

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$2.50

 PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!


Vol. 31, No. 21

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

May 2012



JOSH WINSLOW

PADS POPPING – A pregame edition of 'The Circle Drill' – highlighted by a battle between quarterbacks Braxton Miller (5) and Kenny Guiton (13) – was one of the more notable events April 21 during Ohio State's annual spring game. Guiton appeared to win the battle, but Miller won the war by leading the Scarlet team to a 20-14 win over Guiton's Gray squad.

Meyer Brings Change To OSU

Buckeyes Cap Their First Spring Under New Head Coach

By **MARCUS HARTMAN**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The final tally was not as high as Urban Meyer had hoped for, but the Ohio State football coach was happy to see 81,112 fans inhabit Ohio Stadium for the spring football game April 21.

The Scarlet took a 20-14 victory against the Gray thanks in large part to a 7-yard touchdown run by Rod Smith and an interception by Christian Bryant in the fourth quarter, but that was not of much consequence to the people who filled the stadium with scarlet on a day the weather was mostly gray.

After reading for nearly four months about Meyer's impact on the 122-year-old program he grew up adoring and discovered adrift after a year of NCAA turmoil, they wanted to see for themselves the changes the state's native son had put in place as head coach.

Meyer did not leave them waiting long.

Before the game began, he gathered the entire team at midfield, where they formed a circle around the Block "O" at the 50-yard line.

Standing amid them in the white Ohio State pull-over that is rapidly becoming his trademark, Meyer called for pairs of players to step forward into the middle to face off. Each physical, *mano a mano* match seemed to get the players and by proxy the crowd more and more excited until the exercise culminated with an unexpected pairing.

Meyer called quarterbacks Braxton Miller and Kenny Guiton into the middle and let them go at it, a brief exchange that saw Guiton get the better of Miller by bull-rushing him from the circle.

The infusion of competition Meyer has brought to the program was on display for all to see, and it was met with a roar of approval from the crowd as well as the players.

"That was real fun," said Guiton, a junior who will back up the sophomore Miller this fall. "We do that before practice almost every day to get hyped up. I thought it was good that we both got called in there today."

Miller sounded surprised to hear his number called for the drill, but he was fond of it despite the result.

"Man, it was fun," he said. "It was competitive just to get the crowd into it. We're good friends. We just competed. No problems. We were just laughing at each other like, 'We're really in the circle drill together? That's crazy.'"

Meyer wanted to inject energy into the team and the stadium and to prove a point.

"Our quarterbacks are just like anybody else," he said. "You've got to be able to go and put your nose on people."

Some of the energy from "The Circle Drill" appeared to carry over to the Scarlet offense as Miller led a crisp eight-play, 65-yard drive that culminated with a Carlos Hyde touchdown run of 1 yard. The march took only 2:17 as the Buckeyes unveiled an uptempo, no-huddle attack courtesy of offensive coordinator Tom Herman.

The action on that side of the ball was not as smooth the rest of the day, but it was a hint of the capabilities of the new system the staff worked to install at a breakneck pace in April.

Continued On Page 6

Fans Get First Look At Ohio State Under Meyer

Continued From Page 1

Change was apparent on both sides of the ball.

The offense lined up exclusively in the shotgun. Not only did most plays involve three receivers, they featured a variety of screens, crossing patterns and other wrinkles designed to get the ball to players on the move so they can use their athletic ability. There was precious little of the famous option plays Meyer's offense is known for, but a tricky reverse pitch to wide receiver Chris Fields drew a fan reaction even though it went for a gain of only 6 yards.

On defense, the changes were less obvious but still there. Of course there was the usual array of new faces throughout the stop units of both the Scarlet and the Gray squads, some presences courtesy of graduation and others of injuries that piled up as the three weeks of spring ball wound down.

With defensive coordinator Luke Fickell in charge of the unit full time for the first time and new co-coordinator Everett Withers adding his input, the defense played more of its base 4-3 alignment than last season or most recent ones when it often switched to nickel against three-receiver sets. Meyer, however, confessed to limiting what Fickell could do by requesting blitzes be kept to a minimum because of depth concerns on both offensive lines.

Nonetheless, change was as present in the air as the chill of the occasional wind gusts on a 50-degree day that saw no peeks of the sun to warm things after early morning precipitation.

The difference could have been greater had Meyer not scaled back the offense for practical reasons. He wanted to see his quarterbacks get passing repetitions and protect them from unnecessary hits.

"We did some things offensively that are not who we are," Meyer said. "However, I wanted to get something done."

The coach referred to the 66 pass plays compared to 27 runs (after accounting for nine sacks), a 70.1 percent rate of called pass plays compared to the roughly 45 percent his teams at Florida put up from 2005-10.

"We're going to be a very balanced offense," Meyer said. "That was very imbalanced. However, it was done for a reason."

By that he meant working on a passing game that ranked 115th out of 120 teams in Division I-A last season.

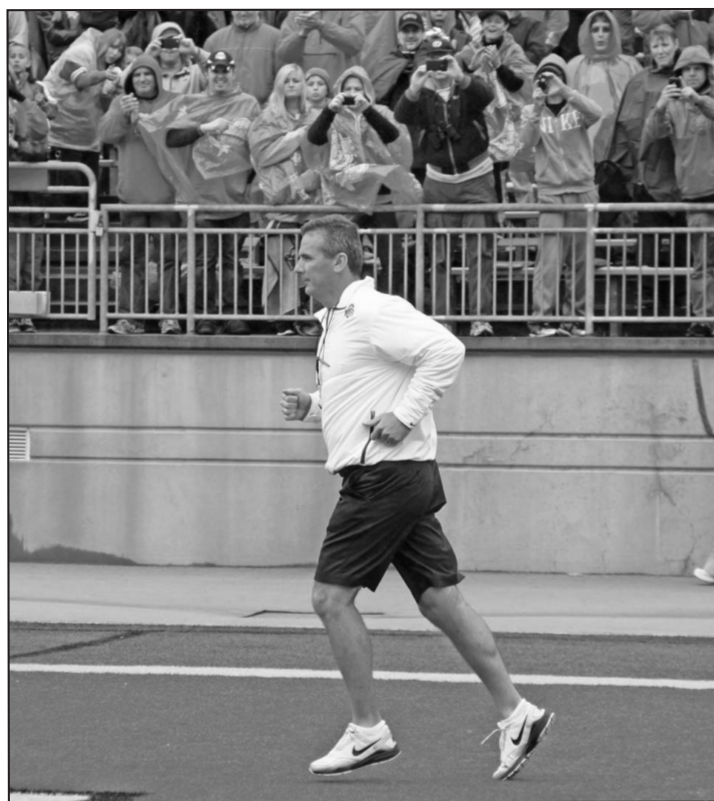
"You're taking one of the worst passing teams in America a year ago and we've got to find out if we can (improve)," Meyer said. "We can't be unbalanced next year. You can stop the run game. People have shown that if that's all you can do. We know we can run the quarterback. We didn't run them one time today. What we don't know – and unfortunately after the spring game I still don't know – is if we can throw the ball."

Although he made clear he still needs to see much more from the passing game, Meyer seemed satisfied overall with how the offensive unit progressed in April. That went for the players as well.

"It was a lot of fun," Guiton said. "It was exciting. New beginnings, new ideas and everything else. Everybody is out there anxious to get going and everything so it's a lot of fun. It was a lot more physical, especially with circle drill."

Miller agreed.

"The first spring practices are kind of tough for everybody," he said. "We're trying to learn the plays and trying to get the pace down. Right now, we're feeling pretty good."



JOSH WINSLOW

MAIN ATTRACTION – Fans were quick to try to get photos of new head football coach Urban Meyer when he took the field April 21 for Ohio State's annual spring game.

"We accomplished a lot. Coming from the bowl game against Florida, we worked

on a lot of things like body fat, getting stronger in the weight room and conditioning and getting in the film room also. We're learning things."

Meyer was often critical of the offense early in the spring but seemed to soften later as the group grasped more and more of his concepts and plays. The defense still got the better of more of the competitive "winner/loser" days, but the offense held its own more consistently as April wore on.

"The first couple of practices we were going out there and the defense was caving in a little bit, but one day it just started clicking and we were completing passes and moving the ball and seeing what it can be like," said junior Jack Mewhort, a starting guard most of last season who moved to left tackle this spring. "It was a lot of fun when we started completing passes and moving the ball in the right direction."

A Happy Homecoming

Prior to the spring game, Meyer said he did not expect to have to pinch himself when he took the field as head coach of the Buckeyes for the first game of any kind. That might be necessary when the first real game rolls around Sept. 1 and Miami (Ohio) comes to town, but not this time around.

However, he admitted to feeling something special about his return to the Ohio Stadium sidelines, where he was a graduate assistant on head coach Earle Bruce's staff for two seasons in the mid-1980s.

"It felt great," said Meyer, who spent the season opener last season in the press box as a television analyst for ESPN. "It

Players On The Spot

• **Braxton Miller, quarterback** – Everyone already knew Miller could run. We were more interested to see how the young quarterback would respond throwing the ball in an entirely new system. Judging by the comments from his head coach, he seems to be on an upward glide path. Miller continues to struggle with accuracy – a problem nearly every young QB has to overcome – but his release and arm strength are fine. It appears the more experience Miller gets, the better and better he becomes.

• **Bri'onte Dunn, tailback** – The pre-spring hype appears to have turned into the truth as the 6-1, 214-pound freshman turned more than a few heads. Technically, Dunn remains behind such veterans as Jordan Hall, Carlos Hyde and Rod Smith on the tailback depth chart, but nearly no one expects that to be the case in the fall. Best of all, Dunn not only showcased his running ability this spring, he also proved his skill as a receiver. The freshman has all the makings of a lethal weapon in Meyer's up-tempo attack.

• **Wide receivers** – Before spring practice drills began, we said the time to step up for the young receivers was now, and it appears several of them took that advice to heart. Devin Smith, Corey "Philly" Brown and Chris Fields each had flashes, while freshman Michael Thomas put on a spring-game show with 12 receptions for 131 yards. Will the 6-2, 196-pound Thomas become a viable target in 2012 or just another spring sensation like Taurian Washington or Bam Childress? Stay tuned.

• **Brian Bobek, center** – The 6-2, 275-pound sophomore entered the spring with a shot at earning the starting spot vacated by Mike Brewster. However, junior Corey Linsley seemed to take a stranglehold on the position early on while Bobek had to battle injuries as well as the emergence of true

freshman Jacoby Boren before Boren was sidelined following shoulder surgery.

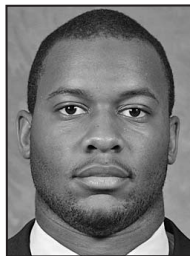
• **Reid Fragel, offensive tackle** – Fragel was another veteran tasked with fighting off the advance of a true freshman. The 6-8, 280-pound former tight end not only had to learn a new position at right tackle, he also had the highly touted Taylor Decker breathing down his neck on the depth chart. In the end, Fragel earned the right to claim the No. 1 spot coming out of spring drills, but his position battle with Decker will undoubtedly continue in fall camp.

• **John Simon, defensive line** – To say Simon has rapidly become one of Meyer's favorite players is not overstating things. The 6-2, 260-pound senior-to-be has embraced the new regime and it has embraced him. The new coach went so far as to declare he expects Simon to be one of the team captains this fall and explained Simon's absence from the spring game simply as the D-lineman had nothing more to prove.

• **Curtis Grant, linebacker** – A pinched nerve kept Grant from competing in the spring game, but he had evidently done enough in earlier drills to claim the starting spot at middle linebacker. Grant will still face a challenge in the fall from returning senior Storm Klein, who missed most of the spring with a knee injury.

• **Christian Bryant, safety** – Bryant fought through some minor injuries to have himself a solid spring. Best of all, the final picture the coaching staff will have of the 5-10, 190-pounder is the game-clinching interception he made for the Scarlet in the annual spring game. Bryant entered the spring looking to become more consistent and appeared to accomplish that mission.

– Mark Rea



Curtis Grant

COVER STORY

felt great being down there and I told our players don't ever not appreciate a group of people coming to watch you play on a 45-degree, rainy day."

The coach told them they should look up to Fickell, defensive line coach Mike Vrabel, athletic conditioning specialist Jeff Uhlenhake and offensive quality control assistant Kirk Barton, all former Buckeyes now employed at their alma mater.

"They played here so they're part of a group of guys who made this stadium what it is," Meyer said.

Earlier in April the new head coach talked of his desire to see the 102,329-seat stadium full for the spring game, but he sounded happy with those who did brave the elements to see what his team had been up to since hitting the practice field for the first time March 28.

"Eighty-thousand fans - I really appreciate that," Meyer said. "It was not a very pretty game or scrimmage, but we had to get some things accomplished. We had to evaluate some skill players and I think we did that. I want to start out by saying thank you to them and thank you to the best band in the land. (Listening to) 'Hang On Sloopy' was kind of a touching moment to watch that after growing up watching that."

He also thanked the players, some of whom played through bumps and bruises to give them enough bodies to stage a game instead of a controlled scrimmage.

"To have a scrimmage in front of a big stadium, that's not right, so for our guys to come out and just tough it out and go was

a good day," Meyer said. "It wasn't very pretty at times."

The players also were appreciative of the support from the fans.

"It was really weird because I saw rain on the forecast, but there's nothing fair weather about Ohio State fans so it was great to see everybody come out in the rain," Mewhort said. "It was like 40 degrees out there, but it was great to see Buckeye Nation come out and support us and the band. It was just great to be back. It was a great welcome back to the stadium."

While change was a major theme of the spring and the day, it concluded with a familiar sight.

After the last seconds ticked off the clock, Meyer led the players and coaches in a jog to the south end zone where the band and many fans waited to sing "Carmen Ohio," the school's alma mater. Jim Tressel began the practice when he took over as head coach in 2001 and Fickell continued it last season as he served as interim coach in the wake of Tressel's dismissal for violating NCAA rules.

No one had explicitly addressed whether it would continue with Meyer in charge, but he made it sound like there was never much doubt.

"This is a school where you don't have to create a lot of tradition," Meyer said. "We're honored to be able to keep the tradition I believe Coach Tressel started. I loved it. I asked Kirk Barton, 'Where do I go? What do I do?' He said, 'Park it right here and look at the scoreboard.' It was great."



Urban Meyer

Grove City

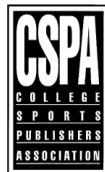
Where OSU fans stay overnight!

JUST 12 MILES FROM CAMPUS

Best Western	614/875-7770
Comfort Inn	614/539-3500
Days Inn	614/871-0440
Drury Inn & Suites	614/875-7000
Hampton Inn	614/539-1177
Hilton Garden Inn	614/539-8944
Holiday Inn Express	614/801-9000
Knights Inn South	614/871-0065
LaQuinta Inn	614/539-6200
Microtel Inn	614/277-0705
Super 8	614/875-8543
Red Roof Inn	614/871-9617
Travelodge	614/991-5301

Grove City Visitors Bureau
800-539-0405
www.visitgrovecityoh.com

HERE'S THE SEASON TICKET TO YOUR FAVORITE COLLEGE TEAM



Are you a college sports fanatic that has to know everything about your team? Then the magazines listed below are just for you!



In-depth football coverage, player features, opponent previews, exclusive recruiting updates plus loads of inside information from columnists and reporters with complete access to America's top athletic programs are delivered straight to your door.

Order your subscription today to start receiving the best coverage of your favorite college sports team!

ARIZONA ST. - Maroon & Gold Illustrated	10 issues	\$34.95	800-421-7751
ARKANSAS - Hawgs Illustrated	20 issues	\$49.90	800-757-6277
AUBURN - Inside the Auburn Tigers	10 mags, 12 newsletters	\$35.00	334-887-7100
FLORIDA - Gator Bait	30 issues	\$49.95	800-782-3216
FLORIDA STATE - Osceola	34 issues	\$49.95	800-725-4321
INDIANA - Inside Indiana	26 issues	\$49.95	800-282-4648
IOWA - Voice of the Hawkeyes	25 issues	\$44.90	888-474-8669
KENTUCKY - The Cats' Pause	35 issues	\$49.95	800-641-3302
LSU - Tiger Rag	33 issues	\$52.00	888-328-4437
LOUISVILLE - SportsReport	38 issues	\$49.95	888-800-8635
MARSHALL - Herd Insider	29 issues	\$44.95	877-800-HERD
MIAMI - CaneSport	20 issues	\$54.95	800-635-2263
MICHIGAN - The Wolverine	12 issues, 26 E-newsletters	\$49.95	800-421-7751
MICHIGAN STATE - Spartan Magazine	12 issues	\$47.95	800-421-7751
NEBRASKA - Huskers Illustrated	19 issues	\$51.95	800-524-9527
NORTH CAROLINA - Carolina Blue	21 issues	\$44.95	888-827-4335
NORTH CAROLINA STATE - Wolfpacker	6 issues, 20 E-newsletters	\$39.95	800-421-7751
NOTRE DAME - Blue & Gold Illustrated	20 issues, 26 E-newsletters	\$52.95	800-843-4747
OHIO STATE - Buckeye Sports Bulletin	24 issues, 36 E-issues	\$74.95	800-760-2862
PENN STATE - Blue White Illustrated	27 issues	\$47.00	800-282-1629
PURDUE - Gold & Black Illustrated	26 issues	\$53.95	800-876-GOPU
SOUTH CAROLINA - Spurs & Feathers	35 issues	\$40.00	803-256-1789
TEXAS - Horns Illustrated	9 issues, 8 newsletters	\$40.00	877-34-TEXAS
VIRGINIA - Cavalier Corner	6 issues	\$29.95	800-421-7751
VIRGINIA TECH - Inside Hokie Sports	11 issues	\$37.95	540-231-4134
WEST VIRGINIA - Blue & Gold News	30 issues	\$39.95	304-291-2242
NEVADA-RENO - Wolfpack Edge	12 issues	\$37.50	775-787-3343

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Scarlet Takes Win In Meyer's First Spring Game

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Urban Meyer put a few wrinkles of his own into Ohio State's traditional spring game, and it's safe to say Buckeye Nation wholeheartedly approved.

An Ohio Stadium crowd of 81,112 braved chilly and damp conditions April 21 as Meyer brought his first spring as OSU head coach to a successful close when the Scarlet team scored a 20-14 victory over the Gray.

But the proceedings turned into more than just a glorified scrimmage between a pair of cobbled-together rosters. Pregame festivities included a midfield version of "The Circle Drill" where two players square off against one another while their teammates form a circle and cheer them on.

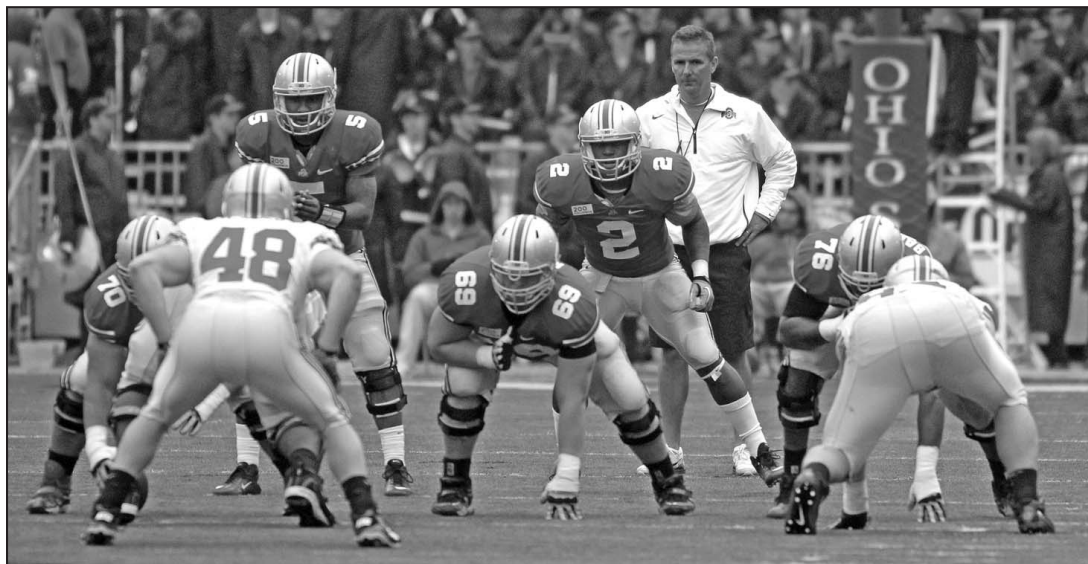
It was equal parts wrestling match and bullfight with an amped-up Meyer serving as ringleader.

"I just wanted some energy," the new coach said afterward. "I think it was fun for fans, and I know the players came out of their shoes when we did that."

Later, Meyer acknowledged the pluses and minuses of his first spring camp with the Buckeyes and immediately cast his eye toward the future.

"We identified our issues and we also identified our strengths," he said. "I told them it has to be the best offseason in the history of college football. It has to happen. And it starts Monday."

Meyer put several stipulations in place for the game ahead of time, including 10-



JOSH WINSLOW

HE'S WATCHING – New Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer (background) kept close tabs on the action during the annual spring game by standing behind the offense and observing the play of quarterback Braxton Miller (5) and the rest of his new charges.

minute quarters and a running clock in the second half. Additionally, he vetoed any contact for quarterbacks Braxton Miller and Kenny Guiton. That conspired to keep the teams from completely showcasing their new spread attack with Miller later admitting

only about 30 percent of the playbook was on display.

But that also allowed the QBs a chance to show off their arms to the tune of 57 combined throws. The resulting passing game statistics blew away anything the Buckeyes accomplished last year when they finished 115th nationally in pass offense.

Miller led his Scarlet squad to the victory by completing 24 of 31 passes for 258 yards with no touchdowns and one interception. The quarterback never attempted more than 25 passes in a single game last season.

Wide receiver Michael Thomas was Miller's favorite target as the true freshman gathered in 12 catches for 131 yards. Had the performance come during a regular-season game, it would have been the fourth-highest total in program history.

Redshirt freshman tight end Nick Vannett complemented Thomas with five receptions for 52 yards, and junior receiver Chris Fields added four catches for 58 yards for the Scarlet. Sophomore wideout Tyrone Williams chipped in with three receptions for 17 yards.

Meanwhile, Guiton connected on 17 of his 26 attempts for 191 yards, one touchdown and one pick for the Gray. The junior QB has attempted only two regular-season passes during his entire career – both of them in 2010.

Seven of Guiton's completions went to junior wideout Corey "Philly" Brown for 90 yards while fifth-year senior walk-on Taylor Rice had three catches for 18 yards.

As a result of all the throwing, neither team eclipsed the 50-yard mark in rushing. Sophomore tailback Rod Smith was the game's leading rusher with 47 yards and a touchdown on eight carries for the Scarlet. True freshman Bri'onte Dunn paced the Gray, carrying seven times for 32 yards. Dunn also added three pass receptions for 27 yards.

Defensively, fifth-year senior cornerback Orhian Johnson led the Gray with seven tackles, all of them solo stops. Sophomore defensive back Adam Griffin and senior linebacker Etienne Sabino added six tackles each. Griffin, the son of two-time Heisman

Trophy winner Archie Griffin, also snagged an interception while Sabino was credited with a sack.

Sophomore linebacker Ryan Shazier led the Scarlet with eight tackles, including two for loss and a sack. Redshirt freshman Conner Crowell and fifth-year senior walk-on linebacker Stewart Smith had five tackles each for the Scarlet.

Sacks were prevalent because of the run restrictions placed on the quarterbacks. The Gray squad piled up seven, including two by sophomore end Steve Miller and a 1½ from junior end Adam Bellamy. Meanwhile, the Scarlet had two – one each from sophomore end Michael Bennett and Shazier.

Scarlet Draws First Blood

The crowd-pleasing frenzy from "The Circle Drill" had barely died away before the Scarlet took the game's opening possession 65 yards in eight plays for a touchdown.

Miller completed all four of his pass attempts on the drive, including being aided by a leaping, twisting grab by Fields that was good for 25 yards. Four plays later, junior tailback Carlos Hyde, who finished the game with 14 yards on four carries, bolted over from the 1 for the touchdown.

Junior kicker Drew Basil added the extra point to give the Scarlet a 7-0 lead at the 7:43 mark of the opening quarter. Basil was originally slated to miss the game with a gimpy ankle but wound up doing the placements for both teams.

Basil made it 10-0 for the Scarlet with a 41-yard field goal at the 9:47 mark of the second period, a kick that began an unusual sequence at the behest of Meyer. After the successful field goal, the coach – who was a constant presence on the field just behind the offense the entire afternoon – instructed Basil to attempt another three-pointer ... and another after that ... and another after that.

In all, Basil attempted seven field goals from varying distances. He was good twice from 41 yards, had a 45-yarder blocked before nailing a second try from that distance, blasted home a 53-yard bomb and then was short on a pair of attempts from 58 yards.

Only Nature Does It Better
614-836-3700
www.dillsgreenhouse.net

Dill's Greenhouse

Serving Central Ohio for Over 29 YEARS

- 25,000 Flats of Annuals
- 500 Varieties of Perennials
- 80 Varieties of Herbs
- 40 Varieties of Tomatoes
- 8000 Hanging Baskets
- Thousands of Shrubs and Trees
- 2,000 Rose Bushes
- 30,000 Potted Annuals
- Water Gardening Plants & Supplies
- Plus All of Your Gardening Needs

Plus see Chris Bradley at Dill's Greenhouse on Channel 10's "In The Garden"

5800 Rager Road off State Route 33

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL



JOSH WINSLOW

UP AND OVER – Scarlet tailback Carlos Hyde (34) started the scoring by reaching the end zone – and avoiding teammate Jack Mewhort (74) – at the end of an eight-play, first-quarter scoring drive.

Despite all of that kicking, only the first 41-yarder counted on the scoreboard, and the tally remained 10-0 until Guiton connected with sophomore receiver Devin Smith on a 28-yard touchdown pass with 37 seconds to go before halftime.

Smith finished the game with two catches for 40 yards, and his touchdown completed a 51-yard drive that encompassed only three plays as well as a 15-yard face-mask penalty against the Scarlet defense on a third-and-2 play that would have resulted in an incomplete pass.

Basil added the PAT after Smith's touchdown catch to make it 10-7 and then tacked on a 32-yard field goal for the Scarlet on the final play of the half to make it 13-7 at the break.

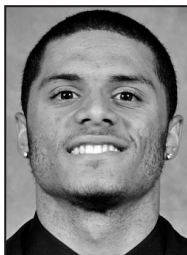
That final scoring drive featured another 4-for-4 passing performance from Miller, who started with a 10-yard completion to Thomas before connecting with Vannett on back-to-back passes good for 11 and 15 yards. The QB then found Thomas again, this time for 14 yards to put Basil into field-goal range.

The Gray took its only lead of the contest with a short touchdown drive late in the third quarter. After senior punter Ben Buchanan – who kicked for both sides in the contest – shanked a 14-yard punt for the Scarlet, Guiton engineered a four-play, 22-yard drive that included a 5-yard toss to Rice and a 9-yard flip to Brown.

Two plays later, Guiton capped the mini-march with a 4-yard touchdown run that apparently circumvented Meyer's no-contact rule for the quarterbacks. After Basil's point-after kick, the Gray enjoyed a 14-13

advantage with 0:08 showing on the third-period clock.

But Miller rallied the Scarlet, thanks in part to a crucial penalty on the Gray defense.



Devin Smith

On a third-and-5 play at the Gray 46, Miller's pass intended for Thomas bounced off the receiver and into the arms of fellow freshman Tyvis Powell with 6:40 left in the game. But the Gray was whistled for a hands-to-the-face penalty, wiping out the turnover and giving new life to the Scarlet.

Two plays later, Miller hooked up with Thomas for a 23-yard gain and Rod Smith followed with a 7-yard touchdown run. Basil added the PAT to push the Scarlet back into the lead at 20-14 with 5:29 to go.

The Gray still had a chance to pull out the victory, but Guiton was intercepted by Scarlet safety Christian Bryant near the goal line with 2:55 remaining and the Gray never got the ball back.

Game Notes

- Offensive coordinator Tom Herman served as the victorious head coach of the Scarlet team with assistance from co-defensive coordinator Everett Withers, defensive line coach Mike Vrabel and tight ends coach Tim Hinton. Team captains were fullback Zach Boren and offensive lineman Jack Mewhort.

- Piloting the Gray squad was defensive coordinator Luke Fickell with a staff of cornerbacks coach Kerry Coombs, offensive line coach Ed Warinner, running backs coach Stan Drayton and wide receivers coach Zach

Spring Game Box Score

Scarlet 20, Gray 14

April 21, 2012 — Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
Gray	0	7	7	0	- 14
Scarlet	7	6	0	7	- 20

First Quarter

SCARLET — Hyde, 1 yard run (Basil kick), 7:43; 8 plays, 65 yards, 2:17 TOP.

Second Quarter

SCARLET — Basil, 41 yard field goal, 9:47; 12 plays, 56 yards, 4:58 TOP.

GRAY — D.Smith, 28 yard pass from Guiton (Basil kick), 0:37; 3 plays, 51 yards, 0:45 TOP.

SCARLET — Basil, 32 yard field goal, 0:00; 5 plays, 50 yards, 0:37 TOP.

Third Quarter

GRAY — Guiton, 4 yard run (Basil kick), 0:08; 4 plays, 22 yards, 1:43 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

SCARLET — R.Smith, 7 yard run (Basil kick), 5:29; 8 plays, 65 yards, 4:31 TOP.

Att. — 81,112.

Weather — 50 degrees, overcast, light rain; wind, N 10 mph.

Team Statistics

	GRAY	SCARLET
First Downs	11	21
Rushing	4	3
Passing	6	15
Penalty	1	3
Rushes-Yards	13-42	23-48
Passing Yards	191	258
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	17-26-1	24-31-1
Offensive Plays	39	54
Total Net Yards	233	306
Third Down Efficiency	2-7	4-9
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	0-0
Punts (No.-Avg.)	3-35.3	3-27.7
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties	4-57	2-30
Time of Possession	18:03	21:57

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — **GRAY:** Dunn 7-32; Guiton 6-10. **SCARLET:** R.Smith 8-47; Hyde 4-14; Fields 1-6; B.Miller 10-(-19).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — **GRAY:** Guiton 17-26-1-191-1. **SCARLET:** B.Miller 24-31-1-258-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — **GRAY:** P.Brown 7-90; Dunn 3-27; Rice 3-18; D.Smith 2-40; Stoneburner 2-16. **SCARLET:** Thomas 12-131; Vannett 5-52; Fields 4-58; T.Williams 3-17.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — **GRAY:** Buchanan 3-35.3-43. **SCARLET:** Buchanan 3-27.7-36.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — **GRAY:** None. **SCARLET:** None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — **GRAY:** None. **SCARLET:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) — **GRAY:** None. **SCARLET:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — **GRAY:** Griffin 1-0. **SCARLET:** Bryant 1-15.

SACKS — **GRAY:** S.Miller 2.0-4; Bellamy 1.5-8; Carter 1.0-6; Goebel 1.0-6; Sabino 1.0-2; Roberts 0.5-3. **SCARLET:** Shazier 1.0-7; Bennett 1.0-6.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — **GRAY:** S.Miller 2.0-4; Bellamy 1.5-8; Carter 1.0-6; Goebel 1.0-6; Sabino 1.0-2; Roberts 0.5-3. **SCARLET:** Shazier 2.0-8; Bennett 1.0-6.

TACKLES (Solo-Assst.-Tot.) — **GRAY:** Johnson 7-0-7; Griffin 4-2-6; Sabino 3-3-6; Roberts 0-5-5; Roby 3-1-4; Carter 2-2-4; C.Brown 2-1-3; S.Miller 2-1-3; A.Reed 1-2-3; Bellamy 1-1-2; Dunn 1-0-1; Goebel 1-0-1; Powell 1-0-1; Sarac 0-1-1; Britt 0-1-1. **SCARLET:** Shazier 6-2-8; Crowell 3-2-5; S.Smith 3-2-5; D.Grant 3-1-4; Moore 0-3-3; Bennett 2-0-2; McCary 0-1-1; Farris 0-1-1; Hale 0-1-1; Tanner 0-1-1.

Smith. Sabino and defensive lineman John Simon served as team captains.

- Several players sat out the contest due to injuries including defensive tackle Johnathan Hankins (arthroscopic knee surgery), running back Jordan Hall (ankle), linebacker Curtis Grant (pinched nerve), receiver Evan Spencer (shoulder), defensive back Jamie Wood (arm), linebacker Storm Klein (knee), safety C.J. Barnett (thigh) and tight end Jeff Heuerman (undisclosed). Defensive back Zach Domicone, linebacker Nathan Williams and receiver Verlon Reed each missed the entire spring while rehabbing knee injuries.

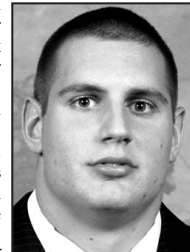
- Simon was also held out of the action, but Meyer explained the senior-to-be had nothing to prove by playing.

- The announced crowd of 81,112 represented the second largest for an Ohio State spring game. The all-time attendance record was 95,722 at the 2009 contest.

- The smallest crowd for a spring game in recent memory was the estimated 2,000 that squeezed into the Woody Hayes Athletic Center for an offense vs. defense scrimmage in 1999. That move had been necessitated by the renovation project at Ohio Stadium.

- Over the past 15 springs, it has been more advantageous to play for the Scarlet team. This year's victory marked that squad's second win in a row and ninth since 1998. The games during that period have also been relatively close with seven of them decided by eight points or fewer.

- The spring football game was preceded for the fifth straight year by an Ohio State men's lacrosse game. An announced crowd of 19,213 saw the Buckeyes take a 14-4 victory over Air Force in the fifth annual "Showdown in the Shoe." The 2010 contest, a 10-6 win over Air Force, drew a crowd of 31,078, a national on-campus attendance record for the sport.



John Simon

Spring Game Did Not Reveal Complete Offense

I was as eager as anyone to see the Ohio State spring football game, just as I am eager to see the upcoming season.

That's because I have a confession to make.

I really don't have much of an idea what new head coach Urban Meyer's spread offense is all about. I work Saturdays during football season, and rather than having the chance to see other innovations in other conferences, I have been watching Ohio State's I-formation attack for more than 30 years. I thought, however, that the Buckeyes had been using some elements of the spread in recent years under Jim Tressel.

If truth be told, my guess is that many of you dear readers don't have much more knowledge of Meyer's attack than I do. But the notion of the spread, especially one that met with such success in the ultracompetitive SEC, seems so much sexier than whatever it is that Ohio State was running the past 11 years.

There is an excitement in the air among Buckeye fans as they are almost certain that Ohio State will stray from the perceived predictability of the offense from the past few (for the most part successful) years.

Of course, it might have been easy for some of those fans to get the wrong impression from the spring game as Meyer admitted the team needed to work on the passing game and vowed before the scrimmage to pass the ball the bulk of the time. And the Buckeyes did so, throwing 57 times with the running backs carrying the ball only 20 times.

While we got to see the progress that quarterbacks Braxton Miller and Kenny Guiton have made with their passing, and we got to see potential candidates step up at receiver – an area that desperately needs stepping up – we didn't really get a chance to see how Meyer's offense works. That was especially true with the mobile quarterbacks Miller – already proven as one of the best ball carriers on the team – and Guiton off limits to contact.

I am concerned that many fans might be anticipating a team that throws the ball all over the yard when the bell rings for the 2012 season. On the contrary, if statistics mean anything, Meyer's offense is almost as run-oriented as most of Tressel's teams were.

Take 2006, for example, the year Florida and Ohio State met in the national championship game. The Gators ran the ball 54.4 percent of the time that season and threw it 45.6 percent. That wasn't that much different from the OSU marks of 58.5 percent rushing and 41.5 percent passing. By the way, the Buckeyes outscored the Gators by a 450-416 margin that season despite Florida playing one more game.

I think the question is not so much how often the Buckeyes will run or pass, but *when* they run or pass. Are they going to mix things up and keep defenses off-balance, or will everyone in the house know what play is coming? Will opposing defenses stack the box and dare Ohio State to throw, or will the Buckeyes be innovative enough to keep the defenses honest?

I think we all know the answers to those questions – or at least we hope we know the answers. As I said, I am eager to see Meyer's offense in full bloom.

One area I will be monitoring very closely – an area that was tough to monitor in the spring game because the squad was split and the defensive line is one of the best units on the team – is the offensive line. That is a position group that I felt underachieved for the

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

bulk of the last 11 seasons. Will a virtually new offensive staff with new philosophies – not the least of which is a leaner, meaner line – help Ohio State improve at that all-important spot?

The fact that the big guys up front are shedding pounds may prove important, as one of the most striking things we could glean about the offense from the spring game was the pace of the play-calling. The Buckeyes were running their plays in a hurry, though the pace did seem to slow a bit as the game progressed. That fast tempo will hinder opposing defenses from making situational personnel changes, but it will also require better conditioning on the part of Ohio State.

The big winner coming out of the spring game in nearly everyone's view was freshman receiver Michael Thomas, who grabbed 12 passes for 131 yards. Keep in mind that the team's leading receivers for the entire season in 2011 had only 14 receptions. Thomas seems to have developed a nice chemistry with Miller that hopefully will carry over into the regular season.

When you are installing a completely new offense, incoming freshmen are not at that great a disadvantage vs. returning receivers, and Thomas certainly seems to have seized his opportunity. That's not to say other receivers didn't shine as well.

In fact, if you were looking for the "wow" factor that Meyer says he has been searching for all spring, it was Devin Smith – he of the big play in the upset of Wisconsin last year – who seemed to be the first to show it with a nifty 28-yard touchdown reception from Guiton in the second quarter of the spring game.

But Thomas had his "wow" moment in the fourth quarter when he set up the game's winning touchdown with a dynamic 23-yard catch-and-run. Meanwhile, Corey "Philly" Brown almost helped lead a Gray comeback with catches of 21 and 23 yards on a drive before Christian Bryant sealed the win for the Scarlet with an interception.

Brown finished the day with seven catches for 90 yards, while Smith made the most of his two grabs with 40 yards and the touchdown.

I thought Miller, who did not seem to progress during his freshman season, looked much improved throwing the ball, and we have to assume that he will be as effective as ever running with the football. My biggest concern would be his penchant for throwing into coverage. He had one pass intercepted and could have had a couple of others picked off.

Meyer made a Heisman Trophy winner out of Tim Tebow. Let's see how he does with the talented Miller.

And maybe by the time Miller leaves here, I'll understand Meyer's spread offense.

From The Pages Of BSB

When it comes to our popular "From the Pages of BSB" feature (found on page 2 of this issue), I become much like one of our readers, eager for each issue to see what bit of Ohio State sports news I might have forgotten about or to see the irony in viewing something today that happened five, 10, 15, 20 or more years ago.

There were a couple of interesting notes in this issue's entry.

Reading the note from 25 years ago reminded me of just how big the Jesse Owens Classic once was. The notion that 8,000 people would show up in Ohio Stadium in lousy weather and an athlete of the magnitude of Edwin Moses would make his first track appearance in his home state in 14 years is an indication of the significance of the meet in its early years. Crowds of as many as 25,000 would come to watch athletes of Moses' stature compete with the top collegians of the day.

With the renovation of Ohio Stadium and the removal of the track, the event was moved to the appropriately named Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium upon its opening in 2000, and changes in the world of track and field changed the makeup of the competitors.

"Nowadays most of the elite track athletes have agents," then Ohio State track coach Russ Rogers said in 1998, the last year the Owens Classic was held in the Horseshoe. "You can't even talk to the athletes themselves."

"And the agents want to get as much money as they can for their athletes because they are getting a percentage. I can't afford to pay someone \$10,000 to come to the Jesse Owens like they can at the big track meets in Europe. They have budgets of \$2 million there to play with."

Interestingly, 20 years ago, running back Eddie George, an early-arriving freshman from Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, caught the attention of the coaching staff in the spring game. This time around, it was another early-arriving freshman from Fork Union in Thomas who stole the show.

Hopefully, Thomas will take a more direct path to stardom than George did. George was the darling of the coaches and fans in the early going of his freshman year before a game-altering, two-fumble performance during a loss to Illinois buried him deep in head coach John Cooper's doghouse. The popular former Buckeye rebounded, of course, and ultimately won the 1995 Heisman Trophy.

I also couldn't help but notice that 15 years ago Cooper got a raise to \$675,000 a year, a handsome salary indeed. But that means the compensation for the Ohio State head football coach has increased roughly six-fold since 1997.

Summitt Connection

To get a sense of how long recently retired Tennessee women's basketball coach Pat Summitt has been a basketball icon, consider this.

In the spring of 1985, Ohio State went in search of a new women's basketball coach following Tara Van Derveer's departure for Stanford after she had led the Buckeyes to four consecutive Big Ten championships.

OSU athletic director Rick Bay went to one of the sport's most established programs to select Nancy Darsch, who had been with Summitt at Tennessee since 1978. To show you how far women's college basketball has come, Darsch was Summitt's first full-time assistant coach despite the fact Summitt had taken over the Volunteers in 1974 at the ripe old age of 22.

"During the past seven years together, Nancy and I have enjoyed five appearances in the Final Four in women's basketball and

a gold medal at the (1984) Olympics in Los Angeles," Summitt said at the time of Darsch's hiring by the Buckeyes. "Nancy has been an active bench coach in two national championship games as well as the Olympics. She is a great analyst and an excellent coach."

Darsch would go on to lead Ohio State for 12 seasons, but she never really escaped the shadow of Van Derveer, who followed her success at OSU with even greater success with Stanford. Despite having to put the Cardinal through a massive rebuilding project, Van Derveer led Stanford to two national championships and three other Final Four appearances during the time Darsch was leading Ohio State.

After the Buckeyes stumbled to a 12-16 record and a 10th-place finish in the Big Ten in the 1996-97 season, Darsch was fired by then-AD Andy Geiger. It should be noted, however, that Darsch remains the only women's basketball coach to take the Buckeyes to the Final Four, leading the 1992-93 team to within two points of the national championship before falling to Texas Tech, 84-82.

A couple of other side notes to that story.

When Darsch left the Tennessee staff, Holly Warlick became an assistant to Summitt for the 1985-86 season and has been there ever since, helping the team to eight national championships. When Summitt stepped down, it was Warlick who was elevated to the head coaching position.

And for those of you critical of OSU men's coach Thad Matta for not yet leading the Buckeyes to the national championship, Summitt led her team to the Final Four in three of the first five NCAA tournaments – as well as four trips to the final four of its predecessor, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women – before finally winning her first national championship in 1987. That was her 13th year as head coach. Still, even before her first title, she was one of the shining stars of the women's coaching profession.

Are we at the beginning of a similar lengthy and successful run for Matta?

Two Great DVDs

As most of you have realized by now, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is in the midst of a yearlong celebration of the 10th anniversary of Ohio State's 2002 national football championship.

We are pleased to announce we will be offering two great DVDs as part of this celebration. We are packaging the 2002 Buckeye football highlights DVD, titled "A Time and Change," with a complete DVD of the national championship game win over Miami (Fla.).

"A Time and Change," produced by WBNS-10TV, chronicles the 2002 regular season and includes several interesting features as well. A complete description of the DVD can be found on page 24 of this issue. The championship game DVD contains the complete 2003 Fiesta Bowl, with coverage by ABC Sports without commercial interruption, presented in full-screen digital video. Chapter points on the main menu allow you to jump directly to the action, quarter by quarter.

While we offered "A Time and Change" to our readers back in 2003, that was in a VHS format. Here is a chance to upgrade to DVD. Also, many of you may have taped the championship game and now you have the opportunity to get a professional-quality DVD minus the commercial interruption.

BSB readers will all receive promotions involving these great 10th anniversary DVDs in the coming weeks and months. Watch your mailbox for details.