

OHIO STATE VS. PURDUE

Bucks Block Out Boilers

Late TD Drive, Blocked Kick Help Sink Purdue

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Ohio State is still in search of its first full four-quarter effort, but the Buckeyes — after a clutch late scoring drive and a gigantic blocked field goal — at least have a Big Ten win to their credit.

And it was a thriller, at that.

The Buckeyes drove 76 yards to the go-ahead touchdown with 5:13 left then watched as Brent Johnson blocked a 29-yard field goal with 53 seconds left to preserve a 25-22 win over No. 17 Purdue before 93,766 on a rainy Oct. 9 afternoon at Ohio Stadium.

"I just got through telling our football team how really proud I am of their effort," said OSU coach John Cooper, whose 21st-ranked Buckeyes improved to 4-2 overall and drew even at 1-1 in Big Ten play. "We challenged them all week long and they responded."

An OSU loss — after a 42-17 home defeat at the hands of Wisconsin a week earlier — would have dropped the Buckeyes out of Big Ten contention and, perhaps, severely curtailed OSU's post-season bowl chances.

But the Buckeyes came up big down the stretch, making plays when they had to and making up for three critical turnovers that each led to Purdue points. Along with the UCLA game, a 42-20 win on Sept. 11, this was probably OSU's best effort to date.

"If you put four quarters together, you're going to win football games and we were able to do that today," said OSU quarterback Steve Bellisari. "We've got a good football team here and I think we proved that today."

It was an up and down day for OSU. Bellisari, for instance, threw for 174 yards and rushed for 96 more. But he was just 10 of 26 passing with two interceptions and was sacked five times.

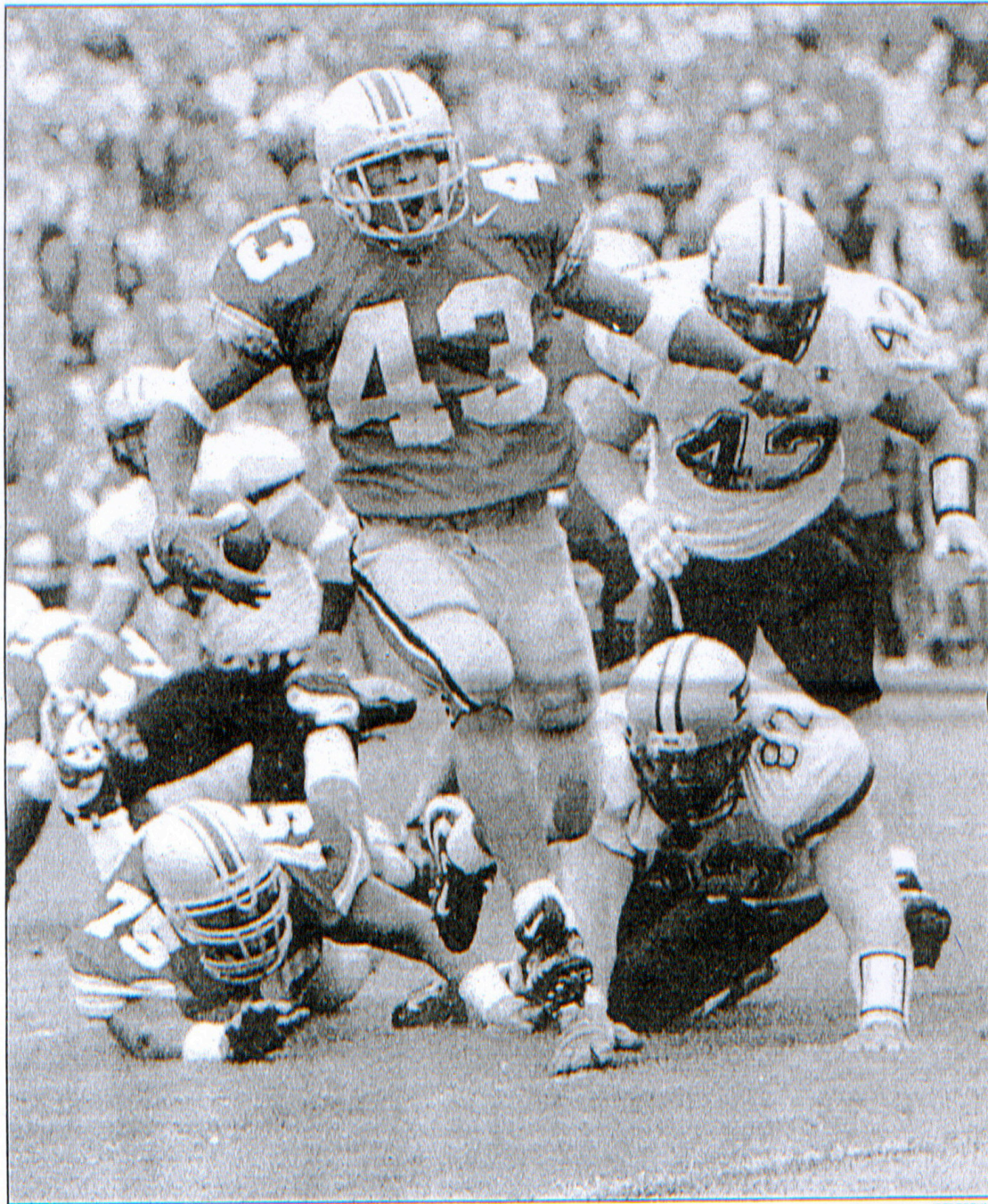
"We dodged some bullets," Cooper admitted. "We turned the ball over a couple of times and even fumbled it twice on that last drive. But I'm proud of them. They played with a lot of heart."

Added offensive tackle Tyson Walter, "We shot ourselves in the foot a lot. We made a lot of dumb mistakes we shouldn't have made. It was really just carelessness."

"But our defense played a great game and we were able to come back and show some character at the end."

Defensively, OSU kept Purdue's wide-open passing attack largely in check. PU quarterback and Heisman Trophy candidate Drew Brees hit on 24 of 39 passes, but it was for a season-low 205 yards and no touchdowns.

"The loss is frustrating because it was such a hard-fought battle right down to the very end," Brees said. "The defense played so well and our offense ... we drove the ball. They can't say they shut us down. But give them credit —



JEFF BREHM

COMBS SCORES — OSU tailback Derek Combs, making his first career start, capped his team's initial possession with a 5-yard touchdown run. Here, he leaves Purdue's David Nugent (82) and Brent Botts (42) in his wake after OSU tackle Henry Fleming (75) provided a key block.

they made plays when they had to and we didn't."

Brees began to click near the end of the game, but his last-ditch drive stalled and the Boilermakers (4-2, 1-2) needed Travis Dorsch to connect on a field goal to force a possible overtime.

And, although Johnson came through for OSU by deflecting the low kick, he wasn't all that comfortable playing the role of hero for the Buckeyes.

"I don't think you should narrow it

down to that one play," he said. "The defense was unstoppable today. They played 100 percent. We gave up a few trick plays, but we'll iron that stuff out."

Purdue coach Joe Tiller, whose team dropped a 38-12 decision at Michigan a week earlier, recognized a sense of urgency from the Buckeyes.

"I thought both teams were productive and played real hard," he said. "Ohio State had their backs up against

the wall and they came out and played really good."

As It Unfolded

Ohio State got a huge break on the game's opening kickoff as Percy King hit Purdue return man Larry Shyne and forced a fumble, which teammate Gary Berry recovered at the Purdue 30-yard line.

"We have to get the job done on special teams," King said. "I just thought I

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had made the tackle, but then I could hear the crowd roar and I knew something big had happened."

The OSU offense needed seven plays to convert the turnover into the game's first touchdown. Bellisari went for 10 yards on a quarterback draw to convert a third down before tailback Derek Combs converted another with a 5-yard pickup down to the PU 5.

On first down, Combs went between blocks by linemen Walter and LeCharles Bentley and cut the play back for the 5-yard touchdown and a 7-0 lead with 12:15 left in the first quarter.

"I saw a dude crashing down hard and I cut outside that block, then cut it back inside," said Combs, who finished with 17 yards on six carries in his first career start. "I just tried to get it into the end zone really quick."

Purdue then evened the score by capitalizing on an OSU turnover. Bellisari scrambled and attempted a lob pass downfield to Reggie Germany. But Purdue safety Adrian Beasley stepped in front of the pass and returned it 19 yards to the OSU 27.

The Boilermakers were aided by an OSU personal foul for grabbing the face mask, moving the ball to the OSU 12. On first down, the Boilers completed the two-play drive as Brees handed off to motion man Vinny Sutherland. Sutherland then threw a lob back to Brees, who tightroped the left sideline and scored on the 12-yard touchdown.

"That was something we've been working on all week," Brees said. "We thought it would work and it did."

Ohio State then held the ball for 11 plays and moved 58 yards down to the Purdue 5. But Bellisari was sacked on third down and Stultz's 33-yard field goal attempt hit the left upright and was no good with 1:47 left in the first quarter.

Purdue then moved 57 yards in 10 plays to take the lead. OSU rallied after allowing PU tailback Montrell Lowe, who led all rushers with 153 yards on 25 carries, to rip off a 39-yard gain on the first play of the drive. The Boilers had to settle for Dorsch's 40-yard field goal and a 10-7 lead with 12:43 left in the first half.

Purdue's next points — another Dorsch field goal — were also the result of an OSU turnover. Bellisari and center Kurt Murphy mistimed a center exchange and PU's Alkin Ayodele recovered the fumble at the OSU 48. An OSU penalty for roughing the passer moved the ball down to the 33.

Brees then completed a swing pass to Sedrick Brown for 25 yards down to the OSU 13. But an ineligible-receiver

penalty and a pair of incompletions forced PU to take Dorsch's 32-yard field goal and a 13-7 lead with 59 seconds left in the first half.

The teams traded possessions to open the second half before the Buckeyes went to their big-play repertoire and their bag of tricks to snag the lead.

Bellisari went deep down the right sideline to flanker Ken-Yon Rambo, who got behind PU's Michael Hawthorne, for a 44-yard gain down to the Boilers' 7.

"We felt we could go after (Hawthorne)," Bellisari said.

After an incompletion on first down, Wiley took a pitch and threw a halfback option pass to tight end Darnell Sanders for a perfectly executed 7-yard touchdown and a 14-13 lead with 8:45 left in the third quarter.

After forcing a Purdue punt, the Buckeyes extended their lead to 17-13. Bellisari completed a 42-yard pass to Germany, who also got behind Hawthorne, down to the PU 27. But the drive stalled after a trio of incompletions and Stultz came on to boot a season-best 45-yard field goal to give the Buckeyes a four-point lead with 4:24 left in the third quarter.

Purdue then chipped away with a 12-play, 75-yard scoring drive. Brees hit on seven of his first nine passes on this possession, including a 24-yarder to tight end Tim Stratton. But Brees' last two attempts were incomplete in the end zone and PU had to take Dorsch's 22-yard field goal to cut the lead to 17-16 with 14:10 left in the game.

The Boilers again took advantage of an OSU turnover, this time getting a touchdown out of it. Bellisari's pass to Rambo down the right side was intercepted by PU's Willie Fells and returned 35 yards to the OSU 5.

Lowe took a pitch left and rolled untouched into the end zone for the 5-yard TD and a 22-17 lead with 13:42 left in the game. The Boilers attempted a two-point conversion, but Brees' pass was incomplete.

The teams traded possessions before Ohio State embarked on its game-winning drive, beginning on its own 24-yard line with 10:26 left.

The 13-play, 76-yard march consumed 5:13 of clock time and Bellisari said there was no doubt where the Buckeyes, with their season on the line, were headed.

"You could look in the guys' eyes and I knew we were going to score," he said. "I had the confidence that we were going to take the ball down the field and put the ball in the end zone."

"Finally, it all started clicking."

The drive began as Bellisari hit Germany for 11 yards and a first down at the OSU 35. On first down, though, Wells fumbled. OSU tackle Henry Fleming won a mad scramble for the loose ball to retain possession, though.

Two plays later, Wiley took a pitch right for 16 yards to convert a third down and move the ball down to the Purdue 41.

After a pair of incompletions, Bellisari found Germany on a curl for a critical 16-yard gain and a first down at the PU 25.

Wiley fumbled after a 5-yard gain on first down, but fullback Jamar Martin was on the case this time and recovered it.

Three plays later OSU faced fourth-and-goal at the PU 16. Bellisari kept it on a quarterback sneak, nearly breaking the play for a touchdown before he was dragged down at the Boilers' 7.

On first-and-goal, Bellisari rolled left and threw underneath to Martin at the 2. Then, on second down there, Wells took a pitch right out of a two-tight end set and followed Martin into the end zone for the 2-yard touchdown and a 23-22 lead with 5:13 left.

"We really needed that play, especially with me fumbling at the beginning of that drive," Wells said. "It was great for me to come back in and score the touchdown."

"The guys blocked that play well and I was untouched. I was surprised when I caught the pitch to see how much field I had out there, and I just accelerated to the pylon."

The Buckeyes attempted a two-point conversion and Bellisari's pass to Germany was incomplete, but PU's James Dunnigan was flagged for pass interference. On the retry from just outside the 1-yard line, Wiley took a pitch left and got into the end zone for the two points and a 25-22 lead.

But Brees and Lowe were not done. They helped the Boilermakers drive 68 yards down to the OSU 12-yard line. But on third-and-3 there, Brees' pass to Chris Daniels was deflected away by OSU's Nate Clements.

Dorsch came on to attempt his potential game-tying field goal, but Johnson batted it away, touching off a massive celebration on the OSU sideline and throughout the Horseshoe.

"I was desperately failing," Johnson said. "But we had to do something. We had to step up right there. I got my hands up. I was trying to get to the point where the ball was kicked and it just happened."

The blocked kick was a bitter pill to swallow for Brees, who became famous with his last-second comeback in last year's Alamo Bowl upset of No. 4-ranked Kansas State.

"I knew we could drive down and score," he said. "We've done it millions of times. We were down there — first-and-10, inside their 20. We just didn't execute."

OSU took over possession on its own 17-yard line with 53 seconds left. Despite PU having two timeouts left, the

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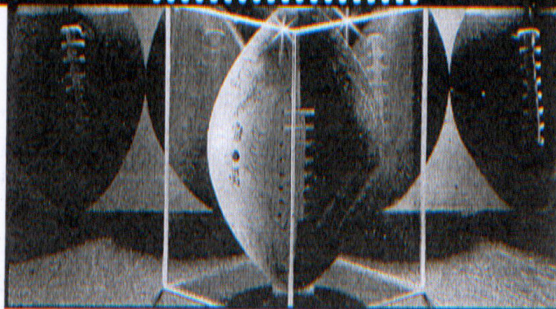
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Bellisari's Run Fitting Capper

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Buckeyes were able to melt the final seconds — especially after Bellisari kept the ball on an impromptu 68-yard scramble down to the Boilers' 21.

"We wanted to keep the ball inbounds," Bellisari said. "I just spun free for a long run. I was trying to score, but the other guy caught me."

For Tiller, this was a game his team easily could have won. He noted his team drove the ball into the red zone six times and netted just one touchdown and three field goals out of those possessions.

"Fumbling the opening kickoff was a huge negative," he said. "Oftentimes you don't think about those things when you lose a game (but) just think if we'd held onto that ball on the opening kickoff — who knows what would have happened today?"

"The other thing was to be down there and not cash in and get six points and have to settle for three."

Game Notes

- There were no OSU defenders within 30 yards of Brees when he caught his touchdown pass and the only suspense was whether he would maintain his footing and stay inbounds long enough to get into the end zone.

- "Vinny made a nice play even getting it off, and I was real close to being out of bounds," Brees said. "In fact, I was joking with one of the officials at halftime and he said, 'Do you know how close you were to being out of bounds?'"

- "I said, 'Yeah. About this close,'" he said, holding up his thumb and forefinger close together. "Yeah, it was close, but it got us into the end zone. It was about the only pass we had that did get into the end zone."

- Combs' touchdown run marked the first time OSU has scored a touchdown on its opening drive this season.

- Sanders' touchdown catch was his first career catch of any kind. He played more as the game wore on after starter Steve Wisniewski left due to a concussion.

- Wiley improved his career passing totals to 8 of 9 for 176 yards and two touchdowns.

He also moved up to No. 10 on OSU's career rushing chart. He carried eight times for 67 yards to finish the game with 2,486 yards in his career, just ahead of Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy (2,466).

- Stultz's 45-yard field goal was his longest since a 46-yarder last year at Illinois. He now stands in eighth place on OSU's career scoring list — passing current running backs coach Tim Spencer in the process — with 225 career points.

- OSU stretched its winning streak to seven straight over Purdue, although it was the first over a Tiller-coached Boilermakers team. He arrived in West Lafayette in 1997 and the teams' last meeting was in 1996.

- Johnson's field goal block averted what could have been the first overtime game in OSU history.

The NCAA enacted overtime rules for the 1996 postseason and then for the 1997 regular season.

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OSU's Nickel Contains Purdue's Brees

It's said that nickels and dimes don't buy much these days, but they turned out to be priceless for Ohio State in a 25-22 victory over Purdue Oct. 9.

A much-maligned Buckeye defense earned some respect in stifling the high-flying Boilermakers offense. Adverse weather conditions, a newfound attitude and a little bit of lady luck helped the Buckeyes survive a last-minute charge from the talented Boilermakers.

But what really did the trick was Ohio State sacrificing a linebacker and shifting to a nickel package most of the afternoon. Though reluctant to play press coverage or jam Purdue's receivers at the line, OSU had enough personnel to account for Purdue's sets, which limited Boilermaker quarterback Drew Brees to a season-low 205 yards.

In fact, it was Brees' second-lowest yardage total — behind a 196-yard showing last year against Michigan State — in his 1-1/2 years as the starter.

More importantly, Brees, who was 24 of 39, failed to throw a touchdown pass for the first time since Dec. 30, 1997, an Alamo Bowl victory over Oklahoma State. He was impressed with the way Ohio State played.

"They didn't do anything to try and trick us," Brees said. "They just know that they're good athletes and good players. They say we don't need to do anything tricky to try and defend you. I thought we moved the ball well on them. But once again, just like at

INSIDE THE DEFENSE

with

Mike Wachsman

Michigan, we did not score touchdowns when we were in the red zone."

The Buckeyes knew they were in for

an aerial assault, no matter the score, the defensive set or the weather conditions.

"They were going to throw the ball no matter what you do," Ohio State defensive coordinator Fred Pagac said. "Our game plan was to play nickel and to change some coverages. He's been sacked three times all year so we didn't think we'd get many sacks. We tried to pressure him at times and get him to

throw off rhythm. That's the key to the pressure."

The Buckeyes failed to sack Brees but threw him off balance just enough to keep Joe Tiller's wide-open air attack under wraps.

"They came in with five receivers and they hit us with a trick play," said James Cotton, responding to his first start of the season with six tackles, numerous play busts and a snarling demeanor. "It was a matter of adjusting throughout the game. They weren't as physical as we thought."

Defensive end Brent Johnson thought the Buckeyes did a decent job of pressuring Brees.

"He was getting the ball away real quick," Johnson said. "We were just trying to penetrate and get in his face. We didn't want to give him time to hit the deep receivers."

Brees, who caught a touchdown on a throwback pass from receiver Vinny Sutherland to tie the game 7-7, earned the respect of Buckeye defenders with his clutch passes, many coming on third down.

"Drew Brees is a good quarterback," safety Percy King said. "You can't play off of anybody because he can get the ball to anybody on the field. We had pretty good coverage, but he squeezed the ball in there."

A week earlier Michigan got to Brees enough to rattle him into a 20-for-49 afternoon. Pressure is the buzzword when facing Purdue, which relies heav-



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ANYBODY'S BALL — OSU outside linebacker Na'il Diggs (32) displays his pass coverage skills, converging here on Purdue tight end Tim Stratton. OSU cornerback Nate Clements (20) also closes on the play.

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ily on the shotgun, quick releases and a three-step drop.

With Ohio State's defensive line getting little sustained pass rush, it was left to the secondary to answer the call.

"We knew it was going to be up to us," safety Gary Berry said. "We were getting everybody up, getting everybody ready. This was our game and we went out and made a play."

Ohio State had seen a shell of Purdue's offense when it faced run-and-shoot Cincinnati during the nonconference season, and the Buckeyes didn't like that experience too much.

But it taught them how to defense four- and five-wide receiver sets.

"No one else really plays like that in the Big Ten," King said. "They run all those receivers at you. It's a real challenge for us as far as getting the plays together."

Staying Positive

The possibility for another unhappy ending at the Horseshoe was definitely in the air as Purdue lined up for a game-tying field goal with 53 seconds remaining.

But Johnson turned into the hero when he reached his big mitt up to deflect Travis Dorsch's line drive kick, batting it to the ground.

"I always had confidence," King said. "At no time did I feel the game was in jeopardy. I knew we'd pull it out in the end. Brent's block was really big for us."

Keeping a positive outlook, which has been difficult in recent weeks due to OSU's lackluster play, was a big determining factor in the Buckeyes' victory.

"It was all talk," linebacker Na'il Diggs said. "I was trying to make sure guys stayed focused. We wanted to play with intensity and heart. They hit a couple of plays on us, but we weren't too concerned about that because I knew we either had a little mental mistake or somebody fell or slipped. Those things are correctable."

Wisconsin was able to beat Ohio

State up physically, but it also cut the Buckeyes' heart.

Purdue is the type of team that will hit some plays, and Ohio State knew that. The big thing is coming back and putting the past behind.

"That type of offense you have to be patient," Pagac said. "I don't think you can expect to stop them to low yardage. Our kids played pretty well and stayed in the game."

The Buckeyes put in the kind of effort they can build on, one they'll need against impending foe Penn State.

"Everybody was out there performing," defensive back David Mitchell said. "If someone missed a play, we didn't get down on them because we knew

they could come back and help us later in the game."

OSU took a 25-22 lead after a touchdown and two-point conversion with just over five minutes to play, so the defense knew it would have its feet to the fire at least one more time.

"We knew we had a lot of time left to play after the two-point conversion," Diggs said. "We knew we'd have to go back on the field, so that kept us motivated."

Purdue ended the rainy day with 380 total yards, nearly 100 yards below its average. In fact, the Boilers were held to fewer yards in only one other game this year when they finished with 358 in their season-opening 47-13 win over Central Florida.

That brought a smile to Pagac's face. "I'm very satisfied with our defense today," Pagac said. "Our kids played their butts off and I'm very happy with the way we played."

Cornerback Ahmed Plummer said it wasn't difficult to sell his teammates on the positive approach.

"You can't get frustrated because you know the type of offense they have," he said. "They're going to complete some passes and get a little bit of yardage running the ball. But you can't break."

"That's what we showed as a defense. We bent a little bit but we didn't break."

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Lowe Gave Boilers Strong Ground Presence

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Dipping Into The Bag Of Tricks

Tiller lived up to his reputation as a gambler on offense, hitting the Buckeyes with myriad sets and unorthodox calls.

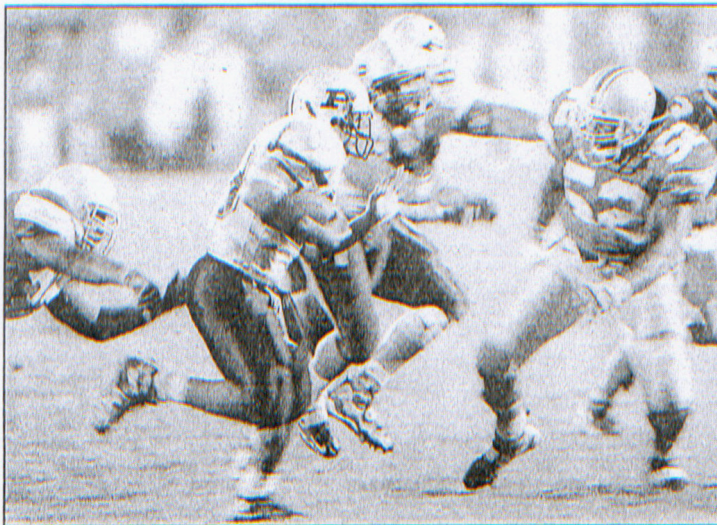
Brees ran some option plays successfully, rolled the pocket quite often and caught the touchdown pass from Sutherland. Ohio State was well aware of Tiller's devil-may-care approach to offense and seemed well-schooled on most plays.

Pagac even said the Buckeyes felt the quarterback throwback coming, though it's hard to believe him considering there wasn't a defender within 10 yards of Brees when he caught the football.

Diggs gave props to the Boilermakers for their offensive chicanery but knew it was only a matter of time until the Buckeyes figured it out.

"They ran a little bit of trickery," Diggs said. "They had fast linemen. Once we figured out their trick stuff, they went back to the basics."

"They had the quarterback throwback that they hadn't run this year. They ran a screen throwback they had-



JEFF BREHM

TOUGH WAY TO LOWE — Purdue tailback Montrell Lowe, pictured here running against OSU's James Cotton (52), proved to be a load. The 5-8, 189-pound redshirt freshman picked up 153 yards on 25 carries with a touchdown against OSU.

The Boilermakers continually spread the Buckeyes out in coverage, which led to big gains for running back Montrell Lowe. Finding most of his success between the tackles and running straight at the Buckeyes' Jason Ott, Lowe rambled for a season-best 153 yards and a touchdown.

OSU was overplaying to the passing game so much that it seemed only logical for Purdue to have success on the ground.

"They were trying to spread us out," Diggs said. "They ran a simple draw. I can't tell you exactly what went wrong. We probably had a couple mistakes we need to correct."

A crash course on Wide Open Offense 101 seemed to help the Buckeyes when test time rolled around.

"We studied real hard this week and they didn't run more than two or three things that we weren't ready for," Diggs said. "We knew the patterns they were going to run, we knew the down and distance what plays they'd audible to. We did a great job studying film this week."

Even amidst the missed assignments, Pagac had nary a discouraging word for his troops.

"We made some plays, didn't make some plays and they scored some points," he said. "We scored some points and won the game."

n't run this year. There were a couple things we had to adjust to and they scored, but we fixed what we were doing wrong."

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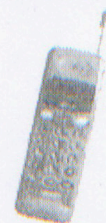
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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 25, Purdue 22

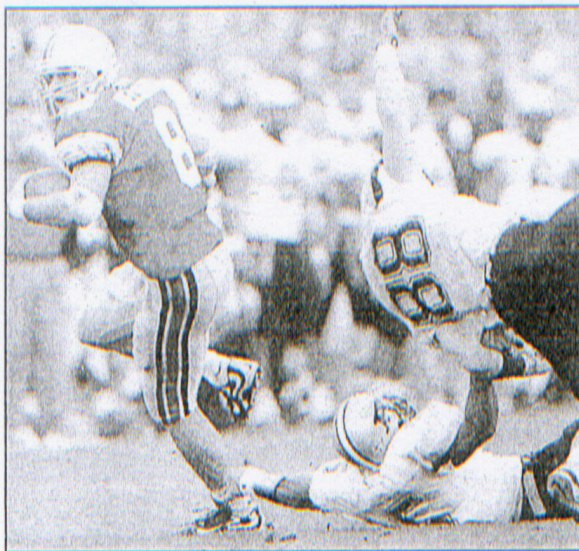
OSU offensive tackle Tyson Walter on his reaction to teammate Brent Johnson's block of a Purdue field goal with 53 seconds left to preserve the win: "Thank God. I got the most tired of the whole game running out onto the field, jumping around and hugging everybody than I did on any other single play. It's just a huge adrenaline rush."

OSU safety Gary Berry on the significance of that play: "That was great. Like Coach Pug (defensive coordinator Fred Pagac) says, if you play 60 minutes of football good things happen. It came down to the last play and we did it."

Purdue kicker Travis Dorsch on his last-minute kick: "To tell you the truth, it was kind of exciting. I've been here a year and a half now and never got a chance to do something like that. When you're called upon, you've got to be excited to go out there. If you dread it, you're probably not going to end up making the kick."

Purdue quarterback Drew Brees on coming up just short at the Horseshoe: "It's frustrating, because we've kind of been known as a team that, if we're down at the end and the offense needs to drive and go down and score to win the game, we've done that in the past. We got down there; we just didn't put it in. The field goal would have tied it, but we would have liked the touchdown to win it."

Purdue coach Joe Tiller on the effect of playing the game in a steady rain: "I don't know if it was much of a factor. It was some, certainly. I think it forced you to play with your feet a little more underneath you than usual. Back in 1908, when I was playing football at Wilson Junior High, the basic rule was, if it's raining, throw it, and if it's dry, run it, because defenders have a tendency to give you a little more space when it's a little slippery, so we like throwing the ball in this kind of weather."



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN — OSU quarterback Steve Bellisari (8) eludes Purdue's James Dunnigan (5) and Jason Loerzel (88). Aided by a 68-yard run to cap the game, Bellisari was OSU's leading rusher with 96 yards on 17 carries.

Walter on how OSU dodged a pair of bullets by recovering its own fumbles on the final, game-winning drive: "I guess it was wet and it was kind of slippery out there. But we had some good awareness and people were able to jump on the ball and they didn't hurt us."

OSU cornerback Ahmed Plummer on his touchdown-saving deflection of a second-quarter pass from Brees intended for Vinny Sutherland: "It just so happened I was in the right position at the right time and I was

able to help Donnie (Nickey) out. That's what we've done in the past — help each other out."

OSU quarterback Steve Bellisari said the Buckeyes believed they could draw Purdue off-sides. The Boilers were called for being off-sides five times in the game: "We knew they liked to jump a lot. We started going on a different cadence and we got them to jump."

Bellisari on the fumbled exchange between him and center Kurt Murphy that led to a Purdue field goal: "We went on two and he snapped it on one. I kind of gave him a little jerk in there and he thought I needed the ball. He snapped it. It was a miscommunication between the two of us. I still should have had it because it hit me right in the hands."

Brees on which loss — this one or his team's 38-12 loss at Michigan a week earlier — was tougher: "I'd say this loss is worse, just because that's two in a row now. It was close. It's not like we didn't have a chance. This one came down to the wire, to the last minute. If we could have cashed in in the first 59 minutes, maybe it wouldn't have been close."

OSU defensive end James Cotton believes this win will lead the Buckeyes toward bigger things in the second half of the season: "This gives us confidence and momentum heading into Happy Valley. Penn State is a great team. We came out today and proved the character of our team."

Walter on how this should be regarded as a quality win: "Purdue is a good team. A lot of people don't want to give them credit because they got shellacked by Michigan last week. They're a very good football team. They're going to come back and win some games. I think it was a very impressive showing because they were better than UCLA was."

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 25, Purdue 22

Oct. 9, 1999 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
PURDUE	7	6	0	9	22
OHIO STATE	7	0	10	5	22

First Quarter

OSU — Combs, 5 run (Stultz kick), 12:15; 7 plays, 30 yards, 2:33
 PU — Brees, 12 pass from Sutherland (Dorsch kick), 8:03; 2 plays, 27 yards, 1:09

Second Quarter

PU — Dorsch, 40 field goal, 12:43; 8 plays, 57 yards, 4:04
 PU — Dorsch, 32 field goal, 0:59; 8 plays, 34 yards, 3:01

Third Quarter

OSU — Sanders, 7 pass from Wiley (Stultz kick), 8:45; 3 plays, 51 yards, 0:34

OSU — Stultz, 45 field goal, 4:24; 6 plays, 53 yards, 1:10

Fourth Quarter

PU — Dorsch, 22 field goal, 14:10; 13 plays, 75 yards, 5:14
 PU — Lowe, 5 run (pass failed), 13:42; 1 play, 5 yards, 0:04

OSU — Wells, 2 run (Wiley rush), 5:13; 13 plays, 76 yards, 5:13

Att. — 93,766

Weather — Overcast and raining, 66 degrees; wind, 8-10 mph from S

Team Statistics

	PU	OSU
First Downs	21	19
Rushing	7	11
Passing	12	7
Penalty	2	1
Rushes-Yards	30-163	38-188
Passing Yards	217	181
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	40-25-0	27-11-2
Offensive Plays	70	65
Total Net Yards	380	369
Third Down Efficiency	7-16	6-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	1-1
Punts	5-39.8	4-43.8
Fumbles-Lost	3-1	3-1
Penalties	12-86	7-62
Time of Possession	34:07	25:53

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — PU: Lowe 25-153; Brees 3-8; Brown 1-2; Sutherland 1-0. OSU: Bellisari 17-96; Wiley 8-67; Combs 6-17; Wells 5-9; Martin 1-1; Team 1-(-2).

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — PU: Brees 39-24-0-205-0; Sutherland 1-1-0-12-1. OSU: Bellisari 26-10-2-174-0; Wiley 1-1-0-7-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — PU: Daniels 11-76; Stratton 5-70; Lane 3-14; Tolbert 2-12; James 2-8; Brown 1-25; Brees 1-12. OSU: Germany 3-68; Rambo 3-61; Wiley 2-34; Sanders 1-7; Houser 1-6; Martin 1-5.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — PU: Rogers 5-39.8-43. OSU: Stultz 4-43.8-52.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — PU: Sutherland 1-7. OSU: Clements 2-30.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — PU: Shyne 4-90. OSU: Rambo 5-118; Wiley 1-5.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES — PU: Ayodele, OSU: Berry.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — PU: Fells 1-29; Beasley 1-19. OSU: None.

SACKS — PU: Dinkins 2-19; Loerzel 1-10; Botts 1-10; Rose 1-7; Nugent 1-4. OSU: None.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — PU: Dinkins 2-19; Nugent 2-5; Loerzel 1-10; Botts 1-10; Rose 1-7; Fells 1-1; Mitrione 1-1. OSU: Mitchell 1-4; Pickett 1-2; Clements 1-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist.-Tot.) — PU: Loerzel 6-2-8; Fells 6-1-7; Ayodele 5-2-7; Turner 5-0-5; Rose 4-1-5; Mitrione 2-3-5; Nugent 3-1-4; Dinkins 3-1-4; Beasley 3-0-3; Dunnigan 2-0-2; Conard 2-0-2; Hawthorne 2-0-2; Botts 1-1-2; Vaughan 1-0-1; Doe 1-0-1; Dorsch 1-0-1; Starling 1-0-1; Lee 0-1-1; Odum 0-1-1; Middlebrook 0-1-1. OSU: Nicky 6-5-11; Mitchell 7-0-7; Berry 5-1-6; Diggs 5-1-6; Cotton 5-1-6; Plummer 5-0-5; Clements 3-2-5; Ott 3-1-4; Pickett 3-0-3; Bullard 2-1-3; Collins 1-1-2; Brown 1-1-2; Johnson 0-2-2; Bellisari 1-0-1; Combs 1-0-1; Wayne 1-0-1; Westbrooks 1-0-1; Cheatwood 1-0-1; Doss 1-0-1; Bailey 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — PU: Starters: Defense, Sutherland, Daniels, Light, Mruczkowski, Niedrach, Starnes, Gorin, Randolph, Brees, Lowe, Lane, Dorsch, Defense, Dinkins, Mitrione, Nugent, Ayodele, Loerzel, Odum, Rose, Hawthorne, Beasley, Turner, Dunnigan, Rogers. Reserves: Jackson, Shyne, Tolbert, Edgerton, Dawson, Starling, Neal, Conard, Clopton, James, Brown, Doe, Middlebrook, Fells, Tone, Botts, Ennis, Vaughan, Upshur, Turner, Lee, Standiford, Simpson, Foggio, Stratton, Williams, Loughheed. OHIO STATE: Starters: Defense, Cotton, Pickett, Collins, Johnson, Diggs, Ott, Clements, Mitchell, Berry, Nicky, Plummer, Stultz, Offense, Germany, Walter, Bentley, Murphy, Gilbert, Fleming, Wisniewski, Bellisari, Martin, Combs, Rambo. Reserves: Doss, Wiley, Grant, Crooks, Cooper, Cacchio, King, Lindsay, Westbrooks, Wells, Wilhelm, Locke, LaVrar, Cheatwood, Hopkins, Bullard, Long, Gurr, Perez, Brown, Elford, Provitt, Houser, Sanders, Wayne, Bailey, Eisenhard.

Season Statistics

Date	Opponent (AP Rank#)	W/L	Score	Crowd
Aug. 29	(9) Miami (Fla.) (12)*	L	23-12	73,037
Sept. 11	(13) UCLA (14)	W	42-20	93,283
Sept. 18	(13) OHIO U.	W	40-16	93,222
Sept. 25	(12) CINCINNATI	W	34-20	93,407
Oct. 2	(12) WISCONSIN	L	42-17	93,524
Oct. 9	(21) PURDUE	W	25-22	93,766
Oct. 16	at Penn State			
Oct. 23	at Minnesota			
Oct. 30	IOWA			
Nov. 6	at Michigan State			
Nov. 13	ILLINOIS			
Nov. 20	at Michigan			

*Kickoff Classic
 #OSU's game day AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics	OSU	Opp
First Downs	116	118
Rushing	56	62
Passing	51	50
Penalty	9	6
Avg. Per Game/Rush	180.3	176.2
Avg. Per Game/Pass	218.3	217.2
Total Offense	2392	2360
Total Plays	395	448
Average Per Game	398.7	393.3
Average Per Play	6.1	5.3
Penalties-Yards	32-234	48-406
Fumbles-Lost	14-9	10-6
3rd Down Efficiency	31-76	39-97
Percentage	.410	.400
4th Down Efficiency	3-5	2-4
Percentage	.600	.500
Sacks	11-52	14-101
Time of Possession Avg.	26:43	33:17

Score By Quarters	1	2	3	4	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	29	52	58	31	170	26.3
Opponents	31	48	19	45	143	22.8

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	5	467,202	93,440
Away	1	73,037	73,037
Total	6	540,239	90,040

Receiving	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD Long
Reggie Germany	26	443	17.0	1 42
Ken-Yon Rambo	25	534	21.4	5 68
Michael Wiley	5	83	16.6	0 27
Steve Wisniewski	4	69	17.3	1 24
Matt Keller	4	68	17.0	0 29
Jonathan Wells	4	19	4.8	0 9
Chad Cacchio	3	33	11.0	0 19
Jamar Martin	2	9	4.5	0 5
Derek Combs	1	16	16.0	0 16
Vanessa Provitt	1	13	13.0	0 13
Nate Stead	1	10	10.0	0 10
Darnell Sanders	1	7	7.0	1 7
Kevin Houser	1	6	6.0	0 6
OSU Totals	78	1310	16.8	8 68
OPP Totals	110	1303	11.8	4 75

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPP	EPR	FG	PTS
Dan Stultz	0	18-19	—	—	8-11	42
Michael Wiley	6	—	—	1-1	—	38
Ken-Yon Rambo	5	—	—	—	—	30
Derek Combs	3	—	—	—	—	18
Jonathan Wells	1	—	—	—	—	6
Darnell Sanders	1	—	—	—	—	6
Steve Wisniewski	1	—	—	—	—	6
Jerry Westbrooks	1	—	—	—	—	6
Jamar Martin	1	—	—	—	—	6
Steve Bellisari	1	—	—	0-1	—	6
Reggie Germany	1	—	—	—	—	6
OSU Totals	21	18-19	0-0	1-2	8-11	170
OPP Totals	16	10-10	1-4	1-2	11-15	143

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	INT	TD	Rating
Steve Bellisari	52	110	.473	980	4	6	132.84
Austin Moherman	23	48	.479	256	5	1	78.76
Michael Wiley	3	3	1.00	74	0	1	417.20
OSU Totals	78	161	.484	1310	9	8	122.01
OPP Totals	110	191	.576	1303	6	4	116.52

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Dan Stultz	2-2	4-5	2-4	0-0	8-11
OSU Totals	2-2	4-5	2-4	0-0	8-11
OPP Totals	4-7	3-4	4-4	0-0	11-15

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Dan Stultz	25	981	39.2	0	56
B.J. Sander	2	49	24.5	0	34
OSU Totals	27	1030	38.1	0	56
OPP Totals	32	1344	42.0	0	61

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ahmed Plummer	2	27	13.5	0	27
Jason Ott	1	14	14.0	0	14
Gary Berry	1	12	12.0	0	12
Nate Clements	1	0	0.0	0	0
Donnie Nickey	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	6	53	8.8	0	27
OPP Totals	9	135	15.0	0	48

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Nate Clements	11	128	11.6	0	27
OSU Totals	11	128	11.6	0	27
OPP Totals	7	46	6.6	0	17

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ken-Yon Rambo	14	298	21.3	0	35
Michael Wiley	4	44	11.0	0	17
Chad Cacchio	1	12	12.0	0	12
Matt Keller	1	9	9.0	0	9
Joe Cooper	1	0	0.0	0	0
Percy King	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	22	363	16.5	0	35
OPP Totals	24	443	18.5	0	27

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Na'il Diggs	38	15	53	9-26	3-15
Donnie Nickey	34	16	50	2-2	—
Nate Clements	39	11	50	5-26	—
Gary Berry	35	13	48	4-14	—
Jason Ott	27	16	43	4-10	1-2
Mike Collins	14	15	29	3-3	—
James Cotton	17	9	26	4-12	1-7
Brent Johnson	11	12	23	4-9	2-6
Ahmed Plummer	19	4	23	—	—
Ryan Pickett	13	10	23	6-12	2-6
Courtland Bullard	13	7	20	1-4	1-4
David Mitchell	16	3	19	1-4	—
Rodney Bailey	13	5	18	3-9	1-5
Percy King	14	4	18	—	—
Fred Pagas	7	4	11	1-1	—
Michael Doss	8	2	10	1-4	—
Joe Cooper	6	3	9	1-4	—
Joe Brown	3	4	7	—	—
Matt LaVrar	4	1	5	—	—
Tim Cheatwood	3	2	5	2-5	—
Matt Wilhelm	2	3	5	2-7	1-5
Heath Quisen	0	5	5	—	—
Clinton Wayne	2	2	4	—	—

Fumbles Forced
 2 — Na'il Diggs; 1 — James Cotton, Michael Doss, Nate Clements, Gary Berry, Percy King, Courtland Bullard.

Fumbles Recovered
 2 — Jason Ott; 1 — Rodney Bailey, Kevin Houser, Na'il Diggs, Gary Berry.

Blocked Kicks
 Brent Johnson.



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Vol. 20, No. 9

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

November 4, 2000

Boilers Brees By Bucks

Dramatic Purdue Win Puts OSU Out Of Rose Bowl Race

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Hero or goat, big play or bonehead move. These are the labels people place on athletes and their exploits when championships are truly at stake.

Such was the case Oct. 28 as Ohio State ventured to Purdue with the upper hand in the Big Ten football race and the scramble for the conference's coveted Rose Bowl berth at stake.

In the absolute final analysis, Purdue and its record-setting quarterback Drew Brees simply outlasted Ohio State 31-27.

"It was a big ball game and big players make big plays," said OSU safety Mike Doss. "Drew Brees made the last play for Purdue and they won."

Doss, himself, was there on the firing line and was positioned to be the hero. After all, his second interception paved the way for Ohio State, which fell to 6-2 overall and 3-2 in Big Ten play, to take a 27-24 lead with just 2:16 left.

But, in a game as cruel as it is physical, Doss found himself in no man's land just a few plays later as Brees threw a 64-yard bomb to former walk-on Seth Morales for the game-winning touchdown with 1:55 left.

"I'm obviously disappointed that we allowed them to come back and win the football game," said a dejected OSU coach. John Cooper. "(Brees) threw a bad pass and Michael intercepted it, ran it back and gave us a chance to win the game."

"But you have to take advantage of it. You have to go on and win the football game."

Purdue (7-2, 5-1) pinned its Rose Bowl hopes squarely on Brees' shoulders, and he riddled the Big Ten's No. 1-ranked defense to the tune of 39 for 65 passing for 455 yards. His three fourth-quarter touchdowns more than offset his four interceptions.

"That was just a great individual effort," said Purdue coach Joe Tiller. "That's why this guy is a special player."

"Drew is a competitor and whether it's running or throwing he'll find a way to beat you," added slippery Purdue receiver Vinny Sutherland, who scored on one of Brees' touchdown passes.

The win allowed the 16th-ranked Boilermakers to move one step closer to just the school's second Rose Bowl berth ever and its first since 1966.

"It was certainly nice to win that football game," Tiller said. "Our guys played with a real sense of purpose. Anytime your football team does that, there are no limitations."

Brees' late-game heroics capped a game fraught with twists, turns and five different lead changes. Ohio State trailed 7-3 at halftime but rallied for a 20-10 lead to start the fourth quarter behind Nate Clements' 83-yard punt return for a touchdown.

"I've never been in a game this wild before," said OSU tailback Derek Combs. "Momentum changed just about every other play. We just didn't come out with the win."

The defeat effectively rules Ohio State, ranked 12th nationally coming into the game, out of the Rose Bowl hunt. OSU's faint hopes in that regard would rest on winning its last three games and hoping Purdue loses its last two games at Michigan State and at

Continued On Page 16



JEFF BREHM

WALKING THE WALK — OSU linebacker Joe Cooper (10) was the subject of some pregame hubbub for his comments about Purdue QB Drew Brees. But Cooper acquitted himself nicely in the game, totaling seven tackles including this sack.

In This
Issue
Of BSB

• FB Schnittker Is Verbal No. 11

Sandusky (Ohio) Perkins full-back/linebacker Brandon Schnittker became the 11th member of OSU's 2001 recruiting class when he committed on Oct. 22. For more on the 6-2, 245-pound Schnittker, see Recruiting Outlook on pages 8-9.



Brandon Schnittker

• C-J's Chattams Tough To Handle

Dayton Chaminade-Julienne wide receiver Angelo Chattams is enjoying a big senior campaign (see feature, page 14). Chattams is also a member of BSB's Hot 25 for 2001. See pages 11-13 for a complete look at this year's Hot 25 list.



Angelo Chattams

COVER STORY: BOILERS BREES BY BUCKS

It Was Broken, But Brees Fixed It In The End

Continued From Page 1

home with Indiana.

"We laid it on the line," said OSU defensive end Brent Johnson. "That's all you can ask. I don't think anybody screwed up or made mistakes. Just sometimes you win games, sometimes you lose games and sometimes you can't do anything about it, either."

From Goat To Hero
— And Vice Versa

Doss and the Buckeyes appeared to have the game wrapped up after he picked off Brees' ill-advised floater and returned it 33 yards to the Purdue 2-yard line with 3:09 left.

"We were in man-to-man coverage," Doss said. "I saw Drew Brees falling down. He was just trying to throw the ball away. I just tried to make the catch and score, but (Brees) got me at the 2-yard line."

Three plays later, OSU's Jerry Westbrook powered in from the 2 for the touchdown that put the Buckeyes up 27-24 with 2:16 left.

"Picking Drew Brees four times, we should win the game," Doss said.

But Brees was getting his own version of a pick-me-up from a teammate on the Purdue sideline.

"It was like Moore, our defensive end," Brees said. "After I threw the pick, he came up to me on our sideline with a big smile on his face. He just said, 'Hey, what did your mom always tell you: If you break something, fix it.'"

"That made sense, but I was still mad at myself. He said, 'If you break it, fix it.' He

kept saying it until I smiled and said, 'All right.' I guess that was the trick to get my attitude back positive."

After the ensuing kickoff, Purdue took over on its own 36-yard line. Brees' first-down pass fell incomplete. On second down, he sent four receivers out on the pattern.

The Boilermakers had run a similar play just before halftime and Ohio State showed Brees something he filed away just for this occasion.

"(Going deep) was something we talked about all game," he said. "The route is a two-minute route. We ran it in the drive before halftime."

"The first read is the hitch out to the field (with Sutherland). Then the fade route (with John Standford), then to A.T. (Simpson) coming up the middle and then to Seth. I noticed that A.T. got hit immediately on that play before halftime. This time, the safety (Doss) came up to get him again."

Morales came off the right flank unchecked and just began streaking down the sideline.

"The corner's responsibility is the flat," Brees said. "He jams Seth then waits for anything that comes out in the flat."

OSU cornerback David Mitchell was covering that area.

"I'm supposed to read both receivers," Mitchell said. "I'm supposed to get a jam on one, which I didn't do, and we got beat deep."

As part of the Cover-2 zone, it was Doss' responsibility to play the deepest part of the right side of the field. But he played a hunch to come up and try to jam Simpson over the middle, leaving Morales unfettered.

"I knew exactly what I was supposed to

do," Doss said. "I never looked at the outside receiver. He just threw it over the top of me, and I have to take the blame for that."

"I figured they were going to go all streaks. I chested up (Simpson). He looked over there, then he looked back (at Morales). There was too much separation for me to get back over there."

Unfortunately, OSU's four-man rush was unable to apply enough pressure and Brees was able to go through his progressions and find the wide-open Morales, who caught the ball in stride at the 20 and waltzed into the end zone with the game-winning score.

"That's a tribute to Seth because he is the fourth progression," Brees told reporters afterward. "Do you know how many times we've run that play since I've been here in practice and in games? Probably 1,000."

"Do you know how many times I've thrown it to that guy? One time out of 1,000, and it was during two-a-days two years ago. I remember it because you don't throw that post that often."

Morales confirmed he was supposed to be Brees' last resort. Instead, he became the last dagger in OSU's heart.

"It wasn't designed to go to me," Morales said. "He looked at Vinny and he looked to Standford. Drew is a great quarterback. He saw me behind coverage. The ball came my way and I made the catch."

"Teams like to focus on Tim and Vinny. But this is kind of like a spread-the-wealth offense. It came up to me and I made the play."

Cooper was left to lament the fact that the Buckeyes had the Boilermakers right where they wanted them — several times.

"They only had one timeout left there at the end," he said. "They were backed up on their own (36-)yard line. You can't let them get the big play. It's that simple."

For Tiller, he was glad to see his senior quarterback and Heisman Trophy candidate exonerate himself.

"I don't think I've ever felt as empathetic toward a player as much as I did after Drew threw that interception," Tiller said. "I just felt he deserved so much more than that, given what he's given Purdue University."

"Then for him to come back and make a throw like that on the last series was poetic justice, certainly. He hung in there. It helps to have an experienced quarterback because he can come back from something like that."

With Ross-Ade Stadium now at a fever pitch, Ohio State had one last chance to pull the game out. But a freak mishap ended OSU's Pasadena dreams.

On second-and-7 on the OSU 31, center LeCharles Bentley prematurely snapped the ball to quarterback Steve Bellisari and hit motion man Chad Cacchio. Purdue's Landon Johnson recovered the fumble with 1:14 left.

"I tried to get the guy in motion," Bellisari said. "LeCharles ended up snapping it and it hit (Cacchio) in the leg and they got it."

Brees, watching from the sideline, could only marvel at his team's incredible good fortune.

"What happened at the end there ... I guess I'm still in shock," he said. "It's weird how things work out."

A November To Remember?

With Purdue in pursuit of its first Big Ten title since 1969 and its first Rose Bowl in 34 years, the season's final weeks will be quite interesting.

Tiller is just hoping his team, which is idle Nov. 4, can come down off cloud nine in time to play Michigan State Nov. 11.

"This was a great win for us, but we know we still have to go up to Michigan State and play a good game and win or this win will be meaningless as far as winning a championship," he said.

Tiller and his players have been chasing this moment since his arrival at the school in 1997. Their success validates his "basketball on grass" passing scheme some thought would never fly in the ground-oriented Big Ten.

"You go to sleep every night thinking it can happen and now it really can happen," Sutherland said. "It's in our hands and we have to make it happen."

Brees added, "We've never had a chance to go to the Rose Bowl before. Now we do, and that makes every game the biggest game of your career."

Ohio State does not have the luxury of an extra week to pick up the pieces. The Buckeyes have their own date with Michigan State Nov. 4 at Ohio Stadium. A road trip to Illinois follows before the traditional season finale with Michigan.

"We've got three tough ball games left with Michigan State, Illinois and Michigan," Cooper said. "What kind of season we have depends on how we finish up."

Ohio State's best bowl hopes probably lie with the Citrus Bowl, which typically takes the Big Ten's runner-up.

The Buckeyes may need to win out, though, just to get that consolation prize.

"I think our team morale is still good and we have good chemistry," said full-back Jamar Martin. "A loss this week isn't going to determine our whole season."

Doss, head held high after a game that saw him log 11 tackles (two for losses), two interceptions, two deflected passes and one all-too-obvious missed assignment, put it all into perspective.

"We've got to win out," he said.

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INTERCEPTION RETURN — OSU junior Nate Clements (20) returns a second-quarter interception against Purdue. Clements had this pick and teammate Mike Doss (8) had two interceptions as the Buckeyes picked off Drew Brees four times.

OHIO STATE VS. PURDUE

Roses Wilt At Purdue

Boilers, Brees Beat OSU 31-27 On Stunning TD

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Ohio State found out what the rest of the Big Ten already knew — Purdue's pass-oriented offense and quarterback Drew Brees can be an absolute load some days.

In a game to decide the upper hand in the race for the Big Ten championship and the Rose Bowl berth, it was Purdue and Brees who enjoyed the last laugh. The 16th-ranked Boilermakers rallied late Oct. 28 for a wild 31-27 win over the 12th-rated Buckeyes before 68,666 at Ross-Ade Stadium.

"That is a tough way to lose a ball game," said OSU coach John Cooper, whose team dropped to 6-2 overall, 3-2 in Big Ten play and all but out of the Rose Bowl race. "Purdue has an outstanding football team and we have to give them credit."

"I'm proud of the way our team played." But Brees, the Big Ten's career passing leader, simply would not be denied. He completed 39 of 65 passes for 455 yards and three touchdowns against four interceptions.

"I don't know if I've ever seen a quarterback put on a better performance passing the football against us than what he did today," Cooper said. "He did what he had to do to win the game."

Brees led a furious comeback for the Boilermakers (7-2, 5-1), who control their own destiny in the hunt for the Rose Bowl. Trailing 20-10 after three periods, he threw three fourth-quarter touchdown passes to pull out the win.

"It was certainly nice to win that football game," said Purdue coach Joe Tiller. "Our guys played with a real sense of purpose. Anytime your football team does that, there are no limitations."

The last touchdown pass came just a few plays after Brees threw a terrible interception to OSU's Mike Doss, which set up a go-ahead touchdown for the Buckeyes at 27-24 with 2:16 left. Brees rallied on second-and-10 from his own 36 and threw deep down the right sideline to Seth Morales who, ironically, slipped behind Doss in OSU's Cover-2 zone for the 64-yard touchdown.

With OSU down to one last chance, the Buckeyes lost possession with 1:14 left after a shotgun snap by center LeCharles Bentley to quarterback Steve Bellisari hit motion man Chad Cacchio and the Boilermakers recovered.

Brees did most of his damage with tight end Tim Stratton, who caught a game-high 12 passes for 100 yards.

"We thought we could force the ball to Tim today just because of the way they were defending us," said Tiller. "We thought the match-ups were tilted his way."

Wide receiver Vinny Sutherland hauled in 10 passes for 142 yards. Morales also shone with seven catches for 115 yards.

"When you concentrate on one area, (Brees) would just go to the other area," said OSU defensive end Brent Johnson. "He had a lot of options to choose from."

Ohio State could not convert Brees' misuses into points, trailing 7-3 at halftime



JEFF BREHM

PRESSURE UP THE MIDDLE — The OSU defense did about everything it could to disrupt Purdue quarterback Drew Brees, including coming right up the middle at him as evidenced on this play by defensive end Rodney Bailey (94).

despite his three first-half interceptions.

"It was very frustrating," said Bellisari, who finished 17 of 29 for 208 yards with an interception. "We wanted to get more points on the board. We had a couple of turnovers we did not take advantage of today."

The Buckeyes again suffered in the running game, netting just 70 yards on 31 attempts.

"We need to do a better job offensively,"

Cooper said. "I don't think our offense held up its end of it. When you get four turnovers and have that kind of field position, you have to take advantage of it."

More statistics tell the tale as Purdue held the ball for over 34-1/2 minutes, ran 93 plays to OSU's 60 and converted 13 of its 23 third downs, including six in a row in the fourth quarter before Doss' interception.

A Fantastic Finish — For PU

Trailing 20-17, Purdue capitalized on an OSU holding penalty to force a punt and regain possession with 11:17 left. Brees led the Boilermakers on a stunning 13-play, 90-yard drive to take the lead.

He converted four third downs on the drive, including a 15-yard pass to Sutherland down to the OSU 24.

Three plays later, Brees threw just before a blitz by OSU linebacker Courtland Bullard. He found Sutherland in the right flat, where Sutherland lost OSU's Derek Ross and beat Ryan Pickett to the goal-line pylon for the 19-yard touchdown and a 24-20 lead with 5:59 left.

Purdue then sacked Bellisari and, after a pair of incompletions, the Buckeyes punted the ball away with 4:37 left. But the Buckeyes appeared in position to steal the game after Brees' ill-advised fourth interception.

Under pressure from OSU's Joe Cooper, Brees lobbed the ball across the field to the sideline. But Doss caught the wobbly pass at the 35 and returned it to the Purdue 2 with 3:09 left.

"That was terrible because I wasn't even trying to complete a play," Brees said. "We had a protection problem there. The linebacker came free. It just slipped out and sailed."

"Their guy picked it and I just had to knock the heck out of him."

It took three plays for the Buckeyes to

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OHIO STATE VS. PURDUE

cash in, but Jerry Westbrook scored on a 2-yard toss sweep right behind fullback Jamar Martin to put the Buckeyes up 27-24 with 2:16 left.

"Before the play started, I told the offensive line I was going to score," Westbrook said. "I just needed them to give me a little bit of time. Jamar made a great block and I just took it in."

Joe Cooper then batted down Brees' first-down pass. But the wily Purdue QB was given plenty of time on second down and he patiently found his fourth option, Morales, streaking unchecked. Morales caught the ball in stride at the OSU 20 and scored untouched to put Purdue up 31-27 with 1:55 left.

"I kind of got by them," Morales said. "I knew (Doss) was eyeing Drew to the other side. I knew I had a good 5 or 10 yards on them."

The Buckeyes had one last gasp, but Alkin Ayodele sacked Bellisari just before the snap hit Cacchio and was recovered by PU's Landon Johnson. That mistake gave Purdue the ball back with 1:14 left.

"Anytime we're in the shotgun, we snap the ball on a silent count," Coach Cooper said. "The ball looked like it hit the motion man."

After Montrell Lowe rushed for 12 yards and a first down, Purdue was able to run out the remaining time, touching off a massive celebration as Purdue fans charged the field.

"As it turned out, we had to beat them twice," Tiller said. "I thought we had them where we wanted them, but we throw that interception and things don't look too good."

"But our guys came back, made a big play and did what they had to do to win the football game."

The Early Stages

Ohio State had the ball to start the game but opened back on its own 5-yard line after an illegal block penalty on the opening kick-off.

Unfazed, tailback Derek Combs, who ended with 73 yards on 15 carries, ripped off 12 yards on the first play to pick up the first of three first downs on the possession. Bellisari then went deep down the right sideline to Ken-Yon Rambo for a 32-yard pickup to the Purdue 37.

The same combination later picked up 7 yards on a swing pass on first down. But two rushing plays by Westbrook ended as a net loss of 2 yards. Dan Stultz came on but missed a 49-yard field-goal attempt short and left with 11:16 left in the first quarter.

Purdue then moved 37 yards down to the OSU 31 as Brees completed his first five passes. But on second-and-8 at the OSU 31, Brees tried to force it into his favorite target, Stratton. Doss stepped in front of the Purdue tight end to make a diving interception at the OSU 22 with 7:36 left in the first quarter.

The teams traded punts before OSU moved out to midfield behind a 21-yard swing pass from Bellisari to Combs. But the

drive stalled at the Purdue 48 after a pair of incompletions and Ohio State had to punt the ball away.

Purdue drove 36 yards to midfield before Brees was again victimized on a pass to Stratton. This time, OSU cornerback Nate Clements made the interception and returned it 35 yards to the Purdue 24 with 11:11 left in the second quarter.

OSU could not pick up a first down, though. A bad pitch left Combs with no gain on first down. Bellisari got 4 yards on a quarterback draw on second down before his swing pass to Combs netted just 2 yards. Stultz came on and drilled a 35-yard field goal — the OSU-record 50th of his career — to give the Buckeyes a 3-0 lead with 9:02 left in the first half.

The Buckeyes then forced Purdue into a three-and-out, but another illegal block penalty on the punt pushed OSU back to its own 10. A 16-yard pass to Rambo gave OSU some breathing room, but Bellisari saw his next pass go off Reggie Germany's hands and it was intercepted by Ayodele at the OSU 45 with 5:40 left in the first half.

Purdue cashed in by driving 45 yards in six plays to the game's first touchdown. Brees hit Stratton for a 12-yard gain before making an amazing throw back across the grain to A.T. Simpson for 19 yards down to the OSU 8.

Brees got 6 yards on a first-down quarterback draw before Steve Ennis took a pitch left and rolled into the end zone for the 2-yard touchdown and a 7-3 Purdue lead with 3:41 left in the first half.

OSU had two more possessions in the closing moments of the half, including one set up on its own 47-yard line by a tipped pass interception by corner David Mitchell. But the Buckeyes went three-and-out each time and the 7-3 Purdue advantage stood at the half.

The teams traded field goals to open the second half. Purdue had the ball first and, powered by a 45-yard pass from Brees to Sutherland on a pump-and-go that caught Clements off-guard, moved 66 yards in eight plays. Travis Dorsch capped the drive with a 34-yard field goal to extend the Purdue lead to 10-3 with 12:40 left in the third quarter.

Ohio State then moved 47 yards in eight plays, keyed by Bellisari's 22-yard pass to tight end Darnell Sanders and a 14-yard toss to Germany. But a 5-yard loss on a quarterback draw and a false start penalty pushed the Buckeyes back and they had to settle for Stultz's 45-yard field goal to trim the gap to 10-6 with 8:52 left in the third quarter.

OSU took the lead on its next possession, a drive set up by Clements' 28-yard punt return out to the OSU 38. The Buckeyes moved 62 yards in eight plays for their first touchdown. Bellisari converted a third-and-7 predicament with a 12-yard pass to Germany.

After a pitch to Combs netted 9 yards, Bellisari faked and went down the left sideline to Sanders for 16 more yards to the

Purdue 22. Two plays later, Bellisari found Germany in a soft spot in the PU zone at the 10. Germany turned upfield for a 21-yard gain down to the Purdue 1.

On first-and-goal there, OSU went with three tight ends and an offset-I with fullbacks Martin and Nate Stead in the backfield. Martin took the handoff and went right. He was hit by Ayodele but kept churning and took PU's Ashante Woodyard with him into the end zone for the 1-yard touchdown to put the Buckeyes up 13-10 with 3:41 left in the third quarter.

"It's basically a power play," Martin said. "Nate goes up and hits the linebacker. I read his block and took it into the end zone."

The Buckeyes then forced Purdue into a three-and-out, capped by Joe Cooper's blitz and sack of Brees.

Clements fielded a low Scott Kurz punt at the OSU 17, went left and picked up blocks from Marco Cooper and Will Allen and outraced PU's Jason Loerzel the last 15 yards for the 83-yard punt return touchdown and a 20-10 lead with 1:53 left in the third quarter.

Purdue answered with an 11-play, 73-yard scoring march. Again, Brees was at his best, hitting John Standeford back across the grain for a 32-yard gain. He then converted three third-down plays, including the 5-yard touchdown to Standeford.

On the touchdown, Brees backpedaled to stay alive and avoid OSU's Doss. Standeford eluded Clements in the back of the end zone to haul in the pass and cut the OSU lead to 20-17 with 12:46 left in the game.

"I faked the run," Brees said. "The key to that is getting the linebackers to come forward, then I just dump it in behind them. I just tried to buy some time. The corner

started coming at me and John was just standing in the back of the end zone."

But that score only set the stage for Brees' late heroics.

Game Notes

- Purdue snapped a seven-game losing streak to Ohio State with this victory. The Boilermakers last defeated OSU 31-26 on Oct. 15, 1988, in Columbus.

- The win also snapped OSU's five-game winning streak in West Lafayette, dating to a 28-23 loss on Oct. 6, 1984.

- OSU still holds a 32-11-2 lead in the overall series, including 9-5 in West Lafayette.

- The Buckeyes are now 7-2 against Purdue under John Cooper.

- Clements' punt return for a touchdown was OSU's first "regular" punt return (other than a blocked punt) for a score since David Boston returned one 70 yards against Indiana in 1998.

- It marked just the sixth such punt return in Cooper's 13-year tenure. Boston also returned one against Pittsburgh in 1996, while Jeff Graham had punt returns for scores against Illinois in 1989 and Texas Tech and Wisconsin in 1990.

- Records are unclear but it is believed that Purdue's trio of Morales, Stratton and Sutherland is the first to go over 100 yards receiving each in a game against OSU.

- It marked just the second time in Purdue history that three players achieved that feat. Randall Lane, Gabe Cox and Cliff Jackson did it against Minnesota in 1998.

- Ayodele proved to be a handful for the OSU offense. He finished with a team-high eight tackles. Three of those were for losses with two sacks. He also had an interception and deflected two passes.

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BSB Quotebook: Purdue 31, Ohio State 27

OSU defensive end Brent Johnson said it was difficult to contain Purdue quarterback Drew Brees and the Boilermakers' aerial attack: "There were times we felt like we had their backs against the wall, we had them under control and they were ours. The next thing you know, he dishes it off to somebody you don't even know where he came from."

Purdue coach Joe Tiller made no apologies for having Brees throw 65 passes among the team's 93 offensive plays: "I told somebody before the football game, 'We may throw the ball 50 or 60 times. We're going to throw the ball as much as we have to to win the football game, period.' We don't care about balance. I have no problems with that."

OSU linebacker Matt Wilhelm was asked whether he ever felt comfortable with his team's second-half lead: "Never. Brees just picked us apart. It was amazing looking at the scoreboard and just seeing how those passing yards built and built."

OSU safety Mike Doss on what he saw when he intercepted a Brees floater that set up a late touchdown: "God just said, 'Here's the ball.' I turned around and caught it."

OSU quarterback Steve Bellisari on Brees' errant pass, which was returned by Doss to the Purdue 2 and put the Buckeyes in position to take the lead at 27-24 in the closing minutes: "I was shocked. I didn't think that would ever happen. A play like that put us right back into it and we scored. All we had to do then was hold them."

Brees, who was under heavy pressure from OSU's Joe Cooper, said he should have avoided the last interception to Doss: "It would have been a lot safer — instead of me throwing that fourth pick — if we had run the ball. I guess that wasn't the plan today."

Purdue receiver Vinny Sutherland said he has come to expect Brees' late-game heroics: "That's just classic Drew. He just tries to make every play. He came up short on that one (the interception). But they left us a lot of time when we got it back. That gave us the time we needed to score."

Doss on whether he ever felt the Buckeyes had the game won: "I didn't feel safe. I knew they could score at any moment. At the end, Joe Cooper knocked down the pass on the first play. Then, I never looked back at the number one receiver, 84 (Seth Morales), and he made the play over me."

Bellisari on the three passes to tailback Derek Combs — the first three passes completed to an OSU tailback this season: "They were just there today. I hope we (do more of that). If it's going to work, we may as well do it."

Sutherland said getting open wasn't as easy as it looked: "They were better than what I expected. Their linebackers were as fast as ours, and I didn't expect that. I thought they would be bigger and slower."

Bellisari on Brees' Heisman Trophy candidacy: "Yes, he's a good quarterback. He deserves it. He made a couple of turnovers, but he fought back. He didn't let it bother him. He kept on playing. He won the ball game for them."



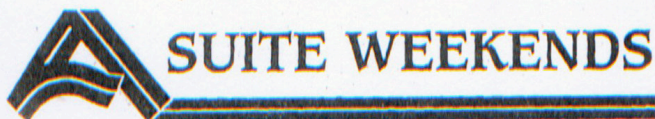
JEFF BREHM

GOOD PROTECTION — Despite his best efforts, OSU defensive lineman Brent Johnson (60) couldn't get to Purdue quarterback Drew Brees quickly enough. Brees managed to complete 39 of 65 passes against the Buckeyes for 455 yards and three TDs.

Wilhelm added his two cents on the Heisman race: "Brees gets my vote for the Heisman. He's a great competitor and a great quarterback."

Bellisari summed up the day's events: "It was a good football game. We didn't play bad. My hat is off to them. They made some big plays when they needed to."

Sutherland when asked if the win means Purdue is destined for Pasadena, where the Boilermakers haven't played in the Rose Bowl since 1967: "We're destined for a good time tonight."

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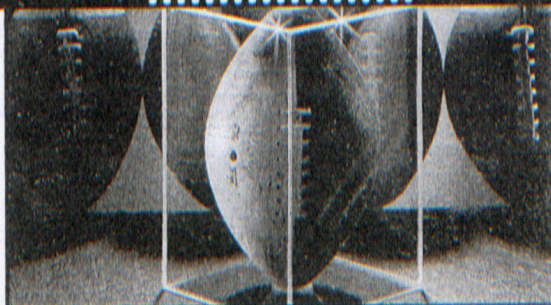
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The Numbers Game

Purdue 31, Ohio State 27

Oct. 28, 2000 — Ross-Ade Stadium, West Lafayette, Ind.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	0	3	17	7	- 27
PURDUE	0	7	3	21	- 31

Second Quarter

OSU — Stultz, 35 yard field goal, 9:02; 4 plays, 6 yards, 2:09

TOP

PUR — Ennis, 2 yard run (Dorsch kick), 3:41; 6 plays, 45 yards, 1:59 TOP

Third Quarter

PUR — Dorsch, 34 yard field goal, 12:40; 8 plays, 66 yards, 2:20

TOP

OSU — Stultz, 45 yard field goal, 8:52; 8 plays, 47 yards, 3:48

TOP

OSU — Martin, 1 yard run (Stultz kick), 3:41; 8 plays, 62 yards, 2:43 TOP

OSU — Clements, 83 yard punt return (Stultz kick), 1:53

Fourth Quarter

PUR — Standeford, 5 yard pass from Brees (Dorsch kick), 12:46; 11 plays, 73 yards, 4:07 TOP

PUR — Sutherland, 19 yard pass from Brees (Dorsch kick), 5:59; 13 plays, 90 yards, 6:18 TOP

OSU — Westbrook, 2 yard run (Stultz kick), 2:16; 3 plays, 2 yards, 0:53 TOP

PUR — Morales, 64 yard pass from Brees (Dorsch kick), 1:55; 2 plays, 64 yards, 0:21 TOP

Att. — 68,666

Weather — 57 degrees, sunny; wind 15 MPH from E



Team Statistics

	OSU	PUR
First Downs	12	25
Rushing	4	3
Passing	8	21
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Yards	31-70	28-31
Passing Yards	208	455
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	29-17-1	65-39-4
Offensive Plays	60	93
Total Net Yards	278	486
Third Down Efficiency	4-14	13-23
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	1-1
Punts	6-46.5	4-39.5
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties	6-63	4-31
Time of Possession	25:24	34:36

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — OSU: Combs 15-73; Westbrook 7-19; Martin 1-1; Team 1-(-1); Bellisari 7-(-22). PUR: Lowe 14-38; Brees 6-4; Ennis 2-3; Sutherland 2-(-6); Team 4-(-8).

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — OSU: Bellisari 29-17-1-208-0. PUR: Brees 65-39-4-455-3.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — OSU: Rambo 6-75; Germany 5-59; Combs 3-30; Sanders 2-38; Cacchio 1-6. PUR: Stratton 12-100; Sutherland 10-142; Morales 7-115; Standeford 7-52; Simpson 2-33; Winston 1-13.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Sander 4-49.0-57; Stultz 2-41.5-45. PUR: Kurz 4-39.5-48.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Rambo 2-48; Wells 2-27. PUR: Clopton 3-87; Sutherland 3-71.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES — OSU: None. PUR: L. Johnson.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Doss 2-33; Clements 1-35; Mitchell 1-8. PUR: Ayodele 1-0.

SACKS — OSU: J. Cooper 1-8; Bullard 1-6. PUR: Terrill 2-15; Ayodele 2-6; Phillips 1-7.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Ross 2-4; Doss 2-3; J. Cooper 1-8; Bullard 1-6; Wilhelm 1-4.

PUR: Ayodele 3-11; Terrill 2-15; Phillips 1-7; Team 1-5; Mitrione 1-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist.-Tot.) — OSU: Doss 9-2-11; Bullard 6-4-10; Ross 7-0-7; J. Cooper 6-1-7; Clements 6-0-8; Nickey 5-0-5; Mitchell 4-1-5; Wilhelm 4-0-4; Collins 2-0-2; Peterson 1-1-2; Bailey 1-0-1; Team 1-0-1; Wayne 1-0-1; Pickett 1-0-1; O'Neill 1-0-1; Stultz 1-0-1; Brown 0-1-1. PUR: Ralph Turner 5-3-8; Ayodele 4-4-8; Odom 4-2-6; L. Johnson 3-2-5; Schweigert 2-3-5; Woodyard 3-1-4; Terrill 1-3-4; W. Moore 3-0-3; Clopton 2-1-3; Gardner 2-2-3; Mitrione 1-1-2; Koutouvides 1-1-2; Team 1-1-2; Phillips 0-2-2; Botts 0-2-2; Kurz 1-0-1; Brees 1-0-1; Loerzel 1-0-1; Morales 1-0-1; Tone 1-0-1; Dorsch 1-0-1; Reeves 1-0-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — OHIO STATE: Starters: Defense, Bailey, Pickett, Collins, Johnson, J. Cooper, Wilhelm, Bullard, Clements, Nickey, Doss, Mitchell, Sander, Offense, Germany, Clarke, Gurr, Bentley, Hopkins, Fleming, Sanders, Bellisari, Martin, Combs, Rambo, Stultz. Reserves: Britton, Grant, Ross, McNutt, Jenkins, Cacchio, Krenzler, Groom, Barre, Crosby, Allen, Westbrook, Wells, M. Cooper, Stead, O'Neill, Locke, Reynolds, Cheatwood, Scott, Jacobs, Brown, E. Smith, Carter, Provitt, Hartsock, Wayne, Bond, W. Smith, Peterson. PUR: Starters: Defense, Sutherland, Morales, Stratton, Light, Mruzkowski, Okobi, Allen, Gorin, Winston, Brees, Brown, Dorsch, Defense, Phillips, Terrill, Mitrione, Ayodele, L. Johnson, Odom, Gardner, Woodyard, Schweigert, Ralph Turner, Clopton, Kurz. Reserves: Lowe, James, Dawson, Vaughan, Koutouvides, Ennis, Ferrell, Upshur, Reeves, Schaub, Starling, Doe, Loughheed, Botts, Rowe, Dinkins, Rob Turner, W. Moore, Randolph, B. Smith, Tone, Loerzel, Foggio, Kitchel, Shelbourne, Simpson, Standeford, Henderson.

Season Statistics

Date	Opponent (AP Rank)	W/L	Score	Crowd
Sept. 2 (16)	FRESNO STATE	W	43-10	96,583
Sept. 9 (38)	at Arizona	W	27-17	57,367
Sept. 16 (17)	MIAMI (OHIO)	W	27-16	96,721
Sept. 23 (14)	PENN STATE	W	45-6	98,144
Oct. 7 (8)	at Wisconsin (22)	W	23-7	79,045
Oct. 14 (6)	MINNESOTA	L	17-29	98,120
Oct. 21 (14)	at Iowa	W	38-10	60,495
Oct. 28 (12)	at Purdue (16)	L	27-31	68,666
Nov. 4	MICHIGAN STATE			
Nov. 11	at Illinois			
Nov. 18	MICHIGAN			

#OSU's game day AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics	OSU	Opp.
First Downs	138	153
Rushing	61	47
Passing	66	85
Penalty	11	21
Average Per Game/Rush	156.6	82.5
Average Per Game/Pass	207.3	239.8
Total Offense	2910	2578
Total Plays	534	590
Average Per Game	363.8	322.3
Average Per Play	5.4	4.3
Penalties-Yards	70-645	54-441
Fumbles-Lost	7-6	18-8
3rd Down Efficiency	41/118	51/139
Percentage	35%	37%
4th Down Efficiency	4/10	6/17
Percentage	40%	35%
Sacks-Yards	37-229	22-129
Time of Possession Avg.	28:34	31:26

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total	Avg.
Ohio State	66	55	79	47	247	30.9
Opponents	27	40	25	34	126	15.8

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	4	389,668	97,367
Away	4	265,573	66,393
Total	8	655,241	81,893

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Derek Combs	104	590	5.7	4	80
Jonathan Wells	82	367	4.5	4	31
Steve Bellisari	69	123	1.8	0	30
Jerry Westbrook	37	101	2.7	3	12
Sam Maldonado	22	50	2.3	1	7
Andy Groom	2	25	12.5	0	14
Scott McMullen	1	28	8.0	0	8
Ken-Yon Rambo	3	8	2.7	0	9
Jesse Kline	2	5	2.5	0	3
Jamar Martin	7	2	0.3	2	2
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Craig Krenzler	5	-11	-2.2	0	8
Ricky Bryant	1	-15	-15.0	0	0
OSU Totals	336	1,252	3.7	14	80
OPP Totals	284	660	2.3	5	40

Receiving	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Ken-Yon Rambo	42	582	13.9	1	60
Reggie Germany	21	353	16.8	1	46
Darnell Sanders	12	170	14.2	3	29
Chad Cacchio	9	263	29.2	4	60
Vannessa Provitt	6	100	16.7	0	44
Drew Carter	3	41	13.7	0	19
Derek Combs	3	30	10.0	0	21
Ricky Bryant	2	61	30.5	1	44
Tony Locke	2	23	11.5	0	26
Tim Cheatwood	2	10	5.0	1	9
Jamar Martin	1	13	13.0	0	13
Ben Hartsock	1	11	11.0	0	11
Steve Bellisari	1	1	1.0	0	1
OSU Totals	105	1,658	15.8	11	60
OPP Totals	170	1,918	11.3	10	64

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FG	PTS
Dan Stultz	0	28-30	—	—	11-15	61
Derek Combs	4	—	—	—	—	24
Jonathan Wells	4	—	—	—	—	24
Chad Cacchio	4	—	—	—	—	24
Jerry Westbrook	3	—	—	—	—	18
Darnell Sanders	3	—	—	—	—	18
David Mitchell	2	—	—	—	—	12
Jamar Martin	2	—	—	—	—	12
Ken-Yon Rambo	1	—	—	—	—	6

Sam Maldonado	1	—	—	—	—	6
Ricky Bryant	1	—	—	—	—	6
Mike Collins	1	—	—	—	—	6
Mike Doss	1	—	—	—	—	6
Nate Clements	1	—	—	—	—	6
Matt Wilhelm	1	—	—	—	—	6
Tim Cheatwood	1	—	—	—	—	6
Reggie Germany	1	—	—	—	—	6
OSU Totals	31	28-30	0-0	0-0	11-15	247
OPP Totals	18	11-13	1-1	0-0	7-14	126

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	INT	TD	Rating
Steve Bellisari	66	180	.533	1528	4	10	138.53
Scott McMullen	5	11	.455	88	0	1	142.65
Craig Krenzler	3	5	.600	41	0	0	107.40
Chad Cacchio	1	1	1.00	1	0	0	108.40
OSU Totals	105	198	.530	1,658	4	11	137.66
OPP Totals	170	315	.540	1,918	14	10	106.70

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Dan Stultz	4-4	5-7	2-4	0-0	11-15
OSU Totals	4-4	5-7	2-4	0-0	11-15
OPP Totals	3-4	2-4	3-7	0-1	8-16

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk.	Long
B.J. Sander	26	1106	42.5	0	69
Dan Stultz	16	600	37.5	0	55
Team	2	0	0	2	0
OSU Totals	44	1,706	38.8	2	69
OPP Totals	46	1,989	43.2	0	63

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Nate Clements	4	47	11.8	0	35
David Mitchell	3	59	19.7	1	31
Mike Doss	3	33	11.0	0	33
Donnie Nickey	2	11	5.5	0	10
Derek Ross	1	0	0.0	0	0
Matt Wilhelm	1	25	25.0	1	25
OSU Totals	14	175	12.5	2	35
OPP Totals	4	12	3.0	0	12

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Nate Clements	21	335	16.0	1	83
Ken-Yon Rambo	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
OSU Totals	22	332	15.1	1	83
OPP Totals	16	117	7.3	0	83

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ken-Yon Rambo	13	381	29.3	0	81
Jonathan Wells	3	38	12.7	0	17
Derek Ross	2	66	33.0	0	47
Jerry Westbrook	1	16	16.0	0	16
Mike Doss	1	15	15.0	0	15
Darnell Sanders	1	9	9.0	0	9
OSU Totals	21	525	25.0	0	81
OPP Totals	40	845	21.1	0	37

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL	Yds.	Sacks
Mike Doss	48	10	58	9-31	2-12	—
Joe Cooper	33	15	48	8-29	4-22	—
Nate Clements	43	5	48	—	—	—
Donnie Nickey	30	9	39	2-2	1-3	—
Matt Wilhelm	29	8	37	11-36	2-15	—
Courtland Bullard	25	10	35	9-58	6-46	—
Mike Collins	18	15	33	4-19	3-17	—
David Mitchell	25	5	30	—	—	—
Derek Ross	21	4	25	2-4	—	—
Brent Johnson	18	5	23	10-49	5-35	—
Ryan Pickett	12	11	23	5-26	2-15	—
Rodney Bailey	17	2	19	7-34	5-30	—
Kenny Peterson	10	4	14	9-32	3-28	—
Will Smith	5	10	15	4-15	2-13	—
Cle Grant	7	2	9	—	—	—
Richard McNutt	6	2	8	1-2	—	—
B.J. Barre	5	3	8	—	—	—
Robert Reynolds	5	3	8	1-6	1-6	—
Clinton Wayne	4	4	8	1-6	1-6	—
Curtis Crosby	5	1	6	—	—	—
Darrian Scott	3	3	6	—	—	—
Joe Brown	2	4	6	2-12	1-8	—
Will Allen	5	0	5	—	—	—
Pat O'Neill	3	2	5	1-1	—	—
Tim Anderson	3	2	5	1-5	1-5	—

Fumbles Forced	2	—	—	—	—	—
2 — Courtland Bullard; 1 — Mike Doss, Matt Wilhelm, Brent Johnson, Derek Ross, Will Smith, Ryan Pickett, Clinton Wayne, Rodney Bailey.						

Fumbles Recovered	2	—	—	—	—	—
2 — Mike Doss; 1 — David Mitchell, Mike Collins, Curtis Crosby, Donnie Nickey, Derek Ross, Courtland Bullard.						

Blocked Kicks	2	—	—	—	—	—
2 — Tim Cheatwood; 1 — Rodney Bailey.						

Steven Morris

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Game More Than Lived Up To Its Advance Billing

I have so many thoughts on the Purdue-Ohio State football game that I barely know where to start.

First off, let me say I love big football games. Ohio State doesn't usually have big games with Purdue — at least not since 1968 — but this was a big one by anyone's definition because of the obvious Rose Bowl implications.

It was a battle of programs in contrasting positions. Purdue, usually among the Big Ten also-rans, was trying to prove it was a legitimate conference title contender. Ohio State was trying to prove it was back among the conference elite after an atypical 6-6 season. Both were looking to continue their march to Pasadena.

The game lived up to its billing with enough excitement to captivate even the most casual fan. In the end, unfortunately, it was the Boilermakers and their Heisman hopeful Drew Brees who snatched victory from the jaws of defeat.

The game typifies the John Cooper era at Ohio State. So often, the Buckeyes find themselves in position to win big games or championships and somehow, so often, they can't quite pull it off.

As Cooper himself says, you have to make plays. And his Buckeyes, who took the lead with 2:16 to play in the game after a stunning Brees mistake, had no one anywhere near Seth Morales when Brees found him for the 64-yard touchdown pass that won the ball game.

I was left wondering who was more open, Morales or Iowa's Alan Cross in OSU's stunning 16-9 loss to the Hawkeyes in 1991. Believe it or not, I think Cross was more open.

Championship teams just don't have lapses like the one the Buckeyes' secondary had on that play. Let me correct myself: Brees had a lapse of a similar magnitude when he threw that interception to Mike Doss. But he and the Boilermakers overcame that lapse. That's why they have the inside track to Pasadena.

Ohio State, on the other hand, with plenty of time left, came out and lost the ball on a play I don't think I've ever seen before: The center hit the motion man on a snap in the shotgun formation.

My initial reaction during and after the game was to put much of the blame on the OSU offense for the loss. Callers to radio shows and posters on our Internet message board seemed to think that as well.

In thinking about it, however, the defense is hardly without fault. First of all, a great defensive game is meaningless if, when the game is on the line, that same defense makes a major blunder like the Buckeyes did on the game-winning pass play.

But what about the rest of the game? Take a look at time of possession. And more importantly, take a look at Purdue's third-down conversion rate. You have to make plays on what Ohio State calls the "money down." OSU was perpetually unable to make a big stop. The offense, inept or otherwise, can't score points if it doesn't have the ball. And speaking of scoring points, Purdue scored 31 of them. I'm not sure that is an indication of a great defensive performance.

And were the Buckeyes ever going to stop tight end Tim Stratton? Brees is no dummy. As long as Courtland Bullard was on Stratton, the Boilermakers were going to continue to throw to him. Where were the defensive adjustments? Am I the only one who recalled Ernie

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Schramm?

As for the offense, I think its major contribution to the loss came when it could come up with only three points on Purdue's first three interceptions. Turnovers are of real value only when you capitalize on them. Purdue scored a touchdown after OSU quarterback Steve Bellisari's only interception. Again, the Buckeyes did not have the look of champions when they failed to convert on those opportunities.

I continue to be troubled by Ohio State's inability — or in this case was it a failure to try? — to run the ball consistently. Everyone knew going into the game that a key would be keeping the ball away from Brees and the Boilermakers. The surest way to do that is to grind out the yardage and the clock. Derek Combs gained 73 yards on 15 carries for a 4.9-yard average. Should the Buckeyes have used him more?

Instead, Ohio State tried to match passes with the Boilermakers, a battle they were going to lose.

The radio callers and Internet posters seemed to put much of the blame for the offensive woes on Bellisari. I actually didn't think Bellisari played that badly. He was 17 of 29 for 208 yards. He threw to a variety of receivers in a variety of places, though it's true he badly missed on some of his passes.

I must admit that I am puzzled at times by the play-calling of the Buckeyes. I don't always understand what the OSU brain trust is trying to accomplish. What happened to the rollouts and options designed to feature Bellisari we were promised at the beginning of the season?

And what was that running play where Bellisari faked to the tailback and then ran behind him, a play that failed miserably both times it was run and got Bellisari briefly knocked out of the game?

While I don't think Bellisari lost the game for the Buckeyes, he didn't go out and win it either. On the other hand, Brees did go out and win the game for his team. Case closed — along with OSU's Rose Bowl chances.

It seems like I've said this so many times through the years. In fact, I probably said it just two weeks ago after the Minnesota loss: Now is when we see what this Ohio State team is made of. They can either fold the tent after such a devastating loss or go on to try to salvage a decent season.

Time will tell which way the team is headed.

Less Talk, No Win

One good thing that came out of the game was that the Buckeyes seemed to talk a little less on the field and they limited the number of stupid penalties.

Of course, the Buckeyes didn't win the game so maybe Cooper was onto something on his radio call-in show the week of the Purdue game.

A caller asked the coach, as he has been asked so often, whose responsibility it was to control the senseless penalties. Cooper replied with less enthusiasm than usual (I'm sure he's tired of answering the question) that it was the head coach's responsibility.

Cooper went on to say that one of his assistants, Tim Salem, had pointed out to him that last season every major conference champion had led its league in penalties. I believe Cooper was implying that there is a value to a team being aggressive.

I think Buckeye fans are more concerned, however, with the trash-talking and overall demeanor of some of the Buckeyes than they are with penalties of aggression.

That is interesting in light of the fact that Cooper went on to say that he believed Florida State led the nation in penalties last season. Now there's a program to emulate, although there is not a fan in the country who wouldn't take FSU's won-lost record over the last decade or so.

Quick Kicks

• The biggest differences I see between Brees and Bellisari — aside from accuracy, of course — are Brees' ability to see all of his receivers and his patience in allowing those receivers to come open.

That was one of Joe Germaine's gifts as well. Bellisari still appears to look in too often on one receiver.

• B.J. Sander turned in a solid game, averaging 49.0 yards on four punts. The coaches still went to Dan Stultz twice in the game, however.

The Buckeye kickoff coverage could have been better. Purdue got good field position twice with returns of 37 yards by Chris Clopton and 36 by Vinnie Sutherland.

Ohio State, on the other hand, averaged under 20 yards on their kick returns, with

Jonathan Wells averaging 13.5 on two returns. The Buckeyes did have Nate Clements' 83-yard punt return for a touchdown to highlight their special teams play.

• Jamar Martin turned in a great power run for his 1-yard touchdown in the third quarter. That's the way an OSU fullback should carry the ball down near the goal line, though Martin is still averaging less than a yard a carry for the season.

Jerry Westbrook also looked strong on his touchdown run. But it would have been more of a storybook day for the big tailback, who moved up to second team for the Purdue game, if he had done better than seven carries for 19 yards. A stronger output also might have given the coaches the confidence to call more running plays.

• While the stunning loss to Purdue is bound to bring out some of the Cooper bashers, I wonder if you'll hear them calling for Glen Mason, who has lost to Indiana and Northwestern after leading his Golden Gophers over OSU, to replace the Buckeye coach.

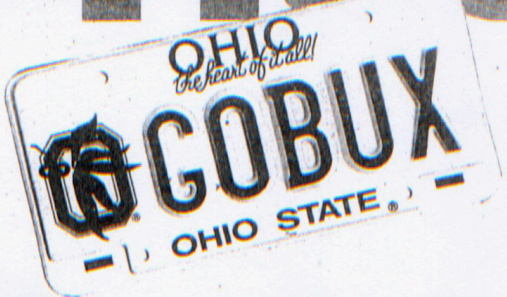
Mason is a vivid example of one of Cooper's pet sayings: "One week you're sipping the wine and the next week you're stomping the grapes."

• You often hear about governors and mayors making bets over sporting events with the prize usually being something native to the office holder's area. In the case of poor Ohio state Sen. Gene Watts, it's been singing "Hail to the Victors" year after year in Ohio Stadium after another Buckeye loss to Michigan.

I had a less exotic wager with my good friend Alan Karpick, publisher of Purdue's Gold & Black Illustrated. Let me announce publicly that I owe him an alcoholic beverage of his choice at the next College Sports Publishers Association convention.

Fortunately, I don't think Stu Coman, publisher of The Wolverine and one of the true gentlemen in our business, drinks.

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