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Vol. 32, No. 16

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Feb. 16, 2013



SONNY BROCKWAY

'KNOCKING IT OUT OF THE PARK' – With a lot of National Signing Day success, Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer completed a 2013 recruiting class that was ranked No. 1 nationally by Scout.com.

BSB Celebrates Woody

Legendary Ohio State football coach Woody Hayes remains a larger-than-life figure at Ohio State, and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, Buckeye Sports Bulletin has special features on the coach in this issue beginning on page 28.

Two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, former Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce, OSU football historian Jack Park and several others reminisce about Hayes, offering special insight as well as interesting stories about the College Football Hall of Fame coach.

We hope you enjoy our centennial birthday tribute to Coach Hayes.



Woody Hayes

Home Run For Meyer

OSU Closes Strong, Finishes With Top-Ranked 2013 Haul

 By JEFF SVOBODA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The day before National Signing Day, Urban Meyer spoke to the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and made it clear why he makes upward of \$4 million per year.

"What do I really do for a living?" Meyer asked the crowd. "I convince 17- and 18-year-olds to go to school here."

The next day, the Ohio State football coach proved he deserves every penny.

day. Three out of three would be knocking it out of the park."

Add in confirmations from earlier verbal commitments St. Louis John Burroughs running back Ezekiel Elliott and Lawrenceville (Ga.) Central Gwinnett linebacker Trey Johnson, and the OSU staff couldn't have drawn up a much better National Signing Day.

"You can tell it's a great day," Meyer said. "If you walk around here a little bit, guys are excited."

The star-studded finish allowed Ohio State to claim the No. 1 class in Scout's rankings with 5,121 points, just nine ahead of archrival Michigan for the national recruiting day far outweighed the negative.

The main downside came from the loss of highly rated punter Johnny Townsend, an Orlando native who chose to postpone his signing before choosing to stay in state at Florida. Still, the reactions of Meyer and the coaching staff showed the positives of signing day far outweighed the negative.

The day started well for Ohio State when Johnson's national letter of intent came in around 8:30 a.m. Johnson committed to OSU in January while taking part in the Under Armour All-America Game, but the Buckeyes had to withstand pressure from Tennessee and Alabama in the lead-up to signing day.

Quickly thereafter, Ohio State saw its skill positions become restocked with dynamic athletes. Clark picked the Buckeyes at a 9 a.m. press conference, as Ohio State was able to get the four-star prospect over Florida, Clemson and others after jumping in late in the recruiting process.

"We went to get the best receiver," Meyer said. "(Clark is) a 3.9 student, he's got a fantastic father and I know that area really well. We just dove right in and he turned out to be a great fit for us. That's very unusual."

Wilson, a four-star running back who originally chose Oregon but reopened his recruitment when Ducks head coach Chip Kelly left for the NFL, proved to be no worry on signing day when he faxed his letter

BSB's 2013 Recruiting Wrap-Up Edition

On Feb. 6, National Signing Day, the Buckeyes picked up two huge verbal commitments to top off a class that was already among the best in the country.

First, four-star wide receiver James Clark – a player who was barely on the Ohio State recruiting board two months ago – chose the Buckeyes. The New Smyrna Beach, Fla., prospect is the No. 30-rated player at his position in the Scout.com ratings.

But the true big fish was reeled in around 10 a.m. when safety Vonn Bell of Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland donned a scarlet Ohio State hat on national television. With that, the Buckeyes' dogged pursuit of the five-star prospect resulted in a commitment from the No. 25 overall player in the nation.

Add in four-star running back Dontre Wilson of DeSoto, Texas, the No. 10 rusher in the country who committed two days before signing day but still had the coaching staff on edge until his letter of intent crossed the wire, and the day was an upper-deck home run for the Buckeyes.

"We went to bed last night with three guys who were very on edge as far as where we were (with them)," Meyer said. "I thought if we hit one out of three, we've done all right. Two out of three would be a good

Continued On Page 6

OPINION

There Was Always More To Woody Than Met Eye



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No. 4	Sept. 29	No. 16	Feb. 16
No. 5	Oct. 6	No. 17	March 2
No. 6	Oct. 13	No. 18	March 16
No. 7	Oct. 20	No. 19	March 30
No. 8	Oct. 27	No. 20	April 20
No. 9	Nov. 3	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 17	No. 22	June
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Charter Member

For a misguided and misinformed few, Woody Hayes is a tragic figure from the history books – an uncompromising, hotheaded, win-at-all-costs maniac who terminated his career and forever besmirched his own legacy by punching an opposing player.

The rest of us know better.

More than 25 years after his death, Hayes remains every bit the iconic coach he was during his nearly three-decade reign at Ohio State. Anyone who believes differently doesn't know scarlet from gray.

Wayne Woodrow Hayes was born Feb. 14, 1913, in the village of Clifton, Ohio, and rose from rather humble beginnings to the pinnacle of college football. He won nearly every award and championship trophy available to him, including induction into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1983, and that same year he became one of the first non-band members to dot the "I" in Script Ohio.

As Buckeye Nation now commemorates the centennial of the legendary coach's birth, it is worth remembering Woody Hayes as he really was – a driven-to-excellence individual who was always more than just a little misunderstood.

There is no doubt Hayes' passion for the game of college football led him to wear his emotions on his sleeve. The stories most people seem to remember about the coach had to do with him berating officials, breaking yard markers over his knee or confronting reporters with clenched teeth or a closed fist – sometimes both.

Yet while that black-and-white persona seems to fit a man many people would like to pigeonhole as an oppressive tyrant, Hayes led a much more nuanced life than many realize.

I was lucky enough to have covered the Buckeyes at the tail end of the coach's career, and I can tell you I was deathly afraid of the man. He cut such an imposing figure with his clenched jaw and barrel-sized chest. And those steely eyes peering through those iconic glasses – that trademark squint could seemingly cut you in half.

In the years since Hayes' reign at Ohio State, I discovered much of his bluster was a carefully constructed act. I have often researched his life and legacy for one project or another, and it is always interesting to me how many different ways the coach is perceived.

For example, OSU football historian Jack Park believes Hayes had a much different opinion of himself than most other people.

"I think if you could bring him back," Park said, "I would bet that he would tell you that what he did serving in the Navy in World War II was much more important than anything he did while coaching football at a great institution like Ohio State."

Longtime OSU sports information director Marv Homan has a slightly different view.

"I believe Coach Hayes viewed himself much more as a teacher than simply a football coach," Homan said. "His father was a teacher and he began his own career as a teacher. But he was a different kind of teacher. There was more to it for him than just memorizing dates or reading from a textbook. He was truly interested in his students and what they thought about whatever subject he was teaching."

"When he got to Ohio State, of course, he had a total dedication to coaching. But he still wanted to make the college experience a lasting one for each of his players. He was interested in their interests and wanted to make sure they would look back at college as a memorable experience – not just because

they were on the football team, but because they were college students."

Homan, who began working in the university sports information office in 1949 and worked with Hayes through the coach's entire 28-year tenure at Ohio State, admitted the two occasionally crossed swords.

EDITOR'S
NOTEBOOK
Mark Rea

"It was difficult at times, but for the most part, I found him to be very fair and very considerate," Homan said. "At times he could be very demanding, but I understood the big picture and I think I understood where he was coming from. Everything he did was a result of his tremendous loyalty to his players and his total dedication to the university and making it a better place."

"I know that sounds terribly idealistic, but it really was true. He was just totally dedicated to those around him and he really didn't care about much else."

Homan wasn't the only person on the OSU campus who didn't see eye to eye with Hayes. He had famous run-ins with administration members, faculty members and even members of his assistant coaching staff.

Former head coach Earle Bruce spent six seasons as an assistant on Hayes' staff and admitted that the team's record affected his health.

"My first year as an assistant was in 1966 and we had a 5-4 season," said Bruce, who was 35 years old at the time. "That year, I had an unbelievable tightness in my chest. Dr. Bob Murphy, the team physician, examined me, and I told him I thought I had a problem and didn't know what it was. 'Well, join the club,' he said. 'Every coach that comes in here under Coach Hayes has chest pains the first year.'"

Murphy's prescription? Go home at night, get into the bathtub to soak and give the coach a good cussing.

"I took his advice a few times," Bruce said, "but my two little girls would be outside the bathroom door wondering who Daddy was talking to."

While Hayes was demanding of those around him, he was every bit as demanding of himself.

The Buckeyes won two national championships in a four-year span between 1954 and '57, but those titles were followed by a couple of mediocre seasons, including a 3-5-1 finish in 1959. Then as now, a losing record at Ohio State was unacceptable no matter how many championships a coach had won. But it was just as unacceptable to Hayes as it was to the fan base.

During the 1959 team's appreciation banquet, the coach told the audience, "We'll fight for the championship next year, but I guarantee it in two years. If I don't bring you a championship by then, this is no place for Woody Hayes."

Two years later, Hayes made good on his guarantee as the Buckeyes won the Big Ten championship as well as a share of the 1961 national title from United Press International.

Legend Or Fact?

Another thing I have learned about Hayes over the years: He was never above masaging the truth if that would gain him a psychological edge. The stories of punching

himself in the face, ripping his hat to shreds, grinding his wristwatch into dust – those are all true stories.

Of course, they were designed to further the myth of a man who would stop at nothing to achieve success. The punches to the face never left any discernible marks, the hats were pre-ripped by equipment managers, and the watches were cheap imitations that probably never kept the correct time anyway.

Even one of Hayes' most repeated quotes that he attributed to essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson – "You can never pay back, but you can always pay forward" – didn't come from Emerson.

The "pay forward" concept was originally part of an ancient Greek play written around 317 BC. Emerson furthered the theory in an 1841 essay titled "Compensation," but the words most closely associated with Hayes' famous quote came from a 1916 book by Lily Hardy Hammond, who wrote, "You don't pay love back; you pay it forward."

Does it matter whether an ancient Greek playwright, a mid-19th century Transcendentalist or a long-forgotten American author came up with the original concept of paying forward or that Hayes paraphrased his quote to fit his purposes? I'm pretty sure you know the answer.

Likewise with one of the most beloved stories told about Hayes – at least where Buckeye Nation is concerned.

In the final seconds of a 50-20 victory over Michigan in 1961, the team scored a touchdown with only five seconds to go and Hayes instructed them to tack on a two-point conversion to set the final score.

When quizzed about that decision after the game, the coach offered several half-hearted explanations, none of which seemed plausible. Then several years later, Hayes admitted it was his way of paying Michigan back for kicking a late field goal during a 58-6 win over the Buckeyes in 1946 – five years before he was head coach.

Asked why he went for two against the Wolverines, Hayes replied, "Because I couldn't go for three."

Most Ohio State fans believe that often-repeated story stems from the 1968 game against Michigan during which the Buckeyes rolled up a 50-14 victory over the archrival Wolverines, a rout that included another last-minute touchdown and aborted two-point conversion try. Others argue the "because I couldn't go for three" quote was fabricated by some enterprising journalist and never uttered by Hayes.

Again, what does it matter? As the old saying goes, "When legend becomes fact, print the legend."

Unfortunately, with each passing year, Hayes fades a little more into history and his legend with it. I remain mystified how Ohio State has never honored Chic Harley or Archie Griffin with statues outside Ohio Stadium, but it is a disgrace for the university never to have commissioned a likeness of Hayes to stand guard outside the main entrance to the Horseshoe.

"Woody did so much for this university and for Ohio and the people of this state in general far beyond the football program," Park said. "His contribution to the community was far more important than wins and losses. If you consider all of his charitable work and all of his other accomplishments, then add everything he accomplished in football, the legacy he left is immeasurable."

"He might have done more for the Ohio State University than any other person in its history. I really believe that."

COVER STORY

Bell Rings Meyer With Good News On NSD

Continued From Page 1

of intent to Ohio State coaches during the morning hours.

"I see him being a potential dual threat," Meyer said. "Hybrid, you might hear the term. That became kind of famous back when Percy (Harvin) started (at Florida). Dontre is a guy that can run inside, outside and also go. He had 46 catches or something, and he had I think 1,800 yards rushing. There aren't many people in the country that can do that."

From there, the stage was set for Bell. As the pressure mounted near the 10 a.m. decision, Meyer said he couldn't stand the wait and retired to a treadmill on the second floor of the team's weight room. That's when the fateful phone call came in to the head coach.

"Vonn Bell called me two minutes before he walked onto the stage and said, 'I'm in,'" Meyer said. "He said, 'You know I'm in, right?' I said, 'No, I didn't know you're in. Congratulations.'"

Ohio State beat out Tennessee and two-time defending national champion Alabama for Bell's services.

The last piece of the puzzle fell into place around 5 p.m. when Elliott made his decision to sign with Ohio State official. The four-star prospect, whom Meyer called a potential every-down back, first picked the Buckeyes in April but made a visit to Missouri — where both of his parents were

student-athletes — late in the recruiting process.

The visit clearly made an impact on Elliott, who was serenaded by cheers at a Mizzou basketball game during his visit. He chose to stop talking to reporters leading up to signing day. In the end, though, Meyer was not worried about the running back, and that proved to be the right approach.

"There's never been an issue at all with Ezekiel," Meyer said. "He's been committed for a long time, has a great family and is our tailback of the future. Ezekiel has been great. Maybe I wasn't listening, but I didn't hear anything other than he's going to be a Buckeye and we're good to go."

Strong From Beginning To End

The way Ohio State finished the recruiting season turned heads, but the Buckeyes were among the best in the nation in putting together this year's class from the very beginning.

The addition of Bell gave them eight players among Scout's top 100 in the nation, a total that placed behind only Alabama, which signed 14. The Buckeyes finished with four five-star players — Bell, Plano (Texas) Prestonwood Christian linebacker Mike Mitchell (ranked 28th overall), Middletown, Ohio, wide receiver Jalin Marshall (32nd) and Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas defensive end Joey Bosa (38th).

There are also 17 four-star players in the

group, including Trotwood (Ohio) Madison cornerback Cameron Burrows, the first player to give his pledge to the class back in January 2012.

Marshall, the top-rated player in Ohio, followed before the Buckeyes earned pledges from six straight four-star prospects — Austintown (Ohio) Fitch defensive tackle Billy Price; Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern cornerback Eli Apple; Centerville, Ohio, offensive lineman Evan Lisle; Toledo Central Catholic safety Jayme Thompson; Elliott; and Riverside (Calif.) John W. North tight end Marcus Baugh.

The next player to give his verbal was three-star defensive end Tracy Sprinkle of Elyria, Ohio, before the Buckeyes closed out April with two big gets in four-star quarterback J.T. Barrett of Wichita Falls (Texas) Rider and Bosa.

Meyer made sure he pointed out that many of those players, who had been committed to OSU for more than nine months before signing day, were just as deserving of attention as the ones the Buckeyes snagged at the end.

"I think we have two corners that if they didn't early commit would be as good of corners as there are in America, and that's Eli Apple and Cam Burrows. They're doing a fine job for us right now," Meyer said of the two early enrollees. "J.T. Barrett, when he did the Elite 11 and some of the feedback we got from him, if he didn't hurt his knee and didn't early commit, he would be another guy where we'd be scratching and clawing and have a parade for him if he had come on signing day."

"Joey Bosa, without question, is one of the best players in the country and a guy that committed early. Billy Price would have been one of those guys that put nine hats out there, and if he would have thrown on the Ohio State hat, there would have been a big celebration around here. We believe he's that good of a player and that good of a person."

"Evan Lisle turned out to be — he's probably the most improved," Meyer continued. "He's a guy we had to really think about taking. I talked to some coaches who coached

him down in the (U.S. Army) All-American Bowl, and he was one of the most improved players and started over some other big-time athletes."

"And then the name you say is Jalin Marshall. We have a great relationship with him and his family. They're first-class people. Can you imagine the Ohio State University and the state of Ohio and Buckeye Nation if he would have waited and put on a hat? That would have been a great day because we think he's certainly one of the best if not the best player in Ohio."

The effort from beginning to end came in stark contrast to the way Ohio State had to recruit the year before. Jim Tressel was the head coach when the Buckeyes started to put together the 2012 class, and then Luke Fickell kept the group together until Meyer took over in November and finished with a flourish of highly touted players who moved OSU's class all the way up to No. 3 in the country.

It was an impressive effort but not necessarily a cohesive one, as the Buckeyes didn't have a full staff hired until January and simply had to do whatever they could to find players. This year, a plan was in place from the beginning and was executed to near perfection.

"Our first year together as a coaching staff last year did not count because that was not a coaching staff," Meyer said. "That was a bunch of guys coming together like a bunch of gypsies trying to find players anywhere we could find them. And we did pretty well. You look at those kids who helped us play this year, and the futures of last year's class is pretty strong, but I wouldn't consider that a great recruiting effort."

"That was, like I said, a bunch of cowboys out there trying to find players. This year, it was a full cycle of recruiting. And I'm very impressed with our coaching staff."

Of this year's haul, 10 players seem ticketed to line up first on offense with the other 14 starting on the defensive side of the ball. The highlights on offense will certainly come from the high-level skill-position talent brought in, as such players as Elliott, Wilson, Marshall, Clark and four-star JUCO wideout

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COVER STORY

Corey Smith will have a chance to contribute immediately.

Defensively, the Buckeyes continued to add depth at all positions. Ohio State picked up six linemen, two linebackers and six defensive backs.

"On defense, we needed really all positions," Meyer said. "To say we needed back end help, no. We need it all the way across. We're a little bit light on defense, and I think we will have answered a lot of our concerns once we develop them.

"On offense, the one area that we didn't close well enough is the offensive line. We wanted to get some playmakers, and we have two sub-10.5 100-meter players coming in, which is real fast. You have to have a couple of guys like that on your team. Big plays are a problem for us, and we have Dontre and Jalin and James Clark, so we have actually three guys that we would put in that category."

Team Effort Nets Big Names

There was no doubt putting together the 2013 class was a challenge for the Ohio State coaching staff.

First, the team had to stay under 82 scholarships rather than 85 because of NCAA sanctions, a constant annoyance likened to dealing with a toothache in the words of Meyer.

On top of that, the Buckeyes showed they weren't going to back down from any recruiting challenges regardless of where the prospect was located. That was especially true when it came to Bell, one of the most sought-after prospects in the nation.

The chief competition came from Alabama – whose credentials as winners of three of the last four national championships cannot be doubted – and Tennessee, an attractive option just two hours to the north of Bell's hometown on the border between Tennessee and Georgia. Factor in the pull of the SEC, which has watched its teams win seven consecutive national titles, and the Buckeyes were in for a battle.

"I mean, that was a street fight," Meyer said.

But the two-time national championship coach was quick to credit his assistants in many cases, and when it came to Bell, Meyer gave plaudits to OSU safeties coach Everett Withers, who was Bell's primary recruiter. The head coach said Withers got to know just about everyone in Bell's life, one reason the highly rated prospect felt that leaving the southeast was a viable option.

"I've seen some really good efforts,"

Meyer said. "Everett Withers from start to finish, his effort on Vonn Bell, was as good as I've ever seen."

The same could be said of Fickell's work with Johnson, who was still recruited heavily by Tennessee and Auburn after he committed to Ohio State in early January.

"That was nonstop," Meyer said. "There were a couple of SEC schools that were just ruthless. Well, I shouldn't say ruthless, but they did a good job, going after them as hard as they could. We hung in there and got it done."

Ohio State has been able to make an impact in the South in recent years, especially in the state of Georgia, the home state of OSU stars Cameron Heyward and Bradley Roby. Still, Meyer was impressed to see that run continue in the case of Johnson simply because of the schools that were in on the linebacker until the very end.

"I don't want to overdramatize it, but you go to Atlanta, Ga., and pull a linebacker out of that high school, that's big-boy business," Meyer said. "Only certain coaches can do that."

When it came to locations that were new to Ohio State, Texas certainly fit that bill. Tressel brought in only three freshman scholarship players from the Lone Star State during his 10 years with the Buckeyes, a total Meyer matched in the 2013 class.

The Buckeyes picked up big names from the state as well. Mitchell is listed as the No. 5 player in Texas by Scout, while Wilson is ranked ninth and Barrett checks in at 22nd. For that, Meyer credited offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Tom Herman, who began his career as a graduate assistant at Texas before stints at Sam Houston State, Texas State and Rice.

"Tom did an excellent job down in Texas, an area that traditionally has not been strong for Ohio State," Meyer said. "I wish I could claim I had more experience in Texas. I've been there quite a bit, but Tom set the wheels in motion, and we pulled three excellent players out of an excellent football state with Mike Mitchell, J.T. and Dontre."

Meyer also credited fullbacks and tight ends coach Tim Hinton, a longtime Ohio high school coach, for his work with in-state prospects.

The praise of the assistant coaches was no accident. When asked how important it is for his staff to be able to recruit, the head coach left no doubt.

"No. 1 is you have to go find players," Meyer said. "If you as a coach can't bring in a good player, your value – there's no value. The lifeblood of what we do is finding good players."

Punting Now A Question

After graduating a three-year starter at punter after the 2012 season in Ben Buchanan, Ohio State thought its situation at the position was cleared up when three-star prospect Townsend gave a pledge to the Buckeyes in June.

But things changed for Townsend when Florida and Alabama extended him offers at the 11th hour, and a day after signing day, the No. 2 punter in the nation signed with Florida. Meyer, who oversees the punt team, admitted the Buckeyes now have a question at the position.

"It's just a complicated thing right now, so yes, I'm concerned," the OSU head coach said.

Asked whether wide receiver Frank Epitropoulos, who punted with some success at Upper Arlington (Ohio) High School, could move to the spot, Meyer was noncommittal.

"I don't know," he said. "He's been hurt since he's been here, so I don't know. We'll talk about that in the spring."

The Buckeyes could still bring a punter into the program or consider moving placekickers Drew Basil, Kyle Clinton, Russell Doup or Kevin Neihoff to the spot. Basil is the only member of that group who is a scholarship player.

Meyer said he wasn't going to think about that on National Signing Day, though. After signing the nation's top class and restocking his roster, the coach saw no reason to feel down about the balance of the proceedings.

"It was a great day," Meyer said. "I thought it was going to be a very good day, but I'd put it in the great category."

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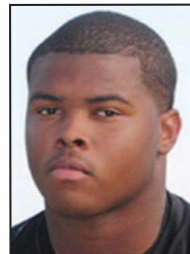
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Trey Johnson



Darron Lee



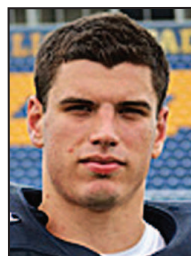
Tyquan Lewis



Evan Lisle



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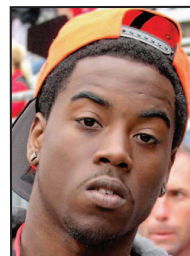
Mike Mitchell



Donovan Munger



Billy Price



Corey Smith



Tracy Sprinkle



Jayme Thompson



Dontre Wilson



Christopher Worley

All photos from Scout.com except Vonn Bell (Danny Parker/Inside Tennessee), Joey Bosa (Josh Winslow), Cam Burrows (Josh Winslow), Gareon Conley (Simone Scott), Tim Gardner (Josh Winslow), Darron Lee (Simone Scott), Evan Lisle (Josh Winslow), Jalin Marshall (Mark Rea), Billy Price (Jeff Svoboda), Corey Smith (Josh Winslow), Tracy Sprinkle (Josh Winslow), Jayme Thompson (Susan Zeier) and Christopher Worley (Ari Wasserman).

Ohio State Finds Talent Across America

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

The Ohio State football team has always had success in finding some of the top prospects in the Buckeye State, and the 2013 recruiting class is no different.

Four of the state's top six rated players by Scout.com are among the newest Buckeyes – Middletown wide receiver Jalin Marshall (No. 1), Centerville offensive lineman Evan Lisle (No. 4), Trotwood Madison cornerback Cam Burrows (No. 5) and Massillon Washington athlete Gareon Conley (No. 6).

Even so, Urban Meyer and his coaching staff also found plenty of success outside of Ohio. The Buckeyes added prospects who played last season in 10 other states, including three from Texas. In total, the haul was good enough to be the top-ranked 2013 class according to Scout, narrowly edging archrival Michigan.

Here are thumbnail sketches of Ohio State's 24 signees in the recruiting class of 2013.

• **Eli Apple, CB, Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern** – A four-star prospect and the No. 11 2013 cornerback according to Scout.com, Apple posted 17 breakups and recorded

two interceptions, 45 tackles, three forced fumbles and a blocked kick last season for Eastern.

The 6-0, 184-pound Apple was the fourth player in the class to commit, doing so in February. Scout rated him the fourth-best prospect from the Garden State.

Personal: Recently changed his last name from Woodard to Apple to honor his stepfather, Tim, who has raised him since age 2 ... Other family includes mother, Annie, and younger sister, Jordan ... One of five players to have enrolled at Ohio State in January.

• **J.T. Barrett, QB, Wichita Falls (Texas) Rider** – John Thomas Barrett (6-1, 225) is one of three players from Texas in Ohio State's class. The No. 22 prospect from Texas was ranked the 13th-overall quarterback in the class by Scout. He is enrolled at Ohio State and is taking part in all nonrunning winter conditioning drills.

Barrett rushed for 569 yards with seven touchdowns and threw for 784 yards and five more scores before a knee injury ended his final prep campaign. As a junior, Barrett rushed for more than 1,500 yards and nine scores and threw for more than 1,600 yards and 14 trips to the end zone.

Personal: Parents are Stacy and John Barrett ... Two brothers, Xavier and Stephen.

• **Marcus Baugh, TE, Riverside (Calif.) J.W. North** – A four-star prospect and No. 73 in the final Scout 100, Baugh played in the Under Armour All-America Game in January after catching 38 passes for 610 yards for North in 2012.

In addition to his work at tight end, where he is ranked the third-best prospect at that position, the 6-4, 245-pound Baugh also saw time at wide receiver, running back and linebacker.

Personal: Has ties to central Ohio thanks to an aunt who lives in Reynoldsburg and a cousin who attends Ohio State ... Son of Debbie Clausen.

• **Vonn Bell, S, Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland** – One of two players to select Ohio State on signing day without previously issuing a verbal commitment, Bell (6-1, 190) is one of four five-star prospects to join the Buckeyes. He is the No. 25 overall prospect in the class according to Scout and the No. 2 safety.

Bell, who recorded 146 tackles and three interceptions, led Ridgeland to the 2012 Georgia Class AAAA championship game before falling to Sandy Creek. He was a two-way player as well, compiling more than 1,700 all-purpose yards and scoring 21 touchdowns.

Personal: Son of Vanessa and Vincent Bell.

• **Joey Bosa, DL, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas** – Another five-star prospect, the 6-5, 270-pound defensive lineman was part of a St. Thomas Aquinas squad that won the Florida Class 7A state title last fall. Bosa ranked No. 38 nationally and the fourth overall defensive line prospect according to Scout.

A second-team All-USA Today pick and participant in the Under Armour All-America Game, Bosa recorded 51 tackles for loss in his last two seasons with 19 sacks, 9½ of them coming in 2012.

Personal: Mother, Cheryl, is an Ohio State graduate ... Father, John, was a first-round NFL draft pick in 1987 by the Miami Dolphins out of Boston College ... Uncle is Eric Kumerow, a linebacker at OSU from 1984-87 and team co-captain as a senior.

• **Cam Burrows, CB, Trotwood (Ohio) Madison** – Burrows was the first 2013 prospect to give a verbal commitment to Ohio State and is the first player from Trotwood Madison to become a Buckeye since Will Allen, who was a part of OSU's class of 2000 and committed while at Trotwood before transferring to Huber Heights Wayne.

RECRUITING WRAP-UP: OSU'S 2013 CLASS

Burrows, a 5-11, 200-pound cornerback, was a first-team Associated Press all-state selection as both a junior and senior and helped the Rams reach three state championship games – posting a 1-2 mark in Division II title matchups. The four-star prospect, who played in the Under Armour All-America Game, was also a two-time state track and field finalist in the sprint relays.

Personal: Enrolled at Ohio State in January ... Son of Dionne and Andre Burrows ... Brother, Chris, is a track and field athlete at Arizona State.

• **James Clark, WR, New Smyrna Beach, Fla.** – Like Bell, Clark was a player who issued a commitment to Ohio State on National Signing Day without issuing a previous verbal commitment. The 5-11, 170-pound receiver was a first-team Florida 6A all-state selection by The Miami Herald as a senior after leading New Smyrna Beach to the playoffs.

Clark caught 87 passes for 1,954 yards and 29 touchdowns during his prep career, including 49 receptions for 1,112 yards and eight scores as a senior. Clark was also a track standout, placing fifth in the 100-yard dash and sixth in the 200 at the 2012 state meet.

Personal: Son of Jesse Clark.

• **Gareon Conley, ATH, Massillon (Ohio) Washington** – A first-team AP Division I all-state selection in 2012, Conley was a wide receiver and cornerback for the Tigers. The four-star prospect played in the Under Armour All-America Game after catching 50 passes and scoring 16 touchdowns for Massillon.

The 6-2, 170-pound Conley averaged 21.9 yards per catch and had 13 pass breakups on defense.

Personal: Son of Sherry Robinson and Jameel and Angel Conley ... Scheduled to play in the Ohio North-South Classic set for April 27 at Welcome Stadium in Dayton.

• **Ezekiel Elliott, RB, St. Louis John Burroughs** – Elliott was the last player to fax in his letter of intent, doing so after reaffirming his verbal commitment to Ohio State over a late recruiting charge from Missouri. Elliott, a 6-0, 210-pound four-star prospect, played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl after a prep career at Burroughs that included three state runner-up finishes under former NFL quarterback Gus Frerotte.

As a senior, Elliott totaled 3,061 all-purpose yards and scored 50 touchdowns. He rushed for 2,155 yards and found the end zone 40 times. Elliott was ranked the No. 9 running back in the 2013 class and the top player from Missouri.

Personal: Son of Dawn and Stacy Elliott, both of whom are Missouri graduates ... Stacy played football for the Tigers, while Dawn was a track and field athlete.

• **Tim Gardner, OL, Indianapolis Lawrence Central** – A member of the Indiana Class 5A undefeated state champion Bears last season, Gardner is a three-star prospect and a 2012 AP first-team all-state selection.

Considered the top offensive lineman in the state by The Indianapolis Star and a "Super Team" selection by the Star, the 6-5, 320-pounder helped the Bears average 328.5 rushing yards and 38.5 points per game last season.

Personal: Coached by Jayson West.

• **Michael Hill, DL, Pendleton, S.C.** – A longtime Buckeye fan and verbal commit since June 2012, Hill is a four-star prospect who was selected to participate in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl after his prep career.

The No. 16 defensive tackle according to Scout, Hill was another future Buckeye who had his prep career shortened because of an injury. A hand injury in the eighth game of his senior season put the 6-2, 305-pounder on the sideline. The ailment not only ended his high school season but kept him from playing in the

U.S. Army game. Before the injury, Hill had four sacks for Pendleton.

Personal: Son of Dianne Blount and Michael Hill Sr.

• **Trey Johnson, LB, Lawrenceville (Ga.) Central Gwinnett** – Johnson (6-2, 220) is a four-star prospect and participated in the Under Armour All-America Game, where he gave Ohio State his verbal commitment during the nationally televised event.

The No. 16 outside linebacker in the class according to Scout, Johnson had 140 tackles as a senior at Central Gwinnett, including 25 for loss. Johnson was named first-team all-state by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution last season and second-team 6A all-state by the Georgia Sports Writers Association.

Personal: Son of Wilbur and Shellie Johnson.

• **Darron Lee, ATH, New Albany, Ohio** – The only central Ohio prospect in the class, the 6-2, 205-pound Lee played quarterback, wide receiver and safety for the Eagles in addition to returning both punts and kicks. However, as a senior Lee primarily played quarterback and safety. Lee was a first-team AP Division II all-state player at defensive back last season after hauling in five interceptions.

The four-star player also returned three punts for touchdowns and contributed more than 1,700 yards of offense and 21 touchdowns. New Albany finished 11-3 last year with a state semifinal appearance.

Personal: Mother, Candice, is a news anchor for WCMH-TV Channel 4 in Columbus ... Originally from Chattanooga, Tenn., but moved to Ohio as an eighth grader ... Scheduled to play in the Ohio North-South Classic.

• **Tyquan Lewis, DE, Tarboro, N.C.** – Lewis (6-3, 233) is a four-star prospect who led Tarboro to three consecutive Class 2A state championships before falling in the title game as a senior, a game during which he was injured but remained in the game and earned defensive player of the game honors.

Lewis recorded 13 sacks and was an AP all-state selection for the Vikings. He is listed as the No. 25 defensive end in the 2013 class by Scout.

Personal: Son of Tyronda Whitaker and big brother to Kenai, Tylie and Christian ... Enrolled at Ohio State in January.

• **Evan Lisle, OL, Centerville, Ohio** – Hailing from the same high school that produced such former Buckeyes as Kirk Herbstreit, A.J. Hawk and Mike Nugent, Lisle was one of the first players to join the 2013 class. The 6-6, 290-pound four-star lineman did so in February 2012.

The No. 4 overall prospect in Ohio according to Scout, Lisle was a special-mention all-state selection last season by the AP and participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl following the season. Lisle was also the only Ohioan named to the USA Today All-America team.

Personal: Son of Steve and Marcy Lisle ... Brother Nick is in the U.S. Army and father Steve went to West Point ... Last name is pronounced LYLE.

• **Jalin Marshall, WR, Middletown, Ohio** – Rated the top prospect in the Buckeye State by Scout, Marshall (6-0, 190) was the second player to join the 2013 class, doing so in January 2012. He played quarterback for the Middies and rushed for a school-record 4,759 yards during his career. That included more than 1,400 last season with 14 touchdowns.

After capping his playing time at Middletown, Marshall played wide receiver at the Under Armour All-America Game. Scout listed him as the No. 32 overall prospect nationally in the 2013 class. He was also the 2012 state champion in the long jump.

Personal: Son of Richard and Angel Marshall ... Has four siblings – older sister Monae, older

brothers DeAnte and Richard Jr., and younger brother Blake ... Scheduled to play in the Ohio North-South Classic.

• **Mike Mitchell, LB, Plano (Texas) Prestonwood Christian** – One of only two middle linebackers to earn a five-star ranking by Scout, Mitchell chose Ohio State during the nationally televised U.S. Army All-American Bowl. Originally from Winter Park, Fla., the 6-4, 225-pounder is the No. 28 overall prospect nationally according to Scout and the second-rated MLB.

Mitchell played for Prestonwood Christian as a sophomore before moving to Plano West as a junior and then returning to Prestonwood Christian for his senior season. He made 186 tackles, including 32 for loss with 11 sacks, forced seven fumbles and returned a kickoff for a touchdown last season.

Personal: Parents are Ken and Candy ... Father played two seasons with the NFL's Atlanta Falcons (1973-74).

• **Donovan Munger, DL, Shaker Heights, Ohio** – Munger (6-4, 290) recorded 80 tackles, including 14 for loss, last season for Shaker Heights, where he played on both sides of the ball. He added six sacks and 23 quarterback pressures in addition to 34 pancake blocks on offense.

After the season, Munger was named second-team Division I all-state by the AP. A four-star prospect and the No. 22 defensive tackle in the class, Munger will join another Shaker Heights product – junior offensive lineman Antonio Underwood – on the Ohio State roster.

Personal: Son of Deidra Sanders ... Participated for victorious Team USA in the fourth annual International Bowl, held Feb. 5 in Austin, Texas.

• **Billy Price, DL, Austintown (Ohio) Fitch** – Price shared 2012 AP Division I co-defensive player of the year honors along with two of his new teammates (Conley and Tracy Sprinkle). The 6-4, 305-pounder is a four-star prospect and first-team all-state selection. He was the third player to give a verbal commit to join OSU's 2013 class, doing so in February 2012.

The No. 21 defensive tackle according to Scout, Price helped Fitch reach the playoffs three times and was also a track and field standout, placing seventh in the discus at the 2012 state outdoor meet after finishing sixth in the shot put and second in the weight throw in the indoor state meet.

Personal: Son of Bill Price and Pam and Dave Lesscack.

• **Corey Smith, WR, Scooba (Miss.) East Mississippi Community College** – Smith (6-1, 190) is the first junior college player to sign with Ohio State since Larry Grant did so in 2006 out of the Community College of San Francisco. Smith graduated from Akron Buchtel before attending Grand Rapids (Mich.) Community College in 2011. With GRCC, Smith caught 28 passes for 438 yards and two touchdowns, but the school disbanded its football program after 80 years.

Last season, Smith played for East

Mississippi, where he hauled in 51 receptions for 733 yards and nine touchdowns. He will have three seasons to complete two years of eligibility at Ohio State.

Personal: Son of Erika Smith.

• **Tracy Sprinkle, DE, Elyria, Ohio** – An AP Division I co-defensive player of the year, Sprinkle had 19 sacks and 30 tackles for loss for Elyria last season as part of a 103-tackle campaign. He had a five-sack game against Amherst Steele and a four-sack effort against Hudson.

Sprinkle, a three-star prospect, became the first defensive player since former Buckeye Matt Wilhelm (1999) to win the Lorain County Golden Helmet award as the county's best player. The 6-2, 241-pounder will join Chase Farris as Elyria products on the OSU roster.

Personal: Son of Tracie Sprinkle and Percy Hicks ... Enrolled at Ohio State in January.

• **Jayne Thompson, S, Toledo Central Catholic** – A member of Central Catholic's 2012 Division II state championship squad, Thompson (6-2, 185) is the 20th-ranked safety in the nation and was an all-state pick after recording 48 tackles, an interception and two fumble recoveries for the Fighting Irish.

Thompson, a four-star prospect, began his prep career at St. Francis DeSales in Toledo before moving to Central Catholic for his final two campaigns.

Personal: Practices Brazilian jiu-jitsu ... Son of Deon Thompson ... Originally from Washington, D.C.

• **Dontre Wilson, RB, DeSoto, Texas** – The last player to give a verbal commitment to Ohio State before National Signing Day, Wilson made his choice known Feb. 4 live on a Dallas television station. He is one of three Texans in the class and the second-highest rated – No. 9 in the state according to Scout. Originally an Oregon commit, Wilson (5-10, 174) reopened his recruitment when Chip Kelly left Eugene to lead the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles.

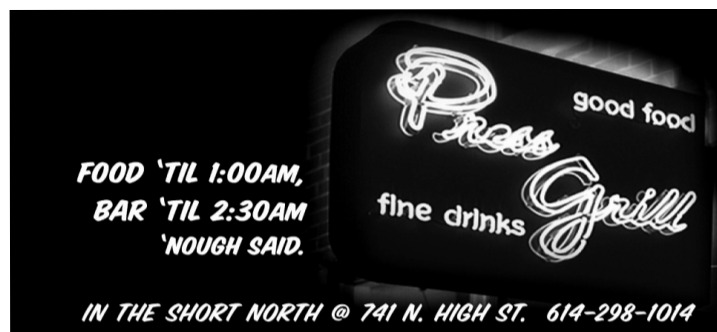
Wilson is the No. 10-rated running back nationally according to Scout, led DeSoto to a state semifinal appearance last season and finished the year with 1,895 yards and 37 touchdowns. He also caught 37 passes for 750 yards and nine scores, and he finished his prep career with more than 3,200 yards rushing, 1,200 receiving and 81 touchdowns.

Personal: Son of Don Wilson.

• **Christopher Worley, S, Cleveland Glenville** – The lone member of the class from Glenville, Worley (6-3, 195) picked Ohio State in January. He was an AP all-state special mention as a senior after helping the Tarblooders to an 8-2 record. Worley had 89 tackles with nine sacks, five touchdowns off interceptions and five forced fumbles. He compiled 161 tackles, 13 sacks, eight interceptions and seven forced fumbles in his prep career.

Worley is the 19th Glenville player to become a Buckeye since 2002 and extends a streak of Tarblooders signing Ohio State letters of intent to 12 consecutive years.

Personal: Son of Michelle Bandy and Chris Worley Sr. ... Scheduled to play in the Ohio North-South Classic.



OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Meyer's Recruiting Hot Streak Continues

Urban Meyer proved his reputation as one of college football's premier recruiters with the way he closed Ohio State's 2012 recruiting class despite being on the job for only a few months.

As it turns out, the coach was only getting started.

Fast-forward a year to the week leading into this year's National Signing Day on Feb. 6, and Meyer dazzled recruiting analysts and opposing coaches alike. He picked up four topflight recruits with less than a week remaining before he was permitted by NCAA rules to officially ink his 2013 class.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK

Ari Wasserman

Those prospects – four-star junior college wide receiver Corey Smith of East Mississippi Community College, four-star running back Dontre Wilson of DeSoto Texas, four-star wide receiver James Clark of New Smyrna Beach, Fla., and five-star safety Vonn Bell of Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland – were the culmination of Meyer's first full class at Ohio State, one that Scout ranked the No. 1 group in the country.

Ohio State also received letters of intent from three other prospects in its class who were wavering after taking late official visits elsewhere. Running back Ezekiel Elliott of St. Louis John Burroughs, linebacker Trey Johnson of Lawrenceburg (Ga.) Central Gwinnett and defensive tackle Donovan Munger of Shaker Heights, Ohio, each signed with the Buckeyes to top off a 24-player class Scout pushed just ahead of archrival Michigan.

Two-time defending national champion Alabama finished third in the Scout rankings followed by Notre Dame and UCLA. The SEC dominated the rest of the top 10. Texas A&M was sixth followed by Florida, LSU, Georgia and Ole Miss. Nebraska finished just outside Scout's top 10, finishing at No. 11.



DANNY PARKER/INSIDE TENNESSEE

COLUMBUS BOUND – Five-star safety Vonn Bell of Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland chose Ohio State at a ceremony on National Signing Day.

Meyer celebrated the 2013 recruiting championship by immediately going to work on next year's title.

During the week after signing day, a time when many coaches at least take a breath following a long year of enduring the hectic world of recruiting, Meyer hosted a number of top-rated juniors Feb. 10 and added three commitments to his 2014 class in a three-hour span.

By adding offensive tackle Kyle Trout of Lancaster, Ohio, defensive end Lawrence Marshall of Southfield, Mich., and running back Parris Campbell of Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary, Meyer brought Ohio State's commitments total to five for next year's class.

In 13 days spanned over two separate classes, Meyer picked up seven total pledges to put together yet another streak of unprecedented success on the recruiting trail.

The run started when Meyer landed

2013 OSU Football Signees (^ – Early Enrollees)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Eli Apple^	CB	6-0	184	*****	Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern
J.T. Barrett^	QB	6-1	225	*****	Wichita Falls (Texas) Rider
Marcus Baugh	TE	6-4	245	*****	Riverside (Calif.) John W. North
Vonn Bell	SAF	6-1	190	*****	Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland
Joey Bosa	DL	6-5	270	*****	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas
Cameron Burrows^	CB	5-11	200	*****	Trotwood (Ohio) Madison
James Clark	WR	5-11	170	*****	New Smyrna Beach, Fla.
Gareon Conley	ATH	6-2	170	*****	Massillon (Ohio) Washington
Ezekiel Elliott	RB	6-0	210	*****	St. Louis Burroughs
Tim Gardner	OL	6-5	320	*****	Indianapolis Lawrence Central
Michael Hill	DL	6-2	305	*****	Pendleton, S.C.
Trey Johnson	LB	6-2	220	*****	Lawrenceville (Ga.) Central Gwinnett
Darron Lee	ATH	6-2	205	*****	New Albany, Ohio
Tyquan Lewis^	DE	6-3	223	*****	Tarboro, N.C.
Evan Lisle	OL	6-6	290	*****	Centerville, Ohio
Jalin Marshall	WR	6-0	190	*****	Middletown, Ohio
Mike Mitchell	LB	6-4	225	*****	Plano (Texas) Prestonwood Christian
Donovan Munger	DL	6-3	290	*****	Shaker Heights, Ohio
Billy Price	DL	6-4	305	*****	Austintown (Ohio) Fitch
Corey Smith	WR	6-1	180	*****	Scooba (Miss.) East Mississippi CC
Tracy Sprinkle^	DE	6-2	241	*****	Elyria, Ohio
Jayme Thompson	SAF	6-2	185	*****	Toledo Central Catholic
Dontre Wilson	ATH	5-10	174	*****	DeSoto, Texas
Christopher Worley	OLB	6-3	195	*****	Cleveland Glenville

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2014 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Parris Campbell	RB	5-11	170	NR	Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary
Marcelys Jones	OT	6-5	325	NR	Cleveland Glenville
Lawrence Marshall	DE	6-3	215	NR	Southfield, Mich.
Kyle Trout	OT	6-6	280	*****	Lancaster, Ohio
Damon Webb	CB	6-0	175	*****	Detroit Cass Tech

Smith on Jan. 29, adding a player to the class at a position the coach has long considered a great need. The 6-1, 190-pound wide receiver who starred during his prep career at Akron Butchel, was committed to Mississippi State before flipping to the Buckeyes.

"I'm expecting to play next year, and Coach Meyer said he is expecting me to be in the rotation next season," Smith said. "I love Coach Meyer and he told me we are going to win multiple championships together."

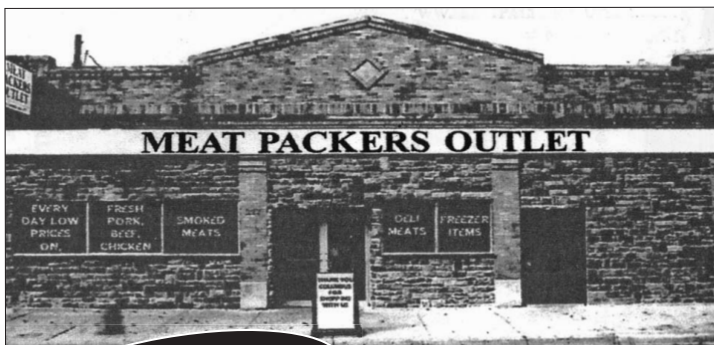
Having quarterback Braxton Miller returning was a huge draw for Smith, who will have two more years of college eligibil-

ity remaining – and three years to use them – when he arrives at Ohio State.

"I think I fit in perfectly with what Coach Meyer wants to do on offense, and I want to be on the field with Braxton Miller," Smith said. "I have a great relationship with (receivers coach) Zach Smith. He recruited me when I was in high school and he was at Marshall."

Smith will be more likely to do it alongside the commitments Meyer added after the JUCO star joined the class, especially with the offensive firepower Wilson brings to the table.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Consensus Poll Coming March 2

Buckeye Sports Bulletin's annual consensus poll of the nation's top recruiting classes will be published in the next print issue of BSB. That issue will be dated March 2 and is scheduled to be mailed Feb. 26.

BSB's annual consensus recruiting poll charts several national rankings and compiles an overall recruiting champion. Last year, Alabama edged Texas in the consensus poll with Florida finishing third. Ohio State was fourth and Florida State rounded out the top five.

Before the March 2 print issue is mailed, BSB will publish an electronic issue Feb. 19. Electronic issues of BSB are available free online to paid subscribers. To sign up to read all of BSB's content online, see the instructions on page 4 of this issue.

fans watching a live stream on the Internet – Wilson fiddled with Texas and Oregon hats on a table in front of him before picking up an Ohio State hat and putting it on his head. That officially signified Wilson's decision to flip his commitment from Oregon to the Buckeyes.

"It was a long, hard decision," Wilson said. "I thought about it a lot, but I'm going to (Ohio State)."

Ranked by Scout the No. 10 running back in the 2013 class, Wilson pledged to Oregon when Chip Kelly was still running the program. However, when Kelly left the Ducks to take the head coaching job with the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles, the 5-10, 180-pound speedster reopened his recruitment.

"I just feel that Coach Meyer has something going there right now," Wilson said. "They could have been national championship last year if they could have gone to a bowl game. I think I can do down there and be a good asset to their team."

Wilson was figured to be a perfect fit in Oregon's dynamic up-tempo offense, and Meyer told the running back he could accomplish similar feats with the Buckeyes.

"They said I will get a lot of (playing time)," Wilson said. "I'll also be a great

special teams player for the team next year."

As it turned out, the commitments from Smith and Wilson simply lit the fuse for National Signing Day fireworks. Those began early with Clark, who was figured by most recruiting experts to be a heavy Florida lean before he stunned those experts and picked Ohio State to set the tone for the day.

Rated by Scout the No. 30 senior wideout in the country, the 5-11, 170-pound speedster picked the Buckeyes despite taking a visit to Gainesville during the final weekend before signing day. He chose Ohio State over Clemson, Nebraska, Northwestern and Purdue as well as Florida.

"My relationship with Coach Meyer is very close," Clark said. "He calls me every morning when I'm going to school to check up on me. He's like my second dad."

Clark's real father, Jesse, was at peace with his son's decision, even if it meant leaving his home state to play his collegiate football in Ohio.

"After we took the Florida visit, we took a few hours talking about the options and different factors about how we would make a decision," the elder Clark explained after his son's announcement. "I'm proud of him, about the things he looked at to make the right decision. He looked at the academic program and the football program as well as how he would fit in with the school."

"We built a relationship (with Meyer) through the conversations we had in our home and over the phone. Everything just happened over the last week or so as we continued to talk to him."

Known as a superlative closer, Meyer put the heat on Clark before the wide receiver knew he would eventually be a Buckeye. Clark remembers a definitive moment during the recruiting process that made him decide to become a Buckeye.

"He said, 'Don't come to Ohio State if you don't want to make a grown-man move,'" Clark said Meyer told him. That was when the Florida prospect decided he wanted to go to Ohio State.

Clark finished his high school career with 2,000 all-purpose yards and more than 20 touchdowns. In his senior season alone, he had 49 catches for 1,112 yards and eight touchdowns. His 4.38 speed, New Smyrna head coach Lance Jenkins said, should

make him an instant impact player for the Buckeyes.

"For me being the head coach and offensive coordinator, he made play-calling really easy," Jenkins said. "He's just a great player. He worked really hard in the offseason. He always had the straight-ahead speed, but he became a great football player in the past two years."

"I know it's probably a cliché they use at Ohio State, but I think he's going to play a Percy Harvin-type role up there. That's what they do. The guy is a legit 4.3-speed. Get the ball in his hands and let him go."

Shortly after Clark jumped on board the Meyer Express, Bell chose the Buckeyes over Alabama and Tennessee to complete the signing-day sweep for Ohio State.

"Urban Meyer is on a mission right now – to win a national championship," Bell said. "We are all on that mission."

Ohio State ranked at the top of Scout's national rankings despite failing to sign a pair of previously committed players – Forestville (Md.) Suitland wide receiver

Taivon Jacobs and Orlando (Fla.) Boone punter Johnny Townsend.

Jacobs, rated the No. 54 wide receiver on the 2013 class, instead signed with Maryland. The 5-10, 160-pound speedster had a twofold reason for opting for the Terrapins late in the process. Jacobs' older brother, Levern, and is on the Maryland football team, and the three-star prospect wanted to stay closer to home to care for his young son.

"I love Ohio State and thank them for all the love they have given me," Jacobs said. "But this is the best decision for me and my family at this time in my life."

Meanwhile, Townsend had been committed to OSU since August, but the three-star prospect, rated the No. 2 punter in the 2013 class, opted to sign with Florida because his older brother is a student there and both of his parents are alumni of the school.

"It was a really difficult decision," Townsend admitted. "I had been committed

Continued On Page 12

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Buckeyes Pick Up Trio Of Verbals For 2014

Continued From Page 11

since August. I developed a great relationship with Coach Meyer and Coach (Kerry) Coombs, the man that recruited me. It really was a tough decision, and making it took a piece out of my heart."

In all, Ohio State's class finished with 24 members, 21 of whom are rated four-star prospects or better by Scout.

Defense Of Recruiting Title Off To Fast Start

It is far too soon for Scout to begin ranking Ohio State's 2014 class, but simply having five commitments puts the Buckeyes on track for what experts believe will be yet another top-five group.

The quick start can be attributed to landing three commitments on Feb. 10, a day during which several prospects toured Ohio State's facilities and witnessed the Buckeye basketball team's home game against top-ranked Indiana.



Kyle Trout

Trout was the first of the three prospects to make his intentions public. Rated the No. 16 offensive tackle in the 2014 class, the 6-6, 280-pounder fills a position the Buckeyes didn't completely address this past recruiting cycle.

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

25 Years ago - 1988

New head coach John Cooper's class of 14 signees was rated in national analyst Tom Lemming's top 20 and included the likes of three well-regarded Ohioans - quarterback Kirk Herbstreit of Centerville, two-way back Buster Howe of Zanesville and linebacker Dave Bals of Willoughby South.

Lemming rated the OSU class third best in the Big Ten for the second straight year, this time behind top dog Michigan and No. 2 Purdue.

No Big Ten schools were in Lemming's national top 10, which was led by Notre Dame.

20 Years Ago - 1993

Cooper closed the year's recruiting effort with a flourish by reeling in defensive backs Tommy Willis of Griffin, Ga., and Shawn Springs of Silver Spring (Md.) Silverbrook along with offensive lineman Andy Dawson of Shelby, Ohio.

Recruiting analyst Allen Wallace of SuperPrep magazine told BSB he thought Cooper's 22-man recruiting class ranked somewhere in the middle of the pack as far as the Big Ten was concerned.

15 Years Ago - 1998

The Buckeyes made three big pickups in the waning hours before signing day. Quarterback/safety Steve Bellisari of Boca Raton, Fla., running back Jonathan Wells of River Ridge,

La., and lineman LeCharles Bentley of Canton (Ohio) McKinley each committed to Cooper's program.

Wells reaffirmed an earlier commitment after brief flirtations with Auburn and North Carolina, while Bentley reconsidered previous commitments to Michigan State and Indiana.

Cooper's newest class included six of Ohio's top 15 players, including top-ranked Kenny Peterson, a defensive lineman from Canton McKinley.

The bad news of signing day came when North Carolina linebacker Shamar Finney picked Penn State over the Buckeyes.

The 1999 recruiting effort got under way as well as Ohio's top junior, tailback Kelton Lindsay of Lebanon, offered his verbal commitment to the Buckeyes.

10 Years Ago - 2003

During the final week before signing day, the Buckeyes were successful in getting a commitment from Lyndhurst (Ohio) Brush tight end/defensive lineman Marcel Frost but saw Warren (Ohio) Howland running back/linebacker Maurice Smith opt to stay with a previous commitment to Michigan State.

Meanwhile, wide receiver Devin Stearns of Gardena (Calif.) continued to mull his options.

The Buckeyes held out hope they could coax commitments from a group that included Kentucky quarterback Michael Bush, New Jersey defensive back Ira Guilford and Massillon (Ohio) Washington linebacker Shawn Crable.

Five Years Ago - 2008

Five-star quarterback prospect Terrelle Pryor of Jeannette, Pa., continued to plan official visits to Oregon and Penn State, but his high school coach did not expect such trips to change the star's mind on his eventual college destination.

"The whole premise of that thing was he was going to go visit Penn State and Oregon, and then when he does that he'll make his decision," Jeannette coach Ray Reitz told BSB. "I don't think it's even going to change when he visits the schools. I think the kid's known for four months where he's going. I don't think anything's going to change."

One Year Ago - 2012

Urban Meyer finished his first recruiting class at Ohio State by snagging verbal commitments from four-star offensive tackle Kyle Dodson of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and three-star linebacker Jamal Marcus of Durham (N.C.) Hillsdale.

"We want to make the great state of Ohio proud with everything we do," Meyer said. "I think this class of new Ohio State Buckeyes is certainly going to do that."

The OSU coach added that he hoped to make the 25-man class even better with the addition of Olney (Md.) Our Lady of Good Counsel receiver Stefon Diggs, who delayed his decision past signing day. Diggs was also considering Maryland and Florida along with Ohio State.

A few hours later, Marshall was next to announce. The 6-3, 215-pound defensive end said he knew during his visit that Ohio State was the right place for him. And as Meyer has done in the past with other recruits, he

was very aggressive in conveying to Marshall that he wanted him to be a Buckeye.

"We were in Coach's office - me, my mom, my sister and Coach Coombs," Marshall said. "We are in Coach Meyer's office and he said, 'When are you going to stop the recruiting process?' And I said, 'Right now. I'm committing to Ohio State.' And they all started jumping up and down. They were really happy."

Marshall, who has yet to be rated by Scout, had offers from Tennessee, Pittsburgh, Michigan and Michigan State before selecting the Buckeyes.

"I already have some people calling me a traitor," said Marshall, who became the second commitment in OSU's 2014 class from the state of Michigan, joining four-star cornerback Damon Webb of Detroit Cass Tech.

"But I just want to play football (at Ohio State), and nobody is going to stop me."

The day finished on a high note with Campbell's commitment, something the 5-11, 170-pound running back did not anticipate doing.

"I didn't even think that I was going to get offered, but when Coach Meyer said those words, I could feel it inside of me," Campbell said. "It was what I wanted, so I decided the time was right. I'm very happy with the decision I made."

Also yet to be rated by Scout, Campbell had scholarship offers from Indiana, Michigan State and Tennessee before selecting Ohio State. He becomes the latest small-framed yet elusive running back to hop on board with Meyer.

"We just got to talking and he was like, 'Parris, we're going to offer you,'" Campbell said. "He asked me, 'Do you have an idea where you want to go?' I was like, 'Yeah, I want to go here.' Then he goes, 'Oh, really?' Then I committed."

"It's been a dream ever since I was younger, so it was kind of like a big dream come true. My grandmother, my mother, Coach Meyer and Coach (Mike) Vrabel were in the room with me, and when I committed, everyone was just very happy. We all clapped. I got up, hugged my family and hugged Coach Meyer."

Among the other top juniors touring the Ohio State facilities during the Feb. 9-10 weekend were Chicago De La Salle offensive tackle Jamarco Jones and Campbell's SVSM teammate, outside linebacker Dante Booker. Both players are top targets who own OSU offers.

"(Kyle Trout and I) were talking and we were like, 'We have to get these guys on board so we can get the No. 1 recruiting class in the nation,'" Campbell said.



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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE ASSISTANTS

Herman, Ohio State Mess With Texas

By MATTHEW HAGER
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

On-field success in college football does not just result in wins. It leads to accomplishments away from the gridiron as well.

That fact was on display Feb. 6 when the Ohio State football team added 24 new members on National Signing Day. Not surprisingly, Urban Meyer and his coaching staff fared well within the borders of the state of Ohio, inking 10 prospects from the Buckeye State, including four of the top six ranked players as rated by Scout.com.

But the coaching staff also hauled in top talent from 10 other states. Among those prospects were two of the top 10 players from Texas – linebacker Mike Mitchell (No. 5) and running back Dontre Wilson (No. 9).

Ohio State offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Tom Herman did the bulk of the recruiting in the Lone Star State and said it was not as difficult to get his foot in the door, so to speak, as one might have imagined.

"It's not challenging when you go 12-0, Urban Meyer is your head coach and you're wearing the Block 'O' on your shirt," Herman said.

Meyer has described Ohio State as being the "flavor of the month" in recruiting, which has helped the program in its efforts to sign the nation's top-rated 2013 class according to Scout. But for the assistant coaches, finding players willing to consider the Buckeyes and building relationships is just as crucial.

"To say that we're going to go into the state of Texas and beat Texas and Texas A&M and Oklahoma on any kid that we want, that's not going to happen," Herman said. "You've got to find and identify the kids that fit your need and (have) reciprocated interest in you."

"Then you continue to recruit those guys and let the chips fall where they may at the end. Whatever that young man decides is best for him, he decides."

Fortunately for Herman and the Buckeyes, Mitchell and Wilson chose Ohio State as signing day approached.

Mitchell, who prepped at Plano Prestonwood Christian in northern suburban Dallas, pledged to OSU at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in January. Wilson, a one-time Oregon verbal commitment from the southern Dallas suburb of DeSoto, announced his commitment two days before signing day.

Not to be overlooked, however, is J.T. Barrett, a quarterback from Rider High School in Wichita Falls near the Texas-Oklahoma border. Barrett not only gave his verbal to the Buckeyes prior to his injury-shortened senior season, he is also one of five members of the '13 class already enrolled in classes at OSU.

Perhaps Ohio State's success in Texas should not be a surprise because of Herman's background. His coaching experience includes stops at Texas, Sam Houston State, Texas State and Rice from 1999-2008.

"I knew very well Tom had a background in Texas," Meyer said. "I knew he's a good recruiter because I did the homework before we hired him. (He's a) very good recruiter."

Herman joked that he's always been a good recruiter, noting that he "stalked" his wife for six months before she agreed to date him. Being persistent with potential Buckeyes helped him land Wilson, who reopened his recruitment when Chip Kelly left Oregon for the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles.

Even before Kelly's departure, however, Herman said Wilson had interest in Ohio State.

"If that relationship is not reciprocated at some point, you've got to fish or cut bait so to speak," Herman said. "With Dontre, we never really had to cut bait. We were never at that point. ... That relationship was fostered over a long, long period of time."

Herman was not the only coach to find out-of-state success. Assistant head coach and co-defensive coordinator Everett Withers was credited by Meyer for his work in bringing in five-star safety prospect Vonn Bell from Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland, a high school located near the Georgia-Tennessee border.

"Start to finish, what Everett Withers did with Vonn Bell, that's as good a recruiting effort as I've ever seen," Meyer said. "I used to call it the octopus technique – tentacles around everything and everyone in this person's life."

Inside Ohio's borders, tight ends and fullbacks coach Tim Hinton was recognized by Meyer for bringing in such talent as five-star wide receiver Jalin Marshall from Middletown.

Of course, recruiting success is mandatory for Meyer. If a coach can't bring in top talent, he can't work for the two-time national championship winner.

"Go out and find a quality student-athlete is the No. 1 job description," Meyer said. "No. 2 is you take care of your group, your players. Then you can help us put together the offensive and defensive schemes."

"If you as a coach can't bring in a good player, your value ... there is no value. The lifeblood of what we do is finding good players."

Talking Newest Buckeyes

Herman, Withers, defensive coordinator Luke Fickell and running backs coach Stan Drayton each spoke about the 2013 class following Meyer's signing day press conference. Here is what they had to say.

• Herman gave an update on Barrett, who suffered a torn ACL that prematurely ended his senior season. The quarterback has been rehabbing the injury since arriving at Ohio State in January.

"He's a great leader, a great worker," Herman said. "Everything I'm getting back from the strength coaches and the trainers is

that he's ahead of schedule. He's pushing himself. He competes against himself and against other guys. Whether he'll be ready in the fall, I don't know. What I've been told is that maybe in the spring he'll be able to possibly throw a little bit – maybe throw some seven-on-seven without cleats so he doesn't dig his feet in the ground and things like that."

• Herman also talked about what Ohio State was looking for when it came to skill players. Just having straight-line speed was not enough, as the coaching staff wanted to find players who make players miss.

"We felt like we were pretty deficient last year in terms of getting the ball in space," the OSU assistant said. "We get one-on-one with a safety or one-on-one with a corner or even a linebacker at times and we can't make that guy miss. I think the premise of a spread offense is to not play football in a phone booth, but to spread people out and create one-on-one mismatches."

Wilson is a player who fits that bill. Described by Drayton as a very dynamic athlete who can not only run fast but make defenders miss, Wilson was a running back in high school but he will play a role similar to the one Percy Harvin played at Florida under Meyer.

As for whether Wilson will work primarily in the running back position room or with the wide receivers, Drayton joked he is already fighting that battle with wide receivers coach Zach Smith.

"That's a question right now that I need put on the back burner because there was almost a physical altercation between Zach and me about that very discussion," Drayton said. "We're going to let Coach Meyer make the final decision."

As for who will coach Wilson on Saturdays, Drayton said it will be the same as it was with Harvin at Florida. Meyer will coach that hybrid position on the field.

• Drayton said the talent the Buckeyes signed at running back – which not only includes Wilson (at least part of the time) but four-star tailback Ezekiel Elliott from St. Louis Burroughs – will help breed competition.

"For years, competition has made players reach their full potentials as individuals," Drayton said. "For the first time in a long time in my career, I can honestly say that we have that environment in that running back room right now."

"It's a very competitive room. It's a very talented room. They all bring something new and interesting to the table. They all have a fit in this offense. They've just got to go out there and earn it now."

• Bell captured headlines on signing day by picking Ohio State over Tennessee and Alabama, but Withers – who also serves as the safeties coach in addition to his other roles on the staff – said the other secondary additions will help the Silver Bullets in the future.

Cornerbacks Eli Apple of Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern and Cam Burrows of Trotwood (Ohio) Madison, both early enrollees, joined safeties Bell, Jayme Thompson of Toledo Central Catholic and Christopher Worley of Cleveland Glenville.

"I've been doing this a long time, but this group with the young men that are here – Eli and Cam and some of the guys we've just added to that group – if the development goes as we think it will go, we feel like this will be a very talented group that will be able to help

Ohio State do some special things," Withers said.

• Fickell acknowledged the recruitment of Lawrenceville (Ga.) Central Gwinnett linebacker Trey Johnson was a battle, but one that was worth it as the Buckeyes now have at least two new linebackers to work with in Johnson and Mitchell. That number could rise by one, according to Fickell, who said Darron Lee, an athletic 6-2, 205-pound prospect from New Albany, Ohio, is a possibility at the position.

The OSU assistant added that the new linebackers and defensive linemen will have a chance to make a contribution right away.

"If you think about it, (Ryan) Shazier is the only experience we've got in the front seven coming back next year – (players) with a lot of experience," Fickell said. "I think that whole group is going to be exciting. I know that I'm excited. I know (defensive line coach Mike) Vrabel is excited."

"We've got some young guys, and maybe in the linebacker room we're a lot thinner with depth and numbers. But it's going to be an exciting time. It's a big winter and it's going to be a big spring."

• Lee is the only member of the 2013 class from central Ohio. The New Albany product showed the coaching staff that he wanted to be a Buckeye by attending two camps and showing off a competitive spirit.

"He was willing to come and work and prove it and compete against anybody," Fickell said. "We asked him to come back for a second camp just so he could compete against some other guys that we had offered (and) he didn't bat an eye at that."

"(Coach Meyer) is not always looking for that guy that ran the 4.4 (40-yard dash) or the guy that jumped 38 inches or something. He wants the guy where, I'm not quite as fast. I'm not quite as big, but where's the battle? Where's the fight? That guy that's ready to compete, that has that competitive spirit. I think that's what we loved about him."

As for Lee being the only central Ohioan among the 24 players signed by the Buckeyes, Fickell – himself a Columbus native – said no one should read much into that fact.

"It was just one of those years," he said.

Support Staff Superlatives

Meyer and a quartet of his assistant coaches met with the media on National Signing Day, but other names were mentioned as those deserving of recognition for the recruiting class Ohio State procured. Primary among those was director of player personnel – and a man described by Herman as a "Twitter phenomenon" – Mark Pantoni.

"All of the assistants couldn't do our jobs recruiting if it wasn't for him and his staff and Derek Chang and Greg Gillum and the people that help him out," Herman said. "They're invaluable resources for us to continue developing and maintaining those relationships while you're trying to get ready to go beat Michigan State."

"You're burning the candle at both ends, but when you've got a support staff like Mark and Derek and Greg that can help you along the way, it certainly makes life a lot easier."

Fickell echoed that opinion.

"They really do an unbelievable job of making our jobs a little easier in the evaluation process," he said.

Pantoni is arguably the most active member of the Ohio State staff on Twitter, boasting in excess of 10,000 followers on the social networking site. He gave updates as each letter of intent was received on signing day under his @markpantoni Twitter account.



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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE POSITIONS

Newest Buckeyes Will Fill Several Roles

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

Another class of recruits has been signed, sealed and delivered to the Ohio State football program by head coach Urban Meyer and his assistants. Lots of ink has been spilled and cyberspace used to determined how the newest crop of Buckeyes compares to those signed around the country, but what about how they fit onto the current roster in Columbus?

What the newest Buckeyes can do for Meyer and his staff this fall and in the future figures to be more important than how they compare to Brady Hoke's latest haul at Michigan or Nick Saban's newest signees at Alabama, so we thought we would take a stab at identifying who can help where and perhaps when.

We will go position by position, starting with the defense before moving to the other side of the ball.

Defensive Line

Although he brought in a highly decorated group last season, Meyer spent much of the early part of the 2013 recruiting cycle stocking up on more defensive line recruits.

It started with Billy Price of Austintown (Ohio) Fitch right after National Signing Day last year and continued in the spring with commitments from ends Tracy Sprinkle of Elyria, Ohio, and Joey Bosa of Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas. Tackle Michael Hill committed in June with end Tyquan Lewis jumping in late in September. The class closed with tackle Donovan Munger in December.

With Ohio State looking at fielding an all new front four for the first time since the Buckeyes moved to a 4-3 defense in the early 1990s, a heavy competition figures to ensue at all four starting positions.

Lewis (6-3, 223) and Sprinkle (6-2, 241) might have the best shot to make an early impact as they are the only linemen to enroll early. They join a group of Leo rush ends headed by sophomore Noah Spence, who flashed star potential last season in spot duty.

Line coach Mike Vrabel figures to be on the lookout for an athletic option to put at the "three-technique" tackle following Johnathan Hankins' decision to skip his last year of eligibility. That could be where Price or Hill (both of whom go 305 pounds) could find a spot pending where Adolphus Washington lines up for his sophomore season. Washington – who was listed at 6-3 and 289 pounds on the OSU roster updated Feb. 5 – played both three-technique and strongside end as a five-star freshman.

Price and Hill could also contribute at nose tackle, where junior Joel Hale and sophomore Chris Carter return along with Tommy Schutt, a sophomore who can play either tackle position.

Bosa figures to join the glut of players competing for time at strongside defensive end. Washington could also line up there, but junior Michael Bennett and redshirt freshman Se'Vonn Pittman provide two more intriguing options there after each had his 2012 season marred by injury. Based on his athleticism, Bosa could also play Leo, but the 6-5, 270-pounder seems likely to grow out of that spot.

Linebacker

This is likely the position group with the most potential for early playing time, and the staff signed two players who bring high-level potential with them.

Ohio State picked up a pair of highly-sought players in Mike Mitchell of Texas and Trey Johnson of Georgia, both of whom committed just after the start of the new year. Linebackers coach and defensive coordinator Luke Fickell mentioned two players listed as something else on the signing day press release – Darron Lee and Christopher Worley – could wind up being linebackers as well, but we will discuss them later.

Mitchell is considered the superior physical specimen (6-4, 225), but Fickell praised Johnson's football acumen on signing day.

The pair join a group that will be very young this season with only one starter – first-team All-Big Ten selection Ryan Shazier – returning from 2012. Shazier is also the elder statesman of the group, joining fellow junior Curtis Grant as the only linebackers who will be more than two years removed from high school this fall.

The rest of the group consists of five sophomores who had little to no impact on the defense last season, though several of them are highly rated prospects of whom much was expected when they were in the same shoes a year ago that Mitchell and Johnson (6-2, 220) occupy now.

Mitchell could prove to be too talented to keep off the field while Johnson's sense of how to play the game might appeal to Fickell, who wants a middle linebacker who will take charge of things on the field when the bullets are flying.

Secondary

Ohio State heads into spring ball with only one spot open in the secondary, but lots of playing time figures to be around the corner in 2014.

Starting safeties Christian Bryant and C.J. Barnett as well as top reserve Corey Brown are each seniors with only sophomores Ron Tanner and Devan Bogard behind them. That means five-star Vonn Bell, four-stars Jayme Thompson and Lee, and perhaps even Worley (ranked a three-star linebacker) could be in the mix in year two and will want to spend the upcoming season positioning themselves for a run at the starting lineup.

Cornerback does have an open spot this fall, though that is likely to be filled by Doran Grant, a highly touted recruit who had an up-and-down sophomore season in 2012. Four-star prospects Cameron Burrows and Eli Apple enrolled in January and will take part in spring practice, where they can expect to fight for a spot in the two-deep if not to fight Grant for a starting role.

Four-star prospect Gareon Conley, a former Michigan commit, could join the mix in preseason camp if he is not playing wide receiver. He said on signing day he had no preference with regard to position.

Then there is the Star position, a hybrid linebacker/safety who replaces the Sam linebacker in the nickel defense Ohio State has run for more than a decade.

There figures to be an open competition here with Orhian Johnson having exhausted his eligibility. Lee and Worley both bring the body type to play there, and they are regarded as heady players whose football instincts are strong. That is a trait that has proved to be essential for playing the Star position effectively.

The coaches loved the competitiveness Lee showed at a pair of camps last season, and Worley has been compared to fellow Cleveland Glenview alumnus Jermale Hines, an instinctual safety who spent two years at the Star position before being drafted by the Minnesota Vikings.

Bryant and Brown have experience at Star, so the staff has options both young and old there.

Wide Receiver

Ohio State's 2012 season was a fascinating one for football strategy junkies as the Buckeyes worked to absorb the new spread offense of Meyer and offensive coordinator Tom Herman, who also serves as quarterbacks coach.

It should be no less interesting this year with that pair hoping they have more parts to allow the unique and innovative attack to truly take flight.

Meyer expressed frustration regularly last season about the lack of playmakers on offense even as the Buckeyes led the Big Ten in scoring and finished just four touchdowns shy of tying the school record in a single season (they had 60). He hopes to have tackled that problem by adding a trio of players who are tough to bring down in the open field – Jalin Marshall, Dontre Wilson and James Clark.

Marshall was the first to commit (in January 2012) and might have faced a heavy load as the Buckeyes' slot receiver if not for the recent decisions of Wilson and Clark to jump on. The top-rated player in Ohio, Marshall is a solid 6-0, 190-pounder who played quarterback at Middletown and brings a variety of skills to the Buckeyes. Wilson (5-10, 174) and Clark (5-11, 170) are smaller players who Meyer hopes can stretch defenses horizontally with pure speed and make yards after the catch with their agility.

The youngsters probably won't be able to walk right into a starting role, though, as the addition of a couple more athletes might result in a reshuffling of the wide receivers already on hand. In addition to the slot receivers, Meyer secured signatures from Corey Smith and Conley, two bigger prospects (6-1 and 6-2, respectively) who can go down the field and battle corners for catches, creating space for the others to work underneath.

A four-star cornerback prospect, Conley could wind up on the defensive side of the ball, but Smith is expected to compete immediately for playing time on the outside. The 180-pound JUCO receiver's presence could allow senior Corey "Philly" Brown to move inside to the slot. The speedy Brown led the Buckeyes in catches last season but might be miscast as the possession receiver he essentially became as the 2012 campaign wore on.

Tight End

Marcus Baugh figures to find playing time hard to come by this season, but the 6-4, 245-pound Californian might be able to carve out a niche as a change of pace when compared to veterans Jeff Heuerman (6-5, 250) and Nick Vannett (6-6, 255).

The elder players don't lack athleticism, but they are more traditional Big Ten tight ends who excel as blockers while Baugh is known more for his ability as a receiver in the open field.

Running Back

The only traditional running back in Ohio State's class of 2013 is Ezekiel Elliott, but he will not be lonely when he shows up for his first position meeting.

Thanks to Jordan Hall's medical redshirt, the Buckeyes have six running backs on scholarship for the coming season. The group includes power backs Carlos Hyde (who will be a senior after running for nearly 1,000 yards last season), junior Rod Smith, sophomore

Bri'onte Dunn and redshirt freshman Warren Ball as well as the smaller, shifty Hall.

Though the 6-0, 210-pound Elliott is listed as three inches taller and 16 pounds heavier than Hall, he might be smart to work on being the senior's shadow when he arrives for summer workouts and preseason camp.

Wilson also could get some time at running back at some point in his career, although there is clearly little need for his services there this fall.

Offensive Line

This is the only area in which Meyer expressed some disappointment, admitting the ability to sign only two players puts the coaching staff on notice to stock up on big uglies in 2014.

Neither Evan Lisle, a four-star prospect ticketed for tackle, nor Tim Gardner, a three-star who seems fit for the guard position, is likely to be pressed into duty anytime soon as four starters return for 2013. The staff is also high on the potential of rising sophomores Chase Farris, Taylor Decker and Jacoby Boren.

Four starters will graduate after next season, so a strong freshman campaign could set up one or both of the new signees for a run at major playing time as a sophomore or redshirt freshman. The 6-6, 290-pound Lisle in particular is considered a major prospect for his long, athletic frame.

Quarterback

No spot on the roster is less primed than quarterback for an immediate impact from a freshman, but that is probably fine with everyone involved.

J.T. Barrett is a four-star recruit who enrolled in January, but the 6-1, 225-pound Texan is still rehabilitating a knee injury that cut short his high school career.

Meyer and Herman have already observed a work ethic and leadership they love in the youngster, who will find himself fourth on the depth chart this fall and likely ticketed for a redshirt.

As expected of anyone running Meyer's offense, Barrett has displayed the ability both to run (569 yards in five games last season) and pass (784 yards).



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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE JUNIORS

Meyer Off To Quick Start With 2014 Offers

By ARI WASSERMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If Urban Meyer was ever entitled to some relaxing vacation time, one would think it would be appropriate during the week following National Signing Day, especially after Ohio State officially signed a 2013 recruiting class that Scout.com ranked the nation's best.

But as nearly everyone knows, recruiting remains a 24/7/365 endeavor.

"We're already knee-deep in 2014 players," Meyer said at his signing-day press conference.

As a result, the coach and his staff hosted a number of top-rated juniors during the first weekend after signing day and continued what has become a constant tear on the recruiting trail, welcoming three new verbal commitments to Ohio State's 2014 class on Feb. 10.

After landing the three new pledges – offensive tackle Kyle Trout of Lancaster, Ohio; defensive end Lawrence Marshall of Southfield, Mich.; and running back Parris Campbell of Akron St. Vincent St. Mary – Meyer already has a quarter of his 2014 class gathered less than a week after signing his ultra-impressive 2013 class.

But there are plenty more prospects left on the board, and the Buckeyes' goal is to put together another No. 1 recruiting class.

The following is an alphabetical look at some of the top-rated high school juniors who reportedly hold offers from Ohio State, including the five who have already pledged to the Buckeyes.

• **Quin Blanding, safety, Virginia Beach (Va.) Bayside** – The 6-2, 200-pound safety earned enough scholarship offers during his junior season that it felt appropriate to trim his list to 10 in November to make his recruiting process more manageable. Making the cut for the five-star prospect were Clemson, Florida State, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Virginia and West Virginia. Rated by Scout the No. 1 safety in the class, Blanding attends the same high school as former Florida State quarterback E.J. Manuel.

• **Dante Booker, outside linebacker, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary** – Shortly after

Campbell announced his commitment to Ohio State, Booker tweeted an intriguing question: "Should I join my bro Parris?" Ohio State's fans who read it – and probably Meyer – were likely hopeful the 6-3, 217-pound linebacker would answer his own question in the affirmative. A four-star prospect rated by Scout the No. 2 outside linebacker in his class, Booker also has scholarship offers from Illinois, Louisville, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, Penn State, Tennessee, Wisconsin and several others.

• **Tony Brown, cornerback, Beaumont (Texas) Ozen** – Meyer had success recruiting the state of Texas for his 2013 class, and OSU's head coach would love to build on that with the five-star cornerback whom Scout ranks the best at his position in the class. Brown, a 6-1, 185-pound prospect who has 4.34 speed, boasts nearly two dozen scholarship offers from programs such as Alabama, LSU, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Texas, USC and West Virginia.

• **Parris Campbell, running back, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary** – The 5-11, 170-pound speedster had no idea he'd be committing to Ohio State when visiting the Buckeyes on Feb. 10, but he left Columbus as the fifth member of Meyer's 2014 class. Scout hasn't yet rated Campbell, but he possesses the quickness and elusiveness the Buckeyes seek in offensive skill-position players. Campbell had offers from Indiana, Michigan State and Tennessee before pledging to the Buckeyes.

• **Edwin Freeman, safety, Arlington (Texas) Bowie** – Most of the early attention around Freeman came from programs in or around the Lone Star State. Of the four-star prospect's 10 scholarship offers, six of them come from schools in the state of Texas. Ohio State, however, has recognized his talent and extended the 6-1, 200-pound prospect an offer. Given that Freeman is Scout's No. 6 safety in the 2014 class, plenty more offers are expected to pour in.

• **Clifton Garrett, middle linebacker, Plainfield (Ill.) South** – The 6-2, 215-pound linebacker has been on Ohio State's radar

for some time, and Garrett even traveled to Columbus last summer for the Friday Night Lights camp in Ohio Stadium. Rated by Scout the No. 3 middle linebacker in his class, Garrett has offers from Arizona State, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan State, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State and Wisconsin among others. OSU, however, is expected to be a player in the four-star prospect's recruitment until the end.

• **Da'Shawn Hand, defensive end, Woodbridge, Va.** – A 6-5, 260-pound prospect who sports 4.65 speed, Hand has emerged as Scout's top-ranked defensive end for 2014. Hand finished his junior season with 110 tackles, including 40 for loss, 16 sacks, two pass deflections, four forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries. A five-star recruit, Hand has amassed a long list of scholarship offers, but eight schools seem to be at the top of that list – Alabama, Florida, Michigan, South Carolina, Virginia Tech, North Carolina, Notre Dame and Ohio State.

• **Jalen Hurd, running back, Hendersonville (Tenn.) Beech** – After rushing 317 times for a state-record 3,357 yards and 43 touchdowns in his junior season, it's no secret why Hurd (6-3, 200) has emerged as a must-get at running back. Ranked by Scout the No. 7 running back in the 2014 class, Hurd has offers from Alabama, Georgia, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Stanford, Tennessee and several others.

• **Jamarco Jones, offensive tackle, Chicago De La Salle** – One of the first 2014 prospects to be offered by Ohio State, the 6-5, 285-pound offensive tackle is one of the most impressive players at a position of great need for the Buckeyes. Rated the No. 5 offensive tackle in the class, Jones has been the source of constant attention from Big Ten programs given his Midwest location. He has offers from Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State, Nebraska and OSU as well as Florida, Notre Dame, Stanford and countless others.

• **Marcelys Jones, offensive tackle, Cleveland Glenville** – The Buckeyes' first commit in the 2014 class was a big one. Not

only did Jones' pledge fill a big need on Ohio State's roster, it served as a continuation for the OSU-Glenville pipeline. The 6-5, 325-pound offensive tackle has yet to be rated by Scout, but Ohio State's relentless pursuit of the prospect early in the process is an indication that the Buckeyes think very highly of him.

• **Marshon Lattimore, wide receiver, Cleveland Glenville** – Given Meyer's love for playmaking wide receivers, Lattimore is another important Glenville target. With the pipeline still flowing, the Buckeyes would love to add the uber-talented four-star prospect to their class. A 6-0, 175-pounder rated by Scout the No. 2 wide receiver in the class, Lattimore has already unofficially visited the Buckeyes multiple times, and Meyer has made him a top priority for the Buckeyes' 2014 class.

• **Lawrence Marshall, defensive end, Southfield, Mich.** – One of the country's most impressive pass rushers, the 6-3, 215-pound prospect promptly picked up scholarship offers from in-state programs Michigan and Michigan State. However, Marshall – who has yet to be rated by Scout – verbally committed to the Buckeyes on Feb. 10. Marshall also had scholarship offers from Indiana, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Tennessee and others.

• **Malik McDowell, defensive end, Detroit Loyola** – Ohio State has already made a splash in Michigan in the 2014 class, accepting two commitments from the state thus far in the process. Meyer wouldn't object to adding a third if it were McDowell, a four-star prospect rated by Scout the No. 4 defensive end in the country. Also an offensive tackle, the 6-6, 300-pounder has picked up scholarships from such schools as Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State, Oregon, Stanford, UCLA, USC and Wisconsin.

• **Raekwon McMillan, middle linebacker, Hinesville (Ga.) Liberty County** – The Peach State has become a hotbed of prep talent for Ohio State, and arguably the best prospect from Georgia in the 2014 class is McMillan. The 6-2, 230-pound linebacker – rated by Scout the No. 2 player at that position in the class – visited Ohio State for the Buckeyes' 26-21 win over Michigan on Nov. 24 and has had the program as one of his favorites ever since. McMillan finished his junior season with 152 tackles, seven sacks, and five forced fumbles. He even added nine rushing touchdowns as a ball carrier in Liberty County's offensive attack.

• **Nyles Morgan, middle linebacker, Crete (Ill.) Monsee** – The 6-3, 220-pound linebacker was a big part of his program's Class 6A state championship, and now that the dust has settled from winning at his state's highest level, the four-star prospect has started to think more about his recruitment. Rated the No. 4 middle linebacker in his class, Morgan has offers from Florida, Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and others. High on Morgan's early list are the Wolverines, Spartans, Fighting Irish and Buckeyes.

• **Jabrill Peppers, cornerback, Paramus (N.J.) Catholic** – Ohio State earned a commitment from cornerback Eli Apple of Voorhees, N.J., in the 2013 class, and Meyer hopes the Jersey trend continues with Peppers, rated Scout's No. 3 cornerback in the 2014 class. The 6-0, 190-pound prospect has offers from Alabama, Florida, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Rutgers, Stanford, UCLA and many others.



Parris Campbell

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE JUNIORS

• **Damian Prince, offensive tackle, Forestville (Md.) Bishop McNamara** – Finishing his junior season with 91 pancake blocks and no allowed sacks before being named a first-team all-state selection, Prince has become universally known as a top offensive tackle prospect. Rated by Scout the No. 7 offensive tackle in the 2014 class, Prince has more than 30 scholarships to show for it. The 6-6, 305-pounder is still sorting out visits, but Ohio State, Florida State and Alabama are thought to top his early list of favorites.

• **Elisha Shaw, defensive tackle, Tucker, Ga.** – A four-star prospect whom Scout rates the No. 5 defensive tackle in his class, Shaw earned early scholarship offers from Alabama, Florida State, Georgia and Ohio State despite missing his sophomore season due to injury. The Buckeyes were the first program outside the southern United States to offer Shaw a scholarship, and he admitted in early January that he doesn't know much about Ohio State. Meyer is in luck, though, because the 6-4, 293-pound prospect followed that statement with an assurance that he plans to do his homework on the Buckeyes.

• **Brandon Simmons, safety, Arlington (Texas) Mansfield Timberview** – The 6-1, 180-pound safety is rated by Scout the No. 4 safety in the class. Simmons has offers from programs all across the country, including Arizona, Iowa, LSU, Michigan, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Stanford, Tennessee, UCLA, West Virginia and many others. Ohio State and Michigan are among schools that have recently made in-school visits with Simmons.

• **Braden Smith, offensive tackle, Olathe (Kan.) South** – Recruiting the offensive line is Meyer's top priority for the 2014 class, and getting into good positioning with Smith could prove to pay dividends for the Buckeyes. A five-star recruit whom Scout ranks the No. 2 offensive tackle in his class, Smith's scholarship offers are growing at an incredible rate. The Buckeyes were one of the first programs to offer the 6-6, 278-pounder, but he doesn't anticipate making a college decision anytime soon. Other offers have come from the likes of Iowa, Kansas, Kansas State, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Stanford and Texas.

• **Thaddeus Snodgrass, wide receiver, Springfield, Ohio** – A player who was once close to becoming one of Ohio State's first verbals in the 2014 class, Snodgrass has since slowed his recruitment while he continues to accumulate offers. A four-star receiver rated by Scout the No. 23 wideout in the class, Snodgrass has piled up offers from Cincinnati, Georgia Tech, Michigan State, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Penn State and Wisconsin along with many others. The 6-2, 175-pounder has been the recipient of in-person visits from Michigan State, Ohio State, Georgia Tech and Purdue in recent weeks.

• **Donnell Stanley, offensive guard, Latta, S.C.** – Meyer's desire to pluck highly athletic linemen out of the South has been well-documented, and he was successful in signing defensive tackle Michael Hill of Pendleton, S.C., in the 2013 class. The OSU head coach will return to the Palmetto State in 2014, but this time looking on the offensive side of the line. The 6-4, 312-pound Stanley, a four-star prospect rated Scout's No. 1 offensive guard in his class, has scholarship offers from a slew of top SEC programs as well as Notre Dame, Ohio State, USC and many others.

• **Jalen Tarbor, cornerback, Washington (D.C.) Edison Friendship Public Charter School** – The diverse defensive back has started on varsity since his freshman season and is the No. 6 cornerback

in the country according to Scout. The four-star prospect has more than 30 offers from such schools as Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Miami (Fla.), Notre Dame, Ohio State, Tennessee and Virginia Tech, but he recently cut his list of favorites to 13. Michigan and Ohio State both made the cut for the 6-1, 175-pounder.

• **Trevion Thompson, wide receiver, Durham (N.C.) Hillside** – Thompson, a four-star prospect, hails from the same high school that produced current Ohio State linebacker Jamal Marcus. Meyer has been intent upon finding speedy wide receivers who can make opposing defenses miss, but the 6-3, 180-pound Thompson is a big target who can serve as a downfield threat. Ranked by Scout the No. 4 wide receiver in the class, Thompson has scholarship offers from Clemson, Florida, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, South Carolina, Virginia Tech and others.

• **Kyle Trout, offensive tackle, Lancaster, Ohio** – Joining fellow offensive lineman Marcelys Jones as a verbal commitment in the 2014 class, Trout is helping the Buckeyes address what Meyer has con-

sidered a great need. A four-star prospect rated by Scout the No. 16 offensive tackle in the class, the 6-6, 280-pounder had nearly a dozen scholarship offers from such schools as Cincinnati, Illinois, Michigan State, Pittsburgh and West Virginia before pledging Feb. 10 to the Buckeyes.

• **Denzel Ware, outside linebacker, Crestview, Fla.** – The four-star linebacker recently reopened his commitment after thinking twice about an earlier verbal to Florida State. Rated by Scout the No. 3 outside linebacker in his class, Ware (6-2, 215) said he will now likely choose among an offer list that includes Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Florida State and Ohio State.

• **Marquis Ware, outside linebacker, Los Angeles Bishop Mora Salesian** – Ware plays both tight end and linebacker for the Mustangs, but he will concentrate on outside linebacker at the next level. And given that he's rated by Scout the No. 5 OLB in his class, Ware agrees he is more prepared to make a splash on the defensive side of the ball. Having diverse skills won't hurt the 6-2, 210-pounder, though, and his scholarship offer list that includes Arizona, Ohio State, Oregon State,

South Carolina, UCLA and many others is proof of that.

• **Nick Watkins, cornerback, Dallas Bishop Dunne** – Rated by Scout the No. 5 cornerback in his class, Watkins admitted he is still far too overwhelmed by his offer list to consider narrowing it down just yet. Programs such as Alabama, Georgia, LSU, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and UCLA among many others will make the 6-1, 180-pound prospect's ultimate decision even that much more difficult.

• **Damon Webb, cornerback, Detroit Cass Technical** – The second commitment in Ohio State's 2014 class was a special one, particularly because Webb plays for a high school traditionally known for sending prospects to Michigan. Meyer has seemingly made an effort to recruit in his archrival's back yard, and landing Scout's No. 7 junior cornerback is certainly a testament to that effort. A 6-0, 175-pound prospect, Webb said he's still being heavily pursued by Michigan, Michigan State and UCLA, though he is confident he will remain 100-percent committed to the Buckeyes.



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Ohio State, Michigan Top Conference Efforts

By JEFF SVOBODA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The recruiting results turned in by the 12 Big Ten schools looked very familiar to what fans have come to expect in recent seasons.

A couple of schools turned in outstanding efforts, led by Ohio State's top-rated class and Michigan's No. 2 ranking in the Scout.com standings. As in recent years, one school jumped up to turn in a very good class, and this time around it was Nebraska, which checked in at No. 11 in the rankings.

After that, there was a big drop to the next Big Ten school. Illinois finished fourth in the conference with the nation's No. 40 class, with six more schools signing groups that finished within the next 10 spots after the Illini.

"I think you had two at the top that did very well in Ohio State and Michigan, and then Nebraska did very well as well," said Allen Trieu, Midwest recruiting manager for Scout. "The other schools did what they normally do.

You didn't see anybody stray too far, either higher or lower, from what they normally do. I would say in general it was a good year overall for the conference."

All in all, the Big Ten checked in second to the SEC when it came to Scout's conference ratings, largely on the strength of the outstanding classes from Ohio State and Michigan. The average class point total of 2,505 was heavily boosted by OSU's total of 5,121 points and Michigan's 5,112.

Other than OSU and U-M, however, it was hard to find star power. The Buckeyes nabbed eight Scout Top 100 players and the Wolverines inked seven, but the only other Big Ten school to claim any of the nation's top 100 players was Penn State, which picked up two.

Additionally, as has become standard, the league saw many of the best players in the region slip away. Eighteen members of the Scout 100 hail from the Big Ten's nine-state footprint, but only nine of those players signed with members of the conference.

In addition, three of the top four ranked

players in Big Ten country left the league. Linebacker Jaylon Smith of Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Luers – the brother of OSU tailback Rod Smith – was ranked No. 3 in the nation by Scout, but he chose to stay close to home and attend Notre Dame.

Wideout Robert Foster of Monaca (Pa.) Central Valley, the nation's No. 23 prospect, chose Alabama, while Crete (Ill.) Crete-Monee wideout Laquan Treadwell (30th overall) went with Ole Miss.

Only Wexford (Pa.) North Allegheny offensive lineman Patrick Kugler, Scout's No. 27 player, stayed in the Big Ten. He chose Michigan.

Meanwhile, Rutgers and Maryland, schools that will join the Big Ten in 2014, placed among Scout's top 50 recruiting classes. The Scarlet Knights tied for 30th and the Terrapins were 46th.

Capsules of each Big Ten school's recruiting effort for the class of 2013 follow. Schools listed are the player's previous school.

Illinois

Head coach Tim Beckman brought in a 25-member class that Scout ranked 40th in the country and fourth in the league, and he hopes it will help the Fighting Illini bounce back from a 2-10 campaign that included the school's fourth winless Big Ten finish since 1997.

Beckman hopes to see an immediate impact. Five of the players come from the JUCO ranks and have already joined the program, and five others are high-schoolers who have enrolled early.

"We have 10 individuals who are involved in our winter workouts, are involved in going to school and becoming an Illini student, and they've done a fabulous job," Beckman said.

The former Ohio State cornerbacks coach was also proud to say that 15 of the signees hail from inside what his staff calls "Illini Nation," which is within a six-hour radius of Champaign. Five of the players hail from the state of Ohio, though only cornerback Caleb Day of Hilliard Darby in that group boasted an Ohio State offer.

"That's the area that we feel is crucial for the success of any program," Beckman said. "It's always been one of the things that we believed in."

The only four-star member of the class is Bolingbrook, Ill., quarterback Aaron Bailey, whom Scout rated the No. 11 player in the nation at his position. Bailey missed much of his senior campaign with a knee injury, but in 2011 he ran for almost 2,000 yards while leading his team to a state championship.

Trieu said to expect immediate impacts from a pair of the JUCO signees in wide receiver Martize Barr and defensive tackle Abe Cajuste.

Illinois (25 signees)

QB Aaron Bailey, 6-2, 220, Bolingbrook, Ill.; WR

BIG Scout.com Rankings		
Rank	School	Commits
1.	Ohio State	24
2.	Michigan	27
11.	Nebraska	26
40.	Illinois	25
41.	Michigan State	18
42.	Penn State	17
43.	Northwestern	19
48.	Wisconsin	17
49.	Indiana	22
50.	Iowa	21
56.	Purdue	23
73.	Minnesota	22

Martize Barr, 6-0, 190, Council Bluffs (Iowa) Iowa Western Community College; DT Abe Cajuste, 6-3, 290, Victorville (Calif.) Victor Valley College; DB Dillan Cazley, 5-10, 175, Charleston, Ill.; OL Jesse Chadwell, 6-5, 260, Clarkston, Mich.; DL Jarrod Clements, 6-3, 275, Trotwood (Ohio) Madison; DB James Crawford, 6-2, 195, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas; DB Caleb Day, 6-1, 190, Hilliard (Ohio) Darby; DB Christian Dilauro, 6-5, 270, Green, Ohio; DT Bryce Douglas, 6-2, 330, Plainfield (Ill.) Central; DB Jaylen Dunlap, 6-1, 175, Crete (Ill.) Crete-Monee; LB/DB Eric Finney, 6-1, 205, Santa Clarita (Calif.) College of the Canyons; RB Kendrick Foster, 5-9, 190, Peoria (Ill.) Richwoods; WR Michael Hermosillo, 5-11, 200, Ottawa (Ill.) Township; OL Dallas Hinkhouse, 6-5, 275, Council Bluffs (Iowa) Iowa Western Community College; DL Merrick Jackson, 6-2, 320, Belleville (Ill.) Althoff Catholic; DL Paul James III, 6-3, 240, Miami Norland; DB Darwyn Kelly, 6-1, 195, Washington (D.C.) H.D. Woodson; DB Darius Mosley, 5-11, 185, O'Fallon, Ill.; WR Marchie Murdock, 6-1, 180, Mansfield (Texas) Legacy; S Zane Petty, 6-1, 190, Sacramento (Calif.) American River College; OL Austin Schmidt, 6-6, 275, Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy; DL Dawuane Smoot, 6-3, 230, Groveport (Ohio) Madison; WR Dionte Taylor, 6-0, 170, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) University School; TE Tyler White, 6-5, 245, Plainwell, Mich.

Indiana

Indiana head coach Kevin Wilson put together one of the school's best classes in years, a group that included three four-star prospects and earned the No. 49 ranking in the nation.

"We executed our plan very well and are excited about this class," Wilson said. "We are very fortunate to have a good amount of returning starters, but we backed that up with what on paper is a very, very strong class, which is critical in building our program. There is potential to help on the defensive side, up front, at linebacker and on the perimeter."

As Wilson mentioned, immediate help should come on the defensive side of the ball, where the Hoosiers finished last in the Big Ten in rushing yards, total yards and points

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: THE BIG TEN

allowed. The Hoosiers inked 13 defensive players.

All three four-star prospects signed are from Indianapolis and will join the stop troops, and the list is highlighted by safety Antonio Allen, the No. 23 player at his position in the country. He becomes the first incoming Hoosier ever to have played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

The Hoosiers also signed Scout's No. 24 defensive tackle, Darius Latham, and its 33rd-ranked defensive end, David Kenney.

Trieu is also a fan of three-star tight ends Evan Jansen and Danny Friend, while wide receiver Anthony Young is a 10-time Ohio state track champion who owns the indoor state records in the 60-meter and 200-meter dashes.

Indiana (22 signees)

DB Antonio Allen, 5-10, 205, Indianapolis Ben Davis; RB Daryl Chestnut, 5-10, 190, Miami Christopher Columbus; DL Christopher Cormier, 6-2, 315, Yuma (Ariz.) Arizona Western Community College; DL Patrick Dougherty, 6-5, 260, Aurora, Ohio; ATH Chase Dutra, 6-1, 205, Brownsburg, Ind.; DB Rashard Fant, 5-10, 165, Fayetteville (Ga.) Our Lady of Mercy; TE Danny Friend, 6-5, 240, Morris (Ill.) Community; LB Steven Funderburk, 6-5, 231, Council Bluffs (Iowa) Iowa Western Community College; ATH Myles Graham, 6-0, 215, Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna; WR Isaac Griffith, 6-0, 180, Fort Wayne (Ind.) Homestead; DL Jordan Heiderman, 6-3, 280, Council Bluffs (Iowa) Iowa Western Community College; TE Evan Jansen, 6-4, 245, Cincinnati Moeller; DL David Kenney, 6-2, 250, Indianapolis Pike; DL Darius Latham, 6-5, 291, Indianapolis North Central; ATH Clyde Newton, 6-1, 215, Punta Gorda (Fla.) Charlotte; LB Marcus Oliver, 6-1, 220, Hamilton, Ohio; DB Noel Padmore, 5-11, 175, Flowery Branch, Ga.; LB T.J. Simmons, 6-0, 230, Lakeland, Fla.; LB Kris Smith, 6-2, 215, Flowery Branch, Ga.; ATH Laray Smith, 6-0, 185, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Xaverian; DL Maurice Swain, 6-5, 305, LaGrange (Ga.) Troup; WR Anthony Young, 6-1, 175, Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward

Iowa

Iowa's recent struggles appeared to extend into the recruiting realm, as the Hawkeyes finished a lowly 10th in the league and 50th overall in Scout's rankings.

Of course, head coach Kirk Ferentz wasn't going to let that rain on his parade.

"Probably like most coaches, we're certainly excited about the class," Ferentz said. "The first thing I'd like to do is just thank our staff. I think they did a great job throughout the recruiting process, not only in terms of evaluation, but also the actual recruitment -- all the work that goes into that. It's pretty involved and I think the guys really did a tremendous job there."

Despite an 11-12 record the past two seasons, Ferentz said he didn't run into too many concerns about the program on the recruiting trail.

"It's funny. I think players tend to look broader than one season or one game, typically," he said. "And I think we have an awful lot to sell. We felt very confident about selling a lot of positive things about this program and the university."

Still, the Hawkeyes did not sign any four- or five-star players according to Scout, though 15 of the 21 signees are three-star players. Four-star safety Delano Hill flipped to Michigan in December after having been committed to the Hawkeyes.

Offensive lineman Sean Welsh and defensive back Solomon Warfield were invited to the Offense-Defense Bowl, while offensive lineman Colin Goebel and wide receiver Derrick Willies were invited to the International Bowl.

Iowa also signed three-star running back LeShun Daniels Jr., the son of the former Ohio State offensive lineman, as well as Goebel, a

three-star prospect who is the cousin of former OSU defensive lineman Garrett Goebel.

Iowa (21 signees)

DL Nathan Bazata, 6-2, 280, Howells, Neb.; TE Ike Boettger, 6-6, 235, Cedar Falls, Iowa; RB LeShun Daniels Jr., 6-0, 215, Warren (Ohio) Harding; OL Colin Goebel, 6-5, 280, Naperville (Ill.) North; DL Brant Gressel, 6-2, 280, Centerville, Ohio; WR Andre Harris, 6-0, 170, Kirkwood, Mo.; LB Josey Jewell, 6-2, 200, Decorah, Iowa; WR A.J. Jones, 6-3, 190, Dallas South Oak Cliff; LB John Kenny, 6-2, 215, Carmel, Ind.; DB Desmond King, 5-11, 185, Detroit Crockett; WR Derrick Mitchell Jr., 6-1, 190, St. Louis Vashon; RB Jonathan Parker, 5-8, 175, St. Louis Christian Brothers; WR Damond Powell, 5-11, 180, Toledo Rogers; DB Malik Rucker, 6-0, 175, New Hope (Minn.) Cooper; QB Nic Shimonek, 6-4, 196, Corsicana (Texas) Mildred; LB Reggie Spearman, 6-2, 225, Chicago Simeon; ATH Akrum Wadley, 5-11, 170, Newark (N.J.) Weequahic; DB Solomon Warfield, 6-0, 185, Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward; OL Sean Walsh, 6-3, 275, Springboro, Ohio; WR Derrick Willies, 6-4, 205, Rock Island, Ill.; TE Jon Wisniewski, 6-5, 220, West Des Moines (Iowa) Dowling

Michigan

Brady Hoke followed his No. 4 nationally ranked class from last year with an even better effort, as the Wolverines finished a close second to Ohio State in the Big Ten and national standings.

Michigan signed seven Scout 100 athletes, including a quartet of five-star players -- running back Derrick Green (sixth overall), offensive lineman Patrick Kugler (27th), safety Dymonte Thomas (39th) and quarterback Shane Morris (40th).

"I'll be dead honest with you. I don't think as a staff we put a whole lot of stock into those things," Hoke said of the rankings. "I know people are working hard at all those services and that kind of stuff. Personally and as a staff, you have to find guys with a great blueprint who fit that blueprint. I also think that you have guys that are football players, and there's something about a guy being a football player."

Michigan signed six offensive linemen in the class, something the U-M coach said was done on purpose.

"It was very important for us to establish guys who can play at the line of scrimmage the way we want to play Michigan football," Hoke said. "We took four offensive linemen a year ago, and we redshirted all four of those guys. We took six this year and two of them are in school now. For the style of football that we need to play, I think that was important."

The Wolverines inked nine players from Ohio, including five of the top 11 in Scout's rankings. Thomas checks in as the No. 2 player in the state while running back DeVeon Smith ranks third.

Michigan (27 signees)

OL Kyle Bosch, 6-5, 311, Wheaton (Ill.) St. Francis; TE Jake Butt, 6-6, 235, Pickerington (Ohio) North; DE Taco Charlton, 6-6, 249, Pickerington (Ohio) Central; OL David Dawson, 6-4, 282, Detroit Cass Technical; RB Reon Dawson, 6-2, 175, Trotwood (Ohio) Madison; DB Ross Douglas, 5-10, 180, Avon, Ohio; WR Jaron Dukes, 6-4, 197, Columbus Marion-Franklin; OL Chris Fox, 6-6, 297, Parker (Colo.) Ponderosa; LB Ben Gedeon, 6-3, 215, Hudson, Ohio; RB Derrick Green, 5-11, 220, Richmond (Va.) Hermitage; DB Delano Hill, 6-0, 198, Detroit Cass Technical; TE Khalid Hill, 6-2, 230, Detroit Crockett; DT Maurice Hurst Jr., 6-2, 305, Westwood (Mass.) Xaverian Brothers; WR Da'Mario Jones, 6-2, 185, Westland (Mich.) John Glenn; OL Patrick Kugler, 6-5, 280, Wexford (Pa.) North Allegheny; DB Jourdan Lewis, 5-10,

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Continued On Page 26

Nebraska's Pelini Adds Top-15 Recruiting Class

Continued From Page 25

159, Detroit Cass Technical; LB Mike McCray, 6-4, 230, Trotwood (Ohio) Madison; QB Shane Morris, 6-3, 183, Warren (Mich.) De La Salle; DT Henry Poggi, 6-4, 260, Baltimore Gilman School; OL Dan Samuelson, 6-5, 275, Plymouth, Ind.; RB Wyatt Shallman, 6-3, 245, Novi (Mich.) Detroit Catholic Central; RB De'Veon Smith, 5-11, 218, Warren (Ohio) Howland; DB Channing Stribling, 6-2, 170, Matthews (N.C.) Butler; LS Scott Sypniewski, 6-1, 230, Ottawa (Ill.) Marquette; DB Dymonte Thomas, 6-2, 195, Alliance (Ohio) Marlington; OL Logan Tuley-Tillman, 6-7, 307, Peoria (Ill.) Manual; WR Cson'te York, 6-3, 185, Harper Woods (Mich.) Chandler Park Academy

Michigan State

The Spartans inked one of the smallest classes in the Big Ten with only 18 members, but MSU scored enough points in Scout's rating system to place fifth in the league and 41st overall in the nation.

"The chemistry is very, very good," head coach Mark Dantonio said of the class. "None wavered throughout the entire process, and it was very easy this morning to just talk and get up to date with those guys as we have been throughout the recruiting process. I appreciate their trust."

The Spartans pulled in a quartet of four-star athletes, including quarterback Damion Terry. Scout ranks Terry, who had five 300-yard passing games as a senior, the No. 9 signal caller in the class.

"We had him in camp and he can spin it," said Dantonio, who watched starter Andrew Maxwell struggle at QB at times in 2012. "Damian has the physical skills to play at this level right now. Now, the rest of it is up to him and our coaching staff, and obviously he has to fit the situation. A lot of this is timing and opportunity."

MSU also nabbed linebacker Shane Jones of Cincinnati Moeller, Ohio's No. 14 prospect and the highest rated player from the Buckeye State to sign with a Big Ten school other than Ohio State or Michigan.

The other four-star prospects are linebacker Jon Reschke and offensive lineman Dennis Finley.

One notable name belongs to two-star tight end Dylan Chmura, whose father, Mark, played the position at a Pro Bowl level for the Green Bay Packers from 1993-99.

Michigan State (18 signees)

DL James Bodanis, 6-5, 295, Toronto (Ont.) University of Toronto; TE Dylan Chmura, 6-5, 238, Waukesha (Wis.) West; DE Demetrius Cooper, 6-5, 220, Chicago Julian; OL Dennis Finley, 6-6, 270, Detroit Cass Technical; K Michael Geiger, 5-9, 180, Toledo Ottawa Hills; WR Jay Harris, 5-10, 180, Downingtown (Pa.) East; DB Darian Hicks, 6-0, 175, Solon, Ohio; RB Gerald Holmes, 6-1, 175, Flint (Mich.) Carman-Ainsworth; OL Noah Jones, 6-3,

275, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard; LB Shane Jones, 6-1, 225, Cincinnati Moeller; WR Trey Kilgore, 6-1, 180, Cincinnati St. Xavier; DB Jalyn Powell, 6-2, 185, Warren (Ohio) Harding; LB Jon Reschke, 6-2, 230, Bloomfield (Mich.) Brother Rice; DT Deyn Salmon, 6-1, 285, Plant City, Fla.; RB R.J. Shelton, 5-11, 190, Beaver Dam, Pa.; QB Damion Terry, 6-4, 220, Erie (Pa.) Cathedral; ATH Delton Williams, 6-2, 205, Erie (Pa.) Cathedral; CB Justin Williams, 6-1, 180, Port St. Lucie (Fla.) Treasure Coast

Minnesota

The Golden Gophers checked in last in the Big Ten and 73rd in the nation in Scout's rankings, and Minnesota was also last with an average of just 2.36 stars per player.

Head coach Jerry Kill is known for developing players, though, and feels he'll be able to do the same with Minnesota's 23 newest players.

"All I know is I was out on the road recruiting and I know who was recruiting them," he said. "I don't know who ranks them, but I know this: At Northern Illinois, the kids that played in the Orange Bowl – I think we were the last-ranked class every year we were there, but those kids played in the Orange Bowl."

Kill was also pleased with Minnesota's haul of linebackers. The Golden Gophers, who graduated two seniors this past year, replaced them with five signees including three-star in-state player Chris Wipson.

"On our board, we had about eight or nine linebackers who we were going to go after," Kill said. "We're very fortunate that we were able to get five of those young men."

One potential immediate impact player is three-star running back Berkley Edwards, the brother of NFL wideout Braylon Edwards, who played at Michigan.

"He's one of the top 10-12 sprinters in the country," Kill said. "Those things we need. And he's a great fit for us at running back because we got some big backs, but we'd like to have one just to hand it off and it's over – good night. He can do that because he's got that kind of speed."

Minnesota (23 signees)

WR Jeffrey Borchardt, 6-0, 185, Plymouth (Minn.) Wayzata; LB De'Vondre Campbell, 6-5, 225, Hutchinson (Kansas) Community College; WR Eric Carter, 5-11, 185, Lakeland (Fla.) Lake Gibson; QB Michael Conway, 6-5, 205, La Crosse (Wis.) Aquinas; LB Rayfield Dixon, 6-3, 205, Loxahatchee (Fla.) Seminole Ridge; RB Berkley Edwards, 5-9, 190, Novi (Mich.) Chelsea; DL Hendrick Ekpe, 6-5, 230, Lewisville, Texas; OL Chad Fanning, 6-6, 270, Minneapolis DeLaSalle; QB Donovan Jones, 6-3, 190, Hampton (Ga.) Dutchtown; LB De'Niro Laster, 6-4, 230, Cleveland Heights, Ohio; OL Matt Leidner, 6-2, 280, Lakeville (Minn.) South; OL Alex Mayes, 6-5, 285, Van Alstyne, Texas; CB Daletavious McGhee, 6-1, 195, Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove; CB Jalen Myrick, 5-10, 200, Savannah (Ga.) Christian Prep; DL Demaris Peppers, 6-3, 270,

Memphis (Tenn.) Fairley; QB Conor Rhoda, 6-3, 195, St. Paul (Minn.) Cretin-Derham Hall; DL Owen Salzwedel, 6-6, 240, Beaver Dam, Wis.; K Ryan Santos, 6-5, 260, Pace, Fla.; QB Chris Streveler, 6-2, 205, Woodstock (Ill.) Marian Central Catholic; LB Damien Wilson, 6-2, 245, Ellisville (Miss.) Jones County JC; LB Chris Wipson, 6-2, 210, Plymouth (Minn.) Wayzata; WR Drew Wolitarsky, 6-3, 208, Santa Clarita (Calif.) Canyon; TE Nate Vozniak, 6-9, 258, Greenwood (Ind.) Center Grove

Nebraska

The key to the Nebraska class, which ranked 11th in the nation, could be its size – literally.

Head coach Bo Pelini brought in some truly massive prospects, including 6-6 defensive end Randy Gregory, 6-6 offensive lineman Dwayne Johnson, 6-7 offensive lineman Matt Finnin and 6-9 offensive lineman David Knevel. Finnin and Gregory could be instant impact players, according to Trieu.

Overall, Pelini signed five offensive linemen and six defensive linemen, and the latter fact was one of the high points for the head coach.

"If you look at what we have done with our defensive line – six guys this year and four guys last year – that gives us 10 in the last two classes," Pelini said. "I think these guys will make a big difference for our football team and how we play defensively, so I am excited about this group."

Pelini also added two linebackers as he attempts to fix a rushing defense that checked in 90th in the country in 2012. Four-star linebacker Josh Banderas of Lincoln highlights that group.

Four-star running back Terrell Newby, who runs a 4.45 40-yard dash, scored 79 touchdowns the past two seasons in the Los Angeles area.

"With this group we have going forward, our goal this coming year is to win it all," Pelini said. "I think this is a good step forward."

Nebraska signed players from 13 different states as well as Canada.

Defensive back Drake Martinez is the brother of starting quarterback Taylor Martinez.

Nebraska (26 signees)

LB Josh Banderas, 6-2, 220, Lincoln (Neb.) Southwest; TE Cethan Carter, 6-4, 230, Metairie (La.) Archbishop Rummel; DT Malik Collins, 6-2, 285, Kansas City (Mo.) Center; WR Tre'ell Dixon, 6-1, 185, Baldwin (La.) West St. Mary; OL Matt Finnin, 6-7, 305, Glen Ellyn (Ill.) College of DuPage; DB Nathan Gerry, 6-2, 210, Sioux Falls (S.D.) Washington; WR Kevin Gladney, 6-1, 185, Akron Firestone; DE Randy Gregory, 6-6, 230, Yuma (Ariz.) Arizona Western Community College; OL Zach Hannon, 6-5, 295, Kansas City (Mo.) Rockhurst; TE Greg Hart, 6-5, 225, Kettering (Ohio) Alter; OL Dwayne Johnson, 6-6, 275, Bellaire, Texas; DB Boaz Joseph, 6-1, 190, Weston (Fla.) Cypress Bay; OL Chongo Kondolo, 6-4, 290, Fresno (Calif.) City College; OL David Knevel, 6-9, 300, Brantford (Ont.) Pauline Johnson Collegiate; LB Courtney Love, 6-1, 225, Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney; DB Drake Martinez, 6-2, 200, Laguna Beach, Calif.; DT Kevin Maurice, 6-3, 270, Orlando (Fla.) Freedom; LS Gabe Miller, 6-0, 235, Mishawaka (Ind.) Penn; DE Dimarya Mixon, 6-3, 265, Mesquite (Texas) West Mesquite; DE A.J. Natter, 6-5, 240, Milton, Wis.; LB Marcus Newby, 6-1, 210, Gaithersburg (Md.) Quince Orchard; RB Terrell Newby, 5-10, 180, West Hills (Calif.) Chaminade; DB D.J. Singleton, 6-1, 195, Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep; QB Johnny Stanton, 6-2, 220, Santa Margarita (Calif.) Catholic; DB Ernest Shuttles, 6-5, 240, Tampa (Fla.) Gaither; RB Adam Taylor, 6-2, 200, Katy, Texas

Northwestern

Head coach Pat Fitzgerald signed what is becoming his usual class – one that checks in near the middle of the Big Ten and is filled with well-regarded prospects.

The team's 19-member class includes two four-star players and 15 three-star prospects, which allowed it to rank seventh in the conference and 43rd in the country.

"These guys are winners, they're captains, they're leaders," Fitzgerald said. "I think it's a very talented group, very athletic, with great size, and we think we have a quarterback who is really special in the class."

That quarterback is four-star prospect Matthew Altvi, a dual-threat signal caller who should fit the Northwestern offense perfectly. Altvi played in the Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl and finished his prep career with 9,750 passing yards, 2,040 rushing yards and 128 total touchdowns.

The other four-star prospect is running back Godwin Igwebuike, who played his prep ball near Columbus in Pickerington, Ohio, and is ranked the No. 20 player in the state.

Trieu also believes cornerback Keith Watkins II is a sleeper, while wideout Tom Fuessel was an Illinois prep quarterback with elite speed who led Frankfort Lincoln-Way East to the top ranking in one national poll at the end of the regular season.

Seventeen of the prospects committed to Northwestern before their senior year in high school, and the class boasts five Ohioans.

Northwestern (19 signees)

QB Matt Altvi, 6-0, 185, Park Ridge (Ill.) Maine South; OT Sam Coverdale, 6-6, 265, Chagrin Falls (Ohio) Kenston; WR Tom Fuessel, 6-4, 185, Frankfort (Ill.) Lincoln-Way East; CB Matthew Harris, 5-11, 180, La Grange (Ill.) Highlands; RB Godwin Igwebuike, 6-0, 190, Pickerington (Ohio) North; DL Eric Joraskie, 6-4, 260, Mount Carmel, Pa.; OL Blake King, 6-3, 250, Minooka (Ill.) Community; DT Tyler Lancaster, 6-3, 275, Plainfield (Ill.) East; RB Warren Long, 6-0, 180, Union City (Calif.) James Logan; CB Marcus McShepard, 5-11, 185, Cleveland Heights, Ohio; RB Xavier Menfield, 5-10, 190, Chatsworth (Calif.) Sierra Canyon; K Hunter Niswander, 6-5, 210, Peninsula (Ohio) Woolridge; OL Brad North, 6-2, 280, Allen, Texas; S Kyle Quiero, 6-3, 190, Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic; SB Jayme Taylor, 6-4, 225, The Woodlands, Texas; LB Anthony Walker, 6-1, 200, Miami Monsignor Pace; LB Brett Walsh, 6-1, 205, Monrovia, Calif.; CB Keith Watkins II, 5-11, 170, Cincinnati Moeller; WR Macan Wilson, 6-0, 185, Houston Kinkaid

Penn State

Penn State signed 17 players as it begins to deal with massive NCAA scholarship reductions, but head coach Bill O'Brien was able to convince some elite players to join the Nittany Lions program.

At the top of the list are a pair of five-star players – quarterback Christian Hackenberg and tight end Adam Breneman.

O'Brien said Hackenberg, the No. 2 rated quarterback in the nation and the No. 33 player in the country, will be in the running to start right away.

"Any one of our (QB) could be our starting quarterback against Syracuse, no question about it," the PSU coach said. "When you look at our room right now, we feel like we have competitive guys, smart guys, guys that come from good families, guys that are going to work hard in the classroom, and Christian fits right in there. He's a tall guy, accurate arm, strong arm, he's smart, and we feel good."



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Breneman is the No. 42 player in the nation.

The class also includes a pair of four-star players in linebacker Zayd Issah and defensive end Garrett Sickles.

O'Brien said it was hard to recruit with his team limited to 15 scholarships – plus two that count toward last year's number – rather than the usual 25.

"Certainly we lost some kids because of sanctions," he said. "There's no question about it. I'm not going to sit up here and tell you that the sanctions didn't play a factor in some of the guys that we set out to recruit.

"But at the end of the day, all I'm concerned about are the guys that are here. What we talk about as a staff all the time is we're not about collecting talent, we're about building a team."

Penn State (17 signees)

RB Richy Anderson, 5-11, 171, Frederick (Md.) Thomas Johnson; LB Brandon Bell, 6-1, 222, Mays Landing (N.J.) Oakcrest; TE Adam Breneman, 6-4, 230, Camp Hill (Pa.) Cedar Cliff; DE Chris Cothran, 6-5, 235, Newtown (Pa.) Council Rock North; DT Parker Cothren, 6-5, 265, Hazel Green, Ala.; QB Tyler Ferguson, 6-3, 199, Visalia (Calif.) College of the Sequoias; DB Kasey Gaines, 5-10, 160, Loganville (Ga.) Grayson; QB Christian Hackenberg, 6-3, 215, Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy; WR DaeSean Hamilton, 6-1, 182, Stafford (Va.) Mountain View; OG Tanner Hartman, 6-5, 255, Lynchburg (Va.) Christian Academy; LB Zayd Issah, 6-3, 215, Harrisburg (Pa.) Central Dauphin; OG Brendan Mahon, 6-4, 315, Randolph, N.J.; OT Andrew Nelson, 6-5, 295, Hershey, Pa.; DB Neiko Robinson, 5-11, 170, Dothan (Ala.) Northview; DE Garrett Sickles, 6-4, 238, Little Silver (N.J.) Red Bank Regional; DB Anthony Smith, 6-0, 184, Wayne (Pa.) Valley Forge Military Academy; DB Jordan Smith, 5-11, 178, Washington (D.C.) H.D. Woodson

Purdue

Former Ohio State assistant Darrell Hazell didn't have much time to finish Purdue's recruiting class, but he did ink a versatile group ranked 11th in the league and 56th in the country.

"We think it's a unique class," Hazell said. "If you study them, the thing that you see it's a hybrid class where a lot of guys can play different positions. The corners can play safety, the safeties can play corner, there are a lot of linebackers that can put their hand in the dirt, and there are a lot of defensive linemen who can stand up and play on their feet."

The head coach finished strong, adding 12 recruits after he took over the program in early January. Included in that group are four Ohioans as well as New Yorker Keith Byars II, the son of the former Ohio State running back.

"You want to get to know the dog and all those other things in a three-week period, but you couldn't get to know them as much as you liked to," Hazell said about the late rush.

Purdue added some good players at the skill positions. The highest-rated player and the only four-star in the group is running back Dalyn Dawkins, who ran for 18 touchdowns as a senior, while the Boilermakers also got pledges from well-regarded three-star quarterback Danny Etling and running backs David Yancey and Keyante Green.

Purdue (23 signees)

TE Matt Burke, 6-6, 220, West Palm Beach (Fla.) Cardinal Newman; RB Keith Byars II, 5-10, 200, New Berlin (N.Y.) Milford Academy; DB Leroy Clark, 5-10, 175, Miami Archbishop Carroll; DT Johnny Daniels, 6-5, 255, Chicago Foreman; RB Dalyn Dawkins, 5-9, 175, Louisville (Ky.) Trinity; QB Danny Etling, 6-3, 218, Terre Haute (Ind.) South Vigo; LB Danny Ezechukwu, 6-3, 240, Lithonia (Ga.) Arabia Mountain; RB Keyante Green, 5-9, 205, McDonough (Ga.) Eagle's Landing Christian;

DT Ra'Zahn Howard, 6-4, 315, Dawsonville (Ga.) Atlanta Sports Academy; CB Da'Wan Hunte, 5-10, 180, Miami Central; Tyrel Jemison, 5-11, 175, Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Luers; S Austin Logan, 6-0, 190, Tallahassee (Fla.) Florida State University School; DE Antoine Miles, 6-5, 250, Canton (Ohio) McKinley; WR Dan Monteroso, 6-3, 185, St. Clairsville, Ohio; WR Myles Norwood, 6-0, 185, Arlington (Texas) Grace Prep; DE Evan Panfil, 6-5, 240, New Lenox (Ill.) Lincoln-Way Central; LB Dezwan Polk-Campbell, 6-4, 215, Columbus Whetstone; DE Jake Replogle, 6-4, 240, Centerville, Ohio; DE John Strauser, 6-4, 235, Champaign (Ill.) St. Thomas More; LB Johnny Thompson, 6-3, 200, Winder (Ga.) Apalachee; OL Jason Tretter, 6-6, 300, Richfield (Ohio) Revere; RB David Yancey, 5-10, 205, St. John (Ind.) Lake Central; WR Deangelo Yancey, 6-2, 200, Atlanta Mays

Wisconsin

On the day he and his wife settled on a house to buy in Madison, new Wisconsin head coach Gary Andersen announced a 17-member class that ranked eighth in the Big Ten and 48th in the country.

"When we were at the Rose Bowl practices, we locked ourselves in the room and really evaluated the young men that were already committed," Andersen said. "Then we looked at the practices and then we were able to build a sheet of our needs list. I think, for the most part, we were able to (address those needs)."

The two four-star prospects the Badgers signed line up at the skill positions. The class includes running back Corey Clement, the No. 31 player at his position, and wide receiver Robert Wheelwright, a Columbus native who checks in as the No. 28 wideout in the nation and the No. 16 player from Ohio.

The Badgers also bolstered their quarterback competition by bringing in three-star JUCO signal caller Tanner McEvoy. Because of injuries and ineffectiveness, Wisconsin started three different QBs in 2012.

When we sit back and look at the quarterback position and where it sits, there are some very good quarterbacks within this program without question," Andersen said. "And there's an injury factor that's taken place within the quarterback position, which we all know about, and we want to make sure we're going to solidify the numbers and give ourselves the best opportunity to play at a high level each and every week during the season. That was the reason we started looking for a quarterback.

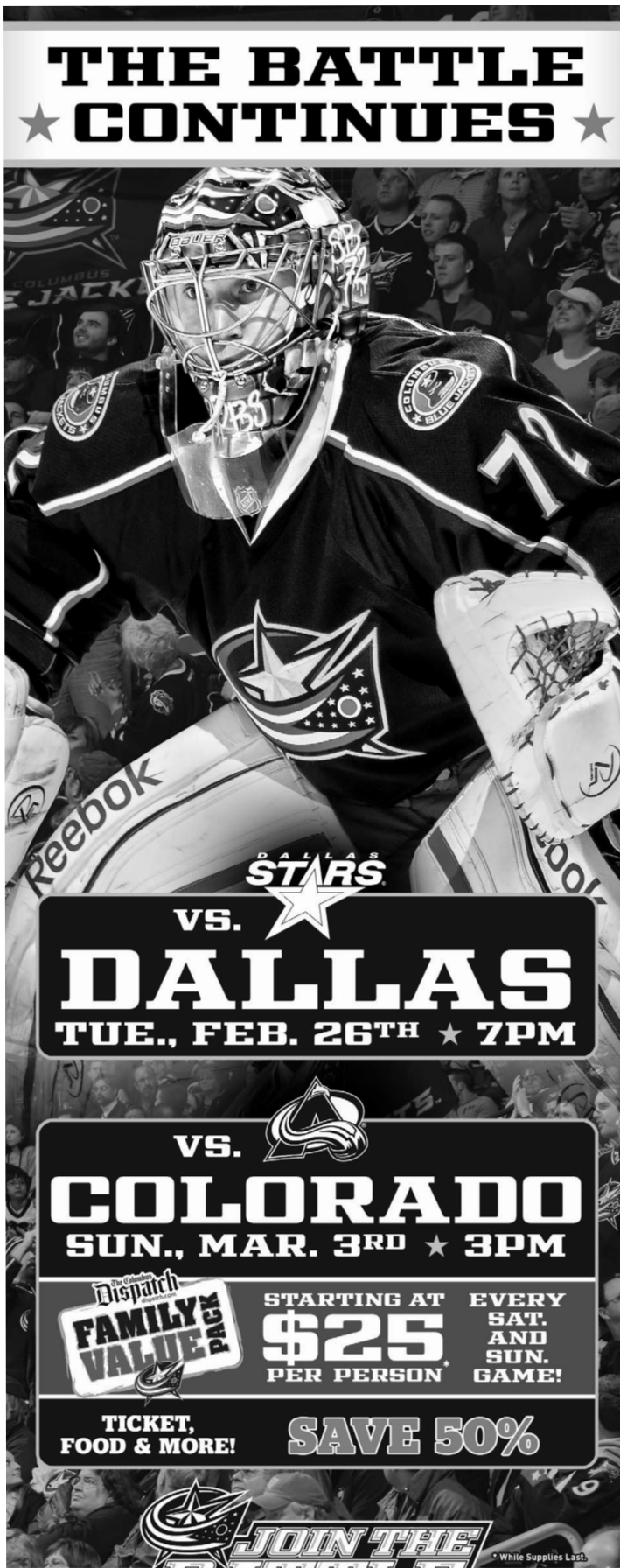
"Overall, we wanted to find one if it was the right fit, but we want to create as much competition as we can at every position."

Andersen also signed three-star tight end T.J. Watt, the brother of former Badgers star defensive lineman J.J. Watt.

While Andersen kept most of Bret Bielema's class together, the coaching changes at UW did result in the school losing four-star safety Tyler Foreman to UCLA.

Wisconsin (17 signees)

OL Hayden Biegel, 6-5, 245, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.; DB Keelon Brookins, 5-11, 185, Oakdale (Minn.) Tartan; RB Corey Clement, 5-11, 210, Glassboro, N.J.; LB Garret Dooley, 6-2, 215, Rochester, Ill.; DB Matt Hubley, 6-2, 205, Waukesha (Wis.) Catholic Memorial; LB Leon Jacobs, 6-4, 220, Santa Clarita (Calif.) Golden Valley; DL Alec James, 6-4, 220, Brookfield (Wis.) East; OL Jackson Keeler, 6-7, 290, Barrington, Ill.; QB Tanner McEvoy, 6-6, 215, Yuma (Ariz.) Arizona Western Community College; OL Matt Miller, 6-5, 265, Toledo St. John's; DL Chikwe Obasli, 6-3, 235, Brookfield (Wis.) Central; WR Jazz Peavy, 6-0, 170, Kenosha (Wis.) Tremper; DB Sojourn Shelton, 5-9, 175, Plantation, Fla.; DB Donnell Vercher, 6-2, 200, Fresno (Calif.) City College; DB Jakkarie Washington, 5-10, 170, Everett, Mass.; TE T.J. Watt, 6-4, 215, Pewaukee, Wis.; WR Robert Wheelwright, 6-1, 179, Columbus Walnut Ridge



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WOODY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Legendary Coach Remains Unforgettable

By MARK REA
Buckeyes Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Two-time All-America end and longtime assistant coach Esco Sarkkinen was once asked to describe Woody Hayes.

"How much time do I have?" Sarkkinen asked.

"Thirty seconds," came the reply.

Sarkkinen laughed for the entire half-minute, later remarking, "You don't describe Woody Hayes in one sentence or one paragraph, and certainly not in 30 seconds. It takes chapter after chapter after chapter."

Although many remember Hayes as gruff and full of bluster, almost blinded to every other facet of his being by the drive to win, the legendary coach was a multifaceted man with a variety of interests on a wide array of topics.

As Ohio State celebrates the 100th anniversary of the legendary coach's birth Feb. 14 with several special events, it is worth remembering the sum of Hayes' life was more than just football. He was a U.S. Navy officer in World War II, a tireless fundraiser for countless charitable causes and a goodwill ambassador for the Ohio State University around the world.

Two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, now president and CEO of the Ohio State University Alumni Association, believes Hayes was much more than just a football coach.

"The first thing that always comes to mind when I remember Coach Hayes is the way he cared about people," Griffin told BSB. "A lot of people say they care about you, but Coach Hayes not only said it, he showed it. His mantra of paying forward, for example – he put that out there for everyone as an example to follow. And what an example it has been."

The Pay Forward Society at Ohio State, made up of donors who have given tens of millions of dollars to the university to help with the construction and/or renovation of athletic facilities, takes its name directly from one of Hayes' favorite sayings: "You can never pay back, but you can always pay forward."

A number of other scholarships at Ohio State bear the coach's name, including the Woody and Anne Hayes 1968 National Championship Athletic Scholarship Fund, which provides or supplements scholarships for former varsity football players, and the Wayne Woodrow Hayes Chair in National Security Studies, a position dedicated to conducting research and educating a new generation in national security studies.

Still, it would be extremely difficult to separate Woody Hayes and college football. They are, after all, synonymous.

"The name Woody Hayes will forever be intertwined with the game of college football – and rightfully so," OSU football historian Jack Park said. "The championships, the great players, the Rose Bowls ... You think of all of those things, and as great as those things are, it barely scratches the surface for a man who accomplished nearly everything there was to accomplish in his chosen profession."

In 28 seasons as head coach of the Buckeyes, Hayes won 205 games, coached 58 All-Americans, captured five national championships and 13 Big Ten crowns and, according to at least one biographer, was "the subject of more varied and colorful anecdotal material than any other coach past or present, including fabled Knute Rockne."

The coach's pearls of wisdom read like scripture for anyone who fancies himself a member of Buckeye Nation.

There was the philosophical: "You win with people."

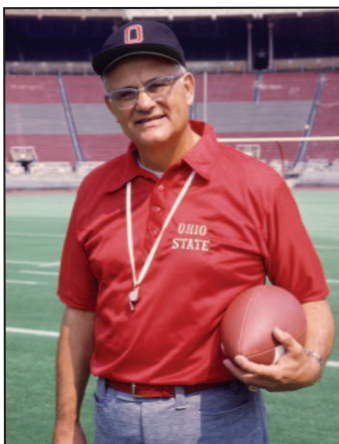
There was the pragmatic: "There's nothing that cleanses your soul like getting the hell knocked out of you."

And the just plain Woody: "Show me a good guy that the players love all the time and I'll show you a loser."

There are also the legendary stories, some of which are so steeped in scarlet and gray lore that whether they are fact or fiction seems meaningless.

One often-told story among former players is the way the coach with his bare hands would destroy his trademark black ballcap or stomp on his wristwatch when things weren't going well during practice. Only years later was it discovered those fits of pique were only for show. The coach not only stocked up during the summer on cheap, dime-store watches, he instructed equipment managers to use razor blades to slice strategic parts of his cap, making it easier for the coach to rip it to shreds.

Other stories deal with Hayes' legendary temper. Wooden chairs were apparently no match for him, as a handful of players learned during one afternoon practice session in the Horseshoe. After the coach became displeased with a particular drill, he trained his focus on a handful of players sitting on chairs around the track. As Hayes stomped toward the group, the players scattered for their lives while the coach turned the chairs into kindling.



FILE PHOTO

REMARKABLE LIFE – Ohio State legend Woody Hayes would have turned 100 years old on Feb. 14.

Then there was the day Hayes split his pants trying to show a kicker what he thought was proper form. Or the time he instructed groundskeepers to turn hoses on the practice field to prepare for less than ideal weather conditions and wound up with a muddy quagmire nicknamed "Lake Hayes" that forced practice indoors on an otherwise perfect afternoon.

Not all of the stories portray the brusque side of the coach, however.

All-America quarterback Rex Kern has often repeated the story of Hayes being stopped one day while shopping in Upper Arlington. A man came up to him and told him how much he and his wife loved the Buckeyes and how he just wanted to shake the coach's hand.

"Well, where is your wife?" Woody asked. "I'd like to meet her."

The man told him she was dying of cancer in Riverside Hospital. That evening, when the man went to visit his wife, the coach was sitting by her bedside.

"I've heard all of those stories and a lot more just like them," said former OSU sports information director Marv Homan, who worked with Hayes throughout the coach's entire 28-year tenure at Ohio State.

"Some of those things have maybe taken on a life of their own over the years. But most of the stories you hear, there is a lot of truth in them. Coach Hayes was such a larger-than-life figure, so it stands to reason most of the stories about him would also seem larger than life."

Everyone Has A Story

From former players and assistant coaches to the everyman on the street, it seems everyone has a Woody Hayes story, but Earle Bruce has more than most.

While he was still a student at Ohio State, Bruce broke into the coaching profession at the behest of Hayes. (See related story, page 31.) Later, after he had become an accomplished high school coach in Ohio, Bruce returned to Hayes' staff in 1966.

But while Bruce, who succeeded his mentor as head coach of the Buckeyes in 1979 and went on to earn election to the College Football Hall of Fame in 2002, has enough fond memories of Hayes to fill a library, there are some things he would just as soon like to forget.

During Bruce's third season as a full-time member of Hayes' staff, the Buckeyes went undefeated during the 1968 regular season and topped things off with a Rose Bowl victory over USC and Heisman Trophy winner O.J. Simpson to win the national championship. But while nearly everyone associated with the team was celebrating the title run, Bruce was miserable.

"Every year during the six years I was an Ohio State assistant, Coach Hayes had one coach selected for his doghouse," Bruce said. "The national championship year of 1968 was my year in the box."

"I got to the point where I would have taken a job flipping hamburgers, that's how bad it was. When Coach Hayes was picking on you, your life was a living hell. Every day of 1968, all day long, was my year of hell."

Things reached such a fever pitch that the young assistant began to entertain malicious thoughts.

"Woody lived in my subconscious," Bruce said. "I frequently had this nightmare that I'd be sitting on top of the practice facility when Woody came to work at 6 o'clock in the morning to look at film. In my dream, I'd drop a concrete block on his head. Oh, my God, I had that dream over and over and over."

"I remember his wife, Anne, was once asked if she'd ever considered divorcing him. 'Divorce? No,' she said. 'Murder? Yes.' I knew what she meant."

Another member of Ohio State's 1968 staff – often called the greatest accumulation of coaching talent in college football history – has similar memories.

College Football Hall of Fame coach Lou Holtz was a first-year assistant with the Buckeyes in '68, and the defensive backs coach made an early impression on his new boss.

"My first staff meeting, I'm smoking a pipe," Holtz remembered. "Somebody said I'd better put it out because, in his words, 'Coach Hayes will make you swallow it.' So Coach Hayes comes in and sees me and he said, 'What are you doing?' And I said, 'I'm enjoying my pipe.' And he said, 'You couldn't work for Paul Brown because Paul Brown says anybody that smokes a pipe is lazy and complacent.'"

"Well, I said, 'That's why you're smarter than Paul Brown because you don't believe that.' And I smoked the pipe the whole time I was there."

Still, Hayes managed to make a lasting impression on Holtz later that same day, using a totally different approach.

"At that same staff meeting, he got mad and he threw the (film) projector through the window – right through the glass-door window there," Holtz said. "From then on, it was chained to the table. He claimed it was chained so nobody could take it away, but I think (athletic director Richard) Larkins probably chained it."

"Later that day, there was a near fistfight between Coach Hayes and an assistant coach that had to be broken up. It had to do with academics, I think, but I walked out of there thinking, 'What in the world have I gotten myself into?'"

That Hayes would get into a heated discussion about academics wasn't at all that unusual. Walt Adamkosky, an Ohio State alumnus who wrote the stage play "Woody: His Life, Times and Teachings," said the coach stressed academics above all else.

"What surprises most people about Coach Hayes is that he saw himself as an educator



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WOODY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Hayes Special Issue To Be Posted Online

Buckeye Sports Bulletin will celebrate the 100th birthday of legendary head coach Woody Hayes on Feb. 14 by posting the complete 24-page Hayes commemorative issue that was published in 1987, the year of the coach's death.

The issue features stories

from not only the BSB staff, but from Hayes' close friend, the late Columbus Dispatch reporter Paul Hornung, as well as Ohio State historian Jack Park.

Included are comments from such diverse people as then OSU athletic director Rick Bay, local politicians and former Hayes players Greg Lashutka and Ben Espy, sports journalists Dick Fenlon and Jimmy Crum, former OSU president Ed Jennings, and Buckeyes Archie Griffin, Bill Jobko, Rex Kern, Mike Sensibaugh and Chris Spielman.

The commemorative issue will be posted

on Hayes' birthday and will be available for free to all current Buckeye Sports Bulletin print subscribers.

If you are not already enjoying BSB's electronic offerings, please email your name, address, phone number and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send back simple instructions on how to access the Hayes Issue, as well as our 36 additional electronic issues and also the complete print version of BSB on Mondays during football season and Tuesdays the rest of the year.

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first, even ahead of being a football coach," Adamkosky said. "He viewed coaching as teaching and the gridiron was his classroom."

Griffin agreed, remembering that throughout his recruiting process Hayes would often discuss academics more than football.

"The first time we ever had dinner, he never once mentioned football," Griffin said. "All he talked about was school and getting an education. When he left, I told my father I didn't think he wanted me to play football for him because he never said one thing about it."

"My father, who wanted me to go to Ohio State for sure, just said, 'Well, don't you think that just means he cares about you as a person and not just a football player?' I had never thought of it like that, and I didn't know it at the time, but my father was right."

The emphasis on academics wasn't merely a talking point during the recruiting process, either.

"He stayed on us all the time about school," Griffin said. "He had assistant coaches pay attention to what you were doing in the classroom, but he was also hands-on about it. He knew all the professors and spent a lot of time at the Faculty Club, so when you came to practice, he would already know how you'd done in any particular class."

"He would sit down at the table with you at lunch and ask how things were going in school, and you had better be honest with him because he already knew the answer. You weren't going to pull the wool over his eyes."

As a result of his emphasis on academics, the vast majority of Hayes' players earned their degrees from Ohio State.

There were occasionally those who did not graduate, however. Many went on to play in the NFL or were successful securing jobs in other professions – more than a few thanks to a letter of recommendation from Hayes. Still, they never escaped their old coach's reach.

"He was always after players who hadn't quite gotten enough credits to graduate," Park said. "Some of them had been working for years and were in their 30s, but that didn't matter. He badgered them to get that degree, and it's my understanding he could be downright nasty about it. He would tell them, 'I'm personally taking you to the registrar's office. I'll see you at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning in my office,' and then throw the phone down."

"I don't think there has ever been a

football coach who realized the importance of academics like Coach Hayes – not just in terms of keeping your eligibility while you were playing for him, but what that degree did for you later in life."

Unparalleled Achievements

The nearly three decades that Hayes held court at Ohio State featured some of the highest points in the program's 123-year history.

After posting a rather pedestrian 16-9-2 record during his first three seasons, Hayes celebrated the first of his national championships in 1954 with a perfect 10-0 mark that included a 20-7 victory over USC in the Rose Bowl.

Three years later, the 1957 team shook off a season-opening loss to TCU and charged to the national championship thanks to nine straight wins to close the season. Included in that streak were wins over fifth-ranked Iowa, No. 19 Michigan and a highly-regarded Oregon team in the Rose Bowl.

Hayes and his team were poised for another trip to Pasadena following the 1961 season, but the university's faculty council voted against accepting a Rose Bowl invitation and the Buckeyes had to settle for only the United Press International's share of the national championship.

That was a bitter pill for Hayes to swallow, and the faculty vote was used against him and his program for several years on the recruiting trail. As a result, the coach was forced to rethink his strategy, something that led him to expand his recruiting focus into the high schools of Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. That change in strategy ultimately laid the groundwork for what many consider the finest recruiting class in school history – the 1967 class that eventually became known as the "Super Sophomores."

That class, which featured such stars as Kern, Jack Tatum, John Brockington and Jim Stillwagon, became the backbone of the 1968 national championship team and touched off a resurgence in Ohio State football.

Between 1967 and 1969, the Buckeyes had a school-record winning streak that eventually reached 22 games. From 1972 through 1977, the team earned six consecutive Big Ten championships or co-titles, a conference record streak. And in the middle of that streak, Ohio State became the first Big Ten team to appear in four straight Rose Bowls, and Griffin became college football's only two-time Heisman Trophy winner.

But while the accolades kept coming and the victories continued to pile up one after another, Ohio State never again won a consensus national championship during Hayes' tenure. The 1970 team was awarded a version of the title by the National Football Foundation, but several seasons during the later stages of the coach's career were marred by a single defeat that cost Hayes as many as three or four more national championship rings.

And then came the 1978 season, a campaign that ended in disaster.

During the final moments of what was an eventual 17-15 loss in the Gator Bowl, Clemson middle guard Charlie Bauman grabbed a game-clinching interception and headed upfield with the football before being forced out of bounds in front of the Ohio State bench. As Bauman popped to his feet, he stood facing the sideline with the football in his left hand. A split-second later, a national television audience watched as Hayes suddenly appeared and struck the Clemson player, throwing a right foreman just below Bauman's face mask.

In the blink of an eye, Hayes' career was over. University officials had no choice but to fire the 65-year-old coach, who returned to Columbus and remained in seclusion for several weeks.

In the meantime, Ohio State conducted a search for his successor. Holtz was the early favorite, but he decided to remain head coach at Arkansas. The university eventually settled on Bruce, who had been head coach at Iowa State.

On the evening before Bruce was formally introduced as Hayes' successor, he received a phone call from his old boss and mentor.

"I was struck by how upbeat he sounded," Bruce said. "He said he was happy that I'd been chosen and he would be there for me whenever I needed support. That was a gracious gesture and gave me a great feeling about coming to Ohio State."

An Everlasting Icon

Despite how his coaching career came to an end, Hayes continued as a revered figure at Ohio State for the remainder of his life. He was made a professor emeritus by the university and retained an office in the old Military Science building, just a short walk from Ohio Stadium.

In 1983, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. That same year, he became one of only a handful of "civilians" to dot the "I" in Script Ohio when he performed the honor at halftime of the homecoming game against Wisconsin.

That appearance was made even more special by the fact Hayes wore one of his trademark black ballcaps and made a conscious effort to salute the American flag as well as the fans assembled in Ohio Stadium that day. The coach said years later that wearing the ballcap was not his idea, while saluting the flag was a spur-of-the-moment thing.

Just six days before Hayes was to dot the "i," more than 240 U.S. servicemen – including 220 Marines – lost their lives when terrorists detonated two truck bombs at the Marines barracks in Beirut, Lebanon.

In his book "Woody Hayes: A Reflection," longtime Columbus Dispatch sportswriter Paul Hornung wrote, "On the way down to the field, he thought about saluting the flag, especially since that national symbol he loved and respected so much flew that day at half-mast to honor the Marines who had died in a terrorist bombing in Lebanon."

As far as the ballcap was concerned, that was the idea of professors at the Faculty Club.

"They had asked me (the Friday before the game) if I was going to wear the baseball cap," Hayes recalled later. "I hadn't thought of it, but they said I had to do it. So I went down to (longtime equipment manager) John Bozick, got a cap and wore it."

The rest is simply another iconic picture of Hayes – clad in a scarlet sports coat and gray slacks – striding confidently onto the Ohio Stadium turf one more time. The coach shakes hands with drum major Bruce Hart and then turns to salute the flag. Hayes then turns to the home sideline, tips his cap and takes a well-deserved bow.

"When you get recognition like that, or any reward," Hayes said the next day, "you start looking back at all the people who have had a part in it – your players, your coaches, the administration, the university, the fans."

"I found out that I did become emotional out there yesterday because I thought of all the great victories we've had and all the great people we've had. It makes you realize how doggone lucky you are."

Hayes suffered a heart attack in 1985 and his health began to deteriorate. One of his final public appearances occurred March 14, 1986, when Ohio State awarded him with an honorary Doctorate of Humanities degree. During commencement ceremonies, a frail Hayes gave a heartfelt speech that stressed the value of education, the worth of a diploma and the need for good acts in the community. It resonated with even his harshest critics.

"Today," he began, "is the greatest day of my life. I appreciate so much being able to come here and talk to a graduating class at The Ohio State University – a great, great university."

A year later, almost to the day, the coach was gone. Hayes died March 12, 1987, at the age of 74.

"That news just hit me like a bomb," Griffin said. "Everyone knew he had been sick, but it was still a shock. I remember it like it was yesterday. I was driving to work that morning, and I had to turn around and go back home. I had to collect my thoughts and just get myself together."

Some 15,000 people attended a memorial service at Ohio Stadium in his honor, and among the mourners at the funeral was former U.S. President Richard Nixon, who gave a touching eulogy.

"God, I miss that man," Kern said. "The day he died was the saddest day of my life. Even now, it brings great sorrow to me."

More than a quarter-century after his death, Hayes remains the iconic figure he was in life. And he continues to inspire debate, especially when those who knew him best discuss how he might fare in today's game.

Several of his former players espouse the view that Hayes would not or could not conform to the socially-driven media of the modern age. But others believe the coach's strengths would transcend any era.

"I think he would be even better today than when I played by virtue of his organization and discipline," All-America offensive tackle John Hicks said. "I think the kids would love him even more. I find today that people want that kind of discipline and leadership."

Hicks is not alone in that assessment. "Coach Hayes was about the old-fashioned values of education, hard work and paying forward," Adamkosky said. "It's about how to be a success in life – on and off the field. And if that sounds corny today, the undeniable fact is it still works."

"(His) messages never go out of style. And they may be more relevant – and needed – today than ever."

WOODY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Hayes Earned His Shot To Coach Buckeyes

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

The story of the man who built the Ohio State football program into a major powerhouse began in humble surroundings.

Wayne Woodrow Hayes was born Feb. 14, 1913, to Wayne Benton and Effie Jane Hayes in the tiny town of Clifton, Ohio, a small village near Springfield on the border of Greene and Clarke counties.

His family moved to Selma, Ohio, when Hayes was 2 after his father took the position of superintendent of schools. Five years later, the family moved again, this time to Newcomerstown, Ohio, when his father accepted a job as school superintendent there. Hayes and his two siblings – brother Isaac, who was two years older than Woody, and sister Mary, eight years Woody's senior – lived in a white frame house overlooking what was left of the historical Ohio Canal.

As a youngster, Hayes mowed lawns and delivered newspapers to earn extra money but spent most of his spare time reading. It was a pastime that served him well later in life as he became a noted historian, especially on military history.

His father had studied at six different colleges or universities before earning his degree at Wittenberg University, and Hayes understood the value of a college education. In his book "You Win With People," the coach described his favorite teacher, Clyde Bartholomew, who taught Hayes in the sixth and seventh grades.

"He taught English so thoroughly," Hayes wrote, "that from that time forward I never had any difficulty with it, and I ended up with a major in English."

There was also time for sports as well. Hayes professed to be a good football player but not a great one. Nevertheless, he captained his high school team in Newcomerstown and played basketball and baseball as well.

Woody graduated from high school and enrolled at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, and went out for the Big Red football team. He was a hard-nosed, 200-pound tackle on a team that wasn't very good. Denison posted a 2-6 record during Hayes' sophomore season and a 2-5-1 record the following year.

By his senior season, he had switched to the center position and the Big Red finished 6-1-1 under head coach George Rich.

Hayes was a three-time letterman at Denison from 1932-34, but he also excelled in academics. He majored in history and English and briefly considered a law career before giving up on that dream. With the country in the midst of the Great Depression, pursuing a law degree was financially impossible, so Hayes decided to become a high school teacher and football coach.

His first job was as an English teacher and assistant football coach at Mingo Junction, Ohio, a tough little town on the Ohio River across from the West Virginia panhandle and just south of Steubenville. Woody later wrote how that first year of teaching and coaching had a tremendous influence on him.

"I taught seventh grade with supposedly slow learners," he said. "But they weren't. Those youngsters were merely *neglected* learners."

After one year at Mingo Junction, Hayes accepted a job as history teacher and assistant coach in New Philadelphia, Ohio. During the summer between his Mingo Junction and New Philadelphia assignments, Woody decided to enroll in graduate school at Ohio State. He wanted to enter law school but found there were no summer sessions. Instead, he decided he would follow in his father's footsteps and get his master's degree in educational administration.

The following summer, while attending graduate school classes, Hayes met another young coach, Paul Brown, who was then head coach at Massillon High School. The two devoted countless hours to talking football and forged a friendship that would last the rest of their lives.

Hayes spent three seasons as a line coach on Johnny Bricksels' staff at New Philadelphia before succeeding Bricksels as head coach in 1938. His first two teams with the Quakers won 18 of 19 games before graduation took a heavy toll and his 1940 squad went just 1-9.

Like most other young men of the era,

Hayes enlisted in the military as World War II was brewing. He attended the U.S. Navy's officers' training school and rose to the rank of lieutenant commander, eventually commanding a ship during the Palau Islands invasion in the Pacific and the destroyer-escort USS Rinehart in both the Atlantic and Pacific operations.

When the war was over in 1945, Hayes pondered his future. He had married the former Anne Gross in 1942, and the couple had a young son, Steven, and he needed a job. Woody thought about returning to New Philadelphia, but a letter from his alma mater settled things.



Woody Hayes

Tom Rogers had been an assistant coach at Denison when Hayes played there, and Rogers had taken over the head coaching position in 1935. The university had briefly suspended the football program during World War II and was having trouble getting it started back up again. Rogers, who had left the program in 1941, wanted to know if Hayes was interested in returning to Denison to become head

coach.

Woody eagerly accepted the offer and began what would be a long and colorful college coaching career.

With the war just over, Hayes had to start from scratch, and Denison struggled through a 2-6 season in 1946. The following year, with basically the same roster, the Big Red marched to a perfect 9-0 record and then followed with an 8-0 mark in 1948. During those two seasons, Hayes began to perfect his coaching philosophy, and his team responded by averaging 32.4 points per game on offense while allowing a scant 6.3 points on defense.

The 1947 and '48 seasons were the first and only undefeated seasons in Denison football history, a program that began play in 1889.

Those two unbeaten seasons also helped put Hayes on the coaching fast track. He took over the program at Miami University in 1949, and after a 5-4 record that first year, the Redskins posted a 9-1 mark in 1950 and

won the Mid-American Conference championship. Miami finished that season with a 34-21 victory over Arizona State in the Salad Bowl (the precursor to today's Fiesta Bowl), and Hayes was a hot commodity again in the coaching market.

One month after his team's bowl win, Woody was on the move again. This time, though, he was headed for Ohio State – a place that was rapidly getting the reputation as being "The Graveyard of Coaches."

Not OSU's First Choice

Former three-time All-American Wes Fesler was hired as head coach of the Buckeyes in 1947 amid tremendous fanfare from Scarlet and Gray alumni. They welcomed Fesler back to Columbus as a favorite son and conquering hero after his playing days in 1928, '29 and '30 had produced tough defenses and a pair of victories over archrival Michigan.

But while Fesler enjoyed some success as head coach at his alma mater, including guiding Ohio State to its first-ever Rose Bowl victory following the 1949 season, an 0-3-1 record against Michigan during his four years quickly soured fans. The breaking point came after the 1950 rivalry game, now known as "The Snow Bowl." Fesler had called for a controversial third-down punt late in the first half, and when Michigan blocked the kick and recovered it in the end zone, it provided the winning points in a 9-3 Wolverines victory.

Fesler was roundly criticized for the decision to punt, and a few weeks later, he bitterly and abruptly resigned, leaving OSU looking for its fifth new head coach in just 10 seasons.

In reality, Fesler's resignation came just one step ahead of a pink slip from the university, which had already picked out his successor.

OSU athletic director Richard Larkins had focused his attention on luring Don Faurot away from Missouri. Ten years earlier, when Larkins was working under longtime Ohio State AD Lynn St. John, Faurot was a finalist for the job when it went to Brown.

Faurot was a native Missourian who had played his college football in Columbia in the mid-1920s. He had returned to the Tigers as head coach in 1935 and had compiled a fine 78-44-8 record that included a couple of Big Eight championships. During that time, he devised a new kind of offensive formation that allowed for multiple options out of the same alignment. It was the Split T formation, and Faurot is credited for its invention.

Despite all he had accomplished, Faurot was 48 and beginning to wonder what the world was like outside Missouri. He was intrigued by the possibilities of coaching at Ohio State, especially since the Buckeyes had the reigning Heisman Trophy winner in Vic Janowicz returning for his senior season.

If he was ever going to make a career move, now was the time.

In Columbus, Larkins coordinated a six-man search committee that selected a number of candidates for Fesler's vacated spot, but the interview process was supposed to be a mere formality. When Faurot met with the selection committee, he was immediately offered the job.

He accepted and went home to Missouri to clean out his office.

Less than 48 hours later, however, as Larkins was preparing to call a news conference to announce the hiring of Faurot as the Buckeyes' new head coach, his office

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WOODY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

telephone rang. It was Faurot calling to say he had changed his mind. He was staying at Missouri.

With spring football only a few weeks away, Ohio State officials quickly reorganized and settled on a field of seven finalists – one professional coach, four coaches from the college ranks and two Ohio high school coaches.

The pro coach, of course, was Brown, who had previously coached the Buckeyes from 1941 to 1943 and produced the school's first national championship in 1942. He had already flirted with returning to Ohio State following World War II but instead took a job as head coach of the Cleveland Browns. The coach had led the Browns to championships in each of his first five seasons in Cleveland – four in the All-America Football Conference and the 1950 crown in the NFL.

Brown was the hands-down favorite of Ohio State fans and students to replace Fesler. Approximately 1,500 fans cheered his arrival in Columbus for a meeting with the search committee in late January, a meeting during which Brown reportedly told Larkins that he was "anxious to leave professional football."

Larkins was not swayed, however. The AD later revealed that a number of influential Columbus businessmen did not want Brown to return. They felt he had reneged on a deal to return to Ohio State after the war and signed with Cleveland without notifying the university.

Nevertheless, newspaper reports continued to trumpet Brown as the front-runner for the vacancy. Also receiving formal interviews were OSU freshman coach Harry Strobel, Cincinnati head coach Sid Gillman, Warren Gaer of Drake and Hayes as well as high school coaches Chuck Mather of Massillon and Jim McDonald of Springfield.

In early February, the field had reportedly been pared to three – Brown, Mather and Hayes with Strobel as a possible dark-horse candidate. Brown was the choice of the fans and Mather was backed by the Ohio High School Coaches Association. Meanwhile, Strobel was the original choice of the athletic department, but Hayes had supplanted him after a stellar interview.

An announcement was to be made around Feb. 14 – Hayes' 38th birthday – but all seven members of the Ohio State Board of Trustees had to agree on the new coach and the university couldn't seem to get the entire panel together at the same time. In the meantime, the six-man search committee and 12-member athletic board had settled on Hayes.

The official decision was postponed for another week as speculation ran rampant. What if Hayes was rejected by the trustees? Would the athletic board then throw its support behind Strobel, or would some back-room maneuvering pave the way for Brown to return to Columbus after all?

While speculation continued to surround the coaching search, Ohio State football itself was being adversely affected. Dick Syzmanski, a high school All-America lineman from Libbey High School in Toledo, switched his allegiance from the Buckeyes and decided to enroll at Notre Dame. At the same time, the annual Big Ten meetings were rapidly approaching, leading some to suggest long-time assistant Ernie Godfrey be named "pro-tem coach" so that the Buckeyes could be properly represented.

The OSU Board of Trustees finally got together to end the speculation on Feb. 18, a Sunday afternoon. Thanks to an impassioned speech from Sen. John W. Bricker, the board formally hired Hayes as the university's 19th head football coach. Hayes received a one-year, \$12,500 contract in accordance with

Injury, Call From Woody Sent Bruce On Coaching Path

If it hadn't been for Woody Hayes and his do-the-right-thing character, Earle Bruce might have joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In 1949, Bruce finished a high school career at his native Cumberland, Md., as a star running back and track star. As a prepster in Maryland, Bruce was a 5-9, 155-pound speed demon who never lost a 20-yard dash in three years of high school. He was beaten only once in the 100.

That kind of speed got him noticed by college football coaches, and Bruce always figured he would go to his home-state school of Maryland. But he was turned off by a meeting with Terrapins head coach Jim Tatum and decided to explore other options. Bruce went with a teammate on an official visit to Ohio State where he met head coach Wes Fesler.

Two things impressed the youngster about Fesler – the coach called him by his childhood nickname "Lefty" and later sent him a telegram on his birthday. That was all Bruce needed to make up his mind.

He spent the 1950 season on the Ohio State freshman team, trying to learn Fesler's single-wing offense. At the end of the season, Bruce sat in frigid Ohio Stadium as the Buckeyes lost a 9-3 decision to Michigan in what has become known as the Snow Bowl. A few weeks later, Fesler resigned and Hayes was named his replacement.

Bruce was still down the depth chart at halfback, behind such notables as reigning

Heisman Trophy winner Vic Janowicz, and expected that he would be moved to flanker or a receiver position to take advantage of his speed.

Then in August 1951, about a month before the Buckeyes' season opener against SMU, Bruce was taking part in practice drills when he slipped on the grass and twisted his knee.

At first, team trainers believed the injury was a simple muscle pull. But several days later, the pain had yet to subside and Bruce sought a second opinion. He had suffered cartilage damage to the joint, and the meniscus had been torn away from the bone.

"Now, the knee probably could have been saved," Bruce said. "Back then, it was a career-ending event."

Knowing he was no longer of use to the Buckeyes, Bruce packed his bags and returned home to Cumberland. By the time he got there, Hayes had already called and left a message with Bruce's mother – get your carcass back to Columbus, finish your education and help coach the team.

"In those days, once you were hurt, you were done," Bruce said. "You had to forfeit your (scholarship). So, I asked my mom if she got the message correct. She assured me she had, so I went back to Columbus."

Bruce rejoined the team as a student assistant with no formal title. As he continued his education, he wasn't thinking about coaching as a profession. He was considering law school and a career with the FBI.



Earle Bruce

But when he began enjoying his role on the coaching staff, Bruce decided to transfer out of OSU's Arts College and into Health and Physical Education.

"Staying in school and helping coach was a great opportunity," he said. "Coaching wasn't like work. Woody's staff made it look like fun. Their influence, coupled with the great high school coaches I had, became the deciding factor in choosing to coach. I wanted to be like them."

Bruce graduated from Ohio State in 1953 and landed his first paying coaching job as an assistant at Mansfield (Ohio) High School. He would later become head coach at three high schools in Ohio – Salem, Sandusky and Massillon – before returning to Columbus in 1966 to rejoin Hayes' staff.

Bruce became a college head coach in 1972 and served stints at five different schools over the next two decades including nine seasons at Ohio State from 1979-87 during which the Buckeyes posted an 81-26-1 record. Overall, Bruce had a 154-90-2 record as a college head coach and took four different schools to bowl games where he had a 12-5 record.

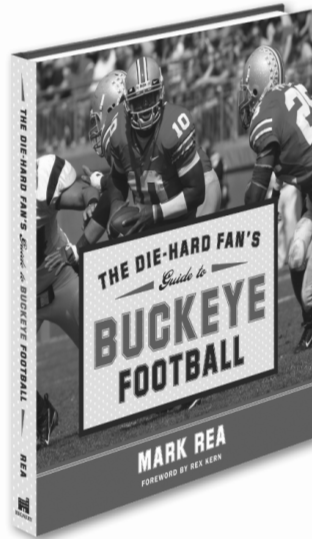
In 2002, he received one of the sport's highest honors when he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. Bruce is one of only six former Ohio State coaches in the hall – John W. Wilce, Francis A. Schmidt, Howard Jones, John Cooper and Hayes are the others.

Not bad for a guy who didn't even consider becoming a coach until being coaxed into it.

– Mark Rea

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