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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

November 30, 2001

And On The 310th Day ...

Buckeyes End Woes In Ann Arbor; Tressel Bags First Win Over Michigan

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It's quite common for a new college or professional football coach, when unveiled to the public, to face a horde of reporters and begin outlining his goals and expectations for his team.

That, of course, was no different when Jim Tressel was introduced way back in January as Ohio State's 22nd head coach. Tressel answered each query with multi-paragraph answers and delved into just about every facet of importance to the team.

But late on that memorable evening of Jan. 18, Tressel gave even more insight into his grasp of the job with the now-famous "310 days" comment at halftime of the OSU-Michigan basketball game.

The "speech" actually involved only a few sentences, the most remembered being, "I can assure you, you will be proud of our young people in the classroom, in the community and, most especially, in 310 days in Ann Arbor, Mich., on the football field."

Tressel said it with his usual composure but managed to both lather up the Value City Arena crowd and confuse countless others who somehow interpreted the remark as a guarantee of victory over Michigan.

So moments after Tressel's Buckeyes put the finishing touches on a triumphant 26-20 win at Michigan



SCOTT BROCKWAY

SWEET SENSATION — Linebacker Courtland Bullard (above) pumps a fist in jubilation after OSU's 26-20 win at Michigan. Below, running back Jonathan Wells, joined by safety Mike Doss, talks with WSYX-TV reporter Clay Hall.

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JEFF RAPP

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- Canton (Ohio) McKinley defensive back Tyler Everett could play safety or corner at OSU (Page 12)

- Complete coverage of OSU's win over Michigan (Pages 14-26)

- Offensive tackle Tyson Walter reaching the end of his sixth season with the Buckeyes (Pages 27)

- Cincinnati native Courtney Coleman becoming key member of OSU women's basketball team (Page 37)

- A look at the Big Ten men's basketball race for 2001-02 (Pages 43-46)



BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 26, Michigan 20

Ohio State senior tailback Jonathan Wells on winning his final game against Michigan: "The rivalry, the tradition of this game is just unmatched. For me to go out there and help this team win the game, that's as special as it gets for me."

Ohio State quarterback and Michigan native Craig Krenzel on making the most important start of his career at the Big House: "It was special to come out here in front of my family and play well enough to win as a team. To come in here with the way everyone views the rivalry, to get things done, that was a great game."

Ohio State linebacker Matt Wilhelm on a bone-jarring hit of UM receiver Marquise Walker: "I was disappointed in myself that I didn't knock his helmet off for as hard as I hit him. It was three-quarters of the way off and I thought to myself I could have put a little bit more oomph into it and knocked it all the way off."

Ohio State safety Donnie Nickey on the postgame scene, which included singing "Carmen Ohio" to OSU fans: "We sang our alma mater on their home field. So if they don't think it's a big rivalry anymore, now they will."

Ohio State linebacker Joe Cooper on jumping up into the crowd and high-fiving a host of fans who made the trip to Ann Arbor: "I didn't plan it, it just came to me. The fans are great fans, they were cheering, they stayed after the game to celebrate with us, and I felt they were part of it. There were only 4,000 OSU fans but they came up here and really supported us, and



MAN OF THE HOUR — Sterling Heights, Mich., native Craig Krenzel returned to his home state and quarterbacked Ohio State over rival Michigan. Krenzel completed 11 of 18 passes for 118 yards.

I wanted to show my gratitude."

Ohio State safety Mike Doss on limiting blitzes after being victimized by screen passes a year earlier: "We didn't want to overblitz. We knew they were a team that loves the screen pass, so we laid back, played a respon-

sible game and took that away from them."

Ohio State coach Jim Tressel on the feeling of surviving a scare in the fourth quarter: "The last 15 minutes? It felt like 310 days."

Michigan quarterback John Navarre on the

Wolverines' passing game running hot and cold and having at least five passes tipped: "There's the intensity of a big game, and a quarterback has to be able to control those emotions. Eventually I calmed down. It was a matter of (Ohio State) played well and their defense got their hands up."

Wells on the thought that Michigan players did not view Ohio State in the same light as previous UM squads had: "We read an article on the bus where some (Michigan) guys were saying that after they stomped us in this game we would become the fourth rival on their schedule after Washington, Notre Dame and Michigan State. I mean, come on. They lit my fire a little bit. I hope the rivalry is back. If not, I hope they keep sleeping on us. And we're going to do the same thing next year if they do."

Doss on how the Buckeyes put all of their adversity behind them to win The Game: "We just pulled together this week. What else could we do? We had Michigan this week, and that's our rival team. We had a great game plan."

OSU tailback Lydell Ross on his first taste of The Game: "It feels great, being that it's my first Michigan game. I got a little emotional and felt the tradition."

Wilhelm on his feelings when time had elapsed and the win was official: "I was speechless. I just collapsed at midfield and looked down at the field. The tears were just rolling out of my eyes. To be 0-2 against these guys and come up here and beat them in their own house is great."

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COVER STORY: AND ON THE 310TH DAY ...

Tressel Didn't Promise A Win, But Got It Anyway

Continued From Page 1

Stadium Nov. 24, the first-year coach finally got to set the record straight.

"Coach, when you arrived in Columbus, did you promise this win and did your kids deliver on that promise today?" a Columbus television reporter asked.

"No, we didn't promise any win," Tressel replied, his eyes still wide from the victory and his hair still damp from the Ann Arbor drizzle. "We promised they would be proud of us, whether we won the game or not. By the way our kids played, you would have been proud of the way they did."

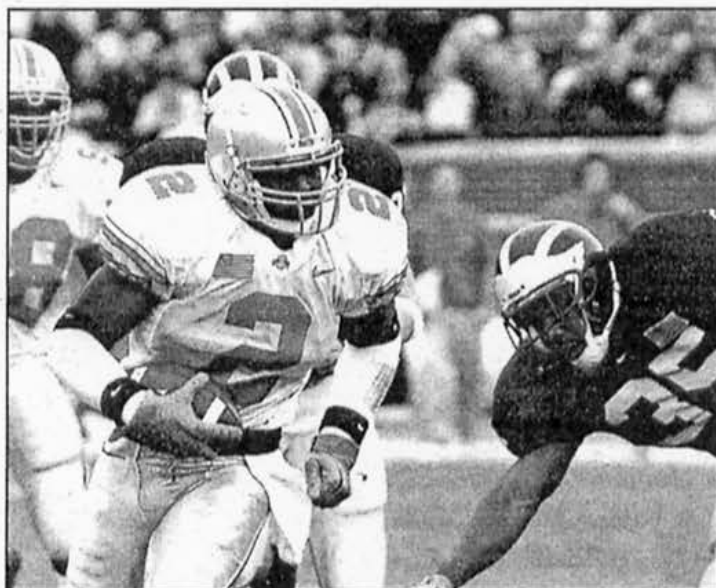
Even without a knockout punch and the tenuous hold on a 23-0 halftime lead, certainly there was a portfolio of things of which to be proud for Buckeye fans.

Consider the following:

- The win came at Ann Arbor, marking the first such victory since the "EARLE" headband game of 1987. In addition, it ended losing skids of two straight and five out of six to the Maize and Blue.

- It also was staged before a national ABC television audience and the second-largest crowd ever to see a college football game — 111,571.

- It came on the heels of John Cooper's much publicized 2-10-1 misfortune in the series as the OSU head coach.



SCOTT BROCKWAY

TAKE YOUR PICK — Ohio State strong safety Michael Doss had a couple of huge plays against Michigan, including two interceptions of quarterback John Navarre, one of which is shown here.

- It ruined Michigan's party as the Wolverines (8-3, 6-2) expected to claim both a Big Ten co-championship and the

league's automatic berth in the Bowl Championship Series. On the flip side, the Buckeyes (7-4, 5-3) assured them-

selves of continuing their season in a bowl game.

- It included a first half of total domination against a UM team that was favored by eight or nine points by most professional handicappers. In building the 23-0 lead, OSU held Michigan to 1.8 yards per play, caused three turnovers and riddled the Big Ten's top rushing defense, with Jonathan Wells amassing 122 yards and three touchdown runs in the first 30 minutes.

- It came just eight days after the Buckeyes were rocked with news that three-year starting quarterback and co-captain Steve Bellisari was suspended for incurring drunk driving charges and one week after OSU was dumped from the Big Ten race with a home loss to Illinois.

Bellisari was reinstated to the team the following day and dressed for the trip to Ann Arbor but did not play. In his stead, Michigan native Craig Krenzel made his first career start and executed a close-to-the-vest game plan with aplomb.

"We've had adversity all throughout the season and we said how we handled it was how we were going to end our season," senior linebacker Joe Cooper said. "We stuck together and came up here and won against a great team."

Aiming At Michigan

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COVER STORY: AND ON THE 310TH DAY ...

closed doors back in the winter. However, there was an immediate full-scale effort by Tressel to resurrect the program's attitude and demeanor as well as an embracing of the team's old-fashioned desire to work toward peaking in November.

In theory, it all was supposed to lead to positive thinking and a positive outcome against OSU's ultimate foe. The theorem just got stamped with an "A."

In the week of preparation, Tressel conducted a private Senior Tackle on Thanksgiving morning then allowed his players to go home for their evening feasts.

He invited former coach Earle Bruce, among others, to speak to the team about The Game.

"Coach Tressel brought the emotion this week," OSU safety Donnie Nickey said of Tressel. "He got us up. There was a great sense of urgency preparing this week. Instead of downplaying it, he up-played it."

"It's not just another game. It's the Michigan game. He brought in people to talk to us about the Michigan game, just to make it important to us."

Tressel was so unflappable he didn't even bother to complain when the team held its Friday walk-through in Michigan Stadium with the tarp still covering the field.

He did, however, show the team a highlight video of OSU-Michigan games of the past on the day before the game and remind them of the privilege they were about to enjoy. This was on par with OSU's spring practices, which often began with Tressel showing the team a quarter of past Michigan games.

"On the ride down here we seemed focused, we seemed alert and ready to go," defensive end Kenny Peterson said.

And loose. The nervousness of so many Ann Arbor failures gone by seemed to dissipate, and the Buckeyes played a near-mistake-free first half in an environment that usually resembles a snake pit.

Meanwhile, the Wolverines' offensive woes of late were magnified with an early interception and an anemic running attack. Also, Lloyd Carr's squad didn't seem to have any of the magic of OSU games past, committing untimely mistakes, falling in a deep hole and failing to wrap up Wells in the backfield when they had the chance.

The Wolverines rallied to pull within a touchdown but chased the Buckeyes from behind all afternoon. When the final gun sounded, a spike of legitimacy was driven into the Tressel era — and euphoria ensued.

"It's beautiful, it's beautiful," repeated

Having Fun The First Time Out

Since the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry began in 1897 — a span of 98 games — 19 men have coached the Buckeyes. On Nov. 24, Jim Tressel became just the fifth OSU head coach to beat the Wolverines in his first try. Here are how Tressel and the others did it.

Coach	Date	Score	Site
Sam S. Willaman	Oct. 19, 1929	Ohio State 7, Michigan 0	Ann Arbor
Francis A. Schmidt	Nov. 17, 1934	Ohio State 34, Michigan 0	Columbus
Carroll C. Widdoes	Nov. 25, 1944	Ohio State 18, Michigan 14	Columbus
Earle Bruce	Nov. 17, 1979	Ohio State 18, Michigan 15	Ann Arbor
Jim Tressel	Nov. 24, 2001	Ohio State 26, Michigan 20	Ann Arbor

senior outside linebacker Courtland Bullard. "Whenever you're part of a family and we had adversity early in the week, to be able to come back and capitalize on the things that you learned and make it all pay off in this game, it's a beautiful thing."

"It all means more when you come out on top."

Most of the Buckeyes labeled the win a great team effort. Tressel and Peterson called it a great win for the seniors.

Some of those seniors, Wells at the head of the list, whooped it up on the field for minutes at a time afterward and looked like they could have celebrated deep into the night. Others such as Mike Collins were so stunned they didn't know how to react and walked around the muddy field in a stupor.

For Joe Cooper, who was awarded a fourth year of eligibility in the winter, it was the sweetest possible script for his last-ever Big Ten game.

"The first thing I thought about (when he was granted the year) was I would be playing another season of football at Ohio State," he said. "Then when it came down to it I really thought about how I would get another shot at Michigan."

"I wanted to make the best of it, and this is one of the main reasons I came back. I guess I made a great decision."

Sloopy Hangs On

They say great things never come easy and that proved true again thanks to a Michigan team that never quit and a conservative approach by the Buckeyes in the second half.

In fact, with Wells the clear-cut MVP of the first half, punter Andy Groom was bucking for those honors in the second half. His boots provided even more good omens for the Buckeyes as he either boomed them deep into UM territory or wobbled them away from the ever-dangerous Marquise Walker.

Matters changed, however, after the Wolverines overwhelmed Groom on one punt and blocked the kick, setting up a four-play, 9-yard scoring drive that

brought the score to 23-13 with 10:02 left. That changed the outlook but didn't change Tressel's thinking.

With Krenzle unproven, Wells dealing with painful leg cramps and offensive tackle Shane Olivea out with a broken ankle, OSU buttoned up the playbook in the second half. As a result, the offense recorded just 74 yards and only one first down, placing the pressure squarely on the shoulders of the defense.

"We had some guys banged up and we were playing short-handed from an experience standpoint at some places," Tressel said. "The one thing we didn't want to do was give them anything because we knew our defense was going to play tough."

Sure enough, the challenge was welcomed.

"As you know, Michigan never quits. But our defense never quit," said OSU safety Mike Doss, who played hero with two interceptions of passes by Michigan quarterback John Navarre, who was roundly booed during the game. "We just came out there and said, 'Take it one game at a time, keep our poise and be

patient.' We made the breaks when we had to."

Added middle linebacker Matt Wilhelm, "I felt at halftime they could have put us on the field the rest of the game. The (OSU) offense going three-and-out was expected in my mind, and I felt we should still be able to go out and get the job done and win at the Big House."

And in the end the win, and all it represented, was all that mattered, not the gap in the final score. As far as the Buckeyes are concerned, they served more than enough notice that they don't intend to concede anything to Michigan anytime soon.

"They're really been disrespecting us a lot," Wells said. "I mean, they're telling us that we're not the rival team that they play. If it wasn't a rivalry then it is now."


Tressel's players seemed to have a keen awareness of the history of the rivalry. That made the win that much sweeter.

"It's a big win for (Tressel)," Krenzle said. "We came up to Ann Arbor and won in a place we haven't won since 1987. Hopefully everyone else feels as good about it as we do."


The message also was sent to outposts beyond Ann Arbor, Wilhelm said.

"People were overlooking Ohio State, especially against Michigan," Wells said. "Us coming into their house, it was a given they were going to beat us around and get the victory. It's definitely a rivalry again."

"We've got a new frame of mind in our leader with Coach Tressel. The first year over, you win at Michigan. It can't get any better than that."



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Fourth-Down Touchdown Really Got OSU Going

Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel is not one who lives on the edge and takes too many chances, but after the Buckeyes grabbed a 7-0 lead over Michigan, Tressel turned into a veritable riverboat gambler.

With OSU facing a fourth-and-inches at the Michigan 46, Tressel wasted little time in deciding to go for it. A stuff and the momentum could have shifted to the hosts, so it was a calculated risk.

It's hard to believe that a vanilla off-tackle play is considered dicey, but OSU's offense has had problems in short yardage situations and Michigan's defense led the league in ground yards allowed at just under 84 per game.

Senior tailback Jonathan Wells, who had already bulled over from the 1 to give the Buckeyes a lead in the Big House in front of an increasingly restless throng of over 111,000, took the handoff from Craig Krenzel, got a great clear-out block from fullback Jamar Martin and raced into the Michigan secondary unimpeded.

"There was no getting caught today," Wells said, referencing his 70-yard run in 1999 that ended at the Michigan 6 when he was caught from behind.

"It was a great call by the coaching staff," Wells said. "It was great offensive line play. The line gave me a crease and I got through there untouched. I put that on my shoulders that if I got to the DB untouched I'm going to go."

Wells scored once more, on an 11-yard run with more great blocking from Martin and lineman Tyson Walter, and

INSIDE THE GAME with Mike Wachsman and Jeff Rapp

finished the first half with 122 yards. He would gain only 7 more yards in the second half as leg cramps kept him out of action, but he and the Buckeyes had gained a measure of redemption in victory.

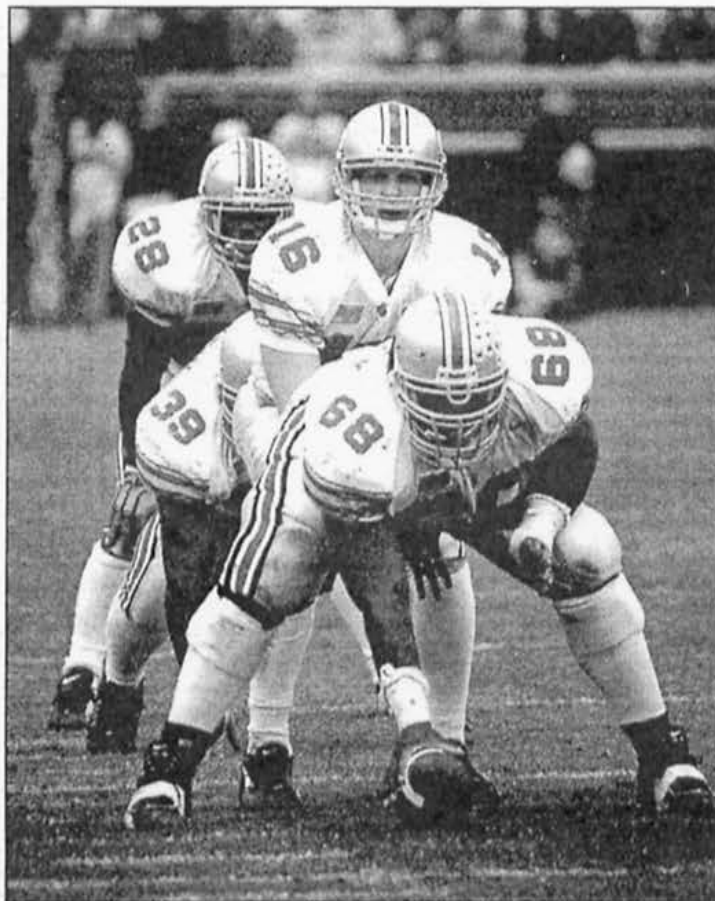
"I wanted to come out and play the best football I could play," Wells said. "Like Coach said, I felt like I was playing better every game, my offensive line came together and has given me creases. When I get creases I just find people and run around them. My confidence just grew and I wanted to go out there and help the team."

Michigan knew the Buckeyes would be landlocked, especially with a new starting quarterback.

"We knew they were going to run," UM linebacker Larry Foote said. "They had extra tackles in, extra linemen."

It didn't seem to matter that the Wolverines have been a wall for most teams because the Buckeyes gobbled up 137 yards rushing.

A few teams had found success this



SONNY BROCKWAY

BIG FOURSOME — Ohio State center LeCharles Bentley (68) prepares to snap the ball to quarterback Craig Krenzel (16) as running backs Jonathan Wells (28) and Jamar Martin (39) take their places behind them. Krenzel, Wells and Martin each had a direct hand in gaining 248 of the Buckeyes' 255 net yards against Michigan.

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

season running off-tackle against Michigan, so the OSU game plan seemed sound.

"We did a few little things that other people had done to hurt them in the past," offensive coordinator Jim Bollman said. "Michigan State had hurt them with some off-tackle plays, and we ran a couple of those plays. We did our own kind of things that we've been doing all year."

While execution was a key for Ohio State, so was attitude.

"We pride ourselves on running the ball and that was something we did well today," center LeCharles Bentley said.

Welcome Home, Son

Much was made of the fact that Krenzel was a native of Michigan and that he was getting a chance to stick it to the Wolverines.

He preferred to dwell on the actual game rather than the circuslike storylines that surrounded the action.

"The coaching staff did a great job putting the focus on the game," Krenzel said. "It wasn't on who we had at quarterback because they feel, whoever we have at quarterback, we can succeed."

Krenzel, who went 11 of 18 for 118 yards with one interception, handled the starting role as coolly as one could hope. He didn't make any big-time mistakes, led the team well and got the Buckeyes into the right checks more often than not.

His presence in the huddle was immediate.

"Craig played well," Bentley said. "He kept up his poise in the huddle, he was a great leader. He did a good job today."

Wells noticed from the beginning that

Krenzel was not going to be rattled easily.

"Craig has always been a confident guy," Wells said. "I have as much confidence in Craig as I do in Scott (McMullen) or Steve (Bellisari). He's out there playing hard and getting prepared. He did a great job out there. Besides the one ball (a second quarter interception), he played a near flawless game and that's all we could ask him to do."

Playing before friends and family, Krenzel displayed the poise of a veteran. Even he was surprised at how laid-back he was at the beginning of the game.

"I was surprisingly calm," Krenzel said. "I roomed with Darnell Sanders last night and told him that I was more calm today than I was before my first high school start. I don't know why, I just felt confident we would play well. It wasn't going to be on me to win the game, so I just wanted to play mistake-free football and put the team in position to win."

It would have been wrong to expect Krenzel to win the game for Ohio State, so the coaches told him to simply go out and be efficient.

"The worst thing we could have done was said to Craig, 'Hey, you're going to throw 37 times and we're going to expect you to win it for us,'" Tressel said. "That isn't one of those types of games. We thought we could run the football. On this particular day against this particular match-up, we felt that was the best way we could approach it."

Michigan was impressed with the way Krenzel stood up to the challenge of lead-

Continued On Page 22

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

No Blown Big Lead This Time

Continued From Page 21

ing the Buckeyes in their biggest game of the year.

"He did a good job," Foote said. "They didn't put him in many dropback situations for him to make a lot of mistakes. They covered it up a little bit. That's what you do with a young quarterback."

Wells wanted to do his part to relieve any anxiety Krenzel might have been feeling.

"I wanted to come out and take some pressure off of him," Wells said. "I'm a senior. I put the pressure on myself and not on a sophomore quarterback."

Having Bellisari on the sidelines was a big boost for Krenzel. Bellisari is his closest friend on the team, and having him in uniform and helping proved invaluable.

"Steve and I have always been each other's eyes and ears out on the field," Krenzel said. "When Steve is playing, I do my best to tell him some things, what I'm seeing, what they're doing."

"Things go so fast on the field that sometimes you miss the little things. He said he was going to be there for me and told me the things I needed to look for."



SONNY BROCKWAY

QUICK REACTION — Ohio State defensive tackle Tim Anderson (54) hangs onto the interception he made at the line of a John Navarre pass. Anderson's pick was one of four given up by the Michigan quarterback.

Bucks Button It Up

With Ohio State firmly in command by a 23-0 count at intermission, careful attention was paid to ensure nothing would be done in the second half to screw things up.

The coaches were mindful that OSU had blown 17- and 18-point leads this season, and they certainly didn't want a repeat on a stage this large.

"We got real conservative in the second

half because we didn't want to do anything foolish, make any stupid mistakes," Krenzel said. "The most important thing is that we did what we needed to do."

The Buckeyes gained just 74 yards after the break as the offense ground to a halt. Part of it was the loss of Wells and offensive tackle Shane Olivea (broken ankle), and part of it was by design.

"It was frustrating for all of us in the second half," Bollman said. "We were going to be conservative with that kind of lead. Those guys are a tough outfit to be conservative against, and we muddled through there. They've got a good football team."

OSU mustered just one first down in the final 30 minutes. That came on a nifty rollout pass from Krenzel to tight end Ben Hartsock for 18 critical yards with OSU nursing a 23-13 lead with just under 10 minutes left in the game.

It's only natural that the players wanted to continue playing, but given the circumstances, the conservative play-calling wasn't wholly unacceptable.

"You've got to trust that the coaches know what they're doing," Krenzel said. "As long as we're on top on that scoreboard there's nothing frustrating about it."

Early Shutdown Enables Defense To Gain Control

In the closing minutes of the Ohio State-Michigan game, UM fans were holding on to hope that there was still enough juice in the rally tank. Some fans were shrieking as the Wolverines continued to chip into what was once a 23-point hole and got as close as 26-20.

But the OSU defense simply remained calm. Why?

The Buckeyes did so for two reasons: The game clock was their friend, and, when things got iffy, they were able to draw confidence from their first-half performance.

The first 30 minutes were simply dominating for the defending 11 as the Buckeyes snuffed out key Michigan plays, kept the Wolves from gaining any momentum and held them to a paltry 52 yards of offense.

The tone was set right away as the Buckeyes forced a John Navarre incomplete pass, stuffed tailback B.J. Askew for virtually no gain and picked off a Navarre

pass that bounded off the intended receiver.

The Buckeyes knew what was coming, they were in position, and they made the play, a trend that would continue throughout the day.

"(Defensive coordinator Mark) Dantonio had a great game plan and we just executed," said strong safety Michael Doss, who made the aforementioned pick and added another in the second half. "We went out there and executed our defense and slowed down their offense. Their quarterback had to make a lot of decisions. They couldn't run the ball on us — you know that because every year they can't run the ball on Ohio State."

For the day, UM managed to average 3.3 yards per carry and Navarre went on to post 206 yards passing, but the first-half statistics go a long way in explaining how the Buckeyes were able to build what proved to be an insurmountable lead.

In the first two quarters, Michigan averaged just 1.6 yards per tote and Navarre was 5 of 15 for 29 yards with two interceptions and a pair of sacks. Sticking to basic running plays, underneath pass plays and an occasional misdirection to keep OSU spread, UM amassed just 10:42 of possession time and gained just four first downs.

"I expected exactly what they did," outside linebacker Courtland Bullard said. "They did a lot of screens and some trick plays. They got us on the reverse one time. Basically, we knew coming into the game exactly what they were going to do. It was just all about adjusting to what they were going to do."

Added free safety Donnie Nickey, "I don't think they tried to do anything different from what they do. I don't think they changed their scheme. They just ran smash routes and tried to get first downs."

As OSU gained confidence on defense, weak-side linebacker Joe Cooper was allowed to play more free and often shot right into the correct lane. He finished with a team-high eight tackles. Likewise, MLB Matt Wilhelm had seven stops.

But it all began with preparation, Wilhelm said.

"It's a credit to the coaches and players," he said. "We got after each other to get into film study and know these guys inside and out."

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Walker Racks Up Catches, But Doss Makes Big Plays

Knowing where the ball is going and being able to do something about it are entirely different things. That's especially true in the case of Michigan flanker Marquise Walker, a 6-3, 213-pound playmaker of the unstoppable variety.

On a day when he became Michigan's all-time leading receiver, Walker was option Nos. 1, 2 and 3 for Navarre and came through with 15 catches for 160 yards and two scores.

"It's not easy to stop a guy like that — and other guys were making big catches for them," Wilhelm said. "But we did what we had to do to get the victory. He got his touches, which you knew was going to happen."

The Buckeyes changed coverage on Walker and kept him in front of them all day — although they let him run for several yards after the catch in the tiring fourth quarter. In the first half, the tackles were sure, and Walker was held to just 29 yards on four catches.

Also, Michigan's insistence on throwing to Walker bit the Wolverines on occasion. Left end Darrion Scott tipped a pass intended for Walker in the second half that was intercepted by defensive lineman Tim Anderson, setting up OSU's third touchdown.

Midway through the fourth quarter, Navarre committed a backbreaking mistake as he tried to force the ball to Walker on the sideline, a pass that Doss picked off and returned all the way to the UM 9, setting up OSU's final points. Doss, who broke up a conversion pass

attempt to Walker moments earlier, saw cornerback Derek Ross bite to the inside and smelled out the play.

OSU's top big-play man on defense, Doss had been relatively quiet in recent weeks.

"I think he showed up today," Nickey said. "He had opportunities to make plays and he did."

When asked if the defense was concerned about any receiver other than Walker, Bullard said, "No. I mean, they have great receivers but I have a lot of confidence in our secondary. As you can see, they made a lot of big plays today."

Front Four Wreaks Havoc, Outshines Vaunted UM Group

Coming into the game, Tressel said he was perhaps most impressed with the fact that Michigan had registered 45 sacks without having to resort to a lot of blitzing.

"That's a great credit to their defensive front," he said.

But in The Game it was OSU's front four — without much help from the blitz — that dropped a nightmare on the 6-6 Navarre.

The leading persecutor was defensive end Will Smith, who logged two of OSU's three sacks, recovered a Navarre fumble and disrupted other plays in the backfield.

"We knew he wasn't that mobile so we took it as a challenge to get to him," Smith said of Navarre. "Plus, we read in an article earlier in the week that we give up in the fourth quarter. We worked on

getting after the quarterback, and we got him."

Anderson, like Smith just a sophomore, also was a pest all day. He tied Cooper for team-high honors with eight tackles, seven of them solos. He also logged a key interception and deflected another pass.

Tressel noticed the great performances from Smith and Anderson.

"They are getting better and better and better all the time," the coach said. "They are going to be outstanding football players, and they give great effort."

Other D-linemen contributed, including Kenny Peterson, who forced the Navarre fumble, Scott and seniors Tim Cheatwood and Mike Collins. Even freshman Simon Fraser accounted for some outside pressure.

"They were great," Doss said of the linemen. "On every play they had their hands up. They were jumping up and knocking passes down. They were in the quarterback's throwing lane, they rushed him, they played hard and ran to the ball."

Position coach Jim Heacock, understandably, was pleased afterward.

"I thought they really gave great effort the whole game, which was a real challenge for them," Heacock said. "They played hard and came up with some big plays."

"We didn't even blitz a whole lot today. Actually we played a pretty base defense and put it in the hands of the players."

Extra Points

• One thing the Ohio State running

attack did was keep Michigan's tenacious front four at bay.

With few pass plays, the Wolverines were barely able to increase their Big Ten-leading total of 45 sacks. They got to Krenzel just once.

"They've made a living on big plays, getting people in long yardage situations," Bollman said. "They were leading the conference in sacks and we were going to do our darndest to stay out of long yardage situations. For the most part we did that."

• While Tressel gave the politically correct answer of rooting for the rest of the Big Ten when asked if it felt sweeter knocking the Wolverines from the BCS, Wells had no such reservations.

"I'm satisfied," Wells said. "Honestly speaking, I'm satisfied. We wanted to get this win. BCS or not for them, it was our seniors' last game in the Big House and we wanted to come out ahead."

• With his eight-tackle day — all of them solo, by the way — Cooper got back in the race for the seasonal team lead.

Doss recorded four stops at UM to give him a team-best 79 on the year, but Cooper now has 74 pending the bowl game. With his seven, Wilhelm's yearly total improved to 59.

• Entering play, opponents had converted 47 percent of their third-down chances but Michigan had no such luck.

The Wolverines were just 6 of 17 on third down (35 percent). UM, however, did convert 1 of 2 fourth-down tries. For the season, OSU foes are 3 of 9 (33 percent) on fourth down.

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

Tressel: Win Over Wolverines 'Just Sweet, Period'

Editor's Note: Throughout the football season, BSB is publishing excerpts of Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel's postgame press conferences. Here is what Tressel had to say following the win over Michigan.

Jim Tressel: "Our kids played hard, our coaches prepared hard and our defense played like crazy. Our offense played hard and our special teams came through."

"We were the walking wounded there in the second half. But they just hung in there and played hard. It is so hard to win on the road. I can't say enough about these kids."

Q. Coach, when you arrived in Columbus, did you promise this win and did your kids deliver on that promise today?

JT: "No, we didn't promise any win. We promised they would be proud of us, whether we won the game or not. By the way our kids played, you would have been proud of the way they did."

"But it's even sweeter when you come away with that win. Michigan is a good football team. They come after it. We're just blessed to get this win."

Q. With the big lead, did you button up in the second half so you wouldn't do anything, as they say, stupid?

JT: "We wanted to keep the TV audience interested and keep it close. We've

been trying all year to do what we think we need to do. There are times when we need to do this or that."

"We had some guys banged up and we were playing short-handed from an experience standpoint at some places. The one thing we didn't want to do was give them anything because we knew our defense was going to play tough and earn everything."

Q. How much sweeter is it to win with a backup quarterback?

JT: "No sweeter. It's just sweet. We've got a lot of guys who have worked hard. They've hung together and hung tough. They've been through ups and downs. As I've told them many times, transition isn't easy. It's just sweet, period."

Q. You got a big touchdown out of Jonathan Wells on the fourth-and-1 call. Can you discuss that call?

JT: "It was just a basic off-tackle play. You have to go with what you know how to do in a crucial situation. It was just off-tackle."

Q. Can you discuss Jonathan's day overall?

JT: "I don't know how many yards he had total. It certainly hurt us to lose him in the second half."

"My heart also goes out to Shane Olivea. That's a tough injury. He was really coming on as a football player. I feel bad for him."

"Our guys hung in there. Whoever needed to go in there and play did."



SONNY BROCKWAY

WORTH THE WAIT — It's well-known that since Jim Tressel took the head coaching job at Ohio State he has kept track of the number of days until the Michigan game. His anticipation was rewarded with a 26-20 victory.

Q. The school had had problems with Michigan. Where did the confidence and execution come from to win here at Michigan?

JT: "I don't know the answer to that. Our kids played hard today. They play hard all the time. The one thing I have never said after a ball game is I was disappointed in our effort. We did the things today you need to do to win. It just happened to be against Michigan."

Q. How about Craig Krenzle's play today?

JT: "I thought Craig Krenzle did a darn good job. He was thrown into a tough situation. He lost a starting lineman and he lost his tailback."

"They were coming after him. They knew we weren't going to throw it a whole bunch. I thought Craig did a nice job."

Q. I know your mentor, Earle Bruce, won his first game here. How satisfying is it to get your first win against Michigan?

JT: "Every win feels good. Most wins only feel good for six days because then you have to see if you can win again. We may enjoy this win for six days, but it won't be

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OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

for a whole bunch because we hope to get to work and play against someone in January."

Q. How important is this win, as you sit here and bask in it?

JT: "I didn't feel as if I were basking. Every win is important. Every opportunity you get to play a football game, to have that privilege, is important."

"It was especially important because we have 12 seniors who will never experience the Ohio State-Michigan game again like this. They can come and stand on the sideline, but it's not the same."

"It was exciting for our fans to be up here. I thought our fans were loud. I don't know how many tickets we had, but our fans did a tremendous job. I'm sure it was exciting for our people back home who were watching the ball game."

"It was just a good game for college football."

Q. Coach, you counted down the 310 days, but how were the last 15 minutes, the fourth quarter?

JT: "It was about 310 days."

Q. Did the plan unfold about as perfectly as you could hope? It looked like you wanted to run it and use Craig minimally, then you got the turnovers and you're up 14-0 early.

JT: "Yeah, that was huge for us because I think the worst thing we could have done was say, 'Hey, Craig, you're going to come up here and throw the ball 37 times and we're going to expect you to win it for us.' This wasn't one of those kinds of games."

"Plus, we felt we could run the football and play good defense. We felt for this particular day, with this match-up, that was the best thing for us."

Q. What, in particular, did you like about running the football, because they were only giving up 80 yards a game on the ground.

JT: "We thought we could run the football. We weren't going to pile up hundreds and hundreds of yards, but we thought we would be able to effectively run it. We really thought we were getting better as the season was going on. Jonathan, his last six or seven games, I think he's been as impressive as any tailback in the Big Ten."

Q. Mike Doss' second interception, how timely was that pick?

JT: "His first one was real huge. His second one was real huge because it was at that moment and it gave us an opportunity."

"A turnover in a game like this is gold. Like a touchdown run on fourth-and-1 in a game like this is gold. You can name a lot of big plays in this football game and we had them."

Q. What does a win in your first Michigan game mean to you personally?

JT: "We work hard against everybody. It is sweet to win a game away from home. It is sweet to win a game in the big rivalry. But we're going to be back working tomorrow."

Q. After all the controversy, losing on senior day and the Steve Bellisari situation, how did you pull this team together?

JT: "We've got good kids. They are kids who want to be good. They are very interested in winning big games. I think they were excited about the opportunity to play at Michigan against a very good Michigan team."

"It wasn't hard to get them headed in the right direction. They were already heading there."

Q. Will Craig be your quarterback for the bowl game?

JT: "Oh, golly. I'm really basking and he's asking me about the bowl game ..."

Q. But you said you were going back to work tomorrow. Is Craig your quarterback?

JT: "We're going to go back to work on recruiting tomorrow."

Q. What did you reinforce on the punt protection? The only way they could get back in the game was to block a punt and they did.

JT: "We just made an error. We didn't handle a gap. Against a rush team like them, you've got to be so solid. You take their six punt blocks leading up to our game, I think they were more impactful on their season than anything else they did all year."

"That one they had against us could have turned the game around."

Q. Was there any point in the game where you considered playing (Steve) Bellisari?

JT: "No."

Q. Is there any satisfaction of playing the spoiler role and knocking Michigan out of a BCS bowl?

JT: "No. Outside of Ohio State, we like the rest of the guys in the Big Ten second. There is no extra satisfaction there."

Q. Was there any hesitation to go for it on that fourth down when Jonathan scored?

JT: "When it's fourth down, you always say, 'Should we go for it?' The guy I always ask is the defensive coordinator. Mark Dantonio said, 'Go for it.' He's the guy we're affecting if we don't get it. He said go for it, so we did and Jonathan did the rest."

Q. Your thoughts on your seniors winning their last game against Michigan?

JT: "I just told them how proud I was of them. It's exciting to see how it feels for them. The impact for our seniors is so huge because they will never get to experience this. Even if they go to Super Bowls, it won't be like this."

"This is a tremendous day for them."

Q. How does this compare with winning a national championship?

JT: "The only difference was when we won our first national championship, we didn't even get off the field and they asked us if we were going to repeat. This has been a little mellower."

Q. Can you talk about the play of Will Smith and Tim Anderson up front?

JT: "I tell you that Will Smith and Tim Anderson have just gotten better and better and better all the time. They are going to be outstanding football players. They give great effort."

"We've got a lot of great guys. We've got guys who have been through change. They've been through surprises, but they kept playing and stayed together."

Q. All season long, you knew how many days it was to Michigan. How did you keep track?

JT: "I was smart enough to write it down because I knew you guys would ask. I had it on a piece of paper."

Q. Have you looked at all at the bowl picture? Do you have any suspicions where you might be headed?

JT: "No, I have no idea. I was just hoping we would win today to assure us of being somewhere. I would think we'll be somewhere, but I don't know where."

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THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

This Was The Biggest Win Since The '97 Rose Bowl

Well, it's 310 days later and I'm pretty darn proud. In fact, I probably feel as good about an Ohio State football game as I have since the Rose Bowl following the 1996 season. It's easy to forget just how enjoyable a win over Michigan can be, especially in Ann Arbor. It really does heal the wounds from an up-and-down 7-4 season.

Now some of you are smart enough to note that I say this is the best I feel about a win since the Rose Bowl in January 1997. What about the win over Michigan in 1998, you ask?

Good question, as I try to understand my feelings now and my feelings back in November 1998. I guess I feel so good now because I'm so hopeful that this is the beginning of a new era at Ohio State.

By the time the Buckeyes defeated the Wolverines in 1998, the program was already mired in what would become the 2-10-1 abyss.

While any win over Michigan is a good one, in the back of my mind back in '98, I couldn't help but think if the Buckeyes — with a great shot at the national championship — hadn't been upset by Michigan State two games earlier, they would have probably lost to the hated Wolverines. The loss to the Spartans lifted much of the pressure for the season's annual finale. (By the way, wasn't it great to see a coach on the sidelines who looked composed, as opposed to one who looked confused and worried in the biggest game of the year?)

The dreaded 2-10-1 curse has been lifted and the new number is 1-0 and I like the sound of that a lot better. And wasn't it sweet to knock the Maize and Blue out of the BCS and a share of the Big Ten title? What sweet revenge for all the times in the last 13 years that Michigan knocked OSU out of conference titles, Rose Bowls and possible national championships.

Jim Tressel, who obviously had been pointing to this game for 310 days — if not all of his life — was way too much of a gentleman after the victory. I wanted him to just raise a fist and go, "YES!!!"

Those Michigan players, coaches and fans can be so smug. I say rub it in a little bit, but that just doesn't seem to be Tressel's style. I hope, after the camera lights and tape recorders were turned off and put away, Tressel set a poor example for Steve Bellisari and the boys and raised a cold one. He earned it.

Let me assure you, people all over Columbus were raising plenty of cold ones. There's a buzz around here that has been missing for so long.

And I guess that's the whole point about this win over Michigan — the way it has made Buckeye fans happy, excited and, most of all, proud again.

Now there are those — even in this office — who say that losing to Michigan is not that big a deal. The losses all count the same in the standings and a win over the Wolverines is not going to make up for a subpar season, they say. I have to disagree. That's not looking at the big picture.

The ultimate goal for any Ohio State team is to win the Big Ten, go to the Rose Bowl and win the national championship. Let's face it. You're not going to do those things very often if you lose to Michigan in the last game of the regular season.

But it's more than that.

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

A very good friend of mine tells me that I frequently repeat myself. I know that, but I'm going to repeat something I have said previously in this column and I have said repeatedly to the many groups I have spoken to over the last several years. It bears repeating.

The Ohio State-Michigan rivalry is one of the cornerstones of the OSU football tradition. The thing about a rivalry is that both teams have to have a chance of winning. That's what makes it a rivalry. In the good old days, you would always hear people say that it didn't make a difference if one team was 0-10 and the other 10-0. Either team could win the OSU-Michigan game. That was the nature of its intensity.

The problem with The Game over the past few years is that many people no longer believed that Ohio State could win. That belief eroded the rivalry and if the rivalry was eroding, then the Ohio State football tradition was eroding.

Once John Cooper went his first six years without beating Michigan and not only kept his job but was given a contract extension, the importance of beating Michigan had been de-emphasized.

Once it became OK to lose to Michigan, the standards and expectations for Ohio State football had been lessened. When one of the cornerstones started to erode, support for the program began to erode.

Think about Columbus on game day the past few years. Do you see as many OSU flags as you used to? Are as many people decked out in their scarlet and gray? I'm not talking about those at the game. I'm talking about the guy raking his leaves or the couple at the grocery store. Is that guy raking his leaves listening to the game on the radio? Is the game on the loudspeaker at that grocery store? All too often lately, the answers have been no.

When I first came to Columbus, businesses on High Street would have to board up their windows in anticipation of the Michigan game. The city would become a virtual ghost town by kickoff. It was so great to see the excitement come back after the victory in Ann Arbor this year.

Beating Michigan creates the environment that makes people want to be active supporters of the program. Yes, it's jumping on the bandwagon, but that's a bandwagon that had rolled for a lot of years before people started jumping off in the 1990s.

And let's not forget an important football implication of the victory.

Ohio State and Michigan generally recruit the same players, especially in Ohio. Don't think that 2-10-1 hasn't been a key recruiting issue over the last several years. Players want to go to a place that they perceive as a winner and they want to go where they perceive the excitement is.

OSU's 26-20 win over Michigan will go a long way toward changing those perceptions.

And Michigan people can say that Ohio State is no longer their rival, but let's see how fired-up the Wolverines are

in Ohio Stadium, 364 days from their loss to the Buckeyes.

I have a feeling Jim Tressel knows the Wolverines will be fired-up and I suspect he will have his team ready.

Recapturing The Excitement

Speaking of bringing Buckeyes back into the fold, this is a good time to mention our "\$20 for 20 and Under" promotion in honor of our 20th anniversary.

In an effort to get younger people interested in Ohio State sports, we are offering a year of Buckeye Sports Bulletin for just \$20 for any reader 20 years of age and under.

The response to this offer has been outstanding, as many of you have been buying gift subscriptions for children, grandchildren and even athletes in your area you hope will become Ohio State fans. We have especially enjoyed the many notes you have sent us, telling us of your excitement in introducing a young fan to the Bucks or how your child or grandchild is already a big Buckeye fan.

To take advantage of the "\$20 for 20 and Under" special, just give us a call at (614) 486-2202 during business hours or send your \$20 to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212.

I also wanted to thank everyone for their patience with our 20th anniversary yearbook. We continue with the final details of the glossy color yearbook recapping the highs and lows of Ohio State sports in our first 20 years of publication. I must admit that it was a bit bigger project than we had anticipated, but we think you will find it worth the wait.

If you still have one of the many forms we sent offering you the yearbook, do not hesitate to use it, as we will honor those offers right up to the publication date.

Game Notes

• One of the problems the Buckeye defense seemed to have in the ups and downs of the last few games was the lack of big plays by Mike Doss.

His two interceptions against Michigan were both critical in the victory. Some guys just have a knack for big plays and Doss is one of them.

• While in the early part of the season it seemed like the defense was relying on Doss or linebacker Matt Wilhelm to make big plays, the defensive line has picked up a lot of the big-play production down the stretch. This group has become pretty formidable and Tim Anderson, just a sophomore, appears to be a star in the making.

• Wasn't it nice to see some of the breaks actually go Ohio State's way, for once? The Buckeyes were due. Marquise Walker's dropped pass in the end zone and the snap into the end zone for a safety were the types of things that usually happen to the Buckeyes in The Game.

Lloyd Carr is the Bobby Knight of Big Ten football. He seems to badger the officials enough that he gets his share of calls.

• Ohio State's inability to hit field goals could have come back to haunt the Buckeyes in this game. Those missed three points from 39 yards in the second

quarter could have made a difference. Fortunately, Mike Nugent got three back in the fourth quarter. The two points on the safety were big, too.

Many are going to say the Buckeyes got too conservative on offense in the second half. I can't disagree with that. But that's the beauty of jumping out to a 23-point lead. If you get that kind of bulge in an OSU-Michigan game, you just want to keep from making mistakes, like the blocked punt suffered by the Buckeyes.

Once the Buckeyes got the big lead, the game became a battle of field position. As long as Michigan had to work for its points, the Buckeyes would win the game.

• It was interesting to hear the Michigan fans boo quarterback John Navarre and the Wolverine offense. I was beginning to think only OSU fans were guilty of such a lack of class. These guys aren't pros being paid millions of dollars. You hate to see them booed by their own fans, especially in The Game.

Speaking of Navarre, I was surprised that a player listed at 6-6 would have so many passes blocked.

• The number of injuries in the game is indicative of how hard-hitting OSU-Michigan games are. All that pad-popping kind of undercuts Michigan's claim that the Buckeyes aren't their rivals.

Jonathan Wells apparently went out with cramps, not from any hit. While he was on the field, however, he had a sensational game. Wells has gone a long way, in the past few weeks, toward erasing the notion that he was a player who hadn't lived up to his potential.

• The emergence of Craig Krenzel in the last two games should take a lot of pressure off incoming freshman Justin Zwick. I don't care if Zwick is the next Art Schlichter. Any Buckeye fan who remembers Schlichter's brutal debut as a freshman against Penn State knows that just throwing a freshman out there, regardless of how good he is, is not the optimum way to go.

Krenzel seems to have earned the starting spot for the time being. Zwick — or Scott McMullen or Rick McFadden — will have to take it from him.

Name The Stadium For Hayes

If it's Ohio State-Michigan week, the name of Woody Hayes is going to come up. The legendary coach is as much a part of the storied rivalry as the teams themselves. The old coach would have been proud of the Buckeyes in Ann Arbor, as they won the game with defense, minimal mistakes and a strong ground game led by Wells.

There are many Buckeye fans who believe that Ohio Stadium should be renamed in honor of Hayes. While it does not appear that is going to happen anytime soon, there is a stadium that is going to be named to honor Hayes.

Quaker Stadium in New Philadelphia, Ohio, is in the process of being restored. When the \$1 million project is completed, the stadium will be renamed Woody Hayes Quaker Stadium in honor of Hayes, who took his first head coaching job at New Philadelphia High School in 1938.

If you would like to help with the project, send your tax deductible donation to The Quaker Club Restoration Project, P.O. Box 202, New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663 or phone Tom Farbizio at (330) 343-1260.