

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 22, No. 30

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

August 2003

# Title Defense Begins

## The Man: Nearly Perfect, Krenzel Goes For 2nd Title

By ERIC LOUGHRY

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The gesture went largely unnoticed, though it happened in front of an Ohio Stadium-record crowd of 105,000-plus and a national TV audience.

During the Ohio State-Michigan game last season, OSU tight end Ben Hartsock heard quarterback Craig Krenzel's first-quarter play call in the huddle incorrectly and carried out the wrong assignment.

Hartsock, sure that tackle Ivan Douglas was supposed to pull on the play, asked the tackle what happened. Only then did Hartsock realize that he had heard the wrong play call. He heard "Counter 34." The play was "Counter 43." It was Hartsock who was supposed to have pulled and been the lead blocker.

It got back to Krenzel that Hartsock said he couldn't hear him in the huddle.

So Krenzel had a little fun at the tight end's expense the next time the play came up. Never mind that OSU trailed the Wolverines in the third quarter and an undefeated season and Fiesta Bowl berth to play for the Buckeyes' first national title in 34 years hung in the balance.

Krenzel again called "Slot Left, Counter 43," stopping and turning to Hartsock, leaning over and slowly and deliberately delivering "43" as the huddle broke out in laughter.

Hartsock, a good sport if ever there was one, laughed too. But as he went to take his position at the line of scrimmage, he told Krenzel in no uncertain terms that the quarterback was nothing more than a wise guy.

That's when Krenzel

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BSB's 2003  
FOOTBALL  
PREVIEW



**SENIOR YUKS** — Craig Krenzel (center) goofos around with senior buddies Darrion Scott (56), Bobby Britton (1), Adrien Clarke (63) and Tim Anderson (right).

## The Wild Card: Clarett Saga Could Affect Repeat Hopes



CHRIS NIDA

**HIS SAY** — On Aug. 11, Maurice Clarett (center, flanked by his mother, Michelle, and his lawyer, Scott Schiff) met with NCAA officials and OSU athletic director Andy Geiger at St. John Arena. Behind Ms. Clarett is Pro Football Hall-of-Famer Jim Brown.

By CHRIS NIDA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Summer is usually, hopefully, a quiet time for college football programs. Players work on their own in seven-on-seven and conditioning drills, while coaches sift through their schedules, evaluate personnel, study recruiting, and maybe, just maybe, even get a little time to themselves.

Ohio State's summer provided no such luxury. Beginning July 13, the day the venerable New York Times published a story alleging academic impropriety within the Buckeye football program, OSU's summer was filled with questions about the integrity of the football program, most of which swirled around the lightning rod that is sophomore running back Maurice Clarett.

Those questions led to the NCAA beginning an investigation into Clarett and the Buckeyes, which subsequently led to OSU holding Clarett out of its fall practice drills until questions about his eligibility had been sufficiently answered.

As BSB went to press Aug. 21, they had not been, and Clarett's status remained up in the air.

The Clarett saga — which began with the Times article and moved on to include an alleged falsified police report, an NCAA investigation and surprise involvement

from basketball phenom LeBron James and NFL Hall-of-Famer Jim Brown — has taken a number of twists and turns since the middle of July, when questions first began to surface.

Here, then, is a rundown of what has taken place with Clarett since then and where he stands now.

### Controversial From The Start

Clarett has turned nearly as many heads off the field as he has on the field since he graduated early from Warren (Ohio) Harding High School and joined the Buckeyes for spring practice in 2002 following a prep career in which he earned not only the Ohio Mr. Football award but also USA Today national offensive player of the year honors as a senior.

Before he even set foot on the field, he drew attention by telling reporters that he was not satisfied with OSU's practice habits heading into the Buckeyes' 2002 season opener against Texas Tech in the Pigskin Classic.

Clarett was quiet for several weeks, at least off the field, as he rolled up five 100-yard games in six appearances through OSU's first seven games. In the week prior to the Buckeyes' game at Wisconsin, considered their first true test of the season,

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## OPINION

# Things Are Shaping Up Quite Nicely

Since the scoreboard went dim in Tempe nearly eight months ago, the euphoria of Ohio State's first national championship since 1968 has been tempered a bit by the unfavorable glare of the national spotlight.

Even before the New York Times cast aspersions upon the university's academic handling of a class involving Maurice Clarett — setting into motion an NCAA witch-hunt that gave head coach Jim Tressel no choice but to hold his star tailback out of early preseason drills — there were DUIs, altercations and freak injuries involving OSU players that prevented the program from enjoying its championship to the fullest.

Now that it's finally time for football again, we can try to put the tumult of the past few months behind us and concentrate on what really matters between the lines.

Although Tressel has had to tinker with an offensive lineup that should have returned all 11 starters from last year, and he must hope that former backups and newcomers can fill defensive holes left by the graduations of Matt Wilhelm, Mike Doss, Kenny Peterson, Donnie Nickey and Cie Grant — not to mention punter Andy Groom — the Buckeyes seem to be fully locked and loaded to make a run at a second consecutive consensus title, something that has been accomplished in college football only once in nearly a decade.

Even if Ohio State cannot make it back to the national championship game, set this year for the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans on Jan. 4, it would likely be content with another Big Ten championship because the Buckeyes haven't enjoyed back-to-back conference titles — can it really be this long? — since they captured six consecutive championships or co-championships from 1972-77.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

with  
Mark Rea

With as many as seven preseason ranked teams on the schedule (depending upon whose poll you like), Ohio State has a favorable road with only four road games the whole season. But three of those trips — to Camp Randall under the lights, Happy Valley and the Big House — are potential land mines lying in wait.

But the Buckeyes get to sharpen their aims by spending the first six weeks of the season (five games and a bye week) at home. Still, this schedule seems to set up nicely for another run at destiny.

## Getting Started

Ohio State begins defense of its national championship amid the hoopla of a prime-time, Saturday night game against a highly regarded Washington team that features such talented players as QB Cody Pickett and LB Marquis Cooper. Despite their talent, however, the Huskies were underachievers last year. And now that the school and head coach Rick Neuheisel have gone through the messiest of divorces, you wonder how the team can focus and play well in a season opener nearly 2,500 miles and three time zones away.

These two teams have played four times before in Columbus and, although the games have been generally close, the Buckeyes have won three of the four. I expect them to make it four out of five and extend their overall winning streak to 15 games.

San Diego State makes a visit to Ohio

Stadium the following week, and like the Huskies, the Aztecs have a high-octane passing attack with QB Adam Hall returning. But Tom Craft is still in a rebuilding stage after last year's 4-9 showing and no one really gives his team much of a chance against the Buckeyes.

The marquee game of the early season pops up in week three as up-and-coming North Carolina State invades Columbus for the first time ever. Head coach Chuck Amato's Wolfpack exploded on the scene last year with an 11-3 record that included a 28-6 spanking of Notre Dame in the Gator Bowl.

The Pack Attack that wore out scoreboards last year with 430 points returns quarterback Philip Rivers (3,353 yards, 20 TDs), tailback T.A. McClendon (1,101 yards, 18 TDs) and receiver Jericho Cotchery (1,192 yards, seven TDs).

In fact, over the course of the first three weeks of the season, the Buckeyes will face quarterbacks who combined for 11,064 yards and 65 TDs last year. But if that gives you a certain amount of pause, especially with Doss and Nickey missing from the OSU secondary this year, just remember that this time last year Dustin Fox was learning a new position and no one had any clue that Chris Gamble would emerge as a defensive threat. And even then, remember what happened with the much-ballyhooed Kliff Kingsbury, Joshua Cribbs and Jason Gesser?

Hopefully by this time, Clarett will have returned to give the Buckeyes the spark they need, because N.C. State's power can be neutralized, as it discovered last year during a three-game losing streak against Georgia Tech, Maryland and Virginia. By the way, those last two

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## COVER STORY: THE MAN

## His Looseness Is A Major Asset (Just Ask Purdue)

Continued From Page 1

motioned a quick "audible" signal to Hartsock.

"As we're walking to the line — and we've seen this on tape — he flips me the bird," Hartsock said. "And we've joked about it since then that we were probably going to see it on ABC with (commentator) Brent Musberger (saying), 'Aw, Krenzel's calling an audible. It looks like he's telling somebody to go deep.'"

OSU went on to beat Michigan, of course, and then won the national title. Like a handful of others during the season, both games were tension-filled for Buckeye fans. But there wasn't a hint of nervousness in the huddle.

"Craig is much, much goofier than the greater public knows," Hartsock said. "If the general public had any idea of the atmosphere in the offensive huddle, there would probably be a lot less confidence."

"It's a really laid-back atmosphere. It's not that it's not serious or it's not focused, but Craig really kind of (lifts) us up and he makes sure that you don't let yourself get too lost in the scope of what's going on."

Such irreverence might contradict the image some have of Krenzel, a molecular genetics major whose academic achievements have been highly publicized by OSU.

But while Krenzel certainly puts in a full day, excelling in a demanding major and poring over game tape meticulously, he has an ornery side, too.

The primary storyline throughout camp was the ongoing saga surrounding tailback Maurice Clarett (see other cover story). Krenzel showed up to interviews one day wearing an isolation boot on his left foot. He had rolled his ankle in practice, suffering a minor injury, and the boot was a precautionary measure. But Krenzel used it as a prop.

"There's nothing wrong," he said when asked about the boot. "This is just to get you guys (the media) to talk about something other than Maurice."

OSU receiver Michael Jenkins, who combined with Krenzel for some of the most clutch plays in OSU history last season, is used to such antics from his quarterback.

"He has his moments where he has to be serious and he has his moments where he can joke around with the best of them," Jenkins said of Krenzel.

In winning half of their 14 games by a touchdown or less, including two in overtime, the Buckeyes demonstrated a penchant for excelling in the tightest of scenarios, with the offense coming through with the games on the line.

OSU's ability to find a way to tally the late score — whether it was a fourth-and-1, 37-yard touchdown pass to Jenkins for the go-ahead score in the final minutes at Purdue, the overtime win at Illinois, a late scoring march against Michigan or a fourth-and-14 overtime conversion to Jenkins when trailing in the Fiesta Bowl — could be traced back to Krenzel and his approach to the game.

He just enjoys himself.

"That's all I've ever done, is just go out there and have fun," Krenzel said. "The game of football is just like the game of life. Very rarely are you ever going to go out and play a game where every little thing goes your way and you do things right. You have to deal with ups and downs within a game, and I look at every

game as if that's going to happen.

"And you just have to deal with everything the same way, knowing that the most important play is the next play. So I just try to go out there and do what I can do and have fun. We're out there on the greatest stage in the country every Saturday. Everyone's wanting to watch the Buckeyes, maybe even more this year. And you can't ask for more than that. We're in a great opportunity. And sometimes people forget that we're just a bunch of 19-, 20-, 22-year old kids out there playing a game we love. And that's all we do out there is have fun."

Krenzel makes sure of that much, whether it's a one-liner or simply an observation. Sensing that Maurice Clarett was uneasy as the Buckeyes trailed in the second half at Wisconsin, Krenzel told the freshman tailback just to take a look around and soak in the atmosphere during a TV timeout.

"I know every team has different types of players," Krenzel said. "You have guys that get psyched and get into the game. Then you have guys like myself. I'll crack a joke in the middle of the huddle during a TV timeout or I'll do something just to loosen guys up and just remind them that we're out here playing a game and we're just having fun and let's just go have fun and do what we need to do on the next play."

That attitude enabled the Buckeyes to produce some rather remarkable results on a consistent basis.

"You just see how relaxed he is in the huddle and if he's able to make a joke you can kind of relax and try not to put so much pressure on yourself," Jenkins said. "So you see that and it does kind of rub off."

Added Hartsock, "When you have that looseness, when you have that enjoyment when you're out there playing the game, that's when you can really perform at your peak, not when you're tight and nervous."

## Cool, Calm And Collected

That breeziness was born of Krenzel's confidence in his abilities.

"You could kind of look in his eyes and know that you could all get the job done," Jenkins said.

Though he has displayed a calm and collected presence in the huddle since making his first start in a 26-20 win over Michigan in the 2001 regular-season finale, Krenzel is more at ease now.

"I think I'm definitely more comfortable and relaxed, and I don't know that any of it has to do with winning a national title," Krenzel said. "I think it has to do more with having 16 games under my belt now. It's going to be a fun season."

"I'm extremely confident in myself, and I'm more confident in my teammates' abilities and what we're going to go out and accomplish this year."

In all likelihood, that will have to be more than last season offensively. Even with the perfect record, there are those who would argue that that OSU offense



JEFF BREHM

**MEDIA BLITZ — Because of his easy-going demeanor and great success behind center, Craig Krenzel enters his senior year as one of the Buckeyes' most public faces.**

at times was more comical than any Krenzel crack.

With the Buckeyes returning every offensive starter from the Fiesta Bowl (assuming Clarett is reinstated), more is expected from Krenzel and the unit.

If OSU is to have a shot at repeating as national champions, a feat that has been pulled off just four times since 1970, the consensus is that Krenzel's numbers will have to be better than last season, when he threw for 2,110 yards and 12 touchdowns against seven interceptions, completing 59.4 percent of his passes (148 of 249).

"I don't feel more pressure on myself because we won last year or because of what we look to do this year," he said. "I think I may be putting a little more pressure on myself because I know that I can be a better player than I was last year."

"Nobody expects more out of me than myself. I'm very critical of what I do. Even a simple completion may not be enough if I didn't put the ball in the right spot. And that's just the kind of mentality and mind-set that I have."

At the outset of last season, the OSU coaching staff knew they had a heady leader, one who would make sound decisions. As the season played out, though, they realized Krenzel could do more than not lose games. He could win them.

"His experience is obviously a tremendous plus," OSU quarterbacks/receivers coach Joe Daniels said. "His awareness, his intelligence, his toughness — all those things add to what he brings to the table for us."

"Really what we've got to do right now is utilize all those things. And it took us a long time — it took him a long time — to realize what he has and for him to realize what he's capable of. So that process was ongoing last year, and pretty soon you blink and we're at the end of the year and we're counting on him making plays and he makes them."

Among those plays were first-down and touchdown runs. Krenzel rushed for 368 yards on the year, including a game-high 81 yards and a couple of touchdowns on 19 carries in the Fiesta Bowl. The rushing aspect of his game came as a surprise to most. But he was mobile enough and, at 6-4, 230, big enough to

take on defenders.

"He's an extremely tough kid," OSU offensive coordinator Jim Bollman said. "He not only did all the things we asked him to do, but he made some key plays with runs and things of that nature."

"It will be interesting to see how things will evolve for him this year."

Certainly, Krenzel wouldn't mind the OSU offense evolving a little bit, allowing him to put the ball in the air more.

He has a talented receiving corps, led by Jenkins, who is in position to surpass OSU season and career receiving records with a strong senior showing. However, OSU's offensive scheme is never going to resemble the aerial attacks of future opponents Washington or North Carolina State. Again, Krenzel is unconcerned. He will let the scenario play out but expects there will be situations or match-ups where he drops back more than he has become accustomed to.

"If you had to ask me a dream scenario, yes, I'd like to go out and throw for 3,500 or more yards and 30 touchdowns and go undefeated," Krenzel said. "But the great thing about college football is that there are so many different ways to win games."

## Looking Ahead, Not Behind

One of the primary focuses of the off-season as OSU moved into the 2003 campaign was putting the magical 2002 season — and national title — behind.

Krenzel had plenty to keep him occupied. Amid preparation for his final season at OSU, the fifth-year senior took part in a research project studying a form of leukemia at OSU's James Cancer Center. He also was engaged to his girlfriend, Beth Barr.

The jokester has been on the other end of some good-natured ribbing from his teammates regarding his engagement.

"Of course," he said. "Everyone always gives you a hard time when you get engaged. They tell you it's the end of your life as you know it. But it's all in good taste and it's all a lot of fun."

The couple will be married next May and already have a good deal of the preparations out of the way. They had to.

"It's a great time in my life," Krenzel said. "I'm looking forward to next May. It's going to be here before I know it because this season is going to fly by. The next thing you know it's going to be January."

"But at the same time, we've gotten a lot of things done for the wedding because I told my fiancée, Beth, that once (fall camp) rolls around you're not going to be getting a lot out of me."

Though he's not married yet, Krenzel still thought a little housecleaning was in order. Any reminder or keepsake of his or the Buckeyes' accomplishments of last season had to go.

The Fiesta Bowl Offensive MVP trophy he took home after OSU's 31-24 double-overtime win for the national title has been relegated to a Rubbermaid container at the house of his fiancée's parents.

"All the stuff that I had from last year — I had some trophies and stuff like that up on shelves — I packed all that up," Krenzel said. "Anything from last season, I packed up into a box. My room looks pretty bare without it, but it's just kind of a reminder to me, once again, last year means nothing and to kind of focus on the moment."



## COVER STORY: THE WILD CARD

# Clarett Keeping A Low Public Profile

Continued From Page 1

Clarett again made headlines. This time, it was for his appearance on the cover of ESPN The Magazine, in which a sneering Clarett appeared with the headline "One & Done."

According to the article inside, which was accompanied by a picture of Clarett throwing his OSU jersey aside, the freshman was considering challenging the rule that prevented anyone who was not three years removed from high school from entering the NFL draft.

Clarett was again the center of attention leading up to OSU's appearance in the Fiesta Bowl, engaging in a back-and-forth debate in the media with OSU officials over who was to blame for Clarett not being able to leave Arizona to return to Youngstown for the funeral of a childhood friend who had been shot and killed.

After the Fiesta Bowl win, Clarett was spotted leaning against a restraining fence 30 feet from the stage where his teammates were celebrating.

## Academic Concerns First

Clarett's brushes with controversy as a freshman may have reflected poorly on himself, but they hardly cast any type of pall over the football program or the university in general, and they never drew the attention of the NCAA.

That all changed July 13 of this year, when the Sunday edition of the Times ran a story at the top of its sports page titled "When Values Collide: Clarett Got Unusual Aid in Ohio State Class."

The article went on to detail how Clarett passed a course in African-American and African studies taught by professor Paulette Pierce despite, the paper claimed, walking out of a midterm exam and not taking a final exam. Instead, Clarett was administered oral exams, which an OSU official said he passed.

The Times also said that football players told Pierce that tutors would do work for the players.

The story was based largely on comments made by an unnamed graduate student who had served as a teaching assistant in the class. She said that wide receiver Chris Vance, a senior in 2002, turned in an outline in the same class as Clarett that was "too perfect" for it to actually have been done by him. According to the article, the teaching assistant had been hospitalized for six weeks after a bout with depression and was no longer at OSU because she feared reprisal for speaking out.

Though the charges against Vance potentially were more serious than any other, all the attention was focused on Clarett. OSU responded quickly, holding a press conference the day the article was published that was attended by OSU president Karen Holbrook, athletics director Andy Geiger, former academic liaison David Frantz and interim provost Barbara Snyder.

School officials emphasized that all players who had played in the Fiesta Bowl were eligible, and that no student, faculty member or teaching assistant ever lodged any complaint regarding academic improprieties during the fall quarter of 2002.

Geiger said this type of attention was part of the scope that comes with being a national champion.

"When you're a national champion and have as prominent a program as we have,

you understand that you're going to receive some scrutiny," Geiger said. "It comes with the territory. We welcome it."

Clarett released a statement to The Columbus Dispatch that was published the Monday following the Times story.

It read, in part, "I was very disappointed to read the Sunday New York Times story about me. I take my education at OSU very seriously."

"Yes, college has been difficult for me sometimes, like it is for lots of freshmen ... I respect Professor Pierce, and I appreciated the assistance she gave me. I do not believe I broke any rules in receiving that assistance in her class."

"Coach (Jim) Tressel makes it clear to the team that academics are a priority, and we all know that our academic performance is equally as important as our athletic performance. I am working hard to be a success at OSU on and off the field. I regret that my effort to be a success in the classroom has been wrongly interpreted by the New York Times."

OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel, OSU's shining example of what the term "student-athlete" really means, expressed doubt the day after the press conference that what the Times alleged could have been true.

"Through the people that I've dealt with at the academic support services and the people that I know are in charge and the type of people that they are, no, I don't believe that kind of stuff would happen at this university," Krenzel said.

Geiger announced at the press conference that OSU would begin an investigation into all of the Times' allegations. That Friday, July 18, he named a 10-person committee that would be in charge of the investigation. Heading that committee was Stanley O. Ikenberry, a former president of both the University of Illinois and the American Council on Education.

The committee was made up of members of the faculty and the administration and was to be entirely separate from OSU's athletic department.

As BSB went to press, there was no word on any of the committee's findings. It could be months before their investigation is complete.

## Now Comes The NCAA

While this academic drama was unfolding, though, another potential problem was hanging over Clarett's head.

The same day that the Times story was published, The Columbus Dispatch reported that NCAA officials had met with Clarett in recent weeks. Geiger indicated that those meetings had nothing to do with the academic concerns raised by the Times.

"I don't think there's any linkage whatsoever," he said at the press conference.

Reports stated that the NCAA was looking into Clarett's financial situation, possibly his dealings with his good friend James. But there was still uncertainty about what exactly it was that had sparked the NCAA's attention.

Things became clearer July 29, when it was reported that Clarett had filed a police report April 18 in which he stated that the vehicle he was driving, a 2001 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, had been broken into while parked at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. According to the report, among the items stolen from the car, which altogether were valued at \$6,165, were approximately \$5,000 worth of stereo equipment, \$800 cash and \$300 worth of clothing.

Also stolen during the break-in was one of two television monitors that were installed in the back of the front seat headrests.

Obviously, the report raised questions about how Clarett had access to such a vehicle and the expensive accessories contained within it.

The day after the report surfaced, a release was sent to media outlets containing statements on behalf of Clarett by his attorney, Scott Schiff, as well as statements by Geiger and Tressel.

Geiger and Tressel's joint statement was the most newsworthy.

It said, "Sophomore running back Maurice Clarett will not participate in preseason football camp until, and unless, all issues related to his eligibility regarding his amateur status have been resolved."

Clarett has not participated in any team functions, including practice, meetings or the team photo since.

Schiff's portion of the statement revealed that Clarett had not been entirely truthful on the police report.

"It is true that on or about April 17, 2003, Maurice Clarett used a borrowed vehicle to attend a morning workout at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center," said Schiff's portion of the release. "This vehicle was broken into sometime during his workout."

"Upon learning of the break-in, Maurice filed a theft report with the OSU police. Many of the expensive items identified in the report did not belong to Maurice but belonged to the vehicle owner. Maurice did exaggerate and inflate the values he placed upon the reported items."

Said Clarett, "I genuinely and sincerely apologize to my teammates and to The Ohio State University for any embarrassment this incident may have caused."

Reports stated that the vehicle involved in the break-in was owned by the Car Store, a used-car dealership on Morse Road in Columbus.

To compound Clarett's situation, the Aug. 4 edition of USA Today ran a story written by longtime scribe Malcolm Moran at the top of its sports page with the headline "Ohio State, Clarett tackle off-field issues" and a subhead underneath that read, "Attorney says star checking out NFL possibilities."

In the story, Schiff was quoted as saying with regard to Clarett investigating the possibility of challenging the NFL draft rule, "That is a logical conclusion you can draw. It would be a sad thing if a great young athlete had to jump because of all these inquiries."

The next day in The Dispatch, Schiff denied he had made such a statement.

"I never implied or stated that Maurice Clarett was trying to go pro," Schiff said. "Going pro is the furthest thing from Maurice Clarett's mind right now."

The same day those quotes were published, Clarett's name was linked to another incident that only served to tarnish the sophomore's reputation further.

According to various reports, Clarett's high school coach, Harding head man Thom McDaniels, arranged a meeting between Clarett and newly inducted NFL Hall of Fame running back Marcus Allen. Clarett never showed.

"Marcus wanted to meet him," McDaniels was quoted as saying. "He thought he might be able to enlighten him, help him and direct him in a path that perhaps Marcus has already gone down."

"Maurice just needed to be where he needed to be. He didn't even call us."

Things took another bizarre turn Aug. 11, when Clarett showed up for a meeting with Geiger and NCAA officials at St. John Arena accompanied by Schiff, his mother, Michelle, and another Hall-of-



CHRIS NODA

**BY MAURICE'S SIDE — Pro Football Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown addresses the media outside St. John Arena Aug. 11.**

Famer in Brown.

Clarett did not comment to reporters, though his mother issued a brief statement, saying, "I'd just like to say that we're continuing to cooperate with the NCAA and basically that's it."

Brown said he did not sit in on any meetings and was simply there to offer support to a young man going through a difficult time.

"I think Maurice is a highly intelligent, fantastically talented young man," Brown said. "I want to give him all the support that I can in going through this investigation."

"He's been unreal as far as his cooperation. We're going to go back and huddle and have a conversation about what has been talked about today and try to make some decisions on how to either assist them or do whatever we think is going to help them expedite the decision they have to make."

## Buckeyes Trudge On

Though Clarett has not been able to participate in team functions since the original statement came down from Tressel and Geiger, he has been visible from time to time, including running sprints at the WHAC and observing some of practice on Aug. 7 and watching in street clothes from the sideline at OSU's first major scrimmage of fall practice Aug. 16.

Coaches and teammates have been peppered with questions about Clarett ever since the Times story was published, but they have never expressed any resentment toward him.

"We know when all of the things that need to be dealt with are done that he'll join us and pick right up and get back on the field," said Buckeye offensive lineman Alex Stepanovich. "We know that we have a big task ahead of us and we focus on what we have to do here. We want to make sure that we back him up 100 percent, but just like in the past, we're going to make sure that we're ready to play on Saturdays."

Krenzel said the team was looking forward to welcoming Clarett back.

"It would be big for this team," he said. "I know all of our players, my teammates, we all respect Maurice. We all know what a great football player he is and we all want him back to be a part of this team."

"We know what he can contribute on the field and we know what he's capable of. And, more importantly, we relish the opportunity to be able to be there with him and just to help him go through the process of maybe trying to understand what college football is all about and trying to understand how to make the better decisions and try to stay out of some of the things that he has gotten into in the past."

BSB will continue to update this story in the coming weeks. For up-to-date coverage, visit our Internet site at [ohiostate.rivals.com](http://ohiostate.rivals.com).



## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

## The Defending Champs Shape Up Like This

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

After winning a school-record 14 games in a single season and capturing the school's first consensus national championship in 34 years, what can the Ohio State football team possibly come up with for a sequel?

Judging from many of the preseason publications, the sequel could be just as good as the original as the Buckeyes are picked as having a very good chance to become the first team to repeat as national champs since Nebraska nearly a decade ago in 1994 and 1995.

"Our biggest challenge is being aware of the difficulty of our challenge," said OSU head coach Jim Tressel before fall camp began. "We are proud of what we accomplished last year, but our emphasis now has to be on how much better we need to get this year. (As a championship team), we will have a bull's-eye on our backs every week. We need to stay in the moment and focus on the task at hand."

The Buckeyes have found life at the top a little more than difficult since winning the Fiesta Bowl. All 11 offensive starters were expected back for the 2003 season, but star tailback Maurice Clarett was held out of preseason drills while the NCAA and OSU conducted investigations into separate incidents. Also, starting offensive tackle Ivan Douglas will miss the entire season with a recurrence of the blood disorder that cost him all of the 2001 campaign, and fullback Brandon Joe and tight end Ben Hartsock missed chunks of preseason practice time with early injuries.

"You worry about guys getting banged up, but on the other hand, you've got to train," Tressel said.

On defense, the unit which many believe put the Buckeyes over the top last season, the likes of Matt Wilhelm, Kenny Peterson, Cie Grant, Donnie Nicky and Mike Doss will be sorely missed. But the team has an influx of talented youngsters eager to fill those voids and make names for themselves.

"We have lost some very good football players, but we have some very good players returning," said OSU defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio. "Hopefully, we can again be an aggressive unit that dictates the tempo. One of the things we want to do this year is force more turnovers and score off those turnovers."

As the Buckeyes prepare for the defense of their national championship, here is a look at how the team's depth chart should look for the opener against Washington.

## OFFENSE

## Quarterback

Craig Krenzel (6-4, 225, Sr.) was an unknown quantity heading into last year's season as the replacement for three-year starter Steve Bellisari. This year, he adorned the cover of Sports Illustrated's College Football Preview after leading the Buckeyes to 14 consecutive victories and the 2002 national championship.

During that championship run, he connected on 148 of 249 passes for 2,110 yards and 12 TDs. Krenzel also showed an ability to scramble out of harm's way, especially when the game was on the line, and picked up



Craig Krenzel

an additional 368 yards and three scores on the ground. A glittering 15-1 as a starter, Krenzel is a career 58.4-percent passer as a Buckeye and expects to showcase his arm more often this year.

Scott McMullen (6-3, 215, Sr.) is an extremely valuable commodity in college football these days — he's a veteran QB with an excellent arm who can provide continuity between the Nos. 1 and 2 players at the position. Last year, he was nearly flawless, completing a dazzling 80.6 percent of his attempts (25 for 31) for 315 yards and two TDs.

He has arguably the strongest arm of any quarterback on the roster and combines that with a quick release and excellent touch. A native of nearby Granville, McMullen was a first-team all-Ohioan as a senior and threw for 6,100 yards and 58 TDs in his high school career.

Troy Smith (6-1, 210, R-Fr.) and Justin Zwick (6-4, 220, R-Fr.) battled one another all spring for the right to back up Krenzel and McMullen, and that battle has continued to be waged throughout fall camp. Smith possesses a rifle arm that reminds some of a certain Atlanta Falcons QB, while Zwick has packed on an addition 10 pounds of muscle and remains the prototypical aerial attack quarterback. In the spring, Smith and Zwick combined to pass for 428 yards and five touchdowns.

## Tailback

Lydell Ross (6-0, 210, Jr.) increased his rushing total from 419 yards to 619 yards last season and matched his freshman total of six TDs.

He also became a more valuable receiver with 10 catches for 75 yards. But with the cloud still hanging over incumbent starting tailback Clarett as of press time, Ross looks to be primed for a standout season. He started three games last year — including turning in a career-high 130 yards against Cincinnati — and said he has added nearly 20 pounds to his listed weight over the summer.

Maurice Hall (5-10, 200, Jr.) has exceptional speed and proved his worth during last year's championship run, scoring the game-winning touchdowns against both Illinois and Michigan. He totaled 370 yards and scored four touchdowns on only 78 carries last year, bringing his career average to 5.1 yards per carry. Hall also grabbed five receptions for 43 yards and ran back 19 kickoffs for an average of 22.8 yards.

Clarett (6-0, 230, Soph.) would obviously top this list were it not for the off-the-field investigations that continued well into fall camp. Should Clarett be cleared to play, he will undoubtedly ultimately take his place as the Buckeyes' featured back again after last year's rookie season that included 1,237 yards and 16 TDs, both school records for freshmen. If Clarett is able to put his full concentration between the



Lydell Ross



Maurice Hall

lines and stay injury-free, the numbers he is capable of putting up could continue to be record-setting.

## Fullback

Brandon Schnittker (6-1, 250, Soph.) is an extremely gifted blocking back who didn't get much chance to show what he could do with the ball last year (just one carry for negative yardage).

But at a position that remains in flux for the second fall camp in a row, Schnittker's ability and the fact he appeared in all 14 games last year are enough to put him at the top of the position chart.

Stan White Jr. (6-3, 238, R-Fr.) spent time at both linebacker and tight end during spring practice, but when projected starter Joe suffered a chest injury during a summer weightlifting session, the OSU coaching staff turned to White and he quickly responded. After an All-America prep career as a linebacker, you know White enjoys contact. He should bring that style of play — as well as a great degree of athleticism — to the fullback slot.

Joe (6-0, 245, Jr.) suffered a pectoral muscle injury during that summertime workout, but told BSB early in fall camp that he could be back and ready for the season opener against Washington. He missed valuable practice time, but coaches will be eager to get him back because of his blocking prowess, both on offense and on the kickoff return team. If he gets more of a chance to run the ball — he, too, got only one carry last year — Joe could provide a change of pace for the Buckeyes' attack. After all, he was a first-team all-stater as a tailback in high school.

## Split End

With 2,064 career receiving yards, Michael Jenkins (6-5, 215, Sr.) returns for his third season as a starter well within reach of David Boston's school career receiving mark of 2,855. One of the Big Ten's top receivers the last two years, he caught 61 passes for 1,067 yards and six touchdowns in 2002. Jenkins also became one of the top clutch receivers in the nation with important grabs against Wisconsin, Illinois and Miami and the game-winning touchdown catch on a 37-yard, fourth-down heave from Krenzel with 1:36 left in the Purdue game.

Reliable, strong, crafty and quick, Jenkins boasts a career average of 18.8 yards per catch.

Drew Carter (6-4, 200, Sr.) finally overcame a litany of injuries to play in all 14 games last season, catching 10 balls for 147 yards. After an impressive spring, he will become the extra receiver when the Buckeyes feature three-receiver sets. One of the fastest members of the team, Carter has 4.3 speed and also will be a valuable player on special teams.

Roy Hall (6-3, 228, R-Fr.) will challenge Carter for playing time this season after spending 2002 as a valuable member of the



Brandon Schnittker



Chris Gamble

scout team. He has the size and speed necessary to make his mark on the Buckeye offense this year.

## Flanker

Chris Gamble (6-2, 194, Jr.) became the first two-way starter for the Buckeyes in roughly 30 years when he starred at both flanker and cornerback last season. Gamble has proved to be so valuable on defense that he will probably not get enough plays on offense to eclipse last year's marks of 31 catches for 499 yards. But he remains a bona fide deep threat and will see considerable time at flanker this season.

Brandon "Bam" Childress (5-10, 185, Jr.) wants to be thought of as more than just a great springtime player. After scoring three touchdowns in each of the last two spring games, Childress is poised to contribute more than ever before, especially to help cut down on Gamble's offensive minutes. He caught only four passes for 47 yards last year but figures to eclipse that mark very early in 2003. The 1999 Ohio high school player of the year also could be used as a kickoff return specialist.

Santonio Holmes (5-11, 183, R-Fr.) is coming off a breakout spring game that saw him total more than 200 all-purpose yards and score touchdowns on a punt return and pass reception. With the Buckeyes inclined to pass a little more in 2003, Holmes should have ample opportunity to get into the receiving mix.

He had 33 catches for 970 yards and 10 TDs as a Florida prep senior.

## Tight End

Hartsock (6-4, 264, Sr.) returns for a second season as OSU's tight end with the reputation of being such a proficient blocker that the coaching staff looks at him as an extension of the offensive line. A solid, technically sound player who is one of the team leaders, Hartsock also is a threat to catch balls on occasion. He more than doubled his career numbers last year with 17 catches for 137 yards and two TDs. Hartsock had early preseason surgery to replace broken bones in one hand, but he is expected to be ready for the opener against Washington.

Ryan Hamby (6-5, 255, Soph.) has the reputation of having the best hands among the OSU tight ends, and even though he had only two catches last year (one of which went for a touchdown), he proved his worth with an important fumble recovery against Michigan that helped preserve a victory. Hamby has gained nearly 20 pounds since last season and has improved his blocking and footwork, making him a viable alternative to Hartsock.

Jason Caldwell (6-5, 265, Jr.) and Louis Irizarry (6-5, 235, Fr.) were getting extra reps in fall camp after Hartsock was sidelined. Caldwell has bulked up as many as 20 pounds over his listed weight but lost none of his quickness and should see a lot of



Ben Hartsock



## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

action in the Buckeyes' jumbo sets.

Izary was a highly decorated prep tight end who caught 128 passes for 2,593 yards and 25 touchdowns at Youngstown (Ohio) Ursuline. He took advantage of increased reps during Hartsock's absence and should give the Buckeyes yet another offensive weapon in their impressive arsenal.

**Left Tackle**

Rob Sims (6-4, 305, Soph.) is thrust into the starting position with the loss of Douglas. Don't expect the Buckeyes to wring their hands too much, though. Sims put together an impressive rookie campaign last year, coming from out of nowhere in the early season to earn a starting role against Miami in the Fiesta Bowl. Even with the ability and understanding of the offense he showed last year, coaches say Sims can only get better. Some have privately whispered that he is the best OSU line prospect since the late Corey Stringer.

**Rob Sims**

Doug Datish (6-5, 295, R-Fr.) had a standout spring and was originally penciled in as Shane Olivea's backup on the right side until Douglas was sidelined. Datish features the blend of size, footwork and agility that the coaching staff likes in its offensive linemen. He was a first-team All-Ohioan at Warren Howland.

**Left Guard**

Adrien Clarke (6-5, 330, Sr.) may never be thought of as svelte, but the 2003 version of Clarke definitely features a slimmed-down model of the lumbering hulkster who dealt with nagging injuries over the last three seasons. Now a senior and ready to defend the national championship, the fifth-year player appears to have dedicated himself to getting in much better shape and will help anchor a talented line that is seen as one of the team's strengths after a few years when it was thought of as a problem area. Clarke remains the most veteran OL on the roster with 30 starts and 37 games in his career.

**Adrien Clarke**

Adam Olds (6-4, 290, Soph.) will finally get a shot at playing time after missing all of the last two years, first as a redshirt and then with season-ending hip surgery in 2002. Olds is coming off a solid spring. He is a former all-state prepster from nearby Dublin Coffman High School and was considered by many to be the top offensive line prospect coming out of Ohio as a senior.

**Center**

Alex Stepanovich (6-4, 300, Sr.) stepped into last year's void left by the departure of All-American LeCharles Bentley and the Buckeyes never missed a beat. Very strong, quick and smart, Stepanovich actually trimmed about 10 pounds from his frame through weight training this summer and has looked extremely agile throughout early practices. He was named to the initial watch list for the 2003 Rimington Award as the nation's top center.

Nick Mangold (6-4, 280, Soph.) proved his value last year as a freshman by jumping into the center spot when Stepanovich

had to fill in at guard. Mangold adds depth to a versatile and talented line and may prove to be too valuable to remain a backup as the season progresses, perhaps switching to guard at times like Stepanovich. He was considered one of the top three center prospects in the nation when recruited out of Kettering (Ohio) Alter.

**Alex Stepanovich****Right Guard**

Bryce Bishop (6-3, 312, Sr.) enters the 2003 season working on a 27-game streak as starting right guard. Bishop was victimized by spotty play as a sophomore but made steady improvement last year and is expected to have a superlative senior season. He threw one of the signature blocks of the early 2002 season, opening a huge hole for Claret's 44-yard touchdown run to open the second half in the Buckeyes' romp over Washington State.

**Bryce Bishop**

Robert "R.J." Coleman (6-5, 295, R-Fr.) is another player who seeks to parlay an excellent showing throughout spring practice into playing time this fall. Coleman is a converted tight end but has quickly picked up the guard position and has impressed coaches with his technique and leverage. He was an all-state performer in football and basketball and a two-time state shot put champion at Byrd High School in Clarksburg, W.Va.

**Right Tackle**

Olivea (6-5, 320, Sr.) would likely be considered the Buckeyes' best offensive lineman if he could stay away from the injury bug. He suffered a broken ankle at the end of the 2001 season and missed time last year with a rotator cuff injury and an emergency appendectomy. Even with those problems, Olivea is still considered one of the top tackles in the country. Now in his third year as a starter, he possesses the rare blend of run- and pass-blocking skills that should make him in high demand at the 2004 NFL draft party.

**Shane Olivea**

Mike Kne (6-4, 300, Jr.) got valuable reps in the spring in Olivea's absence and heads into this season as the backup at this position. He saw extensive action last year in the team's jumbo set, appearing in 11 games. Kne walked on to the OSU squad in 2001 after transferring from Fordham, where he led the team in plays as a freshman.

**DEFENSE****Defensive End**

Simon Fraser (6-6, 265, Jr.) has come so far so fast that OSU defensive line coach Jim Heacock can move Darrien Scott to defensive tackle without hesitation. Fraser has played in all 26 games the last two years and even merited a couple of starts last sea-

son. He can be a ferocious pass rusher, as evidenced by the fact that a full 25 percent of his tackles last year were sacks. Fraser also batted down five passes in 2002 and caused a couple of fumbles, including an important one late in the overtime game against Illinois.

Joel Penton (6-5, 265, R-Fr.) and Jay Richardson (6-6, 265, R-Fr.) are bracketed as backups to Fraser, pointing out the wealth of defensive line depth on the roster. Possessing good size, quickness and the mentality of a pass rusher, Penton was a two-time all-Ohio selection while prepping at Van Wert. Richardson had four tackles in the spring game, including a sack, following up on an all-star career at nearby Dublin Scioto, where 43 of his 73 tackles as a senior went for losses.

**Defensive Tackle**

Scott (6-3, 280, Sr.) moves back to his more natural spot, easing the loss of Peterson, the first OSU player taken in last spring's NFL draft. It's not often that a first-team All-Big Ten player agrees to a position change for his senior season, but Scott feels at home on the interior. Last year, he registered 44 tackles and totaled 8-1/2 sacks. The experience he gained from playing outside the last two years will probably give opposing offensive linemen nightmares as they prepare for one of the quickest, most agile defensive tackles in college football.

**Simon Fraser**

Marcus Green (6-3, 290, Soph.) has impressed the coaching staff with his physical play and his dedication in the off-season. Green has shed some 10 pounds off his listed weight since last season, giving him a little more quickness and allowing him to get into the defensive line rotation. He had 80 tackles and 10 sacks as a senior at Louisville (Ky.) Male.

David Patterson (6-3, 285, Fr.) made as big a splash as any freshman in fall camp. His play in the preseason may make it difficult to redshirt him. Patterson had 218 tackles and 33 sacks in his last two seasons at Warrensville Heights, earning all-Ohio honors and the district defensive player of the year award.

**Defensive Tackle**

Tim Anderson (6-4, 289, Sr.) is the glue that holds the defensive line together. Back for his third season as a starter here, Anderson has totaled 80 tackles, 13-1/2 stops for losses and 7-1/2 sacks during his career. He was a

**Darrien Scott****Tim Anderson**

Continued On Page 12

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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

## Three Honors Candidates On Defensive Line

## Continued From Page 11

second-team All-Big Ten performer last year and has already made the initial watch list for this year's Outland Trophy. Anderson also is tough as nails. He missed the Indiana and Northwestern games last year with a partially torn calf muscle then averaged more than 22 minutes per game the rest of the way.

Quinn Pitcock (6-3, 300, R-Fr.) is another member of the ultratall recruiting class of 2002 eager to make his mark this season. Pitcock has already gained 15 pounds in the last year, but that weight has transformed to power. His bench press is up to 395 pounds and he can squat lift 615. Pitcock was a two-time all-state selection from Piqua, Ohio.

## Defensive End

Will Smith (6-4, 265, Sr.) returns for what many believe will be a run at the Lombardi Trophy and All-American honors. A blend of power and speed, Smith was all over the field for the Buckeyes last season, rushing the passer, stuffing the line and dropping into single coverage on backs and tight ends. He actually set the tone for the Fiesta Bowl win with two important tackles for loss early, plays that seemed to demoralize Miami's vaunted offensive line. In the last two years, Smith has totaled 106 tackles, including 21-1/2 for loss and 9-1/2 sacks. He is as good as there is in college football at the position.



Will Smith

Mike Kudla (6-3, 265, Soph.) is another of the Buckeyes' young defensive linemen who will allow coaches to go eight or nine deep in their game rotation. He made the most of limited playing time last year, recording 12 tackles and also recovering a fumble and returning it 17 yards to set up a score against San Jose State. In the off-season, Kudla battled a serious viral infection that caused him to lose 40 pounds and then missed all of spring ball with a bad shoulder. That all appears behind him now as he has performed well in fall camp.

## Weak-Side (Will) Linebacker

A.J. Hawk (6-2, 230, Soph.) swooped out of the shadows last fall and would have probably been the Buckeyes' top freshman

performer had it not been for a guy named Claret. Tough, smart and aggressive, Hawk totaled 26 tackles as a rookie and also grabbed a pair of interceptions, returning one of those 34 yards for a touchdown against Kent State. As if to prove he takes nothing for granted in taking over the starting position from the graduated Grant, Hawk was the leading tackler in the spring game with 14 stops, 13 of them solos.

Thomas Matthews (6-2, 210, Jr.) has spent most of his OSU career as a special teams performer, but he gets his chance to back up Hawk this year. Matthews has bounced around between linebacker and safety the past two years and brings a level of speed and agility to the position. He totaled more than 100 tackles in both his junior and senior years at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Reggie Smith (6-2, 225, Fr.) is a talented youngster who could see playing time in his first season. He had already caught the eye of defensive coaches early in fall camp with his aggressive style and understanding of the game. Smith was a two-time all-state defensive end at East Cleveland Shaw, finishing his senior season with 121 tackles, 16 sacks and five forced fumbles.

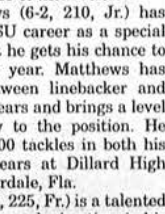
## Middle (Mike) Linebacker

Mike D'Andrea (6-3, 240, Soph.) started slowly in his OSU career but has made significant strides in the off-season. He had a superlative game in the spring, playing mostly at defensive end. So when he suffered a twisted knee in fall camp, the staff didn't hesitate to experiment with Reynolds to the middle. D'Andrea can handle an outside position, but likely will be given the freedom to chase down ballcarriers from the middle. One of the most highly rated recruits in 2002, D'Andrea was a consensus prep All-American after totaling 140 tackles as a senior for Avon Lake (Ohio) High School.

Fred Pagac Jr. (6-1, 225, Sr.) has had his



A.J. Hawk



Robert Reynolds

## Strong-Side (Sam) Linebacker

Robert Reynolds (6-3, 242, Sr.) moved from the strong outside spot during the second week of fall camp due to injuries and could make a home for himself in the middle. There was talk after spring practice of moving Reynolds inside and he worked quite a bit there while D'Andrea was nursing a training camp injury. Nevertheless, Reynolds is a tireless performer who started all 14 games last year and totaled 62 tackles. He seems to have a nose for the ball.

Bobby Carpenter (6-3, 240, Soph.) put a tough off-season behind him to have an excellent fall camp. An intelligent player who could be the most ferocious hitter on the squad, Carpenter saw action in all 14 games last year and made his presence felt immediately with the tackle on the opening kickoff against Texas Tech.

## Cornerback

Dustin Fox (6-0, 195, Jr.) made the switch from safety to cornerback look easy as he intercepted three passes last year and broke up 14 others. His trademark hard-hitting style also led to 84 tackles, and that makes Fox the team's leading returning tackler. He is fast (clocked at sub-4.4 in the 40), physical and instinctive at the position and has a 40-inch vertical leap. Fox also excels on special teams and blocked a punt last year against Indiana that resulted in a touchdown. He was an honorable mention all-conference performer in 2002.

Ashton Youboty (6-2, 187, Fr.) participated in spring drills after graduating early from high school and immediately made his mark. He used his speed and cover skills to move steadily up the depth chart. A native of Liberia, Youboty had 60 tackles and three INTs as a senior at Klein High School in Houston.

## Free Safety

Nate Salley (6-3, 205, Soph.) inherits the free safety spot held for four years by Nickey. Salley has excellent range and closing ability and has impressed coaches with his sure-handed tackling skills. He also can make plays and has the potential to turn interceptions into touchdowns. He



Nate Salley

saw action in all 14 games last year, mostly on special teams, and also lettered for the basketball Buckeyes, playing in a total of 10 games on the hardwood.

Tyler Everett (6-1, 185, Soph.) and Brandon Mitchell (6-3, 190, R-Fr.) were keeping the heat on Salley throughout fall camp. Everett finished last year as the backup strong safety and collected 12 tackles and his first career interception. Mitchell excels in the physical parts of playing the position and is a former 400-meter state champion from Mays High School in Athens, Ga.

## Strong Safety

Will Allen (6-2, 190, Sr.) has the unenviable task of replacing the three-time All-American Doss. But somehow, you believe Allen is up to the task. Last year, playing mostly as the Buckeyes' nickel back, he made 32 total stops and earned the reputation as a teeth-rattling tackler. He also grabbed a pair of interceptions, the first to preserve the victory over Cincinnati



Will Allen

and the second to lock up the team's second straight win over Michigan. Allen topped off the season with five tackles and a fourth-quarter fumble recovery in the Fiesta Bowl.

Donte Whitner (5-11, 185, Fr.) is one of those players who steps onto a football field and immediately lights things up. Although he played cornerback in high school and won prep All-American honors at Cleveland Glenville, Whitner made a seamless move to safety once he showed up for spring ball and quickly burst onto the depth chart. He could be the Buckeyes' fifth DB in nickel packages this year.

## Cornerback

Gamble begged the coaching staff to let him play some defense last year at this time, but only when Richard McNutt's chronic ankle problem flared up again did necessity become the mother of position switches. All Gamble did on defense was make 24 tackles and grab four interceptions, including one on his first defensive play against Cincinnati and another against Penn State that he returned 40 yards for the winning touchdown. Oh, yes — he also earned first-team All-Big Ten honors as a cornerback despite not playing on defense until the fourth game of the year.

E.J. Underwood (6-1, 175, Soph.) went through a mercurial rookie campaign in 2002, starting a couple of games but losing playing time at the end of the season as Gamble emerged. To his credit, Underwood has not gotten down on himself and has responded with a good spring and fall camp. He possesses the kind of cover skills that earned him prep All-American honors as a corner at Hamilton, Ohio.



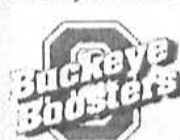
Chris Gamble

SPECIALISTS  
Kicker

Mike Nugent (5-10, 170, Jr.) went from somewhat erratic in 2001 to nearly auto-

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## OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

matic in 2002, connecting on 25 of 28 field goals and setting nine different school kicking records. He earned several All-American honors last year, becoming the first OSU placekicker ever to do so, and was a finalist for the Groza Award.

Making Nugent even more valuable was the way he handled kickoff duties last year, powering most of his kicks through the end zone to neutralize the opponent's return game.

Josh Huston (6-1, 195, Jr.) missed all of last year with knee and hip problems, both of which have healed. Huston kicked three field goals in the spring game and could be called upon to handle kickoffs this season, a duty he performed during the 2001 season.

## Punter

B.J. Sander (6-3, 212, Sr.) served a two-year apprenticeship under Andy Groom and now has the job to himself. He has experience, serving as the Buckeyes' punter throughout the 2000 season when he averaged 41.9 yards on 37 attempts. The knock against Sander has always been consistency, but he allayed any fears in the spring with a solid, steady performance. His leg strength has never been in doubt and he has a career-best punt of 69 yards. Sander also will be Nugent's holder on placements. Huston will serve as Sander's backup.

## Long Snapper

Kyle Andrews (5-11, 245, Jr.) returns for a second season as the team's long snapper on both kickoffs and punts. A former walk-on now on scholarship, Andrews' contribution on special teams played a large role in the Buckeyes' kicking game success last year. There were no errant snaps during the entire 2002 season on 135 combined punts, field goals and extra points.

COACHING STAFF  
Head Coach

Tressel, 50, begins his third season at Ohio State sitting atop the pinnacle of college football. But he's been there before. In his 15 years as the head coach at Youngstown State, he led the Penguins to four Division I-AA national championships as well as two other title game appearances. He built a 135-57-2 (.701) record and his teams made 10 playoff appearances. Last year, Tressel was the national coach of the year after leading the Buckeyes to the national championship. Including his 21-5 record with OSU, Tressel's career mark is 156-62-2 (.714).

A native of Berea, Ohio, Tressel played quarterback for his father, legendary head coach Lee Tressel, at Baldwin-Wallace. He served 10 years as an assistant at Akron, Miami (Ohio), Syracuse and Ohio State



Mike Nugent

before landing the Youngstown State job. Between 1983 and 1985, he coached OSU quarterbacks, receivers and running backs at different times under Earle Bruce.

## Offensive Coaching Staff

Jim Bollman, 48, is in his third season as OSU's offensive coordinator and line coach. He is a native of Ashtabula, Ohio, and was a four-year letterman and football captain at Ohio University. Bollman has served as an assistant at Miami (Ohio), North Carolina State, Youngstown State, Virginia and Michigan State. Prior to coming to OSU, he spent three years in the NFL with the Philadelphia Eagles and Chicago Bears.

Bill Conley, 52, begins his 17th year as a member of the OSU staff and seventh as the tight ends coach. He has the most seniority of any OSU assistant and also serves as the program's recruiting coordinator. A 1972 OSU graduate who played and lettered under Woody Hayes, Conley has helped the Buckeyes land national top-10 recruiting classes several times in the last 10 years. This Columbus native previously served as OSU's linebackers coach and later was in charge of defensive ends.

Joe Daniels, 60, is in his third season as quarterbacks and receivers coach. The native of Bethel Park, Pa., was a running back at Slippery Rock, where he graduated in 1964 before embarking upon a coaching career that led him to stops as an assistant at Boston College, West Virginia, Pittsburgh and Akron. He also spent time with the NFL's Cleveland Browns, Buffalo Bills and New York Jets. He came to OSU after spending the preceding four years at the University of Cincinnati.

Tim Spencer, 42, returns for his 10th season in charge of running backs. A member of the OSU Athletics Hall of Fame, Spencer still ranks third on OSU's all-time rushing list behind only Archie Griffin and Eddie George, whom he tutored to the Heisman Trophy in 1995. He had a brief but standout career in the USFL and NFL,

retiring after serving four years as the starting fullback for the San Diego Chargers. Spencer is a native of St. Clairsville, Ohio.

## Defensive Coaching Staff

Dantonio, 46, begins his third year as OSU's defensive coordinator. He was an All-Ohio prep defensive back at Zanesville, Ohio, and played at South Carolina before serving as a graduate assistant at Ohio State under Bruce in 1983 and 1984. He also has been an assistant on staffs at Akron, Youngstown State, Kansas and Michigan State. Prior to coming to OSU, he served as the Spartans' secondary coach for six years and as associate head coach there in 2000.

Heacock, 55, returns for his eighth year with the Buckeyes. He begins his fourth season as the full defensive line coach after spending his first four years in charge of defensive tackles. Before coming to Columbus, Heacock spent eight years as head coach at Illinois State and also served stints on staffs at Bowling Green, Muskingum College and Washington. He is an Alliance, Ohio, native and Muskingum College graduate.

Mark Snyder, 38, is in his third year as OSU's linebackers coach. A native of Ironton, Ohio, Snyder played defensive back at Marshall then embarked on a coaching career that included stops at Central Florida, Youngstown State and Minnesota, where he served under Glen Mason for the four years prior to joining Tressel's staff.

Mel Tucker, 31, is in his third season as defensive backs coach. After a collegiate career at Wisconsin and a brief pro stint in Canada, Tucker began coaching as a graduate assistant at Michigan State in 1997. He moved to Miami (Ohio) as running backs coach in 1998 and on to LSU in 2000 as the defensive backs coach for Nick Saban. He is a Cleveland native.

## Special Teams

Luke Fickell, 28, begins his second sea-

son as OSU's special teams coordinator. A native of Westerville, Ohio, Fickell started 50 consecutive games as a nose guard for the Buckeyes from 1993 to 1996 and then spent a year in the NFL with the New Orleans Saints. He returned to OSU as a graduate assistant in 1999 then spent two seasons as a full-time assistant at Akron before returning to Columbus.

## Support Staff

Dr. John Lombardo begins his 13th year on the Ohio State athletic staff, including his 10th as the team's head physician, and Bill Davis is now in his eighth year as the director of athletic training. Other members of the medical staff include Doug Calland, head trainer; Bob Sweeney, assistant trainer; Dr. Chris Kaeding, chief orthopedic consultant; and Dr. Ray Pongonis, team physician.

Bob Tucker is in his third year as the director of football operations, and Dick Tressel begins his third year as the associate director of football operations.

Other support personnel include graduate assistants Mark Staten (offense) and Mike Tressel (defense); John Hill, program assistant; video coordinator Mark Quisenberry; equipment manager Danny Swain; assistant equipment managers Rob Lachey, Eric Buchanan and Mike Caldwell; director of strength and conditioning Allan Johnson; assistant strength coaches Mike Cochran and Bernardo Amerson; volunteer strength coach Jack Johnson; and office associates Betty Affeldt and Sherrie Kauffman. Debbie Broeker serves as the head coach's secretary.

Former Buckeyes Steve Tovar and Jeff Uhlenhake also are serving on the OSU staff this season. They are in charge of defensive and offensive quality control, respectively, and are in charge of compiling and breaking down the previous game's films.

Richard McNutt, whose OSU football career was ended by a chronic ankle problem last season, also is serving on the OSU staff this year.



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## OPINION

# The First Three Weeks Will Be Rough Ones

Continued From Page 3

were road games.

If Ohio State can get through its first three games unscathed — and I believe it will — it hits a three-week stretch during which Tressell and his staff can breathe a little easier. Bowling Green went 9-3 last year mainly on the strength of a big-play offense, but the Falcons lost their center and both starting guards from a year ago in addition to their top tailback. Besides, OSU hasn't lost to a Mid-American Conference school since 1894.

## Conference Play

The Big Ten season gets under way the following week when Northwestern invades the banks of the Olentangy. I expect the Wildcats to improve over last year's 3-9 showing but not nearly enough to do much with the Buckeyes. That could give Ohio State a 5-0 record as it hugs into its bye week.

The first road game of the year comes up on Oct. 11 and it should be a doozy. HBO has its "Boxing After Dark" series and you might as well call this one ESPN's "Brawl in the Fall." A night game played in whipped-to-a-frenzy Camp Randall Stadium between two programs that simply just don't care for one another has the makings of an absolute must-see game for fans and an absolute must-win for the two combatants.

Wisconsin certainly views itself as a title contender this year, especially with

nine defensive starters back and the likes of TB Anthony Davis returning, WR Lee Evans back after missing all of last year and a pretty fair QB in Jim Sorgi, who finally gets his chance at the starting job.

The Badgers — as well as their fans — already have this date circled in red. But remember two things: Wisconsin will be coming off a road date at Penn State while OSU is coming off a bye week, and the Buckeyes have won their last three games in Madison. I expect a fourth win in a row.

Returning home the following week, the defending co-champions will meet in the Horseshoe. But while Ohio State has so many returning starters back from a year ago, Iowa was decimated by graduation. It should be a relatively easy victory for the Buckeyes as should the following week when they travel to Indiana to take on the improving but not-nearly-ready-to-contend Hoosiers.

If Ohio State runs the table through October, it will match the school record for consecutive wins at 22 and head to Pennsylvania the following week in search of breaking it.

## Down The Stretch

A Nov. 1 date at Penn State has a lot of folks worried because the Buckeyes have lost three in a row in Beaver Stadium, including a second-half meltdown two years ago that gave Joe Paterno the Division I-A record for coaching victories. And while OSU has come home losers on its last three trips to Happy Valley, it still

holds a 6-4 advantage over Penn State since the Lions joined the Big Ten.

Paterno rallied his troops after last year's loss in Columbus dropped the Lions to 5-3, and PSU went on to win its last four games in succession. But they were exposed against a staunch Auburn defense in the Capital One Bowl and the losses of Heisman runner-up Larry Johnson and four offensive line starters won't help either. And for once, Penn State doesn't have a bye week before playing the Buckeyes. It looks like the losing streak could end and a new school-record winning streak could be set.

After playing Penn State, OSU returns home to close out the home schedule with games against Michigan State and Purdue. Depending upon who you talk to, these contests could be potential trouble spots for the Buckeyes.

The Spartans should improve over their turmoil-riddled 4-8 season from last year, but they will be coming to Columbus near the end of a brutal five-week road trip that takes them to Ann Arbor the week before. I don't see MSU beating Ohio State on the road the week after its Michigan game.

Likewise, the Boilermakers could make some noise in the league race with 17 starters back from last year. (It would have been 18, but TB Joey Harris was ruled ineligible a few weeks ago and will miss the entire season.) But Purdue has not been much of a road warrior lately under Joe Tiller, finishing 5-7 the last two years away from West Lafayette. Add to

that the fact that the Boilers haven't won in Ohio Stadium since 1988 and you begin to see where I'm headed.

That leaves the season finale and it doesn't stretch much of the imagination to believe that both teams could be — and maybe even should be — undefeated when they meet in Ann Arbor for the 100th playing of "The Game."

Of course, history will not be suiting up for the Buckeyes this year. It has been more than 20 years since OSU won back-to-back games in Ann Arbor (1979 and 1981), exactly 40 years since Ohio State took three games in a row from Michigan (in fact, the Buckeyes won four in a row from 1960-63) and nearly 70 years since any OSU head coach (Francis Schmidt, 1934-36) won each of his first three games against the Wolverines.

However, as Woody Hayes used to say, "Statistics are for losers." Those intent on perpetuating the Buckeyes' futility against their archrivals during the Cooper Administration seem to dismiss what has happened the past two years.

Nevertheless, these two teams should take their rightful place on the national college football stage with the traditional noontime kickoff and treat fans all over the country to another thriller that should wind up with the Buckeyes and Wolverines within a touchdown or less of one another either way.

And when the smoke clears that afternoon, I'm guessing you can make your reservations for the Big Easy. Hope to see you there.

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For more information:

Christine Konvolinka 317-927-7771 or czkonvolinka@indy.rr.com

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Deadline for requests: Oct. 11, 2003

### OHIO STATE VS. PENN STATE

November 1, 2003

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For more information:

Mike Falcona 412-492-7484 or mikefalcona@attbi.com

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Deadline for requests: Oct. 18, 2003

### OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN

November 22, 2003

Pioneer High School, 601 W. Stadium Blvd.

Cost: (per person) Bash &amp; Game-\$70, Bash only-\$17

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For more information:

Tom Falotico 586-268-7022 or Bucks4H@aol.com

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## OPINION

# Will Clarett Have Reason To Smile Again?

I'm flipping through pages of our soon-to-be published national championship yearbook and I see it. It is so stunning I stop what I am copy-editing and stare for a minute.

Maurice Clarett is in a photo on page 27 and he's smiling. In fact, he's glowing. It's a photo shot moments after one of the most important plays of the year, Michael Jenkins' game-winning touchdown catch at Purdue, and in it Clarett is ecstatic.

His mouth is wide open with glee. He's clearly either jumping off the ground or up on the balls of his feet. He's about to embrace Jenkins and continue to celebrate the score that told the Buckeyes, if not the world, that they just might get a chance at immortality after all.

There is no division, no brooding. Jenkins isn't concerned that he's about to be greeted on the sideline by a mere freshman. Clarett isn't moping about having an unproductive, injury-plagued afternoon. Instead there is pure, unadulterated joy on the face of Clarett, the kind you're supposed to have when you are young and talented and hopeful and winning at a high level.

How sad, I think to myself. How sad it is that this photo is as rare as one of Howard Hughes giggling at the state fair or J.D. Salinger signing at a Barnes & Noble.

Earlier on this same day that I'm marveling at the carefree demeanor of No. 13, I'm hanging out in the St. John Arena parking lot, watching a weathered 19-year-old emerge in black clothes, accompanied by his concerned mother, an attorney he had allegedly fired days earlier and, of all people, a still menacing-looking Jim Brown.

The NFL Hall-of-Famer said he was there as a show of support. Later in the day, Clarett appeared on a locally televised news show, forced a smile, and said he expected to be back with the team.

At this point (mid-August) in the saga — which includes Clarett branded irresponsibly by the New York Times as a skating-through-the system jock, an

## RAPP AROUND

Jeff Rapp

internal academic probe, and Clarett trumping up his losses after a borrowed car was broken into — there is still great speculation that the tailback will be suspended, or ruled ineligible, or left twisting in the wind by the NCAA. There also still remained an unsubstantiated rumor (that some members of the national media erroneously beat to death) that Clarett planned to sue the NFL for early eligibility for the draft.

Of course, there also was still some semblance of hope that Clarett could return to the program and pick up where he left off with his on-the-field exploits. A little rusty? Sure. Still as good as any runner in the country? Probably. update here?

So here we are, about to embark on the 2003 season in which the Buckeyes will attempt to keep their winning streak alive, reach the throne of the Big Ten and defend their national title. Trying to do that with high expectations and while trying to fend off a Sports Illustrated jinx is tough enough. Mixing in the fact that the schedule is fraught with top-20 teams that no doubt will give their best effort makes things harder.

Adding in all of the off-season headaches that have come with Clarett's name in newspaper headlines makes the task as difficult as keeping up with Craig Krenzel in one of his 700-level molecular genetics labs. Or so we assume.

Let's face it, the range of possibility with Clarett is vast. He could become the first sophomore ever to win the Heisman and lead OSU to a repeat championship. He also could be ruled out of several games, flame out, and never be heard from again.

The truth usually is somewhere in the middle, but that doesn't portend well for

the big guy either. After all, if the Buckeyes lose a game or two this year — and the odds are very much in that favor — Clarett will be an immediate scapegoat even if he remains productive. It doesn't matter if it's a 28-21 loss to Washington that he sits out or a 24-23 loss to N.C. State in which he gains 150 yards or a 17-10 loss to Michigan in which UM gangs up on him all day long.

In any of those scenarios vs. possible top-10 teams, or any others for that matter, Clarett will be like a dartboard in an Irish pub. The letters to the editor and talk radio vitriol will be fierce.

"Maurice Clarett killed this team's mental edge; he ruined their focus; he was a cancer from day one; he set a bad example," they'll say.

Again, the truth is somewhere below the harsh perception. There could be some element of it in any of those observations. While it looks like Ohio State has trudged on just fine through all of Mauricegate, none of us has any idea how well OSU will hold up through all of the stormy off-field elements.

There is still time for Clarett to come out of this. He could show a maturity not yet seen mostly by simply proclaiming a loyalty to OSU and playing his heart out this season. He already has told those around him that he wants to prove an affinity for his university, something he clearly did not do during pregame rants at the Fiesta Bowl after school officials ruled he had not been cleared to leave the team for a funeral in his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio.

One thing is sure, and that is that head coach Jim Tressel wants this matter resolved. He wants to get his team

identity back with Clarett toting the mail, breaking tackles, and inspiring both his teammates and the crowds in the Horseshoe.

If that happens, maybe, just maybe, the Buckeyes will pick up right where they left off — attacking foes one at a time, staying patient, adjusting, encouraging, striking at just the right time like a lioness pouncing on a wildebeest in the night.

The Buckeyes won half their games by a touchdown or less in 2002, including six of their last seven. Certainly there is a belief among the troops that they can continue to find a way to win the tight ones. It always helps when you have a stingy defense, a staunch kicking game, a true running force like Clarett and a calm and clutch leader like Krenzel.

Ohio State appeared to have all those things heading into this curtain-call season of 2003, meaning there was reason to believe Tressel could keep winning 20-17 games and the like.

But what if the bubble bursts? What if the secondary becomes leaky, Clarett becomes uninterested, Krenzel throws a costly pick, or Mike Nugent, God forbid, sprays a game-tying field goal in the final seconds?

I suspect the Buckeyes are going to be a tough out in 2003, but a close defeat may prove to be unavoidable. How OSU manages that moment if and when it comes likely will define this season. The actions of Clarett, of course, will matter, too.

How a sometimes unforgiving and unsympathetic public (that includes starry-eyed reporters) handles it could be the most telling of all.

## From The Pages Of BSB

### TWENTY YEARS AGO — 1983

The OSU community was mourning the loss of one of its greats after two-time All-America center Gary Bradds died of cancer July 15 at the relatively young age of 40.

Bradds, a key reserve on OSU's 1962 national championship finalist team, blossomed after the graduation of Jerry Lucas. As a junior in 1963, Bradds averaged 28.0 points per game and 13.0 rebounds per game. At one point during his Ohio State career, he scored 40 points or more in six consecutive games.

As a senior, the 6-8 Bradds earned National Player of the Year honors, scoring 30.6 points per game and hauling down 13.4 rebounds. He still ranks 12th on OSU's all-time scoring list and 10th in career rebounds.

### FIFTEEN YEARS AGO — 1988

New OSU coach John Cooper held court at the Big Ten Conference Kickoff Luncheon, drawing laughs from reporters with almost every comment.

But he wasn't joking when he talked about how good his Buckeye team could be.

"We may not win the Big Ten this year but we're definitely going to have a say-so about who does," Cooper said. "The road to the Rose Bowl definitely goes through Columbus this year."

BSB announced some personnel changes, as publisher Frank Moskowitz stepped down from his dual role as editor and made room for Mark Rea. Writer Mike Wachsman was promoted to non-revenue sports editor.

### TEN YEARS AGO — 1993

John Cooper and the football Buckeyes were once again looking forward to a new football season, but they also were looking back as well, as the team announced it would wear replica jerseys in honor of the 25th anniversary of OSU's 1968 national championship.

The basketball program was awaiting word from the NCAA on the findings of its investigation, which stemmed from violations head coach Randy Ayers and staff allegedly committed during the recruitment of Cincinnati prep standout Damon Flint.

The Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame welcomed women into its doors for the first time in its 17-year existence. Longtime associate athletic director Phyllis Bailey, tennis standout Leann Grimes Davidge, U.S. Olympic hurdler Stephanie Lightowler-Leftwich, synchronized swimming gold medalists Sarah and Karen Josephson and three-sport All-American Barbara Wetters-Blosser were the original inductees.

### FIVE YEARS AGO — 1998

BSB looked at all the Buckeyes past and present who had graced the cover of the famed weekly Sports Illustrated. By BSB's count, there had been 50 OSU-related cover subjects over the years, and word was linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer was about to become the 51st.

Speaking of former Buckeyes, Chris Spielman made headlines by announcing that he would skip the upcoming NFL season to care for his wife Stefanie, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Paul Keels, formerly the sports director at WLWAM in Cincinnati, was named the new voice of the Ohio State Buckeyes. He replaced Terry Smith on football broadcasts and Dwight Burgess on basketball broadcasts.

### ONE YEAR AGO — 2002

Mike Doss graced the cover of BSB's football preview issue, as he prepared to return for the 2002 season after passing up a chance at entering the NFL draft early.

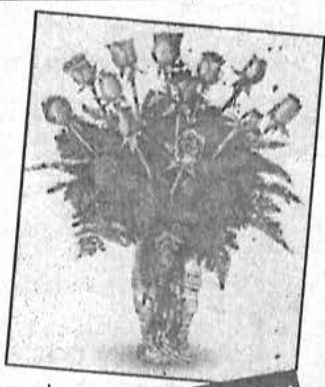
"My team goal is to be Big Ten champs and hopefully make a run at a national title," Doss said. "That's it for now."

OSU introduced new president Karen A. Holbrook, who came from the University of Georgia, where she had served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

The OSU basketball program welcomed in a new face with the announcement that Emonte Jerigan would transfer and play this season, but the team also said goodbye to another valuable member of the program when assistant coach Bruce Parkhill vacated his position to be closer to his daughter in Pottstown, Pa.

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