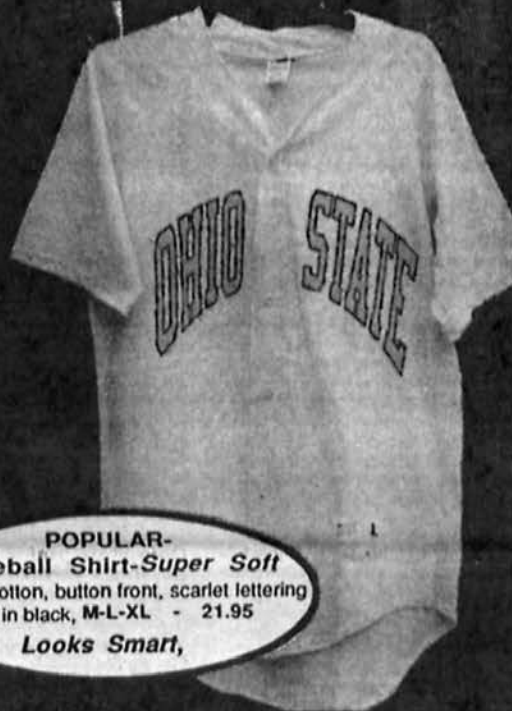
take it a little better. I don't know if I'll learn anything about the kick itself because, again, I kicked it really well."

"Really, I don't know if I'll learn anything except that I don't want this feeling again. I'm going to take this really hard. But, hopefully, it makes me a better place-kicker."

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## Despite Another Loss To Illinois, Cooper Retains Lots Of Support

By MARK REA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

After five straight losses to Illinois, Ohio State head coach John Cooper may have lost fan support, but he has not lost the support of his assistant coaches and players.

Following the Buckeyes' 18-16 loss to the Illini in Ohio Stadium Oct. 10, many fans left the Horseshoe shouting epithets at the five-year coach.

In fact, during the game, when the scoreboard showed an advertisement for Cooper's weekly call-in radio show, the crowd responded with a lusty boo.

But one of the principals in the loss to Illinois said that kind of fan reaction is misguided.

"It's bad enough to lose, but it's even tougher to hear the boos from the home crowd," said OSU place-kicker Tim Williams, whose 44-yard field goal attempt to win the game went wide left of the uprights with 53 seconds left in the game.

When a reporter suggested to Williams that the fans were not booing the team but rather Cooper, he replied, "Well, they shouldn't boo the coach. The coach didn't lose the damn game. Our players lost the game."

"Coach Cooper is a great coach. He's done a helluva job since I've been here. He gave me a chance to kick here; he's recruited some great athletes to come to Ohio State. I wish they would get off his back."

"He's a great coach; he has great coaches behind him. If the players don't execute, obviously, you don't win. We didn't execute; so we didn't win. It's a bunch of crap that everyone boos the coach because he does a helluva job."

Ohio State defensive coordinator Bill Young echoed Williams' sentiments.

"I've been with John Cooper for 13 years and there's not a better football coach, there's not a better person, and there's not a better boss in the country," Young said.

"I feel bad for him, but I feel worse for our football team. But John is a fighter and our team is a bunch of fighters. We'll regroup and we'll come back."

Through 52 games as head coach at Ohio State, Cooper now has a record of 30-20-2 and a Big Ten mark of 18-14-2.

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## Wilkinson Registers Three Sacks Among His 10 Total Tackles

# 'Big Daddy' Stars On Defense For Buckeyes

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Illinois quarterback Jeff Kinney had enough to worry about in his first collegiate start, trying to keep himself together in front of 93,982 people jammed into Ohio Stadium.

Actually, Kinney did pretty well with all of those people except one — Ohio State defensive tackle "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson.

Kinney managed to complete 12 of 25 passes for 139 yards against the Buckeyes, helping his team to an 18-16 victory. But he could never quite shake Wilkinson.

The 6-5, 299-pound redshirt freshman for Ohio State sacked Kinney three times during the day and pressured him into bad passes on countless other occasions.

For the afternoon, Wilkinson tallied 10 total tackles to go along with those three sacks — the only times the Buckeyes got to Kinney all day — and received *Big Bear Buckeye of the Week* honors.

With the performance, Wilkinson climbed into a tie with Derrick Foster for the season team lead in sacks with four. His 10 overall tackles also matched his total production from the team's previous four games.

Blistered for its play in an upset loss against Wisconsin the week before, the defense had a goal to stop Illinois this week, Wilkinson said.

"In this one, we knew we had to play all-out, lights-out ball," he said. "That's the way I looked at it. Last week against Wisconsin, I probably was kind of lackadaisical, taking things for granted. I'm talking about myself. I didn't do that today. That was probably the difference."

During the Wisconsin game, the Badgers took control of the game with two long touchdown drives in the third quarter, turning the Buckeyes' 10-3 halftime lead into a 17-10 deficit from



With help from teammate Greg Smith, Ohio State defensive tackle Dan Wilkinson (72) wraps up Illinois quarterback Jeff Kinney. Wilkinson registered a career-high three sacks in the game.

which the Bucks never recovered. In that contest, OSU never seemed to be able to corral Wisconsin quarterback Darrell Bevell.

But it was a different story against the Illini and Kinney. The senior quarterback did not appear as mobile as teammate Jason Verduzco, the man he replaced in the starting lineup, and that allowed the Buckeyes to get some more penetration up front.

"Kinney was a good quarterback, but we had made a goal to get more penetration up front today," Wilkinson said. "I think we did that. We got to him a couple of times, and other times he got the ball away, but he paid the price."

On one particular play late in the second quarter, Kinney paid a particularly high price. Holding a 15-10 lead in

the final minute before halftime, the Illini moved near midfield and appeared to be driving for another score.

On a first-down play, though, Wilkinson blew in through an Illinois blocker and blew through Kinney as well. It wasn't really a tackle; more like a cross check in hockey that sent the 6-4, 200-pound QB to the turf.

According to Wilkinson, he stayed on his feet for a reason.

"I didn't see the ball, but I was hoping Kinney had it up," he said. "I was hoping just to run through him and get to the ball, but he tucked it back under his arm. I was thinking maybe if I knocked the ball loose, I could pick it up and run with it. But he tucked it back in and just went down."

On the next play, Wilkinson came in on Kinney again, narrowly missing him. But it appeared on television replays that the OSU lineman was being held on the play. Wilkinson said it wasn't an illusion and that he was being held other times as well.

"They were holding me all day," he

said. "I told the ref about it, but he told me a hold is only when they take me all the way down, completely down to the ground. So I guess they figured they could hold me better than block me."

"When he told me that, though, I went over to our offensive linemen and told them to start holding more and add it to their list of things to do because they never called it. They never did call a holding penalty the whole game. But that's part of the game. I just forgot about it."

While the Illini put 18 points on the scoreboard, only half of them were given up by the Ohio State defense. Illinois' defense accounted for two scores with a touchdown on a fumble return and a safety. But it was a late drive by the Illini offense that led to the victory. After Ohio State fumbled away a possession on the one-yard line, Illinois drove 86 yards, chewing up eight and a half minutes, for the game-winning field goal by Chris Richardson.

That drive was eerily reminiscent of the long marches used by Wisconsin against the Buckeyes. It was also the Illini's only really long, sustained drive of the afternoon.

"They really didn't change anything then," Wilkinson said. "They tightened their split ends up a little bit and tried to run the ball. That's all they did. They moved it on us pretty well, but we still managed to hold them to a field goal. That wasn't very good, but at least it wasn't a touchdown and still gave us a chance to win it at the end."

But the Buckeyes could not win the game at the end, snuffing out any realistic chance they had to win this year's Big Ten championship. Much of the team took the loss hard, including Wilkinson.

"It's tough. We're depressed, and some of us are crying," he said. "It's especially hard when your defense plays its heart out and your offense plays its heart out."

"But we just made too many mistakes. You can't win like that. When the offense gets down on the goal line and fumbles, you can't beat anyone like that. You can't beat a high school team like that."

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## Illini Fourth-Quarter Drive Similar To Wisconsin Scoring Treks

## Defense Victimized By Another Late March

By MIKE WACHSMAN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The teams were different, but the way they defeated Ohio State was the same.

After allowing Wisconsin three second-half scoring drives of 78, 58 and 66 yards in a 20-16 loss Oct. 3, the Buckeye defense could not make the pivotal stops against Illinois on a fourth-quarter drive the following week, allowing the Illini to drive 86 yards for a 21-yard field goal that provided the final margin of victory in an 18-16 decision.

Unfortunately for the OSU defense, it was in a position to have to stop the Illini in that situation. With the exception of that final drive, the Buckeyes played well defensively against Illinois, allowing just nine points on a touchdown and a field goal. The other nine points came on a 96-yard fumble return by the Illini defense and a safety.

The Buckeyes limited Illinois to just 270 yards for the game and only 3.9 yards per play. But on the final scoring drive the Orange and Blue ate up almost one third of their total for the day. In addition, Illinois took a huge chunk out of the fourth quarter — eight minutes and 29 seconds — executing the drive.

The success the Illini had on that 15-play drive did not sit well with OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young.

"That scoring drive, we have them first and 15 and they pick up 27 yards," Young said. "That kind of set the tone for that drive. We were missing tackles some, but they were running hard and making the plays. We felt even when they scored the field goal, we had kept them out of the end zone and we could win the game."

Senior cornerback Bryan Cook was at a loss to describe the loss, especially

when almost all the numbers pointed in the Buckeyes' direction.

"There is no justification in my mind," Cook said. "We were the better team. I'll tell anybody that. We were better than Illinois. We should have won the game."

That seems true when glancing at the statistics.

The Buckeyes picked off one Jeff Kinney pass, blocked a punt and limited Illinois to just 14 first downs.

However, on the final drive, Illinois had three plays go for more than 10 yards and converted three straight third-down plays. After picking up only 175 yards in their previous 10 possessions, the Illini switched to a formation that featured two split outs, two tight ends, and only one running back — the same formation Wisconsin ran with success a week prior.

"That formation spreads the field out and gets your linebackers more spread out than you want them to be," Cook said. "From the secondary standpoint, I don't know what was going on up front, but we just weren't getting the job done."

With the lack of success the OSU offense was having denting the scoreboard, it was up to the defense to keep the Illini out.

But, according to sophomore safety Walter Taylor, members of the defensive unit never get upset when the offense fails to convert in scoring situations.

"We never have a letdown feeling if the offense doesn't produce because we're all a team and we have to play as a team," said Taylor, who finished the game with two tackles, a blocked punt and a fumble recovery to his credit. "We can't say the offense didn't do it or the defense didn't do it. It's a team thing."

Even after Ohio State missed a game-winning field goal in the final

minute of play, Young did not give up hope.

"I thought on the last drive we were on defense, if we could stop them on that first down play, we might still have had a chance," he said. "We had all three timeouts left. But they made six yards on first down, then seven on second down. That really didn't help us."

The loss hit Cook especially hard because he will never experience a win over the Illini in his five years of being

a Buckeye. But he also knows there are six games left in this season.

"Our main goal is just to sleep this one off," the senior cornerback said. "Just let it pass. There's a lot more football to be played this season. We just have to rally together and finish the season out on a positive note."

"We'll regroup. We'll just go to bed, sleep it off, and come Monday morning, come in and get ready for Northwestern."

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TIM CARLSON



Members of the Illinois defense swarm all over Ohio State running back Eddie George (27) in the second quarter. On the next play, the Illini stuffed tailback Robert Smith in the end zone, resulting in a safety.

## Miscues In Red Zone Make Ohio State Blue

By MIKE WACHSMAN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Being in the red zone made the Ohio State offense blue in an 18-16 loss to Illinois Oct. 10 in Ohio Stadium.

Prior to the loss, when the Buckeyes got into the red zone, they were in the pink. In the previous four games, OSU had crossed the opponents' 20-yard line 14 times, coming away with 12 scores — nine touchdowns and three field goals.

Against the Illini, though, the Buckeyes got into the red zone six times and had to settle for just one touchdown and two field goals.

There were two crucial fumbles, both by freshman running back Eddie George at the one-yard line, one of which was returned for a 96-yard touchdown, and a 31-yard field goal that was missed by place-kicker Tim Williams.

Obviously, in a two-point loss, that lack of success by the Buckeyes cost them the game. That lack of success also made offensive coordinator Joe Hollis see red.

"We turned the ball over three times and not only that, one of them cost us a touchdown," Hollis said. "We're sick about it, but we feel like we're still a good football team. It's going to be a tough week for us, but we'll gather 'em back and go on from there."

Ultimately, the game came down to another missed scoring opportunity when the Buckeyes stalled just outside the red zone in the fourth quarter. That's when Williams hooked a 44-yard field goal wide left with 53 seconds to play. But the game could have been out of reach by the Buckeyes long before Williams' kick.

"Our inability to score once we get the ball down in the red zone has hurt us as much as anything," said OSU head coach John Cooper. "We turned the ball over twice today in that situation. If we put it in the end zone, you're looking at 30 points."

"We were driving for a touchdown and then turned that around with the

fumble and long run for a touchdown. That's a 14-point swing right there. Then we lost another touchdown and they came back with a field goal. There's another 10 points. Give us another 14 points and take 10 away from them and it's a totally different ball game."

OSU had good success on offense between the 20s, racking up 342 yards in total offense, including 160 rushing. But dominance in total offense doesn't win football games.

"We moved the ball pretty well all day long," Hollis said. "We were running and throwing and doing the things we wanted to do. We just didn't cash in. We're disappointed we didn't win the football game because we felt we should have won."

"It doesn't seem like we do things the easy way on offense. We don't get that long touchdown pass or whatever, but the true test of this team is how hard we come back and practice and play next week."

Cooper is now 0-5 against Illinois in his career as Buckeye coach and has seen a few strange things in the five games. There was a forward lateral of a blocked field goal two years ago and Illinois' game-winning three-pointer with just 36 seconds left last year.

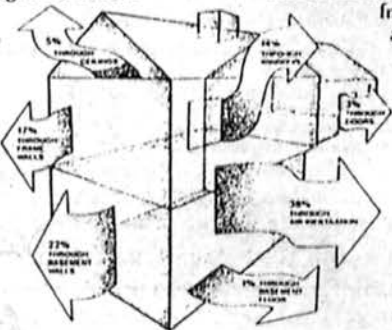
But it has been a simple thing like not punching the ball into the end zone at golden opportunities that has most often spelled defeat for OSU against Illinois. In the last two games against Illinois, the Buckeyes have taken eight trips to the red zone and scored just one touchdown.

What's more, in those five straight losses to the Illini, the Buckeyes have committed an almost unbelievable 19 turnovers, an average of nearly four per game.

"It's a game of mistakes. I tell that to our team every day," Cooper said. "The team that makes the fewest mistakes is going to win. You can't turn the ball over twice on the goal line and get the ball deep on their end of the field and not come away with any points."

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## Only Michigan Owns Longer Win Streak Against Buckeyes

## Illini Dominance Over OSU Baffles Tepper

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Lou Tepper has been at Illinois as long as John Cooper has been at Ohio State and, like Cooper, Tepper remains perplexed by the Illini's five-year jinx over the Buckeyes.

Tepper was an assistant coach under John Mackovic as the Illini beat OSU and Cooper four straight times, and Tepper kept the tradition alive Oct. 10, escaping Ohio Stadium with a mysterious 18-16 win.

"To our fifth-year seniors, going out and beating Ohio State five years in a row, I know it meant a lot to them. But it wasn't something that we particularly played upon," Tepper said. "I don't know how many times it has been done, but when you consider the quality of Ohio State's program, it says a lot."

Only Michigan, which defeated the Buckeyes nine straight times in the first decade of this century and added six straight wins in the 1920s, has mastered OSU better. The Wolverines are currently working with a four-game win streak over the Buckeyes.

Tepper, whose team was coming off a disappointing 18-17 loss at Minnesota, a game in which it lost a 17-3 lead in the second half, had no explanation for Illinois' recent dominance over OSU. But just moments after his first Big Ten victory, he related to the dismay he was sure Cooper felt.

"I can empathize a great deal for John Cooper," he said. "I was there a week ago under the same conditions. I don't know if one side was coached better or if one side played better than the other, but we came out ahead."

"Last week, I really felt that we did a lot of great things in the kicking game and I thought that our young defense progressed, but very few people wanted to hear about that simply because we lost. All of the things you hear are negative things."

"I think Ohio State can go on and have a very fine year; so I empathize with him very much and I respect the effort. I don't think the Buckeye fans have anything to be disturbed about with the effort that their team gave today."

Ohio State appeared ready to gain the upper hand right away with an efficient opening drive to the Illini one-yard line. But the tide turned when defensive back Jeff Arneson helped stand up OSU tailback Eddie George, caused a fumble and scooped up the ball and ran for a 96-yard touchdown.

"(Linebacker) Dana (Howard) and I came up and made the hit," Arneson said. "I don't know which one of us popped it out, but I saw it come out and I just ran after it. (Defensive back) Derrick (Rucker) ran over there and tipped it up in the air and I just grabbed it and ran."

"I didn't look back until the last 30 yards. I just looked straight ahead and ran my butt off. When I looked back and saw just my teammates, I kind of strutted in, but that was mostly because I was tired. I was carrying a refrigerator on my back."

Tepper made sure the play would stand before joining his players in celebration.

"I was looking back for any yellow material. That's what concerned me the most," the Illini head coach said. "He ran a lot of time off the clock, I know that."

The unlikely score spotted new quarterback Jeff Kinney a lead without touching the ball. Tepper named Kinney to call signals the week of the game, opting to bench regular Jason Verduzco, and stayed with Kinney throughout.

Tepper had ample opportunities to replace Kinney — who finished 12-of-25 passing for 139 yards and one interception — with Verduzco early in the game, but he never did. However, the Illini head coach did admit the thought crossed his mind late in the game.

"One of Jason's real strong points is the two-minute offense and that's something we may have done," Tepper said. "Had (OSU's) field goal been good, there's a possibility we might have gone with Jason."

Illinois offensive coordinator Tom Beck named Kinney the starter days before the game with the Buckeyes and said his fifth-year senior did a good job in his first collegiate start.

"I think he did a very credible job," Beck said. "I think a lot of people made a lot out of the decision and I think Jeff responded very well."

"He made some errors out there, like everybody else did, but he came through. He made some key passes, he got hit, he made a good decision on an option and scored a touchdown, and Ohio State has an outstanding defense."

Kinney was more critical of his performance.

"I didn't play a very good game at all," he said, "but I'm not out here to win a game for myself. I'm really proud of this team. It was a total team effort and when we needed the offense to go down there and score, we did."



Ohio State flanker Greg Beatty gives chase, but he will not catch Illinois linebacker Jeff Arneson (43), who scooped up an OSU fumble and returned it 96 yards for a touchdown in the first quarter. The play helped propel the Illini to an 18-16 win.

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# Strange Things Abound In Loss To Illinois

Continued From Page 1

and-two, but the play didn't work and resulted in a delay of game penalty.

That backed up OSU to the 14 but still meant only a 31-yard field goal attempt by Williams. However, the kicker missed the try, hooking the ball to the left.

With only a minute remaining in the first half, Illinois tried for some more points and looked like it would get them until OSU cornerback Tim Walton intercepted a pass and returned it 59 yards to the Illini eight-yard line.

With only five seconds left in the half, Williams sought redemption and got it, nailing a 25-yarder to make the score 15-13 at halftime.

The second half began rather calmly with Ohio State getting a third field goal from Williams — this one of 29 yards — at the 6:47 mark of the third quarter to put the Buckeyes back in front 16-15.

But the strange things started happening again. OSU safety Walter Taylor caused an Illinois fumble and recovered it himself. Two plays later, OSU fullback Jeff Cothran fumbled the ball back to the Illini. Then, on the second play of the fourth quarter, Taylor blocked a punt, setting up the Buckeyes at the Illini 25-yard line.

Three plays later, Herbstreit threw a pass to Cothran, who made an overhead grab and went out of bounds at the one. On the next play, George was back in the lineup, looking for another touchdown. But he was knocked in the air by Howard, then smacked from behind by Illini backup DB Tyrone Washington.

Washington's hit knocked the ball loose from George and Rucker pounced on it at the 10. From there, the Illini took off on a drive that took 15 plays,

covered 86 yards and ate up eight and a half minutes. It ended with Richardson knocking a 21-yard chip shot through the uprights, causing the fourth lead change in the game and giving the Illini an 18-16 lead with 4:56 to go.

The Buckeyes took the ensuing kick-off and moved easily down the field until stalling at the Illini 43, faced with fourth and 10. But Herbstreit improvised on a pass play, tucking the ball under his arm and scrambling for 11 yards and the first down.

After that, OSU called three running plays to set Williams up in the middle of the field. And, with three field goals already under his belt, the Buckeyes' kicker trotted out for a 44-yard attempt to win the game.

The ball had plenty of distance but

strayed just outside the left upright. After that, the Illini simply ran out the clock to preserve the victory.

## SCORING SUMMARY

ILL. — QB Jeff Kinney runs for three-yard touchdown with 4:48 remaining in the second quarter. Kinney's run for the two-point conversion failed. Fourteen-play, 54-yard drive. Time elapsed 6:31. Key plays — Kinney passed for 16 yards to FB Darren Beyer on third-and-seven to the OSU 35. Beyer ran for three yards on third-and-one to the OSU 13. Beyer ran for one yard on third-and-one to the OSU 3. Illinies 15, Ohio State 16.

OSU — Williams kicks 25-yard field goal with no time remaining in second quarter. One-play drive patted zero yards. Time elapsed 0:05. Key plays — CB Tim Walton intercepted a Kinney pass and returned it 59 yards to the Illini 8. Illinies 15, Ohio State 15.

OSU — Williams kicks 29-yard field goal with 6:47 remaining in the third quarter. Eleven-play, 40-yard drive. Time elapsed 6:01. Key plays — Herbstreit passed for 19 yards to SE Brian Stabits on first-and-10 to the Illini 32. Smith ran for five yards on third-and-one to the Illini 18. Harris ran for five yards on third-and-four to the Illini 7. Ohio State 16, Illinies 15.

ILL. — Richardson kicks 21-yard field goal with 4:56 remaining in the fourth quarter. Fifteen-play, 96-yard drive. Time elapsed 8:29. Key plays — Possession set up on fumble recovery at the Illini 10 by Rucker. TB Kevin Jackson ran for 27 yards on draw on second-and-five to the Illini 42. Beyer ran for 12 yards on third-and-one to the OSU 37. Kinney passed for nine yards to TE Craig Koster on third-and-one to the OSU 21. Kinney ran for five yards on third-and-one to the OSU 7. Illinies 18, Ohio State 16.

## Huskies, 'Canes Sharing Top Spot

While Washington was beating up on Pac-10 foe California, Miami (Fla.) was edging its second top 10 opponent in two weeks, beating Penn State 17-14.

That result put the Hurricanes and Huskies — last year's national co-champions — into a tie atop the latest CSAN Editor's Top 20 poll.

Meanwhile, Ohio State fell completely out of the rankings after gaining two votes last week.

1. Washington (8).....	272
(tie) Miami (Fla.) (6).....	272
3. Michigan.....	237
4. Florida State.....	230
5. Texas A&M.....	225
6. Alabama.....	220
7. Colorado.....	192
8. Stanford.....	172
9. Penn State.....	170
10. Georgia.....	138
11. Syracuse.....	119
12. Notre Dame.....	115
(tie) Nebraska.....	115
14. Tennessee.....	106
15. Mississippi State.....	97
16. Virginia.....	71
17. Boston College.....	50
18. Georgia Tech.....	36
19. Washington State.....	25
20. Clemson.....	20

Others receiving votes: Southern Cal 19, Kansas 12, UCLA 8, Florida 7, West Virginia, North Carolina State and Arizona 4.



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# The Numbers Game

## Illini 18, Buckeyes 16

ILLINOIS	7	8	0	3	18
OHIO STATE	3	10	3	0	16

ILL — Arneson, 96 fumble return (Richardson kick) 11:43  
 OSU — T. Williams, 50 field goal 3:09  
 OSU — George, 4 run (T. Williams kick) 13:20  
 ILL — Safety, Rob. Smith tackled in end zone by Blackman 11:24  
 ILL — Kinney, 3 run (run failed) 4:48  
 OSU — T. Williams, 25 field goal 0:00  
 OSU — T. Williams, 29 field goal 6:47  
 ILL — Richardson, 21 field goal 4:56  
 ATT. — 93,982

	ILL	OSU
First Downs	14	21
Rushing	8	10
Passing	5	9
Penalty	1	2
Rushes-Yards	44-131	42-160
Passing Yards	139	182
Passes	25-12-1	27-15-0
Plays	69	69
Total Net Yards	270	342
Third Down Efficiency	8-18	5-15
Punts	7-31.4	3-33.7
Fumbles-Lost	3-1	6-3
Penalties	4-40	4-17
Time Of Possession	30:40	29:20

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING** (Att.-Net Yds.) — ILL: Boyer 18-73; Jackson 9-71; Feagin 7-14; Kinney 10-(-27); OSU: Harris 18-74; Rob Smith 6-40; Cothran 7-26; Sanders 1-24; Herbstreit 4-3; George 6-(-7).  
**PASSING** (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — ILL: Kinney 25-12-1-139-0. OSU: Herbstreit 27-15-0-182-0.  
**RECEIVING** (Rec.-Yds.) — ILL: Koester 4-38; Boyer 3-41; Olson 3-25; Klein 1-25; Wright 1-10. OSU: Stablein 6-85; Cothran 4-41; Saunders 3-20; Sanders 1-13; By'not'e 1-13.  
**PUNTING** (No.-Avg.-Lg.) — ILL: Wells 4-36.5-43; Larson 2-37.0-37. OSU: Kessel 3-33.7-36.  
**PUNT RETURNS** (No.-Avg.-Lg.) ILL: None. OSU: Stablein 2-9.0-14; Taylor 1-10-1.  
**KICKOFF RETURNS** (No.-Avg.-Lg.) ILL: Lynch 2-14.0-16; Voelker 1-8.0-8. OSU: By'not'e 2-26.0-41; Sanders 1-18.0-18.  
**DEFENSIVE FUMBLES RECOVERED BY** — ILL: Arneson, Rucker, Rice. OSU: Taylor.

**INTERCEPTIONS** — ILL: None. OSU: Walton.  
**TACKLES FOR LOSS** — ILL: Howard, Holecck, Leach, Cole, Hardy, Blackman. OSU: Wilkinson (3), Team (3), Simmons (2), M. Williams, Foster, G. Smith.  
**TACKLES** (Solo-Assist-Tot.) — ILL: Howard 7-8-15; Holecck 5-3-8; Rucker 4-4-8; Arneson 3-5-8; F. Johnson 4-2-6; Cole 4-2-6; Leach 1-5-6; Hardy 2-3-5; Copher 2-3-5; Hasenstab 0-4-4; Crumpton 2-1-3; Patton 0-2-2; Collins 0-2-2; Washington 1-0-1; Voelker 1-0-1; Bierman 1-0-1; Blackman 1-0-1; Rice 1-0-1; Richards 0-1-1; Hill 0-1-1; Shelby 0-1-1; Olson 0-1-1. OSU: Tovar 3-10-13; M. Williams 6-6-12; Wilkinson 3-7-10; Nelson 2-6-8; Cook 3-4-7; Simmons 3-4-7; Harper 3-2-5; Powell 3-2-5; Foster 1-3-4; G. Smith 1-3-4; Team 3-0-3; R. Brown 2-1-3; Styles 2-1-3; Taylor 1-1-2; Kerner 0-2-2; Rodriguez 0-2-2.

### Players In The Game

**ILLINOIS** — Hasenstab, Foggey, Cole, McCloud, Copher, Blackman, Leach, Rice, Hardy, Collins, Holecck, Howard, Crumpton, Rucker, Qualls, Arneson, Patton, Washington, Johnson, Boykin, Klein, Strong, Hopkins, Pesek, Engel, Kerr, Bierman, Olson, Koester, Kinney, Boyer, Pierce, Scott, Feagin, Jackson, Lynch, Wright, Fisher, Richardson, Wells, Larsen, Hill, Gabrielle, Sidari, Roberts, Allen, Cox, Richards, Russell, Voelker, Rathke.

**OHIO STATE** — Stablein, Beatty, Kline, Hartman, Long, Monnot, Rod Smith, Stringer, Wiorow, Saunders, D.J. Jones, Metzger, Herbstreit, Cothran, George, Harris, By'not'e, Rob Smith, Sanders, DeGraffenreid, Foster, R. Brown, Wilkinson, Beckman, G. Smith, Bonhaus, Simmons, M. Williams, Styles, Tovar, Rodriguez, Powell, Cook, Paul, Harper, Patillo, Nelson, Taylor, Walton, Kerner, Kessel, T. Williams, Thrush, Borchers, Lease.

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## OSU Season Statistics

RUSHING	ATT	GAIN	LOST	NET	AVG	TD	LG	FIRST DOWNS	OPP	OSU
Raymont Harris	54	232	7	225	4.2	2	20	Rushing	85	95
Robert Smith	36	196	11	185	5.1	1	29	Passing	40	51
Jeff Cothran	43	180	6	174	4.0	1	22	Penalty	43	36
Butler By'not'e	23	103	11	92	4.0	0	36	AVG PER GAME/RUSH	123.8	148.8
Eddie George	25	74	13	61	2.4	5	13	AVG PER GAME/PASS	186.4	158.6
Joey Galloway	1	50	0	50	50.0	1	50	AVG PER PLAY/PASS	6.3	6.8
Chris Sanders	1	24	0	24	24.0	0	24	TOTAL OFFENSE	1551	1537
Brian Stablein	1	10	0	10	10.0	0	10	Total Plays	348	337
William Houston	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1	Average Per Game	310.2	307.4
Bob Hoying	2	2	9	-7	-3.5	0	2	Average Per Play	4.5	4.6
Kirk Herbstreit	33	44	115	-71	-2.2	0	14	PENALTIES-YARDS	34-326	23-174
OSU Totals	220	916	172	744	3.4	10	50	Offense	15-123	14-117
OPP Totals	200	830	211	619	3.1	7	37	Defense	12-126	3-15
PASSING	ATT	COMP	INT	YDS	PCT	TD	LG	Special Teams		
Kirk Herbstreit	114	68	4	789	59.6	2	46	FUMBLES-LOST	10-4	11-6
Bob Hoying	3	1	1	4	33.3	0	4	3rd DOWN EFFICIENCY	29-79	28-73
OSU Totals	117	69	5	793	59.0	2	46	Percentage	367	384
OPP Totals	148	79	9	932	53.4	1	58	4th DOWN EFFICIENCY	4-5	3-4
								Percentage	800	750
								SACKS AGAINST	12-102	15-97
								TIME OF POSSESSION	151-34	148-26
								Average Per Game	30.9	29.41

## Defensive Statistics

DEFENSE	SOLO	AST	TOT	TAC-LOSSES	QB-SACK	PBU	FC	FR	TDS	BK
Steve Tovar	21	37	58	2.4	-	2	1	-	-	EP
Mark Williams	13	24	37	1.4	-	1	2	1	-	-
Bryan Cook	22	12	34	2.3	-	2	-	-	-	-
Roger Harper	16	18	34	2.6	-	1	-	-	-	-
Tim Walton	17	13	30	-	-	3	-	1	1	-
Chico Nelson	13	16	29	1.4	-	1	1	-	-	-
Greg Smith	15	13	28	3-14	2-13	-	1	-	-	-
Jason Simmons	18	8	26	8-31	2-15	-	-	-	-	-
Derrick Foster	11	14	25	6-42	4-34	1	-	1	-	-
Craig Powell	13	8	21	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Dan Wilkinson	7	13	20	6-46	4-40	1	-	-	-	-
Marlon Kerner	12	6	18	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Brent Johnson	7	7	14	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Randall Brown	3	5	8	1-3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alex Rodriguez	3	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Walter Taylor	3	3	6	-	-	1	1	1	-	PT
Lorenzo Styles	4	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luke Pickell	0	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tom Lease	2	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matt Christopher	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jason Louis	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tito Paul	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robert Smith	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pete Beckman	1	0	1	1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paul Long	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Butler By'not'e	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jeff Cothran	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dave Monnot	0	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Tackles for loss by OSU 33-167, Sacks by OSU 12-102



## BSB Quotebook: Illinois 18, Ohio State 16

Ohio State head coach John Cooper's assessment of the game: "You can't make the mistakes we made today and expect to beat a pretty good team like Illinois. We fumbled the ball away twice on the goal line and missed two field goals. If we score on any one of those plays, it's a different outcome — we win."

Illinois head coach Lou Tepper's assessment of the game: "This was a very big victory for us. I think we are making progress each week and that is what we're seeking. I'm sure it is a great thrill for our seniors to have beaten Ohio State five years in a row. It's a great thrill for us to beat a program that has the stature of Ohio State."

OSU senior cornerback Bryan Cook on experiencing his fifth straight loss to the Illini: "There is no justification in my mind. We were the better team. I'll tell anybody that; we were better than Illinois. We should have won that game."

OSU sophomore safety Walter Taylor on the mood inside the Buckeye locker room after the game: "It's very quiet in there. Everybody is down, a little mad, a little sad. The seniors are upset because they haven't won over Illinois since they've been here. That's a hard feeling to deal with."

OSU junior place-kicker Tim Williams on his two missed field goals: "I'm more mad at myself for the 31-yarder I missed at the end of the first half than I am about the one at the end. On that one, I just opened up too quick and hooked it. On the last one, I thought it was good. I hit it real well; it just started out left and never came back for me. Good kickers miss field goals. It just so happened that one was to win the game. I didn't come through."

Illinois sophomore place-kicker Chris Richardson on the empathy he felt for Williams: "I feel bad for him. I've never been in that position yet, and he missed two today. He could have said if he made either that Ohio State would have won. But kicking in front of 90,000 people is a tough way to live."

OSU offensive coordinator Joe Hollis on the 44-yard field goal attempt Williams missed at the end of the game: "We shouldn't have been in that situation to begin with. But we were. We turned the ball over three times. We don't turn the ball over three times, we're not in the position to have to kick a field goal to win it."

Illinois junior safety Jeff Arneson on his first-quarter fumble recovery and 96-yard touchdown run: "It was their first drive and they were pretty much blowing us off the ball. They had fire in their eyes. But the fumble sucked the life out of them and put life into us."

Cooper on the same play: "Something like that has never happened to me in my whole career. We're down on the one-yard line, driving for a touchdown, and the other team causes a fumble and takes it all the way back for a touchdown. Instead of being ahead 7-0, we were behind 7-0. That's a big, big 14-point swing in a matter of seconds."

Tepper on the same play: "That was just an isolation play, which is essentially linemen on linemen and the fullback on the linebacker. It's a brutal play. (Illini linebackers) Dana Howard, John Holeccek and Aaron Shelby and the Ohio State fullbacks are probably all a half-inch shorter right now than they were before the game. It's a man's play; it's not for the faint-hearted and there are some real collisions. We were fortunate enough to make the play and get the takeaway. It was a big play for us."



John Cooper



Bryan Cook



Tim Williams



Steve Tovar

Arneson on the criticism that had been leveled against the Illinois defense prior to the game: "I think maybe our defense is underrated because we're so young. We have a lot of young players who are going to be great. In the rest of the season, I think we're going to prove some people wrong and make some plays like we did today."

Illinois freshman defensive back Tyrone Washington on his hit in the fourth quarter that caused OSU running back Eddie George to fumble for the second time: "From the way I felt after the hit, I was hoping the ball was coming out. But any time I tackle, I'm surprised if it doesn't come out. That's the way I try to hit."

Illinois junior tight end Kraig Koester on playing in front of the Ohio Stadium crowd of 93,982: "It was fun. It definitely feels good against Ohio State and coming in here in front of 90,000 people and seeing what you can do. It's only 62 of us against 90,000, and we won."

Illinois senior quarterback Jeff Kinney on his performance in his first collegiate start: "I was a little pumped up, but I didn't think I played all that well. But we won, and that's the most important thing. I have a lot of room for improvement, but that's one of the good things about athletics. There's always another game."

Cook on the performance of Kinney: "We did a good job containing him for the most part. He scrambled a couple of times and completed a couple of passes he shouldn't have, but on the main points, defensively, I thought we played OK. I thought we played well enough to win the game. I really expected (former Illini starting QB Jason) Verduzco to come in the game, but I guess they felt Kinney was doing the job. He did all right."

Tepper on the play of OSU quarterback Kirk Herbstreit: "I've got a lot of respect for Herbstreit. There were a lot of quarterbacks who would not have played on the ankle he had. I was most impressed with him. In fact, he was the only Ohio State player I sought out after the game to talk to."

OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young on the notion that the team could collapse in wake of two straight losses: "We may lose another game; we may lose two or three more. I don't know. But I do know that we won't fold our tents. There's too much character on this team for that to happen. I just know that won't happen."

OSU senior middle linebacker Steve Tovar's reply when asked by a reporter if there was anything he could point to as the reason for the Buckeyes' five consecutive losses to Illinois: "There is no reason for it, at least in my mind. That's all I've got to say."

Cook's reply when a reporter asked him what there was left to play for with any realistic chance to go to the Rose Bowl gone: "You play because you're a football player. You never play to lose; you play to win. There's still a remote chance we can get to the Rose Bowl. But, regardless of that, we play to win and that's our goal."

Cooper's final thoughts on the loss: "It was a very, very tough ball game to lose, as you might imagine. I saw some bright spots out there today. I thought we moved the ball pretty well on offense and we played pretty well on defense for the most part. But our mistakes killed us. We obviously had high hopes when we started this season, and we're not in a very good position right now as far as the Big Ten season is concerned. But we're going to come back. We're going to fight back and work through this."



## Cooper Figures His Team's Rose Bowl Chances Are Now Remote

## Coach Admits Mistakes Cost Bucks Dearly

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* will publish excerpts from Ohio State head coach John Cooper's post-game press conference. Here is what Cooper had to say after the Buckeyes' loss to Illinois.

**COOPER:** "As you all can imagine, it's a tough one to lose. It's a tough one to lose. We beat ourselves. Illinois played hard, but it was a game of mistakes. I tell our team every day that the team that makes the fewest mistakes wins. You can't turn the ball over twice on the goal line, and get the ball down on their end of the field like we did, and come away without any points and expect to beat a good football team, or a pretty good football team like Illinois."

"They played hard. After we turned the ball over the second time, they take the ball and drive the length of the field and, of course, kick the winning field goal. Then we come back and miss ours; so that's the way the game goes."

"Any questions?"

**Q.** Realistically, what does this loss do to your team's chances in the Big Ten race?

**COOPER:** "Well, realistically, it doesn't put us in very good position at all. You know that. I mean, Wisconsin has to lose three times now. The other good teams in the league have to lose two. I don't see anybody beating Michigan twice, to be honest with you, unless somebody slips up on them."

**Q.** Can you describe what happened when Eddie George fumbled in the first quarter near the goal line?

**COOPER:** "We got in our goal-line

set, and of course Eddie is our running back in that situation and he's done a good job for us all year. He's scored touchdowns for us and had three in one game against Syracuse. We put him back in and he put the ball in the end zone. It was obvious for us to put him back in on the call that we ran. We had a sweep called on the goal line and we didn't block the linebacker. The linebacker hit Eddie and it resulted in a fumble."

**Q.** On the last possession, after the final first down, was it your strategy to run the ball up the middle and set it up in the middle of the field for a field goal attempt?

**COOPER:** "Once we got the ball in field goal range, absolutely. We were trying to put the ball in the middle or the right hash mark. That's where (special teams coach) Mike Stock coaches the kickers and that's where we wanted the ball for Timmy (Williams). There wasn't anything wrong with the distance. He just hooked it. Once you get the ball in field goal range, I didn't want to take a negative play."

"Some people — the fans, I guess — would expect me to throw the football, but they were blitzing. The one thing we didn't want to do was lose seven, eight, nine or 10 yards and then, all of a sudden, be out of field goal range. So we had the ball in field goal range and we didn't want to risk being out of range. It was just one of those deals. We make the field goal, we win the game. If you miss it, you lose ... and take your lumps."

**Q.** Have you ever had a play turn around like the one in the first quarter

when you were driving for a touchdown, fumbled and they took it the other way for a touchdown?

**COOPER:** "I don't think I've ever had that play happen before because up until this year you couldn't advance a fumble. We're going in for a touchdown and, all of a sudden, boom. That's a 14-point swing. Instead of us scoring and being up 7-0 early in the game, all of a sudden we're down 7-0. But that's why they put the rule in. It's a good rule and I like the rule, to be honest with you. We just haven't made those breaks ourselves."

**Q.** Did you sense at any point in the game that your team had taken control?

**COOPER:** "I thought one of the keys came in the second half. We wanted to come out and play hard in the second half because, during the last two ball games, we haven't done much in the third quarter. So we came out and stopped them and got the ball. As I recall, we had to settle for a field goal, but I thought we had a little momentum there."

"I thought we were going to win the game. I thought Timmy would make the field goal. We kick nine field goals every day in practice and I know what his range is. He kicked a 50-yard field goal against the wind and, in the second half, it was their choice to take the ball to start the second half, and we took the wind in the fourth quarter. I don't know if you noticed that or not. We had the wind at our backs, thinking that it may come down to this kind of ball game. Again, there was nothing wrong with the distance. He had plenty of distance; he just hooked it."

**Q.** Did you say anything to Williams when he missed the field goal?

**COOPER:** "No, I didn't say anything. Well, you know. I asked him how wide it was. It looked like when he hit it, it was good."

**Q.** It didn't appear your defense was much at fault today. It allowed only nine points in the game. Did you think it made the adjustments from last week's loss to Wisconsin?

**COOPER:** "The defense played hard. The only fault I had with the defense was, after Eddie fumbled a second time, Illinois did take the ball the length of the field for the winning field goal. But, you know, you can understand sometimes why that happens. I'm sure they had a big letdown. We had just blocked a punt. It was just one of those things. If it's and buts were candy and nuts, what a merry Christmas it would be. We blocked a punt, and most of the time a punt is going to go backwards, we scoop it up and score. And it turned out, it came this way. Kirk (Herbstreit) made a nice play to Jeff (Cothran) to put us first and goal at the one or one and a half yard line. Then, the next play, we fumbled."

**Q.** Most of the week, the report was that Robert Smith would see action only in an emergency situation. Yet, he played and played early in the game. Did you really plan all along to play him anyway?

**COOPER:** "No. Robert didn't practice all week, but when he warmed up, he told us he wanted to try it and was ready to play. You saw what he did when he was healthy. He ripped off a big gain. Then, on the safety, he got

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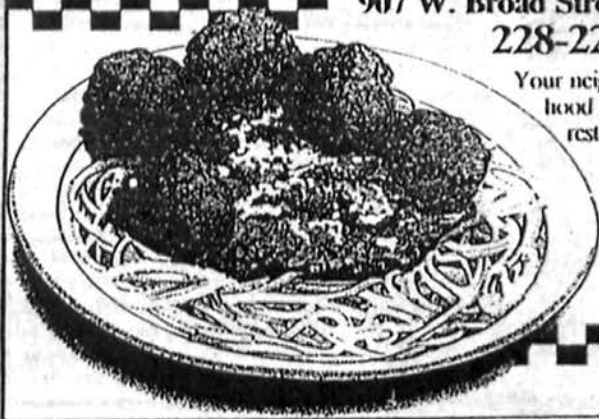
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## Buckeye Sports Bulletin

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hurt again. He came back and tried to play after that but couldn't do it. That's why we played Eddie and Raymont (Harris) the rest of the way at the tail-back spots."

**Q.** With the exception of the Syracuse game, this offense has not scored a lot of points. Has that been a surprise to you?

**COOPER:** "Well, I think our inability to score when we get the ball down in the red zone has hurt us as much as anything. Again, today we turned it over twice down there. You put two more touchdowns on the board and you have 30 points."

**Q.** When the team focuses on goals of winning the Big Ten championship and going to the Rose Bowl, and now it looks like those goals are not going to be reached, how do you avoid a total collapse?

**COOPER:** "The only thing we can do, the only thing I talked to our squad about, was that we're going to have a lot of people out there on our backs, a lot of

people on my back right now, obviously, and it's a no-win situation. The only alternative we have is to circle the wagons, be a close-knit football team, fight back, have a great week of practice and hopefully win next week, try to regroup and have the best kind of season we can have. If you're a competitor, you do that."

"I think we have competitors on this football team, particularly our seniors. Our seniors are very devastated right now because, obviously, we had high hopes to start the season. As we talked about before, our chances of going to the Rose Bowl are probably pretty slim because of two losses. I don't know if a team has ever lost its first two conference games and come back and gone to the Rose Bowl."

**Q.** What was your evaluation of Illinois quarterback Jeff Kinney today?

**COOPER:** "He did some good things. Dan Wilkinson got after him a few times and got a lot of pressure on him, but I thought Jeff played a pretty good ball game."

**Q.** Did you keep looking at their sideline, expecting Jason Verduzco to come into the game?

**COOPER:** "No. I don't have any control over their football team. I'm not worried about who their quarterback is. I'm sure they have a reason for doing what they're doing. They have a plan and I'm sure they're going to stay with that plan."

**Q.** You're now 0-5 against Illinois. Is there any way to explain that?

**COOPER:** "Yeah, we've gotten beat five years in a row. That's the best way to explain it."

**Q.** Some weird things have happened during the last two games. How can you put these things into perspective?

**COOPER:** "There's nothing easy for me these days. It's almost like it wasn't meant to be. We got the ball down on the goal line and, for the first time ever in my career, we fumble the ball like we did, first and goal, and they pick it up and run it back for a touchdown. After we get a fumble, we fumbled the ball again and they pick it up. I don't know; it was just one of those days."

**Q.** Were there any bright spots for your team today?

**COOPER:** "Yeah. I'm proud of our

football team. I didn't think we ever quit in the ball game. I thought we played hard. I thought Danny Wilkinson played a heckuva football game. Herbie did some nice things. The offense is certainly banged up, and I'm sure they'll get their share of criticism this week, but I can't fault guys like Alan Kline and Jason Winrow who are living in the training room all week and playing injured on Saturday and doing the best they can. I thought (Brian) Stablein played a good ball game. Some others guys on defense, I'm sure, played a good ball game."

**Q.** After the Syracuse game, could you have ever dreamed the next two games would have turned out like they have?

**COOPER:** "No. I thought we'd win the game today. I thought we had a good week of practice and I thought we'd come back home and win today. I never go into a game thinking I'm going to lose. I've never been in a ball game yet that I didn't think we had a chance to win. Obviously, I never went to Wisconsin thinking they'd beat us and certainly didn't go out there today thinking we'd lose the ball game."

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# The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, Publisher

## Perhaps The Time Has Come For OSU To Explore Its Options

Sometimes it's easy to blame a football coach for a loss. Maybe the team was not properly motivated or the game plan was poorly conceived. Maybe the coach made a bad decision at some critical point during the contest to cost his team a victory.

In Ohio State's 18-16 loss to Illinois, I'm not sure John Cooper was to blame. The team looked much more motivated than against Wisconsin. The game plan seemed effective, both on offense and defense. Cooper didn't fumble the ball. He didn't miss any field goals.

But there is no escaping the fact, whether it was his fault or not, that the game marked an unprecedented fifth straight loss to Illinois and left the Buckeyes alone in last place in the Big Ten conference. Most likely, the Rose Bowl will again have to wait another year. And there is no escaping the fact

that John Cooper is in trouble.

If you've met Cooper, you know he's a nice guy. His career record would seem to indicate he's a good football coach who runs a clean program. Yet sometimes, for whatever reasons, things just don't work out. Sometimes the chemistry for a person and a job just isn't right.

Over the last four-plus seasons, Cooper has been painting himself into a corner. And now, whether he was to blame for the loss to Illinois or not, he seems to have his back against the wall. Cooper's relationship with the average fan is quite definitely strained. It's getting harder and harder to point to improvement on the field or in the standings as a justification for his continued stay at OSU.

There is plenty of football left to be played this season, and Cooper and his team can definitely still salvage something positive from this campaign. Unfortunately, more losses, especially a fifth straight defeat at the hands of Michigan, are also still possible.

Sure, the decision to retain or remove Cooper ultimately lies with athletic director Jim Jones and OSU president Gordon Gee, not fans or members of the media. But Jones and Gee have to look at the relationship between Cooper and the fans and media in evaluating his situation.

If things continue the way they are going this season, there is no reason to wait for donations and recruiting to suffer. There is also no reason to base a decision on what the press or people across the country might think if the administration makes a move. What's important is what the OSU alumni and the people of Ohio think, and many of them don't think too well of the Ohio State football program right now.

I think the powers that be at OSU need to at least start exploring their future options.

WHILE WE'RE talking about Cooper, let's talk about his accusers a little bit, as well.

After the loss to Wisconsin, many of the Cooper-bashers pointed to the fact that Raymont Harris, not Eddie George, was in on the failed two-point conversion attempt against the Badgers. Well, George was in on goal-line situations against Illinois and coughed up the ball twice. Who's to say he would have done

better than Harris against Wisconsin?

I was also surprised at how many Buckeye fans were critical of Cooper's use of sore-ankled Kirk Herbstreit over Bob Hoyer in the Wisconsin game.

There are a lot of reasons that the Buckeyes lost to the Badgers — and to the Illini for that matter. But Kirk Herbstreit was not one of them.

It's hard to complain about a quarterback who is completing 60 percent of his passes. And on a team in desperate need of leadership, Herbstreit is definitely a leader.

There is no question, however, that the offense is more effective when Herbstreit is more mobile, like he was against Illinois. There is also no question that the Buckeyes need to get Hoyer some game action. Perhaps the opportunity will present itself against Northwestern. Then again, with the way the Bucks have been playing, they better not be taking that opportunity for granted. After all, the Bucks currently trail Northwestern in the standings.

JUST AS it was difficult to find someone who didn't play well against Syracuse, it was difficult to find a lot of people who didn't make mistakes against Illinois. The Bucks are proof that you win as a team and you lose as a team.

I am troubled by the way opponents have been able to drive the ball against the OSU defense, the team's strength.

In the Louisville game, the Cardinals marched 67 yards on 12 plays at the end of the game and, but for a failed two-point conversion, would have won. Wisconsin had three long scoring drives in the second half of its victory.

Illinois ate up over eight minutes in the fourth quarter on its 86-yard scoring march following George's second fumble. Not only did the Illini score the winning points, but they also kept the OSU offense, an offense that had moved the ball much of the day, off the field. The Bucks ended up with only one opportunity to score the winning points, an opportunity that ended with Tim Williams' missed field goal attempt.

During drives like the ones mounted by Louisville, Wisconsin and Illinois, somebody on the OSU defense has to step up and make a big play. That's what winning football is all about.

ONE PLAYER who appeared to be

making the plays on defense was "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson. Buckeye fans may be watching the birth of a star as they watch Big Daddy. It's probably been since the days of Jerome Foster that the Bucks have had as dominant an interior defensive lineman as Wilkinson is shaping up to be.

But before Buckeye fans get too euphoric, they should remember that the last colorful defender OSU had, Alonzo Spellman, never really equaled his freshman efforts and was off to the NFL following his junior campaign.

Hopefully, the Bucks will get more out of Big Daddy than Zo-Man.

Another star in the making might be Chris Sanders. As mentioned in this space previously, Sanders is helping fill the big-play void left by the injured Joey Galloway. Sanders had a 23-yard reception against the Illini and also ran for 24 yards on a reverse, bringing back memories of Galloway's 50-yard scoring jaunt against Louisville. Should Galloway recover from his knee injury, he and Sanders could make a dynamic double threat for the Bucks next year.

WITH OSU seemingly out of the Rose Bowl race, there was some question as to how the Buckeyes would be able to get motivated the rest of the season.

I would hope that playing for pride would be motivation enough for the Bucks.

TOLEDO AREA Buckeye fans will have a chance to show their spirit when the OSU Marching Band comes to Oregon Clay High School Oct. 23.

"The Best Damn Band In The Land" will perform under the direction of Dr. Jon Woods in the school gymnasium at 6 p.m. and then will perform before the Clay-Fremont Ross football game, as well as at halftime.

As a special treat, the band will perform the famous "Script Ohio" during the pregame festivities.

The event is sponsored by the OSU Alumni Club of Lucas County, with proceeds going to the club's scholarship fund for area students. Tickets are \$6 for the concert and \$4 for the game and may be purchased at Collins & Parker, 2514 Woodville Road in Oregon, or by contacting Kevin Kwiatkowski at (419) 691-5684.

## Contest Winners Are Announced

Harry Reed of Wellsville, Ohio, was the winner of BSB's Subscribers' Special Contest and its prize of an OSU-Indiana football weekend.

Reed won two tickets to the game, as well as two nights at the beautiful Courtyard by Marriott. He also won dinner for two at the popular Houlihan's in The Continent, and dinner for two at Ricardo's, serving fine Italian food since 1949.

Earlier this season, Harry Huskey of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, was chosen the winner of the Football Fantasy Trip #1, sponsored by Big Bear and BSB.

Huskey won a trip for two with Buckeye Boosters to the OSU-Syracuse game that included tickets, air fare, hotel and more.

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