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Buckeyes See Their Future

Youth Gets A Shot In 49-0 Win Over Toledo

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

The present for Ohio State football looks pretty good — the Buckeyes hold a commanding lead on the top spot in both major polls.

But if OSU's 49-0 win over Toledo Sept. 12 is any indication, the program's future could be pretty bright as well.

Sure, the old standbys like Joe Germaine, David Boston and Dee Miller all got to have their fun in the sun against the Rockets.

But so did a whole new breed of Buckeyes with names like Germany,

Cheatwood, Wells, and another guy named Bellisari.

"Games like this are real fun, especially for the younger guys," said OSU tailback Michael Wiley, who blistered Toledo himself for 151 yards and a touchdown. "They get to have some play time for their families."

Wiley should know. It was just two years ago when, playing his first college game, he scored touchdowns the first three times he touched the ball in a 70-7 rout of Rice.

The Toledo game could have gotten that bad — the Buckeyes led 42-0 at half-time. The huge lead allowed OSU coach John Cooper to substitute early and often.

"We looked at all the young football players that we're probably going to play this year," Cooper said. "We played a lot of young football players and put the ball game out of reach early and had a chance to play all those young guys. It turned out real good for us."

Miller, who snagged a touchdown catch in the win, said games like Toledo help develop OSU's young talent.

"It just gets them the experience and how to handle the home crowd and the college atmosphere," he said. "They got to come out and make some big plays."

Boosting The Offense

A ton of first- and second-year players came up big in the Toledo win, especially on offense.

Sophomore receiver Reggie Germany caught a pair of touchdown passes in the win while freshman

tailback Jonathan Wells churned out 48 yards on 10 carries.

"It was good to get a lot of those young kids in there to see what they can do in game situations," said OSU offensive coordinator Mike Jacobs.

"I think our tailbacks looked pretty good today. Both our younger guys, Derek Combs and Jonathan Wells, looked good. Jamar Martin and Sean Penny both got some snaps at fullback."

Sophomores Henry Fleming and Tam Hopkins played quite a bit at right tackle and right guard, respectively. A pair of freshmen, Austin Moherman and Steve Bellisari, got their first taste of playing quarterback at the collegiate level.

Germany's heroics — he caught touchdown passes of 5 and 47 yards — showed that the Buckeyes have more than just two dependable receivers.

"Reggie is a great receiver," Germaine said. "He may not get some of the credit he deserves because of David and Dee, but he's up there with the best of them. We can count on him on every play."

For Germany, who had just one catch all of last season, it was fun to be asked to come to the postgame interview room and actually have something tangible to talk about.

"This is by far the most time I've ever played," he said. "This is an exciting time in my life, coming from not playing too much to playing a real role in the victory."

"It's a real big step, especially playing at Ohio State. You have the David Bostons and the Dee Millers. They are two of the premier receivers in the country. I'm trying to follow in their footsteps and do a good job."

Germany's touchdown catches came in the second quarter as the Buckeyes built their commanding lead.

"One was more of a slant-shade, while the other was a post," he said, recounting the patterns that helped put him in the end zone. "The first one was man-to-man. The coach told me to give him a good inside move. He went for the fake, so I



JEFF BREHM

MR. EXCITEMENT — Wearing the familiar jersey of predecessor Stanley Jackson, freshman Steve Bellisari provides a spark in his relief time at quarterback in the rout of Toledo. Bellisari also saw time on kick coverage and at safety for the Buckeyes.

was able to get outside and Joe put the ball right there.

"On the second one the coach told me to get as close to him and then make my post move. Mark Garcia put the ball right there."

The coach Germany is referring to is OSU's venerable wide receivers guru, Chuck Stobart. Besides Stobart, Germany said he has truly benefited from studying the work of Miller and Boston.

"With Dee and Dave, they have contrasting styles," he said. "Together, they make the best tandem in the country. You learn a lot about running routes, how to catch the ball and how to get open from those guys. You learn how to get open and catch the ball when it's crunch time."

"It's amazing. It's like the torch is passed down from generation to generation. It's like the father handing down a ring to his son. It's like tradition, basically. From all the great receivers we've had down to Dee and Dave, you learn a lot by watching the receivers in front of you."

Moherman, a redshirt freshman, followed Germaine and Garcia into the game in the third quarter. He played one series and threw one incomplete pass before giving way to Bellisari.

The true freshman — the brother of former OSU captain Greg Bellisari — enjoyed one of the day's loudest crowd reactions when he entered the game at quarterback midway through the fourth quarter.

Continued On Page 10



KEVIN DYE

UPRIGHT AND TOUGH — Jonathan Wells displays the running style that propelled him to stardom in Louisiana and has earned him third-string status at the hallowed OSU tailback spot. Wells charged ahead for 48 yards on 10 carries against the Rockets.

COVER STORY: BUCKEYES SEE THEIR FUTURE

Youngsters Revel In Chance To Play Early

Continued From Page 1

"That makes me feel great," Bellisari said of the ovation. "That pumped the offense up a little bit. We tried to get something started, but we had some penalties that hurt us."

He had already been a big hit on OSU's special teams, covering kicks, and appearing as a backup safety in the waning moments of the West Virginia opener.

Against Toledo, Bellisari completed 3 of 5 passes for 24 yards and also scrambled for nice yardage after avoiding a sack, although the play was negated by penalty.

"That's what we've been seeing in practice from Steve, so we're not disappointed," Jacobs said. "At the same time, Austin Moherman has also been playing pretty well in practice. We think we'll have a real race with those two young men in another year."

Bellisari said he weighed redshirting this season but then decided to do whatever it took to get on the field.

"Personally, I expected to play," he said. "I worked for it. I'm a little bit excited."

"I'm just trying to do whatever they ask me to do. If they want me to play offense, it's offense. If it's defense, it's defense."

"I actually feel it helps me to play defense. Anytime you get experience on the other side of the ball, I think it helps with your position."

Bellisari, an excellent high school student, had become a true pupil of the game. When asked which position group meetings he attends, he replied wearily, "I sit in all of them. I go to every single meeting — for DBs, quarterbacks and special teams."

Bellisari and the coaches agreed that his forays to defense and the special teams would not hinder his progress as a quarterback.

"That was something I wanted to make sure — that I would have a shot at quarterback," he said. "They said, 'You're a quarterback and we're going to give you that shot when the time comes.' That's what I'm striving for."

"I felt real comfortable back there today. It's like a dream come true."

Bellisari said he is also getting support from his brother Greg, now a linebacker with the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

"He's so excited for me," he said. "He's just glad I'm doing it."

Another true freshman making his mark — and also leaving a lot of bruises — is the 6-1, 220-pound Wells. Playing as OSU's third tailback behind Wiley and Joe Montgomery, Wells debuted at WVU by carrying four times for 27 yards.

"That is great for me," Wells said. "That was my goal coming into fall camp — to play as hard as I can and to showcase my talent. Hopefully I could get some quality reps in the game, and I have and I've tried to make the most of it."

Wells' glee was apparent when he

found the end zone on a 7-yard run late in the win at West Virginia.

"I turned the corner and saw no one there," he said. "My eyes got big. When I got in there, I kind of forgot everything. It was a great feeling, though."

Wells, a Louisiana native, admits it is weird playing college football in Ohio and getting appreciable playing time on the nation's No. 1-ranked team.

"I have to give the credit to God," said Wells, who picked the Buckeyes over North Carolina and Auburn last winter. "He helped me pick this place to come and play football. I'm getting quality reps. You can't ask for anything better than that as a freshman."

Speaking For The Defense

OSU's young lions did not roar only on offense. The Buckeyes continued rotating their defensive linemen, and a collection of youthful linebackers and defensive backs also got into the act.

"I think (cornerback) Nate Clements played pretty well," said OSU defensive coordinator Fred Pagac. "Those young defensive linemen were playing pretty well. Timmy Cheatwood made a few plays. Joe Cooper and Jason Ott were running around out there."

Up front, freshman Mike Collins is rotating primarily with Clinton Wayne at defensive tackle. He participated in a tackle-for-loss at WVU and was solid against Toledo.

"We're rotating as many as three people at a time, so you don't get that much time," Collins said. "You get cool a little

bit, and I don't like that. But it helps us as a defense."

"I'm going to play my role until it's my time."

Freshman Ryan Pickett, one of OSU's prize recruits last winter, also played quite a bit at the other defensive tackle spot, notching four tackles.

Redshirt freshman Ott appears to be the heir apparent to Andy Katzenmoyer at middle linebacker. The 6-4, 240-pounder notched four tackles against the Rockets.

Once OSU had built a comfortable margin, Ott was flanked by heavy hitters on both sides. Sophomore Cooper, seeing his first action this year after missing last year due to Prop 48, led OSU with seven tackles. Redshirt freshman Tim Cheatwood denied a late Toledo scoring bid with an interception and logged six tackles of his own.

Cheatwood and Clements combined on the hit of the day on Toledo receiver Brock Kreitzburg. He caught a pass near the OSU sideline and Cheatwood and Clements crushed him, sending a bright red mouthpiece into the air.

"Tim Cheatwood played the whole second half," John Cooper said. "He flew around, made some plays. He's a converted strong safety and now we've got him playing outside linebacker. He's a good football player, a real tough football player."

In the secondary, Clements and sophomore David Mitchell ably backed up OSU's stellar corners Antoine Winfield and Ahmed Plummer. Freshman Derek Ross also saw playing time at safety.

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OHIO STATE VS. TOLEDO

OSU Grounds Rockets 49-0

Buckeyes Cruise To 42-Point Halftime Lead In Laughter

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

It may have been Toledo's first-ever visit to the Horseshoe, but Ohio State did not mind playing the rude host.

"We thought this was a conference game, to be honest with you," said OSU tailback Joe Montgomery. "Our whole concept was that the Big Ten had started."

Sure enough, the top-ranked Buckeyes played their in-state Mid-American Conference guest from the Glass City with the kind of intensity usually reserved for the likes of Iowa, Penn State or Michigan, rolling to a 49-0 win before 93,149 Sept. 12 at Ohio Stadium.

"If you could script a ball game, that is about how you would want one to go," said OSU coach John Cooper. "We jumped on them early, and our defense played solid."

The Buckeyes (2-0) dominated on both sides of the ball, racking up 512 yards total offense while holding UT (1-1) to just 194. The Rockets managed just one first down in the first half and didn't move the ball into OSU territory until midway through the third quarter.

"Like every game, we want to attack teams," said OSU cornerback Ahmed Plummer, who had one of OSU's five interceptions. "We don't want to sit back and have teams attack us. I think today we were able to establish that."

"We got in the quarterback's face and made him make decisions quickly. I think we got him a little bit flustered."

Individually, tailback Michael Wiley rushed for 151 yards and two touchdowns on 13 carries. Freshman Jonathan Wells added 48 yards on 10 totes.

"When you're supposed to beat teams, you don't want to have them hanging

around until the third or fourth quarter," Wiley said. "We came out and established ourselves."

OSU played four quarterback options and, counting a Wells halfback option pass, had five players attempt a pass. Starter Joe Germaine was 13 of 21 for 150 yards and three touchdowns before giving way to backup Mark Garcia, who completed 5 of 11 passes for 83 yards and a score.

Freshmen Austin Moherman (0 of 1) and Steve Bellisari (3 of 5 for 24 yards) also saw action.

Ten Buckeyes caught passes, led by Reggie Germany (three catches for 63 yards and two touchdowns), David Boston (five for 55 yards and a score) and Dee Miller (four for 54 yards and a TD).

Ohio State scored on each of its first three possessions, holding leads of 21-0 after one quarter and 42-0 at halftime.

"This was a good game because we were able to look at all the young players we're going to play this year," Cooper said. "We were able to put the ball game away early and concentrate on that."

"I like giving our second team the chance to play early in the year. We now know what we need to work on with these guys."

Toledo coach Gary Pinkel and his team took the beating like men. The Rockets, among the nation's winningest



JEFF BREHM

DAMON DOES MORE — Ohio State senior Damon Moore (13) makes an outstanding play on Toledo tight end Isaiah Jackson (89) in the first quarter of the Buckeyes' big win. Moore had the first of five OSU interceptions.

programs in the 1990s, had no answers for the Buckeyes.

"They got after us pretty well," Pinkel said. "After watching their West Virginia tape, I knew without a doubt that we were playing one of the top two or three teams in the country."

As It Happened

Toledo backed the Buckeyes to their

own 2-yard line with an early punt. But the barrage began quickly as OSU moved 98 yards in five plays. Germaine hit Boston for a 12-yard gain to get OSU off its own goal line.

Three plays later Wiley took a pitch right and made a number of nifty cuts, eventually dodging UT's Kelly Herndon downfield and rolling for a 76-yard touchdown run.

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"(Fullback Matt) Keller got a good block — the whole offense got a good block — but their guy was forcing me outside, so I tried to jump inside real hard," said Wiley, whose journey tied for the fifth-longest run in OSU history.

"Then Dee Miller was my little escort down the field. He walled off the last guy and I got into the end zone."

The play gave OSU a 7-0 lead with 11:55 left in the first quarter.

"It was good to open the game like that because we started with bad field position," Wiley said. "We happened to break a big play and the offense was back in the groove."

OSU regained possession at its own 45-yard line after a Toledo punt. This time the Buckeyes needed just two plays. Germaine hit Boston for 23 yards on first down.

Then, after OSU was penalized for illegal motion, Germaine went down the right sideline to a wide-open Miller for the 37-yard TD pass. UT linebacker Keith Travis slipped on the play, and Herndon was slow to provide help. The play gave OSU a 14-0 lead with 9:39 left in the first quarter.

"That was a great call by our coaches, Coach (Mike) Jacobs and Coach (Tim) Salem up in the box," Germaine said. "They must have seen something. Dee got himself wide open. It was one of those where you just want to hand it to him."

Miller added, "That was just a simple up-and-out pattern. Dave (Boston) took the man on the post. The rover didn't get out in the flat, and it was just an easy touchdown throw for Germaine and me."

OSU's next score was set up as safety Damon Moore made a sliding interception of UT's Chris Wallace at the Rockets' 18-yard line.

It took four plays to convert the turnover into points as Germaine lofted a pass to Boston, who skied over UT's Jameel Turner for the 5-yard touchdown to put the Buckeyes up 21-0 with 7:06 left in the first quarter.

OSU was forced to punt on its next two possessions but got back into the scoring column early in the second quarter after Plummer intercepted a Wallace pass at the Toledo 45.

It took six plays to convert this miscue into points. Keller helped set up the score with a 13-yard pickup on a draw. One play later Wiley took a pitch left and, reading blocks by Keller and tight end Steve Wisniewski, cut back and scored on an 11-yard run to up the OSU lead to 28-0 with 13:37 left in the first half.

OSU's next score was also set up by an interception. Linebacker Andy Katzenmoyer hit Wallace as he threw, causing a wobbly pass that Na'il Diggs picked off and returned to the Toledo 6.

On first down there, Germaine lobbed a 6-yard scoring pass to Germany. That extended the lead to 35-0 with 8:43 left in the first half.

Boston's 16-yard punt return late in the half set up OSU's next touchdown, which again was the result of just one play. Garcia dialed up Germany on a 47-yard post pass, making it 42-0 with 3:00 left in the half.

OSU went back with the starters to open the second half and Germaine engineered a 12-play, 80-yard scoring drive. He hit three passes on the drive, which was capped by Wiley's 4-yard sweep into the end zone. That gave OSU a 49-0 lead with 11:09 left in the third quarter.

Game Notes

• Perhaps the only blemish on the game was OSU's play on special teams. Boston and Gary Berry combined to mishandle three punt returns and OSU's field goal unit provided near-disastrous results.

"If I was disappointed with one phase of this game, it was our field goal kicking," Cooper said.

Kicker Dan Stultz missed field goals of 36 and 44 yards, hitting the left upright on the longer one, and long snapper Kevin Houser's snap on a 21-yard attempt just before halftime bounced to and away from holder Brent Bartholomew.

Sitting on a 42-point lead, OSU raised eyebrows by calling a pair of timeouts in the half's waning seconds to set up that attempt.

"It was called (from the sideline)," Cooper admitted. "Actually, what we did is we wanted to run our two-minute offense right before halftime. We wanted to let those guys run the two-minute, and it's quite obvious they needed the work. A couple times we had to wait to call timeouts."

• While OSU's first-team offense played the first series in the second half, the first-team defense was used only piecemeal after halftime.

"That's the first time in my coaching career I can remember not sending the entire first-team defense out to start the second half," Cooper said.

"I think it's also the first time one of my teams had 400 yards offense at halftime."

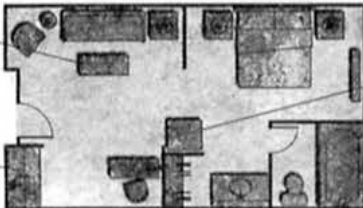
• Ohio State has now won 20 straight home openers. Cooper is now 11-0 in home openers.

• There were plenty of interceptions. Plummer's pick was the sixth of his career, while Moore's was his 11th. Diggs, Percy King and Tim Cheatwood all notched their first career picks.

• Linebacker Joe Cooper led OSU with seven tackles.

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OHIO STATE VS. TOLEDO

Big Plays Give Buckeyes Boost Vs. Rockets

The sun wasn't the only thing doing the burning at Ohio Stadium. No, the Buckeyes themselves did a nice job leaving visiting Toledo burnt to a crisp.

The Buckeyes scored on a number of big plays, including a simple toss sweep to Michael Wiley that went for 76 yards and put OSU on the board. Joe Germaine hooked up with Dee Miller for a 37-yard score midway through the first quarter, and relief QB Mark Garcia had his moment in the sun with a pretty 47-yard TD toss to Reggie Germany in the third.

All in all, it was a big-play parade that left Toledo trampled.

"We were able to hit the big plays because of our running game," OSU quarterback Joe Germaine said. "They started out with those eight guys in the box, playing us very soft in coverage. We were running the ball so well that they had to honor that and we were able to get some of the receivers behind them."

Wiley finished with 151 yards on 13 carries, scoring twice. He's more than upheld the mantle of great OSU running backs, at least if early returns are an indication.

"I've always been confident," Wiley said. "Coach (Tim) Spencer has been great with that, keeping me focused on what I had to do. I wasn't thinking about breaking a big run on them, but I'm glad I did. I'm right where I wanted to be."

Toledo plays just three defensive backs, with four linebackers guarding against the run. That means one outside linebacker is often left in coverage. That may work in

INSIDE THE OFFENSE with Mike Wachsman

the Mid-American Conference, but when receivers are named Miller and Boston, you have to do more than that.

"With our team there really isn't a defense that can stop us," Garcia said. "We're either going to be able to run the ball or throw the ball well. This team decided to stop our run, so we got a chance to throw the ball."

Keeping It Simple

When you put up 512 yards of offense, the common thought would be you went to every trick in the playbook. That wasn't the case for the Buckeyes, though.

They kept it pretty simple, running a lot of outside plays designed to exploit Toledo's lack of speed and keeping most pass plays to the basic hitches and outs. OSU turned them into big plays and scores because of great athleticism, not because the calls were exotic.

"They were playing so far off us," Miller said. "They were playing 11 or 13 yards back, so we couldn't go deep like we wanted to. We just kept having success underneath."

You don't have to be fancy if the guys up front are doing their job, and the Buckeye

front five was up to the challenge. Germaine wasn't sacked and was rarely hurried, making it easy for him to pick apart the overmatched Rocket defense.

He was effusive in praise for his protectors.

"The offensive line did a great job," Germaine said. "We're just looking for improvement. They stepped it up and played better today."

After some early problems against West Virginia, the Buckeyes decided to scale back the playbook against the Rockets.

"We weren't going to do a lot," coordinator Mike Jacobs said. "We reduced some things this week and got back to fundamentals, and that's the kind of game we wanted to have. We were real happy with our first unit. We have a lot of things to work on with the second and third guys, but when you score 49 points you can't be too upset."

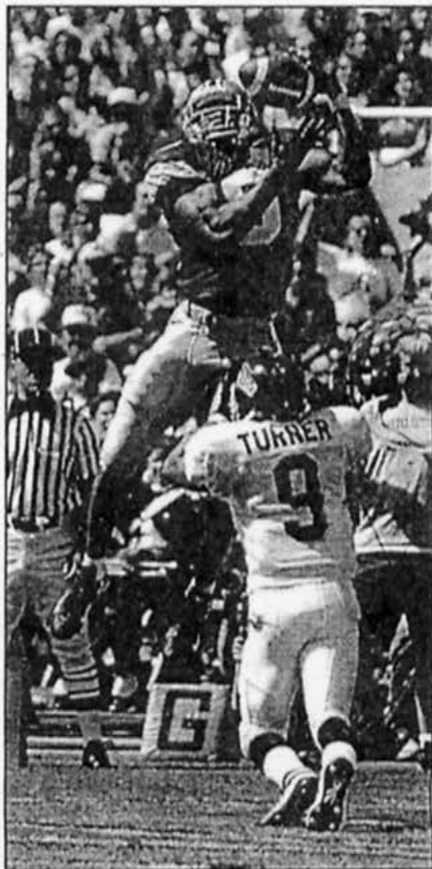
Other than a halfback pass by Jonathan Wells in OSU's two-minute offense right before halftime, the Buckeyes didn't do much in terms of dazzling offense. Even that will serve as a cautionary note for future opponents who want to zero in on the OSU tailbacks.

OSU simply had guys make something out of nothing, with athleticism taking center stage.

"With Michael back there, he's got speed to burn and is capable of hitting the home run," Germaine said. "Every play is scripted to be a touchdown, and we know with him back there that's always possible."

Send in The Reinforcements

The best thing about blowouts is that coaches have an opportunity to get guys who otherwise



TURNING HIM INSIDE OUT — Toledo cornerback Jameel Turner is used by David Boston, one of three TD plays the Rockets DB allowed. Boston's score put OSU up 21-0 and the rout was on.

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OHIO STATE VS. TOLEDO

wouldn't play some chances at glory. The Buckeyes substituted liberally, especially on the offensive line, and used just about everyone available.

That was especially helpful on the offensive line, where Tam Hopkins and Henry Fleming played as much (or more) as starters Ben Gilbert and Brooks Burris, and Mike Gurr got quite a few reps in place of Rob Murphy. Drew Elford, LeCharles Bentley and Ben Pulfer also got some valuable time.

"It gives them the experience and the chance to handle the home crowd and just the college atmosphere, period," Miller said. "They came out and made some big plays, and that's what you have to expect when you're playing a team like Toledo. Our second string came in and moved the ball like they were the first string."

Not only was it sweet for a lot of players to actually taste the heat of battle, but it should also make things more lively and competitive in practice.

"We all know there's competition. That's the name of the game here at Ohio State,"

tailback Joe Montgomery said. "Guys know what they have to do when they get in there. If you don't, someone else will take your job."

The starters weren't too upset about leaving the game by halftime, either.

"It's nice when you can get out quick," Germaine said. "It means you've been aggressive and been playing well."

Murphy, who's been OSU's best lineman the past two seasons, often needs a rest due to a nagging back injury. Instead of wondering whether the line will drop off, he smiles a smile of security.

"All summer long we've said we were going to play a lot of bodies," Murphy said, "regardless if it's Penn State or a team like we played today. It's refreshing to know that if you go down or need a break, these guys come in and can have a great game."

Grounding The Rockets

The big thing against lower-echelon teams is to not keep them in the game. North Carolina learned that the hard way against Miami (Ohio) Sept. 5, and Iowa felt

the wrath of Iowa State because it got too cute instead of playing power football.

The Buckeyes wanted to take care of business early, play some young guys and stretch their legs by the third quarter.

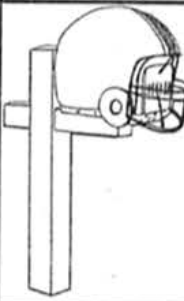
Mission accomplished.

"We wanted to have a quick start," Jacobs said. "We wanted no mental lapses. We didn't want to end up like North Carolina. We wanted to start the game

pretty quick. We were able to do that."

Though it may not do much for the competitive juices, Wiley knows it's a good day's work if he isn't playing in the third quarter.

"Once we got on them 21-0, you could see they were out of it," he said. "After Dave (Boston) scored, they didn't seem as tough. It's nice when you take away a team's will so early in the game."

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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 49, Toledo 0

OSU flanker Dee Miller on when he thought the Buckeyes had put the game away: "After David (Boston) scored and made it 21-0 in the first quarter, I knew Toledo wouldn't bounce back from that. We came out real strong. Mike (Wiley) had a great run, then I had a score and Dave had a score. Then we put our second string in and we were still moving the ball."

OSU tailback Michael Wiley agreed on when he felt the rout was on: "It was probably after the third drive when Dave caught the touchdown. The offense was really clicking and we knew we had them beat."

Tailback Joe Montgomery on OSU's tailback rotation: "Coach (Tim) Spencer is doing a good job of getting everybody in there. He's rotating me, Mike and the young backs, and that worked out real well today. We played better, certainly. We did a better job picking up blitzes, and Coach Spencer wasn't yelling out there. We must have been doing something right."

OSU guard Rob Murphy talked about how the Buckeyes dealt with the 85-degree heat: "I think everyone was in real good shape. There were a lot of guys who played. The starters got some breaks. It wasn't that bad at all."

OSU quarterback Joe Germaine rated the play of his offensive line: "The offensive line is just getting better and better. We know it all starts with them. They're popping them open. Matt Keller made a great block for him (Wiley), and once Michael or any of our backs get in the open field, not many guys can catch them."

OSU receiver Reggie Germany on his two touchdown catches: "Both of those were gifts from God. I guess it was



Joe Montgomery



Reggie Germany

meant for me to catch them because he put me in the right position."

Miller on how difficult it is to get psyched up for a second half with a 42-0 lead: "It's kind of boring in there at halftime. You know you're not going to go back in for very long. But you have to keep high hopes, come out and get loose. You have to come out and play hard like you did in the first half."

Murphy also noted the game's lopsided nature: "I like playing in the heat of battle, having to come in when we're tied or down and get it done. Games like today aren't great, but I'll take a win any way we can get it."

Montgomery on overcoming knee problems and notching his 11-yard touchdown run, his first scoring play since the Iowa game on Oct. 26, 1996: "It felt real good. All the things people said about me, some said I wouldn't come back. It feels like being reborn all over again."

Germaine on how Toledo tried to contain OSU's passing attack: "They were giving us a cushion at first, and we were able to take advantage with some short throws. But then later we were able to spring some long ones as well."

Toledo coach Gary Pinkel on his team's status after the defeat: "I know we are a better football team. I don't want anybody feeling sorry for themselves. I just want people to play hard and play with pride. I think we did that today."

OSU cornerback Ahmed Plummer shared the feelings he had after his interception: "It was fantastic. I give God the glory. He was able to put me in position."



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 49, Toledo 0

Sept. 12, 1997 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
TOLEDO	0	0	0	0	- 0
OHIO STATE	21	21	7	0	- 49

First Quarter

OSU — Wiley, 76 run (Stultz kick) 11:55; 5 plays, 98 yards, 1:58
 OSU — Miller, 37 pass from Germaine (Stultz kick) 9:39; 4 plays,
 55 yards, 0:46

OSU — Boston, 5 pass from Germaine (Stultz kick) 7:06; 4 plays,
 18 yards, 1:41

Second Quarter

OSU — Montgomery, 11 run (Stultz kick) 13:37; 6 plays, 45
 yards, 1:35

OSU — Germany, 5 pass from Germaine (Stultz kick) 8:43; 1
 play, 5 yards, 0:05

OSU — Germany, 47 pass from Garcia (Stultz kick) 3:00; 1 play,
 47 yards, 0:07

Third Quarter

OSU — Wiley, 4 run (Stultz kick) 11:09; 12 plays, 80 yards, 3:51

Att. — 93,149

Weather — Clear and sunny, 85 degrees; wind 7 mph from W

Team Statistics

	UT	OSU
First Downs	14	25
Rushing	7	12
Passing	6	13
Penalty	1	0
Rushes-Yards	35-106	43-255
Passing Yards	88	257
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	36-16-5	39-21-0
Offensive Plays	71	82
Total Net Yards	194	512
Third Down Efficiency	2-14	5-16
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	1-1
Punts	9-42.8	7-51.6
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	3-0
Penalties	1-9	11-90
Time of Possession	31:32	28:28

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — UT: W.Tait 14-59; Taylor 8-36; Green 2-11; Harris 7-0; Wallace 4-0.
 OSU: Wiley 13-151; Wells 10-48; Montgomery 5-27; Combs 7-21; Keller 2-14; Miller 1-4; Westbrook 1-3.
 Germaine 1-0; Martin 1-0; Bartholomew 1-4; Garcia 1-9.

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — UT: Wallace 34-13-5-73-0; Cole 2-2-0-15-0; OSU: Germaine
 21-13-0-150-3; Garcia 11-5-0-83-1; Bellisari 5-3-0-24-0; Mohrman 1-0-0-0-0; Wells 1-0-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — UT: Kreitzburg 4-34; Bilk 3-32; Long 3-12; Curry 2-13; Harris 2-4; W.Tait 1-1.
 OSU: Boston 5-55; Miller 4-54; Germany 3-63; Lumpkin 2-32; Warnke 2-21; Redmond 1-15; Westbrook 1-7; Martin 1-6; Wisniewski 1-3; Combs 1-1.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — UT: Lindstrom 9-42.8-62; OSU: Bartholomew 7-51.6-56.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — UT: Jam.Turner 4-24; OSU: Boston 4-57; Berry 2-9.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — UT: Curry 3-43; Harris 2-34; OSU: None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES — UT: None. OSU: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — UT: None. OSU: Diggs 1-18; King 1-3; Cheatwood 1-0; Moore 1-0; Plummer 1-0.

SACKS — UT: Savage 1-9; OSU: None.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — UT: Savage 1-9; Beckwith 1-6; Vaillant 1-1; OSU: Cheatwood 1-3; Cooper 1-3; Katzenmoyer 1-2; Moore 1-1; Homa 1-1; Cotton 1-1; Ott 1-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.) — UT: Jam.Turner 12-0-12; Beckwith 10-0-10; Travis 5-3-8; Boyd 4-4-8; Herndon 5-2-7; Rollins 4-3-7; Singleton 4-2-6; Nagy 1-4-5; Vaillant 4-0-4; Mitoraj 3-0-3; Golden 2-1-3; Morris 2-0-2; Lomberger 1-1-2; Savage 1-1-2; King 0-2-2; Hamood 1-0-1; McLean 1-0-1; Gould 1-0-1; Weaver 1-0-1; Gibson 1-0-1; Harris 1-0-1; Jones 1-0-1; Kreitzburg 1-0-1; T.Tait 0-1-1. OSU: Cooper 4-3-7; Cheatwood 3-3-6; Mitchell 3-2-5; Moore 4-0-4; Pickett 4-0-4; Ott 3-1-4; McClellion 2-2-4; LaVar 2-1-3; Homa 2-1-3; Cotton 2-1-3; Johnson 1-2-3; Katzenmoyer 2-0-2; Griffin 2-0-2; Simpson 2-0-2; King 2-0-2; Collins 1-1-2; Bellisari 1-1-2; Wayne 1-0-1; Diggs 1-0-1; Ross 1-0-1; Rudzinski 0-1-1; Perez 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — TOLEDO: Starters: Offense, Long, Westrich, Schaefer, Otterbacher, Peters, Harding, Bilk, I.Jackson, Wallace, W.Tait, Harris, Defense, King, Hamood, Mitoraj, Nagy, Beckwith, Vaillant, Rollins, Travis, Herndon, Singleton, Jam.Turner. Reserves: Wooley, T.Tait, Curry, Cole, Taylor, Burke, Green, Freeman, Savage, Sickles, Golden, Morris, Reynolds, Boyd, France, Durant, Gould, Schultz, Lindstrom, Weaver, Lamar, Barker, Ilich, Lenix, McLean, Kreitzburg, Jas.Turner, Gibson, Lomberger. OHIO STATE: Starters: Defense, Bailey, Wayne, J.Brown, Johnson, Diggs, Katzenmoyer, Rudzinski, Winfield, Berry, Moore, Plummer, Offense, Boston, Walter, R.Murphy, K.Murphy, Gilbert, Burris, Lumpkin, Houser, Germaine, Wiley, Keller. Reserves: D.Mitchell, Redmond, Bellisari, Cooper, Mohrman, Miller, Garcia, King, Clements, McClellion, Cacchio, Jackson, Webb, Westbrook, Wells, Ott, Montgomery, Simpson, Penny, Ross, Martin, Bartholomew, Griffin, Combs, Stultz, LaVar, Cheatwood, N.Mitchell, Cotton, E.Brown, Hopkins, Woodard, Gurr, Jacobs, Bentley, Pulfer, Perez, Fleming, Elford, Pickett, Germany, Warnke, Wisniewski, D.Sanders, Wilson, Homa, Eisenhard, Collins, Queen.

Season Statistics

1998 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent (AP Rank*)	W/L	Score	Crowd
Sept. 5	(1) at West Virginia (11)	W	34-17	68,409
Sept. 12	(1) TOLEDO	W	49-0	93,149
Sept. 19	(1) MISSOURI (19)	W	49-0	93,149
Oct. 3	PENN STATE	W	49-0	93,149
Oct. 10	at Illinois	W	49-0	93,149
Oct. 17	MINNESOTA	W	49-0	93,149
Oct. 24	at Northwestern	W	49-0	93,149
Oct. 31	at Indiana	W	49-0	93,149
Nov. 7	MICHIGAN STATE	W	49-0	93,149
Nov. 14	at Iowa	W	49-0	93,149
Nov. 21	MICHIGAN	W	49-0	93,149

*Number in parentheses before opponent's name is OSU's game day AP ranking; number after opponent's name is opponent's game day AP ranking.

Team Statistics	OSU	Opp
First Downs	51	25
Rushing	25	11
Passing	26	14
Penalty	0	1
Avg. Per Game/Rush	251.5	92.0
Avg. Per Game/Pass	279.0	160.0
Total Offense	1,061	504
Total Plays	159	131
Average Per Game	530.5	252.0
Average Per Play	6.7	3.8
Penalties-Yards	16-146	8-60
Fumbles-Lost	8-1	2-1
3rd Down Efficiency	14-33	4-28
Percentage	.419	.142
4th Down Efficiency	1-1	1-3
Percentage	1.000	.333
Sacks	2-7	4-28
Time of Possession	30:33	29:27

Score By Quarters	1	2	3	4	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	31	31	14	7	83	41.5
Opponents	3	7	0	7	17	8.5
Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.			
Home	1	93,149	93,149			
Away	1	68,409	68,409			
Total	2	161,558	80,779			

Individual Statistics	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Rushing					
Michael Wiley	30	291	9.7	3	76
Joe Montgomery	17	63	3.7	1	20
Jonathan Wells	14	75	5.4	1	14
Derek Combs	10	32	3.2	0	12
Matt Keller	4	80	7.5	0	12
Des Miller	2	14	7.0	0	10
Jamar Martin	2	4	2.0	0	4
Jerry Westbrook	1	3	3.0	0	3
Brent Bartholomew	1	-4	-4.0	0	0
Mark Garcia	1	-9	-9.0	0	0
OSU Totals	88	503	5.7	5	76
OPP Totals	58	184	3.2	0	22

Receiving	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD	Long
David Boston	12	184	15.3	2	35
Des Miller	10	164	16.4	2	42
Reggie Germany	4	79	19.8	2	47
John Lumpkin	3	60	20.0	0	28
Jimmy Redmond	2	25	12.5	0	15
Darrik Warnke	2	21	10.5	0	17
Michael Wiley	2	8	4.0	0	6
Jerry Westbrook	1	7	7.0	0	7
Jamar Martin	1	6	6.0	0	6
Steve Wisniewski	1	3	3.0	0	3
Derek Combs	1	1	1.0	0	1
OSU Totals	39	558	14.3	6	47
OPP Totals	38	320	8.4	2	49

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPP	EPR	FG	PTS
Michael Wiley	3	—	—	—	—	18
Des Miller	0	11-11	—	—	—	2-5
Reggie Germany	2	—	—	—	—	12
David Boston	2	—	—	—	—	12
Jonathan Wells	1	—	—	—	—	6

Joe Montgomery	1	—	—	—	—	6
OSU Totals	11	11-11	0-0	0-0	2-5	83
OPP Totals	2	2-2	0-0	0-0	1-2	17
Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	INT	TD Rating
Joe Germaine	31	53	.585	451	0	5 161.1
Mark Garcia	5	11	.455	83	0	1 138.6
Steve Bellisari	3	5	.600	24	0	0 100.3
Austin Mohrman	0	1	.000	0	0	0 0.0
Jonathan Wells	0	1	.000	0	0	0 0.0
OSU Totals	39	71	.549	558	0	6 148.8
OPP Totals	28	76	.521	320	0	2 81.5

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Dan Stultz	0-0	2-3	0-2	0-0	2-5
OSU Totals	0-0	2-3	0-2	0-0	2-5
OPP Totals	0-0	0-1	1-1	0-0	1-2

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Brent Bartholomew	13	581	44.7	0	56
OSU Totals	13	581	44.7	0	56
OPP Totals	18	795	44.2	0	62

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Na'il Diggs	1	18	18.0	0	18
Percy King	1	3	3.0	0	3
Tim Cheatwood	1	0	0.0	0	0
David Mitchell	1	0	0.0	0	0
Damon Moore	1	0	0.0	0	0
Ahmed Plummer	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	6	21	3.5	0	18
OPP Totals	0	0	0.0	0	0

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
David Boston	8	77	9.6	0	37
Gary Berry	3	14	4.7	0	6
OSU Totals	11	91	8.3	0	37
OPP Totals	6	50	8.3	0	21

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Michael Wiley	2	48	24.0	0	28
Reggie Germany	1	14	14.0	0	14
OSU Totals	3	62	20.7	0	28
OPP Totals	12	202	16.8	0	25

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL	Yds.	Sacks
Joe Cooper	7	5	12	1-3	—	—
Central McClellion	5	7	12	—	—	—
Damon Moore	7	2	9	1-1	—	—
Antoine Winfield	8	0	8	1-4	—	—
Jerry Rudzinski	5	3	8	1-4	—	—
Brent Johnson	4	4	8	—	—	—
David Mitchell	4	3	7	—	—	—
Andy Katzenmoyer	5	1	6	1-2	—	—
Na'il Diggs	4	2	6	1-1	—	—
Tim Cheatwood	3	3	6	1-3	—	—
Gary Berry	5	0	5	1-4	—	—
Mike Collins	2	2	5	1-3	1-3	—
Jeff Wilson	4	0	4	—	—	—
Ryan Pickett	4	0	4	—	—	—
Jason Ott	3	1	4	1-1	1-1	—
Percy King	3	0	3	—	—	—
Greg Simpson	3	0	3	—	—	—
James Cotton	2	1	3	1-1	—	—
Steve Bellisari	2	1	3	—	—	—
Matt LaVar	2	1	3	—	—	—
Clinton Wayne	2	1	3	—	—	—
Derek Ross	2	1	3	—	—	—
Randy Homa	2	1	3	2-3	—	—
Nate Clements	2	0	2	—	—	—
Kevin Griffin	2	0	2	—	—	—
Darrik Warnke	2	0	2	—	—	—
Joe Brown	1	1	2	—	—	—
Edmund Brown	1	0	1	—	—	—
Nick Mitchell	1	0	1	—	—	—
Ahmed Plummer	1	0	1	—	—	—
Heath Queen	1	0	1	—	—	—
Kevin Houser	1	0	1	—	—	—
Marcus Perez	0	1	0	—	—	—

Fumbles Forced
 1 — Joe Cooper.

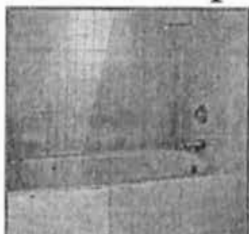
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OHIO STATE VS. TOLEDO

Rockets Grounded Against OSU Defense

You can snicker all you want about playing a MAC school — especially when you're No. 1 in the country — but the fact is the Buckeye defense had no choice but to respect the Toledo offense coming into the Sept. 12 home opener.

The Rockets had a couple of well-fueled jets in tailbacks Wasean Tait and Dwayne Harris and the league's best ignition switch in quarterback Chris Wallace. A fourth senior, dependable receiver Brock Kreitzburg, gave Toledo even more confidence coming into the Horseshoe.

But these Buckeyes are a fierce lot the likes of which a team like Toledo simply cannot prepare to face.

Through one quarter, UT had amassed minus-1 yard passing. At half-time, the Rockets had 32 net yards on 34 plays and one first down. To say the OSU defense made a statement would be, well, an understatement.

"Our first goal really was to stop their bread-and-butter plays that we've seen them run offensively," head coach John Cooper said. "They had been running a lot out of the sprint sets and three-wide receiver sets. Their quarterback threw for almost 3,000 yards last year, so the game plan was to shut him down, shut the receivers down and yet not be suspect on the running plays. They have two running backs that have a lot of stats."

Defensive coordinator Fred Pagac wasn't doing back flips afterward, but when does he ever? Still, he couldn't

INSIDE THE DEFENSE

with

Jeff Rapp

help but commend his stop troops.

"I'm very pleased," he said. "I thought we flew around real well. It's hard for me to tell until we watch film, but I think our effort was good and I think we were running to the ball really well today."

Wallace Handled, Jones Next

Wallace was coming off a breakout junior season and continued to torture foes in UT's season-opening win over Temple.

But he would have needed about four more linemen to have had any success against OSU. The athletic QB finished with no net yards rushing and completed just 13 of 34 passes for 73 yards. Five of those incompletions wound up in the hands of enemy players.

"I think we were able to fluster him a little bit with some added pressure," said cornerback Ahmed Plummer, who grabbed one of the five interceptions. "We rushed him very well and of course the coverage was excellent. That could shut down any quarterback. Hopefully we can keep it up."

Wallace had no time on straight drop backs and spent much of the day overthrowing people on the run. When the



JEFF BREHM

BACK FOOT BLUES — Toledo quarterback Chris Wallace (7) seemingly never got to step up in the pocket vs. the Buckeyes and endured a horrid day throwing the football. Here Wallace is harassed by linemen James Cotton and Mike Collins (98).

UT coaches called plays for him to get outside the pocket to buy time, the OSU ends kept containment and the corners had the UT receivers blanketed.

"For the most part I thought our ends did real well on him," position coach Shawn Simms said. "He has really good feet, and in the game we watched on the film (Temple), he would get rid of the ball really quick."

OSU registered nary a sack on the day, but the plan to hurry Wallace on nearly every play worked like a charm.

"We thought he'd do that a lot — play-action passes, boots, naked — and what they did also is they pulled a guard out to help with the one defensive end that we would have rushing," Simms said.

"I think we got after him early and

got a couple good hits on him. And it must have been great coverage on the back end because he didn't have anyone to throw to, and when he did, he got hit."

It was a no-mercy approach that seems prevalent in college football these days. After all, why let a great athlete run around and create plays?

"You want to pressure the quarterback at all times," Pagac said. "I don't like the word intimidate. That's not football to me."

"I want us to knock the crap out of him, but I think pressure is the thing I want our defense to think about. We want to put pressure on him and make him make bad decisions."

"We always had somebody coming inside-out on second contain situations,

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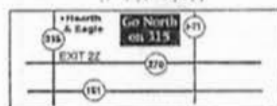
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OHIO STATE VS. TOLEDO

and really, I think it was uncharted waters. I didn't know what to expect from him."

The Buckeyes will have a better handle in preparations this week for Missouri and its electrifying QB, Corby Jones.

OSU flustered Jones in a road win last year, but he'll enter the Sept. 19 battle in Ohio Stadium a more experienced and disciplined signal-caller. If Jones can do what Wallace couldn't and pull off a miracle, he'd leave Columbus a Heisman Trophy candidate.

But that's a big if the way Ohio State is playing on defense these days.

"Obviously we're always concerned about containing all quarterbacks," Pagac said. "Corby Jones, we played him a year ago and I know a little more about him than we did (about Wallace) coming into the game today."

"Jones can run real well, and obviously that's one of the things we'll be keyed into."

Added Simms, "I think it's a good precursor as far as breaking the edge. I don't know how much play-action or boot or naked Corby Jones is going to do, but we know with him we better stop one thing, and that's the option. If we can stop that, then he's got to beat us throwing."

Shutout Came Without Gamble

Probably the best thing about OSU's shutout of Toledo is it came without Pagac having to show much of his hand. For the most part, OSU's blitzing packages were left on the shelf as the Buckeyes whipped the Rockets with their good old-fashioned 4-3 base

defense.

"We didn't put in a whole lot today," Pagac said. "We ran some dogs, but we don't consider them blitzes. We played pretty vanilla."

"We were the same as always. We were trying to stop the run, we were playing gap-sound defense, and we used dogs with one linebacker going and playing a man-free principle behind it. That's sound vs. the run and gives you a little bit of pressure vs. the pass, so we felt pretty safe with that."

So safe, in fact, that Toledo didn't cross midfield with the ball until midway through the third quarter — and that was against the second-team defense.

Moments later, Tait broke free momentarily on a 14-yard run, with reserve safety Central McClellion saving the day with an ankle tackle at the OSU 16.

"I was like, 'Wow, if I miss this tackle here, that's the shutout.' But I made it, I made it," McClellion said.

Sure enough, the drive stalled from there and Todd France missed a 33-yard field goal. Even with third- and fourth-teamers in, OSU proved stingy.

"I didn't expect this," Pagac said of Toledo's goose egg. "We obviously played well today and maybe they had a little bit of an off day. But we played aggressively."

While Pagac wasn't figuring to completely stymie Toledo, members of the defense — and offense for that matter — almost anticipated it.

"It's never a surprise because we have a lot of powerful people on defense," OSU wide receiver Dee Miller said. "Our

defensive front is a lot more physical, and we have guys who can run and cover and hit you."

That fact became evident to UT coach Gary Pinkel, whose Rockets had not been held scoreless since a 27-0 loss at Indiana to open the 1993 season.

"We played well when we were on offense," he said. "They just stifled us. They attacked the things that we did well, and they have great athletes."

"We were just completely out of rhythm and couldn't get back in."

Plummer Pilots Pick Parade

Damon Moore grabbed the first of the five interceptions, but the play that may have signaled the beginning of the end of the Toledo passing game may have come later in the first quarter when Plummer got in the act.

Knowing Wallace had no interest in testing Antoine Winfield on the other side, Plummer snuffed out a fade pass to Mel Long and made a diving interception to set up the OSU offense at the Toledo 45.

"I just went up there in bump-and-run coverage. He took off, did a fade route, and I was able to stay with him and turn and see the ball. After that, instincts took over," Plummer said.

"You can't ever really guess a route, but you can have an idea something is going to come based on how they're lined up and the formations. I guess I saw it coming."

Plummer said he's at the ready every time the ball is snapped.

"I think I've taken the same approach

as last year," said Plummer, who tied for the team lead with six picks in 1997. "Antoine's a great player and, like you saw today, they didn't even look his way. I go to practice working hard, knowing that teams are going to try to attack me."

After Plummer's play, the thievery was contagious as linebackers Na'il Diggs and Tim Cheatwood recorded interceptions, as did safety Percy King.

"I think it was a result of good plays by us and a couple of times we got lucky," Pagac said. "One ball hit a guy in the back of the shoulder and we came up with the ball. We were lucky, but then, on the other hand we were hustling to the ball."

Youngsters Make Their Mark

As Pagac shuttled reserves into the game, the talent level made an obvious drop, but the effort did not. And the depth in the secondary, a concern coming in, got a shot in the arm.

"I think I've been playing well," McClellion said, "and lot of those young guys like Percy, David (Mitchell) and even (Nate) Clements have come on for us."

The second line of linebackers have developed as well, even with the academic casualty of Chris Kirk and a nagging injury for Courtland Bullard. Outside backer Joe Cooper actually led OSU in tackles with seven while Cheatwood was second with six. Jason Ott took over the middle in relief of Andy Katzenmoyer and called plays in the huddle.

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OHIO STATE VS. TOLEDO

Cooper: DBs Negated Toledo's Passing Game

Throughout the season, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is publishing excerpts of Ohio State head football coach John Cooper's postgame press conferences. Here is what Cooper had to say following the win over Toledo.

COOPER: "Obviously I'm happy to win the football game, to play as many players as we did and not come out with any serious injuries at all. I don't think we've got anybody who'll miss any practice time this week."

Q: It was a bend-don't-break defense. They came down a couple of times, but you just stopped them.

COOPER: "Yeah, we forced some turnovers. I think we had five interceptions in the game. When you've got that many young players in the game, it's difficult to do a lot of blitzing and stunting because they don't get a lot of practice time during the week. So we played basically a base defense in the second half."

Q: What were you able to do with Chris Wallace?

COOPER: "I think we were able to get

pretty good pressure with a four-man rush — we didn't blitz them a whole lot. He's a very active quarterback, and then I think our defensive backs pretty much put their wide receivers out of the game. Even though we weren't blitzing, we were able to play some man coverage.

"The tempo was set early when Damon (Moore) made a real good interception on a crossing route and Ahmed Plummer made an over-the-shoulder interception. Both of them gave the offense great field position."

"If I'm disappointed in any phase of our ball game today, obviously it's our field goal kicking. We missed two field goals and had a bad snap on the third one. We should have probably been over 50 points in the first half."

Q: Talk about the job your offensive line did today.

COOPER: "The offensive line is getting better. We still made some mistakes. We had some penalties that you can't afford to have against a better football team. But they're getting better. We were able to play more players today. We played Tam Hopkins and Henry Fleming an awful lot during the ball game, so I'm going to be interested to look at the film and see how they graded out."

Q: What did you think of Mark Garcia's play today?

COOPER: "I thought Mark played about like we expected him to play. He's got a good arm; he threw the deep routes pretty good. They were putting a lot of pressure on him. They brought a lot of outside pressure and we were trying to get him outside. A couple of times we probably should have checked (off)."

"They disguised their coverage a little better today than what we had seen on film. They went into a Cover 2 sometimes and gambled a little bit more in the secondary. That'll cause an inexperienced quarterback more problems."

Q: What about Steve Bellisari going both ways?

COOPER: "He played both ways; he played on special teams. That's probably the first time in my coaching career we had a player do that in the same ball game. He's going to be a good football player. He's a good athlete."

"He got his bell rung a couple times

covering kickoffs, but he'll learn. He's a good athlete, but he needs to avoid getting double-teamed on those kickoff coverages. If you're first down there, they find ways to double you, and he got his bell rung a couple times. One time I wasn't sure if he was going to get up."

Q: What did you think of Reggie Germany today?

COOPER: "Reggie has really had a good fall camp for us. He's a guy that has fought through some minor injuries. We know he's a good football player. He's a good blocker and he runs good routes. He played about like we expected him to."

Q: Can you talk a little bit about your defense? (Toledo) never got past midfield until midway through the third quarter.

COOPER: "I think anytime you can shut out an offensive team like that you've got to be pleased. We think we have a good defensive team. We've been substituting up front with a lot of young players to keep them fresh. Our secondary is a veteran secondary with Antoine Winfield and Ahmed Plummer. I think Plummer really stood up well. We know how good Winfield is. I don't think there's a better defensive back in college football, so you try to go the other way."

"They started picking on him (Plummer). The first play of the game they run the fade route — incomplete pass — and later they threw it and he intercepted it. Anytime your corners can take their wideouts out of the ball game, your other nine players can play football."

Q: The play that Michael Wiley broke, is that the type of play you expect to go the distance?

COOPER: "That's a short-yardage play and they were pinching their defense. They brought the end and tackle both out on a slant, and really the corner and free safety, I think, missed tackles on that play. And, of course, Michael has got the speed to hit the home run. That's what I like about Michael Wiley."

Q: Any concern about David Boston on punt returns? He fumbled one last week and fumbled one here today.

COOPER: "That's an area we need to work on. We need to use better judgment. We got a little careless last week against West Virginia and we were a little careless today. We need a lot of work on spe-

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cial teams.

"We haven't caught the punt return, we haven't caught the kickoff return, although we only had one kickoff chance today. Again, our field goals are something we need to work on every day. We just need to get better."

Q: Do you expect to have (Ken-Yon) Rambo next week?

COOPER: "Yes, we anticipate having him back."

Q: Was this in certain respects better, or would you have liked to have been tested?

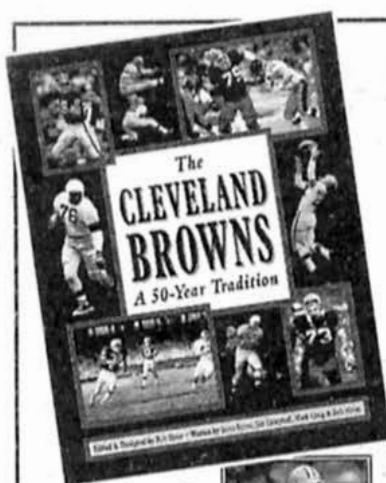
COOPER: "No, no. I like the way it went today. We gave our seconds a chance to play early. Now we know pretty much what those guys can do and what we need to work on."

"You know what happens — those young players practice and if they don't get much playing time early they start getting discouraged. Now we got them in the game. Some of them are complaining about not playing and they see why they haven't been playing. We called a pass play one time and we had two offensive linemen who looked like they were down there trying to catch the ball. They were 15 or 20 yards down the field."

"You can teach with all this film. Those young players should make a lot of improvement between this game and the next time they get a chance to play a lot of football."

Q: Without seeing the film, who really stood out as far as the youngsters? You talked about some of them, but was there anyone who just flipped right to the top of the charts?

COOPER: "I'd have to look at the film. We played them all. Again, the guys on defense must have played pretty well, guys like Tim Cheatwood, Jason Ott and Joe Cooper, who played all the way in the second half."



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THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Season's A Long Road — Just Ask Seminoles

Week two comes and goes and the Ohio State football team still finds itself atop the college football polls. It had to be considered a good week for the Buckeyes as the team continued, in its game with Toledo, to show it has all the tools on offense and a stifling defense.

I felt sorry for the Rockets in the first half as the Buckeyes were able, for the most part, to move the ball at will and completely shut down quarterback Chris Wallace and the Toledo offense. Wallace, a highly touted prep teammate of Buckeye Dee Miller, appeared to get more and more frustrated as the game wore on.

Meanwhile, as the Buckeyes continue to fine-tune their title-chasing machine, key rivals for Fiesta Bowl berths continue to drop like flies. Hopefully the trials and tribulations of teams like Michigan, Notre Dame, Florida State and North Carolina will help remind the Buckeyes that it's a long road to Tempe. Ohio State appears to have all the tools, but all it takes is one slip-up and you're off to Pasadena or an even lesser destination.

Oh, the Bucks still have plenty to work on. The punt return and field goal units were atrocious against the Rockets. You can get away with the missed field goals and mishandled punts against a MAC squad, but those type of blunders can be fatal in a close game.

This early in the season, some flaws in the game can have a silver lining, as it gives the coaching staff ammunition to keep the players from getting too cocky or complacent.

I've never been a big one for playing the in-state schools like Toledo. My feelings are moot, however, as Ohio teams are scheduled for years to come.

I don't have a problem playing lesser teams, as long as they are part of a competitive non-league schedule. You need an opponent with whom you can anticipate getting work for your reserves. However, if you play a team from another region such as Rice or Houston as the Bucks have done in the past couple of seasons, you get the added exposure outside the Midwest, which helps in recruiting.

And I think scheduling lesser teams from Ohio creates a greater risk of upset. Many of the players on the MAC teams in the state were recruited and perhaps rejected by Ohio State, and these players have more to prove against the Buckeyes than a player from another state. All teams gun to upset the Buckeyes, but the Toledos, Bowling Greens and Miamis would not just make their seasons, but their decades, with an upset of the Buckeyes in Ohio Stadium.

This year's OSU non-league schedule is — to my way of thinking — an outstanding one. You have the tremendous challenge in West Virginia, the game to play the reserves with Toledo, and a good, solid contest with Missouri. Plus, it's a schedule that should help the Buckeyes with the selection formula for the Fiesta Bowl.

All the Buckeyes need to do is keep on winning.

No Upset Specials

Speaking of continuing to win and the many upsets that have already occurred this season, it's been several years since the Buckeyes have really been upset. In the past three seasons, Ohio State has lost six games, all to

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

either Michigan (three times), Penn State (once) or in a bowl game (twice).

True, Michigan has beaten the Bucks with some lesser teams, but it's a far cry from the early John Cooper years when a team like Illinois had continued success against the Buckeyes. The Illini, in fact, are the last team other than the Wolverines, Nittany Lions or a bowl opponent to defeat the Buckeyes, downing Ohio State 24-10 in Columbus on Oct. 8, 1994.

I questioned Michigan State in this space last week, but maybe it's Michigan that really has the problems this season. I pity Eastern Michigan, the Wolverines' next opponent, which may have to pay the price for Notre Dame's and Syracuse's sins. The Eagles should join the MAC victim list. Big Ten teams were 4-0 against the MAC on Sept. 12, winning by a combined score of 187-33, with Western Michigan scoring all but three of those points in a 45-30 loss to Indiana.

Garcia Gets A Shot

When former Buckeye quarterback coach Walt Harris brought Mark Garcia in from Modesto Junior College in California, he was supposed to challenge Stan Jackson for the OSU starting job. Joe Germaine was not anticipated to be a factor. It seems that nobody told Germaine that, however, and after sharing duties with Jackson for two years, Germaine is now firmly entrenched as both the Buckeye starter and one of the best quarterbacks in the country. Garcia has been left to spend his final year of eligibility on the bench.

Buckeye fans certainly took notice, however, when Garcia fired a perfect 47-yard strike to Reggie Germany in the second quarter against Toledo. The throw gave people an indication of what Harris saw in Garcia when the Buckeyes brought him in from California.

Garcia's play was a bit inconsistent after his TD throw as he completed five of 11 passes for 83 yards. Of course he was playing with a patchwork offensive unit, but I don't think he's going to challenge Germaine. Still, that throw probably gives Buckeye fans some confidence in Garcia, should Germaine go down.

As mentioned last week, I worry about the pounding that Germaine might take over the course of the season. The pass blocking, fortunately, was much better against the Rockets than it was against West Virginia in the opener, with Garcia suffering the only sack allowed by OSU. Germaine, however, did suffer a vicious blind-side hit just before the end of the first quarter.

Talent At Tailback

People knew from the start of his college career that Michael Wiley was explosive. This is a guy, after all, who scored the first three times he touched the ball as a collegian. Still, you have to be pleased with his early play as a starter, as he has gained 291 yards on 30 carries in the first two games for almost 10 yards a carry. He showed a dazzling array of moves on his 76-yard touchdown run and seems to be protecting the

ball better this season — fumbles have always been the biggest concern with Wiley.

It will be interesting to see how he holds up in the more physical Big Ten and in more competitive games, where he might be called on to carry the ball more than the 17 and 13 times he ran against the Mountaineers and Rockets, respectively.

Of course with the bevy of running backs the Buckeyes possess, the coaching staff may elect to not run Wiley 30 times a game, even in close encounters. Reserves Jonathan Wells and Joe Montgomery are both averaging about five yards per carry in the early going and should provide solid support for Wiley.

Speaking of Montgomery, people usually talk about his power running, but he showed a great burst of speed on his 11-yard touchdown run against Toledo. As soon as he cut inside, the seam was there and he really turned on the jets.

Don't Cross The Boss

If you follow the OSU athletic program closely, you know that the much-anticipated Success Center is one of athletic director Andy Geiger's pet projects.

So it's not surprising that Geiger — who seldom, if ever, criticizes John Cooper — took exception when his football coach suggested that the Buckeyes needed an academic center at the Woody Hayes facility. Cooper's comments came in response to questions concerning his football team's recent academic woes.

I think that the players involved, coaches and the athletic academic people all probably need to share the blame for the much-publicized and quite embarrassing problems the Buckeyes have suffered in the classroom and with the transcripts of Paris Long and Chris Kirk. Let's hope that the good news is that all three of the groups involved will take the recent problems as a wake-up call and re-examine the way they do their academic business.

One thing I absolutely agree with Geiger on is the notion that a self-contained athletic compound, where football players would practice, train, eat and study, would cut the players off from the rest of the student body. Student life is an important part of the college experience. While big-time college football players will never be just "normal" students, they should be allowed to soak in as much of the college experience as possible.

If you are going to sequester the players in some athletic fortress, you might as well just call them pros and send them a paycheck.

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