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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

April 21, 2018



"We're going to have to make some decisions. Those decisions have not been made."

- Urban Meyer

Decision Time

TIM MOODY

LOOKING FORWARD – Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer is tasked with picking a new starting quarterback for the 2018 season.

With Spring Practice Over, Meyer Has A Choice To Make

 By TIM MOODY
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

There are no more spring practices. There's no more data to be gathered. There's no spring game left to evaluate the quarterbacks battling to be the next starter at Ohio State.

There's nothing left for head coach Urban Meyer to do other than meet with his coaches, talk to the players, evaluate all aspects of the battle and, eventually, make a choice.

"I know I'm going to get a bunch of questions about the quarterback," Meyer said after the Buckeyes completed their annual spring scrimmage on April 14. "I'll go ahead and answer one of them right now, and that is we're going to have to make some decisions. Those decisions have not been made."

That scrimmage presented junior Joe Burrow and sophomore Dwayne Haskins – and, to some extent, redshirt freshman Tate Martell – with one final chance to prove themselves on the field in front of the coaching staff. Unless the battle spills over into fall camp – which is unlikely for a variety of reasons – all the quarterbacks can do is sit back and wait for a decision to be made.

That process will include various steps for Meyer, who was initially scheduled to meet with the media for a post-spring press conference on April 16 before the event was canceled that morning. It's safe to assume he had other things on his mind.

"You've got Joe Burrow and Dwayne, obviously, competing right now, along with Tate," Meyer said. "Next week – I want to take the weekend off (because) we've got recruiting and that – but Monday (April 16), Tuesday, we're going to have some very good meetings and productive meetings. I

want to see all of the statistical data – we have everything charted – and go from there."

Throughout spring practice, as Meyer said, the Buckeyes kept track of everything. Every throw made by every quarterback. Every snap, every little thing that might impact the decision.

That data will play a role in the choice, which is ultimately up to Meyer, but he'll receive plenty of input from others as well. After the spring game, he said he was scheduled to meet with offensive coordinators Ryan Day and Kevin Wilson later that same day for a quick update before an in-depth meeting the following Monday.

He was certainly going to meet with the players themselves, he was going to evaluate that data, and he was going to weigh all other aspects.

Meyer also noted that he wants to make sure he makes a choice that is, first, best for Ohio State, but also best for the players. That's where a spring decision comes into the mix.

Throughout camp, the coaching staff made it clear that the battle was neck-and-neck between Burrow and Haskins, and that idea was certainly held up in the spring game.

Burrow and Haskins both played mainly for the Gray squad that won, 37-14, although all three quarterbacks played at least some for both sides in the scrimmage.

Tallying up their overall stats, Burrow was best on paper after going 15 of 22 for 238 yards and two touchdowns, including strikes of 50 and 42 yards to sophomore H-back Demario McCall in the second half, the latter coming on the final play of the game. Haskins was 9 of 19 for 120 yards and two more scores, and he made some eye-opening throws, including a 25-yard laser to

Continued On Page 8

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OPINION

OSU Got Some Value Out Of Spring Game

After a spring game that more resembled a fire drill than a full-blown contested scrimmage, the Ohio State football program achieved a multitude of its goals.

Although threatening weather and a start time of 11:45 a.m. conspired to push official attendance figures south of 50,000, the university sold each of its 79,000 allotted tickets for the game. That figure will likely allow OSU to lead the nation for the fourth straight year in spring-game attendance.

Dozens of former players were in attendance to help bolster enthusiasm for the estimated two dozen high school prospects on official or unofficial visits, a roster that included "Rocket" Ronnie Hickman, a four-star athlete from DePaul Catholic (N.J.) Wayne, who offered his verbal commitment to the Buckeyes the night before the spring game.

Lastly, Ohio State finished spring practice in much the same fashion it finished the 2017 season after clobbering USC in the Cotton Bowl – as the program everyone else in the Big Ten is chasing for supremacy.

Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana each canceled their spring games because of impending inclement weather, while Michigan State's nighttime spring affair was so sparsely attended that someone could have shot off a cannon in Spartan Stadium and not hit anyone in the stands. Then there's Iowa, whose choice to have its spring game on a Friday evening is so popular that even the Big Ten Network chose to telecast a softball game between third-place Nebraska and fourth-place Minnesota over live airing of the Hawkeyes' spring game.

About the only thing the Buckeyes and head coach Urban Meyer did not accomplish during this year's set of 15 spring practice sessions was to determine who would start at quarterback now that J.T. Barrett has exhausted his college eligibility.

More to the point, that mission was not accomplished if we are to take what Meyer says at face value. Something gnaws at me when a coach of Meyer's pedigree claims to be undecided about a three-man race for the quarterback position on his team. Perhaps it's the cynic in me or maybe it's just because I've seen this movie many times before during my career, and I pretty much know how it ends.

To prevent anyone from become disenchanted or disgruntled, each of the candidates is told he remains very much in the hunt for the starting position. The hard work continues, the competitive juices keep flowing, and the coaching staff evaluates which players are willing to do whatever it takes to secure the job for their own.

Playing quarterback – especially in Meyer's system – is not entirely about who has the strongest arm or quickest feet. In all of his years as a Buckeye, Barrett was never the most gifted athlete in the quarterback room. But he was always the most cerebral, and if history has taught us anything, intangibles such as leadership, thoughtfulness and an ability to see the bigger picture are every bit as important to Meyer at the quarterback position as athletic ability.

But there is something to be said about raw numbers, so it's worth discussing spring-game statistics if only because we have such small sample sizes of what the trio of prospective starting quarterbacks can do in an Ohio State uniform.

Three-Man QB Derby

Joe Burrow, set to begin his fourth year in the program, had the most impressive numbers during a truncated afternoon that featured 10-minute quarters, a running clock in the second half and no contact until midway

through the second quarter. Playing for both the Scarlet and Gray teams, Burrow attempted 22 passes and completed 15 of them for 238 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Burrow seemed a little out of sync to begin the game, misfiring on two of his first three attempts. But he shook off that early trouble and was much sharper during his second series. He hit all four attempts during the possession, including effortless tosses to H-back Parris Campbell and tight end Luke Farrell as well as a pinpoint sideline throw to wide receiver Binjimen Victor.

Later in the game, Burrow connected on a pair of long touchdown passes to sophomore DeMarco McCall, who spent most of the spring trying to elbow his way into crowded groups at both the running back and receiver positions. McCall got himself wide open early in the fourth quarter to reel in a 50-yard touchdown pass from Burrow, and the duo hooked up again on the final play of the game, this one a decidedly more difficult pitch-and-catch that Burrow deposited over a couple of defenders and into the waiting arms of McCall for a 42-yard score.

While Burrow was proving his accuracy, sophomore Dwayne Haskins showcased the powerful arm that has most Ohio State fans assuming he will be the starter in the fall. Haskins has built whatever reputation he has so far on the howitzer he has dangling from his right shoulder as well as his relief performance in last year's Michigan game.

For anyone who might have forgotten, Haskins entered the game midway through the third quarter against the Wolverines with his team trailing by a 20-14 score and rallied the Buckeyes to a 31-20 victory. If you know anything about Ohio State football, you understand a win against Michigan banks a whole lot of fan-base capital for a quarterback. Therefore, most Buckeye Nation denizens believe that by the time the Sept. 1 season opener against Oregon State rolls around, it will be the 6-3, 218-pound Haskins under center.

Not that Haskins' spring-game performance did anything to undermine that notion. Like Burrow, he played for both teams – albeit taking fewer snaps – and completed 9 of 19 attempts for 120 yards and two touchdowns. The first of those scores was a 25-yard strike to sophomore receiver Jaylen Harris, a touch pass just over the outstretched arms of defender Marcus Williamson.

The third man in the quarterback derby is redshirt freshman Tate Martell, a wild card if there ever was such a thing.

At first glance, the 5-11, 207-pound Martell would seem to be the product of the recruiting hype machine, a frenetic ball of energy with dizzying high school numbers but whose frame appears too small to withstand the rigors of playing quarterback in the Big Ten. Then he hits the field and brings an electricity to the huddle that quite frankly neither Burrow nor Haskins seems to possess.

Martell has not yet displayed a big-time arm, completing only 5 of 16 throws for 28 yards and pitching the only interception of the spring game. His idea of a deep ball seems to be throwing the ball as far as he can and hoping the receiver can make a play on it. He overthrew targets on several occasions, didn't

seem to have much touch on timing patterns and once threw the ball away on fourth down.

Martell also appears to have a run-first mentality. Several times during the spring game, he seemed to get through only one or two of his progression reads before tucking the ball and taking off.

But when he takes off – well, that's when he excels. Martell scampered for 69 yards and a touchdown, numbers that likely would have been much higher had quarterbacks not been off-limits to contact. He seems not that dissimilar to the kind of disruptive force Johnny Manziel was when he won the 2012 Heisman Trophy as a redshirt freshman at Texas A&M.

So, Who's The Man?

Did 15 spring practice sessions determine who will succeed Barrett as the Ohio State starting quarterback? Perhaps, although Meyer went out of his way to make it seem that the issue was still up for debate.

Martell is likely not going to be the starter, but he is going to play in some form or fashion. Dating back to Josh Harris at Bowling Green through Tim Tebow at Florida and Barrett at Ohio State, Meyer has always liked a quarterback who can run the football, and it would be a safe bet to believe there will be some short-yardage and/or goal-line packages in the offensive playbook designed with Martell in mind.

As for the other two quarterbacks, it depends upon how you assess the situation.

Last season, Haskins played in eight games as Barrett's primary backup, throwing for 565 yards and four touchdowns with only one interception while completing 70.2 percent of his passes. Burrow played in just five games last year and attempted only 11 passes, completing seven of them for 61 yards.

It is worth noting, however, that Burrow had apparently won the backup role over Haskins until Burrow suffered a broken bone in his throwing hand late in fall camp. Furthermore, Burrow has three years' worth of experience in Meyer's system, and that is a huge factor in the head coach's mind. Additionally, Meyer once favorably compared Burrow to current Washington Redskins quarterback Alex Smith, who led a Meyer-coached Utah team to an undefeated season in 2004.

Still, if Burrow is not going to be the Buckeyes' starting quarterback in the fall, he has other options and should be allowed to explore them. He is on track to graduate from Ohio State this spring, and as a graduate transfer, he could move on to another program where he could start immediately.

"I love Joe Burrow," Meyer told ESPN reporter Marty Smith after the spring game. "He's a loyal soldier and I think I owe him an answer. Our staff owes him an answer. And I don't know what it is right now. (He's) a guy who gives so much to our program. I believe we've given a lot back to him, but you play quarterback to play. He's a great kid (and) he's a very good quarterback. We'll see what happens."

If I were a betting man, I would wager that Burrow will be a starting quarterback in the fall, but it will be with a different program – possibly the University of Cincinnati, where he has a relationship with Bearcats head coach Luke Fickell.

That leaves Haskins as the starter and Martell as the change-of-pace guy for the Buckeyes in 2018.

Is that a winning combination? Only time will tell, of course, but once upon a time at Florida, Meyer used that kind of swinging door at the position and Ohio State fans remain painfully aware of how well it worked.



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PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

EDITOR
Tim Moody

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
Bill Armstrong Bob Roehm
David Breithaupt Julie Roy
Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
Joe Dempsey Steve Siegfried
Rich Exner Garrett Stepien
Eric Loughry Jeff Svoboda
Ryan McGlade Mike Wachsman
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No. 1	Sept. 9	No. 13	Dec. 16
No. 2	Sept. 16	No. 14	Jan. 20
No. 3	Sept. 23	No. 15	Feb. 3
No. 4	Sept. 30	No. 16	Feb. 17
No. 5	Oct. 7	No. 17	March 10
No. 6	Oct. 14	No. 18	March 24
No. 7	Oct. 28	No. 19	April 7
No. 8	Nov. 4	No. 20	April 21
No. 9	Nov. 11	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 18	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 25	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 2	No. 24	August

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Charter Member

Multiple Factors Will Go Into OSU's QB Choice

Continued From Page 1

sophomore Jaylen Harris for the game's first passing touchdown. As a passer, Martell was clearly third best, completing just 5 of 16 attempts for 28 yards while being picked off once by redshirt freshman cornerback Shaun Wade. Martell, a redshirt freshman out of Las Vegas, acquitted himself nicely with his legs, though, making some of the game's most energetic plays while running for 69 yards and a touchdown on 11 attempts – numbers that would likely have been even better had the scrimmage been live. Instead, Martell was called down by contact in numerous situations where the defender would have struggled to make a tackle.

All of those numbers will be added to the data package Meyer will evaluate, but data is second best when it comes to making his final decision.

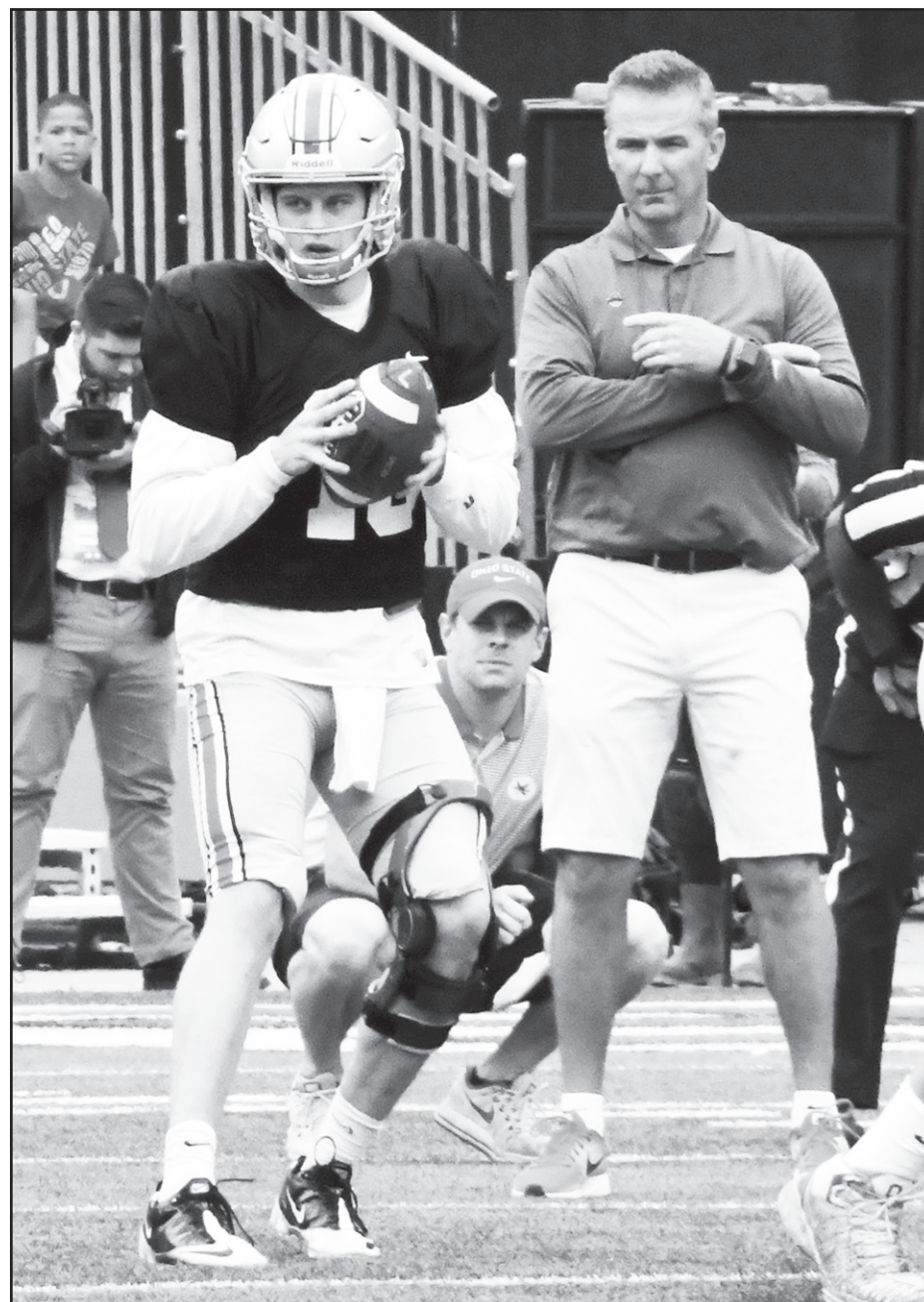
"It's something that helps you because it's also factual," Meyer said. "Intangibles are, obviously, going to be very involved in the decision."

Meyer's "30 years of gut" feeling will play a role as well, he added.

Based on the available data, the battle was certainly close this spring, which in typical circumstances would lead to it continuing into the fall. For Ohio State, under these circumstances, though, that's unlikely.

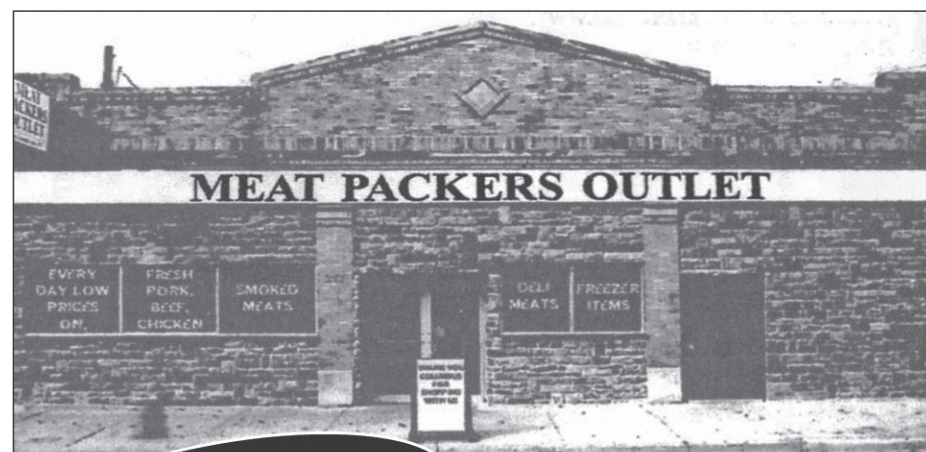
The best thing for the team might be to continue the battle, but Meyer has acknowledged that's not what would be best for the players – specifically Burrow.

The Ohio native from Athens High School is set to graduate this spring after just three years in Columbus. With his degree in hand, Burrow would have the option to transfer to another school and play right away with two years of eligibility



SONNY BROCKWAY

LAST LOOK – Head coach Urban Meyer (right) had his last chance of the spring to evaluate Joe Burrow (10) on the field at the spring game.



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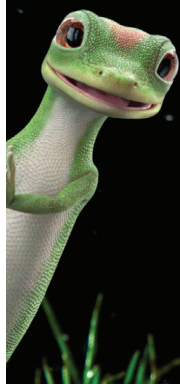
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COVER STORY

remaining. If he chose to stay at Ohio State without winning the job, there's a chance he would never end up as a collegiate starter, even though he has the talent to start and star at that level.

Haskins is a year younger than Burrow, meaning he could lose out on the job and stay while still becoming the Buckeyes' starter down the line. Haskins would also have to sit out a year while losing a season of eligibility if he transferred since he's already used his redshirt. The same applies to Martell, the youngest of the bunch.

With Burrow's future at the school in question depending on the result of the battle, Meyer said he'd like to see all three signal callers back in Columbus this fall, but he knows that's not a guarantee.

"I hope so," he said of having all three back. "I'll just leave it there. I hope so."

In Their Own Words

With the on-field portion of the competition likely over, both Burrow and Haskins left spring practice feeling confident. Martell is confident as well, but this has all the signs of a two-man race, while the Bishop Gorman product is more likely to find his way into the fold with special packages showcasing his athletic skill set next season.

For now, the decision for Meyer and the staff looks like a choice between Burrow and Haskins. Both look good enough to start, and both feel they can deliver if called upon – but they had very different ways of articulating their thoughts after the spring game.

Burrow, for one, was confident in his own ability but understood that there's not much more he can do.

"I think this was the best offseason that I've had since I've been here," he said. "Last fall, last spring, all of this, I think I took a big step this spring."

"Now some decisions have to be made. You've got to step back and evaluate everything. You've got to meet with the coaches and see what they're thinking, what you're thinking, and you have to kind of meet in the middle."

For Burrow, the decisions aren't limited to who will start, but also where he'll be playing football this fall.

Haskins, on the other hand, was much more direct in saying where he feels he stands, but he acknowledged that any player would feel the same way.

"Everybody has the right to feel that way," Haskins said when asked if he thought he should be the starter. "I feel like I should be the guy. I'm going to keep doing so until it's proven."

"I feel like I've done enough, but enough is never enough. You've got to keep going. So I'm going to keep pushing myself, keep pushing my teammates."

For now, Burrow and Haskins are both waiting, but their mindsets are unlikely to be the same going forward. Haskins feels he has the job won, but losing the battle would likely delay his time as the starter at Ohio State rather than eliminate it.

Burrow feels he's good enough to start as well, but losing the competition would likely

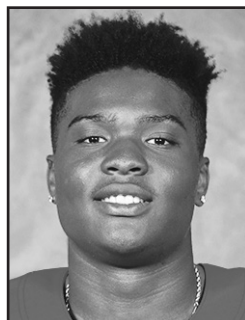
end his hopes of ever being the guy for the Scarlet and Gray.

"I came here to play," Burrow said. "I didn't come here to sit on the bench for four years. I know I'm a pretty darn good quarterback, and I want to play somewhere."

Playing at Ohio State has always been choice No. 1 for Burrow, but he's known for a while that playing elsewhere was a possibility. He said he loaded up on classes the past three semesters in order to make sure he graduated in time to transfer and play right away.

Even though he laid the groundwork for a transfer, Burrow doesn't want to leave. He chose Ohio State for a reason, and being the quarterback in Columbus is what he wants.

"It would be really hard for me to leave," Burrow said. "I've put so much into this. I've put my heart and soul into it. If I were to leave it would be pretty devastating for me."



Dwayne Haskins

At the same time, I would understand how they went."

If Haskins is the choice, his superior arm strength would likely put him over the top. It's something he said adds a "really great dimension" to Ohio State's offense.

If Burrow wins the job, he said he feels his intangibles – namely toughness and leadership – will make his case.

"If they were to go with me, I think that would be the area that put me over the top," Burrow said. "Dwayne has an arm you don't see a lot. I have a pretty good arm, too, but I think my leadership and my intangibles really came alive this spring."

Leadership or not, strong arm or not, the quarterbacks can't do much more than wait for a decision. They've stated their cases, and the ball is in Meyer's court.

"Now you just kind of sit back and relax," Burrow said. "You know the body of work you have. I know I played very well. I took a big step as a leader this spring as well. I'll kind of just sit back and see how it plays out."



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Spring Game Ends Without A Winner At Safety

Ohio State football head coach Urban Meyer said after the team's spring game on April 14 that junior Jordan Fuller will man one of the starting safety spots when the 2018 season kicks off Sept. 1 against Oregon State. As for who accompanies Fuller at the back end of the defense this fall, Meyer said he, co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach Alex Grinch and defensive coordinator Greg Schiano will have to sort that out.

SPRING GAME NOTEBOOK Ryan McGlade

"The field safety is probably our No. 1 concern on our team right now," Meyer said. "We're just not quite sure who that is. Jordan Fuller will be a starter. Who the other the guy is, that's Coach Schiano and Alex Grinch. We're going to meet on probably (April 18). They're going to give me a depth chart, and we'll go from there."

Schiano said after the scrimmage that he was pleased with the progress of Fuller, who started 13 games last year.

"The field safety – we've kind of moved Jordan over there and that's kind of been the evolution a little bit," Schiano said. "Jordan performed at a very high level this spring. Now, he didn't have a lot of live contact by design. But as far as playing the position, I feel like he was excellent."

"After Jordan, it's been a real battle for the other side and for the backup positions. I know that we don't come out of spring with a clear-cut guy. So the competition will continue into training camp, and I'm confident we'll have two guys that start that game that will be really game-ready. It's developing depth behind it that will be the challenge."

As recently as April 11 while on the Big Ten teleconference, Meyer said sophomores Isaiah Pryor, Brendon White and Jahsen Wint were among the many names vying for the other starting safety post.

Pryor took the field with Fuller and the

first-team defense for the first snap of the spring game, finishing with four tackles. Wint had 11 stops while White had one. Amir Riep, who switched to safety this spring after spending his freshman season of 2017 as a cornerback, logged five tackles from his new position in the exhibition.

The Buckeyes will be adding two more safeties to the fold this summer when 2018 signees Marcus Hooker, the brother of former OSU safety Malik Hooker, and Josh Proctor join the team.

Schiano noted that he was not worried the staff had yet to determine the team's other first-string safety because many of the candidates displayed promising signs in the spring.

"I do feel like we have guys that can play, but you would always like it – it's cleaner if you come out with a guy that established himself," Schiano said. "It's not that none of them didn't show things – they did. It's just none of them showed it that much more than the other and you can say, 'That's the guy.'"

Munford, Prince Reverse Roles In Spring Game

Throughout spring practice, it was understood that senior Isaiah Prince was taking reps at left tackle while sophomore Thayer Munford occupied right tackle, where Prince started the last two seasons.

When the spring game started, those two were flipped, with Munford handling the blind side and Prince back on the right end of the line while working with the first-team offense and mainly blocking for junior quarterback Joe Burrow and sophomore Dwayne Haskins.

Meyer said Munford and Prince spent time at both positions this spring and that nothing is final yet.

"We've done both," Meyer said. "That decision hasn't been made yet. Isaiah has been playing a lot of left, too. I think we're just trying to get that rotation of who's going to be the third tackle. Obviously, we've got a good one coming in too with (five-star 2018 signee Nicholas Petit-Frere). He's a guy that's been here watching and is a very talented young man. Josh Alabi has also earned a right to maybe get in a little bit. We're just kind of figuring out what's best."

Meyer Names Starters, Discusses Other Position Battles

While one starting safety spot and the two tackle slots remain unclear, Meyer was able to confirm players at other positions who locked up starting jobs at the end of spring ball.

The coach said fifth-year senior Brady Taylor is the team's starting center heading into the summer but must prove himself again in fall camp. Meyer added that redshirt freshman Josh Myers stood out in the battle to anchor the offensive line.

Moving down the offensive front, Meyer said sophomore Luke Farrell, who only briefly played in the spring game, will start at tight end. Like Taylor, though, Meyer said Farrell will have to earn his spot again in the fall. The head coach also mentioned junior Rashod Berry and sophomore Jake Hausmann as tight ends who caught his eye. Berry did not play in the spring game because he suffered two stingers days before, Meyer said.

Defensively, Meyer said nothing is set in stone with the linebackers. Sophomore Tuf Borland would be the leading candidate to be the starting middle linebacker, but he

suffered an Achilles injury during the spring and will be out until sometime in September. Fifth-year senior Dante Booker was out all spring with shoulder injuries. The ailments to Booker and Borland gave fellow linebackers such as sophomore Baron Browning, early enrollee Dallas Gant, juniors Justin Hilliard and Keandre Jones and sophomore Pete Werner an opportunity to impress the coaches. In the spring game, Werner had six tackles, Gant had five and also forced a fumble, Browning had four tackles and Hilliard and Jones each had one.

"Linebacker is still open with the injury to Tuf Borland," Meyer said. "I thought Baron Browning played very good today. I think Hilliard is right in the middle of that thing too. We'll see."

Much like in years past, Meyer said the team will plan to employ a three-man rotation at cornerback with junior Damon Arnette, sophomore Jeffrey Okudah and junior Kendall Sheffield. Okudah had shoulder surgery in January and therefore did not play in the intrasquad scrimmage.

Meyer left open the possibility of a fourth corner breaking into the lineup.

"You know how we like to play three guys," he said. "There might be another one that pops in there if young guys keep developing."

Victor Still Working To Improve His Consistency

Binjimen Victor appears to have all of the tools necessary to transform into an elite wide receiver for Ohio State. The 6-4, 200-pounder was a four-star prospect in Coconut Creek,

Fla., and was regarded as the No. 97 overall prospect and No. 12 receiver in the 2016 recruiting class, according to the 247Sports composite rankings.

Ratings and measurables haven't translated into steady excellence on the college gridiron for Victor, though. He appeared in only five games as a freshman for Ohio State in 2016, logging four receptions for 64 yards with one touchdown. He showed flashes of his ability on that scoring grab, which went for 25 yards, at Maryland in the 10th contest of the year and on a 21-yard catch against Clemson in the College Football Playoff semifinal.

Victor then assumed a more prominent role in Ohio State's crowded wideout rotation last fall but still wasn't quite the game-breaker the team expects him to be. He played in all 14 games and caught 23 passes for 349 yards and seven touchdowns. Eighteen of those receptions came during the first seven weeks of the season, however, with the other five occurring over the second half of the campaign. He failed to record a catch against Penn State, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship and USC in the Cotton Bowl – some of the most important games for Ohio State.

In the spring game, Victor reminded everyone of the type of skill he possesses. He hauled in five balls for 91 yards, including a 43-yard snag down the sideline, and a touchdown.

"I felt like I needed to make plays today," Victor said after the scrimmage. "Coming into the spring, what I feel like I really wanted to focus on was separation, and that's



TIM MOODY

OPEN SPOTS – Sophomore Pete Werner (20) is among a handful of linebackers competing for playing time in 2018.

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OHIO STATE SPRING GAME

Spring Game Box Score

Gray 37, Scarlet 14

April 14, 2018 • Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4		F
SCARLET	0	14	0	0	–	14
GRAY	3	14	7	13	–	37

First Quarter

GRAY – Nuernberger, 40 yard field goal, 1:45; 8 plays, 53 yards, 2:56 TOP.

Second Quarter

SCARLET – Teague, 1 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 5:26; 13 plays, 85 yards, 4:16 TOP.

GRAY – Martell, 2 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 4:50; 2 plays, 65 yards, 0:36 TOP.

SCARLET – Harris, 25 yard pass from Haskins (Nuernberger kick), 2:53; 5 plays, 65 yards, 1:57 TOP.

GRAY – Williams, 3 yard run (Haubeil kick), 0:16; 11 plays, 65 yards, 2:37 TOP.

Third Quarter

GRAY – Victor, 2 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 4:30; 5 plays, 59 yards, 5:30 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

GRAY – McCall, 50 yard pass from Burrow (Haubeil kick), 8:43; 2 plays, 72 yards, 1:17 TOP.

GRAY – McCall, 42 yard pass from Burrow, 0:00; 7 plays, 62 yards, 3:40 TOP.

Att. – 47,803.

Team Statistics

	SCARLET	GRAY
First Downs	16	14
Rushing	8	4
Passing	7	8
Penalty	1	2
Rushes-Yards	27-144	16-124
Passing Yards	135	251
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	13-30-1	16-27-0
Offensive Plays	57	43
Total Net Yards	279	375
Third Down Efficiency	2-11	1-8
Fourth Down Efficiency	3-5	3-3
Punts-Avg.	2-35.0	2-39.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties	2-16	3-23
Time of Possession	16:02	23:58

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – SCARLET: Teague 14-73; Martell 9-59; Rossi 3-9; Burrow 1-3. GRAY: Weber 1-63; Williams 5-47; Martell 2-10; Burrow 2-5; McMahon 2-2; Dobbins 1-(-1); Haskins 3-(-2).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – SCARLET: Martell 5-14-1-28-0; Haskins 4-11-0-58-1; Burrow 4-5-0-49-0. GRAY: Burrow 11-17-0-189-2; Haskins 5-8-0-62-1; Martell 0-2-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – SCARLET: McCall 6-65; Harris 3-39; Gardiner 1-23; Teague 1-4; Burrow 1-3; Malone 1-1. GRAY: McCall 5-100; Victor 5-91; Campbell 4-40; Farrell 1-15; Mack 1-5.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – SCARLET: Chrisman 2-35.0-36. GRAY: Chrisman 2-39.0-51.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – SCARLET: None. GRAY: None.

FORCED FUMBLES – SCARLET: None. GRAY: Gant.

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

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – SCARLET: None. GRAY: Wade 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – SCARLET: Young 1.0-2. GRAY: Hamilton 1.0-5.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – SCARLET: Young 1.0-2; Johnson 1.0-1; Landers 1.0-1; Cornell 1.0-1. GRAY: Hamilton 1.0-5.

TACKLES (Solo-Assst.-Tot.) – SCARLET: Pryor 4-0-4; Wa. Davis 3-0-3; Sheffield 2-0-2; Banks 2-0-2; Johnson 2-0-2; Werner 1-1-2; Young 1-1-2; Togiai 1-1-2; Cage 0-2-2; Fuller 1-0-1; Jones 1-0-1; Landers 1-0-1; Hilliard 1-0-1; Cornell 1-0-1; Arnette 1-0-1; White 0-1-1. GRAY: Wint 8-3-11; Riep 4-1-5; Gant 3-2-5; Werner 4-0-4; Browning 3-1-4; Hamilton 2-2-4; Jester 2-1-3; Banks 2-0-2; Hamdan 1-0-1; Cox 1-0-1; Dever 1-0-1; Williamson 1-0-1.

what I did. In the summer, I've just got to keep improving in that."

Victor stayed in the exhibition much longer than other first-team wide receivers such as Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon, K.J. Hill, Austin Mack and Terry McLaurin. Meyer said that was by design.

"Vic, I kept him in there because he has to just keep getting better," Meyer said. "He's still got a ways to go. That's one of the most talented receivers we've ever had. It's consistency and fight and those kinds of things (that need to improve). When he does (have consistency and fight), it's fun to watch. He's a very talented guy."

Victor agreed with his head coach saying he still has room for improvement. The junior also said that he views Meyer calling him one of the most talented players at his position to come to Ohio State as motivation.

"I have a little way to go, but I feel like he says that because he sees what kind of player I am and what kind of player I could be in the future," Victor said. "I've just got to keep working at that and meeting that high expectation."

Victor added that the consistency Meyer referred to applies to more than just having a presence in every game, something he struggled with during his first two years on campus. Victor said the consistency pertains to every day in practice as well.

"Don't have up-and-down days," he said. "Every day has got to be a good day. I feel like that's what I need to work at as well. I'm really looking forward to this summer and making that happen in the fall."

While there is much focus on where Victor can further develop his game, the Floridian has made strides as a Buckeye. Since signing with Ohio State in February 2016, he has put on 27 pounds and has seen his part in the offense increase each season.

When asked to reflect on his OSU career to this point, Victor was candid in how challenging it has been.

"The journey has been pretty up and down with the playing level, the meeting rooms, gaining weight and all of that," he said. "But that's what football is about. It's not an easy sport. I've just got to go through it and maintain like I can."

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Haskins The Leading Pick Among BSB Staffers

Ohio State's 2018 spring practice was wrapped up with the annual spring game on April 14, allowing media and fans one last look at the Buckeyes before the end of the academic year.

The Gray team topped Scarlet, 37-14, although the rosters were mixed and matched throughout the contest, so the true winners are hard to determine.

As expected, the quarterbacks were front and center, with Joe Burrow and Dwayne Haskins showcasing their arm talent while Tate Martell showed what he can do with his legs. Demario McCall also had a feature role as an H-back, catching 11 passes for 165 yards and two touchdowns, including a 42-yarder from Burrow on the last play of the game.

With the spring game – and spring camp – in the books, BSB editor Tim Moody and staff writers Ryan McGlade and Garrett Stepien took some time to analyze the Buckeyes' spring camp and their performance at the Horseshoe.

Let's just get this out of the way – who do you think should be the starting quarterback and who do you think will be the starting quarterback?

Garrett Stepien: Dwayne Haskins and Dwayne Haskins. I believe that from both sides, I said it before the spring and I'm sticking to it now. Despite an applaudable effort from Joe Burrow, who left everything he had on the field in the spring game, Haskins flashed the same promise he showed in his spurts of action during the 2017 season.

Among the three of them, Tate Martell's performance confirmed he clearly isn't there yet. He does, however, have a place in this offense with the special packages catered to his dynamic athleticism — which he showed off on a few of the big read-option runs he ripped off in the spring game. Not only do I believe starting Haskins with Martell off the bench was the plan from the jump for Ohio State, but I also think it works out best for the offense in 2018 with the returning personnel in the unit.

Tim Moody: I agree with Garrett that Haskins will start, but I don't agree that he should.

While Haskins brings a stronger arm and the ability to make a few throws that Burrow can't, the junior from Athens, Ohio, can still make all the throws necessary to run the offense, and he does so more accurately and more consistently from what I've seen. Burrow is also a better runner, and he makes better decisions when throwing the ball.

At the end of the day, though, Ohio State will have a star at quarterback next season, and whoever doesn't win the job will have success on the football field eventually – whether it be in Columbus or at another school.

Ryan McGlade: I guess I'm kind of in the middle between Garrett and Tim. I certainly think Haskins will get the nod, largely because of what he did at Michigan last year. I also would *probably* say Haskins should get the starting job. You can't deny Haskins' cannon of an arm. But like Tim said, Burrow can make all the necessary throws to the run the offense. I thought it was important that Urban Meyer said after the spring game that intangibles such as leadership and toughness will play a large role in the coaches determining the starting quarterback. I would say Burrow has the edge in that department. But in the end, I think Haskins' performance at the Big



TIM MOODY

STRUTTING HIS STUFF – Sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins (7) threw a pair of touchdowns in Ohio State's spring game.

House last fall and his ability to take the top off the defense with his arm will lead to the coaches going with him.

Martell looked really good running the ball but was just 5 of 16 with an interception as a passer. What role do you see him having in 2018?

RM: The coaches hinted multiple times throughout the spring that they were working on a package for Martell to be used as a running back and/or receiver. I truly believe that if we see Martell in the fall, that is what we'll see him doing. He still has a long way to go to be a polished passer, so I would be very shocked if he throws much in 2018. He redshirted as a true freshman last year, and Meyer will not want to waste the type of talent Martell possess. Expect the Las Vegas native to be a wild card in the Buckeye offense this coming season.

TM: I was honestly surprised by how poorly Martell threw the ball in the spring game. I knew he wouldn't be a perfectly

polished passer, but I expected him to be a bit further along.

That said, I was impressed by his running ability, as he proved to be even more of a game-breaker than I expected. Like Ryan said, Martell's role in the offense will be complementary to the starting quarterback, but there will be a role. To me, Meyer should look back to his Florida days at how he used

Tim Tebow as a freshman, complementing Chris Leak on the way to a national championship for the Gators. Martell needs to be on the field, and he needs to be given the ball with a chance to make plays in space. He should get sets as the quarterback and should also have a few plays where he's on the field with the starter.

My best guess would be 8-10 snaps per game for Martell, which should lead to some highlight-reel moments for the Buckeyes.

GS: Not to say Haskins can't do it at all, but he sure isn't able to duplicate what Martell brings to the inside run. Martell might have some situations on the rare chance where he lines up at receiver in the slot just to throw defenses off, but I wouldn't bet on serious involvement outside of coming in and running the read option. As he showed in the spring game, he has the IQ to make the quick decision to tuck it and run, which is an overlooked element to that approach beyond only athleticism. If his special packages involve plays like those, he has the speed and acceleration to make a defender or two miss on his way to a house call – something Haskins can't do – that only opens up the offense further beyond the skill players it already has.

With spring practice in the books, which player made the biggest step forward in your mind?

GS: Damon Webb will quietly be a tough act to follow for whoever replaces him beside

Continued On Page 14



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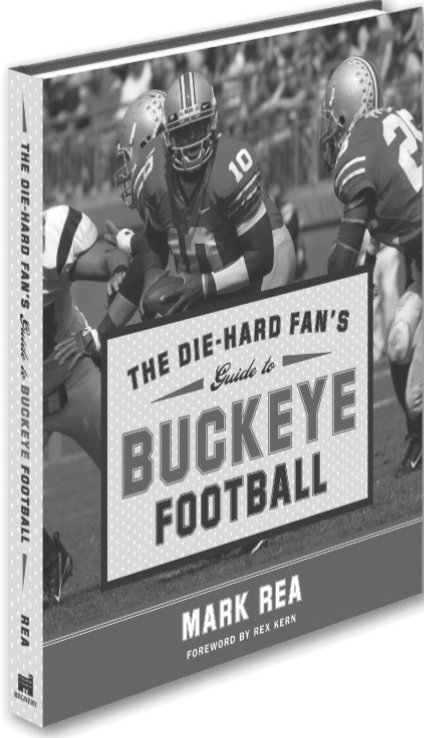
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DE Young Dominated Ohio State's Spring Game

Continued From Page 13

Jordan Fuller at safety, but Isaiah Pryor has all of the tools to make for a seamless transition at the position. The coaches have said Jahsen Wint, Brendon White and incoming signees Josh Proctor and Marcus Hooker are still in the mix, but I put more stock in comments from Fuller and Alex Grinch on Pryor earlier in the spring. The 6-2, 207-pound sophomore has the physical and mental makeup to form a dynamic duo on the back end of the defense with Fuller.

RM: I think I'll have to say Baron Browning. The sophomore linebacker had four tackles in the spring game, but what caught my attention more is the praise Meyer had for him throughout the spring. The head coach went so far as to say in late March that Browning is "as talented a linebacker as has ever walked through these doors." That without a doubt raised my eyebrows. Browning is right in the thick of the linebackers race, so I would not be shocked to see him excel on the field this fall.

TM: I'm sure there are guys who didn't play last year who have taken a big step forward, but it's hard to say how far they've come since we had yet to see them on the field.

That said, I'll go with a guy who actually redshirted last year, but we've already seen a lot of him for the Buckeyes: Demario McCall.

He was limited last year before taking a medical redshirt after a few appearances, but he seems to be right at home – finally – as an H-back in Ohio State's offense. He's a perfect fit for the position, and he looks

bigger, stronger and faster than ever. McCall is a star in the making, and his performance this spring proves that the coaching staff will have to find a way to get him on the field this fall.

The spring game isn't the best time to evaluate defensive players, but we take what we can get. Which defensive player stood out the most to you?

TM: First of all, they need to either play with flags or play tackle football. Playing the weird two-hand-touch brand in the spring game makes it almost impossible for defensive players to go full speed, which limits what they can do.

That said, Chase Young might have had five sacks if it had been a live game. He was credited with only one, but I'm not sure even the best offensive linemen Ohio State has can block him, and the Buckeyes have some pretty good players up front. Young combined with Nick Bosa will be a freakish tandem on the field, and that's in addition to guys like Dre'Mont Jones and Jonathon Cooper.

I'll also give a shout-out to redshirt freshman cornerback Shaun Wade. He lost his first season to injury issues, but he's every bit as talented as Jeffrey Okudah, and probably more talented than Damon Arnette. He showed off that skill set with a really nice interception on the sideline, and he should find his way onto the field in some capacity this season.

GS: Chase Young handled Thayer Munford, a pretty darn good offensive lineman, so easily that it's impossible for me to ignore. The defensive line is sure to miss guys like Jalyn Holmes and Tyquan Lewis on the ends, but any indications that Young is a star in the making were confirmed when he dominated the spring game. Young is



Chase Young

bigger, faster and only going to get better with summer workouts before he returns for fall camp ahead of his second season. The more Young improves, the easier it is for someone like Bosa or Cooper on the defensive line, which looks like it very well could be even better than it was last year.

RM: Allow me to make it 3 for 3 – Chase Young. He manhandled any offensive lineman who lined up across from him, which is pretty impressive considering the talent OSU has along its offensive front. We all thought Nick Bosa and Sam Hubbard coming off the edge was lethal last year. I don't know the word to describe what it will be like to watch Bosa and Young rush the passer in 2018. One thing is for certain, Ohio State's offensive tackles should become some of the best in the country going up against guys like Bosa, Young and Cooper in practice every day.

Now that you've seen them on the field, do you think any of the early enrollees will have a real role this season?

RM: I couldn't help but notice Master

Teague in the spring game as he pounded out 73 yards and a touchdown on 14 carries. Though he should be wrapping up his senior year of high school right now, Teague looks like he's already been in Mickey Marotti's strength program at OSU for a couple of years. With Teague being a running back, though, it'll be tough for him to earn significant playing time with J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber ahead of him on the depth chart.

GS: A ton of coach speak comes out of spring camp, especially when we ask about early enrollees, but I really think defensive tackle Tommy Togiai has a strong chance to crack the defensive line as a true freshman in 2018 after the spring he had. From the viral video of him dominating the circle drill to the rare removal of the black stripe as an early enrollee and ultimately the heavy bulk of first-team reps he received throughout the spring game, Togiai solidified his positioning for time at a spot where depth has been a slight concern after the slow recovery of Antwan Jackson from surgery on a broken left foot.

Togiai's big spring drew rave reviews from his teammates to Meyer. With all of that, why shouldn't he be on equal footing with the others involved – except for someone like a returning starter in Dre'Mont Jones – on the inside entering fall camp?

TM: Teague had a great spring, but he could very well end up redshirting behind Dobbins, Weber, Antonio Williams and, potentially, Brian Snead. Togiai has looked great as well, but he'd have to get in front of one of four returning players – Dre'Mont Jones, Haskell Garrett, Robert Landers and

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ANALYSIS

Davon Hamilton – to crack the primary defensive tackle rotation.

Offensive tackle Max Wray is solid as well, but his contributions probably won't extend beyond special teams, which can be said for linebacker Dallas Gant as well. Then there's the corners, Tyreke Johnson and Sevn Banks, who are future studs but won't have a defensive role this season in all likelihood.

That's all a roundabout way of saying that I don't see any of the early enrollees making a huge impact this fall, but there are a bunch of them who will see the field and have a chance to make their mark on special teams.

Looking back at spring camp, how would you assess the Buckeyes overall?

TM: How Ohio State's season pans out pretty much comes down to how the 11 new starters fare, and it's tough to accurately project that in the spring. From what I've seen, though, I expect a lot of new names to step up and thrive in prominent roles.

To me, the offensive line will be key – the defense is going to be very good and very fast, but the offense won't be able to do anything if the five guys up front struggle. Brady Taylor might be the biggest question mark, but it will be interesting to see who slots in at left tackle as well. Isaiah Prince spent most of spring camp in that spot, but he was back on the right in the spring game with Thayer Munford on the left. Both are capable players, but neither has started on the blind side for Ohio State before.

RM: Like Tim said, I think it's hard to accurately gauge the Buckeyes from the handful of times we saw them in spring practice and then at the spring game. There are a few positions I think the coaches have to spend little time fretting over as we head into the summer – cornerbacks, defensive line, running backs, tight ends and wide receivers.

We all know the quarterback situation, so I won't spend time on that here. Like Tim mentioned, offensive line is a bit of a mystery. Ohio State seems to have plenty of depth at the position with Branden Bowen, Matthew Burrell, Michael Jordan, Demetrius Knox, Thayer Munford, Malcolm Pridgeon, Isaiah Prince and Brady Taylor. It's just a matter of everyone playing up to their potential. The starting safety spot opposite Jordan Fuller is the other glaring issue with spring camp now complete. Isaiah Pryor seemed to be the leading candidate, but Meyer indicated that defensive coordinators Alex Grinch and Greg Schiano have some work to do to decide who joins Fuller at the back end of the defense.

GS: For what the team lacks in leadership it had last year, Ohio State makes up for it with the talent the Buckeyes bring into next season. Even in the few times we were able to see OSU throughout the spring, it looks every part of a contender, notably because of the depth they have across both sides of the ball.

Of course, offensive line is undoubtedly the biggest concern, but the abundance of skill players spread out across the unit should make life easier for the group as it finds its footing after some of the shuffling. I'm interested to see how the new starters, from quarterback to the trenches, enter the fold with Ryan Day expected to have more of an influence on the offense. I think Tim summed it up best when he said new names are going to step up in prominent roles. The talent is certainly there, and it will be fun to watch the development from the start of fall camp and into the season.



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OSU Still Hasn't Answered Its Biggest Question

The spring game provided clarity – Ohio State is set at quarterback. The Buckeyes have a quarterback who can lead them to a national championship. In fact, they have two – eventually maybe even three.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

The question of ability is settled. But there lingers another question: Just who will that quarterback be? My vote goes to Joe Burrow. I understand others would say Dwayne Haskins. I wouldn't dispute that too strongly.

Few people, if anyone, would say Tate Martell is ready yet. But he too showed he is capable of running the offense.

I don't recall a time when Ohio State has had so much game-ready talent at quarterback.

Yes, that includes 2015, when undefeated QB starter and national champion Cardale Jones was battling with the former starter, J.T. Barrett, for the regular job.

Yes, that includes 1996 and 1997 when Joe Germaine and Stanley Jackson each had back-to-back 1,000-plus-yard passing seasons and won a Rose Bowl.

And yes, that includes 1982, the year-of the five-way battle among talented quarterbacks to replace Art Schlichter. From that group, Mike Tomczak went on to become a three-year starter at OSU, Jim Karsatos became a two-year starter after Tomczak, Brent Offenbecher got his chance as a starter briefly when Tomczak was benched, and Scott Woolf became a Division III All-American at Mount Union.

But I think this group is better. Burrow

and Haskins both offer something Ohio State has been missing – accurate arms.

Are they leaders yet in the J.T. Barrett category? Of course not. But there also is no reason to believe that either or both won't grow into being a "coach on the field" as well.

Of course, I haven't seen these players on the practice field like OSU's coaches. But when we've all had the limited opportunities to see Burrow and Haskins play, they have demonstrated both composure and talent.

Burrow is the better runner. Haskins probably has a stronger arm. Martell is the most dynamic on his feet but the least developed as a passer.

Final numbers from the spring game: Burrow, 15 of 22 for 238 yards, two touchdowns and no interceptions; Haskins, 9 of 19 for 120 yards, two touchdowns and no interceptions; Martell, 5 of 16 for 28 yards, no touchdowns and one interception (plus 69 yards rushing).

How many Big Ten teams would like to have the runner-up in this quarterback battle as their starter next season? Ten, 11, 12 other Big Ten teams?

Half the league might be willing to trade their apparent starter for Martell.

Ohio State is in good hands at quarterback. That bodes well for the coming season.

Spring Game Points

I find it hard to believe that Demario McCall really weighs as much as the 193 pounds listed by Ohio State, but few defenders will get a good enough hold on him to judge for themselves.

Elusive is the best way to describe McCall. And if the spring game is any indication, Urban Meyer plans to find ways to get McCall the ball in the open field this coming season, McCall's third at Ohio State.

That's a great idea. In space, the guy gets open and avoids tacklers.

Consider these stats in limited action over his first two seasons – 22.5 yards per reception and 6.0 yards per carry.

His 42-yard TD reception from Burrow was a great way to wrap up the spring game, coming on the final play of a game in which he caught a game-high 11 passes for a game-high 165 yards.

Freshman Master Teague is a brute at running back. He ran for 73 yards on 14 carries in a game of touch football most of the day. I'm guessing he would have had 100-plus yards if the spring game was a game of tackle football.

No doubt, Teague deserved his press clippings, which included being tabbed a four-star prospect. The guy has passed the look test in his first performance in Ohio Stadium.

Earlier, we noted the depth Ohio State has at quarterback. The same is true at running back, where the freshman Teague will have to find playing time while competing with two returnees who have already had 1,000-yard rushing seasons at Ohio State – Mike Weber and J.K. Dobbins.

The game of touch football, from a fan's point of view, was disappointing. There was no real way to get a sense of the talent on defense. And would-be long runs by Martell, Teague and others were stopped short by light touches on the back.

But, given the potential for injury, it's difficult to question Meyer's decision on this.

The worst performance of the day was by the Big Ten Network. BTN missed the entire first offensive series of the game and never went back to show what happened. Then BTN missed a fourth-quarterback TD pass, showing just the end of the play.

Credit the weather and the decision by Meyer to skip a halftime break for upping the entertainment value for the announced crowd of 47,803. Skipping a halftime break packed in the action and kept the flow going. Sometimes in the past, the second half of spring games became so boring and long and many fans left early.

This wasn't the biggest OSU spring game crowd. But it was still an amazing turnout, I was reminded in tuning in briefly for the Maryland spring game later that day.

There appeared to be maybe a few hundred – perhaps 1,000 or so – fans in the stands for the Maryland game. One side was completely empty. Fans were spread out sparsely on the home side of the stadium.

Now that the spring game is out of the way, the countdown is on for Sept. 1, the day of the opener in Ohio Stadium against Oregon State.



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Starting QB Will Be Deserving No Matter What

Another Ohio State spring practice is in the books, and it doesn't appear that fans are any closer to having answers to their questions.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

The most pressing, of course, centers around the quarterback position. Holdovers Dwayne Haskins and Joe Burrow did their level best to take the job, while freshman Tate Martell showed some brilliance in running the football. It's safe to say that it's a two-man race, but whether or not there will be a definitive starter divulged to the public remains to be seen.

OSU coach Urban Meyer didn't appear to be in any real hurry following the Buckeyes' spring game on April 14.

"We're going to have to make some decisions," he said. "Those decisions have not been made."

That could cause some anxious moments, for fans and players alike.

Fans want to know that someone has taken the job and will head into fall camp with the position in hand. They know that having a battle continue into the season would be a detriment to the team, because when you have two quarterbacks you really have none.

The players involved want to know, for reasons not only centered on improvement, but on their immediate future.

Burrow is in an especially tricky spot. He graduates in May and has two years of eligibility remaining. Should he get the OSU job, he would obviously stick around in Columbus. But if Haskins gets the nod, Burrow would likely – and rightly – look at his options, which include transferring.

"That would be a discussion in the meetings we have," Burrow said after the game. "I'm not sure yet. I'm happy with how I played and how the situation was handled this spring."

For what it's worth, Burrow appeared to outplay Haskins in the spring game, though not by a ton. And that means Haskins could get the job, because you have to "knock out the champ" to gain supremacy, and having a slight edge is not a knockout.

Burrow looked good on the long ball, including a 42-yarder to Demario McCall on the final play of the scrimmage. Burrow appeared to have command of the offense,

which is a big thing for Meyer. The coach wants to have the ultimate trust in his quarterback – wants to know that in crunch time he can be counted on.

Haskins had his moments, too, including a beautiful back-shoulder 43-yard strike to Binjimen Victor, quite possibly the prettiest pass of the day by anyone. The coverage was there, but Haskins threaded the needle.

Martell had been touted as the wild card and was reportedly close. But after seeing his problems throwing the football, it's safe to say that his role in 2018 will be limited, likely to short-yardage and red-zone packages. He does have speed and elusiveness handling the football, and if his passing improves he could legitimately be in the mix down the road.

Although Meyer wasn't ready to declare a winner in the quarterback derby, he feels the Buckeyes as a whole are progressing nicely.

"I'm pretty pleased with where we are at," Meyer said. "We're not where we were last year. That was a veteran team."

There really isn't any secret formula to decide a starter, though Meyer says a number of things will go into the decision, with leadership being the top component.

As for the rest of it?

"Data is second," he said. "It's something that helps you, and it's also factual."

There is also a little bit of "feel," that nebulous thing that you just know.

"Thirty years of gut (feeling)," Meyer added. "That will be part of it too."

However things shake out, the quarterback position appears to be in good hands. But until a winner is announced, fans have reason to be just a bit apprehensive.

Young Stars On Display

It's pretty easy to see why many believe the Buckeyes will once again be in the thick of the hunt for a College Football Playoff berth, despite having questions at quarterback.

There's a crazy amount of talent on hand in Columbus, and a lot of it showed in the spring game. It should be noted, however, that nothing can be gleaned from a single scrimmage, even if it mirrored (sort of) game conditions.

A few performances stood out over others, but it should be noted that these were not the only solid players on the day. These were the most notable, at least to these bespectacled eyes:

DE Chase Young – Will be a beast, especially as teams focus on stopping Nick Bosa. His speed off the edge is jaw-drop-

ping, and if he can amass a collection of pass-rush moves, he will be close to unstoppable.

WR Binjimen Victor – Looks to have his body control down pat, making some excellent catches. He was able to reach over defenders to snag several passes and looks stronger than he did last year.

LB Baron Browning – Difficult for a defender to stand out in this "touch football" format, but the sophomore was around the ball a lot. He flowed straight ahead very well, and his side-to-side quickness was also good.

H-Back Demario McCall – It's nice that OSU is looking to get the speedster involved. McCall is what they thought Dontre Wilson was going to be, only with actual ability and availability. He could be a real playmaker in 2018, and it appears that he will be used quite a bit. You do wonder a little whether he will cut into Parris Campbell's workload, but maybe the coaches can get creative and put both on the field at the same time.

RB Master Teague – He has a great name, is a physical runner and seems to love contact. It wouldn't be a shock if he takes third-team honors in a crowded, talented backfield. Teague was especially effective putting his shoulder down and initiating contact.

CB Marcus Williamson – Sort of a forgotten player, he was good in coverage and seemed to at least make the coaches take notice. The corner jobs look to belong to Kendall Sheffield and Damon Arnette, with Jeffrey Okudah and Shaun Wade waiting to pounce. But Williamson is not going to go away, and he played well enough to keep himself on the coaches' radar.

Ready To Shine

Victor has everything coaches could want in a receiver – talent, size and an innate ability to go up and get the football. He could be the next big star from the OSU receiving corps, but it isn't quite etched in stone yet.

"He's one of the most talented receivers we've ever had," Meyer said. "But he's still got a ways to go."

Victor grabbed five passes for 91 yards

and score, and he said that his arrival is going according to plan.

"I felt I needed to make plays today," the junior-to-be said. "Coming into the spring game I felt like what I really wanted to focus on was separation, and that's what I did. I thought I had a pretty solid day. It could have been better. There were a lot of coaching points where I'll watch film and make corrections."

Victor isn't the only talented receiver the Buckeyes have, but he's the one who looks most like a star-in-waiting – sort of like Michael Thomas did early in his career. There are a couple of things that need some tinkering, though.

"Consistency – that's been up and down," Victor said. "I've got to keep maintaining and stay focused on having consistency through the whole fall camp."

Glad To Be Home

It was cool to see a host of former players on the sideline, even if it was just an exhibition.

Most notable was the presence of Ryan Shazier, who suffered a serious spinal injury late in the NFL season. He was standing on his own and received a thunderous ovation from the fans in attendance.

He still feels a part of the Buckeye program and hinted that he wouldn't have missed the opportunity to return to Columbus.

"Me and Coach Meyer talk often," he said. "He asked me if I was feeling up to it, if I would be able to be (an honorary) coach, and I felt it was an honor to just be here. I just couldn't say no."

Malcolm Jenkins, fresh off a Super Bowl title with the Philadelphia Eagles, also served as a coach for the game, but it was Shazier who got the bulk of the attention – something he's been used to ever since the injury.

"It's been outstanding support," he said. "I still get letters to this day. It's so much mail that I can't even read it all. I'm just thankful to everybody for all the support and all the prayers. I just want to say thank you to everybody because I wouldn't be able to be doing so well if it wasn't for all the support."

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OSU Spring Game Format Should Be Re-Evaluated

Without a doubt, the Ohio State spring game is among the best spring football events in the nation. The Buckeyes were the first school to crack the 100,000 mark in spring game attendance, and the annual scrimmage always draws a huge crowd – regardless of the weather forecast, as we saw April 14 at Ohio Stadium.

MOODY MUSINGS

Tim Moody, Editor

With all that in mind, though, I can't help but wonder how much better the event could be if the football team actually, you know, played football in front of their faithful fans.

For the second year in a row, fans were treated to a glorified two-hand touch game – at least in the early stages – before the starters spent the majority of the game on the sidelines. All of that makes sense, to some extent, and head coach Urban Meyer was sure to point out that the health of the players comes first in the spring – and he's absolutely right.

"Obviously nowadays with the health of players I think we're doing it the right way," Meyer said after the game. "I know you sometimes get criticized because you

start the first three or four sets of the scrimmage with just two-hand tag and it's just too critical, too fragile right now – that's the way it is."

It would be crazy to risk injuries, especially to veteran players who will be key components to the 2018 team, and there's no reason for surefire starters to go through the motions in the spring game for more than a series or two.

That's all fine, but there's still a lot Ohio State could have done to put a much more entertaining brand of football on the field.

First off, set the rosters and let those two teams play each other.

The school didn't release a full participation chart for the spring game, but there were obviously many players swapping back and forth. In fact, all three quarterbacks ended up playing for both teams, switching out on a series-by-series – or oftentimes play-by-play – rotation. It would have been much more entertaining for the fans to see a Joe Burrow-led team take on a Dwayne Haskins-led team, with Tate Martell rotating in during the second half or in special sets.

Instead, what we got was a simple 11-on-11 practice session, with no real winner or loser since players were all over the field.

An actual game between two teams would be better for the fans and players, and it would give the coaching staff a

perfectly fine look at everyone on the field. They've had all spring to evaluate, so running a more structured scrimmage in the spring game wouldn't take away from anything.

And if you are going to play two-hand touch, why not make it a little more interesting? Instead of playing until someone arbitrarily blows a whistle because a player might have gotten a hand on the ball carrier, give them flags to wear during the non-tackling portion of the scrimmage. That would allow the defenders to go harder, and it would allow the playmakers on offense to show what they can really do.

The way Ohio State played in the spring game basically prevented big plays, even though there were numerous occasions when a player – most notably Martell – was called down despite breaking away on what would have been a sure touchdown in a live game. If the event is largely for the fans, then limiting the big plays takes away from the excitement.

Ohio Stadium was pretty dead during the spring game this year, and that could have been easily fixed without endangering the players.

On Quarterbacks

For the third year in a row, Burrow was the best quarterback on the field for Ohio State's spring game. Yes, I know it's just a scrimmage, but spring practice counts – this is what the coaches can base their decision on, not garbage time against Bowling Green or Maryland in the last couple of seasons.

Don't get me wrong, Haskins impressed as well, showing off his rocket arm and making some throws that not many other athletes can pull off. His touchdown to Jaylen Harris in the corner of the end zone was particularly impressive, but he didn't do anything to tell me he's a better option than Burrow, and I've felt the same way every time I've seen either quarterback on the field.

Haskins takes shots down the field on a

regular basis, which is a good thing, but it seems like he often throws it out there for his receiver to make a play, even if it's not a true 50-50 ball. If he starts for Ohio State, the Buckeyes will win a ton of games and he'll do very well, but he'll also make costly turnovers in unnecessary situations.

Burrow, on the other hand, threw downfield just as well as Haskins in the scrimmage, and he looked more accurate doing it. He can make all the throws, even if his arm isn't as strong, and he simply guides the offense better than Haskins. He completes a higher percentage of passes, he's a better runner and he's a year older.

For me, Burrow should be the starter, but it will probably be Haskins because of the extra dimension brought by physical talents.

As far as Martell goes, he showed off an incredible skill set in the spring game and proved why he needs to be on the field this fall. He also proved that he's nowhere near ready to be the starting quarterback, and his passing ability has a long way to go.

That said, Martell will be part of this offense, and he's a difference maker with the ball in his hands.

On The Web

As many of you already know, BSB has completely overhauled its web presence, and we're better suited than ever before to give our subscribers the best coverage of Ohio State available.

We are no longer affiliated with Scout.com. Instead, we've overhauled BuckeyeSports.com to include daily features, analysis and breaking news stories in addition to a brand-new forum, where the BSB staff and subscribers can come together to discuss everything Buckeye.

I, for one, am really excited about the changes, and I'm thrilled with the response from our readers so far. We're now giving subscribers instant access to all the news they need in a format that's more attractive and easier to navigate than ever before.

The forum on BuckeyeSports.com will be a big part of the experience, so we encourage all of our readers to get involved. In the first few days of the website, we had a few issues on the forum that were preventing readers from posting their comments or starting new topics, but those have all been remedied. So, if you ran into problems when you first tried, don't worry, you'll be good to go next time you're on the forum.

When you do log on, make sure to edit your profile so that you'll have a personalized display name to post with on the forum, rather than just seeing your posts show up under your record number, which is your username for the website.

In just the first few days of the forum, we've had exclusive recruiting information in regard to some of the football team's top targets as well as five-star power forward Alonzo Gaffney, Ohio's top basketball player in the 2019 class and Chris Holtmann's first commit for the next recruiting cycle.

Subscribers can expect to continue to see that kind of inside access as we strive to bring you the best recruiting coverage around.

The new site already has a ton of great content, and there will be plenty more to come to give you your Buckeye fix – even though the season is still a few months away.

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QB Competition Looks As Close As Advertised

When Urban Meyer said all spring that none of his quarterbacks had separated himself from the others, I wondered if that was just coach-speak. Coaches don't like to give up too much to the media and public, and they also like to encourage competition by claiming that position battles are still open.

After watching the spring game, however, I was left wondering if Meyer wasn't being perfectly candid. All three QBs had their moments. None from the group of Dwayne Haskins, Joe Burrow and Tate Martell, however, appeared to step up and grab the job. On the positive side, Ohio State's quarterback room – at least for now – is loaded.

I am sure Meyer and his staff have seen a lot more in practice than we as media and fans were able to see in the spring game, given such factors in the game as split squads, key players sitting out, and most importantly, the constantly changing rules – especially the one that made much of the scrimmage a touch football game. It's also hard to evaluate what a quarterback is going to do in Meyer's offense when the signal callers are off limits as far as contact goes.

Here's my quick take on what I saw from the quarterbacks:

If you are looking for a rifle arm, Haskins has the edge over the other two, no questions asked.

He displayed it on a 25-yard TD pass to Jaylen Harris in the second quarter and a 43-yarder to Binjimen Victor that set up another score in the third period. For Haskins to really excel, the Buckeyes are going to have to develop a receiver willing to go up and get the 50-50 balls, a la Devin Smith, because Haskins is going to put it out there. Maybe Harris or Victor can fill that role, as they showed a willingness to mix it up with DBs during the exhibition.

Haskins did nothing to hurt his status during the spring game.

Burrow, on the other hand, probably helped his standing the most during the scrimmage. He may not possess a howitzer, but he showed the ability to throw the long ball, leaving the crowd with the final impression with a 42-yard TD bomb to Demario McCall on the game's last play after connecting with McCall earlier for 50 yards and another score. Both Haskins and Burrow appear stronger going deep than J.T. Barrett, the man they hope to replace.

In addition to the long throws, Burrow connected on a variety of other passes, finishing the day a combined 15 of 22 (68.2 percent) for both squads, good for 238 yards and the pair of scores to McCall. That is consistent with his passing line in real games, where he is 29 of 39 (74.4 percent) for 287 yards and two scores without a pick in his mop-up appearances as a redshirt freshman and sophomore.

While the conventional wisdom after the spring game is that there was no separation among the quarterbacks, that may not actually be true. Martell seemed to lose ground on the veteran QBs with his 5-for-16 passing performance for just 28 yards with the game's only interception. But in fairness to the redshirt freshman, if the scrimmage had not been a touch football game, he might have been the star of the day. His dazzling running ability was on full display, and even with the patty-cake format, he was credited with 69 yards and a touchdown on 11 carries. And if you go back and look, you will see that his passing line was affected by several drops.

Martell has that breakaway ability that is more reminiscent of Braxton Miller than Barrett, who was a more than competent runner, but not a threat to go all the way every time he touched the ball. Let's face it, in Martell's favor, Meyer loves his quarterbacks to run the

football. The QBs – led by Barrett's 165 carries – ran 192 times last year, and in Meyer's first two years in Columbus – with the dynamic Miller at the helm – the QBs averaged 232 carries, including 236 in the penalty-shortened 12-game 2012 season.

Just some random thoughts, purely my own, on who might ultimately get the nod at QB.

Let's say Burrow and Haskins are equal. Burrow is set to graduate this spring – a feather in his cap as it demonstrates work ethic and organizational skills. As any Buckeye fan knows, that would make him eligible to transfer and play at another school right away. Haskins has less flexibility.

Would Meyer and staff be better off giving the starting position to Burrow, which might leave a better chance of keeping Haskins, making the Buckeyes as strong as possible in the quarterback room?

If Haskins gets the nod, is there any chance that Burrow would stay?

You can take a look at two of Ohio State's national championship teams and see that you have to have quarterbacks in waiting.

The Buckeyes needed Ron Maciejowski – a QB who could have started at most schools but caddied for Rex Kern all three of his years – to win the national championship in 1968. They even got a lift from former starter Bill Long, who lost his job to Kern but helped the Buckeyes defeat a powerful Purdue team in one of the biggest games of the season.

And let's not forget 2014. Miller, the reigning two-time Big Ten Silver Football winner as conference MVP, was injured just days before the start of the season. Barrett stepped in as the starter and got the Buckeyes to the brink of the postseason before suffering a season-ending injury in the Michigan game. Next man up. Cardale Jones led the Buckeyes on their magical three-game run to the national championship.

So just because you don't win the starting job doesn't mean you won't end up playing or contributing – maybe even contributing to a championship.

As fans, we like to think that there is no place greater than Ohio State and wonder why anyone, even someone on the bench, would want to go anywhere else. We hope Burrow – or any of the QBs – would stay, but Burrow has to do what is best for him, and between his growth as a quarterback and progress toward graduation, he has earned the right to make that choice.

Do you ever wonder if the quarterback situation would be different if Haskins had not threaded the needle to Austin Mack for that key completion against Michigan? If Brandon Watson had swatted the ball away or, worse yet, intercepted it, would we be having the same conversation right now? Watson and fellow DB Tyree Kinnel were that close to possibly altering the course of OSU football history.

There was more than one play to Haskins' performance in the Big House, however. Two plays later he rushed 22 yards to the U-M 1-yard line to set up the go-ahead score, and he was 6-of-7 passing for 94 yards for the game without an interception. Still, the bullet to Mack is the play we remember and the play that, in the eyes of many Buckeye fans, gives Haskins the edge in the QB battle.

Here's a final thought. I believe that, with

things appearing to be this close, the coaching staff would rather have the battle continue over the summer and into fall camp. Burrow's situation, however, forces their hand.

I suspect that other staffs would be less sympathetic to Burrow's plight.

Spring Game Notes

Speaking of Burrow, he was involved in a fantasy football special in the second quarter of the spring game. He threw a pass that apparently bounced off of another player back to him, which he caught and advanced 3 yards. He got credit for both a completion and a reception on the same play. The play showed good field awareness on the part of the quarterback.

- We already knew that the quarterback room was loaded. We got a reminder that there is no shortage of running backs either. The team features two 1,000-yard runners in J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber, who barely played in the scrimmage and really didn't need to as the coaches already know what each of them can do.

We did get a look at freshman early-enrollee Master Teague, who put on a bruising demonstration with 14 carries for 73 yards, a total which would surely have been higher if the action had been live. I'm not sure where Teague might get carries, with the presence of Weber and Dobbins, but for a player who looked like a bit of an afterthought during recruiting, it was a solid day.

And speaking of bruising running, Antonio Williams had a couple of powerful runs once tackling started, including his 9-yard run followed by a bullish 3-yard touchdown at the end of the second quarter. Williams, a 5-11, 208-pound junior-to-be, finished the game with five carries for 47 yards and is yet another back in front of Teague.

And speaking of Weber, the knock on him during his big freshman season was he couldn't pull off the long run, frequently getting caught from behind. As he got healthier in his sophomore season last year, he started to show more breakaway speed, and on his only touch of the spring game he took off for 63 yards on what surely would have been a TD in live action.

And all this talk of running backs doesn't even take into account Demario McCall, who may have been the breakout star of the spring game. Although all of his yards – all 165 of them – came on receptions, he started his OSU career as a running back and has carried 63 times for 381 yards and a 6.0 average with four touchdowns in his brief career. After his receiving performance in the spring game, he is looking more and more like an H-back, but he, too, should get his carries and still could end up as a running back.

It's an abundance of riches at that position.

- In what proved to be a fairly dull affair, I think I was most entertained by the battle, throughout the afternoon, between Harris and cornerback Marcus Williamson. These two really went at it, and little separated them on any pass to Harris. The receiver may have won the battle with his three catches for 39 yards and the highlight-reel touchdown, but Williamson may have won the war with his blanket coverage.

Frankly, I knew little about either of the players coming into the game, and it is just one more example of how much talent Meyer con-

tinues to stockpile. Players graduate or go on to the pros, and there is always someone else, frequently someone you had forgotten about or never really paid that much attention to, there to replace them.

At the least, Meyer and his staff have to give Harris and Williamson A's for spring-game effort.

BSB Goes 24/7

I have a saying about Buckeye Sports Bulletin in this instant news world in which we now live. If Urban Meyer were to resign today, you would read about it next week in BSB – in two weeks if you live in Indiana (those of you who live in the Hoosier State, our worst mail state, sadly get the joke).

Well having to wait for your Buckeye news is no longer necessary. We have recently revamped our website, BuckeyeSports.com, and you will now be able to access Buckeye sports news as it happens, along with all sorts of other timely features and a few bells and whistles such as videos, photo galleries, rosters, schedules and more. And it's all free with your BSB print subscription and only available to BSB subscribers.

BuckeyeSports.com is the perfect complement to your Buckeye Sports Bulletin and even more so as we approach our monthly summer publishing schedule. You will no longer have to wait 30 days or more for news and features from all of your favorite Buckeye Sports Bulletin writers.

One of the most exciting new features of all is the addition of the BSB Forum. This will allow you to communicate with BSB staff members, guest experts and other Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers. The Forum is where the action is as everyone has the ability to contribute news or opinions and share their love of the Buckeyes. This is especially useful for those Buckeyes who live out of state and are unable to speak to other Buckeyes on a regular basis. Now you can communicate with those who share your passion anytime.

Again, this exciting new service is free with your subscription. If you have already signed up to read the electronic BSB Quickly, you are signed up for BuckeyeSports.com. You will have the same user name and password and sign in the same way, though the login boxes are in a slightly different place.

If you have not already signed up for our electronic offerings, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send you back simple instructions on how to access the site. Once you are signed up, jump in and play around. You'll get the hang of it pretty quickly, as I did and I am no Bill Gates. Don't forget to put your two cents' worth in on the Forum. And watch, because sometimes the Forum is where you will find the breaking news. If you hear something, say something. The Forum gives BSB correspondents all over the country!

Hats off to Blufftonbuck, who waded through some of the early glitches to become the Forum's first poster. Don't forget to register your Forum name. Otherwise your posts will be listed under your BSB record number – not very descriptive. Just go to "edit profile" on the Forum page. You can even add your picture if you so desire.

The last edition of BSB Quickly will be posted on April 24. But remember, the new BuckeyeSports.com will be even better and always up-to-date.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call as at (614) 486-2202 during regular business hours.