

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$2.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!

Vol. 23, No. 27

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

May 8, 2004

For OSU, Spring Ends As It Began

Zwick Holds Narrow Edge Over Smith At QB

By CHRIS NIDA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It was a dark day for the quarterbacks at Ohio State's annual spring game April 24.

That is not a commentary on the performance of Justin Zwick, Troy Smith and Todd Boeckman, who combined to complete 29 of 52 passes (55.8 percent) for 251 yards and an interception. And it's certainly not an indictment of the weather conditions on that Saturday, as the contest was staged on a beautifully sunny afternoon that saw the temperature hover around a comfortable 60 degrees.

No, the quarterbacks' day at Ohio Stadium was dark in a much more literal sense. Each of the three competitors for the job wore a black jersey, forcing them to stay behind the line of scrimmage and attempt to throw completions. To further complicate matters, the black jerseys meant that any quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage would lead to an immediate whistle, signifying that the play would be blown dead.

"We had gone about 160 plays (during the jersey scrimmage April 17) when we had them run around and be live," OSU head coach Jim Tressel said afterward, explaining the rationale for the black jerseys. "We wanted them to stand in and either deliver or unload. We thought we needed a little work on that."

The quarterbacks got their work in, particularly Zwick, who attempted 26 passes to Smith's 15 and Boeckman's 11. But it seemed to come at the expense of the offense as a whole, as the spring game was a largely lifeless affair won by the Scarlet, 13-0.



DIRECTING THE TROOPS — Controlling an offense that featured Steve Winner (73) at center, Stan White Jr. (89) at fullback and Lydell Ross (30) at tailback, Justin Zwick (12) quarterbacked the Scarlet team to a 13-0 victory in Ohio State's annual spring game.

BSB's Spring Football Wrap-Up

Another round of Ohio State spring football has come to a close. The players have gone up against each other in a number of scrimmages. The fans got their first glimpse of the Buckeyes since January. And the coaches took it all in. So where did things leave off?

To find out, we invite you to check out our complete package of spring football news. Beginning on Page 6, we have stories on the Scarlet's 13-0 win over the Gray; insight into how the offense and defense looked; and features on defensive back Ashton Youboty and tailback Tony Pittman, two players who really broke out this spring.

When your football appetite has been satisfied, take a look at the latest doings with the men's (Pages 26-28) and women's (Page 29) basketball programs. And don't forget to read up on the Buckeye baseball team (Pages 30-33). As of press time, coach Bob Todd's nine was in a three-way tie for first place in the Big Ten. It should be a great stretch drive at Bill Davis Stadium.

Tressel reiterated what he has said time and time again this spring, and what he figures to say time and time again into fall camp: If there had been an actual game the day of the spring game, Zwick would have started and Smith would have played significantly.

From the sounds of Zwick, the players have heard plenty of that mantra as well.

"I really don't pay a whole lot of attention to that," Zwick said. "I think that's more for other people to worry about. We're all just here trying to get better and make this team better. Whoever can do that is going to play, and all I can do is go out and give 100 percent."

Frustration For Smith

The black jerseys seemed to do more of a disservice to Smith than anybody. It is well known that much of the sophomore QB's success at the position is directly related to his ability to make things happen with his feet — as evidenced by the 105 yards rushing he had in the jersey scrimmage a week prior to the spring game.

But aside from late in the game when the Gray team had the ball at the 1-yard line after a blocked punt, Smith was confined to the area behind the line of scrimmage.

With the Gray's top running back, Roshawn Parker, going down to injury early, Smith's team had virtually no running attack to speak of. The squad was moving the ball on the first possession of the game, but after Parker went down, his replacement, walk-on Matt Johnson, promptly was stripped of the ball.

Parker's absence allowed Scarlet rushers to do nothing other than focus on tagging the opposing quarterback (since the QBs also were barred from contact). Not surprisingly, Smith ended the game having been sacked seven times, but it's a safe bet he would have been able to elude some of those tackles if the play hadn't been whistled dead when a defender tapped him.

The fact that Smith wasn't informed until the morning of the spring game that he wouldn't be able to run past the line of scrimmage didn't make him too happy.

"Why should I be (happy)?" he wondered aloud. "I don't understand why I should be."

Asked how much the black jersey limited Smith, Tressel responded that all the quarterbacks were affected by the decision to shield them from contact.

Tressel reiterated the fact that he wanted

Continued On Page 12

OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL

Defense Trumps Signal Callers

Scarlet Throws 13-0 Shutout In Spring Game

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

If you were looking for offense from either the Scarlet or the Gray during Ohio State's annual spring game April 24, you came to the wrong place.

Restrictions on the mobility of the quarterbacks and a dearth of available running backs on the Gray team led to a 13-0 victory for the Scarlet in a mistake-filled game that left the 45,074 in attendance at Ohio Stadium thankful for the warm, sunny day but still a bit baffled as to what kind of team the Buckeyes would field in the fall.

The much-anticipated quarterback battle between Justin Zwick and Troy Smith never really materialized as all QBs wore black jerseys for the game, symbolic of players who were not allowed any contact.

Zwick won the derby — at least for the afternoon — completing 16 of 26 passes for 165 yards while leading the victorious Scarlet team. Meanwhile, Smith was hamstrung by being unable to operate in his usual manner and managed only seven completions in 15 attempts for 53 yards. He also was sacked an amazing seven times, although a sack was awarded anytime a quarterback was touched by a defender in the backfield.

After the game, OSU head coach Jim Tressel said the battle for the starting position would continue in the fall, although Zwick seems to have retained the lead he carried into spring practice.

"We put some restraints on them today. One thing we have to get better at is either delivering it to the receiver or



HE'S IN — Scarlet tailback Lydell Ross (30) gets into the end zone ahead of Gray defensive end Simon Fraser (75) for the only touchdown scored in Ohio State's annual spring football game, a 13-0 victory by the Scarlet.

throwing it away," Tressel said of the decision to allow no contact on the quarterbacks. "Sometimes your best throw of the day is when you put it into the stands. That was what I felt we needed to work on."

When asked if he could now name a starter after 15 days of spring practice, the head coach replied, "It was rare two years ago when Craig (Krenz) took nearly every snap over the course of 14 games during our national championship season.

Last year, we didn't win the Big Ten championship but we were Fiesta Bowl champions and won 11 games, and we don't do that without two quarterbacks who were good enough to play and could play.

"If we had to play a game today, I'd probably say the same thing I said coming into the spring: Justin would probably start and Troy would play a significant amount. Both gained some very good experience this spring, and I feel like they've progressed. But we still have a ways to go with both of them."

True freshman Todd Boeckman finished his first spring by seeing some action on both the Scarlet and Gray squads. He completed a total of 6 of 11 passes for 33 yards and pitched the game's only interception.

While the quarterbacks struggled — at least in terms of numbers — there were a couple of standout offensive performances in the game, not the least of which was from true freshman tailback Tony Pittman, who tallied 21 carries for 105 yards. The number of carries amounted to nearly half of the rushing plays in the entire game from both teams combined.

"I didn't realize I had that many," Pittman said. "I just wanted to do well. It's been a blur for me, really. This has been quite a learning experience, but I definitely think I did the right thing by getting here in the spring."

Pittman graduated from high school early and joined the Buckeyes just a few days before spring practice began. The

Hole-In-One Commemorative Ring®



Celebrate that perfect shot

The ultimate reward for the ultimate achievement in golf.

Custom made in Gold or Silver
Includes your name and the date of the big event.

Call or stop by today

American Awards, Inc.
2380 Harrisburg Pike
614-875-1850
www.awardsohio.com

OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL

next-best rushing total for the Scarlet was Lydell Ross, who carried just five times for 17 yards before taking most of the final three quarters off.

Others who had breakout offensive games for the winning side included senior John Hollins and redshirt freshman Tony Gonzalez, who combined for 10 catches for 127 yards in the game. Gonzalez's performance was especially noteworthy since he was operating with a pair of stretched hamstrings.

"I definitely wasn't 100 percent," he said, "but I've worn that stupid yellow jersey almost all spring. I wanted to play today."

Stan White Jr. also had a good game with a couple of catches out of the full-back spot, good for 14 yards, and a nice block on linebacker Reggie Smith in the first quarter, springing Ross for a 1-yard touchdown, the only TD of the game.

On the Gray side, things were a bit disjointed and then went from bad to worse when the team's top running back — senior walk-on Roshawn Parker — suffered a shoulder stinger early and went to the sidelines after just three carries. The rest of the day was spent in search of some offense, and the Gray simply never found any. Its first possession of the day was its best, but it ended in a fumble at the 33-yard line by Parker's replacement, redshirt freshman walk-on tailback Matt Johnson.

Gray's only other scoring opportunity came when Roy Hall blocked a Josh Huston punt late in the fourth quarter and returned it to the 1-yard line. But two false start penalties and back-to-back sacks of Smith by senior safety Thomas Matthews ended the threat.

There were plenty of stars on the Scarlet defense, including Matthews who had seven tackles including his sacks. Sophomore cornerback Ashton Youboty continued his fine spring with four tackles, one forced fumble, a pass deflection and a blocked punt. Sophomore defensive end Jay Richardson also opened some eyes with two sacks among his five tackles. Another DE, redshirt freshman Marcel Frost, also had two sacks for the Scarlet team, while sophomore walk-on Antonio Smith had the game's only pick.

For the Gray, sophomore safety Donte Whitner led the way with 11 tackles while junior middle linebacker Anthony Schlegel had nine. Redshirt freshman walk-on DB De'Angelo Haslam added eight stops and true freshman OLB Marcus Freeman had five tackles including a sack. Other Gray defenders with sacks were defensive ends Simon Fraser and Mike Kudla and walk-on linebacker Chibindu Nnake.

The game also was marred by several special teams mistakes, including blocked punts, mishandled snaps and blocked field goals. None of that made Tressel very happy, although he tried to put the best face possible on it.

"When you start diluting your teams, special teams is where you're liable to have the most breakdowns," he said. "No matter the circumstances, though — I guess it's good if you're on the kick block teams and not so good if you're on protection. There were some great lessons from today that we can learn."

The only field goals came from Huston, who converted from 20 and 43 yards. He yanked attempts from 20 and 52 yards to the left and had a 24-yard attempt blocked. Mike Nugent's afternoon was limited to the second-half kick-off for the Gray.

Punting was also a mixed bag. Senior

walk-on Kyle Turano had the most consistent day, averaging 43.0 yards on two kicks for the Scarlet. Huston's only attempt was blocked. Meanwhile, the Gray used three different punters with freshman A.J. Trapasso getting three tries, averaging 33.7 yards per kick. Walk-on Kevin Gerber's only attempt went 35 yards while fellow walk-on J.D. Bergman — over from the OSU wrestling team — couldn't field a low snap cleanly and got his only attempt snuffed.

The return game wasn't much better. The longest kickoff return of the day was just 24 yards by Bam Childress, while Youboty's 11-yard punt return was the longest of the afternoon in that department.

Game Notes

- Several players missed the game with injuries. They included David Patterson (knee), Curt Lukens (leg), Maurice Hall (both knees), Kirk Barton (ankle), Mike D'Andrea (shoulder), Marcus Green (knee), Tyler Everett (undisclosed), Dustin Fox (concussion) and Joel Penton (undisclosed).

Tailback Ira Guilford and wide receiver/defensive back Dareus Hiley also were held out with what were reportedly academic troubles.

- Although there was little offense, there were several big hits in the game. The first came when safety Brandon Mitchell smacked tight end Louis Irizarry on the second play of the game. Later, cornerback E.J. Underwood delivered a blow to Antonio Holmes, preventing Holmes from scoring a touchdown.

But perhaps the biggest hit — and most unusual — came when Turano laid the wood to Schlegel after the blocked field goal. The 6-2, 245-pound Schlegel scooped up the ball and the 6-0, 195-pound Turano whacked him to the ground with a textbook tackle.

- The Buckeyes wore a decal with black letters "RMB" on the backs of their helmets during the game.

The letters honored a pair of people close to the Ohio State athletic family who recently died tragically.

Combined, the letters formed the initials of Ricky Matter and Michael Breschi. Matter, who died in an automobile accident, was the younger brother of OSU women's basketball player Caitly Matter; Breschi was the 3-year-old son of Ohio State lacrosse coach Joe Breschi. The youngster died when he was accidentally struck in the parking lot of his preschool.

Tressel also had the letters sewn onto the ballcap he wore during the afternoon.

- With the notable exception of no contact on the quarterbacks, the game was played close to form with an actual set of Big Ten officials, led by referee Scott Myers.

Instant replay — which will get a trial workout in the Big Ten this coming fall — was available to the officials during the spring game, but it appeared that it was used only once.

Early in the first half, play was stopped momentarily and the ball was spotted about a half-yard from where it was originally marked. The entire process took less than two minutes.

The Big Ten will use instant replay on an experimental basis in 2004, but it will not be like the NFL version. Reviewable plays are limited and coaches are not permitted to call for challenges. Only a Big Ten official in the press box may use replay to overturn calls.

Scarlet 13, Gray 0

Scarlet and Gray Game
April 24, 2004 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
GRAY	0	0	0	0	0
SCARLET	7	3	0	3	13

First Quarter

Scarlet — Ross, 1 yard run (Huston kick), 1:53; 12 plays, 66 yards, 5:42 TOP.

Second Quarter

Scarlet — Huston, 20 yard field goal, 3:55; 8 plays, 54 yards, 2:31 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

Scarlet — Huston, 43 yard field goal, 9:47; 10 plays, 19 yards, 6:10 TOP.

Att. — 45,074

Weather — 60 degrees, clear and sunny; wind slight

Team Statistics

	Gray	Scarlet
First Downs	7	18
Rushing	2	11
Passing	4	6
Penalty	1	1
Rushes-Yards	18-(33)	33-91
Passing Yards	82	169
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	24-12-1	28-17-0
Offensive Plays	42	61
Total Net Yards	49	260
Third Down Efficiency	4-12	6-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	1-1
Punts-Avg.	6-22.7	3-28.7
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	1-0
Penalties	6-40	5-33
Time of Possession	18:39	29:21

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — Gray: Johnson 3-10; Parker 3-3; Schnittker 1-3; Team 1-(-2); Boeckman 2-(-15); T.Smith 8-(-32). Scarlet: Pittman 21-105; Ross 5-17; Team 1-0; Boeckman 2-(-8); Zwick 4-(-23).

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — Gray: T.Smith 15-7-0-53-0; Boeckman 9-5-1-29-0. Scarlet: Zwick 26-16-0-165-0; Boeckman 2-1-0-4-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — Gray: Childress 3-31; Irizarry 3-21; Schnittker 3-16; Parker 1-14; Jordan 1-1; R.Hall 1-(-1). Scarlet: Hollins 5-64; Gonzalez 5-63; White 2-14; Holmes 2-14; Hamby 2-12; Pittman 1-2.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — Gray: Trapasso 3-33.7-48; Gerber 1-35.0-35; Bergman 1-0-0-0; Team 1-0-0-0. Scarlet: Turano 2-43.0-44; Team 1-0-0-0.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — Gray: R.Hall 1-54; Childress 1-5. Scarlet: Youboty 2-20; Holmes 1-0.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — Gray: Childress 4-74. Scarlet: Jacobs 1-20.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) — Gray: None. Scarlet: Youboty 1-8.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — Gray: None. Scarlet: A.Smith 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) — Gray: Freeman 1-12; Kudla 1-9; Fraser 1-6; Nnake 1-6. Scarlet: Frost 2-14; Richardson 2-13; Matthews 2-8; Carpenter 1-8; Schlichter 1-5.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — Gray: Freeman 1-12; Kudla 1-9; Fraser 1-6; Nnake 1-6. Scarlet: Frost 2-14; Richardson 2-13; Matthews 2-8; Carpenter 1-8; Schlichter 1-5; Youboty 1-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.) — Gray: Whitner 3-8-11; Schlegel 3-6-9; Haslam 5-3-8; Freeman 4-1-5; Harley 1-4-5; Underwood 3-1-4; R.Smith 1-3-4; Fraser 3-0-3; Pitcock 2-1-3; Maupin 2-1-3; Hawk 1-2-3; Nnake 1-2-3; Arden 0-2-2; Buie 1-0-1; Kudla 1-0-1; Franzinger 1-0-1; Schnittker 1-0-1. Scarlet: Matthews 3-4-7; Mitchell 3-2-5; Richardson 2-3-5; Carpenter 2-3-5; Youboty 4-0-4; Roberts 3-0-3; Frost 2-1-3; Kerr 0-3-3; Jacobs 0-2-2; Pittman 1-0-1; Hollins 1-0-1; Salley 1-0-1; Cotton 1-0-1; Schlichter 1-0-1; Turano 1-0-1; A.Smith 0-1-1; Coker 0-1-1.

INFINITI FX45

The **NEW FX** Crossover SUV
V6 or 315 V8 all-wheel drive



Blending in is NOT an option!

INFINITI OF COLUMBUS
3890 Tuller Road • Dublin, OH • (614) 793-1000
Showroom Hours: M-T 9am-8pm • Fri-Sat 9am-6pm • SUN 12pm-5pm
1-800-837-1160
Shop 24/7 www.infinitiofcolumbus.com

OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL

Listless Offense Not Likely Sign Of Future

Of the four Scarlet and Gray Games played on coach Jim Tressel's watch, the annual intrasquad scrimmage has alternated between a high-scoring affair and an outing more closely resembling the offensive output displayed by the Buckeyes in the fall.

The game has played out as somewhat of a shootout on two occasions, including last spring. In the other two outings, touchdowns were only slightly more common than OSU wins in Ann Arbor during the 1990s.

The latest of the spring affairs certainly falls into the latter category, with the Scarlet taking a 13-0 win. The lone touchdown was a 1-yard plunge by Lydell Ross late in the first quarter.

"I don't know exactly where we are offensively because we have to line up and play someone to figure that out," Tressel said. "But with a little bit of a small package involved and some limitations, it doesn't concern me there was only one touchdown."

With projected starters split up between both sides and a host of restrictions placed on both the offense and defense — for the first time under Tressel, quarterbacks were off limits for contact and no first-down blitzing was allowed — the sluggish showing likely has little bearing on the offense in the fall.

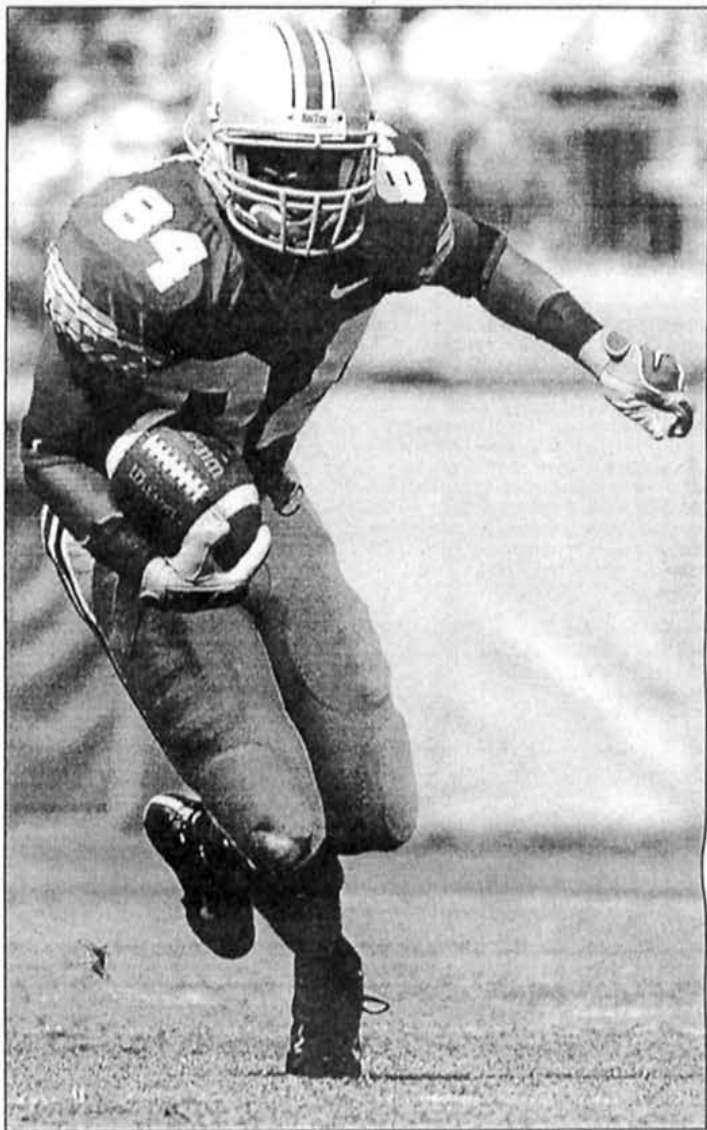
INSIDE THE OFFENSE with Eric Loughry

But the spring game was a far cry from the 37-29 shootout last spring when freshman quarterbacks Justin Zwick and Troy Smith combined to throw for six touchdowns.

The offenses combined for 606 yards in that game. They managed just a little over half that output this spring (309). The Gray was held to just 49 yards in a spring game more along the lines of the 6-3 contest in 2002 than the first spring game under Tressel, a 22-21 contest in 2001.

With both Zwick and Smith wearing black jerseys to designate them as off limits to defenders, neither quarterback was able to find the end zone this year. Nor was dark-horse candidate Todd Boeckman, who was admittedly nervous in his first action in a game situation in Ohio Stadium.

Regardless of whether the spring game has provided offensive fireworks or not, though, it has had little impact on Tressel's ball-control offense in the fall.



JEFF BREHM

BENEFICIARY OF THE GAME PLAN — With an emphasis placed on passing during the spring game, receivers often bear the fruit of the quarterbacks' labor. A case in point was fifth-year wideout John Hollins, who caught five passes for 64 yards in the contest.

Ground To A Halt

With tailbacks Ross and Antonio Pittman on the Scarlet squad and Maurice Hall out for the spring, Roshawn Parker, a non-scholarship player who has looked good in scrimmage situations the past two years but has only one career carry in actual games, was the lone veteran tailback on the Gray roster.

Nevertheless, the team was on the move the opening drive of the game until Parker went down with an injury. On the next play, walk-on Matt Johnson was stripped of the ball by Ashton Youboty, who also recovered the loose ball, and the Scarlet drove 66 yards the other way for the first and last touchdown of the afternoon.

Parker's absence was felt immediately. It would be felt throughout the game as the Gray finished with a net of minus-33 yards rushing and minus-47 yards coming on quarterback sacks.

Without a scholarship back in the fold and only Johnson left at the tailback spot, the Gray was forced to throw. And the

Scarlet defense knew it.

"I thought when the Gray lost (Parker), they lost their balance," Tressel said. "And when they lost their balance, it makes it harder."

"The contain rush guys and so forth just pin their ears back and get after it. So I guess it's just another reminder that you'd better be pretty balanced or you're not going to have as much fun as a quarterback when the team can't run."

With no viable running game and restrictions on his own mobility because of the black jersey, Smith struggled, finishing with just seven completions out of 15 passes for 53 yards. He was also sacked seven times. Meanwhile, Boeckman was 5 of 9 for just 29 yards with an interception and was sacked twice.

The Gray receivers didn't have much fun either.

Starting Gray wideouts Roy Hall and Bam Childress were limited to just four receptions for 30 yards, and Hall's only grab went for a 1-yard loss. Devin Jordan had a single catch netting 1 yard.

PromoWest
Pavilion

Up Close & Personal

VIP BOX SEATS AVAILABLE ON A PER SHOW BASIS,
PLEASE CALL 451-5483 FOR INFORMATION

5/7	QUAB PRESENTS GUSTER TICKETS AVAILABLE THROUGH QUAB OFFICE	4:00	\$10.00
5/13	FUEL W/ MAGNIFY	6:30	\$20 / \$22
5/14	BLUE OYSTER CULT BRING YOUR COLUMBUS DESTROYERS TICKET AND GET IN FREE	7:00	\$15 / \$17
5/15	P.O.D. W/ HAZEN STREET, LACUNA COIL & BLINDSIDE	6:00	\$22 / \$24
5/19	THE OFFSPRING W/ MELISSA AUF DER MAUR AND THE START	7:00	\$27.00
5/26	WISH YOU WERE HERE: A TRIBUTE TO PINK FLOYD	6:30	\$10 / \$12
6/11	PRIMUS	6:30	\$37 / \$39
6/13	2004 WOODY HAYES GOLF CLASSIC PAIRINGS PARTY	5:00	N/A
7/2	CD101 PRESENTS BOOM BASH 2004 FEATURING I THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	4:30	\$10.00

ticketmaster



Tickets available at all Ticketmaster outlets. Charge-by-phone
at 431-3600 or online at www.ticketmaster.com

405 Neil Avenue
West of Nationwide Arena

www.promowestpavilion.com

OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL

"It was kind of hard because the defense knew we weren't running the ball," Childress said. "So they just sagged off and just made sure Roy and Devin and I couldn't get catches."

Tight end Louis Irizarry had three catches for 21 yards, and fullback Brandon Schnitker picked up 16 yards on three receptions.

"We had to make do with what we had and we tried to make some things happen, but it didn't work out today," Hall said.

Nick Mangold, a returning starter on the offensive line at center, manned the middle for the Gray. He was disappointed with the pass protection, regardless of the circumstances.

"They were able just to tee off a little bit, which hurt us, but we've still got to be able to protect," Mangold said.

Line Fills In Holes

Perhaps secondary only to the quarterback derby, revamping an offensive line that lost three starters as well as a veteran backup took center stage.

However, when spring practice was over, it appeared that Ohio State was well on its way to solidifying a front wall that included holdovers Rob Sims and Mangold as well as newcomers Mike Kne, Tim Schafer and Doug Datish.

"I thought the spring went real well," said Mangold, now one of the elder statesmen who will start a second season in 2004 as the starting center. "I was able to get in with the guys and help bring everybody up, get everybody more acclimated to those game-type situations."

"Some of us older guys tried to help the younger guys learn, showed them what they needed to do as far as work in the film room and just everything else. So for me, I felt like it was a great chance to work on my leadership and help this line be what it needs to be."

With Mangold in the middle and Sims manning the left tackle spot, Kne and Datish appeared to solidify their holds on the guard positions while Schafer appeared to lock onto the right tackle slot.

"It's been kind of a work in progress, but I think we're getting to where we want to be," Mangold said. "Everyone has jelled and we're becoming more and more of a tight group."

Perhaps best of all, the Buckeyes built up some depth with the healthy spring competition. Program veterans T.J. Downing, Andree Tyree, R.J. Coleman and John McLaughlin all pushed the potential starters and remained injury-free.

In fact, the only spring casualty was redshirt freshman Kirk Barton, who was to have battled Schafer at the right tackle spot. But Barton entered spring rehabbing from off-season shoulder surgery then twisted an ankle in the jersey scrimmage April 17. He did not play in the spring game.

"Except for Kirk, we've been unbelievably healthy," Mangold said. "Knock on wood for that. We really don't like to talk about injuries because of the karma thing, but we have been healthy all spring. We just need to stay that way."

As for the quarterback derby, Mangold has a unique perspective on the situation, working with both Zwick and Smith as they vie to become the starter in the fall. But he swears he plays no favorites.

"I want the best guy back there, and I don't know who that is right now," he said. "From my perspective, they're pretty even. They have two pretty different styles. To me, whoever performs the best will be in there. But knowing there is a

guy behind him who can be every bit as good is just a safety net. It's a luxury, really. For me, it could be either one."

And could it be a combination of both? "I would think so," Mangold said. "I definitely think the potential is there for that to happen."

Scarlet Receivers

While their counterparts on the Gray squad had a quiet afternoon, a couple of Scarlet receivers went to work.

OSU's No. 1 receiver, redshirt sophomore flanker Antonio Holmes, had just two receptions for 14 yards before he took the latter half of the afternoon off — another tradition of Tressel spring games for projected starters at the skill positions.

It was fifth-year senior John Hollins and redshirt freshman Tony Gonzalez who came up big for the Scarlet, each coming up with five receptions. Zwick finished 16 of 26 for 165 yards, with nine of his completions going to either Hollins or Gonzalez. Hollins also caught a pass from Boeckman, who was 1 of 2 for 4 yards during brief play on the Scarlet side.

Hollins gained 64 yards on his five grabs, with 29 coming on a sideline route to the 4-yard line that set up a Josh Huston field goal to give the Scarlet a 10-0 lead in the second quarter.

"It was a lot of fun getting out there and competing," said Hollins, now a fifth-year senior. "And we had to split the receivers up, so I kind of knew the ball was going to be in the air more and I was going to have the chance to make some plays and have some opportunities to make some plays. I wanted to get out there and focus and concentrate."

Hollins, a split end still looking for his first career reception, lettered last year on special teams. He blocked a punt that was recovered for a touchdown in OSU's 35-28 win over Kansas State in the 2004 Fiesta Bowl.

Now preparing for his final season, Hollins has focused on making the most of his last opportunity.

"I had a solid spring and this is just one practice out of 15," he said. "I just wanted to come out here and take on the mind-frame of getting better, working hard, and so I just wanted to be able to help the team however many plays I'm in there."

Despite being slowed down with two pulled hamstrings, Gonzalez was just 1 yard off Hollins' yardage total, with his five snags going for 63 yards.

The longest reception was a 19-yard pickup on the final drive of the first half. He also exhibited excellent concentration, coming back to gather up a ball that was tipped by Scarlet linebacker Marcus Freeman for a 15-yard gain late in the third quarter. The catch helped sustain a drive that ended early in the fourth quarter with a 43-yard field goal by Huston for the final points of the game.

"It felt great to finally get out there," said Gonzalez, who redshirted last season. "It's been a long time since I've played in a football game. It was nice, because I had been banged up (the day before the spring game). I had pulled the other hamstring, so I was kind of on two bad wheels out there, just trying to do whatever."

Gonzalez, a Cleveland Star Ignatius standout at receiver and in the defensive secondary, had been out all of spring practice with a right hamstring pull until returning for the April 17 jersey scrimmage at Ohio Stadium. The practice time he had missed was evident that day as he struggled, dropping a couple of balls

Offensive Players On The Spot

In the April 10 issue of BSB, we highlighted several offensive players believed to be "on the spot" during spring practice. Here is how they fared:

• **Justin Zwick, quarterback** — Did Zwick do anything spectacular to dazzle his critics this spring? Not really. Did he do anything spectacular to lose the starting job? Absolutely not. Truth be told, Zwick is eerily reminiscent of a certain OSU quarterback who entered the 2002 season largely untested and rather unspectacularly. We all know how that story ended. Zwick completed 16 of 26 throws in the spring game for 165 yards with no touchdowns but no interceptions either. Heading into the fall, it appears from all indications that the starting QB spot is still Zwick's to lose.

• **Lydell Ross, tailback** — With the exception of a rather mundane performance in the spring game, Ross seemed to do everything this spring to solidify his hold on the No. 1 tailback position. He was asked to shed a couple of pounds, which he did without any sacrifice of power. Ross also was asked to do more film work than he has ever done to help him improve upon his decision-making once he gets the ball. That will continue throughout the summer. He is poised for a breakout senior season. All he needs to do is remain healthy. He passed the first test with an injury-free spring.

• **Roy Hall, split end** — Hall had a rather quiet spring and an even quieter spring game with just one catch for minus-1 yard. He did, however, recover a blocked punt and returned it 41 yards for the Gray, giving that team their best chance for a score. In scrimmages, Hall was making plays and

catching balls in traffic. The only fear is that the OSU offense will be geared more toward the run with Hall getting only a few balls thrown his way per game. At 6-3 and 230 pounds, a tall, athletic, reliable playmaker at receiver in the Big Ten can be a valuable weapon. How will he be used in the fall? Stay tuned.

• **Louis Irizarry, tight end** — Heading into the spring, Irizarry simply needed to return to basics and put a troublesome rookie season behind him. By all accounts, that's exactly what he did — right up until May 1 when he was jailed along with teammate Ira Guilford for robbing a fellow Ohio State student. If Jim Tressel's initial reaction is any indication, Irizarry will not play for the Buckeyes in 2004.

• **Offensive linemen** — It was extremely difficult to tell from the spring game how the offensive line is coming together. With Doug Datish, Tim Schafer and Nick Mangold on one team and Rob Sims and Mike Kne on the other, it was impossible to gauge the play of the projected starting line. However, that five was on display during scrimmages and other drills and seemed to be doing fine. It is still a work in progress, but the building blocks appear to be in their proper places.

— Mark Rea



Roy Hall

when he was open.

"That was some serious rust right there," Gonzalez said. "That was bad."

When he pulled his left hamstring the day before the spring game, he feared he would miss another opportunity to show what he could offer.

Gonzalez held up and came through, but Tressel suggested he might need some extra training.

"We need to get a little bit of a ham-

string plan with Tony, maybe three or four mornings a week at 6 o'clock — maybe work on the hamstring machine or something," the OSU coach said. "But Tony Gonzalez, when he's healthy, he can help this team and I'm sure he will."

Gonzalez was in the room when Tressel brought up the hamstring situation. He wasn't sure if it was a joke or not.

"Probably not," Gonzalez said, "(although) I hope so."

Bulk & Bagged Sand • Bulk & Bagged Gravel • Bulk & Bagged Mulch • Bulk & Bagged Topsoil

FREE!
DO-IT-YOURSELF
**NATURAL
STONE
SEMINAR**

Space is limited
please call
ahead!

Walkways • Patios • Walls

LEARN HOW TO:
• Design • Installation

• REFRESHMENTS • BRING YOUR PLANS

Mr. MULCH
2721 W. DUBLIN-GRANVILLE RD. (161)
(1½ Miles East of Sawmill)
792-8686

"CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR FUTURE SEMINARS" • mrmulch.com

Rental Equipment • Accessories • Granite • Planters • Water Fountains

Natural Flagstone • Boulders • Ponds • Natural Wallstone

Natural Striping Stones • Concrete Pavers • Pond Stone • Retaining Walls

OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL

Defense Allows 100-Yard Rusher, But Just 1 TD

INSIDE THE DEFENSE

with

Mike Wachsman

The numbers compiled by the Ohio State defense during the 2004 Scarlet and Gray Game would lead one to the conclusion that the Buckeyes are once again going to be a fearsome unit on that side of the ball.

There may be some truth to that, but it's hard to really get a read after watching a contest that had split up offensive lines and didn't allow quarterbacks to run the ball.

The defenses combined for 13 sacks and kept the damage on the ground to 58 yards. There also was just one touchdown scored during the afternoon, so there is definitely something to be proud of.

But the players were taking it as just another step on the evolutionary chain.

"This was good for us, but it will really get going in the fall," said linebacker Anthony Schlegel, who tallied nine tackles for the Gray squad. "We pretty much stuck with the basics today, and it probably hurt the offense a little bit that the quarterbacks couldn't take off.



JEFF BROWN

GET BACK HERE — The spring game marked the first time linebacker John Kerr (33) suited up in his new OSU game uniform. Here he corrals Gray running back Roshawn Parker (20).

"Especially someone like Troy (Smith), that's a big part of his game. So we had a little bit of an advantage. Then again, we couldn't blitz on first downs. It was a pretty basic plan on

both sides, I guess."

Even with the solid figures against the run, there was some unhappiness from the Buckeyes stop unit.

Freshman Tony Pittman netted 105

yards and had the longest run of the day, a 13-yard burst shortly into the second quarter.

He also had three straight first-quarter runs of 8, 9 and 7 yards, a fact that didn't go over very well with a few players.

"We can't give up 7 yards a run on the ground," said linebacker John Kerr, who saw his first meaningful action at Ohio State since transferring from Indiana. "They were running hard, but that's no excuse. We need to flow to the ball better. It's hard for me sometimes because I'm only playing one series at a time, so I'm still learning. But we have to shut off the run a little bit better than we did.

"A lot of our negative yardage came in sacks today, and that's going to impact your rushing total. But to have someone gain 100 yards on you, that hurts a little."

It's All On The Line

With off-season knee injuries to Marcus Green and David Patterson keeping them out of all 15 days of practice, the opportunity was there for some younger players to get a lot of work on the defensive line.

It was a chance for untested youngsters such as Brandon Maupin and Sian Cotton to get thrown into the mix, and they seemed to pass the test. Maupin made three tackles in the spring game, while Cotton had one but

Witex Laminate Flooring Collections



Leading the way for Witex brand for many years have been the Laminate Flooring Collections in a broad variety of looks, casual-to-country, trendy-to-traditional, ranging from natural, rustic hickory to elegant deep cherry decors. Each style is supported by a complete line of moldings, underlayments (including Witex-brand sound control products) and floor care products.

Witex Laminate Flooring is ideal for stylish and worry-free residential and light commercial uses. Fabricated from high-density, moisture-resistant fiberboard (never lower density or particleboard), Witex products have long been recognized by the architectural and design communities not only for their high-end designs, but also for their quality and performance characteristics.

The decor layer is bonded to a precision-engineered, high-density core protected by a superior wear layer comprised of an aluminum oxide finish.

WITEX

Long-established as the worldwide leader in laminate flooring, Witex innovations continue to set standards of quality in the industry.

STARTING AT

\$1.29
S.F.

PANEL TOWN & MORE

"The Ultimate Flooring Store"

1063 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215

614-488-0334

www.paneltown.com

COMPLETE OFFICE PRINTER LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

US Laser incorporated

OFFICIAL
PARTNER



CENTRAL OHIO'S
PREMIER OFFICE PRINTER SUPPORT COMPANY IS PROUD TO BE
AN OFFICIAL PARTNER OF YOUR COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS!

SINCE 1992 US LASER HAS PARTNERED WITH CENTRAL OHIO'S
LEADING ORGANIZATIONS TO HANDLE ALL OF THEIR
OFFICE PRINTING NEEDS.

US LASER SUPPORTS TEAMS OF ALL SIZES
FROM FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES TO SMALL BUSINESS
CALL US TODAY TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR TEAM!

COLUMBUS - CINCINNATI - INDIANAPOLIS
US Laser, Inc. 720 Grandview Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614.487.3373 Fax 614.487.3376

www.uslaser.com



OHIO STATE SPRING FOOTBALL

was also a presence in the backfield.

"Those guys really have some solid qualities," defensive tackle Quinn Pitcock said. "Sometimes with young guys they're a little timid, but both Brandon and Sian can play. They showed that they can hack it, and I really expect them to be in the mix when fall camp opens."

Also making some noise was end Jay Richardson, who finished with five stops. He also had two sacks for the Scarlet, and his biggest stop came late in the fourth quarter when the Gray had the ball at the Scarlet 6-yard line. Smith — temporarily allowed to scramble with the Gray in striking distance — went around right end looking to cut the margin to 13-6. Richardson filled the gap and managed to collar him, allowing a gain of 3 but preventing the Gray from scoring any points.

Pitcock showed that he appears ready to step up and fill the void left by the departures of Tim Anderson and Darrien Scott. The sophomore was active up front, and though he made just three tackles on the day, he was solid enough at the point of attack that the Scarlet went from running up the middle to favoring the outside.

"It's always going to be our calling card to attack the run," Pitcock said. "We like to run to the ball, and we have guys who can do that. We just have to continue to play as hard as we can and we'll be all right."

"The big test for us is going to be in the fourth quarter. We want to physically be better and in more shape than the team across from us."

Pitcock isn't absolutely certain what the season holds, but he knows that there seem to be the requisite bodies up front for the Buckeyes to make some noise.

"It was great having Will (Smith) and Tim and Darrien up there last year, but we're a new group," he said. "I expect more guys will be rotated in. We had a lot of injuries this spring, so a lot of guys got to show what they could do."

Much of what OSU does this fall will be contingent on how well a relatively inexperienced front plays. Patterson, Richardson, Simon Fraser, Mike Kudla and Marcel Frost will go after quarterbacks while Pitcock, Green, Maupin and Cotton will plug things up inside.

But if they can't get it done, OSU's wealth of talent and experience at linebacker will be moot.

"We know that a lot of it is on us," Pitcock said. "If we can't put pressure on the quarterback or take up some blockers, our defense won't be able to make plays. We have a lot of impact players on our side, and we need them to be free to do their thing. So it starts now for us."

Not Backing Off

There is a bit more stability in OSU's linebacking corps, and one would be hard-pressed to find a better, deeper collection of talent anywhere.

Not only will A.J. Hawk and Bobby Carpenter be back for their junior campaigns, but Schlegel will be patrolling the middle.

He shed blockers well enough and sniffed out the ball with enough regularity that the starting spot — for the time being, anyway — looks like it's his to lose.

"Today wasn't all about playing for starting spots," he said. "We wanted to see how we measured up against the

Defensive Players On The Spot

In the April 24 issue of BSB, we highlighted several defensive players believed to be "on the spot" during spring practice. Here is how they fared.

• **Simon Fraser, defensive end** — After his position coach, Jim Heacock, asked him to step up this spring, Fraser responded. He moved through the 15 days of practice with relative ease and capped them with a three-tackle performance for the Gray in the spring game. There is every reason to believe Fraser will be one of the stars of an extremely deep and talented defensive line this fall.

• **Anthony Schlegel, middle linebacker** — Maybe he wasn't quite Chris Spielman, Andy Katzenmoyer and Matt Wilhelm all rolled into one guy, but Schlegel did nothing this spring to hurt his standing atop the depth chart at middle linebacker. He exhibited some rust after the transfer year but quickly adapted to OSU's style of play. Nine tackles in the spring game were about all you need to know about whether or not he can cover the field. He is extremely talented and supremely confident, traits shared with the aforementioned former Buckeyes.

• **Mike D'Andrea, middle linebacker** — Unfortunately for D'Andrea, he was never medically cleared to begin full contact in the spring and will have to bide his time until fall. But if a player can make improvement while pacing the sideline, it could be D'Andrea. He spent an inordinate amount of time in the film room, trying to analyze the flaws in his game and address them with coaches. Once he hits the field this fall, it is expected that OSU fans will see a player who pays much more attention to detail rather than one who hopes his athletic ability alone can get him by.

• **Dustin Fox, cornerback** — Like D'Andrea, Fox spent much of the spring on the sidelines after suffering a concussion. Also like D'Andrea, he used the down time to take a different view of his approach to the boundary cornerback position. Fox spent a lot of time in the press box for a different perspective of scrimmages and listened in on coaching conferences while on the sideline. He also got a healthy dose of reality when Ashton Youboty had a standout spring as his replacement. All of those things should fuel his desire for an outstanding senior season.

• **E.J. Underwood, cornerback** — All Underwood needed was to stay healthy and get a lot of reps. He accomplished the first with ease then benefited as much as anyone when Youboty switched over to Fox's position for most of the spring. In the limited amount of time the media was allowed access to drills, it appeared that passes were seldom completed to whomever Underwood was guarding. It will be interesting to see if he continues to progress when Youboty moves back to challenge him in the fall.

• **Mark Snyder, defensive coordinator** — From all accounts, Snyder appears to be keeping the status quo with the defense he inherited from Mark Dantonio. In other words, Snyder sees no need to fix something that isn't broken. In fact, despite major personnel losses the last two seasons, the case could be made that the Buckeyes will field the most talent they have had in quite some time on the defensive side of the ball. Snyder's only problem may be to devise a rotation system that will keep all of his players happy.

— Mark Rea



Simon Fraser

think it should have been 35-0. But the defense performed well as a unit. To hold someone to negative rushing yards is always good."

Secondary A Primary Concern

With the loss of Chris Gamble and Will Allen in the defensive backfield, there will be some unfamiliar faces doing battle for playing time.

Senior cornerback Dustin Fox was held out of the game after sustaining a concussion early during spring practice, but the coaches have faith that he can become a leader in the secondary.

Less certain is the way the opposite side is taking shape.

The primary candidates appear to be E.J. Underwood and Ashton Youboty, and each threw his helmet squarely into the fray.

They had four tackles apiece, but Youboty's stats might have been just a tad more meaningful as he forced a fumble, recovered a fumble, blocked a punt and returned two punts for 20 yards.

It's apparent that both guys will play. How much is the big question.

"We have a lot of capable guys," Youboty said. "We have guys who can tackle, guys who can cover — just guys who can play."

There appears to be an embarrassment of riches at safety, most notably on the strong side with Donte Whitner. The sophomore led all players in the game with 11 stops, many of them coming on running plays after Pittman had eluded the linebackers.

"Donte stepped up today," Youboty said. "The DBs shouldn't have to make so many tackles on running plays, but we have some playmakers on offense. Pittman runs pretty hard."

Brandon Mitchell stood out more than incumbent Nate Salley at the free safety spot, making five stops to just one for Salley.

As happened last year, that's a battle that could go on well into fall camp.

Tyler Everett missed the game with an undisclosed injury but also could be in the mix at safety.

It's easy to see that the Buckeyes have a little bit of sorting out to do in the defensive backfield heading into fall camp.

"Our whole spring has basically been about making progress," Youboty said. "I think we've taken some steps, but there's more work to do."

"The spring helped us gain our identity as a defense, let us know what we can do and what we can't do."

While the spring was about progress, the game itself was a nice opportunity to show skills in a mostly live setting. And there was a perk to winning, too.

"We have bragging rights all summer," Youboty said with a smile.

offense and against each other. The big test will come in camp when we're game-planning. This was pretty basic stuff."

OSU attempted to take it easy on Hawk after he went through off-season arthroscopic knee surgery, but he still was able to make three stops in the spring game.

Carpenter also was active, making five stops and a sack.

Freshman Marcus Freeman definitely looks like a player after making five tackles and one sack, though he had a sure interception go off his hands and into the waiting arms of receiver Anthony Gonzalez.

Senior Thomas Matthews may finally be on the verge of breaking out after posting seven stops and a pair of sacks. His speed on the outside and familiarity with the secondary — he has done a stint at safety — makes him similar to Cie Grant, who blossomed as a senior outside backer.

In fact, maybe even the OSU coaches can't make up their minds which position Matthews should play. He was listed as a strong safety in the initial spring roster then as a linebacker in the spring game program.

Meanwhile, even though he was on the losing side, Schlegel wasn't that upset with the day he and the linebacking corps had.


"This is a very good group I'm with," he said. "I'm more comfortable now because they've simplified things for us today. Last year, Coach D (former defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio) put in the whole package, and that was

tough. We only ran a few things out of the ordinary today, and the offense didn't run a ton, either."


"I know what I can do now and where my fit is. All the pieces are in place with me and A.J. and Bobby and Mike (D'Andrea, who sat out the game with an injury). I learned about what our mentality has to be for us to be successful."

Like Schlegel, Kerr also went through some growing pains this spring. But he also feels a little better about where he is now than where he was at the beginning of camp.

"It was kind of hard to get into any kind of groove," Kerr said. "Knowing you're only going to be playing on our 30 series (nickel package), it takes a little wind out of your sails. As a group I thought the linebackers played well. We (Scarlet) could have done better today. I



Planks



ON HIGH

888 S. High St.
(German Village)

443-4570

GREAT TIMES... SAME GREAT FOOD!

ON BROADWAY

4022 Broadway
(Grove City)

875-7800

SERIOUS BUCKEYE FANS ONLY!!!

COVER STORY: SPRING ENDS AS IT BEGAN

Tressel Strips Wheels From Quarterbacks

Continued From Page 1

to see how his quarterbacks handled being in the pocket, but he wasn't willing to say that the rules hurt one quarterback more than any other.

"I think it took something away from all of them because one of the things — one of your weapons — as a quarterback is to step up and run when people get overzealous with their rush," he said. "So it hurt all of them. Plus, quite honestly, I didn't want them getting banged up."

None of them did get hurt, though Smith did hit the ground several times when the pass-rushers' eyes got a little too wide. Defensive end Jay Richardson sent Smith sprawling once, one of his two sacks on the afternoon.

But Smith, regarded as the biggest running threat of the three signal callers, made it clear he was more restricted by the rule than either Zwick or Boeckman.

"Of course it hurt me more," he said. "Purposely, I wasn't able to do things that I was going to be able to do. It hurt."

Nevertheless, Smith attempted to stay positive.

"Now I see how it feels to really be pummeled in the pocket like that," he said. "I need that type of experience in any way, shape or form that I can get. In that aspect it was a positive day."

Smith relented some, admitted that he had not known of the plan to put the quarterbacks in black jerseys until the morning of the game. He went to see Tressel, wondering why.

"He told me that he wanted me to work on just standing in the pocket and releasing the ball, which I can understand," Smith said. "But if you look back at the national championship game we won, Craig (Krenzel) had 81 yards rushing, all on step-ups. That's a big part."

"I didn't necessarily agree with (the decision to wear the black jerseys), but what can I do?"

Judging by the seven times Scarlet defenders got to Smith, one might think Smith would have been on the ground quite a bit more had the rules allowed the QBs to be hit. Smith begged to differ.

"A lot of the time, I was stepping up," he said. "There were times that I was being sacked that I wouldn't have stood back there like a sitting duck. You learn from experiences like this."

Smith wasn't overly impressive with his arm on his seven completions. He did complete multiple passes to tight end Louis Irizarry and fullback Brandon Schnittker, so he wasn't afraid to check down and hit receivers underneath.

But he also failed to complete any long passes — overthrowing Roy Hall on one occasion early — and not all of his short passes found their targets either.

Still, he earned the respect of his teammates who were on the other side of the ball.

"Obviously, Troy's a scrambler," Scarlet cornerback Ashton Youberty said. "Even if we have a coverage sack, it's still a disadvantage because he runs and gives them a first down. You just have to be more aware. Troy has a good arm. He can easily throw a fade right over your head. So you just have to be aware."

Finding A Comfort Zone

Zwick, meanwhile, seemed content after his spring game performance. He completed 16 of his 26 passes for 165 yards, finding John Hollins and Tony Gonzalez five times apiece and generally avoiding any potential pitfalls.

He did have what looked to be an interception go through the hands of freshman linebacker Marcus Freeman, falling into the waiting arms of Gonzalez, but other than that Zwick



JEFF BREHM

SCRAMBLING FOR A CHANCE — While offensive tackle John McLaughlin (62) occupies Scarlet defensive end Marcel Frost (84), Gray QB Troy Smith (10) tries to find an open receiver.

avoided most situations where a turnover could have occurred.

Like Smith, he also failed to complete any long balls, either over- or under-throwing his intended receivers on a couple of occasions. Zwick also was in position to complete some fade passes into the end zone from the Gray's 3-yard line, but the Scarlet receivers couldn't create enough separation to allow Zwick to drop in a touchdown pass.

Most frustrating was that after directing the Scarlet to a score on its first possession, Zwick had his team in the red zone on four more occasions and could not push it into the end zone on any one of those.

"We moved the ball well," he said. "We got it down there and we just have to work on getting it in the end zone. If we had scored all the times we were close to the red zone or in the red zone, it would have been a little bit better score. We just have to work on finishing."

Somewhat the forgotten man in the quarterback derby, Boeckman entered the game for the Gray on the third series of the game but did not get any snaps with the Scarlet until the fourth quarter. That provided Zwick with the chance to get into a rhythm, and the presence of 105-yard runner Tony Pittman stepping in for the largely inactive Lydell Ross forced defenders to remain honest when it came to stopping the Scarlet.

That gave Zwick some time in the pocket, allowing him to complete some nice balls to Hollins, tight end Ryan Hamby and wide receiver Santonio Holmes when he was in the game.

"We threw some deep out, outside reads that we had, faking a go and coming back to it," Zwick said. "When you're throwing downfield to the sidelines, it's something that's good if you can get it out there."

The amount of attention focused on the two primary competitors for the starting quarterback job would be overwhelming for any member of the team, much less two sophomores. That alone has earned both Zwick and Smith the respect of their teammates.

"I respect them a lot, for them to be so young and know so much," said senior receiver Bam Childress. "The coaches

are hard on them because they have to know a whole bunch of stuff, but just for the things that they have been through and how well they have played in the spring, I really respect them for taking the media and everything. They still come out cool, calm and collected and just have fun."

Overcoming Nerves

Tressel consistently went out of his way during spring drills to mention Boeckman as in the mix for the quarterback job this fall, but it became fairly apparent after the spring game that he was a clear third on the depth chart.

Boeckman didn't look out of place in completing 6 of his 11 passes for 33 yards, but he did throw the only interception of the day, a second-quarter downfield heave that he tried to force to Hall. Walk-on safety Antonio Smith rolled over for the pick.

It was not a coincidence that Boeckman looked a bit more comfortable under center in the fourth quarter with the Scarlet.

"I came out and it was too much," Boeckman said. "I saw the fans. I'm in Ohio Stadium playing. I was really nervous coming in. I tried to calm the nerves down, but it took a while to do that."

While Boeckman would obviously love the chance to take the field this fall with the team as a true freshman, he understands his role.

"I'm a young guy," he said. "Those guys have a year of experience on me, and I just wanted to push them to get better."

After 15 of the practices preparing for the fall, Zwick is the slight leader in the quarterback race. There will be 29 practices in fall camp for Smith to try to unseat him before the Sept. 4 kickoff with Cincinnati rolls around.

As far as the boss is concerned, naming a starter isn't the name of the game, and he has no timetable as to when he wants this competition to come to a resolution.

"Our goal really isn't that day where we get to name a quarterback," Tressel said. "Our goal is to have good quarterback play significant enough to win, and we still have a ways to go there."

**BALLQUBE, INC. NO MATTER WHAT YOUR SPORT IS,
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED**



1 Holder \$28.41
2-3 Holders \$29.39 EA.
1 Case (4 Holders) \$22.77 EA.
includes standard shipping

BallQube, Inc. has been the leader in custom manufacturing holders for Sports Collectibles since 1987. All our products are designed and manufactured in the USA.

Football Holders • Helmet Holders • Mini-Helmet Holders • Basketball Holders • Cereal Box Holders • Baseball Holders • Bat Holders • Hat Holders • Softball Holders • Hockey Puck Holders • Hockey Stick Holders • Jersey Holders • Soccer Ball Holders • Trading Card Holders • Racecar Holders • Golf Ball Holders

Also available in decorative wood bases

SHOP ON-LINE 24 HOURS A DAY:

www.ballqube.com

The Clear USA Winner

1-800-543-1470

8 A.M. TO 5 P.M. C.S.T. MONDAY-FRIDAY OR FAX ANYTIME 903-663-5371, RT 2, BOX 190 CUSHING, TX 75760



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PROFILE

Pittman Was Better Late Than Never

By ERIC LOUGHRY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

He enrolled at Ohio State early, but freshman tailback Antonio Pittman was late for his first spring practice after mistakenly boarding the wrong bus on the campus loop.

Pittman might have announced he had arrived at OSU with his play in the final spring session — the annual Scarlet and Gray Game.

He finished with a game-high 105 rushing yards on 21 carries for the Scarlet, good for a healthy 5-yard average.

Pittman graduated early from Akron Buchtel so that he would be able to start at OSU spring quarter and join the Buckeyes in spring practice, and like many freshmen, he had some trouble finding his way around campus during his first week of classes. When the first of 15 spring practice sessions opened April 1, Pittman was nowhere to be found — and it wasn't his idea of a poor April Fools' Day prank.

When it became clear the bus was not headed anywhere near the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, Pittman frantically called the football offices to explain what had happened. He finally arrived at practice feeling more than a little sheepish.

"The first day, I got lost. And then I came late. Then I got to run the ball and I

realized how much faster the (college) game was," Pittman said. "And you can't outrun everybody to the outside. Now you've got to go up there and you've got to pound."

He evidently made a lot of progress in just 15 days of practice.

Pittman looked neither lost nor out of place during the final spring practice of the year, with the 105-yard effort in the Scarlet and Gray Game serving as punctuation. He also was the leading rusher in the April 17 jersey scrimmage.

"I thought Tony had a good spring for a guy coming in," OSU head coach Jim Tressel said. "He didn't have winter conditioning and really didn't know much about what we were doing. (But he) stepped in and learned. Once he figured out the bus system, we were in great shape."

Pittman's big day came after a restless night. Determined that he wasn't going to be late on game day, Pittman was one of the first people in the WHAC early on the morning of the spring game.

"I woke up in the middle of the night — about 3:30 — and just didn't go back to sleep," he said. "I came to the Woody (Hayes Athletic Center) about 8:30 this morning and I just was ready. The first thing I grabbed was my jersey and just turned it around to the back to see my name on it. I was just happy."

He had reason to be.



JEFF BROWN

WELCOME TO THE HORSESHOE — Scarlet tailback Tony Pittman (25) had a breakout spring game with 105 yards rushing, while Gray linebacker Marcus Freeman (17) accounted for five tackles. Both players are freshmen who enrolled early.

Senior Lydell Ross played just one quarter for the Scarlet, rushing for 17 yards on five carries. Then it was Pittman's first opportunity to show OSU fans what he could do. He didn't disappoint.

"He ran the ball well," Scarlet quarterback Justin Zwick said. "All spring he's been one of those guys that has spurts of getting on the field and making plays, and today he came out and made a bunch of plays for us."

Pittman's longest run of the day went for 13 yards, and midway through the second quarter he put together consecutive runs of 8, 9 and 7 yards. But what he remembered most after the game was a hit put on him by Anthony Schlegel and Donte Whitner, a fourth-quarter tackle that dislodged his helmet.

"I remember a couple of plays, but the one I remember (best) is when I got my helmet knocked off," Pittman said. "That was the hit — that was the hit I was waiting for. I mean, you never felt that in high school. Now you understand the grown men you're playing against, so you've got to get ready."

At least to some degree, Pittman feels he already is.

"I'm feeling comfortable because if you're running scared, you're going to get hurt," he said. "And if I was scared, I wouldn't have come here early. And I believe that I'm ready."

But there have been some growing pains for Pittman. There was plenty for him to digest, and though his college football career is all of three weeks old, with all he had to learn it seemed like the process was longer to him.

"It has been a long, long ride," he said. "The jump from high school is a big transition, then from high school football to col-

lege football is going to be an even bigger jump because the game is so much faster."

"And there is so much stuff that you have to learn. You have to learn how to pick up blitzes and read defenses, and you have to learn your offensive sets and everything else, so it's been a long ride."

But Pittman expected an adjustment period would be necessary, which is what led him to take the steps to graduate from Buchtel in January so that he could get a head start at OSU.

"The whole reason why I jumped early from high school is because you've got to learn so much," he said. "Your playbook is like 300 and something pages. And in camp in the summer you only get 10 days to learn that. But when I got here, I had 15 days to learn that plus I still have the whole summer plus camp to learn some more. So I'll be ready when the time comes."

Tressel noticed marked improvement in Pittman's pass blocking, one of the most drastic changes running backs face moving up from the high school level.

"The hardest thing to pick up as a back is your blitz protections," the OSU coach said. "I thought he made some progress there."

Pittman was all smiles following the spring game, but he realized that although it was important he had a strong showing, it's merely a building block. It was just a scrimmage after all, a controlled one at that.

"The mission's not accomplished because we've still got summer conditioning and everything," he said. "And I haven't proven anything yet really."

"I just had a great day today, but I'm going to continue to work harder and harder and harder until the season comes, and I'm still going to work harder."

&PLAY
WHILE YOU WORK, WE
FIX YOUR BRAKES
AT COMPLETE BRAKE SERVICE, INC.
463 WEST TOWN ST, 2 BLOCKS WEST OF COSI



614-221-4888 or 1-800-581-2339

WE CAN DRIVE YOU BACK TO WORK OR HOME IN THE METRO AREA

COMPLETEBRAKESERVICE.COM

YOUR SECRET PLACE FOR GREAT BRAKE SERVICE & PARTS IS
CELEBRATING 19 YEARS OF EXPERT SERVICE & FAIR PRICES



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL PROFILE

Is Youboty Set To Succeed Gamble? You Bet

By MIKE WACHSMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

There's an old saying about there being "no substitute for experience," and Ashton Youboty seems to personify that.

After a freshman season spent mostly on special teams, the Ohio State sophomore now seems ready to pounce on the field cornerback spot left vacant by the early departure of Chris Gamble to the NFL.

Though fairly new to the rigors of life on the corner in the Big Ten, Youboty said it was enough to simply get on the field last year.

He was able to get a feel for the speed of the game at the collegiate level, and that put him at ease heading into spring practice.

"That one year was a big difference," Youboty said. "Last year I was just running around, just trying to run after the ball and make plays. This year I'm better-skilled, better on my technique. I know the defense. After they call it, I don't even think about it. I just line up and play. Everything's slower to me."

"I just slowed everything down. Things are a lot slower. Even Bam Childress (OSU's fastest receiver) is a lot slower to me."

As a result, Youboty was one of the most talked-about players of the spring. He got notice for several good returns during the team's annual kick scrimmage then stood out again two days later at the jersey scrimmage.

But he saved the best for last, chalking up four solo tackles for the victorious Scarlet team in the spring game. One of those tackles was for loss and Youboty also forced a fumble, recovered another, broke up a pass, blocked a punt and returned a pair of punts for a 10.0-yard average.

After Dustin Fox sat out most of the spring with a concussion, Youboty went over to Fox's corner spot, where he spent the rest of the spring.

Fox seems a lock to retain his spot, so Youboty will battle E.J. Underwood for the starting role on the other side — Gamble's vacated spot that often draws one-on-one coverage with the opponent's top receiver.

The way he sees it, the job is his to lose.

"As of right now, I'm starting at that position," a confident Youboty said. "It's going to be tough on our position coach to decide who to start. As of right now I've been the starter (at Fox's position) all spring, so we'll see."



DOING IT ALL — Ashton Youboty (26) did a little bit of everything for the Scarlet squad, registering four solo tackles, forcing and recovering a fumble, blocking a punt and returning two punts for a 10.0-yard average.

Early Initiation

A native of Houston, Youboty became one of a growing number of players to graduate from high school early so that he could come to Columbus and get a jump on practice.

The extra time paid off to an extent as Youboty got on the field last season and finished the 2003 campaign with 14 tackles, 13 of them solos. While much of that damage was done on spe-

cial teams, he slowly worked his way into the defensive backfield rotation. In fact, the coaching staff gained so much confidence in him that he started last year's Michigan game when Gamble was briefly benched for disciplinary reasons.

There's no real secret to getting the job done for Youboty, at least in his mind.

"I'm just out there trying to make

plays, running after the ball," he said. "You can't really think about a lot of things while you're playing. You just have to let your abilities take over."

Part of letting your abilities take over is knowing what you can and can't do. Youboty finally got the hang of it late last year, and he intends to take that knowledge into the 2004 season.

"Once I figured out the whole defensive system, I know where I have to be at what time, when I have to break," Youboty said. "I play faster now between now and last year. My technique's improving. I still need to improve, but it's better than last year. You can see the progress."

Youboty will never be mistaken for Shawn Springs or Nate Clements on the field — at least in terms of words per minute — but he does remind OSU head coach Jim Tressel of another former Buckeye.

"He reminds me a little bit of when I used to watch Ahmed Plummer," Tressel said. "He was a guy that wasn't flashy but he was always there, making the play, in the right place every time, steady, doing what he's supposed to do."

Waiting For Fall

After his solid spring, Youboty heads into fall camp brimming with confidence.

"I think I had a good spring and I'm pretty comfortable knowing what I can do," he said. "This defense is built on making big plays, and I want to be part of that."

There's no doubt that Underwood will continue to challenge Youboty for the starting role, and that's not even taking into account the arrival of heralded freshman Ted Ginn Jr. this fall. He also could throw himself into the mix, so the defensive backfield could get mighty crowded this fall.

"I can't worry about who's coming in," Youboty said. "I know the coaches are going to go out and get talented players, but I have to worry about how I can help the team. If you spend time worrying about what everyone else is doing, you're going to slack on your responsibilities."

Between now and the fall, Youboty will continue to lock down everything in his power — including his duties away from the field.

"I'm just trying to stay eligible and do what I have to do in class," he said. "Out here, it's just if the coaches see what they want. E.J. and I are doing everything the same. Nothing's different. I think it's going to be a tough decision on the position coach."

YOUR #1 STOP BUCKEYE SHOP

Conrads

ACROSS FROM ST. JOHN ARENA, BESIDE THE HOLIDAY INN

TOLL FREE: 1-888-443-8678
FAX: 1-877-2FAX OSU
WEB: www.conrads.com
E-MAIL: conrads@ameritech.com

MAIL ORDERS: P.O. Box 16070
Columbus, Ohio 43216-6070

STORE: 316 W. Lane Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43201
LOCAL PHONE: 614-297-0497

BICYCLE SHIRT
100% Poly.
M-L-XL REG \$69.95
SALE \$65.88

Please include \$6.50 Shipping & 6.75 Ohio Sales Tax

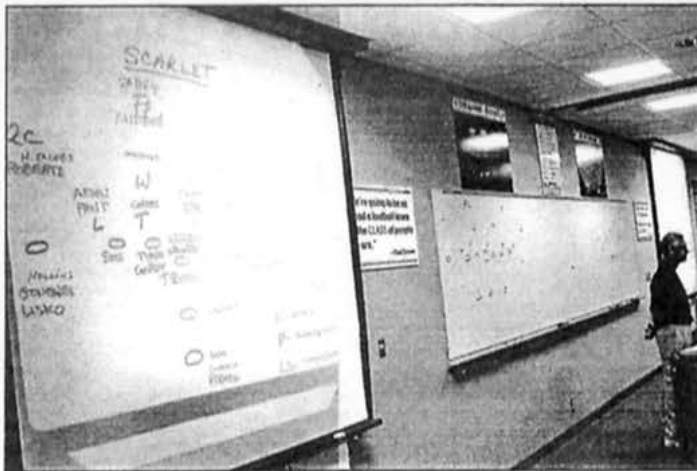
You Can Count On These Services From THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ★Printing | ★Resumes | ★Christmas Cards |
| ★Typesetting | ★NCR Forms | ★Rubber Stamps |
| ★Art & Paste-up | ★Ship UPS & FED EX | ★Business Cards |
| ★High-Speed Duplicating | ★FAX Service | ★Wedding Invitations |
| ★Photostats | (Sending & Receiving) | ★... and much more |

THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

1399 GRANDVIEW AVENUE • COLUMBUS, OHIO 43212
614-488-2683 • 614-481-8700 • FAX 614-488-0059
(Three doors north of the Tri-Village Post Office)

OHIO STATE SPRING DRAFT



Smith Goes 1st At QB (If Only They Knew)

By CHRIS NIDA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

They didn't know it at the time, but the Gray team got jobbed at the annual spring game draft.

A Jim Tressel tradition since he took over as head coach at Ohio State in 2001, the draft was held on the Wednesday prior to the April 24 spring game. As always, seniors were divided up between the Scarlet and Gray, and the draft proceeded from there.

It was a bit of a surprise when the Gray team decided to choose Troy Smith first at the quarterback position, but Gray senior Dustin Fox gave a compelling reason for the selection.

"Troy can do so many things for us," Fox said. "In a game like this where they're playing such base defenses, it allows us to get Troy to break out of the pocket a little bit and get the ball downfield."

"As you saw in the jersey scrimmage a weekend ago (when Smith rushed for 105 yards), Troy really did a good job of making plays with his feet and that's what we're looking for him to do for us this weekend."

That perceived advantage would be negated in the spring game because the quarterbacks were forbidden to cross the line of scrimmage (see cover story). At the time, though, the Gray thought Smith's scrambling ability was enough to set him apart from Justin Zwick.

"I think our guys know that both those guys have done some good things, and I think if you asked them questions about Todd Boeckman they'd tell you he's done

some good things," Tressel said.

"I think really if I had to read into the whole draft, it's fairly obvious to me that no one has emerged as the guy (at any position) yet, and I think that's accurate. So I think the team's been paying pretty good attention."

Smith's selection was one of the few surprises of the 2004 draft. Aside from the quarterback position, most other positions held true to the spring two-deep (see accompanying box).

Before the draft began, seniors and players at the less deep positions were divided up between the two squads. Assigned to the Scarlet were the following: cornerback Harlen Jacobs, linebacker Thomas Matthews, wide receiver John Hollins, offensive lineman Mike Kne, fullbacks Brandon Joe and Stan White Jr., tailbacks Lydell Ross and Michael DeMaria, kicker/punter Josh Huston, punter Kyle Turano and long snappers Drew Norman and Dimitrios Makridis.

The Gray was assigned cornerback Fox, defensive lineman Simon Fraser, offensive lineman John McLaughlin, tight end Jason Caldwell, wide receiver Bam Childress, fullbacks Brandon Schnitter and Ryan Franzinger, tailbacks Roshawn Parker and Maurice Hall, kicker Mike Nugent, punters A.J. Trapasso, Kevin Gerber and J.D. Bergman, and long snapper Kyle Andrews.

Also assigned to the Gray were linebackers A.J. Hawk and Curt Lukens, both of whom were expected to be limited due to injury. Hawk did play sparingly, but Lukens did not.

Following the assignments, head trainer Doug Calland announced the players



Photos by DARRELL DAWSON

who would not play at all and those who would be limited due to injury. On the offensive side of the ball, offensive lineman Kirk Barton, offensive lineman Steve Fender and tailbacks DeMaria and Hall would not see action, while on the defense linebackers Joe Bradley and Mike D'Andrea, Fox, defensive lineman Marcus Green, David Patterson and Joel Penton and safety Tyler Everett would be held out.

Expected to participate in a limited fashion were tight end Ryan Hamby, Joe and wide receiver Devin Jordan on offense and Leo defensive end Redgie Arden, linebackers Hawk, Lukens and Trevor Robinson and defensive back Antonio Smith on defense.

The draft proceeded from there, with Fox calling tails and the coin flipped by Tressel landing heads. That left the Scarlet with the first pick. The teams alternated positions from which to choose and then selected from within those position groups.

Wide receiver Antonio Holmes was the first player selected, as much for his ability at the receiver position as for his versatility as a punt returner, always a crucial element in the spring game.

"He's a playmaker, obviously," Ross said. "He's a game-breaker. He can return the ball and play receiver."

The Gray followed up Holmes' selection by snapping up center Nick Mangold, the lone proven center on the OSU roster this spring.

"On the offensive line, we have a lot of guys that stepped up this spring with Mangold being like the quarterback of the offensive line," Fraser said. "You have to be able to make adjustments and stop some of the blitzes or whatever packages they're trying to throw at us on the other side of the ball."

Carpenter was the first selection

SPRING DRAFT DAY — While Jim Tressel presided over the festivities (far left), OSU passing game coordinator Joe Daniels and members of the Buckeyes participate in their annual draft for the spring game rosters.

among strong-side linebackers, not a surprise considering he is backed up by fresh face Marcus Freeman. The quarterback position was opened next.

Other positions where the order of selection may have come as a surprise were at tight end,

where Louis Irizarry was chosen ahead of Hamby, and at cornerback, where Ashton Youboty was selected ahead of E.J. Underwood. However, Hamby was supposed to be limited by injury, and with Fox's absence due to a concussion, the cornerback position was opened late, signifying the team sees little difference between the two top healthy competitors at the position.

After completing the draft, the teams were allowed to make trades. Only one deal actually went through, though, with the Scarlet trading Arden for walk-on Chris Schlichter to give the Gray more viable depth at the defensive end position.

There was no shortage of offers, though, as the Gray desperately wanted to obtain more depth at the cornerback position. They proposed four separate deals involving Scarlet cornerback Michael Roberts — including Smith for Zwick and Roberts — but the Scarlet shot them all down.

Scarlet head coach Joe Daniels and Gray head coach Mel Tucker were in the thick of the trade discussions. They also were right there advising the players during the draft, as were their assistants. Mark Snyder, Jim Heacock, John Peterson and Dick Tressel assisted Daniels on the Scarlet team, while Jim Bollman, Luke Fickell and Darrell Hazell made up the Gray staff under Tucker.

The coaches' input into the order of selection should not be discounted, but the spring game draft does provide something of an insight into how the seniors feel about their teammates.

"I always like to get a feel for what the players are thinking," Tressel said. "You don't know how much the coaches' suggestions had to do with their drafting as well. I thought the amount of thought that went into some of the selections tells you that they feel pretty good about multiple people at a lot of positions."

The Scarlet And Gray Draft: Pick By Pick

Here are the results of the 2004 Ohio State spring game draft, listed in the order in which the positions were opened.

Wide Receiver — Antonio Holmes (Scarlet), Roy Hall (Gray), Tony Gonzalez (S), Devin Jordan (G), Derek Harden (S), Brent Ullery (G), David Lisko (S), Wes Scott (G)

Center — Nick Mangold (G), Steve Winner (S), Tyler Whaley (assigned to Scarlet)

Strong-side Linebacker — Bobby Carpenter (S), Marcus Freeman (G), Chibindhu Nnake (G)

Quarterback — Troy Smith (G), Justin Zwick (S), Todd Boeckman (assigned to play for both squads)

Defensive End — Jay Richardson (S), Chris Schlichter (G) (later traded to Scarlet for Leo Redgie Arden)

Tight End — Louis Irizarry (G), Ryan Hamby and Jordan Hoewischer (assigned to Scarlet)

Offensive Tackle — Rob Sims (S), Tim Schafer (G), T.J. Downing (S), Steve Rehling (G)

Leo (defensive end) — Mike Kudla (G), Marcel Frost (S), Reggie Smith (G), Redgie Arden (S) (later traded to Gray for defensive end Chris Schlichter)

Safety — Nate Salley (S), Donte Whitner (G), Brandon Mitchell (S), Rob Harley (G), Antonio Smith (S)

Defensive Tackle — Quinn Pitcock (G), Sian Cotton (S), Brandon Maupin (G), Derek Coker (S), Caesar Buie (G), Joel Penton (S)

Cornerback — Ashton Youboty (S), E.J. Underwood (G), Michael Roberts (S), De'Angelo Haslam (G)

Offensive Guard — Doug Datish (G), Andree Tyree (S), R.J. Coleman (G), John Conroy (S), Daniel Dye (G)

Tailback — Tony Pittman (S), Colby Staubs and Matt Johnson (assigned to Gray)

Middle Linebacker — Anthony Schlegel (G), John Kerr (S)

INTRODUCING
THE...



DEALERS WANTED!!

FEATURES:

- 49cc air cooled 2 stroke engine
- Max speed: 27mph
- Range: 30 Miles
- Weight: 110 Lbs.
- Weight Capacity: 350 Lbs.
- Electric and/or manual start
- 26 gallon fuel capacity
- Front and rear disc brakes
- Single 13" rear tire, 11" front tire
- Authentic Scarlet Helmet Stripe and Buckeye Leaf decals, same as on the players' helmets!

Now Only

\$499.99

INNOVATIVE DESIGNS, INC.

614.889.7744

TOLL FREE 888.999.0509

6419 Nicholas Dr.
Columbus, OH 43235

NFL DRAFT

On A Record Weekend, OSU Ships 14 To Pros

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Ohio State may not have had a player chosen in every round, but the Buckeyes clearly had the best day of any college program in the 2004 NFL draft.

Since the league adopted the seven-round selection process in 1994, only seven programs could claim as many as 10 players chosen in a single draft with Miami (Fla.) holding the record with 11 players taken in 2002.

But the Buckeyes shattered that mark with 14 players selected, including three in the opening round. In fact, Ohio State had at least one player taken in every round except the second and sixth.

"They nearly hit for the draft 'cycle' with at least one representative in 10 of

the 11 position categories recognized by the NFL," said ESPN.com writer Len Pasquarelli. "The only position they didn't fill was running back, and that was only because Maurice Clarett wasn't eligible."

Defensive end Will Smith was the first OSU player taken, going with the No. 18 pick to New Orleans, where he will be reunited with former teammates LeCharles Bentley and Cie Grant. Former Buckeye Kevin Houser also is on the team as the Saints' long snapper on punts and placements.

Cornerback Chris Gamble went with the No. 28 pick to defending NFC champion Carolina, and receiver Michael Jenkins went to Atlanta with the No. 29 selection overall.

On being the first Buckeye chosen in a record-setting draft, Smith said he felt

humbled.

"We were a close group, so I feel a lot of honor with being the first one taken," he told BSB. "We enjoyed each other and our time as Ohio State Buckeyes. But what we enjoyed more than anything was being part of a winning team — a national championship team — and doing things no one else thought we could do."

"Even though we had our critics, I guess the number of guys we had taken in the draft proves that we had a lot more talent than some people might have given us credit for."

According to Saints head coach Jim Haslett, no player was more important to his team in the draft than Smith.

"He is a terrific talent and by all accounts a no-risk selection," Haslett told NewOrleansSaints.com. "There were five guys on the board that we really liked and we took the highest remaining player of that group."

The Saints reportedly took several phone calls during their 15 minutes allotted to select the player, including one from defending Super Bowl champion New England.

"The Patriots called us to move up, but we told them we would make the pick and they congratulated us on taking a great player (in Smith)," Haslett said. "He is very active with great pass rush skills. He can play at either end. He is a multipurpose player and an excellent athlete."

As for his new home, Smith said he was eager for the move.

"I've never been to New Orleans before," he said, "but I know it's a very hot place and a good football place. LeCharles said it was an exciting place to play football, and he said they have good fans there and that I'd like it."

The First-Rounders



Will Smith 18th



Chris Gamble 28th



Michael Jenkins 29th

While Smith was heading south from his native New York, Jenkins was moving just a few hundred miles north of his Tampa, Fla., hometown.

"It's just a special feeling to be picked in the first round," Jenkins told reporters during his first press conference in Atlanta. "I didn't know what was going to happen (with the Falcons) because they had an early second-round pick. But they thought I had first-round potential and they got me."

Jenkins said that he locked himself away in his old bedroom at his parents' home in Tampa to watch the draft.

"I was in my room in Tampa by myself while everyone else was down in the living room watching the draft," he said. "The first round started closing out and my mom and I took a walk around the block and got the call from a 770 number and they said I was going to be the next pick, so I had to turn around and go back in the house to try and catch it on TV."

"It was a little nerve-racking because I had no idea what team would be looking to take me."

Once he got the call from Atlanta, the prospect of catching balls from Michael Vick immediately went through his head.

"I think every receiver wants to go to Atlanta and be a part of an offense with Michael Vick," Jenkins said. "It's just a great team to work with, and I'm excited to get out there and learn and try to help."

Four other Buckeyes heard their names announced on the first day of the draft, beginning with Ben Hartsock with

OHIO STATE FANS! BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

Weekly Sept. thru Nov.
Weekly Jan. thru mid-March
Biweekly mid-March thru mid-May
Monthly Dec., June thru Aug.

Some Ohio State sports fans need more information on the Buckeyes than they can find in their local newspaper. Buckeye Sports Bulletin is for those fans. By subscribing to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, they receive 30 issues a year featuring:



- ☆ In-depth coverage of all Ohio State sports
- ☆ The latest comments from coaches and players
- ☆ The latest in recruiting information
- ☆ Personality profiles
- ☆ Features on former Buckeye greats
- ☆ Rosters, schedules, statistics, photos
- ☆ Check us out on the Web at www.ohiostate.rivals.com

- ☐ 1 Year (30 issues) \$58 ☐ 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$101
☐ 2 Years (60 issues) \$110 ☐ 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$194

I want to know more about Ohio State sports. I am enclosing \$ _____

☐ Money Order ☐ Check ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Credit Card # & Exp. Date _____

Credit Card Orders Accepted 24 Hours A Day
Call (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

Mail To: BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN
P.O. BOX 12453
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43212

ON YOUR SIDE

A Lot of People Know a Little About Insurance.

The Rest have Nationwide® Agents.

We're there when you need us.

We're a single source for ALL your insurance needs:

- Auto
- Home
- Financial Products
- Business

Call me ... Stop by ... It's your choice!

Ernie Epitropoulos Agency
4701 Olentangy River Rd., Ste. 102
Columbus, OH 43214
(614) 451-2030
(614) 451-2079 fax



Nationwide®
Insurance &
Financial Services
Nationwide Is On Your Side®

Life insurance underwritten by Nationwide Life Insurance Company
Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and Affiliated Companies.
Home Office: Columbus, OH 43213-2229. NAAB 11/00

NORTH STAR VISION CENTER

NORTHWEST

1910 Crown Park Court
614-326-1830

NORTHEAST

1680 Schrock Rd.
614-882-2223

SOUTH

Southern Vision Center
105 Great Southern Blvd.
614-491-3435

Comprehensive Eye Exams
Contact Lenses & Fashion Eyewear
Special Attention to Children
Laser Surgery Consultation
Treatment of Eye Diseases
Emergencies Welcome

**Personalized
Care Is Our Focus**

NFL DRAFT

the No. 68 pick to Indianapolis.

Defensive tackle Tim Anderson was also a third-round selection, going to Buffalo with the 74th overall pick.

Punter B.J. Sander shot up into the third round — a rarity for kicking specialists — as Green Bay used the No. 87 pick to select him.

Defensive tackle Darrion Scott rounded out the third-round selections for the Buckeyes, going to Minnesota one spot after the Packers picked Sander.

The fact that Sander rose into the third round was unusual enough since only one or two punters are typically drafted each year. It is even more rare for the Packers to spend such an early pick on a punter. In fact, the only other time Green Bay has selected a punter as early as the third round was in 1981 when they took Ray Stachowicz of Michigan State with the 62nd overall pick.

But Josh Bidwell's departure via free agency to Tampa Bay made punter one of Green Bay's few positions of need, and the Packers decided to jump on Sander before he was gone.

"I figure that we possibly drafted a starter at that position, a very valuable position to help our field position," Green Bay head coach and general manager Mike Sherman told Packers.com. "I don't look at it as overly risky. I look at it as risky if I didn't take him."

Sander will compete for the punting job with former Cincinnati punter Travis Dorsch and ex-Australian rules footballer Nathan Chapman. But Sherman said he was confident Sander would win the job in training camp. He also likes the fact that Sander is left-footed.

"Being left-footed puts a different spin on the ball," Sherman said. "I've always been enamored with left-footed punters because I know how hard it is to field those punts coming off that foot. I think he can be a dangerous punter in Lambeau Field."

Once he arrived in Green Bay for the team's minicamp, Sander was besieged by reporters asking him if he felt any added pressure by being selected so highly.

"It's just one of the things you deal with," he told reporters. "Most of the pressure I feel is pressure I put on myself because I have very high expectations."

So do the Packers, who traded a fourth- and fifth-round pick to Miami to get into position to take Sander.

Second Day Just As Good

On the second day of the draft, seven more Buckeyes heard their names called.

Center Alex Stepanovich and safety Will Allen were fourth-round selections by Arizona and Tampa Bay, respectively.

Tampa Bay defensive backs coach Mike Tomlin admitted that he began studying Allen intently in February. A few weeks later, Tomlin personally attended the Ohio State Pro Day to watch Allen's workout.

So when the second day of the draft came and the OSU defensive back was still on the board, the Buccaneers coach got his player.

"I never really get into how other people see it," Tomlin told Buccaneers.com, "but I knew that we liked him, and if the opportunity presented itself we were going to jump on him."

Having released John Lynch and promoted third-year man Jermaine Phillips to the starting lineup at strong safety, the Bucs felt a need in the secondary.

"Just from a pure numbers stand-

point, we needed another guy to go into the mix," Tomlin said. "Will more than meets the criteria. He is a versatile guy, a man-coverage guy, active — he shows natural instincts and plays hard. (He's a) program guy, of course. The success that the Ohio State program has had speaks for itself, but you like guys who have experienced some success and know what it's about, know what it's about to compete for championships. We're excited about him."

Following in round five were quarterback Craig Krenzel to Chicago, receiver Drew Carter to Carolina and linebacker Robert Reynolds to Tennessee.

Krenzel watched the draft at the house of his fiancée, Beth Barr, and her parents in Dublin, just outside Columbus. His parents, Alan and Debbie, drove down from Sterling Heights, Mich., with his sister, Krysten, while Krenzel's older brother, Brian, flew in from North Carolina.

Along with his brother and father, Krenzel went golfing the first day of the draft then attended church with the entire family Sunday morning before returning to the Barr residence to watch the second day of the draft.

While most draft experts predicted a sixth- or seventh-round selection for Krenzel — if he was to be drafted at all — the Bears snapped him up late in the fifth round.

Was he surprised to be taken that early?

"I wouldn't say surprised," Debbie Krenzel told BSB. "He was very pleased — thrilled — that he went that high."

Krenzel told ChicagoBears.com that he still wants to become a doctor but will gladly put those plans on hold for a shot at the NFL.

"It's always been my No. 1 aspiration and dream to play football in the NFL," he said. "Medical school has always been a backup plan for me if football didn't go the way I wanted it to. It's something that I would enjoy and something that I could be successful at and something that I could do to help other people. But it's always been my No. 1 goal and passion to play in the NFL."

"Someday after I'm done playing football, which hopefully isn't for a long time, I'll probably entertain the thought of going back to school even if it's 10, 12, 15 years from now — which is what I'm hoping it is."

Krenzel added that he didn't foresee having to make many adjustments going from the run-oriented offense at Ohio State to the high-power attack featured in the NFL.

"I don't think there are really going to be any adjustments," he said. "Most offenses are 60-40 pass-run, and whether it's college or the NFL, the goal is to do both effectively. Personally for

me as a quarterback, it's exciting for me to come into a system where we're going to try to have that balance."

"It's kind of difficult when you play in a system like Ohio State, where you don't usually get a chance to throw until it's third-and-9 and everyone knows you're going to throw the football."

Meanwhile, Panthers general manager Marty Hurney said he regarded Carter as a steal in the fifth round.

"Drew Carter is a receiver that we had high," Hurney told Panthers.com. "We think he would have gone higher if he wasn't hurt last year. We think he is a guy that will come in and be able to help us. It will take some time this year because of the injuries, but he was just too good to pass up."

Carter said it didn't matter where he was drafted, only that he was selected.

"My physical therapist and I had a goal and that was for me to get drafted," he told BSB. "I had my own workout at the beginning of April. I still ran a high 4.3 and that was only four months out of surgery. After that, I felt a lot better about my chances."

"But you never know with a draft. I'm a hard worker and I think that's why a team like Carolina took a chance on me. I'm not one to give up very easily."

Carter was doubly elated when he was drafted to the same team that selected Gamble.

"When I saw I got drafted by (Carolina), I thought, 'I guess I'm going to be with Chris,' which is cool," he said. "It's always good to have someone there that you've hung around with for the last four years. Chris and I are really good friends. I'm just glad that we both get an opportunity to play."

"He's just a natural. He has so much natural athletic ability that with a little coaching he can adjust right away. It seemed like he and I would go against each other every day, and we just made each other better. Chris is going to be a great corner in the NFL."

The OSU portion of the draft concluded with offensive tackle Shane Olivea going to San Diego and offensive guard Adrien Clarke picked by Philadelphia in the seventh round.

There was a tinge of excitement as well as a little uncertainty in the voice of Clarke as he prepared to board a plane to Philadelphia to participate in the team's minicamp, which began May 3.

"I think I'm going in with something to prove," Clarke told BSB. "The Eagles are a good organization. They're right there every year, so it will be good to go somewhere where they're used to winning."

Clarke went to tremendous lengths to shed pounds and gain confidence for the NFL after the Buckeyes' season ended.

He tipped the scales at 324 pounds on OSU's Pro Day, and he said he got good feelers from teams around the league.

Hoping to hear his name called on the first day of the draft, Clarke got a little frustrated as the rounds went by with no mention.

"Honestly, when it gets that late, there is a part of you that thinks it might be better not to get drafted," he said. "But then you realize that there are only about 300 players to get picked, and you can say you're one of them. A lot of guys would like to be in my shoes, going to a team that's shown it's committed to winning."

Clarke grew up a fan of the Cleveland Browns but will change his allegiance now that he's heading to the City of Brotherly Love.

"They've got Donovan McNabb, and he's a big-time playmaker," Clarke said. "I don't know a ton about them, but I know about (head coach) Andy Reid and the fact that the defense is always good. They're always in the middle of the NFC title race, so I can go in there and hopefully break in."

"I know there are some veterans up front there, but I can only worry about what I can control. I can't worry about who or what is in front of me. If I give it my best effort, then I've done what I can."

Free-Agent Signings

Following the draft, two more OSU players inked free-agent contracts and joined their teams in minicamp.

Quarterback Scott McMullen signed with Philadelphia and will compete for a roster spot behind McNabb, Koy Detmer and Andy Hall, a sixth-round draft choice from Delaware.

Meanwhile, offensive guard Bryce Bishop signed a deal with Tennessee, one of 27 free-agent signings the Titans announced after draft day. Others inking deals with Tennessee included Miami (Fla.) running back Jarrett Payton, son of the late NFL Hall of Fame running back Walter Payton.

Eric Loughry and Mike Wachsmann contributed to this report.



COME
CATCH

THE SPIRIT!

We're Your
Downtown Connection
To OSU Gifts,
Buckeye Sportswear
And So Much More!

Buckeye Connection
Ohio Center Mall, 400 North High St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone (614) 228-0196

THE BROWN BAG

Soups, Salads, & Sandwiches
Beer & Wine Carry Out

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

1 Block North of Schiller Park
on the corner of Mohawk & Whittier

443-4214

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Quarterbacks Garnering Undue Attention

There are going to be battles for positions any spring for any college football team. Players graduate and younger players — or those who have waited their turn — fight for the open spots in the starting lineup. It's as much a part of spring as rain and the start of baseball season.

Yet when one of the open positions is quarterback, it seems that all eyes are on that battle. Few seem to care that there might be solid competition at middle linebacker or cornerback. Who's winning the battle at quarterback?

Such was the case this spring at Ohio State where sophomores Justin Zwick and Troy Smith battled it out for 15 practices with neither quarterback seeming to gain a significant edge.

Whenever the Buckeyes have two quarterbacks of similar ability it seems that fans tend to throw around the term "quarterback controversy." I don't consider a battle between two players during the spring a controversy. I consider that healthy competition.

However, intentionally or unintentionally, OSU coach Jim Tressel may have thrown gas on the quarterback flames — certainly in some fans' eyes — when he decreed that quarterbacks in the spring game could not cross the line of scrimmage. The coach pointed out that the rule affected all three quarterbacks with freshman Todd Boeckman also in the mix.

But all 45,074 in attendance, as well as every player on the team (and let's be honest, the coaches, too) knew that stipulation affected the elusive Smith the most. That led many — especially those believing the coaches have already made up their minds about their quarterback — to the conclusion that there was some sort of conspiracy to limit Smith.

Let's take a look at this situation.

If a pro team is paying one player millions of dollars and another the league minimum and the two are playing comparably, the high-priced guy is going to play. Similarly, in the college game if a scholarship player and a walk-on are battling for a position, if all things are even close to equal, the scholarship player will see the field. That's just the way it usually is.

Now Troy Smith is hardly a walk-on. But Zwick, the most heralded high school quarterback to come out of Ohio since Art Schlichter a quarter of a century earlier, is a player in whom the coaches invested a lot of time and effort recruiting. Smith, on the other hand, was recruited as an athlete, with the feeling that he would find the field somewhere, but probably not at quarterback in front of Zwick.

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

It only stands to reason that Tressel and his staff would give Zwick the first shot at the position vacated by two-year starter Craig Krenzel. Smith also seems to be getting his shot at the job, but the smart money would say that he would really have to separate himself from Zwick to win the starting nod. I don't believe he did that this spring.

You also have to consider the fact that Zwick's pocket game may be more to the liking of Tressel than Smith's "slash" style of quarterbacking. While Smith might rack up the yards, his willingness to free-lance may be a little too extreme for Tressel, at least within the context of the "don't make a mistake and let's get a 50-yard punt" type of offense the coach has favored so far at Ohio State.

I always put some stock in the spring game draft by the players. They have no real agenda and sometimes you can glean some insight as to who is and who isn't making progress by analyzing what order the players choose the spring rosters.

The Buckeye seniors on the Gray squad, interestingly, chose Smith over Zwick. That may not have been as significant as it might have seemed on the surface, however. The choice of Smith may have been a strategic move on the part of the Gray team, rather than a comment on which quarterback was doing better.

"Troy can do so many things for us," senior Dustin Fox said after the draft. "In a game like this where they're playing such base defenses, it allows us to get Troy to break out of the pocket a little bit and get the ball downfield."

"As you saw in the jersey scrimmage a weekend ago (when Smith rushed for 105 yards), Troy really did a good job of making plays with his feet, and that's what we're looking for him to do for us this weekend."

Fox and his teammates were thrown a curveball, however, when Tressel prohibited quarterbacks running with the ball.

Conspiracy theorists will say that with Zwick as the preferred pick, Tressel didn't want Smith running wild in front of the spring throng. Playing behind a patchwork offensive line, Smith would have been flushed out of the pocket — he was sacked seven times in the spring game — and once he took off, he would have been running against a defense that had been divided in half. Chances are he would have gained a lot of yards against a defense sprinkled with reserves and walk-ons.

Tressel claimed that he simply wanted his quarterbacks to get experience staying in the pocket and that he didn't want anyone getting hurt. Those are noble motives.

Perhaps the coach would have been better served, however, if he had outlined the quarterback limitations in advance. The scrimmage-day decision proved to be a bit of a public relations disaster and seemed to irk Smith, though he did his best to keep his team-first face on.

To their credit, Smith and Zwick have done a good job of keeping the competition upbeat.

I took note of a comment by senior receiver Bam Childress.

"I respect them a lot, for them to be so young and know so much," Childress said of the two quarterbacks. "The coaches are hard on them because they have to know a whole bunch of stuff, but just for the things that they have been through and how well they have played in the spring, I really respect them for taking the media and everything. They still come out cool, calm and collected and just have fun."

I think, when all is said and done, Ohio State will come out just fine at quarterback.

And by the way — did you know Ohio State is trying to fill 13 other positions?

Standing Out

Plenty of players stood out during the spring. The two who seemed to attract the most positive attention were probably freshman running back Tony Pittman and linebacker Anthony Schlegel, a junior transfer from Air Force.

Pittman, who was one of the stars of the spring game with 105 yards rushing, should help give the Buckeyes the depth at running back they lacked last season in the wake of Maurice Claret's unanticipated absence. His emergence may be that much more important with Maurice Hall's knees still questionable and the probable absence of Ira Guilford, a projected defensive back who became an emergency fill-in at running back last season. He is now facing legal charges following a late-night campus incident.

Schlegel came to Ohio State with All-Mountain West credentials from his time at Air Force. He shook off the rust from his forced transfer sabbatical and had a solid spring, including nine tackles in the spring game. His emergence is one more indicator that the Buckeyes will be

loaded at linebacker this season. The biggest problem linebackers coach Luke Fickell may have is keeping his bevy of talented players happy.

NFL Victory No Surprise

I don't know why people were so surprised when the Supreme Court upheld an appeals court's stay of the decision making Claret and others eligible for the NFL draft. It has been known for years that the NFL had attorneys at the ready to fight any challenge to their rule barring players from entering the draft until they are three years out of high school.

The prevailing school of thought had been that by the time Claret went through the challenge of the rule, he could have continued his college career, improved his draft status and been eligible without all the legal rigmarole.

About the only thing that was surprising to me in the process was how quickly U.S. District Court Judge Shira Scheindlin made the initial ruling in Claret's favor. Now we will see how long the process drags out.

The thing that bothered me most was the idea of Claret's attorneys taking up the time of the Supreme Court with his case. This body has ruled on some of the most critical issues affecting the course of our history. I just don't think Claret's plight stacks up with Brown vs. Board of Education.

His case does involve freedom to pursue a chosen field and there are some legitimate legal questions involved. I simply don't see Claret or many in his camp that concerned with the legal precedent, though. I think they are concerned with how quickly Claret is allowed to play for pay.

I hope Claret understands the significance of the Supreme Court and having his case argued in front of it. Or is it all about Maurice?

Not Very Popular

Claret is apparently not particularly popular in Columbus. Readers of the city's *The Other Paper* were asked who they wished more success for, Claret or ex-Columbus Clipper Drew Henson.

In the unscientific poll, 75 percent of the readers wished more success to Henson. That is significant when you consider Henson quarterbacked archrival Michigan and was a bust with the hometown Clippers before opting for pro football. The poll was taken late last year. I doubt Claret's popularity with the people of Columbus has increased since then.

I'll have some other results concerning Ohio State sports from "The Other Poll" in upcoming issues.

VIRUS Lounge

231 North Fifth St.
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 228-5882
www.TheVirusRoom.com

- M-F 4PM-2AM
- S 9PM-2AM
- Proper dress req'd
- 21 & over please

The only High Tech lounge in town!

- Specialty martinis
- World class beer and cigar menu
- Connect your laptop to our T-1 internet
- Play Atari 2600



CORVETTE CORNER & CARS 2NV

1661 E. DUBLIN GRANVILLE ROAD
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43229
www.corvettecorner.com



Sales & Leasing
614-847-0900

Central Ohio's Leader in
Corvette/Collector Sales,
Service & Parts.

Parts & Service
614-888-6688