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Smith Recaps Year

Success, Change Big Part Of 2013-14 At Ohio State

By JEFF SVOBODA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

In many ways, 2013-14 was business as usual for the Ohio State athletics department.

The football team won all 12 games on the regular-season schedule for the second consecutive year, while the men's basketball program continued its streak of NCAA Tournament appearances. Some of Ohio State's other 34 varsity sports put together impressive accomplishments, and the Buckeyes again had a strong year in the classroom.

But it was also a year of change for Ohio State, and not just in sports such as women's basketball and men's hockey where first-year head coaches Kevin McGuff and Steve Rohlik got their feet wet and skippered impressive postseason performances.

Ohio State hired a new president – UC Irvine chancellor Michael Drake, who took over July 1 – and athletics director Gene Smith signed a contract extension that will keep him at the school through 2020. In addition, continued attacks on the college athletics system kept Smith and his fellow administrators across the country busy.

Smith was willing to discuss these topics and more when he sat down at the Fawcett Center with BSB in late June to discuss the state of his department and other issues.

Recapping the athletics year, Ohio State received plenty of standout performances, including a school-record 24-game win streak by the football program. The rowing team repeated as NCAA champions, while the pistol program won its second national title and the men's tennis team won the ITA national indoor championship.

Women's golf returned to the top 10 in the nation, where it was joined by football, men's tennis, fencing, men's gymnastics, wrestling and synchronized swimming. In addition, the women's lacrosse team made its first NCAA tournament appearance in 11 years.

However, it wasn't enough for the school to have a good year in the standings of the Directors' Cup, the yearly trophy that tabulates the on-field success of a school across all of its sports. The Buckeyes dropped from last year's finish of 16th all the way to 25th this season, its worst standing since the inception of the trophy in 1993-94.

THE INTERVIEW ISSUE

With all that in mind, Smith had a lot to talk about when he met with BSB. What follows is a partial transcript of our in-depth question-and-answer session with the director of athletics.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin: From your perspective, as you look back on this year, how do you feel about how it went?

Gene Smith: "It went great. We had a great year. We graduated 195 athletes over the year and then we had 329 Academic All-Big Ten honorees, and that's the second highest in our history, so it was a great year. Competitively, we had a lot of people that did well, a lot of teams did well.

"Having our rowing team win back-to-back national championships was phenomenal. The football team had a great

year even though we didn't finish as strong as we all had hoped. Men's basketball, I think Thad (Matta) did one of his best coaching jobs ever in a tough situation. I think he managed that extremely well. Recruiting has been phenomenal. I think Kevin McGuff, our women's coach, transitioned in well with the smaller numbers and injuries and so on, and I think he got a lot of great experience for those young ladies and set a great foundation for the future.

"You look at it, I think we had six coaches that received national coach of the year recognition. Women's golf, it's unbelievable the job Therese Hession does. Women's tennis got better, moved up the rankings, so it was a good year when you think about it overall."

BSB: In the Directors' Cup, you finished 25th. You want to be top five, top two, even top one.

Smith: "We have to win that bad boy from Stanford."

BSB: Does finishing 25th worry you?

Smith: "It doesn't worry me. We should strive to be in the top five. We certainly shouldn't be in the 20s. That's now who we are. You have to take into consideration where every individual program is. Certain sports didn't go deep enough in the postseason so those points we usually rack up, we just weren't able to achieve. Every coach knows that, but it's not like the end all, be all. It's just one of those indicators we have to constantly look at because we should be up there. There's five schools in the Big Ten ahead of us, and that shouldn't happen."

BSB: You mentioned it was one of Thad's best coaching jobs. Seeing it from your perspective, what was so impressive about what he did this year?

Smith: "We had a mix of such great kids, but it was challenging at some positions. We've been blessed over the years, we always have had that offensive go-to guy. We had Deshaun (Thomas), who was our most recent guy that had just unreal offensive talent in a lot of situations. We had Jared Sullinger before that, we had Mike Conley and Greg Oden, we had Evan Turner.

"We always had that one go-to, clutch guy, and we just didn't really have that (this year). Being on the basketball committee, loving this sport and having watched it over the years, to be where we need to be, you have to have one of those guys that offensively is the ball hog – 'Give it to me, I'm going to score one way or the other.'"

"I thought what Thad did understanding that we did not necessarily have that, trying to put our young men in a position where they could be as strong as they could be, he did a great job. It's hard to get guys to be all in defensively like they were. Who wanted to play us? Defensively we were pests. I thought he did a marvelous job of holding them together and not letting them fall apart. We went probably as far as we could, so I was proud of them."

BSB: Obviously you lost to an in-state team, Dayton, who then goes to the Elite Eight. They had the headline in the Dayton paper mocking Ohio State. There was a lot of discussion before the game if Ohio State should play more Ohio teams ...

Smith: "There's your answer. It was like they won the national championship. You know, for us, if we lose, it's like it ended up. If we win, we're expected to win. There's



MATTHEW HAGER

'GREAT YEAR' – Ohio State athletics director Gene Smith was pleased with the 2013-14 athletics year, which included national championships claimed by several Buckeye squads.

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'Tough Losses' Hurt At End Of Football Season

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a dichotomy with that one. But no, it didn't bother me. I expected it when I saw it. You have to respect the fact that they have done a marvelous job with basketball over the years and they have a guy at the helm like they have in Archie Miller. He's talented, and he coached here. He's on that (Matta) coaching tree, so he's doing a marvelous job and will continue to do so. But you're right, those are the realities of, to some degree, one of the many reasons why we won't play."

BSB: Football-wise, head coach Urban Meyer recently said you are the best AD in the country. Do you feel the same way about him with what he's done with this program?

Smith: "We have a great relationship, no doubt. We spend a lot of time on different issues, and there's no one that could be better for our job considering the situation we were in and the opportunities that we have ahead of us. You know the pedigree – national champion, from Ohio, wife is from Ohio, kind of a Camelot type of deal, but at the end of the day, he gets what we needed to do to go to another level with our performance."

"More importantly, he understood the culture, and he's talking about that a lot right now – that we needed to establish a particular culture. That's relative to wins and losses, but for me – as he well knows, and he agrees – it's about everything else, too. It's about how you carry yourself. It's behaving the right way, that understanding of being respectful, understanding that it's not just about you. It's about your teammates, it's about your families, it's about the institution, it's about getting ready for life – the Real Life Wednesdays, all those things."

"I think he's packaged it really nicely and he's doing it extremely well to help the progress. He's done a good job with that piece. He's a CEO-type coach. We're in a good spot, we really are."

BSB: The 12-0 start to the season was great, so there was no complaining there. Then obviously the 0-2 end was frustrating for the program and the fan base as well.

Smith: "Tough losses – particularly the Michigan State one. That one hurt. Clemson hurt, but not as bad as the Big Ten Championship Game, to be quite frank. The Michigan State one hurt because we should have got that."

BSB: There are two new coaches on the defensive side of the ball. How involved are you when it comes to making those decisions?

Smith: "What's so funny is that our conversations are so fluid, and we talk about personnel all the time. We talked prior to the bowl game about personnel – who might be interviewing somewhere, who is ready to be a head coach, what jobs are opening – so it starts from there and then we evolve into conversations."

"We knew Everett (Withers) had his opportunity, so when that was coming down the pipe we began to talk and (Meyer) had some ideas of people. And then I might have a name to throw at him, but we have those conversations fluidly and naturally. We don't like schedule a meeting, you know what I mean? And then when he gets down to his final few, he asks, 'Gene, talk to these guys,' so he'll set it up and he'll make his recommendation and go."

"Larry (Johnson) was a no-brainer – 'What time can we get him here?' All those years of

experience, his pedigree. When (Meyer) called me and said Larry might have an interest, I said, 'Wow, let's figure that out and push that interest over the edge.' Mike (Vrabel leaving) was a surprise to us, and he was quality, but when you can get a Larry Johnson, that's another level, man. We were excited about that."

"I knew Chris Ash so that made it easier with him. I didn't have to meet him or talk to him. He was at Iowa State with me, so I didn't have a need to figure him out. So that's how that happens – it just kind of flows. Same thing with a lot of different situations like recruits or the leadership program. We just kind of talk naturally."

BSB: The stadium expansion is getting close to being done. At Michigan, there was a story that blew up in the media as far as their trouble with selling student tickets. Especially since the expansion, have you had anything similar happen here at Ohio State?

Smith: "We're fortunate. Obviously we've been watching it because it was happening at Michigan and it actually has happened over the years across the country. What was cool was those 2,600 seats we put in there for the student section will take the South Stands to 19,600 seats as opposed to 17,000, and we blew way past our ticket allotment. I think we sold 1,600 tickets over our allotment for students. (Ticketing director) Brett (Scarborough) left the student ticket ordering open so more students could order."

"We're fortunate. Our public and donor sell was at about 98-point-something percent renewal. We're in good shape. However, you have to constantly continue to develop the fan experience. We had a call last Friday where I chaired a subcommittee on in-game fan experience from the Big Ten. We lifted the video replay policy last year and now we're talking about basketball and hockey and should we lift it for those two sports?"

"We also talked about technology in the stadium. We're going to have full WiFi in our stadium in 2015. We have the digital antenna system which helps with texting and phone calls, but the full WiFi we don't have. We'll have that in the fall of 2015, and more of our schools are moving toward that."

"We're going to try some new things on the video board that only the people in the stadium will get a chance to see. You won't be seeing it at home on your couch, it'll be for the people in the stadium. When you think about the new tunnel for the team under the seats, we're going to do some things around it with the team coming out that will be different. It will be really exciting for night games."

"We're constantly thinking about how we can continue to make the game fun and exciting beyond the game itself. We're doing everything we can to hold our ticket prices for a while. We're looking at a variable ticket model for the future. We're starting that study this fall with our Athletic Council. We've stayed pretty true to our model with the exception of premium prices. Now we need to look at the variable ticket model and how that will work, particularly since our scheduling really changes after 2016. We have to get ready for that and make sure we have the right pricing structure for the fan in place at that particular time."

BSB: Can you give us any sneak peeks as far as enhancing the atmosphere?

Smith: "No, they have to be a surprise (laughs). We have creative people, and it's

just that they are little things that people will say, 'Wow, that's cool.' It's like fireworks last year. I can't tell you how many people commented on the fact that we did that. We've been resisting doing that for years, but it was cool. I didn't have the vision. I had a hard time seeing it. These guys draw that stuff up, and I'm like, 'How is that going to work?' but then when you see it, it's like, 'OK, that's better than what I thought.'"

"I say, 'Look, here's eight ideas. Let's try all eight. If three of them are good, great. The rest we'll never do again.' You have to try some things. You have to be sensitive to your traditions, protect those, but at the same time we have to understand our demographic is changing. You look at what's happening up north, you look at what's happening out west, you look at those attendance numbers and what's happening is we haven't been responsive to the changing demographics."

"People who come to our games are going to be different, so how do you make sure we protect our history and our traditions but also add that new component that recognizes their interests? Like our band – holy smokes. I asked (director) Jon (Waters), how are you going to do better than last year? That was phenomenal, right? The pressure is on, but they'll figure it out. That type of stuff is representative. Levy Restaurants, our concessionaire, I was shocked when they first came on board last year. You just walk the concourse and the colors and the splash, the aesthetics are different in the stadium. Those are the things that make you better."

BSB: You're going to have a new boss in Drake. Have you had much chance to pick his brain on athletics? He's coming from a much smaller school.

Smith: "A little bit. I had a formal meeting with him for about 90 minutes or so. It was a great conversation. He gets athletics and its value in higher education and in society. I think he's not going to have any challenge with the transition here. I think the magnitude of what we do is different, but he's an experienced professional at 63 years old so that adjustment won't be that hard. He gets it. That's really good. I'm anxious to get him here, get him started, learn from him. He has a lot of other issues on campus to focus on besides us, so he'll be pretty busy. I'll just be lucky to catch him when I can."

BSB: We have to ask about the O'Bannon trial that is going on right now. Do you get updates on that every day? How closely to do you pay attention?

Smith: "Yeah, I get updates every day. I'm watching it. It's going to still be a long time to go through this, then it will go to the appellate court and all that, so you're talking two years or whatever. The reality is some of the things I hope that happen in the new governance structure will deal with some of those concerns. I do think that ultimately if you have to pay for student-athletes' likenesses, then you have to figure out a financial model that works. It's not like it's a new discussion. Do you set up a trust fund, and as that person grows, X amount of dollars go into that trust fund? Because you know, when you come here, you have no persona ..."

BSB: Well, Braxton Miller does, but a lot of guys don't.

Smith: "A little bit, but we didn't contribute. So that's exactly right. So you come here but we didn't contribute to that, so if he wants to collect, he can collect from high school. Then you have that transition and

then you have to have some way to evaluate how you monetize that. People say it's just jersey sales, but I think it's more than that."

BSB: That's an easy metric, but it's only one.

Smith: "That's only one of X. So I think that's the big issue, that you have to sit down and figure out that formula. Where is the trust fund? Is it at the institution or is it in the conference office? If you say the conference office peels off X amount of money from the television revenue and retains it in the conference office and then you have a formula and at the end of the year you submit a report and it's filed, do you retain that in a trust fund until they graduate or do they get a check annually? So there's a lot of stuff around that. The courts aren't going to come up with the formula. They'll just say they should be paid for their likenesses and it's going to come back to us to figure that out."

BSB: So it's fair to say you have thought about potential outcomes and what might happen?

Smith: "Oh yeah. I don't know what is going to happen, but I know if the O'Bannon plaintiffs win, then the reality is we have to come up with a model and it's going to significantly change who we are and how colleges are run. It's going to go back to the old-school days. The reality is if I'm in the L.A. market, I can increase the value of a persona a whole lot faster than if you're in Ames, Iowa. It's all market driven. I can do the same thing here."

"The reason the rules are the way they were is because we were trying to change the old-school model, but now we're going to open it back up because I'm going to look at Braxton and I'm going to look at, how do we help monetize this persona? However you set up the structure – if he's paid yearly, monthly or when he graduates – that money has to grow, right? Because what it does is helps recruiting. That's where we're going, so that means we probably can't have as many sports, which means we significantly reduce our department. The game changes. We spend a significant amount of funds on marketing other sports (right now). I mean, it just changes."

BSB: It has to be worrying as somebody who has been in athletics as long as you have that you're going to lose something if it goes to its logical conclusion or past it.

Smith: "I was talking to a class about a month ago and that's what I was trying to explain to them, the changes to how that individual will operate, how they think. And any entity that is financially benefiting from those likenesses, they're open. They're fair game. It's interesting, isn't it?"

BSB: You don't realize how many ripples there are.

Smith: "Dan Guerrero, the AD at UCLA, and I were sitting around talking about that. We were like, people don't get it. They don't get the devastation. They just think, 'Just pay them,' but if that passes, it goes deep."

BSB: When a lot of this stuff started being discussed, Jim Delany said something along the lines of not being sure if his institutions would want to be part of a pay-for-play model. Do you think it could get to that point?

Smith: "We talked about that. Is there a different structure that we would go to? Ohio State is probably one that would not walk away from our environment, the Horseshoe, the great tradition and history. We'd probably walk away from our broad-based phi-

THE INTERVIEW ISSUE: GENE SMITH

losophy that we've enjoyed with 36 sports and 1,000 athletes.

"I could see a new piece of legislation going to the NCAA saying that – right now, 16 sports are required along with men's and women's basketball to be Division I. I could see that going down to another number, whatever that is. I can see conferences like the Big Ten saying, 'OK, here are the only ones we're going to compete in at a championship level.' If you have anything else, it's club or whatever.

"So you truly are moving into that professional model is what you're doing. I don't know how the federal government views this legally. You can say it's just for football and basketball. It would be hard, so I'd have to pick the sports where the athletes can monetize their likeness in this environment. So now you start going down that mental track. As soon as you print that, everybody is going to be on their napkin to figure out, 'These are the sports,' because that's what will happen.

"To your earlier question, we will lose something. We will lose a lot. That's why 70 percent of the public doesn't want us to pay our athletes. However, we have to come up with a way to solve some of the financial challenges that some of the kids are having. You know my message on that. I've been driving that for years, and I think that we will get there because that's the root of this in a lot of regards. If a full-ride student-athlete has to go out and get a loan, we're not doing something right. We have to figure that out."

BSB: As far as NCAA progress, you're getting toward August when you might get a chance to enact some of these changes. People are studying it – is that where things are right now?

Smith: "I think Aug. 7 is the board of directors meeting, and every indication is they are going to vote on the new model and the top five (conferences) will have autonomy. I think what will happen once they vote it in, I think we'll be able to get that cost-of-attendance piece of legislation in the system fast and hopefully get it voted on for an effective date of 2015. That would be a great opportunity because we've talked about that enough. People are studying it, so we should be able to create a piece of legislation that everybody can see, modify it by the January convention and get it voted in and go.

"Other issues I think will take a little bit longer because we haven't vetted them as much. Health care, those types of things, time demands for student-athletes – I think those are going to take a little bit more time and we need to engage more coaches in the discussion. One of the big things in the new structure that I think we'll be able to do better is identifying the best people to help solve a problem.

"I think the cost of attendance will get out of the chute pretty fast. The others might take a little while longer, but that's the game changer, getting us to that new governance structure because we'll be able to do what we can afford to do."

BSB: As far as other issues, you spoke on concussions at the NACDA (athletics directors) convention. I know the Big Ten is doing a study with the Ivy League schools on the subject. What were you able to discuss while you were there?

Smith: "My whole part of the panel discussion was not as much on the medical side, which was very interesting. It was more focused on a couple of things like having the right protocols in place, and that's based upon the environment and what you have. We're blessed to have a medical center so we have some unbelievable talent and skill here, but it starts from the fact that the medical

people make the call on the student-athlete, not the coaches. They make the call on coming out and when they return to play and have an environment where the team physician has total authority and that authority is respected.

"My coaches understand that they do not venture into that world. If the team physician says he's not ready, he's not ready – just move on to the next guy. It's that simple. A lot of places aren't set up that way. In fact, there's some places where the team doctor reports to the coach. That makes no sense. That's a conflict inherent in the structure.

"What I brought to the table was that drive. The other piece that I tried to bring home and why they asked me to be on that panel was people always just think about the impact the concussion has on the student-athlete on the field or the court or whatever, but they forget about the piece in the classroom. So if I'm concussed on Saturday and I have to go to class on Monday, how does that affect me? So what are your mechanisms with academic advisors to communicate with the faculty, what are your mechanics to help that student-athlete deal with that class on Monday and trying to recover because brain trauma is brain trauma. That's why they asked me to be on the panel, to share my thoughts and feelings on those issues.

"The joy of listening to the medical experts like Brian Hainline from the NCAA, listening to them about all the different studies nationally, what is occurring, and the hope that exists out there to see real numbers of a true decline. The numbers aren't well-tracked right now, but there's a sense that there's a decline in the number of concussions. We've gone back to teaching how to tackle. Nobody ever really talks about gymnastics and lacrosse and all those other contact sports, but there's a lot of conversations in those sports and their cultures are starting to shift a little bit."

BSB: Another thing that came up this year was the controversy surrounding your bonuses when teams or athletes

won championships this year. Is that something you'd like to take out of your contract?

Smith: "That's an old model. That's not new. (Oklahoma AD) Joe Castiglione and I were talking about it – and his is the same way – and we were saying, 'You know, we need to change that.' This model has been in place for years. This year after President Drake gets settled and I've had some conversations with the general counsel on campus, we'll discuss how we change our incentive model because we're in a performance-based environment. So how do you shift that to the business side of the house? I've had some preliminary conversation with our general counsel on campus, and we'll eventually probably change that."

BSB: Do you understand why that became an issue?

Smith: "It's been so old, I wasn't as sensitized. I had it at Iowa State, which was, I don't know, how many years ago? I had it at Arizona State. If you made a public records request for some of the top ADs across the country, you would probably find the same thing. It needs to be changed and so we'll end up changing that. The optics don't look right, so we'll change it."

BSB: Maryland and Rutgers are joining the Big Ten on July 1 ...

Smith: "I'm excited about them coming in. I know it's not a popular decision, but from a business point of view it worked and it will work. We needed a presence on the East Coast. We needed to give Penn State partners to protect them. It worked, but yeah, I'm excited."

BSB: There was an article in Sports Illustrated recently with a little bit of sentiment that fans see the Big Ten losing a little bit of what made us. Do you hesitate to make decisions like that when that might be the outcome?

Smith: "That goes back to what we deal with locally, so being careful, holding on to our traditions and history but understanding our world is changing. People need to under-

stand that realignment was going to happen. If we took a vote back in 1996 about realignment, everybody would say, 'Don't realign because you're changing who we are.'

"Well, you know what? There's a lot of companies that fail because they stayed the way they were. There's probably only a few like Southwest that say, 'We're not doing anything differently. It's gang seating, and that isn't changing.' There's only a few that survive that way. Our world was changing and we were blessed that we put the Big Ten Network together, so the reality of trying to expand to that market made sense to us. Even the Sports Illustrated article missed the Penn State issue and the potential for the ACC to go into the Big Ten and go to Penn State and say, 'Hey, join us.' So it's interesting.

"My hope is that being part of the Big Ten, that (the programs at Maryland and Rutgers) will elevate. Maryland has a rich tradition in basketball and was dominant for a very long time, so hopefully that will increase. Rutgers had a good run in football. It wasn't consistent but they had a good run, so we can help them elevate. Anyway, it wasn't a popular decision, but I know for where we need to be down the road, it was the right decision. We couldn't go west very easily. So I feel good about where we are."

BSB: Do you foresee anything else happening with expansion?

Smith: "Not in the near future, no. Do I think it's going to happen down the road? Yes. I'll be retired, sitting in the stands, screaming, talking to the officials. But I think down the road it will probably happen again. It's just going to happen. There's television, the ability to keep the fan base growing in certain markets. Not all markets, but certain markets will say, 'We need to do something different.' The Big 12 to me, they are very solid where they are with 10 schools, but will that continue to work over time? You never know. So the reality is I think down the road we'll see expansion, but it's not anywhere in the near future."




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Broadcasting Career Keeps Fox In Game

By BEN AXELROD
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Despite its lack of success, you'd be hard pressed to find a sports city with more to talk about than Cleveland, Ohio.

Speaking to BSB as he pulled into the parking lot of 92.3 The Fan's studios in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Dustin Fox was preparing for the final radio show in a week in which he had already discussed a Cleveland Indians walkoff grand slam, the NBA draft, the NBA finals, LeBron James' impending free agency and a Cleveland Cavaliers coaching search. And oh yeah, some quarterback named Johnny Manziel.

Born into a football family in Canton, Ohio, being at the center of the action is nothing new for Fox, who started as a sophomore cornerback on Ohio State's 2002 national championship team. The GlenOak High School product was a three-year starter for the Buckeyes, helping usher in the Jim Tressel era and serving as a captain in 2004.

Following Fox's impressive college career, the Minnesota Vikings used a third-round pick on him in the 2005 NFL draft. Injuries, however, plagued the 5-11, 200-pounder's lone season with the Vikings, who released Fox prior to the start of the 2006 campaign.

The Hall of Fame City native was immediately scooped up by the Philadelphia Eagles, with whom he made his NFL debut in 2006. Fox would go on to play two additional seasons with the Buffalo Bills, playing in a total of 11 games.

After his time in the NFL, Fox got into medical device sales with Biomet and also made his broadcasting debut in 2010. Cutting his teeth as an Ohio State analyst for WEWS-TV Channel 5 and WKNR-AM in Cleveland, Fox caught his big break in 2011 when he was named a drive-time co-host for CBS Cleveland's new sports talk station, 92.3 The Fan.

For the past three years, Fox has been heard from 2-7 p.m. each day discussing the latest happenings in Cleveland sports alongside Adam "The Bull" Gerstenhaber.

Last year, he added to his broadcasting résumé when he began calling Mid-American Conference football games for ESPN, and for the past three years he's been the radio color analyst for the Cleveland Gladiators of the Arena Football League.

Also the co-host for the postgame show on the Cleveland Browns radio network, Fox has become one of the most prominent voices in one of America's most talked about sports cities. What's that like and where does Fox plan on going from here? BSB chatted with him to discuss just that.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin: How did you make the transition from being an NFL defensive back to a big-time sports broadcaster?

Fox: "It's pretty simple. Once I got done playing, I knew that I wanted to get into broadcasting, but I didn't have a very big avenue for it because I didn't really know anybody or know how to get into it, so I just got into sales. I was selling orthopedics with my brother for the first year when I got done playing, and then I just called up a friend of mine, (former WKNR host) Kenny Roda – actually I contacted him on Twitter, and (WSYX-TV sportscaster) Clay Hall down in Columbus was the one who connected me with (WEWS sports director) Andy Baskin in Cleveland.

"Both of those guys – Kenny and Andy Baskin – helped me out giving me some stuff. Kenny was at WKNR at the time and I was doing Buckeye stuff over there, and then I was doing Buckeye stuff for Channel 5 with Andy Baskin. That was pretty cool."

BSB: Cleveland is such a fascinating sports city. You've probably already covered close to 10 coaching searches in your three years. What's it been like talking about a town with so much happening on a daily basis?

Fox: "It's fun, man. It's awesome. There's always something to talk about. We don't win but outside of that, it's interesting. There's always something interesting to talk about. It would be bet-



FILE PHOTO

SPORTS STILL IN BLOOD – Ohio State 2002 national champion Dustin Fox (37) remains connected to sports as a radio host on 92.3 The Fan in Cleveland.

ter if we won, obviously, but things are turning around. The Indians were fun last year when they made the playoffs. That run that they had was probably the most exciting thing that we've had since we've been on the air.

"But there's also been good moments with all the teams. There's been exciting moments. They haven't always been on the field, but sometimes it's getting the No. 1 overall pick in the (NBA draft) lottery or drafting Manziel. There's been lots of exciting stuff."

BSB: What's a typical day like for you?

Fox: "For me, it depends because a lot of people don't know that I still sell orthopedics. My brother owns the company. He's a Biomet distributor. Two or three days a week, I'm doing that in the mornings. I'll get up at like 5:30 and go cover surgery. I'll be in surgery by 7 or 7:30. And once the surgery's over I'll drive downtown and get downtown around 11:30 or noon and start prepping for the show and do the show and drive home."

BSB: What's your favorite topic to talk about? Is it still Ohio State, or are you really into the pro teams up there?

Fox: "We don't talk Ohio State up here (laughs). We don't. I mean, during football season, we'll talk it maybe a couple of segments a week, if that. It sucks because I would like to talk about it.

"It's about what our listeners want. They want to hear about their teams. I get it. There is a huge amount of Ohio State fans up here, but not everybody went to Ohio State. Not everybody's an Ohio State fan. In Cleveland, everyone's a Browns fan or everyone's an Indians fan or Cavs fan. It's a little bit delicate, but we try to make time for it. If I had my pick of it, I'd love to talk Ohio State football. But we just can't."

BSB: Speaking of the Browns,

what are your thoughts on the Johnny Football situation up there?

Fox: "It's exciting. I think he's a great player. I hope it works out. I think he's acting like a fool right now, but I think he's going to calm down. Hopefully – well, not hopefully – I know he's going to calm down once the season begins. He needs to. He needs to take it seriously because he's got a great opportunity here.

"The town is depending on him to be the savior. I don't know that he realizes how big that is, but it's huge. If he doesn't pan out, he's going to be letting a lot of people down."

BSB: What about another potential savior in Cleveland – is there any chance noted Ohio State fan LeBron James returns to the Cavs, or is that just a pipe dream at this point?

Fox: "It's not a pipe dream for me. I think it's definitely a realistic possibility. You look at what Miami has and the fact that they have to retool that whole thing down there, and you could make the argument that for the next five to 10 years, he could have a better roster in Cleveland.

"Now the question is, does he want to leave Pat Riley? And if you saw Riley's press conference, you could see that he's a salesman. I think it would be tough to leave Miami, but I think it's either Cleveland or Miami. I don't know if it's 50-50 or if there's a percentage that you could put on it, but when you hear LeBron talk about how important his family is and his kids are getting older and all that stuff, I think that's a big factor and I think his kids are enrolled in school up here already for the fall. I think if you put two and two together, it's definitely a realistic possibility."

BSB: It's clear on air that you definitely have a big personality. Have you always been like this or is it something that's evolved as you've gotten older in life?

Fox: "I don't know, man. I thought

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THE INTERVIEW ISSUE: DUSTIN FOX

when I was in school I was always pretty decent with the media in terms of opening up. It has evolved, there's no question about that. I've adapted to the area here in Cleveland and what people are interested in. I feel like I fit in with a lot of our demographic and who our listeners are. I think that makes me likable on the air.

"I just try to be myself, you know, and have fun and not take things too seriously."

BSB: That's where my next question was headed. Your show is relatively new and you've stood toe-to-toe with an established station up there. Why do you think your show has been so successful so quickly?

Fox: "I think we work really hard at making it a good show. We work for more than five hours and that's more than any show in Cleveland. It's tough, so you've got to put time and effort into it."

"I'm really lucky to have a veteran radio host with me, a guy who's worked in the biggest market in the world and knows what it takes to be on the radio and does a very good job. He's taught me a lot since I've been here, and I think he's allowed me to grow. We butt heads on a lot of things, but I think that over time our chemistry has gotten a lot better since we started and I think that I've evolved as a broadcaster in terms of when I started to where I am now."

"I challenge him now. When we started, it was like I was more of a sidekick. Now, I think it's definitely 50-50."

BSB: I know you wish you could talk about the Buckeyes more, so I'll give you a chance to do it here. What are your thoughts on Ohio State heading into year three of the Urban Meyer era?

Fox: "They've got to win, man. They've got to win. This is the year, I think, when you look at the fact that Braxton (Miller) is coming back for his senior year. My goodness, isn't this supposed to be the year when all of the Urban Meyer recruits really pan out and start to make an impact on the team? I think we'll really know how good the recruiting classes have been and how good of a recruiter he is. We all think

he's great and you never know how the classes are going to be on paper, but when you look at some of the guys he's got, this is the time for them to really step up."

"I think it will be an exciting year. I think it'll be fun with the Big Ten expanding with Rutgers and Maryland and all that. And then you have the playoff – it should be a really exciting year in college football."

BSB: Professionally, what are your aspirations? Could a national move be on the horizon?

Fox: "My dreams are to be calling games – college games, pro games, whatever they may be – on a national level. That's why I've really tried to work my way into getting the reps when I can. I call the Gladiators games up here, and last year my manager got me a connection with ESPN and I did some ESPN3 games, some Mid-American Conference games."

"I've got some good experience so I'm just trying to work my way into there and see how it goes. It's tough to get into that business. It's a tough job too. You learn so much through repetition and all that and preparation and things like that."

"I don't have any desire to leave Cleveland. I love it here. Guys all the time call games on the weekend and go back to their radio show throughout the week. I'm with a great company in CBS, and there could be an opportunity there or there could be an opportunity with ESPN."

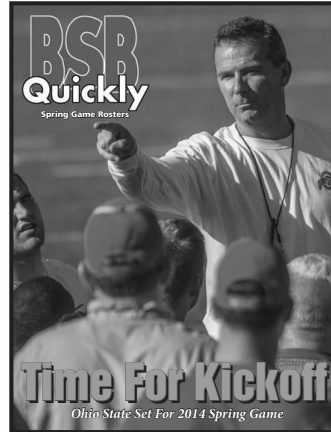
"I try to take it one day at a time. I've got goals, obviously, but I'm not going to say that if I'm not doing something by a certain age that I'm going to be disappointed. I think that the last couple of years have been really good for me."

"I've been lucky, I've been blessed. Think about this – when I got into the business, this station just randomly started out of the blue. To basically be a rookie broadcaster shoved into drive time radio in a top-10 market, I think that's pretty huge. That's where we're at now. The show's gotten buzz nationally, and we've had lots of moments on the show that have been picked up by national people, we get great guests. I'm happy, man. It's all good."



Dustin Fox

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Hoying Using OSU Lessons In Real Estate Career

By RYAN GINN
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State football teams of the early 1990s helped vault the program back to national prominence, and quarterback Bob Hoying played a valuable role in that success as a starter from 1993-95.

A native of St. Henry, Ohio, a town less than 10 miles from Indiana with a population hovering around 2,000, Hoying chose to play for head coach John Cooper and the Buckeyes over Illinois, Louisville and UCLA.

When he got to Columbus, he ultimately teamed with such Buckeye legends as 1995 Heisman Trophy-winning running back Eddie George, wide receiver Terry Glenn and defensive lineman Mike Vrabel. He is also the brother-in-law of Ohio State defensive coordinator Luke Fickell, his college teammate who married the sister of his wife, Jill.

He is one of the most successful quarterbacks in Ohio State history, directing the Buckeyes to a co-Big Ten championship in 1993, a win against Michigan in 1994 and an 10-0 start in 1995. Hoying still holds Ohio State's career records for touchdown passes (57, tied with Terrelle Pryor) and completions (498), while the 7,232 yards he threw for in his career and the 3,269 yards he accumulated in 1995 are each second in OSU annals, behind Art Schlichter's 7,547 and Joe Germaine's 3,330 in 1998, respectively.

After playing for the Philadelphia Eagles from 1996-98 and the Oakland Raiders the following three years, Hoying embarked on a career in real estate. Now a principal at Crawford Hoying along with Brent Crawford, Hoying works for one of the top firms in the central Ohio area. Crawford Hoying builds and operates apartment communities, works in real estate development and rents residential and commercial properties as well.

The company has also been in the news in Columbus of late for its plans to develop the \$300 million project known as Bridge Park in Dublin. The project would turn 25 acres of property across the Scioto River from downtown Dublin into a mixed-use area that would include apartments, condominiums, commercial space and a hotel.



RYAN GINN

SUCCESS OFF THE FIELD – Former Ohio State quarterback Bob Hoying is a principal at Crawford Hoying, which builds and operates apartment communities, works in real estate development and rents residential and commercial properties.

Hoying sat down one-on-one with BSB to discuss both his playing days and his successful transition to a prominent post-football career.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin: Did you grow up an Ohio State fan?

Hoying: "Growing up in St. Henry, I had a chance to watch (future Ohio State and NFL offensive lineman) Jim Lachey in my

hometown and at Ohio State. He was about 10 years older than me, so in my formative years of practicing and training I had a chance to watch Jim play at Ohio State and then go on to the NFL. I know for me and some of my other classmates, he was a big role model for us and kind of a big reason why I ended up at Ohio State."

BSB: Coming from a small town, what was the transition like when you arrived

in Columbus at a big school in a big city?

Hoying: "It was hard, but I got redshirted so I had a chance to sit back. Kirk Herbstreit was great to me and kind of took me under his wing. I worked really hard the next two years and was able to start my sophomore year. I think it would have been different if I would have come in right away and played my true freshman year like a lot of guys do these days, but it wasn't like that for me.

"I had a chance to play with really fast guys. Our scout team my freshman year was Terry Glenn, Eddie George, Buster Tillman and a bunch of other guys who all ended up being stars two or three years later. Terry was a walk-on at the time. You have a chance to play with that kind of talent in practice and you get used to it."

BSB: What are some memories that stand out to you from your time at Ohio State?

Hoying: "Obviously the Notre Dame and Penn State games and the Michigan game my junior year (a 22-6 win for the Buckeyes) are some of the bigger moments for me. The things you miss after you're done playing – and I played for six years in the NFL – are the players and the friendships that you had. That's the stuff you miss, just cutting up with players after practice. I met my wife, and Coach Fickell and I are brothers-in-law now because we married sisters. I was able to play football with my brother (Tom) at Ohio State, so I have a lot of great memories."

BSB: You broke some school records in 1995. Could you sense a breakthrough performance coming together before the season?

Hoying: "I probably didn't until Walt Harris came in as quarterbacks coach my senior year

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Continued On Page 12

Hoying Proud Of Ohio State Accomplishments

Continued From Page 10

and told me something. He had been with the New York Jets (as the quarterbacks coach from 1992-94) and told me after spring ball, 'You've got Eddie George, Rickey Dudley, Terry Glenn – all guys that are as good or better than we had at the Jets last year.' I kind of laughed about it because I didn't believe him at the time, but it was true. Those guys were so talented. It was in spring ball that year when we got the sense that we had a good nucleus of guys heading into that year."

BSB: After the Citrus Bowl loss to Tennessee that closed the 1995 season, you told BSB that you'd probably have more appreciation for your career after more time passed. Is that the case?

Hoying: "You definitely get better with age. When people look back and talk about the great games with you, they don't necessarily bring up the losses. I'm proud of what we did. I feel we could have won a couple of more games my last three years where we could have played for national titles, especially my sophomore and senior years. I think it would have changed the dynamics of Coach Cooper's tenure at Ohio State."

"I do feel pretty proud that we kind of changed how Ohio State was viewed nationally. Up until that point, we'd kind of lost our luster a bit. Looking back, I think we're pretty proud that we played on some pretty good teams."

BSB: The 1990s didn't produce the fondest memories when it came to The Game, so how much did it mean to get that one win over Michigan in 1994?

Hoying: "It meant a lot. That's why you go to Ohio State. I was as frustrated as everyone else, and I think we all were, that we couldn't win it. To this day, probably the most frustrating game is my senior year against Michigan (a 31-23 loss for the previously undefeated Buckeyes). It just played (on TV) yesterday, as I was reminded by a handful of people, and I didn't watch it. My son's 11, and he's not seen that game. I don't know that I've watched it any more than one time. That's the game that probably would have had us playing in the title game, and we came up short up there."

BSB: What was it like playing for John Cooper?

Hoying: "It was great. He was a very positive coach and kind of let the coaches do the coaching on the offensive side but was still there. He had a lot of belief in me. There was a time my true freshman year when I was looked at as an athlete and asked if I wanted to play special teams or maybe move to defense to get on the field faster. I told him no and that I thought I could play quarterback and he agreed. He didn't press me to change a position or anything. He was very supportive of my career, and we stay in touch from time to time to this day."

BSB: Did you always play quarterback growing up, and what attracted you to that position?

Hoying: "My dad never played football. My hometown didn't have football until the mid-70s or early-70s. I grew up playing it and throwing the ball a ton with my brother and my dad. Once you become the quarterback, there's only one guy who can play it. I loved it because you're in control of virtually every play of the game, and it's just something that came naturally to me."

BSB: You got to play with quite a few talented teammates over the course of your career at Ohio State ...

Hoying: "I tell people all the time that it's not just the '95 team. Really, in my five years of playing football, all the guys I played with were great. Robert Smith was a guy I never started with, but he played ahead of me and I got to watch him play. There were a lot of guys that as I was getting in were getting out, and in those overlapping years there were a ton of guys who went on to play in the NFL. It was a special time. There were NFL coaching days in the spring where they come to test everyone, and you couldn't get into the Woody Hayes (Athletic Center) because there were so many people watching them. It was fun to play with all those teammates."

BSB: What was your experience like in the NFL?

Hoying: "It was great. I had a chance to play for Jon Gruden virtually my entire time. The three years in Philadelphia, Jon was my offensive coordinator and then got the head coaching job out in Oakland. I learned a ton of football from him. Just an unbelievable coach and offensive mind. He was a very demanding

guy. I think a lot of what carries me through my professional career today is how hard I had to work with him. I consider myself a pretty bright guy, but I had to study the playbook for an hour or more each night just so we could run what he wanted us to run."

BSB: At what point did you start planning for life after football?

Hoying: "I had an opportunity to have great parents, so I was always thinking ahead, and education was very important to me in college. My second year in the NFL, I came back and met Brent Crawford on the golf course. He had just sold some units at Ohio State's campus, and about a year later we bought our first apartment complex, which we actually just sold last year. It sounded pretty interesting to me, so I got my real estate license that year and ended up playing another four years in the NFL."

"Every time I came home in the offseason, I got a little more involved in the management side of things, and it's grown to what we're doing now."

BSB: How did you bounce back from the damage to real estate done by the economic downturn?

Hoying: "It was about as bad as you could ever imagine for the real estate world, for the most part. Virtually overnight, you lost all of your value or saw it reduced by 30 or 40 percent. When I say overnight, it was over the course of months in late 2008. You couldn't get new financing because nobody was financing anything, and you had loans that were maturing on some of our projects."

"You basically had to put blinders on and just attack them one by one, and that's what we did. We had a lot of patient partners and patient banks that are financing our deals now. Looking back, there's so many things you learned and can never forget. There wasn't federal bailout money for medium-to-small companies like ours. It makes you stronger. We talk about it all the time here, to never forget what happened in those years from 2008-12. I think everybody thought it would only be a year or two."

"I think it reflects on all the disappointing times I had in college or in the pros. A lot of times I look back and realize I learned from those things in college and it made me stronger. It's no different in professional life."

BSB: The \$300 million mixed-use project in Dublin is obviously a big undertaking for Crawford Hoying. How was that project conceived?

Hoying: "We weren't ever setting out to do a massive project like that. We tried to work on a redevelopment in Dublin at a different site, and Dublin liked it. It was taking a fairly vacant office building and repurposing it with mixed uses. They kind of pointed us in the direction of old Dublin, and so we started looking at property 2½ years ago in historic Dublin along the river."

"There was a failed retail center that really needs to be redeveloped at some point, and we were able to purchase that along with an old driving range on the east side of the Scioto River. There's a smaller piece in old historic Dublin that's linked together by the pedestrian bridge. We're working on a series of mixed-use restaurants, offices and residential buildings and a mix of restaurant and residential on the east side of the river."

"We've been working on this project going on two years now, and we're getting close. It's something we're all pretty proud of, and it builds off a couple of projects we've just recently finished or are in development. The interest has been great. A lot of restaurants would like to come into Dublin and just don't have the right location. Dublin has been key in all of this. They're spending quite a bit of money – about \$41 million – on the new pedestrian bridge, a world-class park, a relocated Riverside Drive and a roundabout. We're proud of it and excited to be working on it."

BSB: How has the company changed over the years?

Hoying: "It's probably shrunk a little bit because after the downturn, a lot of companies got lean and mean. We tried to trim where we could trim, and it's forced companies like ours and everybody else to get way more efficient. We've been at 200 employees for a while now, and you don't want to grow just to grow. We're trying to pick our spots. But again, you win with people, and we feel like we've got some really good people on our team."

BSB: What tasks are you involved with on a day-to-day basis?

Hoying: "I'm pretty much focused on the real estate development side of things. We're in meetings with the city, their planners, our consultants and architects going through the various stages of projects we're developing. It's fun for me because you get to do a little bit of everything. It's exciting that you don't have to come in and do the same thing over and over again."

BSB: Trent Diller spoke at the Elite 11 camp in Columbus about the success of quarterbacks in life after their playing careers are done. What do you attribute that to?

Hoying: "I think for a lot of quarterbacks, it's not being afraid to fail. The ball is in your hands and you have 3½ seconds to make a decision. You have to do it in a split-second, and you have to live with the consequences. In a professional career, we can have people double-check or triple-check our work and then turn it in. Football forces you to prepare and then live with your decisions. Not everybody can do that, and not everybody wants to take that role on."

"The other thing is communication. You have to get in the huddle and look at 10 other guys and lead them, tell them what to do. I think once you start that from a young age, you do it your entire life. It's very natural as you're going into some other profession to carry that with you."



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Fan Favorite Stays Busy After Playing Career

By BEN AXELROD
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Born James Donnell Penn, the man known more affectionately as "Scoonie" has been a mainstay on the Columbus basketball scene for the past 16 years. Whether Penn was leading Ohio State to a Final Four in 1999 or spending his professional offseasons working out with the Buckeyes, it hasn't been hard to find his infectious smile around the halls of the Schottenstein Center for almost two decades.

Calling Columbus home, however, wasn't always the plan for the 5-11, 180-pounder, who was born in Yonkers, N.Y., but made a name for himself on the Massachusetts prep scene at Salem High School. The Big East Rookie of the Year in 1996, Penn starred at Boston College for the first two seasons of his college career while playing for head coach Jim O'Brien.

But when O'Brien took the head coach opening at Ohio State and came to Columbus in 1997, Penn opted to follow suit. Leaving the comfortable Northeast for the unfamiliar Midwest, Penn quickly became a fan favorite for the Buckeyes after sitting out the 1997-98 season because of NCAA transfer rules.

Upon becoming eligible for OSU, Penn instantly made his mark in Columbus, averaging 16.9 points and 4.3 assists per game en route to being named a third-team All-American as well as the Big Ten Co-Player of the Year alongside Michigan State's Mateen Cleaves. More memorably, the Bay State native helped lead the fifth-seeded Buckeyes to the 1999 Final Four in Tampa Bay, Fla., as he was named the South Region's Most Outstanding Player.

Penn capped his college career a year later as a consensus second-team All-American after averaging 15.6 points per game for a Buckeye team that was bounced by Miami (Fla.) in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Despite playing just two years at Ohio State, Penn left the university as its all-time leader in three-point makes with 153. Although the Buckeyes' 1999 Final Four was ultimately erased from the record books because of NCAA violations committed by O'Brien, Penn's legacy remains that of a fan favorite in Columbus to this very day.

After being chosen by the Atlanta Hawks in the second round (57th overall) of the 2000 NBA draft, Penn headed overseas, where he'd play 11 seasons of professional basketball. Over the course of his career, the Buckeye great spent time playing in Italy, Serbia, Croatia, Greece, Turkey and Ukraine.

Upon the completion of his professional career in 2011, Penn returned not to Massachusetts but his adopted home of Columbus. There, Penn founded and became the CEO of POWR Management Group, which helps service the needs of former top-tier collegiate and professional athletes.

Inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013, Penn can regularly be seen and heard as a basketball analyst on WBNS 10-TV's "Wall to Wall Sports" and the Big Ten Network. The two-time All-American recently took the time to speak with BSB about a number of topics including his legacy and the current state of the Buckeye basketball program.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin: As somebody who spent his entire life in the



FILE PHOTO

FOREVER A BUCKEYE – Former Ohio State men's basketball standout Scoonie Penn was a member of Ohio State's Athletics Hall of Fame class in 2013. He helped the Buckeyes make the 1999 Final Four.

Northeast until 1997, how did you wind up coming to Columbus?

Penn: "It was tough being where I'm from and being a hometown kid and going to Boston College at first when Coach O'Brien left. That kind of left me in a position where I wasn't sure what I was going to do – whether I was going to stay at BC or enter the draft or look at other schools. When O'Brien came to Ohio State I decided to visit. I came here for my visit, on the flight home I felt comfortable and when I landed in Boston I was like, 'I know where I'm going and that's Ohio State.'"

BSB: At the time, could you have ever imagined Columbus becoming your permanent home?

Penn: "Never. I never could have imagined it, even when I came on my visit. My friends were like, 'Why are you going to the country? Columbus is the country.' I didn't ever have that in mind to come to the Midwest at all. I was a Northeast kid, and I liked the East Coast. But at the end of the day, I'm glad I did."

BSB: When you look back at your time at Ohio State, what stands out to you the most?

Penn: "Just the friends I made and the great times we had. The basketball, that was great. But the guys that I met along the way, the people I played with, those are the people that I'm still close to to this day. The university's great. I met so many great people through the university, and it opened so many doors that I'm grateful for."

BSB: Thad Matta's had the Ohio State program running strong for the past 10 years, but is it fair to say that your era

showed that this basketball program can sustain success?

Penn: "I think our era changed this program's culture of basketball. It jump-started to where it's at now. I'm happy we were able to be pioneers. When the Schott opened up, it was the best facility in college sports. For us to have that and play well and be a success, it obviously worked out great."

BSB: Everybody still has the memories, but you look up in the rafters and there's no 1999 Final Four banner. Does that ever hurt you personally?

Penn: "It does. It upsets me sometimes when I go to look up there and it's not there. I really feel it should be, but that's out of my hands. But they can't take that away. We won. We know where we played and that we did everything correctly. But it does hurt that we're not recognized for going to the Final Four and that that banner isn't there. And when you look at Ohio State history, because of the way it was written, they're not able to mention that team was a Final Four team."

BSB: How do you think that you're remembered individually by Ohio State fans?

Penn: "I hope in a good way. I think in a very good light because I gave it my all. Not just as an individual, but as a team guy. I played hard. I did what I did for myself, the team and the university, and I did it the right way. I think I'm looked at and held to a high standard at Ohio State and with Ohio State basketball and its culture. I think that going into the Hall of Fame after just playing two years says a lot. In a lot of ways, I wish I

did play four years at Ohio State. If I started here, believe me, I'd have a lot of those records if I did. That's not the case, but I'm happy to be a Buckeye and it's something that I'll always cherish."

BSB: You were drafted by Atlanta and then left to play 11 years professionally overseas. What was that like?

Penn: "It was a great experience getting to play in different places in Europe and getting to see the world. I really enjoyed it. I was just happy that I got to play 11 years after school and continuing to do what I loved to do. My kids got a chance to see Europe, and those are memories that and things that you can never take away. Playing professionally is a dream for all kids who play basketball, and I was lucky that I had the chance to do so."

BSB: You played for new Cleveland Cavaliers coach David Blatt. What was he like?

Penn: "A fiery individual. I enjoyed playing for David Blatt. He was fiery, real emotional. He was on us, but he has just a competitive drive and I loved that about him. He and I, we meshed well together because that's the kind of person I am. I enjoyed playing for him. I think he's going to do pretty well in Cleveland."

BSB: I know you're still close to the Ohio State program. What's your view of its current state?

Penn: "Thad Matta has done an excellent job. It's a healthy program. It's one of the best programs in the country. I think we've had some good teams that just haven't been able to get over the hump a couple of times. But Thad Matta's definitely put a lot of heart and soul into the program, and those guys do a great job of recruiting and dealing with the young men who come through here."

BSB: Who wins a game of one-on-one, you or Aaron Craft?

Penn: "I do. Easily."

BSB: Easily?

Penn: "Yeah, I do."

BSB: What about you and Mike Conley Jr.?

Penn: "Oh, Mike's a little tougher. But if you put us in our college days, I think me because I was strong. I played D and I could score much better. I had much more of a well-rounded game. Mike wasn't much of a scorer in college. Mike was a lot thinner. I think I'd be able to kind of use my strength against a guy like Conley when he was in college."

"I played against both of these guys when they were in school, so I had a little bit of an advantage. I think they're both exceptional players. Mike's doing very well in the NBA. My style was just a little different. If I came out in this era or Mike's era, it would be different. Everybody wanted a pass-first point guard, so it made it a little bit more difficult for me."

"I love Aaron's game, I love Mike's game and I hope Aaron gets his shot in the NBA."

BSB: What's Scoonie Penn up to these days?

Penn: "I have a management company called POWR Management. I'm working with my business and growing that. On the side, especially during basketball season, I'm doing work with the Big Ten Network, work with CBS doing Division II games. I got a chance to call some high school games – I called the state championship game this year and also I do radio. I stay busy throughout the year and am always trying to keep something on my plate."