

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 31, No. 24

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

August 2012

## Meyer's Method

## New Ohio State Head Coach Has Ways Of Producing Winning Teams

SONNY BROCKWAY

**PROVEN WINNER** – Ohio State first-year head football coach Urban Meyer has found plenty of success in leading programs at Bowling Green, Utah and Florida. The Ashtabula, Ohio, native hopes to do the same with the Buckeyes.

By JEFF SVOBODA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

*"It is not devotion to a fad that makes men play football; it is because they enjoy their struggle."*  
– "Football for Player and Spectator," Fielding Yost, 1905

When Urban Meyer looks at the roster he'll lead out of the tunnel in the southeast end zone of Ohio Stadium right around noon on Sept. 1, it's fair to say there are plenty of things he likes.

He sees a quarterback still battling growing pains, but one that's perfectly suited for his spread offense. He sees an offensive line that has made tremendous strides since he was hired as the head coach in November. He sees a defensive line that appears to be on the road to becoming a dominant unit. At the rest of his positions, he sees talented youngsters who could blossom into very good players in a short period of time.

Meyer even sees the kinds of players he likes to coach. He sees warhorses such as John Simon, Zach Boren and Etienne Sabino – the kind of "grown-ass men," in his vernacular, that help football teams win games and make mothers proud. Those are the type

of players he likes to have in his program, and if he could, he'd have 22 of them starting and 22 more ready to back up those players.

But Urban Meyer knows that's never the case.

To win at the level he's accustomed to – a level that includes two national championships, four conference titles, four BCS bowl appearances and 104 victories in 10 seasons of coaching – he knows he needs to forge those types of players in the crucible of the weight room, the film room and the classroom. He has spent the past nine months trying to do just that, and the road has not always been smooth.

**BSB's  
2012  
FOOTBALL  
PREVIEW**

"I watched guys' faces and saw how easy it is to be average," Meyer told reporters after the first full team practice of the fall. "I mean, think about it for all of us. It's just so easy to be an average whatever. Greatness isn't exactly being a first-round. I wouldn't mind a bunch of first-rounders, but greatness is we're going to push you to be who you are."

"If you're a 2.0 student, that's what you are, we're going to push you to be a 2.0 student. If you're a 2.0 student, but you really should be a 3.0 student, we're going to grind you. We're going to do the same thing on the football field."

From the moment Meyer took over, his plan has been about making players realize the potential they might not have known they had. Every moment, every motivational ploy, every progress report and evaluation meeting has been part of a rigid, detailed map. There is little room for debate.

"His demeanor and his approach toward things, he's very straightforward," said Sabino, a fifth-year senior linebacker. "There's not much gray area. He tells you what he wants and how he wants it."

As Sabino is also quick to point out, the strategy works. That's one reason the players are willing to go through one of the toughest football programs in the country, one in which the instinct to compete is instilled so deeply that there is pride in simply finishing a bottle of Gatorade faster than one's teammates.

Meyer is old-school. To him, competition is life, life is football, and football is struggle. Fielding Yost wrote as much in 1905, and Meyer can and does quote that line today.

"You have to love the struggle," Meyer said. "Everybody loves to play the game. Do you love the struggle?"

For the past nine months, he has dedicated himself to finding out how many players on his team love the struggle. All of it leads up to the first day of September, the 245th day of the year that will go

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Charter Member

## OPINION

# Meyer's New Challenge At OSU Will Not Be Easy

There is little doubt Urban Meyer is one of the best football coaches in college football today. When your 10-year résumé boasts a 104-23 record, an .819 winning percentage, four conference titles and two national championships, that pretty well speaks for itself.

But is Meyer a miracle worker? Some would reply in the affirmative.

Bowling Green had experienced six consecutive losing seasons before Meyer arrived in 2001. Once he installed a new wide-open attack and got his players to buy into that system, the undermanned Falcons – who competed that season approximately 30 scholarship players under the NCAA maximum of 85 – posted a remarkable 8-3 record and followed in 2002 with a 9-3 campaign, the program's highest win total in eight seasons.

Meyer was off to Utah in 2003 to undertake another reconstruction project. The Utes had been a decidedly pedestrian 17-17 in the three seasons before hiring Meyer, and all the coach did in his first year in Salt Lake City was match the single-season school record with 10 victories.

One year later, Utah steamrolled its way to a 12-0 mark, became the first school from a non-BCS conference to play in the Bowl Championship Series, and put an emphatic exclamation point on the campaign with a 35-7 pounding of Big East champion Pittsburgh in the Fiesta Bowl.

Meyer's success at Utah was a win-win situation for both the coach and his school. While the Utes eventually parlayed their newfound success on the national stage into membership in the Pac-12, Meyer used the job as a springboard to a big-time position at Florida.

The Gators weren't exactly on the scrap heap in 2005, but they had posted three consecutive five-loss seasons before Meyer arrived in Gainesville, and the coach gave them two SEC championships and a pair of national titles over the next six seasons. What many people forget is that Florida nearly won a third BCS championship on Meyer's watch. The Gators finished 13-1 in 2009, losing only to eventual national champion Alabama in that season's SEC title game.

Three coaching stops in 10 years that produced three monumentally successful reclamations – not a bad lifetime batting average, but is it any wonder Meyer burned himself out so quickly? With each succeeding job came additional pressures to win until the game ceased to be a game to the point the coach put his own well-being in jeopardy.

Now, Meyer has come out of a self-induced, one-year retirement to see if he can scale the mountain one more time. In many regards, he's chosen to climb Mount Everest this time because – with all due respect to Florida – the white heat of pressure that accompanies being head coach of the Ohio State football team can be akin to bathing in molten lava.

Meyer has charged himself with revitalizing a program coming off one of its toughest 12-month periods in history. In the wake of an agonizingly long NCAA investigation that eventually cost head coach Jim Tressel his job, the Buckeyes wound up with a late-season collapse in 2011 that produced the program's first four-game losing streak since World War II and first seven-loss season since 1897.

Most fans believe last season's stumbles to be a one-year aberration, especially with the über-successful Meyer now at the helm. But history dictates the rebuilding process will not be an easy one.

First and foremost, Tressel set the bar for excellence incredibly high. With the conference realigned into divisions and a new postseason playoff system going into effect in 2014, it will be extremely difficult to match seven Big Ten championships in 10 years, including a conference record-tying six in a row, one national title and a 9-1 record against Michigan.

Secondly, if winning another national title is his goal – and we know that it is – Meyer is seeking to become only the second coach ever to raise the crystal football trophy at two different schools. Only Nick Saban has accomplished that feat, winning a title at LSU in 2003 and two more at Alabama in 2009 and 2011.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Additionally, there are the well-documented health issues that effectively ended Meyer's run at Florida.

The coach left Gainesville following the 2010 season – leaving about \$20 million of contract money on the table – and embarked upon a sabbatical to reconnect with his family, a hiatus that seems to have agreed with him. He's tan, fit and full of purpose with an infectious positive attitude that has seemingly rubbed off on his players.

His sabbatical, of course, didn't include stepping entirely away from football since Meyer served as an analyst for ESPN last season. And the rest of the sabbatical didn't last long, either, when it became readily apparent the Ohio State program was in desperate need of the kind of resurrection the coach had engineered three times before.

Meyer accepted the OSU job in late November and immediately hit the ground running with the proviso he would set aside time for family in his hectic schedule. Only his wife and children can say if he is keeping that promise, but from the outside looking in, it appears the Buckeyes have themselves a coach who displays the same kind of quiet intensity he exuded at his previous three stops.

Since being hired, Meyer has assembled a diverse coaching staff that includes an interesting mix of assistants from his Florida tenure and a couple of former head coaches, including Luke Fickell, his immediate predecessor at Ohio State. Meyer's first recruiting class was ranked the Big Ten's best and third nationally by Scout.com. He set about overhauling an offensive attack that for all of Tressel's success ranked among the nation's top 40 in scoring only three times in 10 years. And he even found time this summer to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at Cleveland Indians and Cincinnati Reds baseball games.

But now, the heavy lifting begins and it seems only natural curiosity to wonder if Meyer can accomplish the type of success he has enjoyed his entire head coaching career.

Despite many in the Buckeye Nation who believe their favorite team might never lose a game during the Meyer era, the coach's latest reclamation project won't be easy.

## Getting A Bulldog

The cold, hard truth of the matter is that the 2012 Ohio State football team is not overstocked with talent. Oh, the Buckeyes

still have as much star power as nearly any other team in college football. The defensive line features such future NFL stars as John Simon and Johnathan Hankins, and many college football experts believe it won't take very long before the Heisman Trophy conversation includes Braxton Miller.

Yet, Ohio State finished 6-7 last season for a reason – and you can't blame everything on the deposed members of Tressel's coaching staff or the NCAA.

OSU was a bad football team in many facets of the game last season, and that was especially true on offense as the Buckeyes ranked next-to-last in the Big Ten in total offense and dead last in passing yardage. The combination of a freshman QB and a veteran offensive line that underachieved – and that is putting it mildly – conspired for a ranking of 118th nationally in the average number of sacks allowed per game. How bad was that? There were only 120 teams playing at the Division I-A level last year.

That losing record wasn't only the product of a stumbling offensive attack, however. After years of ranking among the nation's best defensive units, the Buckeyes slipped to 27th nationally in scoring defense and were no better than 50th against the run. Sacks? 72nd. Turnovers created? 77th. Tackles for loss? Tied for 84th.

Special teams also suffered as the Buckeyes finished 41st in the nation in net punting and had both a punt and a kickoff returned against them for touchdowns.

Depth is also a lingering concern. Nearly half the members of the two-deep are underclassmen, including nine redshirt or true freshmen. And don't even get me started about what would happen if Miller went down. Last year's fourth-quarter collapse at Nebraska remains nightmare-inducing.

Meanwhile, what about Meyer and the pact with his family? One of his promises is never to spend more than nine hours a day at the office. Championship football at this level is pretty much a 24-7 proposition, and those who will not or cannot commit to that kind of lifestyle usually wind up in the unemployment line.

Besides, does Ohio State really want a changed Meyer? I doubt very seriously that the university was seeking a kinder, gentler version of the guy who won two national championships in a three-year period. I'm pretty sure OSU was seeking a bulldog with the same kind of take-no-prisoners attitude the coach put on full display while in Bowling Green, Salt Lake City and Gainesville.

And you know what? I think the bulldog is exactly what Ohio State got.

If you have paid even the slightest attention this summer, Meyer appears to have retained the intensity that drove him to greatness. He appears extremely demanding of excellence – both from himself and those around him – and still able to relate to his players while teaching them a thing or two about winning football as well as life itself.

It should come as no surprise to anyone who has read this column over the years that I was critical of the way the Ohio State administration handled the entire NCAA affair. But somehow, some way, after the football program stumbled and bumbled its way through the murkiest period of its history, it came out on the other side with one of college football's elite coaches in the driver's seat.

It's almost like losing your life savings in the stock market only to find the winning Powerball ticket stuck to the bottom of your shoe.



## FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

# Plenty Of Change, Same Goals For Buckeyes

By **MATTHEW HAGER**  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The upcoming college football season will be the 123rd at Ohio State. The history of the Buckeyes is long, but it's safe to say this campaign will be unlike any other.

Not only does the team have a new coach in two-time national champion and Ashtabula, Ohio, native Urban Meyer, but Ohio State faces the year knowing there will be no postseason play at the end of it. The Buckeyes are hoping to greatly improve on a 6-7 season in 2011 – the program's first losing campaign since 1988. Many things around the football program have changed since Ohio State lost to Florida in the Gator Bowl in January.

One thing that hasn't, however, is the preseason hopes.

"Our goal is to go 12-0," junior tailback Carlos Hyde said. "Even though we can't go to a bowl game, we still have to get out there and play. We're going to go out there and play and have a chip on our shoulders because we can't go to a bowl game."

"We'll let the world know who the Buckeyes are this year."

Meyer has brought his historically successful spread offense to Columbus, and that means the Buckeyes will have a different look on that side of the ball. Leading the charge will be returning quarterback Braxton Miller. The Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne product took over the starting job in the fourth game of last season and contributed 1,874 yards of total offense en route to winning Big Ten Freshman of the Year.

Aiding Miller will be a deep tailback position, led by junior Carlos Hyde. Hyde will likely start the season opener because of an offseason foot injury suffered by versatile senior Jordan Hall. In addition to Hyde and Hall, Ohio State could get running-game production from sophomore Rod Smith and freshman Bri'onte Dunn.

The wide receivers will be a question mark, as Meyer has on several occasions spoken of his desire to see a playmaker emerge at that spot. He does have the benefit of having a pair of talented players in fullback Zach Boren and wide receiver/tight

end Jake Stoneburner, both of whom present difficult matchups for opposing defenses.

The offensive line will have new starters in center Corey Linsley, right guard Marcus Hall and right tackle Reid Fragel, but the group will have returning starters in Jack Mewhort and Andrew Norwell at left tackle and left guard, respectively.

Defensively, Ohio State has a slightly less different look. The group will be led by a deep and veteran defensive line. Senior John Simon will anchor the line alongside junior Johnathan Hankins. The linebackers are more of a question coming off a disappointing 2011 season. Sophomore middle linebacker Curtis Grant has been pegged by Meyer as a crucial player when it comes to the defense finding success this fall. On the back end, the defensive backs return all four of their 2011 starters, including senior cornerback Travis Howard.

The specialists should be solid this season, thanks to a trio of returning starters in punter Ben Buchanan, kicker Drew Basil and holder George Makridis.

As the Buckeyes continued to prepare for the Sept. 1 season opener against Miami (Ohio), here is a look at how the team's depth chart should look against the RedHawks.

## OFFENSE

### Quarterback

Named by Ohio State coaches the outstanding offensive player of last season and the team's outstanding first-year offensive player, Braxton Miller (6-2, 220, Soph.) returns under center. Miller threw for 1,159 yards and 13 touchdowns to lead the Buckeyes' aerial attack. He also led the team in rushing with 715 yards and seven scores. Miller started the final 10 games of the season for Ohio State and posted a 4-6 record as a starter. He lost his final two games of the season against Michigan and Florida but had some positive signs emerge as the season

came to a close. The sophomore threw for a season-best 235 yards in Ann Arbor and completed a season-high 18 passes in 23 attempts against the Gators. His performance this fall will go a long way toward determining the

level of success Ohio State will achieve.

Kenny Gupton (6-3, 210, Jr.) caught Meyer's eye – and not in a good way – when the former Florida head coach took over at OSU. Yet by the time preseason camp began, Meyer was raving about the change he had seen in Gupton on and off the field. Miller dealt with minor injuries during last season, and if that happens this season Gupton could be called upon to play meaningful minutes in his fourth year at Ohio State.

### Tailback

Carlos Hyde (6-0, 232, Jr.) had an up-and-down season in 2011. The Naples, Fla., native ranked third on the team last season with 566 rushing yards and posted an OSU-best 5.3 yards-per-carry to go with six touchdowns. He posted a pair of 100-plus-yard performances against Nebraska (104) and Indiana (105). Unfortunately for Hyde, when senior Dan "Boom" Herron returned from NCAA suspension Hyde's playing time dwindled for the most part. With Jordan Hall starting the season on the sideline, Hyde will get his chance to get the bulk of the carries at the beginning of the season.

With Hall out, Rod Smith (6-3, 228, Soph.) moves into the two-deep. Smith is in his third year at Ohio State, joining the Buckeyes out of Fort Wayne (Ind.) Paul Harding in 2010 and taking a redshirt that same year. He saw game action for his first time last season, rushing for 116 yards on 29 carries with a touchdown. Smith reached the end zone on a 2-yard run against Akron. He will again be wearing No. 2 this season, which he switched to last season after wearing No. 24 in his first season with the program.

Before his injury, Hall (5-9, 194, Sr.) was a prime candidate to play the role Percy Harvin played under Meyer at Florida – the jack-of-all-trades player who was supposed to create major matchup problems for Buckeye opponents. Hall needed surgery on his foot on June 29 after cutting his foot stepping on a piece of glass. Whenever he returns, Hall will be a major part of Meyer's offense. A three-time letter winner, Hall has 817 career rushing yards to go with five touchdowns. He has also proved to be a capable pass catcher, hauling in four touchdowns among 21 receptions.

### Fullback

Zach Boren (6-1, 245, Sr.) has had only one carry for 1 yard, but the Pickerington, Ohio product has nonetheless become a

solid contributor for the Buckeyes in his three-year starting career. Boren will likely

be a bigger part of the offense under Meyer, and the fullback has shown an ability to catch a pass during his OSU career. He enters the season with 20 career receptions for 151 yards and a touchdown. Named last season as the team's most outstanding offensive back thanks in large part to his blocking ability, Boren could have a breakout season offensively this fall.

Despite being stuck behind Boren on the depth chart for his entire career, Adam Homan (6-3, 245, Sr.) has become a three-time letter winner thanks in large part to his work on special teams. Homan, the younger brother of former OSU linebacker Ross Homan, has played in 34 games, despite missing three games early last season because of a knee injury. Like Boren, Homan has shown an ability to be a target in the passing game, hauling in two passes during the 2010 season.

### Wide Receiver (X)

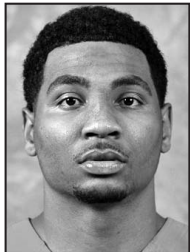
Best known for his 40-yard touchdown catch that sent Ohio State to an upset victory against visiting Wisconsin last season, Devin Smith (6-1, 200, Soph.) could be a top target for Miller this fall. Smith played in all 13 games last season and then showed off his speed and leaping ability on the Ohio State track and field team. With the football Buckeyes, Smith tied for the team lead with 14 receptions and led OSU with 294 receiving yards to go with four touchdowns.

Michael Thomas (6-2, 198, Fr.) has made a good impression on his coaches and teammates after enrolling early in January. Most fans know he played well in the spring game, catching 12 Miller passes for 131 yards. Some might not know that he also earned OSU Scholar-Athlete status following his first two quarters. Thomas, the nephew of former NFL wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson, spent last season working alongside and rooming with freshman quarterback Cardale Jones at Fort Union (Va.) Military Academy.

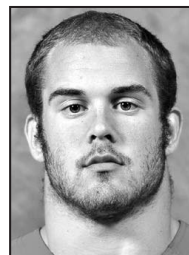
### Wide Receiver (H)

Arguably no player has higher expectations placed upon him because of Ohio State's new spread offense than Jake Stoneburner (6-5, 245, Sr.). The Dublin (Ohio) Coffman product spent his entire career as a tight end but has moved to wide receiver during preseason camp, taking a spot that Aaron Hernandez played for Meyer at Florida before moving on to play for the New England Patriots. Stoneburner comes into his final season at Ohio State with 37 career receptions, including 14 in 2011. He made the most of his opportunities last season, reaching the end zone on seven of his receptions.

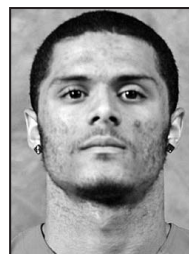
Chris Fields (6-0, 197, Jr.) is a veteran among the wide receivers, but the Painesville, Ohio, native has yet to have a breakout season. He has played in 21 games and made eight starts in his two seasons as a Buckeye – all the starts coming last season. Fields caught eight passes for 114 yards



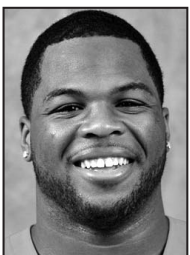
**Braxton Miller**



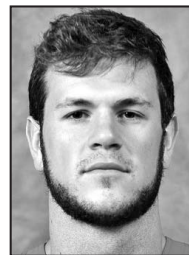
**Zach Boren**



**Devin Smith**



**Carlos Hyde**



**Jake Stoneburner**



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## FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

but arguably had his season highlight come on special teams. In a tight game against Toledo, Fields returned a punt for a 69-yard touchdown just before halftime in OSU's 27-22 victory.

**Wide Receiver (Z)**

Corey "Philly" Brown (6-0, 186, Jr.) was named the team's outstanding receiver last season. Brown hauled in 14 passes in 2011, tied for the team high, for 205 yards and a touchdown. He hopes to be a bigger offensive threat this fall and showed flashes of potential last season despite missing four games with an ankle injury. He caught three passes for 61 yards at Nebraska, four passes for 34 yards vs. Wisconsin and two catches for 76 yards – including a 54-yard TD reception – against Michigan.

Despite being limited because of a shoulder injury in the spring, Evan Spencer (6-2, 205, Soph.) is expected to be a top receiver for the Buckeyes in 2012. Spencer, the son of former OSU running back and assistant coach Tim Spencer, played in 10 games last season and caught three passes – including a highlight-reel-worthy one-handed grab against Akron for a 33-yard gain. His lone touchdown produced Ohio State's lone score against Michigan State, another 33-yard reception in the 10-7 loss. His 26.0-yards per catch average ranked best among Ohio State wide receivers.

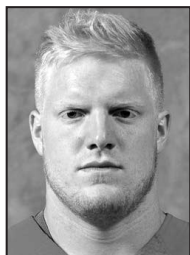
**Tight End**

Jeff Heuerman (6-6, 250, Soph.) was behind two players last season, and despite the fact that both Stoneburner and Reid Fragel remain on the team, Heuerman is on top of the depth chart at tight end. He played in 11 games last season and earned a letter. He made his first reception in the Gator Bowl, hauling in a 25-yard gain from Miller.

Cited by Meyer in mid-August as a standout player of preseason camp, Nick Vannett (6-6, 255, R-Fr.) is faring well in Ohio State's new offense. He took a redshirt last season as the fourth tight end on the depth chart behind Stoneburner, Fragel and Heuerman. The Westerville (Ohio) Central product showed fans what he can do in the spring by catching four passes in the spring game.

**Left Tackle**

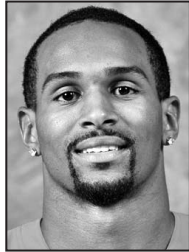
Jack Mewhort (6-6, 312, Jr.) found himself in the headlines during the offseason for the wrong reasons, but the Toledo St. John's

**Jack Mewhort**

product will still be called upon to anchor the offensive line. Mewhort is a returning starter but he is in a new spot, one that was manned by NFL second-round selection Mike Adams last fall. Mewhort has played in 23 games at Ohio State and started all 13 games last season between right and left guard. Mewhort and Stoneburner lost their scholarships during the summer after pleading guilty to disorderly conduct stemming from a June 2 incident in suburban Columbus. Police believed

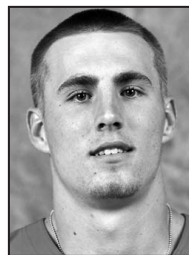
the two players were urinating on a building, and when confronted, the players allegedly tried to run away.

Darryl Baldwin (6-5, 300, Soph.) has made the switch from the defensive line, where he was slotted during his first two seasons, and has cracked the two-deep. Baldwin took a redshirt in 2010 and failed to see meaningful playing time last season. He made his position switch in the spring and switched numbers – No. 90 to No. 76. Despite playing sparingly, Baldwin did earn his first varsity letter by playing in seven games in 2011. He recorded three tackles last season, including a sack against Akron.

**Corey "Philly" Brown**

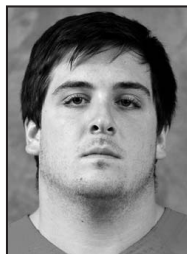
**Left Guard**  
It's hard to miss Andrew Norwell (6-6, 310, Jr.) when he's on the field because of his long hair flowing from the bottom of his helmet. According to Ohio State, Norwell has not had a haircut since August 2010. A versatile offensive lineman, Norwell has been a contributor since arriving on campus, playing in 24 games in his first two seasons. Last season the Cincinnati Anderson product started all 13 games, starting the first five games at left tackle before moving one slot over to guard. His efforts earned him an honorable mention All-Big Ten selection following last season.

Antonio Underwood (6-2, 306, Soph.) worked some as the No. 2 center with freshman Jacoby Boren out during training camp but is primarily a backup guard. Underwood played in four games last season as a freshman and made his first collegiate start at Purdue. During the spring, he was the primary backup at right guard before sliding over to center when Boren was limited.

**Jeff Heuerman**

**Center**  
One of the biggest success stories so far in the Meyer coaching tenure, Corey Linsley (6-3, 295, Jr.) has several times told reporters he has made a complete 180 since the two-time national championship coach arrived in Columbus. Linsley failed to become a key player on the offensive line in his first three years as a Buckeye before emerging this spring and taking over as the No. 1 center. Before the spring, some had thought sophomore Brian Bobek would take over the spot that Mike Brewster had manned before leaving for the NFL, but Linsley beat out Bobek, who left the program before preseason camp began.

Jacoby Boren (6-2, 287, Fr.) gained praise from Meyer in the spring before suffering a shoulder injury that required surgery. He was limited through most of preseason, but Boren was the No. 2 center before his injury and coaches have spoken highly of him as he rehabbed. While at Pickerington (Ohio) Central, Boren primarily played guard on offense for the 2011 Ohio High School Athletic Association Division I

**Corey Linsley**

runner-up Tigers. Boren is the third from his family to suit up for the Buckeyes, joining offensive lineman Justin (2009-10) and current fullback Zach.

**Right Guard**

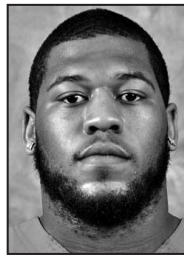
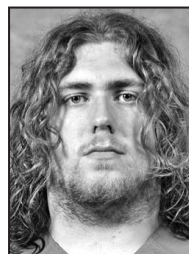
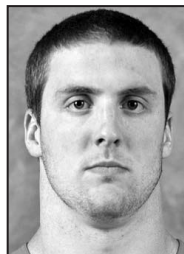
A fourth-year junior from Cleveland Glenville, Marcus Hall (6-5, 315, Jr.) has played in 21 games for the Buckeyes but has made only six starts – once in 2009 (vs. Iowa) and five times last season at right guard. He spent most of last season as the top backup at left guard behind Norwell and moved back to the right side in the spring.

Chase Farris (6-4, 290, R-Fr.) is another player who has switched sides of the ball, moving from the defensive line to the offense. He made the move at the start of preseason camp and has shown good quickness at his new position. Whether he will see meaningful playing time this season is yet to be seen, but Farris appears to have found a home on the offensive line.

**Right Tackle**

Many Ohio State football players underwent physical transformations under new assistant athletic director for football sports performance Mickey Marotti, but none more so than Reid Fragel (6-8, 310, Sr.). A tight end for his first three years at Ohio State, Fragel bulked up during the offseason. He went from 280 pounds to above 300 this fall. He'll wear No. 77 this season, 11 numbers lower than his previous jersey figure, and hopes that his success as primarily a blocking tight end will help him develop into a good offensive tackle.

One person who could prevent Fragel from reaching his goal is Taylor Decker (6-7, 313, Fr.), a five-star newcomer from Vandalia (Ohio) Butler. Decker was one of the last players to join Meyer's first OSU class and has loads of potential. He enrolled in March in time for the start of spring practice and immediately battled Fragel for the top right tackle spot, a contest that extended deep into preseason camp. Decker, a two-sport athlete in high school with the Aviators who earned scholarship offers to play basketball at mid-major schools, was

**Marcus Hall****Andrew Norwell****Reid Fragel**

ranked the No. 7 senior in the state of Ohio by Scout.com.

**DEFENSE**  
**Defensive End (Leo)**

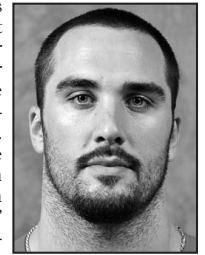
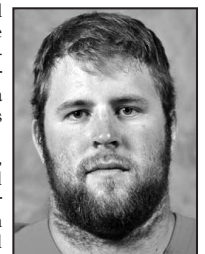
Assuming he is cleared by Ohio State's medical staff, Nathan Williams (6-3, 249, 5th Sr.) will return to the field for the first time since last year's season opener. Williams made two tackles in that game but was sidelined for the rest of the year because of a knee injury and subsequent surgery. The Ohio State defense suffered in his absence when it lost Williams' pass-rushing abilities and his high motor. Williams has made 12 starts and appeared in 35 games for Ohio State, making 21½ career tackles for loss and 10 sacks. Both of those figures rank second best among the returning players.

A reserve defensive lineman and special teams players last season, Steve Miller (6-3, 255, Soph.) has seen more time among OSU's two-deep in the spring and during preseason camp. Though stuck behind Williams and Simon, the latter of whom manned the Leo position last season in Williams' absence, Miller has potential to see the field this fall.


**Nose Tackle**

Another returning starter on the D-line, Garrett Goebel (6-4, 290, 5th Sr.) gives Ohio State another experienced cog in its strong unit. Goebel has started 13 games for the Buckeyes and has played in 39 games in his collegiate career. An unassuming player who gets down and dirty in the trenches, the former high school state wrestling champion at Lombard (Ill.) Montini made 33 tackles last season, including four for loss, with a sack and two pass breakups.

Joel Hale (6-4, 295, Soph.) earned praise from Meyer in the preseason and hopes to build on a freshman season in which he earned a letter and found his way into the defensive line rotation. Hale played in nine games last season and made four tackles, including two against Purdue. Like many of his teammates, Hale was a two-sport athlete in high school, starring on the football and track and field teams at Greenwood (Ind.) Center Grove.

**Nathan Williams****Garrett Goebel**

Continued On Page 12



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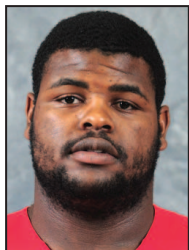
## FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

# Hankins, Simon Anchor Defensive Line

Continued From Page 11

## Defensive Tackle

Johnathan Hankins (6-4, 322, Jr.), affectionately called "Big Hank" by some fans and teammates, is a little less big this season. He is down from his 2011 listed weight of 335 but should still be plenty big enough to create havoc inside this fall. Hankins is a 2012 preseason All-American who has found his name on several preseason watch lists. He has appeared in 22 games during his career and ranks third among current Buckeyes with 12½ tackles for loss and four sacks. Despite his size, Hankins has good agility. He showed that in ranking fourth on the team last season with 67 tackles.



Johnathan Hankins

A highly-touted newcomer, Adolphus Washington (6-3, 289, Fr.) is a five-star prospect from Cincinnati Taft who has wasted little time cracking Ohio State's two-deep. Washington, a Parade Magazine All-American and U.S. Army All-American, led the Senators to the playoffs last season. He recorded 23½ sacks, forced three fumbles and finished the year with 90 tackles en route to being named the Ohio Division III Co-Defensive Player of the Year.

## Defensive End

A strong, aggressive player who will lead Ohio State's deep defensive line this fall, John Simon (6-2, 263, Sr.) has earned plenty of praise from Meyer since the head coach's arrival. In the spring, Meyer said he was not sure who the team captains would be – except that Simon would be one no matter how the team happened to vote. It's easy to see why Meyer is enamored with Simon. He was a 2011 captain who will become the first two-time captain since James Laurinaitis (2007 and 2008). During his career, Simon has recorded 28½ tackles for loss and 11½ sacks. He enters the season on the preseason watch lists for the Lombardi Award, Lott IMPACT Trophy, Nagurski Award and Bednarik Award after earning third-team Associated Press All-America honors last season.

Michael Bennett (6-7, 285, Soph.) might be the odd man out of the starting lineup if Williams is ready to start the season. Even so, Bennett should see significant playing time this fall. The Centerville, Ohio, product played in every game last season as a freshman, recording 17 tackles – including 13 solo stops – with five sacks. He primarily played as a tackle last season but was working at defensive end during preseason camp with Williams still not full-go.



John Simon



Ryan Shazier

When Williams was out, J.T. Moore (6-3, 260, Soph.) was the No. 2 defensive end behind Bennett. Moore played in all 13 games last season as a redshirt freshman and made four starts. He made nine tackles, including one for loss, and started the season by making a season-best three tackles in his first collegiate game against Akron.

## Weakside (Will) Linebacker

Save for Braxton Miller, no other 2011 freshman made more of an impact last season than Ryan Shazier (6-1, 230, Soph.). The Plantation, Fla., product played in all 13 games last season but did not become a starter until the final three games. Shazier made 57 tackles, the most by an OSU true freshman since Andy Katzenmoyer made 86 in 1996, and made 30 of those stops in games he started in place of injured senior Andrew Sweat. His first start was his best as Shazier made 15 stops against Penn State, earning Big Ten Freshman of the Week honors.

A newcomer from Lancaster, Ohio, Luke Roberts (6-1, 226, Fr.) comes from the school that produced such notable Buckeyes as Bobby Carpenter, Jim Cordle and Rex Kern. Roberts, who enrolled in time for spring football, was a second-team Division I all-state selection by the AP last season after

recording 118 tackles, including 19 for loss, with five sacks for the Golden Gales.

## Middle (Mike) Linebacker

Curtis Grant (6-3, 235, Soph.) has pressure placed upon him this season from Meyer. The new head coach said the Buckeyes need the Richmond (Va.) Hermitage product to be a big contributor this fall if Ohio State is to be successful. Grant flashed potential during the spring – despite being limited at the end because of a pinched nerve – and the preseason. That potential is what made him one of the most marquee prospects in Ohio State's 2011 class. Despite that, he struggled during his first season in Columbus while trying to catch up to the college game. Grant played primarily on special teams, appearing in 10 games and recording two tackles.



Curtis Grant

Conner Crowell (6-1, 235, R-Fr.) has a lot to live up to, if for no other reason than his jersey number. The new No. 36 is wearing the look made famous by OSU linebackers Tom Cousineau, Marcus Marek and Chris Spielman. Crowell certainly isn't on that trio's level yet, but he has worked as the No. 2 middle backer in the preseason after finishing a prep career at Waldorf (Md.) North Point in 2011.



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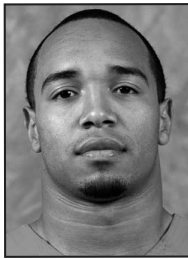




## FOOTBALL PREVIEW: DEPTH CHART

**Strongside (Sam) Linebacker**

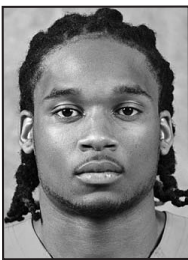
Etienne Sabino (6-3, 237, 5th Sr.) is the most experienced member of the linebackers group, playing in 39 games with five starts. Sabino was a highly-touted prospect from Miami Dr. Krop who was a late bloomer. He even took a redshirt season in 2010 when he failed to earn a spot in the starting lineup after playing in 2008 and 2009. Last fall, Sabino made his first career starts and played in all 13 games. He made 62 tackles with eight stops three times – vs. Toledo, Miami (Fla.) and Michigan. Sabino also finished last season on a high note, earning Gator Bowl team MVP honors after making four tackles, including two for loss in the loss to Florida.

**Etienne Sabino**

Joshua Perry (6-4, 238, Fr.) was the first player to join Ohio State's 2012 recruiting class, and the No. 9-ranked outside linebacker prospect of last year by Scout.com has already made the two-deep. Perry earned second-team Division I all-state honors by the AP while playing for Lewis Center (Ohio) Orlentangy. He recorded 70 tackles with seven sacks for the Braves before enrolling early at Ohio State in January.

**Cornerback**

Bradley Roby (5-11, 190, Soph.) emerged as a redshirt freshman last season and earned a starting spot. He's back again this fall at that spot and is coming off a solid offseason during which he ran a blistering 4.31 second 40-yard dash. The speedster from Suwanee (Ga.) Peachtree Ridge tied for the team lead with three interceptions last season and

**Bradley Roby**

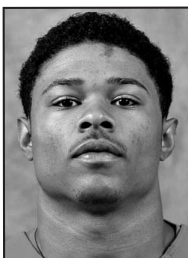
made 47 tackles. He played a key role in OSU's win at Illinois, making an interception and returning the turnover 36 yards, setting up a key score in a 17-7 win. The son of two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, Adam Griffin

made 47 tackles. He played a key role in OSU's win at Illinois, making an interception and returning the turnover 36 yards, setting up a key score in a 17-7 win.

The son of two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, Adam Griffin

**Safety**

Christian Bryant (5-10, 192, Jr.) is a confident, physical safety from Cleveland Glenville. Bryant made nine starts last season and played in all but one game, missing the Michigan contest with a shoulder injury. Despite playing in only two seasons, Bryant ranks fifth on the team with 78 career tackles. Last fall, he tied for third in the Big Ten with eight

**Christian Bryant**

pass breakups and finished the season with 68 tackles.

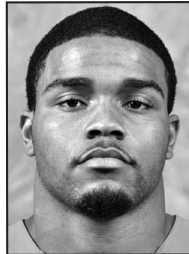
Corey Brown (6-1, 197, Jr.), who unlike Corey "Philly" Brown hails from the Pittsburgh area, is a two-time letter winner who comes into the season with nine career

tackles. He played in all 13 games last season and made four stops.

**Safety**

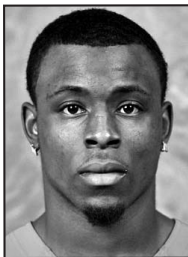
A hard-hitter from Clayton (Ohio) Northmont, C.J. Barnett (6-1, 202, Jr.) returned to the field last season after knee surgery limited him to two games in 2010. Barnett made his presence known by recording a team-best 75 tackles. He made 12 tackles against Michigan and a career-best six solo stops at Nebraska. His season efforts earned him second-team All-Big Ten by league coaches following the season.

Orhian Johnson (6-3, 210, 5th Sr.) might be listed as a backup, but he has plenty of experience. Johnson has played in 37 games, including 15 starts, and has been a solid contributor for the Buckeyes since arriving from St. Petersburg (Fla.) Boca Ciega. His 92 career tackles are second most on the team, trailing only John Simon (110). Last season, Johnson made 32 tackles and tied for the team lead with Roby in interceptions with three.

**C.J. Barnett****Cornerback**

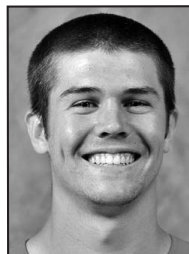
A veteran of 31 games and 11 starts, Travis Howard (6-1, 200, 5th Sr.) is one of the most experienced members of the secondary. All of Howard's starts came last season, a campaign in which he hauled in two interceptions. Both of those picks came in the fourth quarter in wins against Illinois and Indiana. His four career INTs are tied with Johnson for most among current Buckeyes.

Doran Grant (5-11, 188, Soph.) has been pushing Howard for most among current Buckeyes. Grant was listed as a co-starter at the end of the spring, and he and Howard have continued to jostle in the preseason. Grant, who played at Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary before coming to OSU, lettered last year after playing in every game. He made six tackles, including three in the season opener against Akron.

**Travis Howard****SPECIALISTS**  
**Kicker**

Drew Basil (6-1, 210, Jr.) is back for his second season as Ohio State's primary kicker, who will handle both kickoffs and place-kicking duties. Basil also did some punting in preseason practices that the media were permitted to watch. The Chillicothe, Ohio, native led the Big Ten with an 84.2 field-goal percentage (16 of 19) last season, a figure that ranks fifth all-time in Buckeye history. The 2011 season started bumpy for Basil, as he missed his first two field-goal attempts – making him 0 for 4 for his career – before he made 16 of his last 17 kicks.

Kyle Clinton (6-1, 212, Soph.) is a walk-on but not a newcomer to college football. Clinton played for Ohio in 2010 and played in every game, kicking off 67 times and making four tackles. Before joining the Bobcats,

**Drew Basil**

Clinton was a first-team All-Ohio pick by the AP in 2009 as a senior at Dublin (Ohio) Coffman.

**Punter**

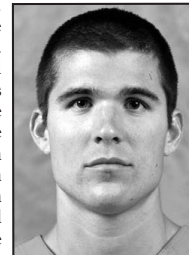
Ben Buchanan (5-11, 190, 5th Sr.) already ranks fifth all-time at Ohio State with 2,889 punting yards and is back for his final season as a Buckeye. Buchanan ranked fifth in the Big Ten in punting average (41.3 yards) and fourth in the conference in net putting (37.4 yards). The Westerville (Ohio) Central product punted 70 times last season, the most for an OSU punter in seven years, and less than one-third were returned. Those that were returned were for an average of only 5.2 yards. Nationally, Buchanan ranked sixth with 27 punts downed inside the 20. A three-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree, Buchanan has had issues with having punts blocked – including one apiece in Ohio State's last two bowl trips.

Basil is listed as the No. 2 punter, but Kevin Niehoff (6-3, 200, Fr.) could potentially get reps in a pinch. An invited walk-on from Mason, Ohio, who arrived at Ohio State in time for the spring quarter, Niehoff was a three-year starter for the Comets and also lettered in baseball and basketball. His father, Rob, played at the University of Cincinnati and later suited up for the Cincinnati Bengals.

**Long Snapper**

George Makridis (6-2, 230, Jr.) earned the starting job last season and returns for another season as OSU's long snapping specialist. Makridis, the brother of former OSU long snapper Demitrios Makridis (2003-07), played in 13 games last season and made 108 snaps. Following the season, Makridis earned his first varsity letter.

Bryce Haynes (6-4, 220, R-Fr.) is in his second year at Ohio State after taking a redshirt last year. Haynes was taking plenty of snaps during preseason and could see action this fall. He earned an OSU Scholar-Athlete honor in 2011 and will have a new jersey number this season, switching from No. 51 to 41.

**Ben Buchanan**

coach Earle Bruce during the 1986 and '87 seasons, working with the tight ends and then the wide receivers.

Meyer earned his master's degree in sports administration from OSU in 1988 and followed that accomplishment by starting his coaching career with a two-year stint at Illinois State, working as the Redbirds' outside linebackers coach in his first season in 1988 and then the quarterbacks/wide receivers leader a year later.

Meyer next spent five seasons at Colorado State as the wide receivers coach before leaving that job to take the same position at Notre Dame from 1996-2000.

Bowling Green came calling on Meyer in 2001, and the longtime assistant jumped at the opportunity to finally lead a program. Meyer took over a team that had gone 2-9 in 2000 and had not had a winning season in seven years, but it did not take Meyer long to find success. The Falcons, led by quarterback Josh Harris, made a six-win improvement in Meyer's first season with wins against Missouri, Northwestern and Bowling Green's archrival Toledo. He was named Mid-American Conference Coach of the Year following the season.

In 2002, Meyer led BG to a 9-3 record. The Falcons began the season 8-0, including another win against Missouri, and earned their first ever ranking in the AP and ESPN/USA Today top-25 polls. That season's squad led the nation in red-zone production with 61 scores in 63 trips inside the opponents' 20-yard line and ranked ninth nationally with 448.9 yards per game.

Meyer moved on to Utah following the 2002 season, taking over a Utes squad and leading it to a 22-2 record over two seasons. Meyer led Utah to its first outright conference title in his first year, capping the season with a Liberty Bowl victory against Southern Mississippi. Following the '03 season, Meyer was named the National Coach of the Year by Sporting News.

In 2004, Utah had its best year in program history. The Utes went undefeated and finished their 12-0 season with a 39-7 throttling of Pittsburgh in the Fiesta Bowl. That squad, led by future NFL starter Alex Smith, finished among national leaders in several offensive categories – including a third-best 45.3 points per game and third-best 499.7 yards per game.

After leading the Utes to new heights, Meyer made a move south. He took over for Ron Zook at Florida in 2005 and, after leading UF to a 9-3 record in that first season, led the Gators to a BCS National Championship Game victory against a favored Ohio State squad. The second-ranked Gators crushed Troy Smith and the Buckeyes 41-14, giving Meyer his first national crown.

Florida went 9-3 in 2007 behind Heisman-winning quarterback Tim Tebow, but that proved to be a hiccup when UF posted consecutive 13-win seasons in 2008 and 2009.

**Urban Meyer**

Continued On Page 14

# Herman Joins Staff, Will Lead Buckeye Offense

Continued From Page 13

The '08 squad produced another national title, thanks to a 24-14 victory against Oklahoma in Miami.

The 2009 Gators lost only one game – to eventual national champ Alabama in the SEC championship game – but following that defeat Meyer had a health scare. After returning to Gainesville, Meyer was admitted to a hospital with chest pains and dehydration. The day after Christmas, Meyer went public with the incident and said he would resign following the season. A day later, he changed the resignation to a leave of absence.

Florida went on to thump Cincinnati in the Gator Bowl on New Year's Day in Tebow's final collegiate game. Meyer did leave the Gators for a few months before returning full time before the start of spring practice in 2010. That following season, Florida sputtered to a 7-5 record, and Meyer again announced his resignation. His final game at UF came in the 2011 Outback Bowl, a 37-24 victory against Joe Paterno and Penn State.

Meyer stepped away from coaching following the 2010 season but did not leave the game. He spent last season as a college football commentator for ESPN. As Ohio State struggled to a 6-7 season, Meyer was rumored to be the next head coach of the Buckeyes. Those rumors proved true when he was officially named to the position on Nov. 28.

The father of three is married to wife Shelley. He has two daughters, Nicole and Gigi, and a son, Nathan.

## Offensive Coaching Staff

Meyer will have an almost entirely new offensive staff. Leading the newcomers is offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Tom Herman. Herman comes to Ohio State from Iowa State, where he held the same titles for the previous three seasons. Last season, his ISU offense posted 44 points in a triple-overtime victory against rival Iowa and 37 points in a two-OT win against then-No. 2 and undefeated Oklahoma State. Last

season's ISU offense averaged 386.5 yards per game.

Prior to his stint with the Cyclones, Herman held the offensive coordinator/QBs coach job at Rice (2007-08) and Texas State (2005-06). His coaching career began with a stint from 1999-2000 as an offensive graduate assistant at Texas and a four-year job as wide receivers coach/special teams coordinator at Sam Houston State.

Two of the new assistants came from Brian Kelly's staff at Notre Dame in co-offensive coordinator/offensive line coach Ed Warinner and fullbacks/tight ends coach Tim Hinton. Warinner is a 29-year coaching veteran who was ND's offensive line coach in 2010 and 2011 and also held the title of run game coordinator in '11. He has been an offensive coordinator for nine years, including a three-year stint at Kansas from 2007-09 during which the Jayhawks averaged 445.5 yards per game and 35.3 points per game.

Warinner began his coaching career in 1984 in Akron and has had stints at Michigan State (1985-86), Army (1987-99), Air Force (2000-02), Kansas (2003-04, 2007-09), Illinois (2005-06) and Notre Dame (2010-11).

Hinton is a known commodity in Ohio, stemming back to his first college football job as a student assistant at Wilmington – his alma mater. Hinton enters his 31st year in coaching after serving most recently as the running backs coach from 2010-11 at Notre Dame. He might be best known for his 11-season stint as head coach at Marion (Ohio) Harding, where he led the Presidents to five playoff berths and was named the 1995 Ohio Division I Co-Coach of the Year. In addition to his time at Harding, Hinton was also head coach at Van Wert and Chillicothe Zane Trace.

Besides his work with his alma mater, where he was a student assistant in 1981

and tight ends/wide receivers coach from 1982-84, Hinton also had college coaching experience at Ohio State as a grad assistant with Meyer from 1985-86, as well as at Ohio (1990-92) as a full-time assistant and Cincinnati (2004-09).

Stan Drayton is the only returning coach on the offensive side of the football, though he is leading a new position. Drayton served as the wide receivers coach last season and will now head the running backs, the spot he has the most experience working with. Drayton is familiar

with Meyer, as he worked under Meyer at Florida from 2005-07 and in 2010 – both times as running backs coach (and recruiting coordinator in his final season at UF). Drayton, a native of Cleveland, was a part of Florida's 2006 national championship team and has had collegiate coaching experience at Allegheny College (1993), Eastern Michigan (1994), Penn (1995), Villanova (1996-99), Bowling Green (2000), Mississippi State (2004), Florida, Tennessee (2008) and Syracuse (2009). He also has NFL coaching experience as an offensive quality control/special teams coach with the Green Bay Packers from 2001-03.

Finally, the wide receivers coach has a solid OSU bloodline. Zach Smith is the grandson of Earle Bruce, but his hiring is certainly not a case of nepotism. Smith worked with Meyer at Florida, working as a graduate assistant and quality control coach with the Gators from 2005-09. After leaving UF, Smith worked as a wide receivers coach and special teams coordinator at Marshall in 2010 and at Temple in 2011.

## Defensive Coaching Staff

No one can question Luke Fickell's love for Ohio State. First he was a solid defensive lineman for the Buckeyes and helped OSU win the 1997 Rose Bowl. Next, he spent 11 of his 14 coaching years so far working for

his alma mater. Most importantly, Fickell served as the program's interim head coach in 2011 following the dismissal of Jim Tressell and chose to remain with the program after Meyer was hired.

Fickell returns to his job at linebackers coach, which he held from 2004-10. He served as the co-defensive coordinator as well from 2005-10 but is listed as the defensive coordinator this fall. Columbus has been Fickell's home for most of his life. He was a state wrestling champion at Columbus DeSales before becoming a four-year starter at nose guard for his hometown Buckeyes, setting a school record for consecutive games played with 50 from 1993-96.

Following his collegiate career, Fickell attempted to play professionally, signing with the New Orleans Saints as an undrafted free agent. But a knee injury ended his pro hopes before he played in a game.

Fickell became a graduate assistant at Ohio State in 1999 and spent the 2000-01 seasons as a defensive line coach at Akron. In 2002, he returned to Ohio State and has remained with the Buckeyes ever since. Fickell began as the special teams coordinator from 2002-03 before taking over his linebacker coaching duties in 2004.

Fickell has much in common with co-defensive coordinator Everett Withers, who also holds the titles of assistant head coach and safeties coach. The 25-year coaching vet, like Fickell, spent the 2011 season as an interim head coach. Withers led North Carolina to a 7-5 record last fall after Butch Davis was dismissed before the season. Before taking over the head job, Withers spent the 2008-10 seasons as UNC's defensive coordinator and safeties coach.

Withers has had collegiate coaching stops at Austin Peay (1988-90), Tulane (1991), Southern Miss (1992-93), Louisville (1995-97), Texas (1998-2000) and Minnesota (2007). He also had NFL stops with New Orleans as a defensive quality control coach in 1994 and as a defensive backs coach with the Tennessee Titans from 2001-06.

Cornerbacks coach Kerry Coombs is another coach with deep Ohio ties. After a prep career at Cincinnati Colerain, Coombs helped the University of Dayton earn the 1980 NCAA Division III national championship. Following his 1983 graduation from UD, Coombs went to the Ohio high school ranks, first working as an assistant coach at Greenhills from 1983-84 and Lakota (1985-88) before becoming the head coach at Loveland from 1989-90 and then taking the same job at his high school alma mater from 1991-2006. While head coach at Colerain, Coombs led the Cardinals to 10 state playoff berths and the 2004 OHSAA Division I title. He also sent several players to Ohio State, including Connor and Spencer Smith and Tyler Moeller.

Coombs joined the collegiate coaching ranks in 2007 as the defensive backs coach at Cincinnati. He held that job in 2008 as well before becoming the associate head coach/defensive backs coach/special teams coordinator from 2009-11.

Last but not least, Mike Vrabel returns for his second season coaching at his alma mater. He moves from the linebackers to the defensive line this year. The three-time Super Bowl champion with New England was a college teammate of Fickell and earned two Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year awards and consecutive All-America honors in 1995-96. He still holds Buckeye records for career sacks (36), single-season tackles for loss (26 in 1995) and career TFLs (66).



Tom Herman



Luke Fickell






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# Ohio State Football Roster By Position And Eligibility

POSITION	SENIORS	JUNIORS	SOPHOMORES	REDSHIRT FRESHMEN	FRESHMEN
<b>QUARTERBACK</b>	17 Justin Siems*	13 Kenny Guiton	<b>5 Braxton Miller</b>		12 Cardale Jones 19 Levi Ratliff
<b>TAILBACK</b>	7 Jordan Hall	34 Carlos Hyde	2 Rod Smith		25 Bri'onte Dunn 28 Warren Ball
<b>FULLBACK</b>	<b>44 Zach Boren</b> 49 Adam Homan		32 Darryl Wood* 35 Craig Cataline*		
<b>WIDE RECEIVER</b>	<b>11 Jake Stoneburner#</b> 29 Taylor Rice*#	<b>10 Corey "Philly" Brown</b> <b>80 Chris Fields</b>	9 Verlon Reed 15 Devin Smith 16 Evan Spencer 18 Tyrone Williams 84 Ryan Ross* 88 Stacey Blunt*	85 Frank Kangah* 87 Peter Gwilym*	8 Ricquan Southward 33 Frank Epitropoulos 83 Michael Thomas
<b>TIGHT END</b>			86 Jeff Heurman	81 Nick Vannett	82 Ryan Carter* 89 Blake Thomas
<b>OFFENSIVE TACKLE</b>	77 Reid Fragel	<b>74 Jack Mewhort</b>	76 Darryl Baldwin		66 Kyle Dodson 68 Taylor Decker
<b>OFFENSIVE GUARD</b>		64 Ivon Blackman* <b>78 Andrew Norwell</b> 79 Marcus Hall	67 Ben St. John* 69 Eric Kramer* 73 Antonio Underwood	55 Tommy Brown 57 Chase Farris 62 Logan Beougher*	60 Joey O'Connor 65 Pat Elflein
<b>CENTER</b>		71 Corey Linsley		70 Tim Trummer*	50 Jacoby Boren
<b>LONG SNAPPER</b>		<b>56 George Makridis*</b>		41 Bryce Haynes	
<b>KICKER</b>		<b>24 Drew Basil</b>	20 Russell Doup* 39 Kyle Clinton*		26 Kevin Niehoff*
<b>PUNTER</b>	<b>17 Ben Buchanan#</b>				
<b>DEFENSIVE TACKLE</b>	<b>53 Garrett Goebel#</b> 56 Dalton Britt*# 91 William McCary*# 96 Kharim Stephens*#	<b>52 Johnathan Hankins</b>	51 Joel Hale 97 John Holman*	72 Chris Carter 97 Claudius Mbemba*	90 Tommy Schutt 92 Adolphus Washington
<b>DEFENSIVE END</b>	43 Nathan Williams# <b>54 John Simon</b>		50 J.T. Moore 63 Michael Bennett 88 Steve Miller 94 Rashad Frazier*		8 Noah Spence 95 Se'Von Pittman
<b>LINEBACKER</b>	6 Etienne Sabino# 20 Ross Oltorik*# 59 Stewart Smith*#		10 Ryan Shazier 14 Curtis Grant	36 Conner Crowell	5 Camren Williams 15 Joshua Perry 25 David Perkins 34 Jamal Marcus 38 Craig Fada* 42 Luke Roberts 48 Joe Burger*
<b>CORNERBACK</b>	<b>7 Travis Howard#</b> 35 Vincent Petrella*#		<b>1 Bradley Roby</b> 9 Adam Griffin 12 Doran Grant	33 Nik Sarac*	18 Najee Murray 23 Tyvis Powell 24 Armani Reeves
<b>SAFETY/STAR</b>	16 Zach Domicone# 19 Orhian Johnson#	<b>2 Christian Bryant</b> 3 Corey Brown <b>4 C.J. Barnett</b> 21 Jamie Wood		28 Ron Tanner	30 Devan Bogard

# – 5th-Year Senior • \* – Walk-on • Returning Starters In **BOLD**

## Ohio State Future Schedules

Date	2013 Opponent	Date	2014 Opponent	Date	2015 Opponent	Date	2016 Opponent
Aug. 31	VANDERBILT	Aug. 30	vs. Navy (Baltimore)	Sept. 5	NORTH CAROLINA	Sept. 3	BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 7	FLORIDA A&M	Sept. 13	KENT STATE	Sept. 12	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	Sept. 10	TULSA
Sept. 14	at California	Sept. 20	VIRGINIA TECH	Sept. 19	at Virginia Tech	Sept. 17	at Oklahoma
Sept. 21	BUFFALO	Sept. 27	CINCINNATI	Sept. 26	TBA	Sept. 24	TBA
Sept. 28	WISCONSIN	Oct. 4	PURDUE	Oct. 3	at Purdue	Oct. 1	PURDUE
Oct. 5	at Northwestern	Oct. 18	at Iowa	Oct. 10	PENN STATE	Oct. 15	at Michigan State
Oct. 19	IOWA	Oct. 25	NORTHWESTERN	Oct. 17	MICHIGAN STATE	Oct. 22	ILLINOIS
Oct. 26	PENN STATE	Nov. 1	at Wisconsin	Oct. 31	at Minnesota	Oct. 29	at Penn State
Nov. 2	at Purdue	Nov. 8	ILLINOIS	Nov. 7	WISCONSIN	Nov. 5	MINNESOTA
Nov. 16	at Illinois	Nov. 15	at Penn State	Nov. 14	at Illinois	Nov. 12	at Wisconsin
Nov. 23	INDIANA	Nov. 22	at Indiana	Nov. 21	INDIANA	Nov. 19	at Indiana
Nov. 30	at Michigan	Nov. 29	MICHIGAN	Nov. 28	at Michigan	Nov. 26	MICHIGAN
Dec. 7	Big Ten Title (Indianapolis)	Dec. 6	Big Ten Title (Indianapolis)	Dec. 5	Big Ten Title (Indianapolis)	Dec. 3	Big Ten Title (TBA)



# Meyer Era Set To Kick Off At Ohio State

Continued From Page 1

down as the one Urban Meyer put his stamp on the Ohio State football program.

The band will march down the ramp, the fight song will blare and the anthem will play, and a ball will be teed. With the swing of a leg, the first of 720 minutes of football across almost three months will be played, and the answers will begin to become clear.

\*\*\*\*\*

*"The game gives no place for the weak and fainthearted. It demands the stout and the brave." – Yost*

When Meyer first walked through the doors of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, players didn't know what to think.

They knew all about him, of course. If there was one guy who moved needles and created strong opinions across the college football landscape in the late 2000s, it was Urban Meyer.

"He was it, especially in this era of us guys who are here today," said Boren, who enters his fourth year as the team's starting fullback. "That was when we were in high school. That's when he really got that program going, and that's when you're really into college football because you're being recruited. He was the rock star of college football. When he came in, it was kind of like, 'Wow.'"

The honeymoon was bound to be a short one. As Meyer remembers that November Monday morning, he walked into the room, said a few words and left. Not only did Ohio State still have a staff in place to coach the upcoming Gator Bowl, there simply just wasn't much else to say.

"It was just kind of, 'This is the way it's going to be. I'll see you guys in a few weeks,'" he said.

Those players probably sensed it at the time, but their lives were about to change. Meyer was never shy about discussing the poor shape he thought some of his players – especially the team's offensive linemen – were in, and when winter conditioning started in mid-January, strength coach Mickey Marotti went about reshaping bodies with an unyielding program. A nutritionist was brought in to completely revamp the team's training table.

While ballooning weights were under attack, so were lagging grade-point averages. Some of Meyer's proudest moments include him beaming about a player raising his GPA after realizing he had to take his studies more seriously. On the flip side, the coach has made it clear that falling short in the classroom is not acceptable.

The change in culture was immediate, which isn't to take anything away from the way things were under head coach Jim Tressell or even interim head man Luke Fickell. Obviously, Tressell's teams worked hard – seven Big Ten titles and a national crown in 10 years don't just happen – while Fickell's one outfit gave an honest effort in very tough circumstances.

But there's a drive to Meyer's program that in some ways resembles a Ferrari going at 100 mph. The tempo of practice has been raised while the off-the-field evaluations have meant that players are being pushed to be their best at all times.

It's a demanding situation, one that takes some getting used to. When the going was at its roughest, players were buoyed by two simple things – the pair of BCS title rings Meyer has in his possession.

"If it was a coach coming in here and we've never seen it work, we might question it, but here you have a guy who comes in who's proven himself time and time again," Sabino said. "It's easier to buy into the system when you see something like that."

"I guess you would second-guess yourself sometimes. Even now you might second-guess it, like, 'Do we really need to do that?' But there's a reason he asks us to do something. There's going to be a point in time where we're going to be like, 'Oh, that's why we do that.'"

That's not to say the coaches are lacking in humanity. Encouragement hasn't been in short supply, especially when players excel at what they are doing, and many players have raved about Meyer's open-door policy that allows players to come in and talk to him about whatever is on their minds.

"I know a lot of our guys have sat down and had hour-long conversations with him," Boren said. "He's just a mentor to a lot of our players, and there are a lot of guys away from home that he acts as that father figure for."

In the end, everything boils down to trust, and after three-quarters of a year, the Buckeyes are starting to develop that two-way street.

"When people started buying into the system, he began opening up, and you knew he was a true Buckeye," Simon said.

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*"In a certain sense a player must lose his individuality and make himself a component member of his team. With the proper spirit of sacrifice in all its members, the team becomes harmonious." – Yost*

Meyer said the year off he took from the grind of college coaching allowed him perspective not usually afforded to someone in his position.

Freed from being forced to manage the daily minutiae of his own team, Meyer picked up a job as an analyst with ESPN, where he was able to fly around the country and visit various coaches.

What he found was a reinforced way of thinking about coaching and motivating a football team.

"It's about team-building," Meyer told the school's high school coaches clinic in April. "I've been to many speeches, read many books and had some great conversations over the years, and this is something that I've come up with over the past year. Every program, every group – whether it's corporate America or a football team or a big family – you're going to deal with three different types of people."

At the top of the list, Meyer said, are people he calls elite, and that term applies on average to about 10 percent of a good football team.

"God made them completely different," he told those assembled. "It's almost like they're freaks. They're bizarre. I'm talking about the self-discipline, the self-respect, the work ethic that most of us can only dream of."

Following that group is the middle of the bell curve – the 80 percent of the people who try hard and do what they are supposed to do, but don't quite possess the innate physical or mental characteristics to join the elite.

Lastly, at the bottom end of the scale are the "defiant and disinterested" who don't feel the need to buy in.

Many coaches, Meyer has found, spend the most time with the bottom group when



SONNY BROCKWAY

**RECHARGED – Urban Meyer is back in the college football coaching ranks after taking a sabbatical during the 2011 season.**

the true key to success is to work with the middle group.

"You want magic in your program?" he asked. "Get the 80 percent to come."

As a result, much of the program designed by Meyer and Marotti is centered on bringing along those who want to be made better.

To do so, the staff starts to lean on the elite players. For example, Simon displays a tremendous work ethic when it comes to the weight room, and throughout his career he has been known for working out at all kinds of odd hours. Meyer appreciates that kind of effort but told Simon that he wasn't allowed to do it unless he brought a friend.

"Simon's in at 6 a.m.?" Meyer asked rhetorically. "OK. That's not making us better. Him going and lifting at 6 a.m. does nothing for our team. It does something for him, not the team. It's a team sport, not an individual sport. So (when) he brought in Noah Spence, here's a true freshman learning from the best. Now (Simon is) giving something back to the team."

The goal at the end is to have a team whose elite group swells past the 10 percent mark. The coach has known it to happen before, and the results were magical.

"My best team in '08, we had about 20 to 25 percent elite," Meyer said of that national championship winning squad. "We hit it right."

There are other ways the coaching staff tries to push players along, including detailed evaluations and reward systems. Perhaps the most famous is the Champions Club, a group of players who are judged to have excelled in all facets of academic and athletic life. Those players are rewarded with better gear and a steak dinner while those who don't qualify eat hot dogs.

The coaching staff also tracks each player's progress weekly in the academic realm, the weight room and all other areas, with the

grades delivered by the counselor, advisor or coach in charge.

From those rankings come a three-tiered, color-coded system used to rate each player's performance in both the classroom and the weight room. When a player graduates from one level to another, the announcement is made in front of the entire team, and players see the incentive in responding.

"It sits out in the open so everybody can see it," junior center Corey Linsley said. "There's no hiding in this program. You can't say, 'Oh, I did 80 pushups,' because it's posted right here, so if you don't do 80 pushups, the whole world is going to see it. It's brought a whole new level of accountability to everybody in the program. When it's presented in front of everybody, everybody is going to see it. The reward is a tremendous sense of accomplishment."

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*"The requirements of the individual may seem numerous, but they are important, and the man who comes nearest to these ideals is the one who is going to make the greatest player." – Yost*

While Meyer's tactics work when it comes to pushing a player to hit certain benchmarks, true transformation doesn't come until the motivation becomes self-created – a way of life, one might say.

The battle to reach "competitive excellence" – one of Meyer's favorite phrases – is one the players and coaches on the team will continue to fight.

"C.J. Barnett is a guy who just does not accept being average," Meyer said at the start of fall camp. "Then I looked at a couple of guys next to him who do. So what's our job as coaches? We've got to be motivators to not allow that."

The message is starting to get through, it appears. Meyer has preached about how he wants his teams to give four to six seconds of relentless effort on each play, and in early fall practices the team's mantra was to go two extra steps in every drill to drive home that point.

"We can fall short really easily," senior safety Orhian Johnson said. "When you think about it, when you look at it, it comes to a point where you're in a workout or you're in practice or conditioning, you have to figure out if I'm going to quit or I'm not. It's your decision. If you want to be average, cool, you can stop right now. But if you want to be great, go ahead and finish that rep and then do an extra rep."

In many ways, that is a mind-set that takes some time to get used to. A person can wake up and talk about being great, but to actually go above and beyond in daily life is the kind of thing that can be told only in actions across a series of weeks and months.

As a result, there are things Meyer simply cannot know about his team until they occur. What will happen after a road loss? What will the mind-set be when November dawns, cold winds blow across campus and the reality sets in that no trip to Florida or California awaits after week 12?

Then there are the pieces he likes, the things he glows about when speaking to the media after a practice session, the time he told the media that the team's make-or-break week of two-a-days was a success.

Meyer's team has survived the struggle. As a thin, knowing smile crosses his face as he praises his team's work, one gets the sense they even enjoyed it.

# Finally Time To Get Back To Football Action

I'm always ready for the Ohio State football season to start. It's time for all the speculation to end and for the whole world to see just how good (or bad) the latest edition of the Buckeye football team is.

But I'm more eager this year than most others for any number of reasons.

Of course, I'm ready to put all the negatives of last season – both on and off the field – in the past. More importantly, however, I am as interested as anyone to see how the team looks and performs under the tutelage of Urban Meyer.

Admittedly, it is going to be tough for the Ohio-bred, championship-winning Meyer to live up to the hype and excitement that has been building since even before his hiring was announced last November – building since the first rumors began to float that he might be coming to Columbus.

Still, after the program's first losing season since 1988, the Buckeyes have little place to go but up. More importantly for many fans, the Ohio State offense, which finished 107th in the country in total offense last season with 318.2 yards per game, almost assuredly has no place to go but up.

After watching Jim Tressel's plodding – though successful if measured in wins and losses – offense for 10 years, most fans are ready for Meyer and his offensive staff to bring Ohio State into the 21st century.

I've heard the excited talk for months. Now I am ready to see just how this new-fangled offense is going to work.

Aside from getting a handle on the X's and O's of Meyer's spread attack, I will be watching a couple of things in the short and long term as the program transitions from Tressel's staff to Meyer and his brain trust.

For starters, I will be watching the offensive line.

To my way of thinking, the Buckeyes have underachieved in that area for years. During the past few seasons, Ohio State has brought in the likes of Mike Adams, Mike Brewster and J.B. Shugarts, and imported Justin Boren from Michigan, all with mixed results at best. I'll be watching for big holes, ironclad pass protection and opposing defenders on their backsides.

As I have said for years, despite all of the sophistication of college football today, especially on offense, the game is still won and lost in the trenches. While not fully understanding Meyer's offense yet, I am hard-pressed to believe it will function at maximum efficiency without strong play from the offensive line.

I'm going to have to take a wait-and-see attitude toward this year's offensive line.

Players with extensive experience such as Jack Mewhort and Andrew Norwell have shuffled between positions during their careers, and the experience gets thinner as you go down the depth chart. True freshman Taylor Decker is battling for one of the starting spots with converted tight end Reid Fragel, and there are plenty of other youthful players battling for positions in the two-deep.

New line coach Ed Warinner has extensive experience as an offensive line coach and coordinator. It will be interesting to see if he can cobble together a cohesive unit from this somewhat young and inexperienced group.

The other position I will be watching closely is quarterback.

I never felt Terrelle Pryor particularly progressed in his time at Ohio State. He was a magically gifted athlete when he arrived in Columbus, able to alter the outcome of the game with a flick of the arm or a burst of

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

speed from his legs. He left with the same raw gifts, but I am not sure he was a polished quarterback at the time of his hasty departure, nor do I think the coaching staff ever devised a scheme to maximize his amazing talents.

Current quarterback Braxton Miller appears to have the same magical gifts as Pryor. Last season, he was pretty much thrown to the wolves and left to survive on his superior athletic ability. Will he come out in 2012 and beyond in a system designed to maximize his immense talents, and will he get better as the season and his career progress?

The early indicators – and Meyer's track record with quarterbacks at his previous stops – would seem to point to a positive outcome for the sophomore signal caller. Though I know that many fans have wished good riddance on Pryor, I personally have to wonder what Meyer might have done with the highly-touted quarterback from Jeannette, Pa. Unfortunately, we'll never know.

I think the Buckeyes will be just fine at quarterback as long as Miller stays healthy. Don't forget that Meyer had Tim Tebow run the ball 217 times from his quarterback spot as a senior at Florida. But Tebow was listed at 6-3 and 245 pounds by that season, and I'm not sure the sometimes-fragile Miller – listed at 6-2, 220 – can stand up to that type of pounding.

Reserve quarterback Kenny Gupton continues to have praise heaped on him by Meyer, but there would certainly be a drop-off if Miller goes down.

Interestingly, the unit that seems to worry Meyer most is one I feel pretty good about – the wide receivers. The new coach is looking for that "wow" factor, and I think he'll find it in that group once he puts it in a position to make "wow" plays – something that was utterly lacking in 2011.

Sophomore Devin Smith won me over with one play last season, his game-winning catch against Wisconsin. He also seems to have a good chemistry with Miller.

Corey "Philly" Brown, Evan Spencer and Verlon Reed have also shown flashes. Chris Fields turned in a "wow" play with a 69-yard punt return last season; he just needs to translate that game-breaking ability to his receiving skills.

The player who really excites me among the receivers is Jake Stoneburner, who moves from tight end to create matchup problems for all sorts of defenders. If it is Meyer's intention to put the ball in the hands of his best playmakers, he will want to get the ball to the 6-5, 245-pound Stoneburner.

Even when he was still at tight end, the previous coaching staff should have broken from recent tradition and tried to get the ball to Stoneburner more. Don't forget that of Stoneburner's 14 receptions last season, which tied for the team lead, half of them went for touchdowns. Enough said.

I have far fewer worries about the Ohio State defense than I do the offense. I believe that last year's performance was an aberration, caused in major part by the absence of the dynamic Nathan Williams due to injury and the pressure put on the unit to make up for the ineptitude of the offense.

With the potential return of Williams, along with the presence of bona fide stars

John Simon and Johnathan Hankins, not to mention a solid supporting cast, it's hard not to be excited about the defensive line.

Just as I am eager to see the new offense, I am excited to see how Meyer uses the defensive line since he is noted for relentless pressure up front.

"That is where it all starts," Meyer said of the defensive line. "If you want to have a bad football team, have a bad defensive line. You can be average in some other spots and hide them, but it's over if you have a bad defensive line. You have no chance."

Well, this is a good defensive line, so that should bode well for the Buckeyes.

There are also potential stars in the defensive backfield in the up-and-coming Bradley Roby, along with C.J. Barnett and Travis Howard. Christian Bryant has also shown flashes, and if he holds onto potential interceptions and enemy ball carriers, he can be a good one, too.

It's really only the linebackers who give me pause.

Etienne Sabino finally showed signs at the end of last season of what earned him five-star status as a high school recruit, but in his last opportunity, he needs to play like that for a full season. Ryan Shazier electrified OSU fans with his nose for the ball and raw athletic ability as a freshman in 2011. Now he needs to play at the same level but with more knowledge of the game.

Experience is nearly nil after that, including sophomore Curtis Grant, who brings five stars of high school hype to the middle linebacker spot but virtually no playing time other than on special teams. There are six scholarship freshmen vying for action behind the top three.

Fortunately, there is enough talent at the front and back ends of the defense to hopefully cover up any deficiencies in the middle, but an injury-free season among the key linebackers would be a plus for the Buckeyes.

It all adds up to a lot of potential for Meyer's first OSU team and what should be a lot of fun for fans as they take in this new era in Ohio State football.

In the end with Buckeye Nation members – fortunately or unfortunately – it's still all about winning. I believe it's actually a plus that there is no pot of gold at the end of the 2012 rainbow. No bowl and championship expectations will give Meyer a chance to work in his systems, bring in another recruiting class and be ready to go for the glory in 2013.

For me, this season will be more about growing. How will the team be playing at the end of the season as compared to the beginning? It was a hallmark of Tressel-led squads that they saved their best for last, and this year's final two games are at Wisconsin and at home with Michigan, the Buckeyes' two biggest rivals.

If ever there was a year to beat Michigan, this is it. They are getting a little cocky up north after just one successful season and one win over the Buckeyes. It's time to nip that cockiness in the bud, and Meyer seems to understand that.

A fan at the recent Buckeye Boosters Kickoff Dinner asked Meyer if he thought this was the start of another "Ten-Year War" with Michigan.

"I'm just interested in a one-year war," Meyer replied.

## No Explosion At ISU

In the "For What It's Worth" department, I was somewhat surprised at the numbers posted by new offensive coordinator Tom Herman during his stint in the same position at Iowa State.

With Meyer seemingly having the pick of the litter among assistant coaches and Herman being portrayed as an offensive guru along the lines of Meyer, I figured the Cyclones would have posted some gaudy numbers from 2009-11.

However, in 2009, Iowa State ranked 73rd nationally in total offense (364.7 yards) and 103rd in scoring offense (20.5 points). In 2010, the Cyclones finished 99th (317.4) and 97th (21.7), respectively, and last season they improved to 60th (386.5) and 90th (22.7). If you are wondering what the ISU program was like before Herman got there, the team ranked 44th in total offense (386.8) and 59th in scoring (25.3) the year before his arrival in 2008.

Of course, that was the year Herman was making his mark with Rice. Under his command, the Owls offense scored 41.3 points a game to rank eighth in the country and racked up 470.9 yards an outing, good for 10th.

Herman's numbers at Iowa State don't necessarily give any indication of his coaching and teaching ability. The totals can be affected by talent, competition and any other number of factors.

As I said, I was just a little surprised, not knowing that much about Herman, when I came across those numbers.

## Preview Finally Here

The phone at BSB world headquarters started ringing shortly after the first of August. "When is the Football Preview issue coming out?" one reader after another would ask, the volume of calls increasing each week. The queries reached a peak in the days leading up to the Aug. 23 publication of this issue.

Please note that the publication date of the next print issue is always listed at the bottom of the credit box on page 3.

But what I really wanted to remind those readers who were so eagerly awaiting this issue is that there were four complete issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin posted online between the July print issue and this big Football Preview issue.

Those issues included BSB staffer Jeff Svoboda's ongoing coverage of Buckeyes at the Olympics, complete coverage of the Big Ten Media Days in Chicago, reports from the Buckeyes' preseason football camp and loads and loads of recruiting information. Those issues were free to all current BSB print subscribers and were just four of the 36 electronic issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin that we publish each year in addition to our print issues.

Next up are our Football Friday electronic issues, posted the day before each Ohio State football game this season. Those issues will recap any news that breaks after the print issue goes to press, feature the latest comments from Meyer and his players, and update any recruiting news. They will also include the popular staff predictions of the upcoming game.

If you are not already enjoying BSB's electronic issues, email your name, address, phone number and preferred email address to [subscriptions@BuckeyeSports.com](mailto:subscriptions@BuckeyeSports.com). For more information, see page 5 of this issue or give us a call anytime at (614) 486-2202.