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Cooper Welcomes 45 Letterwinners, 13 Starters

Ohio State Football 1988 Underway



Ohio State Coach John Cooper Addresses Players During The First Week Of Spring Practice

Assessing Personnel Priority Number One

By Ken Halloy

Welcome to Philosophy 101 with OSU football coach John Cooper.

"It's true in virtually every sport that a high percentage of your players are going to be good enough *not* to get you beat. They're not going to win for you, but they're not going to beat you," Cooper explained. "Somebody has to win for you."

"To do that you have to learn what your players can't do. It's ridiculous to try to get players to do something they're not capable of doing. But I think we've got some players that can win for us."

There lies priority number one — personnel assessment — of Cooper and his assistants during spring practice. The Buckeyes began the first of 20 practices March 29, practices which will culminate in the annual Scarlet-Gray game in Ohio Stadium April 30 at 1:30 p.m.

PRACTICES WERE scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and

Saturday throughout April. NCAA rules require that there be five non-contact practices. OSU's third day of drills was the first in full pads. It was also the day a spring practice, because

the defensive line," Cooper fired in rapid succession. "We need help but we're not discouraged a bit."

Cooper's first Buckeye team returns 45 lettermen, including 13 starters

"We need a quarterback, a punter, a tight end, receivers, linebackers, people in the secondary and depth in the defensive line. We need help but we're not discouraged a bit."

— John Cooper

of rain, was held for the first time in the new Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

Practices adhere to the spring theme — fundamentals — to discover what Cooper's players can't do. Along the way, there are some specifics he hopes some can do.

"We need a quarterback, a punter, a tight end, receivers, linebackers, people in the secondary and depth in

(eight on offense, five on defense) from last year's 6-4-1 team. Departed players include starting quarterback and All-American punter Tom Tupa and All-American linebacker and Lombardi Award winner Chris Spielman.

Cooper admits his first season at OSU will be challenging because the Bucks are short on numbers and talent.

"I'VE BEEN A little disappointed

in what I've seen talent-wise. I know we've lost a lot of great players," he said. "I'm not crying the blues and I'm not trying to down-play the players we've got here, but I would have thought coming in here that Ohio State would have had stronger linemen. I think we've got some good backs and the offensive line will be good, but we need to be stronger."

"As I've said before, Earle Bruce did a great job of coaching here. I'm telling you, Earle can flat coach, unless the talent here is a hell of a lot better in the past than it is right now."

Cooper's main gripe — lack of strength — hasn't changed since he took over the top job. He also says the constant stress on fundamentals won't change through the entire season.

"The same drills we're working on right now, we're working on the last week of the season," he said.

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Cooper Keeps Stressing Fundamentals

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The head Buckeye, who compiled a 25-9-2 record at Arizona State, has also kept his word to the players, allowing them to play the position they want through spring drills. There were some position changes the first week.

TONY CUPE HAS switched from wide receiver to defensive back, Jaymes Bryant has moved from tailback to fullback, Vince Workman changed back to tailback after moving to flanker midway through last season, and lineman John Kacherski is giving outside linebacker a try. Also, John Wagoner has moved back to quarterback after spending last season at flanker.

These players have changed positions either by choice or suggestion of coaches. Jay Koch, who caught two touchdown passes from his tight end position last season, declined Cooper's request at bidding for a spot at outside linebacker.

"The great thing about college football is that you can't trade for other players. The players you have is all you have," Cooper said. "So we say, let's coach the hell out of them and get them ready to play."

Cooper expects to have a depth chart organized at the conclusion of spring drills and could offer no clear-cut favorites at any of the positions.

"AT MOST POSITIONS we'll have a pretty good idea who could line

up for us in the fall. But I want those guys to know they could be beat out in the fall," Cooper noted. "Competition brings out the best in everybody. Right now, they're lining up pretty much how they finished last season."

The spring game will be approached by the players and coaches as merely the 20th practice.

"To the fans it's a game, but we won't show much, only basic stuff," Cooper said. "We just want to keep improving each individual player to make them the best we can be."

"I know that's something everyone's heard me repeat over and over again. But there's no secret to success. The championship teams are the ones that make the fewest mistakes. They are the ones that are fundamentally sound. That's what we're striving for."

"We know what we've got to do and the players have had a great attitude and their work habits have been great. Heck, I'm not looking for problems. We've got them. I know what the problems are. Now we have to solve them."

Notes

Spring practices are open to the public. Crowds in excess of 200 have appeared.

"We have nothing to hide. I don't want to make a blanket statement and say we'll always have open practices, but there's no sense in closing it for what we're doing now," Cooper said.

Cooper said a set schedule for practices was made, in part, to accommodate high school coaches around the state who might want to attend a practice.

"Because of the indoor facility, everyone knows we'll still practice rain or shine, so with a set schedule the coaches will come and see what we're doing. We want them involved with our program. It certainly doesn't hurt recruiting."

Profanity is forbidden by the players during practice and games.

"WE JUST TRY TO be fair with our players. The profanity thing is no big deal because I've never allowed it since I've been a coach. There's no place for that in football."

The Buckeye coach said that contact

during spring practice will be held to a minimum.

"Injuries can kill you, so we'll stay away from it a bit. Also, with all the emphasis we're putting on our weight program, you have to have less contact because we need these guys to get bigger. If two big guys have a collision, chances are someone's going to get hurt."

Cooper said, as would seem obvious, that the Buckeye offense will develop around the ability of the quarterback. To stress his point, he zipped a dart into sophomore signal-caller Greg Frey.

"If Frey's our quarterback, he can really throw the ball well all over the field," Cooper said. "But we're not going to make a living with him running the option, that's for sure."

Buck Beat

Former Ohio State All-American quarterback Art Schlichter recently signed a contract with the Ottawa Rough Riders of the Canadian Football League for a reported \$125,000.

Schlichter signed with Ottawa a day after filing for bankruptcy March 29. He listed debts of nearly \$1 million and claimed assets of \$1,800.

FORMER BUCKEYE hoopster Tony Campbell recently signed a contract with the Los Angeles Lakers for the remainder of the season.

Campbell was signed when forward Billy Thompson, from Louisville, injured his leg for the second time in two years.

Campbell obviously impressed Lakers brass with his lofty 30.1 scoring average for the Albany Patroons of the Continental Basketball Association.

PERRY CARTER HAS earned his first Buckeye Sports Bulletin *Buckeye of the Month* award for his efforts in March. Carter averaged 11.6 points and 8.0 rebounds in OSU's nine games for the month.

The 6-8 frosh out of Washington, D.C., scored in double figures five times, with a high of 25 against Old Dominion, and was in double figures in rebounding three times, with a high of 14 against Cleveland State.

FOR THE LADY Buckeyes, Niki Lowry won her second straight Plank's *Lady Buck of the Month* award for her play in March. Lowry had an outstanding month, averaging 26.2 points a game and 8.4 rebounds. She shot a sizzling .655 from the floor during the team's five outings, including 12 of 14 shooting against Syracuse in an NCAA contest.

The junior from Detroit led OSU in scoring in all five games, reaching 30 points or more twice, with a high of 36 against Illinois.

TWO OSU CAGE recruits won the Gatorade Circle of Champions awards for Ohio. Mark Baker, a 6-1 guard out of Dayton Dunbar High School was the boys winner, while Erica Floyd, a 6-1 forward from Kent Roosevelt High School, won the girls award.

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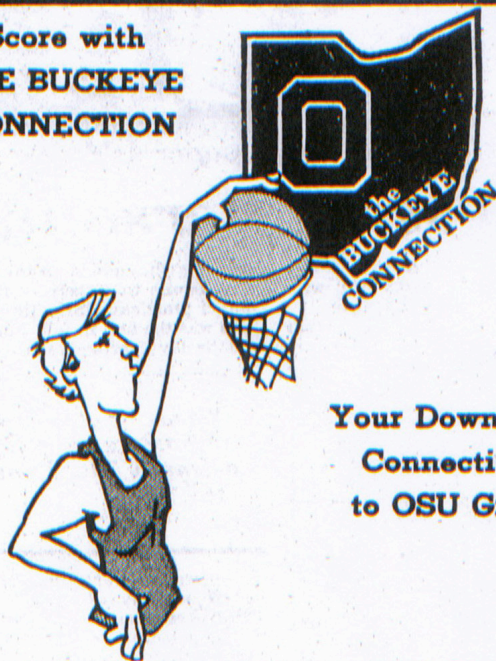
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1988 Ohio State Spring Football Report: Offense

OSU Offense To Drop-Back This Season

By Ken Halloy

The Ohio State offense during spring practice is preparing to drop-back in the fall.

Offensive coordinator and assistant head coach Jim Colletto said the Buckeye offense will begin a new era in its approach to the passing game—the drop-back—though the running attack used under former coaches Woody Hayes and Earle Bruce will experience only minor restructuring.

The passing attack, what little there was during the Hayes regime, worked almost exclusively off the play action. Bruce, who inserted more passing into the offense to keep up with the Joneses of the Big Ten, also virtually always used play-action passing.

Buckeye faithful often criticized the persistent play-action approach, citing that plays developed slowly and the quarterback couldn't get sufficient time to view his targets. On third-and-20, you're not fooling anybody by faking to the fullback, they asserted.

"It's a new direction that we're taking, but the attitude and philosophy of being tough guys and knocking people around at Ohio State won't change," said Colletto, who also coaches the centers and guards. He performed the same duties at Arizona State under head Buckeye coach John Cooper.

Colletto said inserting drop-back passing into the Buckeye offense is a matter of necessity. But don't be looking for Ohio State to pass on every



Jim Colletto

down. Colletto said the definitive ratio for run-pass that he is working toward is 50-50.

"The approach used before was very successful here. They won a lot of games, but I think in this day and age, with the quality opponents Ohio State has to play, you better have more to work with," he said. "All we're trying to do is give the offense a few more weapons to try and play the game with. The drop-back will open up the game, and make it more difficult for defenses to gang up on us. We're trying to become a proficient drop-back passing team."

"And we will pass on first down. That is something we keep careful track of."

Opening the passing game should also make things easier for the running backs. The longest run by a Buckeye back in 1987 was 56 yards by Vince Workman. Jaymes Bryant was next in line with a 35-yarder.

The '88 rushing attack will not be sophisticated. There will be power sweeps, counter plays, a few draws and some traps.

"We'll trap quite a bit if we can do it," Colletto said. "And that's about it—pretty much what they've had here in the past and what they've had success with."

"But we just feel we can keep defenses off balance more if they get used to seeing us use the drop-back. We'll still use play action occasionally just to keep the defense honest, so that

they won't do the opposite and always expect the pass."

Colletto is encouraged by the running back situation.

"They're all much faster than anything we had at Arizona State. They're a physical group," he said. "We don't know if they can catch the ball yet, though, and whether they can block or not is another thing."

"There's about eight of them and they all look good. I haven't been anywhere where I've had nearly that many backs with that kind of ability."

Also, the next starting Buckeye fullback will be a busy one.

"Our fullback is in for the surprise of his life, both running and passing," Colletto said. "He'll have screens, different sweeps, and draws. He'll get all kinds of stuff."

Alignments that will be experimented with during spring drills include the I, split-back, one-back and shotgun. Colletto said the Buckeyes will probably not use the full house set at all.

sparingly at wideout in '87, is expected to change to defensive back.

The only veteran receiver in camp is senior Everett Ross, the leading receiver on the team last season with 29 catches for 585 yards and five touchdowns.

But that's not all worrying Colletto. He backed up Cooper's ongoing harp about the lack of strength of the linemen on the team. Worse is that Colletto will not have the services of junior tackle Joe Staysniak, who will miss the entire spring because he has infectious mononucleosis.

Colletto is also looking to improve the tight end position left vacant by Alex Higdon.

He said there may have to be a changing of the guard, or tackle, or other positions before the season opener September 10.

"There may be one or two guys that might be moved, but we don't have an overabundance of players anyway," he said. "But I don't really like moving them around in the spring because it

"It's a new direction that we're taking, but the attitude and philosophy of being tough guys and knocking people around at Ohio State won't change."

— Jim Colletto

Yes, the shotgun.

"You bet—we'll work on the shotgun. That can be a very exciting part of an offense," he said. "It will be a part of our everyday plan. We don't consider it unusual at all. Most quarterbacks welcome the chance to operate from the shotgun."

The immediate concern of Colletto's is finding the personnel to execute his passing plan. Though eight offensive starters return, there are few receivers and quarterbacks with experience in spring camp. Finding suitable replacements is priority number one for Colletto.

Last year's starting quarterback, Tom Tupa, is gone, making junior-to-be Greg Frey the leading candidate for the job.

At receiver, Workman, who moved from running back to flanker last season, wants to return to the backfield, and Tony Cupe, who played

confuses them and wastes days."

That's especially true when you have only 20 practices to get the job done. Thus, the new offensive philosophy won't be very detailed during spring drills.

"We'll try to get in a lot of the stuff that the offense is built around—the basic pass patterns, the protections," Colletto said. "But we won't get real fancy with formations and motions and how these passes can be run in different ways, like we might be doing in a game situation. They'll know our system, though, before the spring is over."

"But the biggest thing I want to come out of spring practice is the reassertion of the attitude Ohio State's always played with over the years. This is a program where people expect to see a great deal of class, poise and toughness. That's what we want to get back to."

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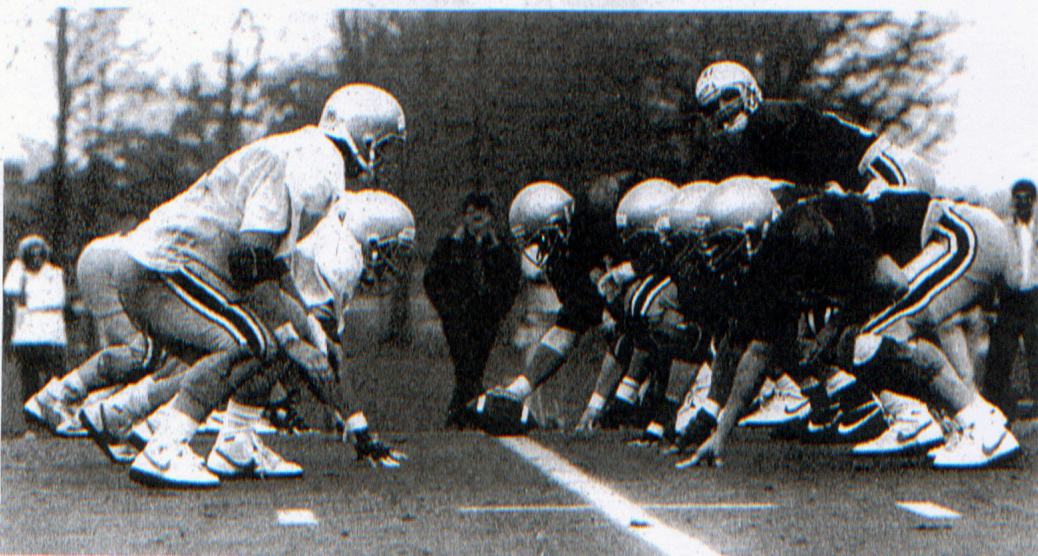
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Quarterback Chris Stablein Gets His Chance To Run Buckeye Offense

Quarterback Job Open For The Taking

By Ken Halloy

There is strong competition for the starting quarterback position in spring camp, assures quarterbacks coach Bill Dudley.

"It certainly appears to be a very competitive position right now, early in the spring. I hope it remains that way," Dudley said.

That may come as a surprise to many who figured the job belonged to Greg Frey until incoming freshmen Kirk Herbstreit, Nick Cochran and Jason Frank can report and challenge for the position in the fall.

But Dudley hinted that if a clear-cut favorite emerges in the spring, that would be the one likely to take Ohio State's first snap from center in the season opener against Syracuse.

"The last freshman quarterback to start at Ohio State was Art Schlichter (in 1978). Do you remember how they did his first year? His first game? How did he do in that first game against Penn State?" Dudley fired.

The answers, in order, are 7-4-1, lost 19-0, threw five interceptions.

"And Schlichter was considered the country's best quarterback coming out of high school. Penn State wasn't exactly the Little Sisters of the Poor, but Syracuse isn't too bad, either. I rest my case," Dudley said.

"But seriously, those kids coming in would have to be way, way ahead of the guys we have here, both mentally and physically. Or, there would have to be injuries that would press them into action. It's just really hard for a 17 or an 18-year-old to come in at this level of football."

Thus, Dudley is concentrating only on what he sees before him in practice. "And that's not too bad," he says. Besides Frey, Scott Powell, John

Wagoner and Chris Stablein are the legitimate candidates for the starting job, though there are three other walk-ons going through spring drills. All throw right-handed.

Three of the four challengers are being nagged with injuries. Frey has tendonitis in his right elbow. Powell is still nursing a shoulder injury sustained in preseason practice last fall when he switched to outside linebacker, and Stablein has a rotator cuff problem in his throwing arm.

Frey (6-2, 190), based on experience, must be considered the early front-runner, though Dudley said it's still too early to "throw around names."

"He's making the fewest mistakes through the first week of practice. He's the one that's really further along mentally, as well," Dudley said. "He's very good and can play at this level. He has a lot of confidence in his ability."

As Tom Tupa's backup in '87, Frey completed eight of 20 passes for 94 yards and two interceptions. He also filled in during critical situations against Michigan State and Michigan. Against the Wolverines, Frey relieved an injured Tupa in the fourth quarter for a couple of plays.

Off his first snap from center, Frey hit Vince Workman for 19 yards on a third-and-nine play. The Buckeyes later scored their game-winning field goal to complete the drive.

Powell (6-4, 229) decided to give defense a try last year, but ended up watching after being injured. The senior-eligible was the holder for field goals and conversions the last two seasons.

"Powell is doing a lot of things right, right now, especially mentally," Dudley said. "He's just having



Bill Dudley

problems with that shoulder. He can't get as loose as he would like. He has a very good attitude on the field. He is certainly giving it everything right now."

After redshirting his freshman season in 1986, Wagoner (6-3, 200) moved to flanker last year out of necessity. Former quarterbacks coach Tom Lichtenberg said on several occasions that Wagoner could be an outstanding quarterback if given the chance. The problem was that Wagoner had to wait behind Jim Karsatos and Tupa.

"John has a great deal of physical talent. If his talent was hidden before, it isn't anymore," Dudley said. "He simply has no experience. That's what's probably going to hold him back. He didn't even play the position last year. But I think he can get it done."

Few have heard of Stablein (6-3, 210), though he was on the scout team last year after transferring from John Carroll. He has three years of eligibility remaining.

"He's working just as hard as the rest of them and working at nearly the same level, so we are definitely giving him a serious look," Dudley said.

The quarterbacks are finding the new drop-back offense easier to handle, Dudley said, because they can see the receivers longer from the snap of the ball. Working from the shotgun is a joy for them.

Not so easy is establishing the necessary footwork. The drop-back calls for a variety of motions, from a three-step drop to a seven step. There are at least six different drop-back motions to be learned.

"Right now we're looking for a quarterback who can do it physically, get back there and throw a good ball. The mental part will come later," Dudley said.

That's why he doesn't consider it a must to establish a number one man at the end of spring drills.

"By the time fall practice rolls around, I know that with competition, with character and hardworking guys, somebody will rise above it all and get it done," Dudley said. "I'd be very surprised if that doesn't happen."

He is more concerned with bringing the group along slowly, giving them ample opportunity to learn the offense.

The spring game, due to a public audience guaranteed to include a number of scouts, will feature a "watered down, vanilla offense."

"I doubt that we'll show very much of what we'll actually do in the season. We want them all to get a chance to show what they can do. That's what spring practice is for."

Buckeye Backfield Talented

By Stephanie Pauley

The Ohio State offensive backfield is going to be busy this spring learning a multiple offense that even running backs coach Ron Hudson finds confusing.

"This offense is going to be much more demanding on the athlete than it has been in the past," Hudson said. "It's much like a pro offense in that the (running back) has to understand protections and that these protections change just by the movement of one individual. They have to understand pass patterns and conversions of these pass patterns which they never had to know before. They have to know the pass routes as well as carry the ball."

"They also have to understand aiming points on every running play. Every play is so specific that it can change if one guy is uncovered and another guy is covered. We will have an elaborate check-off system and we'll try to keep our offense from running bad plays into impossible defenses which nobody can block. We may call two plays in the huddle and the quarterback has to make the right call and hopefully we can do that."

Because the offense is so detailed, Hudson said spring drills will concentrate on decreasing mental errors.

"More than anything this spring we have to stress the fundamentals of the



Ron Hudson

position. We have to make sure they understand exactly what can happen according to the play call," he said. "A defense dictates how a play is run and the backfield has to recognize the defense. That is not easy. When the defense starts shifting and moving around, the line makes the calls and the running backs have to listen to these calls and make the changes in their assignment."

"We have to incorporate fundamentals so they can succeed on the field in terms of techniques when they have to make these mental adjustments. It is very difficult to teach if you've never been associated with it before. And they've never had to do this before."

Hudson inherited the OSU position with the most depth and experience. Some Buckeye faithful have questioned if there would be unused talent with the new offense.

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Receiving Corps Thin

By Stephanie Pauley

When spring drills began March 29, only six scholarship wide receivers reported to OSU assistant coach Gene Huey. By the end of the first week, he was left with four.

First, sophomore Tony Cupe (6-0, 188), who caught eight passes for 95 yards last season, was moved to defensive back after the first day of drills.

Then senior Gary Clift (6-2, 193) reaggravated a hamstring injury and will probably miss the remainder of the spring season. Clift established himself last spring and saw reasonable action in the fall. He finished the season with five receptions for 87 yards.

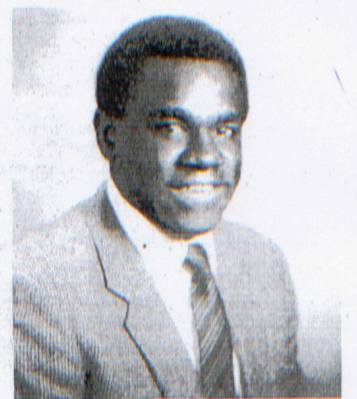
Despite having only one experienced receiver remaining, senior Everett Ross (5-11, 180), Huey remains optimistic.

"We'll have at least four good receivers and maybe one or two in the freshman class we can look at this fall," Huey said. "But those four will probably be the ones who see most of the playing time in the fall because of the spring reps (repetitions). The players understand there is a lot to learn and they really have to go out to practice every day and improve daily."

"When you're going to use four people, they better be interchangeable. You should have no reservations or doubts about their playing abilities if they should be asked to play."

Huey said the Buckeyes plan to utilize a balanced offensive attack, featuring the forward pass.

"When you get into split backs and



Gene Huey

wide outs running the deeper patterns, that doesn't constitute just going pass crazy. You can still feature the forward pass and do a real fine job of throwing the football, whether it be to the backs or the receivers," he emphasized. "Everybody in this offense gets a chance to handle the football, running or throwing."

The new offense can offer five capable receivers — two wide outs, one tight end and two running backs. Huey said the biggest difference will be running deeper pass patterns but the main concern is retaining possession of the football.

"We'll run whatever is given to us as far as the defense is concerned," he

Continued On Page 6

Line Returns Ample Depth & Experience

By Ken Halloy

Other than running back, the Buckeye offensive line returns more depth and experience than any other area on the team. The entire interior starting group is back.

The focus here is on the tackles and tight ends (see related story on guards and centers), coached by offensive coordinator Jim Colletto. Tackles Jay Shaffer and Henry Brown, and tight end Alex Higdon are the only departed forces.

Shaffer was listed a starter last season before a pulled abdominal muscle sidelined him before opening day. He never did fully recover and played only sparingly. Brown saw limited duty as a backup after moving from defense for his senior campaign, and Higdon caught 26 passes for 252 yards. Higdon was also an excellent blocker.

Colletto confesses to having only one major concern about his tackles and tight ends, and that's how well they will adapt to the new drop-back offense.

"These guys have been taught well in the running game and the basic pass protections over the years, and that won't be much different at all for them now," Colletto said. "But the drop-back is going to be a real change for them. The biggest thing is pass protection. While they've thrown the ball more in the past few years, they probably haven't worked on pass protection like they will now."

The change focuses primarily on effectively holding the block longer, yet avoiding costly holding penalties.

"There's a little bit of finesse involved now and we'll work on pass protection a lot. It will get long and monotonous, but you can't avoid that with something as fundamental as blocking," Colletto said. "We talk about stressing the fundamentals in spring. Believe me, the offensive line will really know what we mean."

Perhaps the only negative coming from this area is that tackle Joe Staysniak is out for the entire spring with infectious mononucleosis. He is not even watching practice from the sidelines.

Staysniak (6-5, 282) has started every game at left tackle in his two seasons at OSU and is a potential All-Big Ten performer this fall.

"We're really going to miss him, no question about it, but I think he's the kind of kid who will respond quickly when he comes back in the fall," Colletto said. "But still, just the fact he can't work with the others will hurt enough."

There is some new terminology with the new coaching staff. For example, left tackle is now the quick tackle and right tackle is the strong tackle.

Replacing Staysniak at the top spot in spring drills is Karl Coles (6-5, 256), who moved from offensive guard. Coles climbed his way up the depth chart last season, and played considerably when the line was riddled with injuries throughout the year.

Mike Kuri (6-5, 254) completes the depth at quick tackle.

At the strong side, Tim Moxley (6-7, 285) heads the list of returnees. Moxley became a starter last season when Shaffer was injured, and performed beyond expectations. Moxley appears to have a strong hold on the starting spot.

Coles was listed as Moxley's backup before moving up into Staysniak's position. Mike Shoaf (6-6, 290) completes the list.

Though Higdon was a stable force for the Buckeyes in '87, Colletto is encouraged with the talent returning at tight end, and his thoughts don't include highly-touted incoming freshman Chris Roy. Colletto and the rest of the coaching staff try to treat spring practice with the view that the class of '88 doesn't exist.

"You can only consider what you have now. If some of the new kids can help us out, great. But we don't want to have to count on them," he said. "But I like what I see here now."

Colletto was referring to Jeff Ellis in particular. The tight end position seems to be Ellis' to lose, but don't count on his losing it. The sophomore-to-be Ellis (6-4, 225) came on strong last season when Higdon cut his hand against Wisconsin, and Ellis finished with seven receptions for 63 yards and a touchdown.

Ellis' progress overshadowed the achievements of classmate Jay Koch (6-4, 205), who shined early last season, catching TD passes against Oregon and LSU. Though expected to be moved to outside linebacker due to lack of size, Koch was practicing at tight end the first week of spring drills.

Koch told coach John Cooper he didn't want to change positions, and Cooper, in line with his philosophy of allowing players to play where they want, obliged. But speculation is that Koch will have to switch if he wants playing time, and there appears plenty available at outside linebacker.

Jim Palmer (6-5, 230), Gary Lickovitch (6-3, 226) and Rich Huffman (6-2, 228) round out the list of returning tight ends.

Colletto said the tight ends will probably see more passes come their way than in the past.

"A drop-back offense makes use of more receivers, and the tight end is no exception," he said. "We'll try to get the most out of the talent we have. If we have a great tight end, obviously he'll have more passes thrown to him. We won't waste the position."



John Cooper Is Worried About Team Depth

Line Centers Around Seasoned Uhlenhake

By Stephanie Pauley

Although Bob Palcic is a holdover from Ohio State's 1987 coaching staff, he started spring practice at the same level as the new members of the coaching staff — having to learn new personnel.

Last season Palcic worked with the offensive tackles and tight ends, but in '88 he will oversee the offensive guards and centers.

"Even though there were times last year I worked with the guards, I don't necessarily have any preconceived ideas (in spring practice)," Palcic said. "I do have a few ideas of what these guys can and cannot do, but I try to go

into every spring and every fall with a completely open mind. That's how I would want it if I was a player."

The OSU line will have to learn drop-back pass protection — the forte of the '88 Buckeye offense. The transition also brings along new terminology. The left side of the line is now the quick side, while the right side is considered the strong side.

"Basically, Ohio State has been a gap-protection team and drop-back protection is more of a man philosophy," said Palcic, who is no stranger to teaching drop-back protection. Palcic coached the offensive line at Arizona, which uses the drop-back, in 1984-85 before joining the OSU staff.

"The other thing that is different along with the drop-back protection is we flip-flop our line now," Palcic explained. "We have a quick side that aligns with the split end and a strong side that aligns with the tight end. Your quick guard and tackle should have more speed and your quick tackle should be your best pass protector."

Senior center Jeff Uhlenhake (6-4, 256) returns for the '88 season in "perfect form," by Palcic's standards. A probable All-Big Ten candidate, Uhlenhake started every game at center for the Buckeyes last year after being named first-team All-Big Ten guard in '86.

"Jeff Uhlenhake is one who fits the



Bob Palcic

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1988 Ohio State Spring Football Report: Defense

OSU Defense To Undergo Few Changes

By Ken Halloy

Ohio State defensive coordinator Bill Young says "there's no need changin' what doesn't need fixin'."

Instead of an entire face-lift, like the offense is undergoing during spring drills, the defense will receive merely a powdering of the nose.

"It's amazing how similar the defense that we had at Arizona State and the one they had here is," said Young, who sports a soft, Southern drawl. "We're going to run a lot of the same stuff that they've been running. They've been really good on defense here and we'll just try to build on that. We'll just implement some of the better things they've done here."

The defense will work primarily off a 5-2 alignment.

"We're primarily a type of defense that will make the offense go the long, hard route, a bend but not break kind of philosophy," said Young, who also tutors the linemen. "We'll play a lot of zone defense. We're not an all-out blitzing, or man-type philosophy defense."

OSU will blitz occasionally, though, and do some line stunting to improve the pass rush, Young said, but he doesn't feel the need to be a gambler every week.

"A rugged, hard-nosed, strong defense will wear a team down eventually. We are going to work on being fundamentally sound, making few mistakes. We want to be solid and consistent," he said. "That's why we coaches keep talking about how we'll work so much on the fundamentals in spring practice."

"One costly mistake can lose a football game. We want to eliminate the possibility of making the big mistake such as giving up the long pass play. Teams will earn everything they get from us."

There is no one major concern for Young about his defense. He's fretting about virtually everything, including lack of bodies, as only about one-third of the players in camp were defensive



Bill Young

players in '87. Depth appears a big problem, especially in the secondary where only juniors David Brown and backup Zack Dumas return with significant experience.

And while he isn't going to change the defensive philosophy, Young realizes there have been some standouts responsible for making it work in the past. Starters gone from last year's squad include All-Big Ten linebackers Chris Spielman (also an All-American and Lombardi Award winner) and Eric Kumerow, secondary men William White, Greg Rogan and Ray Jackson, and tackle Ray Holliman. Also gone is linebacker Fred Ridder, who started at the beginning of last season before being injured. Lastly, Derek Isaman, who would be a senior, has left the team to try out for the Olympic boxing team, though he may return if he doesn't make it.

This group accounted for about half the team's tackles and turnovers in '87.

"We've got some big shoes to fill," Young said. "We can look at our depth chart and see there are some holes that have to be filled. I don't think many people around the state realize what kind of athletes we've lost. We've got

several pro scouts in here every day talking to those guys. Right now we don't know who we're going to fill those shoes with."

Brown and outside linebacker Mike McCray appear to be emerging as leaders for '88.

"The numbers in the secondary are really a concern for us. I'm sure before it's all said and done, we'll have to move some players to other positions to fill some of those vacancies," Young said.

That may mean converting offensive players. But Young already sees a catch-22 problem building. For example, Tony Cupe has been asked to move from wideout to defensive back, and he has eagerly accepted the change. The problem is that the Buckeyes are also thin at receiver.

"If you look at the offense, you'll see some of the better athletes on this team," Young said. "If they're not battling for a starting position on offense, you can look for them possibly moving to defense."

Though the Buckeyes had a top 20 recruiting class nationally, including several outstanding defensive

performers, Young doesn't want to rely on incoming freshmen to do the job.

"Hopefully by the end of spring we'll have implemented our defense and have the guys come out with the understanding of what we want, in

"We're primarily a type of defense that will make the offense go the long, hard route, a bend but not break kind of philosophy."

— Bill Young

terms of schemes and other things. We'll get a good idea of who we want to line up with in the fall," he said.

"There will be some kids who we recruited that obviously won't be able to do that, but it's pretty tough to come in as a freshman and really compete for a starting position anyway."

"We've got a lot of work to do."

Improved Pass Rush?

By Ken Halloy

Will Ohio State improve its pass rush, considered non-existent in the past decade?

Defensive coordinator and line coach Bill Young shrugs at the question, but not helplessly. The twitch was more a reaction of disbelief that many Buckeye faithful believe a traditional power like Ohio State has lacked an effective pass rush.

"You'd have a hard time convincing the rest of the teams Ohio State has played of that, but you know, I've heard people say that a number of times since we've been here," Young said. "We think we can improve it but it won't be easy."

Voila. Back to gripe numero uno of the coaching staff—the linemen aren't strong enough.

"Part of being a good pass rusher is having the strength to whip around an offensive blocker. We're real disappointed in that right now," he said. "We're not nearly as strong up front as we need to be."

The coaches would like all the linemen to be able to bench press 400 or more pounds. Currently, only about five players on the entire team can do so, Young noted.

One of those players is John Kacherski (6-3, 240), who played sparingly up front last year and made six tackles. But he is now working spring drills at outside linebacker, to fill the void left by Eric Kumerow.

Still, Young isn't in a desolate mood. He said lack of strength can be compensated for with quickness and smart, aggressive play. He said the linemen will work on a variety of stunts off the snap of the ball.

"I don't know how much stunting the line did before we got here, but we have a complete package of different stunts. We'll do quite a bit of line stunting," Young said.

And Young said practicing against the Buckeye offense, which will be drop-back oriented with the quarterback, will help as well.

"Our offense will probably throw the ball more than they've done in the past. I'm talking about the drop-back, as opposed to the play-action they did most of the time," he said. "Before, they might have been practicing

against something they didn't see in games. Anytime you get the opportunity to practice against something like that (the drop-back) all the time, it should make you better."

Encouraging to Young, lastly, is the work ethic of the players and the experience returning. Though part-time starter Ray Holliman is gone, the two other starting down linemen return in nose guard Mike Sullivan (6-0, 250) and right tackle Mike Showalter (6-4, 268), who regained his starting job and played well at the end of last season. Sullivan was the Buckeyes' second-leading tackler, behind departed linebacker Chris Spielman, with 78 last season. He had nine tackles for losses, including five quarterback sacks.

Backing up Sullivan in spring drills is Pat Thomas (6-1, 233). Thomas saw limited action last season, mostly on special teams.

Showalter's top replacement appears to be Tom Moore (6-3, 226), who did the long snapping last season and has played in every game during his three years at Ohio State. Paul Long (6-5, 245), an '87 recruit who has moved from offensive guard, is listed behind Moore.

Holliman's vacancy belongs to Ken Coleman (6-2, 244), who progressively improved last season, playing extensively at the end of '87. He will be backed by Derek MacCready (6-5, 270) and Srecko Zizakovic (6-6, 240).

MacCready transferred from a junior college before the '87 season with spirited credentials, though he played only sparingly for the Bucks last year, making four tackles. Vast improvement is expected of him in '88.

Zizakovic is making a minor move to tackle after experimenting mostly at tight end last season. He was listed as a tight end/defensive tackle in the '87 Ohio State Official Media Guide.

Young warns that by the end of spring practice, many position changes can occur.

"We want to make the players happy by letting them play where they want right now, but things can change overnight as a result of our suggestion and theirs," he said. "We really want to improve our pass rush, so we're willing to do what it takes to get that done."

Veteran Ross Top Receiver

Continued From Page 4

said. "That may mean throwing the ball to the backs on certain coverages or deep down field to the receivers. Most important is gaining yardage. You can do that with throwing it to the back for five or six yards and it may end up in a 15-yard gain."

"We're going to run good pass patterns, not necessarily for touchdowns, but for possession and consistency. We're going to concentrate on catching everything that is thrown, whether it's for three yards or 30."

Ross returns as the Buckeyes' leading receiver in 1987, pulling in 29 receptions for 585 yards and five touchdowns. Huey said Ross is competing in spring drills despite a nagging turf toe injury. Although Ross has the experience, Huey said there is a lot to learn with the new offensive system.

"The primary thing in a receiver is having someone who can catch and has speed enough to run patterns and run away from folks," he said. "But another primary objective of mine is to have some well-disciplined receivers who read coverages and run the patterns based on coverages they see. They have to be mentally and physically tough people."

"There are programs where receivers

aren't required to be physical and block. But they're certainly going to do that here. Hopefully, it will become a self-motivating thing and the receivers won't mind mixing it up with the people in the secondary."

Backing Ross at split end will be sophomores Bobby Olive (6-0, 155) and Wes Siegenthaler (6-0, 182).

Olive joined the Buckeye squad last season as a walk-on and nabbed two passes for 18 yards.

Siegenthaler, an '86 recruit, was sidelined most of last season because of injuries. Huey said although the two are inexperienced, they are having a productive spring.

"They have given the effort and they just have to improve upon the mental aspects," he said. "They have to be more fine-tuned on the small, subtle things about running pass pattern routes."

With Clift absent from the flanker position for the remainder of drills, 1987 recruit Bernard Edwards (6-5, 195) will be seeing the majority of playing time this spring. Edwards played quarterback his sophomore and senior high school seasons, spending his junior year at wide receiver. In his prep career, Edwards caught 82 passes for 1,149 and 13 touchdowns.

"I think these kids are eager to learn this offense," Huey said. "It's not all that complicated, but it will require a lot of dedication and work."

New Era For Linebackers At Ohio State

By Ken Halloy

"I guarantee it's a whole new start for linebackers at Ohio State. We're certainly going to find out some things this year about what we're made of," says outside linebackers coach Fred Pagac.

"But what makes Ohio State great," chimes in inside linebackers coach Gary Blackney, "is that there's always been kids who have been in the background, and when they've gotten their opportunity, rose to the occasion."

Both coaches, who are holdovers from Earle Bruce's staff, agree the linebacking situation hasn't been as suspect since they've been at Ohio State. This is Pagac's 11th year at OSU and Blackney's fifth.

As compared to last year, the returning cast has to be bleaker, Blackney said.

"Anytime you lose a two-time All-American and Lombardi winner in Chris Spielman, and Eric Kumerow, who was the lineman of the year in the Big Ten two years ago, it has to be a lesser situation," he said.

That's not all that's gone. Senior inside backer John Sullivan, a starter last season opposite Spielman, is still recovering from leg surgery and will miss all of spring drills, and outsider Derek Isaman has decided to try out for the Olympic boxing team. Isaman still may return in the fall if boxing doesn't work out.

What it all means is that only one of four starting linebackers returns from last season — outside man Mike McCray. Fortunately, the 6-3, 232-pound senior is already emerging as a team leader.

"Mike is doing one hell of a job, busting his butt all the time and it's rubbing off on the other players," Pagac said. "We really appreciate his efforts so far. He'll probably be a leader on this team."

Such is not the fortune for Blackney. The only experience he has returning is in sophomore Andrew Gurd. Gurd (6-3, 215) saw considerable action last year, collecting 37 tackles and recovering one fumble. His knack for being around the ball has some comparing him with Spielman.

"Andy is progressing on track, if you can make a good judgment at this early point," Blackney said. "He's still very young and he didn't benefit from a redshirt experience last year."

It seems as though Ohio State has always had a leader at inside linebacker. Names such as Gradishar and Cousineau quickly come to mind. Gurd could be the next in line.

"It's possible. He just really needs to work on technique more than anything," Blackney said. "We've always liked the idea of our linebackers assuming a leadership role because they are in a great position, by nature, to be leaders."

That's because Ohio State defenses in the past have been oriented around having the linebackers make the big plays, Blackney said. That may change this year because of the lack of depth and experience at the backer positions.

"The structure of our defense may be the same this year or we may have to incorporate to have more defensive linemen make big plays," Blackney said. "We just don't know how the younger guys will come along and we probably won't know until the season."

Besides McCray, Pagac has only three other scholarship players in spring practice — Mike Chancey, Tom Lease and converted nose guard John Kacherski. Blackney has only four full-

grant players, other than Gurd. They are Frank Hoak, Brian Benio, Orlando Craig and Charles Keenan.

"We just don't have numbers," Pagac said. "The kids are 'maybe's' right now. They are unproven and have got to show that they can play."

Blackney's goal for the end of spring practice: "To find three inside linebackers that can line up and win for us."

On Pagac's wish list: "I need to find someone to fill in for Kumerow."

Both refuse to speculate about incoming freshmen. Blackney has Tony Closson and Judah Herman coming his way, while Pagac will welcome Derek Foster and others.

At inside backer, Gurd appears the front-runner for Spielman's vacancy, while the other is still open, pending Sullivan's return. There, Benio (6-2, 229) is battling against Craig (6-1, 224) for the top seed heading into fall, while Keenan (6-2, 221) will try to nudge his way up the ladder.

Hoak (6-2, 222), who moved from tight end to linebacker last season, is Gurd's backup.

All the replacements have seen brief action during their careers, mostly on special teams.

Turning to the outside, Kacherski (6-



Gary Blackney

3, 240), one of the strongest players on the team, is making the transition smoothly, but it's still too early to tell if the switch will be permanent, Pagac said. Kacherski saw limited duty, mostly on punt and kickoff teams in '87. The coaching staff spoke highly of Kacherski throughout last season.

"He's what we're looking for out there. He has speed and strength," Pagac said. "He has a lot of athletic



Fred Pagac

ability and it will be a good move if we can get all that ability out of him."

Vying against Kacherski is Chancey (6-4, 212), who came to OSU as a quarterback two years ago before moving to defense last year.

Lease (6-5, 229) is the number two man behind McCray. Lease, a 1987 recruit, missed all of last season after injuring his shoulder during fall drills.

Fiery Attitude Key To Secondary

By Ken Halloy

Defensive secondary coach Ron Zook figures a law of nature can help an OSU secondary deficient in numbers and experience.

"It's all attitude," Zook explained. "The mass times acceleration equals force. A lot of guys think they have to get bigger to play big-time football. Not so. Speed and strength are important, but I'll take the kid who is dying to play and who will sacrifice himself on every play, any day. That's the attitude I want."



Ron Zook

Zook demonstrates that attitude in practice. He is animated, running back and forth across the field encouraging the players and getting excited when they put forth a good effort. He also sprints 50 yards when there is a foul-up.

He says he's just having fun while getting his philosophy across to his players.

"Defensive backs have to have a different temperament all together because they are under an awful lot of pressure," he said. "The quarterback may throw two interceptions in a game and nothing may come of it, but a defense back doesn't usually get a chance to be beaten deep two times."

Zook may have to rely on attitude because he certainly doesn't have a lot

of bodies. Three starters from the secondary have to be replaced. Gone are four-year starters William White and Greg Rogan, and one-year regular Ray Jackson. White and Rogan epitomized Zook's theory on playing with an intense attitude, as both stood under 6-0.

"They were great players and we're going to miss them immensely," Zook said.

As for the players returning, "In terms of people, depth-wise, this is probably as lacking a situation as I've ever been in," he said. "Anybody who knows anything about Ohio State football knows I need help."

"But even if there hadn't been a coaching change, they'd be evaluating personnel just like we are now."

The depth chart for the first week of practice shows only six players. For four positions. Fortunately, junior-to-be David Brown (6-0, 184) is emerging as one of the defensive leaders and will be heavily responsible for guiding the inexperienced deep backs. Brown has started all but one game during his career. He registered 53 tackles, intercepted three passes, batted away four others and recovered a fumble last season.

Backing up Brown is Mark Pelini (6-2, 197), who had 13 tackles in limited action last year. He also came up with a key interception late in the 10-6 win over Illinois.

Jim Peel (5-11, 195), a sturdy athlete, is the spring leader at the other safety position. Peel had 10 stops last season, after impressing the coaching staff with two interceptions in last year's spring game.

Backing Peel is senior-to-be Sean Bell (6-2, 194), who has played mostly on specialty teams during his career. Highly touted out of Middletown (Ohio) High, Bell hasn't lived up to expectations at OSU, though he will likely get his chance this year.

The cornerbacks are being manned by Zack Dumas (6-2, 190) and Dwight Smith (5-11, 183). Dumas became a starter last season when Rogan broke his ankle in the fifth game of the season, and totaled 37 tackles and

intercepted a pass. Smith filled in when needed, adding eight stops.

And that's it — the list of defensive backs in spring camp. Zook's salvation will likely come through the conversion of some from the bountiful group of running backs, the return of Proposition 48 players Vincent Clark and Tim Rutledge, or incoming freshmen, a group which includes AP Ohio player of the year Buster Howe.

The problem is that the Prop 48s and freshmen aren't eligible until the fall.

"I tried to recruit Clark and Rutledge when I was at Tennessee, so I know what those guys can do," Zook said. "Still, they can't learn the system. They're coming in really as freshmen, and you don't really like to have freshmen in the secondary. Mistakes back there are very costly."

"But that's the situation we're in and there's nothing we can do about it. We may very well need some of the players when they come here in the fall."

Learning the system may not be difficult, Zook said, but the terminology and some schemes are different. Most important is that the new players will be late in developing that attitude.

"Our emphasis is on getting the football for the offense. I always say if an interception could get you a million dollars, it would give them a better attitude to get that football," Zook said. "When that ball's in the air, we have to get interceptions, cause fumbles."

But the secondary won't be on a kamikaze mission to force turnovers. The spring trademark of the Buckeyes — fundamentals — will be adhered to during the season for the secondary.

"We will try to have a very, very sound secondary. We don't do an awful lot of things, so the things we do, we do right. It's important for us not to try to get the players to do more than they're able to do," Zook said.

"We'll pretty much be a bend-but-don't-break defense. We won't be a give-it-all-up type of defense. If we drill that into their heads, it will work out and we'll have a solid secondary. When you hear something enough, you start doing it."

OSU Players Eager To Impress Coaches

By Ken Halloy

The players were like corroded batteries. And then came the acid — new football coach John Cooper. Now there is a vibrant energy surrounding the Ohio State football team.

"It feels really exciting right now," said senior outside linebacker Mike McCray after the first week of spring drills. "Everyone is really getting into practice and the way Coach Cooper talks about winning a national championship. The coaches really get into all the drills, yelling and encouraging us."

"It really fires everyone up." Practices are boisterous, to say the least. Cooper's no depth chart philosophy and allowing players to play where they choose has given all a feeling of rebirth.

"I don't think I've ever wanted to work harder at Ohio State than I do now," said fullback Jaymes Bryant, who moved from tailback. Bryant was in former coach Earle Bruce's doghouse at the end of last season.

"I didn't know where my career was heading, but now I feel like I'm back on track," Bryant continued. "Everyone has a good feeling that good things are going to happen to us this year, even though we did lose a lot of great players."

Those players lost include Eric Kumerow, Chris Spielman and Tom Tupa, all of whom will be missed. But changes breed more changes and senior tailback Vince Workman feels the altering after a 6-4-1 season can only be for the better.

"We've got a lot to prove this year, and the players who went through that last year feel that and want to work even harder this spring to make sure that we'll be prepared for every game this year," Workman said. "They're

"Everyone is really getting into practice and the way Coach Cooper talks about winning a national championship. The coaches really get into all the drills, yelling and encouraging us."

— Mike McCray

(the coaches) drilling it in our heads that the team that makes the fewest mistakes will win."

Practices are vigorous and constant as the players go through a rapid succession of drills for nearly three hours.

"Spring practice is never fun, but it is more bearable this year because everyone is fighting for a starting job,"

said nose guard Mike Sullivan. "I've never heard the word 'fundamentals' so much in my life. The way we go through drills, I don't think we'll make a mistake all season. Well, maybe one or two, but none against Michigan."

Practices seem well-planned. For a few minutes players will work only with their position coaches and then combine with another unit to do a more extensive drill. One drill has all the players running in place, then walking in a squatted position before

believe me, everyone is pushing everyone hard."

A yawner drill, such as the quarterbacks going through dry runs of the various drop-back steps, might be followed by the signal-caller taking snaps from center and throwing a number of timing passes to receivers.

"There are so many little things we go over, like planting your feet right and dropping back the right way. It can get boring, but if you pay attention, you learn something new every day," said quarterback Greg Frey. "When you go over something over and over again, it starts sticking with you. I'm feeling that already."

Frey, the top gun during the spring, didn't want to speculate on what kind of season 1988 might be.

"We did lose some good players and we've got a tough schedule this year with Syracuse, Pitt and LSU right away, but you never know what will happen," Frey said. "When you're at Ohio State, you always feel like you're able to beat anybody. That's the feeling here again, now."

"What's probably different this year is that Coach Cooper isn't just talking about going to the Rose Bowl, he's talking about winning it. That's an easy way to get everyone's attention, and he's got that."

Kicking Game Also Lacks Depth, Experience

By Ken Halloy

No news flash here: Ohio State lacks depth and experience at yet another two positions — punter and place-kicker. Both starters from 1987, punter Tom Tupa, Ohio State's all-time leader in the category, and booter Matt Frantz have departed.

"We're putting a lot of emphasis on the kicking game and that's one of the areas where we really need to work on," said graduate assistant Steve Woods, who is coaching the place-kickers. "You win with the kicking game and with defense, Coach (John) Cooper says. I wouldn't say it's the best situation, but they're working hard."

At place-kicker OSU returns Pat O'Morrow, who lost his starting job midway through the 1986 season to Frantz but is the favorite to win the starting job in the fall. There are six other walk-ons working out during spring drills but Woods said only Brian Eisenburg and Mark Klein pose legitimate challenges to O'Morrow. Eisenburg and Klein were on OSU's scout team last year.

There are only two punters in camp, Mark Smith, a 1987 recruit who is also a backup quarterback, and walk-on Jeff Bohlman. Smith is a three-step kicker, while Bohlman takes one less.

Tony Caviglia, also a graduate assistant, is coaching the punters. He is in his first season at OSU after spending three years in a similar capacity at USC. Woods is also in his initial year after doing the same at Eastern Kentucky last season.

Both face difficult tasks — finding a top-notch kicker by the season opener Sept. 10. The coaches said it was too early to tell how the kicking game stacks up after one week of practice, though Woods noted that O'Morrow is a step above his competitors.

O'Morrow made four of nine field goals and 12 of 14 extra points before stepping aside to Frantz two years ago. O'Morrow continued to do the kicking off for the rest of that season and last

year. Though expecting to be used for long field goals last season, O'Morrow never got an opportunity.

"Pat is definitely looking the best right now. He's got more range and is striking the ball better," Woods said. "He also has experience and that's pivotal."

O'Morrow can kick field goals beyond 50 yards, but is inconsistent. He is fairly accurate from 40 yards and within, though Woods said he is not charting distances until the second week of practice. All three place-kickers can drill them from 30 yards

somersaulting and ending in a full sprint.

"That stuff might not seem hard, but when you do it over and over again, it starts to wear on you," said Tony Cupe, who has moved from receiver to defensive back. "But that's what we're here for and when you think that you're working for a starting job, it makes you push a little harder. And

rather easily, though Woods said he expects his starter in the fall to be able to treat a 40-yarder as a given.

"It's just too early to tell how things will work out, but we're just concerned with establishing proper technique and being consistent. Consistency is the key right now," Woods said.

His gut feeling? "I don't have a bad feeling and I don't have a good feeling. That's just the facts. Hopefully, it will all work out."

Caviglia just feels fortunate to have found a walk-on to compete against

Smith, who didn't see any action last season. Thirteen walk-ons tried out for spring drills, but only Bohlman, a 6-3, 195-pound sophomore, was retained. He transferred from Kent State last spring.

Caviglia is confident there will be a competent punter come fall, despite having only two athletes vying for the position.

"Neither of these guys is a Tom Tupa. I don't know what the standard of their ability is right now," he said. "I

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Walk-Ons Are Getting Chance

By Ken Halloy

OSU coach John Cooper said the Buckeyes would have only a limited amount of contact during spring drills, mainly to avoid unnecessary injuries.

Cooper proved a prophet as defensive back Mark Pelini dislocated his shoulder during practice April 8. Pelini will miss the rest of spring drills. His presence will be missed as there are now only five scholarship players vying for the four secondary positions.

Pelini is not the only Buckeye who is out for spring ball. Offensive lineman Joe Staysniak is out with infectious mononucleosis. He is not even attending practices.

Also, inside linebacker John Sullivan will take the spring months to recover from reconstructive knee surgery performed in the offseason. He should be back in time for fall drills.

Sophomore tight end Matt Manifold is also recovering from the same surgery. He may not be able to return in the fall, but will continue extensive rehabilitation, said assistant OSU trainer Bill Davis.

Lance Price, who is rumored to be wavering between running back and receiver, practices each day until his pulled hamstring bothers him, Davis said.

Lastly, flanker Gary Clift's hamstring pull is more serious, as he is expected to sit out the remainder of spring drills, said receivers coach Gene Huey. Clift sustained the injury the second week of practice.

There are other players not practicing or seeing only limited action, not due to injuries. Running back Marc Hicks, who sat out last season after transferring from California, and defensive back Zack Dumas, are practicing only on Fridays and Saturdays so that they can spend more time with their studies.

Lastly, the Proposition 48 athletes of last season — wide receiver Jeff Graham, defensive backs Vincent Clark and Tim Rutledge, and fullback Tyrone Harrison, are not eligible to return to the team until the fall.

To help offset the loss of players, Cooper has allowed a number of walk-ons to participate in spring drills. But it's not merely a token gesture.

"I've usually always given a walk-on player a scholarship every year," Cooper said. "When they put out and give it all they've got, they deserve it. That inspires the scholarship players. If there's a walk-on here that deserves

it, I'll gladly give him a scholarship."

The number of walk-ons fluctuates day-to-day through spring drills, therefore little information has been compiled on them. The following is not a comprehensive list, as some may be gone or others added during the spring.

Place-kickers include Chanthavane Adethsack, a transfer from Gulf Coast (Miss.) Junior College, and Bob Hoyt, a sophomore who is also on the Buckeye soccer team.

Defensive backs include freshman Ed Veley (5-8, 160), sophomores Geoff Warner (5-11, 160), Trevor Poole (6-2, 195) and Chris Ntukogu (5-10, 190) and junior Doug Dinan (6-0, 180).

Quarterbacks include freshmen Dorian Vaughn (6-0, 196) and Doug McAllister (6-3, 200). McAllister is a junior who transferred from the Air Force Academy in December 1986.

Receivers include freshmen Joseph Lombardo (6-2, 180) and James Tork (6-0, 168), and sophomores Anthony Cook (6-3, 212) and Steven Greer (5-11, 165).

Other players include freshman long snapper Travis Lutz (6-4, 220), sophomore fullback Uwe Halveland (5-11, 217) and offensive tackle/nose guard Walter Dutch (6-2, 240).

Williams Reflects; Burson Named MVP

By John Keim

Curtis Wilson sat in the locker room moments after the Buckeyes' 72-67 loss to Connecticut. He was trying to describe the season, but what he talked about seemed more like an elevator ride.

"It was up and down, up and down all year," said Wilson about the Buckeyes' second straight 20-13 season. "It was up and down all the way to the end."

Wilson's statement was pretty accurate. Ohio State had its share of upsets — beating top 20 teams Iowa, Michigan, Illinois and Purdue. On the negative side there were defeats to Wisconsin, Michigan State (twice), and Dayton, none of whom had a winning record.

There was a 32-point loss to Florida, a 33-point loss to Illinois, but a 25-point win over Wisconsin.

"It was a tough season," said OSU coach Gary Williams. "I don't remember any game ever really coming easy for us. We had to work hard every night. I think our players did a great job of not letting any one game get to them and that's very important in basketball — you can't let one game determine your season."

If the Buckeyes had done that, they might have been in trouble early in the season. After opening the campaign with four straight victories, including the Nebraska Invitational championship, they were soundly defeated by Florida 102-69. That game, followed by an 81-80 loss at home against Dayton, could have been damaging.

But Ohio State responded by winning three of its next four before starting the Big Ten season. Following a loss to Purdue, the Buckeyes then showed their trademark for the rest of the season.

A controversial 64-63 loss at lowly Wisconsin when a scoreboard operator incorrectly counted a basket as a three-pointer instead of a two-pointer, was followed by two upset wins at home over Iowa and Michigan.

Specialists

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do know they both have strong enough legs to compete in Division I football."

The emphasis during the spring is improving hang time on punts, so that good coverage will offset lost distance, as Caviglia isn't expecting to see many 60-yard Tupa boomers this season. He would settle for a net average of about 37 yards.

The top priority for next season is to recruit a punter, Caviglia said, though he realizes the new staff searched endlessly. Incoming recruit Buster Howe punted in high school and could challenge in the fall, but Caviglia isn't looking ahead.

Note: Matt Frantz is apparently trying to petition for another year of eligibility. Though Frantz is a senior academically, he has played football for only two seasons.

NCAA rules allow athletes to consume their four years of athletic eligibility in five years from the time the athlete first enrolls into college as a full-time student.

Frantz enrolled into college in 1983, but is believed to be petitioning under the extenuating circumstance that he has only been a part-time student, and therefore should be allowed another year to participate on the football team.

"We went to Wisconsin with a lot of confidence but then (center) John (Anderson) had a serious eye injury and that changed the rotation of our players," Williams said. "We went in there a little shaky and we had to battle back from 12 down to take the lead."

"Then we came back (against Iowa and Michigan) and showed what our team was made of and I was convinced then that we could have a good team."

He wasn't so sure at the start of the season, however.

"I was worried concerning this year," Williams said. "I thought we would have (Proposition 48 casualties) Treg Lee and Eli Brewster playing for us and we didn't. We just never had enough depth all year."

Improvement in certain players, mainly junior forward Tony White, helped the Buckeyes to a 9-9 Big Ten record. White, in his first season as a starter, averaged 7.8 points per game and 4.6 rebounds. During the Big Ten, those marks improved to 9.3 and 5.2. His 78 offensive rebounds were the second highest on the team.

As a sophomore, White scored 4.5 points a game and grabbed 84 rebounds.

"I took some strides this season and accomplished some things I knew I could do," White said. "I just have to work hard in the offseason."

Williams said White improved as much as any player he's ever coached over the course of a year.

"He got stronger, he lifted weights and he's a very intelligent person, and those two things have made him a good player," he said.

The Buckeyes were led in scoring by junior guard Jay Burson's 18.9 average

and in rebounding by Carter's 7.2 average.

While the Buckeyes weren't selected for the NCAA tournament field, Williams feels the experience of the NIT can be helpful for next season. During the tournament, Ohio State avenged an early-season 74-65 loss at New Mexico by beating the Lobos on their home court, The Pit, 68-65.

"There's no doubt about that," Williams said. "This whole NIT experience helps us because we only had one senior on the starting team. The experience of playing in the (Madison Square) Garden or in New Mexico can only help a Perry Carter or a Jay Burson be even tougher next year."

Notes

Jay Burson won the 1987-88 Jerry Lucas Most Valuable Player award, by a vote of his teammates, at the team's annual banquet April 5. Burson averaged 18.9 points per game and led the Buckeyes in scoring 21 of the 33 games. He scored 20 or more points 16 times and was in double figures in 31 games. His season and career high was 29 points in a 92-75 loss at Iowa.

OSU assistant coach Fran Fraschilla said at the banquet, "When I first got the job last summer, I was at a basketball camp with (Purdue guard) Troy Lewis and tried to familiarize myself with the Big Ten. I was talking to Troy about Jay and he said, 'That to play against this guy.' I didn't understand what he meant but after spending a year with Jay Burson, I see what he meant."

Burson was named to the all-tournament teams at the Cornhusker Invitational, the Lobo Classic and the

NIT. He was the MVP in the Cornhusker. He was also named to a second-team berth on the *Associated Press* All-Big Ten team.

Jerry Francis received the John Havlicek Award as the Buckeyes' most inspirational player, while Tony White was named OSU's most improved player. The Havlicek Award is also chosen by the players; the most improved is selected by the coaching staff.

There were also four statistical awards:

Best free-throw percentage — Burson, 82.1 percent, making 147 of 179 attempts.

Best field-goal percentage — Perry Carter, 54.0 percent, making 129 of 239.

Most rebounds — Carter, 237, an average of 7.2 a game.

Most assists — Curtis Wilson with 188.

Hoop Recruit Visiting OSU

Jamal Brown, a 6-4 off-guard from Arlington, Texas, will be making a recruiting visit to Ohio State around the last week of April. Brown played his high school ball at Sam Houston High School and averaged 23 points per game.

He is the all-time leading scorer in the city of Arlington and was second-team All-Texas, as chosen by the Texas Sportswriters Association.

Brown is also reportedly considering Alabama, Auburn, South Alabama and Oklahoma State. Ohio State has one scholarship left for next season.

Running Game Has Depth, Experience

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"You're going to see a lot of backs play," Hudson assured. "The offense they had here was a successful offense to a certain degree, but it wasn't as multiple and it didn't ask as much of the athlete as this one does. What we have to do is find what each athlete does best and see how that fits into our system."

"For example, Carlos Snow (5-9, 194) looks like a good little ball carrier but he's awful small. Maybe he shouldn't be in the pass patterns where we need a taller, bigger guy who can reach and catch the ball. Or maybe there is a fullback who can block better than run or vice versa."

In senior Vince Workman (5-11, 194), Hudson has an experienced receiver as well as a durable runner. Midway through last season Workman was moved to flanker and finished the season as the Buckeyes' second-leading receiver with 26 receptions for 354 yards and one touchdown.

Despite the change, Workman closed 1987 as OSU's leading ground gainer for the second consecutive season, netting 470 yards. In 1986, the Dublin, Ohio, native rushed for 1,030 yards and eight touchdowns.

Snow, a highly-touted '87 recruit, took over top backfield duties when Workman made the transition to flanker. He finished the season second in rushing with 381 yards and four touchdowns.

John Spencer (6-0, 206) spent most of his freshman season on the sidelines, hampered by injuries. The brother of OSU's second career-leading rusher, Tim Spencer, John was a first-team All-Ohio tailback at St. Clairsville

(Ohio) High, rushing for 1,540 yards and 19 touchdowns his senior year.

This season junior Jaymes Bryant (6-0, 214) will try his luck at the fullback position left vacant by George Cooper's departure. Toward the end of last season, Bryant's tailback playing time was significantly limited. OSU's second-leading rusher in '86 with 656 yards, Bryant managed only 313 and three touchdowns last season.

Also vying for the fullback position is senior Bill Matlock. Matlock (5-9, 219) saw a reasonable amount of action last season when Cooper was slowed by injuries. Matlock finished the year

with eight carries for 61 yards.

Chris Boddie (6-2, 231) and Jim Graham (5-10, 207) will provide depth at the position. Boddie played in one game for the Buckeyes at fullback, rushing for four yards on one carry.

Hudson said the allotted 20 spring practices is enough to discover who will be playing in Ohio Stadium next fall.

"The team that lines up in the final game in the spring will probably line up as the first-string group in the fall, unless somebody can take the position away from them."

Palcic's Guards, Centers

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mold, speed and strength-wise. You would like all of your offensive linemen to be able to bench press 400 pounds," Palcic said. "Jeff can bench press 430 and runs about a 5.0 40 (yard dash). He's also smart and he has the experience."

Providing depth at center are Dan Beatty (6-4, 256), Mike Huddleston (6-5, 260), Tom Scholl (6-1, 224) and Dan Hirneise (6-3, 262). Huddleston was a 1987 recruit who was sidelined for the year by a preseason injury.

Senior Greg Zackeroff (6-5, 260) will flank Uhlenhake on the strong side. A two-year starter, Zackeroff has proven to be a steady performer for the Buckeye line.

John Peterson (6-2, 282) and Ken Voll (6-3, 263) will support Zackeroff at strong guard. An offensive tackle in '87, Peterson suffered a dislocated elbow against LSU and missed the

remainder of the season. Peterson appears to be making the transition to guard a smooth one.

Junior Jeff Davidson (6-6, 276) leads the Buckeyes on the quick side. Davidson was OSU's starter last season before he broke his leg against Illinois (fourth game) and missed the rest of the year.

Steve France (6-5, 270) and Erik Grimm (6-4, 256) are providing backup help on the quick side.

Spring drills consist of 20 practices, including the annual spring game. Although a new system has to be learned, Palcic said there is ample time.

"I think 20 practices is enough to find out exactly who the top players are going to be and who will be playing in Ohio Stadium this fall," he said. "It's enough time for them to get a real solid foundation of the system but two-a-days in the fall are going to be extremely important to put the finishing touches on the offense."