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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Sept. 8, 2018

The Future Is Now

Day's Buckeyes Win Big In Haskins' Debut

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

There will always be turnover from one season to the next. Ohio State sends handfuls of players to the NFL every season, and members of the coaching staff come and go on an annual basis. Sometimes, though, the turnover is more significant.

Going into 2018, it had been a while since the Buckeyes had a first-time starter at quarterback in week one, and it had been even longer since a head coach not named Urban Meyer roamed the sidelines in a season opener. Both of those streaks were broken Sept. 1 at Ohio Stadium when the No. 5 Buckeyes – led by acting head coach Ryan Day and first-year starting quarterback Dwayne Haskins – trounced Oregon State, 77-31.

Day, of course, is the head coach on a temporary basis. Meyer is suspended for the first three games of the season after mishandling former receivers coach Zach Smith's employment at the university. Haskins, on the other hand, is in his position on a more permanent basis as the heir to J.T. Barrett's quarterback throne.

There were plenty of question marks surrounding the Buckeyes through the offseason. There always will be, especially when there's a new quarterback, and even more so when there's uncertainty surrounding the head coach. On a day of firsts, though, Day and Haskins answered many of those inquiries.

"It was a lot going on for me," Day said in his first postgame press conference as a head coach at any level. "It was the first time going through everything, whether it was in the meetings or going to the skull session, the walk, pregame, going out on the field."

Haskins, for his part, was coy about his performance, simply saying, "Not a bad job," when asked how he did.

That might have been an understatement.

The Quarterback

Though redshirt freshman Tate Martell had a couple of cameo appearances in the first



SONNY BROCKWAY

LIKE A VETERAN – Ohio State sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins (7) threw for 313 yards and five touchdowns against Oregon State in the first start of his career.

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OPINION

Day, Haskins Looked The Part For Buckeyes



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Charter Member

If first impressions are worth anything, Ryan Day will be a head coach in the very near future, Dwayne Haskins will make himself a lot of money someday as an NFL quarterback, and the 2018 Ohio State football team has the chance to become something very special.

For a least one afternoon, no one cared much about Zach Smith's firing or Urban Meyer's suspension as the Buckeyes exerted their offensive muscle to the tune of 721 total yards during a 77-31 manhandling of Oregon State.

Day was in charge of the onslaught, and it's difficult to believe the offense would have performed any better had Meyer been pacing the sideline rather than watching the proceedings from home. The yardage figure was the second-highest total ever in a single game in program history, and the point total matched the best output for a season opener. Ohio State rolled up 776 yards during a 77-10 win against Bowling Green in the 2016 season opener.

Haskins made his debut as the team's starting quarterback, and the sophomore was nearly flawless, begging the question of how any program can lose a four-year starter and owner of a boatload of school and Big Ten records and still feel like it has upgraded the position.

The 6-3, 220-pound sophomore was cucumber-cool in the huddle, under center and in the pocket as he connected on 22 of 30 attempts for 313 yards and five touchdowns. Haskins was also an equal-opportunity distributor, completing passes to seven different receivers, including touchdowns tosses to wide receiver Terry McLaurin, H-back Parris Campbell, tight end Rashod Berry and running back Mike Weber.

Speaking of Weber, the 5-10, 214-pound junior appeared in midseason form as he punished the Oregon State defense with a career-high 186 yards and three touchdowns on 20 carries. That was part of a rushing attack that manufactured 375 yards and five scores against the Beavers.

As much as the Buckeyes appeared to be a well-oiled locomotive in the opener, it's worth mentioning that Oregon State is undertaking a massive rebuild. The Beavers experienced their 11th straight defeat, the longest losing streak for the program since a school-record 15 consecutive losses in 1995-96. And Ohio State's next opponent, Big Ten rival Rutgers, has lost to the Buckeyes by scores of 58-0 and 56-0 the last two years, yielding more than 600 total yards in each contest.

In other words, expect another offensive explosion before the team travels to Dallas on Sept. 15 to take on TCU. The Horned Frogs had a similar offensive outburst to Ohio State in their season opener, rolling to a 55-7 victory against Southern University, a member of the Southwestern Athletic Conference in the Football Championship Subdivision.

Before heading to the Lone Star State, however, the Buckeyes will need a little work on defense. That was about the only thing that didn't cooperate on opening day – that and Mother Nature, who alternated between sun-splashed splendor and an angry lightning storm accompanied by monsoon-like rains that extended halftime some 90 minutes.

Oregon State managed to pile up 392 total yards – an even mix of 196 both on the ground and through the air – and notable breakdowns on the Ohio State defense contributed to big chunks of that yardage.

Junior running back Artavis Pierce, who had never before rushed for more than 73 yards in a single game, broke off touchdown runs of 80 and 78 yards early in the third quarter and finished with 168 yards on just 11 carries. Pierce became the first nonconference

player to eclipse the century mark in rushing against the Buckeyes since Clemson quarterback Tajh Boyd ran for 127 yards during his team's 40-35 win in the 2014 Gator Bowl. No nonconference running back had run for 100 or more yards against Ohio State since Brendan Bigelow of California rambled for 160 yards during OSU's 35-28 win against the Bears in 2012.

EDITOR'S
NOTEBOOK
Mark Rea

Of particular concern was Pierce's 80-yard run, which came on Oregon State's first play from scrimmage in the second half. Defensive tackle Antwan Jackson had Pierce dead to rights at the line of scrimmage, but the 5-11, 201-pounder bounced off the would-be tackle and then outraced OSU cornerback Jeffrey Okudah down the sideline.

Joining Pierce in setting a new career best was receiver Trevon Bradford, who gathered in six passes for 104 yards and two touchdowns. Bradford's previous career high was 51 yards, set two years ago when he was a freshman, and he nearly equaled that with a 49-yard touchdown early in the first quarter when he got behind safety Isaiah Pryor and then split safety Jahsen Wint and cornerback Damon Arnette on his way to the end zone.

There were bright spots on the defense, including defensive end Nick Bosa padding his already-impressive résumé with a pair of sacks and two fumble recoveries, including one in the end zone for a touchdown.

All in all, it was a satisfying opener with lots of highlights and just enough correctable mistakes to keep everyone focused on what they need to do to get better. Just what the doctor ordered for a program that needed to shake off a month of discontent and get back to what it does best – play football.

Enough Is Enough

For the better part of the first half of the 20th century, Major League Baseball was the most popular sport in America, earning the moniker of "The National Pastime."

Baseball's popularity began to erode in the early 1950s but not for the reasons most often promulgated by modern-day experts who believe the game is too slow, too simplistic and too antiquated. Baseball suffered from scandals in other sports, including allegations of point-shaving by college basketball players and academic cheating by members of the college football team at West Point.

Those scandals faded over the years but they have been replaced by countless others – baseball's steroid epidemic, the use of performance-enhancing drugs that brought down such national heroes as three-time Olympic gold medal sprinter Marion Jones and seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, countless pay-for-play scandals at various universities across the nation, and the sexual deviancies of Jerry Sandusky, Larry Nasser and Richard Strauss.

At some point, as baseball discovered in the 1950s, the escapism and entertainment value of sports is going to be overshadowed by the unseemly events that occur away from the playing field.

I've covered sports in general and Ohio State sports in particular for most of the last 40 years, and I can honestly say I've about had enough.

The latest back-and-forth surrounding the firing of Smith and subsequent suspension of Meyer is baby powder compared to some of the other scandals that have occurred in college football over the few years. But it somehow feels just as bad because it hits so close to home.

For the better part of the last month, we have been subjected to the sordid details of Zach and Courtney Smith's tempestuous marriage. The wife claims she was physically and verbally abused. The husband denies the allegations. What followed was a winding, twisting road of half-truths, a costly investigation that led to the suspension of Meyer and Gene Smith, the university's athletic director, and the resignation of a board of trustees member because he thought the penalties were too lenient.

All the while, Zach and Courtney Smith continue to argue back and forth through their designated media mouthpieces. Zach Smith fired the most recent volley Aug. 30 when he told USA Today, "Urban knew the truth. That's what's lost in all this – the truth. Everything he's said negatively about me, that's all on Ohio State. That's all from the pressure they put on him to keep his job because they are spineless. That's why they fired Jim Tressel. They are absolutely spineless."

Smith went on to dispute much of what was contained in Ohio State's investigative report, including the denial that he had a sexual relationship with a secretary on the football staff. He did not address allegations that he took sexually explicit photos of himself from the White House during the football team's 2015 visit or that he had sex toys mailed to the football office.

The waters in this case have been muddied to such a degree that no one can be totally sure of the facts. One thing, however, I am totally sure of. Meyer taking to Twitter to "clarify" the reasons for why he believes he was suspended does not help matters.

From his demeanor at the Aug. 22 press conference announcing the suspension, anyone watching could tell Meyer didn't agree with the punishment. There was no need to clarify anything by releasing a statement 24 hours before the football team's season opener against Oregon State, a statement the coach claimed was necessary because of "a number of things reported in the media ... that have not been correct."

One of the most famous lines from one of the most famous plays ever written deals with someone who "doth protest too much."

Seeking their own venue to "set the record straight," all the while blaming the media for spreading misinformation, has become an increasingly favorite tactic for those in the public arena. Sometimes, the media does get it wrong. But Meyer's so-called clarification seemingly addressed what Smith told USA Today, not anything the media incorrectly reported.

To my mind, it seems that Smith blames Meyer and Ohio State for his dismissal while Meyer apparently blames Smith and what he told USA Today for the need to clarify the reasons why the head coach was suspended.

In other words, in perhaps what is the perfect sign for the times in which we live, no one is willing to take responsibility for his own actions.

This was an unmitigated mess from the very start, a festering sore that will continue to ooze until all of the parties learn to simply keep their mouths shut. The public relations war has already been lost on all sides. My advice would be to put down your weapons and walk away.

COVER STORY

Haskins' 1st Start Is Most Prolific In OSU History

Continued From Page 1

half, Haskins, a sophomore from Potomac (Md.) Bullis School, played the majority of the first three quarters for Ohio State. Once he left the field for good, he had already wrapped up the most prolific starting debut in program history.

Haskins finished the game with 22 completions on 30 attempts for 313 yards and five touchdowns. He became the first first-time starter ever to throw for more than 300 yards at Ohio State, and his five scores were the most in a starting debut as well.

"It's been an 11-year dream," Haskins said. "And I was thinking about that yesterday – how far I came just to be here and just to have this opportunity is a blessing. Just take a deep breath and realize that it's finally here but get better and go on to the next week."

In the victory, Haskins become the first Ohio State quarterback to make his first start in the season opener since Barrett topped Navy to kick off the 2014 season – which ended with a national title, for what it's worth.

Against the Beavers, the Buckeyes punted just once, and that came in the second quarter on a drive led by Martell. The only possession led by Haskins that didn't end in a touchdown came in the third quarter when, with Ohio State ahead 56-28, Haskins was pressured on third-and-10 at the Oregon State 19-yard line and he heaved a ball over the middle in the direction of fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon. The pass went over Dixon's head to be intercepted by Shawn Wilson. Interestingly, Haskins ended up forcing a fumble on the ensuing return, but the ball was picked up by Oregon

State's Kaleb Hayes, who returned it all the way to the Ohio State 19.

After the game, Haskins accepted that he made a poor decision there but praised the offense overall.

"The first thing I would say is the interception. I should have thrown that away," he said. "I got hit by a tackle while throwing the ball. Otherwise, great job by the offense today. I'm really proud of everybody."

Start to finish, Haskins' performance was as good as anyone could have hoped – and likely better than most expected, at least outside the doors of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

Within the program, though, players such as fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell – the team's lead captain – already knew what Haskins could do. They saw him do it in practice all season a year ago, and the world saw him perform in crunch time against Michigan.

But Sept. 1 marked the change to a new era at Ohio State – one with Haskins running the show. And what transpired is what

Campbell expected. It was what is expected from every player on the roster.

"I think it was definitely what we expected," Campbell said. "The standard on the board here for every player is elite. Obviously, he showed that today and he was elite today. I think my biggest challenge for him was just keep pushing, get better, week-by-week get better and continue to perform."

Fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin, another team captain, praised Haskins' poise in his starting debut in addition to his arm talent.

"There were some things back in the spring where he was just young, trying to get a hold on this offense, and he had some ups and downs," McLaurin said. "I came over and talked to him before the game, and he looked as locked in as I have seen him. He didn't flinch today. He was locked into the game plan, and that is a credit to Coach Day."

"His (Haskins') quick release, man, every time I turn around the ball is there. That is really good for me."

All in all, Haskins looked about as far



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COVER STORY

from Barrett as two quarterbacks can be. While Barrett – perhaps the fiercest competitor to play a down at Ohio State – simply made plays any way he could, Haskins looked the part of a gunslinger, or a future first-round pick in the NFL draft. Barrett was a runner, willing to go head-to-head with a linebacker. Haskins – while willing – proved the quarterback run doesn't need to be a part of the offense at Ohio State. In fact, it might be even better this way – it's hard to argue with 77 points against a Power-5 opponent, even if the Beavers were 1-11 last season.

That said, if Haskins is called upon to run, he can hold his own. He carried the ball twice against Oregon State, going for 7 yards and 17 yards on two scrambles. When the defense does force him to pull the ball down, Haskins knows what he plans to do.

"Make them pay," he said. "Simple as that."

The Coach

As Day noted, Sept. 1 marked many firsts for him. More notable than anything, it was his first game as a head coach at any level, and it was Ohio State's first game without Urban Meyer since the Gator Bowl in 2011, when Luke Fickell was still the interim head coach after Jim Tressel stepped down.

At Ohio State, though, things mostly looked the same. Day, who called plays and coached from the sidelines rather than his usual perch in the press box, never once looked out of place. He had some trouble with his whistle before the game – "the whistle, I don't know, they gave me a whistle, it didn't work" – but otherwise filled in seamlessly.

To Day's credit, he was the head man throughout fall camp as well. Meyer was placed on administrative leave Aug. 1, and his suspension began Aug. 22. That meant he had all of preseason camp, plus two weeks of game prep, to jell with the team while awaiting Meyer's return.

That showed against Oregon State, and it helped Day and the Buckeyes avoid the nerves that might be expected in such a situation.

"(I was) not nervous because there was a quiet confidence about this team all along," Day said. "There's a quiet confidence about a lot of guys on our team."

"When you're surrounded with players and coaches that have your back and that you know you've been through some stuff with, you kind of feel good about it."

Day noted that there were three aspects of being head coach that he especially enjoyed. One was the bed check the night before the game. Then there was Skull Session at St. John Arena. Then there was the return to the field for the second half, when many fans returned to the stands after a long weather delay.

"Coming out before the game and seeing the support and going through the line, and just the support that I felt and this team felt walking from the Skull Session to the stadium was really, really cool," he said. "And you could feel it and it was emotional."

Once the Buckeyes took the field, it was clear to some extent that the offense had Day's fingerprints all over it. That would likely have been the case even if Meyer had been around, though. Day was promoted to offensive coordinator in the offseason and given a raise to \$1 million, making him the highest-paid offensive coach in program history and second-highest paid assistant overall (defensive coordinator Greg Schiano is set to make \$1.5 million in 2018).

That's not to say things were the same as they would be if Meyer were around, though. Campbell noted that nobody is quite like the Buckeyes' actual head coach.

"I mean, I don't think you can compare anybody to Coach Meyer," Campbell said. "I

think Coach Meyer is kind of a one-of-a-kind coach. But I think what Coach Day brings is great. He's a juiced up guy; he loves pushing tempo on offense, obviously. I mean, he just gets us going."

Campbell added that Day hasn't acted any different in the role of acting head coach than he did as an assistant.

"Coach Day is just kind of a laid-back guy," Campbell explained. "He doesn't yell or do too much rah-rah stuff like that. I think it was great. I think he managed being head coach-offensive coordinator calling plays very well. Obviously it's a big task when you have to do something like that, but I think he managed it pretty well."

Before long, though, Day will be back in his normal role, and that Meyer guy will be back on the sidelines. At least for practice, that is.

The Other Coach

Since Meyer was placed on leave at the beginning of the month, he has had very little contact with Day, other coaches or the

players. On Aug. 23, the day after his suspension was handed down, he was allowed in the Woody Hayes Athletic Center to meet with the players and coaches for about 45 minutes. His message that day was still focused on the opener, Campbell said.

"Honestly, his main focus was just us going out and being 1-0," he said of Meyer. "Obviously he wasn't there, so he wanted the team to be focused. He didn't want to let any of the distractions or what was going on get in any of the players' heads and getting in our way. So his main focus was just us being 1-0."

The Akron native also noted that there is a different vibe on the sidelines without Meyer – not necessarily a bad vibe, just different. Meyer, to be fair, is a multi-time national champion, while Day now has a grand total of one game as a head coach under his belt.

"I think there's a different pressure when Coach Meyer is on the field, just because of the high expectations that he holds," Campbell said. "I'm not saying that each

and every coach doesn't hold that exact expectation, it's just that Coach Meyer has a different presence about him, has a different vibe about him."

When the game ended, Meyer's suspension still had more than 24 hours on the clock. He was set to be reinstated the following Monday, Sept. 3, for the week, but his suspension will be in place once again Sept. 8 when the Buckeyes host Rutgers. He'll be held out of action again Sept. 15 when Ohio State faces TCU in Arlington, Texas.

But, even though the coach will be missing a couple more games, Campbell expected Meyer's return to the program to bring a different energy.

"I think it's going to be juiced up," Campbell said. "I think guys are going to be excited to have him back around. I think obviously he's going to be excited to be back around, so he might come in a little aggressive, just because he hasn't been around us in a long time. He just wants to enjoy our presence. So I think it will be fun. I think everyone will be excited."



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OHIO STATE VS. OREGON STATE

Ohio State Defense Struggles In Blowout Win

Ohio State's offense dominated Oregon State in the season opener Sept. 1 in Columbus. However, the game wasn't without some shortcomings for the Buckeyes.

The Buckeye defense surrendered three touchdowns of 49-yards or more against Oregon State, including touchdown runs of 80 and 78 yards in the second half alone. Ohio State was gashed for 196 rushing yards, despite holding the Beavers to minus-4 rushing yards in the first half.

GAME NOTEBOOK

James Grega

Much of Oregon State's second-half success had to do with the fact that Nick Bosa and Dre'Mont Jones, who dominated the first half, were benched for the entire second half due to Ohio State's big lead, which stood at 42-14 going into the locker rooms.

The most glaring position group for Ohio State however, was the secondary.

With starting safety Jordan Fuller sidelined with a hamstring injury, both Isaiah Pryor and Jahsen Wint – who had been battling for the starting job opposite Fuller – got the start against the Beavers but struggled early in the blowout victory.

On Oregon State's second possession of the game, backup quarterback Connor Blount, who came on in relief of an injured Jake Luton, completed a pass over the middle to receiver Trevon Bradford for a 49-yard touchdown. Bradford beat Pryor off the line of scrimmage before racing by Wint up the Oregon State sideline for the Beavers' first touchdown of the game.

Just before halftime, Bradford found the end zone again, this time on a corner

route beating Pryor who was in man-to-man coverage. By the time the two teams headed to the locker room, Blount had thrown for 169 yards and the two scores without throwing an interception. Bradford finished the game with six receptions for 104 yards in the loss, while Blount did not play at all in the second half, giving way to third-string signal caller Jack Colletto.

In addition to the safety struggles, sophomore cornerback Jeffrey Okudah was whistled for a pair of pass interference calls on the same drive in the first half, although Oregon State ended up punting later in the possession. He later lost a foot-race up Ohio State's sideline on Oregon State's first play of the second half, as running back Artavis Pierce scooted 80 yards for a score, beating Okudah to the edge.

First-year Buckeye assistant Alex Grinch, who coaches the safeties in addition to coordinating the defense, said after the game that Ohio State's week two opponent, Rutgers, likely won't be intimidated by the Buckeye secondary when they watch film in preparation for the Big Ten opener.

"If you're a Rutgers football team, who we play next week, and you watch Ohio State's defense at this point, I certainly don't think they're intimidated to play us," Grinch said. "That's got to change very quickly."

Bosa, who was on the field for just two touchdowns allowed by the Buckeye defense, added that he doesn't imagine defensive coordinator Greg Schiano will be pleased either when Ohio State returns to practice.

"All you can really think about is how crazy Coach Schiano is going to be this week in practice on the fundamental things and getting those issues fixed," Bosa said. "Because when you play a Big Ten oppo-

nent or someone who is better, those things aren't going to fly."

The absence of Fuller, who participated in team warmups and was dressed for the game, was felt throughout the game in both run and pass situations. The Beavers accumulated 392 yards of offense, 196 each through the air and on the ground, but Grinch said that Fuller's absence doesn't excuse the big plays allowed by the Buckeye defense.

"As you evaluate things, anytime you have an explosive play, it's very easy to earmark a specific position group," Grinch said. "Oftentimes it's more of a collective effort of 11 guys. Sometimes it is one guy, absolutely. Sometimes it's gap integrity, sometimes it's a missed tackle. In 2018, with the offenses that you face, very rarely do you have an opportunity to defend one play on a single down. They can hand the ball off, they can run as a quarterback and there's a pass option off of it."

"So when you do those things, there's not extra guys. Not every defense has – who's the extra? The guy that has that gap needs to take that gap, the guy in a position to make an open-field tackle needs to make it," he continued. "As best you can, you try to layer yourself, but some things offenses do, they kind of get you leveled out. Those plays need to get corrected, and they need to be corrected fast."

Bosa Dominates 1st Half

Bosa didn't need to play more than a half of football to announce his presence as one of the most dominant forces in college football against the Beavers.

In one half of action, Bosa collected four tackles, two sacks and two fumble recoveries, the second of which he fell on for Ohio State's sixth touchdown of the game after



SONNY BROCKWAY

DOMINANT DAY – Ohio State junior defensive end Nick Bosa (97) had two sacks and two fumble recoveries in the first half against Oregon State.

Pete Werner stripped Blount near his own goal line.

It was the first touchdown of Bosa's career, but he added he was more excited about his two sacks than he was the first-half score.

"It's cool. I like to get sacks better, but touchdowns are good too," he said. "Whenever somebody gets pushed back that far, we expect to get points out of it. I think the momentum swung in our direction."

The rest of the defensive line also dominated the Oregon State offensive front. As a team, the Buckeyes collected five sacks and six tackles for loss.



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Dre'Mont Jones tallied a pair of first-half sacks while Werner added the fifth for the Buckeyes in the first 30 minutes. Robert Landers added a tackle for loss in the win, as the Ohio State defense played more than 10 defensive linemen in the blowout victory.

Weber Highlights Rushing Attack

For the 15th straight game, J.K. Dobbins got the start at running back for Ohio State. However, it was Mike Weber who stole the show offensively in the Buckeye backfield.

Weber, who rotated offensive possessions with Dobbins, notched eight carries for 92 yards and a pair of rushing touchdowns in the first half alone, adding a third score on a touch-pass from Dwayne Haskins to put Ohio State up 35-7.

Dobbins was the only scholarship running back who failed to find the end zone against Oregon State, but he did earn 15 carries tallying 74 yards on the ground in just more than a half of football.

Weber, who finished with a career-high 186 yards on 20 carries and four total touchdowns, said the split of carries between him and Dobbins is exactly what he envisioned when he decided to return to Ohio State following the 2017 season.

"That is something that we talk about and think about a lot," Weber said. "It's the reason why I came back, because we knew that we were going to split carries but splitting carries is actually good on the body for both of us. We are both going to eat for the rest of the season, and I can't wait for that to happen."

Despite not finding the end zone and watching Weber steal the show, Dobbins said he was happy for his backfield mate.

"Oh, it was great," Dobbins said. "It's just great to see him doing that. I'm not a selfish guy, so I'm excited for him."

Once Weber and Dobbins were removed from action, Brian Snead and Master Teague got their first game action as Buckeyes and combined to rush for 81 yards on 13 carries, each of the freshmen finding the end zone once.

McLaurin Posts Career Day

Often forgotten about despite being a fifth-year senior captain, Terry McLaurin posted his best game in his Ohio State career against the Beavers.

The Indianapolis native grabbed four passes for 121 yards and two touchdowns against the Oregon State defense, scoring the first touchdown of each half. His second score, a 75-yard catch-and-run, came on the first play of the second half following a lightning delay.

McLaurin, recognized in front of the team following the game, said he was pleased with his performance and was excited that he could contribute to the big game from the offense, which punted just once.

"The guys were kind of ragging on me because they thought I was going to get caught (on his long TD), but as a leader I just want to come out and give energy to our team," he said. "I got called up in the locker room, but I am not a 'me' guy. I just want to do everything for this offense. Just to be able to come out and play at a very high level, you need that from a fifth-year senior. To be able to do that for our offense and get us off to the right start, that is all I cared about today."

McLaurin's four receptions were third most on the team, as K.J. Hill led all

What Worked Well

The new offense. Night and day from the days of "J.T. left, J.T. right" with former multiyear starter J.T. Barrett, sophomore Dwayne Haskins had an as-advertised performance. In his debut as Ohio State's starting quarterback, he completed 22 of his 30 passes (73.3 percent) for 313 yards and five touchdowns against Oregon State. What truly stood out, though, was how the Buckeyes operated an entirely different scheme. With just four attempts for 28 yards between quarterbacks Haskins and redshirt freshman Tate Martell, Ohio State's offense approached the rushing attack with a healthy dose of tailback handoffs for junior Mike Weber and sophomore J.K. Dobbins. The two-headed monster combined for 260 yards on 35 carries, with Weber accounting for three rushing touchdowns. On the outside, the Buckeyes spread the wealth to their receivers with 10 players – a running back, two tight ends and seven wideouts – recording at least one catch. From the balanced attack, Ohio State racked up 721 total yards – 346 passing and 375 rushing – as the Buckeyes buried the Beavers.

What Didn't Work

The back seven. Because of Ohio State's explosion on offense, the Buckeyes' problems on defense did not affect the final outcome. Oregon State broke out for 392 total yards and 31 points thanks to big-play touchdowns by Artavis Pierce, who ripped off runs of 80 and 78 yards as he scampered for 168 yards on 11 car-

riers. Without junior safety Jordan Fuller, who was nursing a hamstring injury, sophomores Jahsen Wint and Isaiah Pryor struggled at times as the Beavers bounced Pierce's runs. Earlier in the game, they both got burned when Oregon State connected for its first touchdown on a crossing pass from Conor Blount to Trevon Bradford, who beat Pryor in coverage and zipped past Wint on the way to a 49-yard catch-and-run. The linebackers – Pete Werner, Baron Browning and Malik Harrison – were also at fault on some of the runs. Ultimately, if not for how explosive and unstoppable Ohio State was on offense, perhaps the Beavers could have made things more interesting. In the future, against better teams, these mistakes could come back to haunt the Buckeyes.

Play Of The Game

After Ohio State opened the game with a 21-7 first-quarter lead, Weber's second touchdown run truly sparked the blowout. As the Buckeyes pushed their tempo on Oregon State and moved the ball down the field and into Beaver territory, Haskins handed off to Weber on a second-and-10 past midfield at the 49. Weber did the rest when he turned a rush over the left tackle into a 49-yard house call. Getting to the second level and bouncing to the outside, Weber raced for the end zone with a burst of breakaway speed. The score put Ohio State in command of a 28-7 lead with 12:25 left in the second quarter, which eventually led to a commanding 42-14 advantage at halftime.

– Garrett Stepien

Buckeye receivers with six for 82 yards, while Austin Mack hauled in five receptions for 69 yards.

Martell Earns 1st Playing Time

Highly touted Ohio State quarterback Tate Martell saw his first game action as a Buckeye in the blowout win over Oregon State, stepping in briefly for Haskins in the second quarter before playing the majority of the fourth with the game in hand.

Martell carried the ball twice for 4 yards and completed 3 of 4 passes for 33 yards against the Beavers. Though the redshirt freshman didn't find the end zone in his first snaps as a collegian, acting head coach and quarterbacks coach Ryan Day said he was encouraged with the reps Martell received in the season opener, including a read-option play when Martell pitched the ball late to receiver C.J. Saunders, who gained 8 yards after getting the ball.

"He can do some great things like that," Day said. "His quick, short-area quickness is excellent. In that opportunity he has an option to run it, give it, or actually pitch the ball late or throw it."

"That's what he did there. He's a playmaker. And so as the season goes on he'll have more and more opportunities to show that."

Inclement Weather Delays 2nd Half

While the Ohio State marching band was performing its "Queen" themed halftime show, the skies opened over Columbus, dumping multiple inches of rain over the stadium, accompanied by lightning strikes, forcing a delay that lasted more than an hour while the teams remained in the locker room.

The delay was the third Ohio State has experienced in as many seasons. During the 2016 season, contests against Tulsa (home) and Oklahoma (road) were delayed due to lightning in the area. The Buckeyes won both of those games and cruised against Oregon State.

Borland said since the Buckeyes had been in that situation before, there was no panic from the players or coaches.

"It was just a sense of calming," the linebacker said. "We had been there before at Oklahoma two years ago and Tulsa. It wasn't unfamiliar territory for us."

Parris Campbell added that there was a sense of anxiety, but that faded once Ohio State opened the second half with McLaurin's long TD catch.

"I think honestly we were fine," he said. "Obviously, guys were anxious to get back out there, get back on the field. No one likes to play and kind of sit around, get tight, get tense. But I think we handled it very well. Obviously, we came out first play of the drive and we have a touchdown from Terry. So I think we handled it well."

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Buckeyes Post 77 In Season-Opening Victory

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The 129th season of Ohio State football opened Sept. 1 like no other in its storied history in one major regard, but the result was the same as the past 19 season openers when No. 5 Ohio State defeated Oregon State 77-31 at Ohio Stadium.

Ohio State owns the longest current winning streak in openers and has also won 31 consecutive season-opening games at home.

That's where the familiarity ends.

While there have been many instances when the Buckeyes had to replace star players, such as this season with sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins having the unenviable task of taking over for multi-record holder J.T. Barrett, there hasn't been a scenario where the head coach was suspended for the first three games.

After an offseason of uncertainty concerning the performance on the field and a scandal that rocked the athletic department, the Buckeyes steamrolled the Beavers behind five touchdown passes by Haskins and four scores, three of them rushing, from junior back Mike Weber.

Head coach Urban Meyer was not present for the victory. He was issued the suspension Aug. 22 for his handling of former wide receivers coach Zach Smith, who had been fired a month earlier after allegations of domestic violence against his ex-wife were publicly revealed.

Offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day was the acting head coach. He was pleased the Buckeyes jumped to a 42-14 halftime lead.

"I'm really proud of the way the guys came out today," said Day, who won his first game as a head coach at any level. "We talked about starting fast in this game. We talked about how we wanted to start fast, play fast. I thought we did that in the first half."

Haskins was 22 for 30 for 313 yards and a third-quarter interception. The yardage and TDs are the most by a Buckeye QB in his first start.

"It's a lot of work put in to get here, to



SONNY BROCKWAY

BREAKAWAY – Fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin had four catches for 121 yards and two touchdowns in Ohio State's 77-31 win.

get to this moment," Haskins said. "It feels good to have my coaches, my teammates rely on me."

Weber rushed for 186 yards on 20 carries with three TDs plus a touchdown catch.

Ohio State had 375 of its 721 total yards on the ground. The amount is second all-time in OSU history to the 776 total yards vs. Bowling Green in 2016.

Oregon State running back Artavis Pierce had 158 of his 168 yards on TD runs of 80 and 78 yards in the third quarter. Quarterback Conor Blount was 12 for 19 for 169 yards and two touchdowns.

How It Happened

Ohio State wasted little time getting on the board following a fumble by Beavers

quarterback Jake Luton on their first series.

Junior defensive end Nick Bosa recovered at the Ohio State 43, and the Buckeyes – aided by a 15-yard penalty for grabbing the face mask – used five plays and 1:13 to go the 57 yards. Haskins found senior receiver Terry McLaurin across the middle for 27 yards to the 6 and, after a short run by Dobbins, connected with him again for a 2-yard scoring strike with 11:17 left in the first quarter.

"I'm just glad we won and I was able to give some confidence to Dwayne early and get off to a fast start," McLaurin said.

Oregon State responded even quicker, scoring on its third play after starting at the Beaver 25. Quarterback Conor Blount on his first drive passed 26 yards to Pierce then hit

Trevon Bradford on a slant. Bradford then ran unimpeded for a 49-yard TD to make it 7-7 at the 10:35 mark.

Weber replaced sophomore J.K. Dobbins when the Buckeyes got the ball back, and he had runs of 11 and 16 yards among four carries, the latter for a 14-7 lead with 8:20 to go in the opening stanza.

By the time the Buckeyes had a 21-7 lead with 3:41 left in the first, Haskins had completed 10 of 11 passes for 114 yards. On the third scoring drive, he completed an eight-play, 75-yard march with a roll to the right and a toss to junior tight end Rashod Berry for his second TD pass. Haskins also had a 27-yard completion to junior K.J. Hill to start the drive.

Oregon State failed to take advantage of a fumbled punt return by junior C.J. Saunders that was recovered by Kee Whetzel at the Ohio State 24. The Beavers had to settle for a 43-yard field-goal attempt by Jordan Choukair that he missed.

The Buckeyes made the Beavers pay on their next possession when Weber emphatically finished a 75-yard drive with a 49-yard TD run with 12:25 left in the second quarter to make it 28-7.

Ohio State redshirt freshman QB Tate Martell made his debut with 10:51 left in the second quarter. After he ran for no gain and Dobbins went for 2 yards, Haskins returned on third down and passed 18 yards to Hill and later threw 20 yards to junior Austin Mack, his third completion of 20 or more yards, to put the ball at the Oregon State 8.

Three plays later from the 3, Weber and Dobbins were in the backfield together. Haskins made a touch pass to Weber, who went around the right end, and Haskins had his third TD pass to give the Buckeyes a 35-7 lead.

The Buckeyes increased the margin to 42-7 with 4:30 remaining before halftime thanks to a 65-yard punt by sophomore Drue Chrisman that put the ball on the Oregon State 3. On second-and-7 from the 6, junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones and sophomore linebacker Pete Werner converged on Blount. He fumbled, then Bosa pounced on it at the 1 and fell into the end zone to make it 42-7. Bosa had two sacks and two fumble recoveries in the first half.

"It's always the best feeling when you're not being covered on a blitz," Werner said.

Worth The Wait

After a 72-minute weather delay at halftime, the game got crazy. The Buckeyes started at their 25, and on the first play, McLaurin took a reception at his own 33 and went the distance for a 49-14 lead.

Oregon State began the ensuing series at the 20, and Artavis Pierce took the handoff on the first snap and ran 80 yards for the score to complete a stretch of two TDs in 19 seconds.

Back came the Buckeyes as fifth-year senior Parris Campbell had an 8-yard TD catch before Pierce shredded the defense for 78-yard TD to make it 56-28. Following a Haskins interception, the Beavers closed the gap to 56-31 on a 23-yard field goal by Choukair with 5:25 left in the third quarter.

Weber made it 63-31 by running in from 4 yards with 14:25 left in the game. Brian Snead had a 2-yard TD run for the Buckeyes with 9:26 left, and fellow true freshman Master Teague had a 33-yard scoring run with 3:50 to go when Day opted to go for it on fourth-and-1.

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 77, Oregon State 31

Sept. 1, 2018 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
Oregon State	7	7	17	0	31
Ohio State	21	21	14	21	77

First Quarter

OHIO STATE – McLaurin, 2 yard pass from Haskins (Nuernberger kick), 11:17; 5 plays, 57 yards, 1:13 TOP.

OREGON STATE – Bradford, 49 yard pass from Blount (Choukair kick), 10:35; 3 plays, 75 yards, 0:42 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Weber, 16 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 8:20; 8 plays, 65 yards, 2:15 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Berry, 6 yard pass from Haskins (Nuernberger kick), 3:41; 8 plays, 75 yards, 2:04 TOP.

Second Quarter

OHIO STATE – Weber, 49 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 12:25; 6 plays, 75 yards, 1:56 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Weber, 3 yard pass from Haskins (Nuernberger kick), 7:58; 10 plays, 59 yards, 2:53 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Bosa, 0 yard fumble return (Nuernberger kick), 4:30.

OREGON STATE – Bradford, 7 yard pass from Blount (Choukair kick), 0:19; 11 plays, 75 yards, 4:11 TOP.

Third Quarter

OHIO STATE – McLaurin, 75 yard pass from Haskins (Nuernberger kick), 14:45; 1 play, 75 yards, 0:15 TOP.

OREGON STATE – Pierce, 80 yard run (Choukair kick), 14:26; 1 play, 80 yards, 0:14 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Campbell, 8 yard pass from Haskins (Nuernberger kick), 11:55; 10 plays, 75 yards, 2:31 TOP.

OREGON STATE – Pierce, 78 yard run (Choukair kick), 11:06; 2 plays, 76 yards, 0:42 TOP.

OREGON STATE – Choukair, 23 yard field goal, 5:25; 6 plays, 14 yards, 1:51 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

OHIO STATE – Weber, 4 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 14:25; 11 plays, 79 yards, 5:54 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Sneed, 2 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 9:26; 8 plays, 46 yards, 3:06 TOP.

OHIO STATE – Teague, 33 yard run (Nuernberger kick), 3:50; 7 plays, 71 yards, 3:35 TOP.

Att. – 102,169.

Weather – 84 degrees, cloudy/rain (72-minute weather delay at halftime); wind, W 9 mph.

Team Statistics

	OREGON STATE	OHIO STATE
First Downs	15	35
Rushing	6	18
Passing	7	14
Penalty	2	3
Rushing-Yards	39-196	53-375
Passing Yards	196	346
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	14-24-0	25-34-1
Offensive Plays	63	87
Total Net Yards	392	721
Third Down Efficiency	6-16	12-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	1-1
Punts-Avg.	6-40.7	1-65.0
Fumbles-Lost	5-2	1-1
Penalties	5-49	6-50
Time of Possession	28:44	31:16

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: Pierce 11-168; Jefferson 8-47; Bradford 3-23; Colletto 4-14; Baylor 2-7; Rogers 2-2; Luton 1-(-5); **TEAM** 2-(-17); Blount 6-(-43). **OHIO STATE**: Weber 20-186; Dobbins 15-74; Teague 6-56; Sneed 7-25; Haskins 2-24; Saunders 0-8; Martell 2-4; **TEAM** 1-(-2).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **OREGON STATE**: Blount 12-19-0-169-2; Colletto 1-4-0-2-0; Luton 1-1-0-25-0. **OHIO STATE**: Haskins 22-30-1-313-5; Martell 3-4-0-33-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: Bradford 6-104; Pierce 3-41; Hodgins 2-40; Hernandez 2-6; Jefferson 1-5. **OHIO STATE**: Hill 6-82; Mack 5-69; McLaurin 4-121; Campbell 4-22; Harris 1-15; Ruckert 1-13; Dixon 1-10; Berry 1-6; Olave 1-5; Weber 1-3.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **OREGON STATE**: Rodriguez 6-40.7-51. **OHIO STATE**: Chrisman 1-65.0-65.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: None. **OHIO STATE**: McCall 1-26; Saunders 2-5.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: Flemings 3-49. **OHIO STATE**: McCall 1-21.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: Choukair 43. **OHIO STATE**: None.

FORCED FUMBLES – **OREGON STATE**: None. **OHIO STATE**: Werner, Haskins.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: **TEAM** 1-0. **OHIO STATE**: Bosa 2-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: Wilson 1-33; Hayes 0-46. **OHIO STATE**: None.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: None. **OHIO STATE**: Bosa 2.0-21; D. Jones 2.0-16; Werner 1.0-6.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **OREGON STATE**: Rashed Jr. 1.0-4. **OHIO STATE**: Bosa 2.0-21; D. Jones 2.0-16; Werner 1.0-6; Landers 1.0-5.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.) – **OREGON STATE**: Williams 7-1-8; Moore 5-3-8; Smith 4-3-7; Willis 3-4-7; Taumoealau 4-1-5; Tufaga 4-1-5; Wilson 4-1-5; Vakameilalo 2-3-5; Whetzel 2-3-5; Hughes-Murray 2-2-4; Rashed Jr. 2-1-3; Hayes 1-2-3; Manning Jr. 1-2-3; Hodgins 2-0-2; Kelsey 2-0-2; Grant 2-0-2; Williams 1-1-2; Kell 1-1-2; Fifita 0-2-2; Aydon 0-2-2; Tago 0-1-1; Soesman 0-1-1; McCartan 0-1-1. **OHIO STATE**: Wint 5-0-5; Werner 4-1-5; Sheffield 4-0-4; Bosa 2-2-4; Browning 1-3-4; Hilliard 3-0-3; D. Jones 3-0-3; Togiai 2-1-3; Harrison 2-1-3; Booker 1-2-3; Wade 1-2-3; Okudah 2-0-2; Arnette 1-1-2; Cornell 1-1-2; Young 1-1-2; Vincent 1-1-2; Pryor 0-2-2; White 0-2-2; Haskins 1-0-1; Prince 1-0-1; Friday 1-0-1; Landers 1-0-1; Jackson 0-1-1; Smith 0-1-1; **TEAM** 0-1-1; Olave 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **OREGON STATE**: Offense, Luton, Bradford, Hodgins, Hernandez, Pierce, Houston, Lavaka, Moore, Brandel, Demogerontas, Qutoriano, Choukair. Defense, Wilson, Williams, Rashed Jr., Hayes, Willis, Moore, Tufaga, Hughes-Murray, Fifita, Hodgins, Vakameilalo, Rodriguez. Reserves, Allen, Blount, Colletto, Rogers, Delp, Kelsey, Montibon, Tago, Whetzel, Manning Jr., Flemings, McCartan, Short, Baylor, Robinson, Jefferson, Watson, Grant, Kell, Bush, Smith, Taumoealau, Soesman, Mengis, Anderson, Cordasco, Smith, Bodden, Bramscher, Williams, Aydon. **OHIO STATE**: Offense, Munford, Pridgeon, Jordan, Knox, Prince, Farrell, Haskins, Dobbins, Campbell, Mack, McLaurin, Nuernberger. Defense, Bosa, Landers, D. Jones, Cooper, Harrison, Browning, Werner, Sheffield, Arnette, Wint, Pryor, Chrisman. Reserves, Martell, Dixon, Smith, Okudah, Hill, Proctor, Gant, White, Young, Brown, Williamson, Davis, Vincent, Sneed, Mitchell, Cornell, Victor, Riep, Harris, K. Jones, Olave, Wade, Weber, McCall, Borland, Teague, Pope, Jean-Baptiste, Hilliard, McCullough, Booker, Hamilton, Friday, Cox, Alabi, Woidek, Donald, Myers, Togiai, Petit-Frere, Taylor, Saunders, Ruckert, Berry, Jackson, Chrisman, Haubeil, Cage.

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OHIO STATE VS. OREGON STATE

Ohio State Position Battles Clear Up In Opener

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Heading into fall camp, Ohio State had open position battles throughout the offense and defense.

On offense, quarterback Dwayne Haskins had already locked up the job during spring practice, but questions remained regarding who would be blocking for him and who would be starting at tight end. On the defensive side, there were lingering questions at safety and linebacker, while the rotations along the defensive front and at cornerback were up in the air as well.

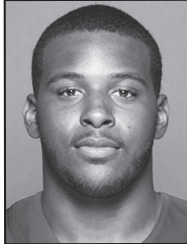
The Buckeyes announced a few starters before the season opener – most notably the majority of the offensive line – while leaving a few spots up in the air for the matchup against Oregon State.

When the Buckeyes took the field for what ended up being a 77-31 blowout win, the depth chart picture became clearer. What follows is a breakdown of how the starting lineup shook out in Ohio State's season opener.

The Offense

For the most part, Ohio State's offensive lineup was already set heading into the game. The main position battle left over this fall was along the offensive front, where acting head coach Ryan Day named four starters – left

guard Malcolm Pridgeon, center Michael Jordan, right guard Demetrius Knox and right tackle Isaiah Prince – before the opener. There was a question about who would start at left tackle, though, with sophomore Thayer Munford struggling with some minor injury issues in fall camp. Heading into the game, Munford was listed as a co-starter with junior Joshua Alabi.



Thayer Munford

When the first-team offense took the field against the Beavers, though, it was Munford protecting Haskins' blind side, and he played with the first-team offense whenever the top lineup was in the game. The line, which featured two first-time starters and one player – Jordan – making his first start at a new spot along the line, did not allow a sack.

Alabi ended up as the second-team left tackle as the back-ups on both sides of the ball saw plenty of action. Along with Alabi, fifth-year senior Brady Taylor (LG), redshirt freshman Josh Myers (C), redshirt freshman Wyatt Davis (RG) and freshman Nicholas Petit-Frere (RT) rounded out the second-team line.

At tight end, sophomore Luke Farrell got the start while he rotated regularly with junior Rashod Berry. Freshman Jeremy Ruckert got in the game as well, catching one pass for 13 yards. Berry had a 6-yard touchdown reception while Farrell didn't record a catch.

At running back, co-starters J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber each got their fair share of touches. Weber finished with 20 carries for

186 yards and three scores while adding a 3-yard touchdown catch. Dobbins had 15 carries for 74 yards while freshmen Brian Snead and Master Teague both added fourth-quarter scores.

The Defense

As many expected, Ohio State got a dominant performance from the defensive line, led by junior defensive end Nick Bosa and junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones. They were joined in the starting lineup by junior end Jonathan Cooper, who rotated heavily with sophomore Chase Young, and junior tackle Robert Landers.

On the outside, Bosa, Cooper and Young got most of the first-team reps, while junior Jashon Cornell got in the game as well. Notably, freshman defensive end Tyreke Smith saw action early with the first-team offense in the Rushmen package in some passing situations. Freshman defensive end Tyler Friday rotated with the first- and second-team defenses as well.

At tackle, Jones and Landers were the clear first-teamers, but sophomore Haskell Garrett, junior Davon Hamilton and freshmen Taron Vincent and Tommy Togiai were involved as well. Sophomore Antwan Jackson and redshirt freshman Jerron Cage rotated with the second-team unit.

Before the opener, junior Malik Harrison and sophomores Baron Browning and Pete

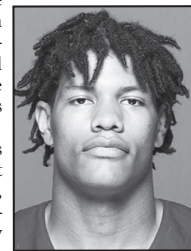
Werner were named starters at linebacker, and that's what transpired against Oregon State. There was some question as to how much sophomore middle linebacker Tuf Borland would play – or if he would play – after he suffered an Achilles injury in the spring. Borland ended up rotating with the first-team defense, while Browning got most of the reps in the middle.

At cornerback, Damon Arnette and Kendall Sheffield got the start as expected, and sophomore Jeffrey Okudah was heavily involved in the rotation as well. When the second-team defense took the field, redshirt freshman Shaun Wade, sophomore Marcus Williamson and freshman Cameron Brown got the most action at corner.

Perhaps the biggest question for the defense heading into the game came at safety,

where Jordan Fuller was guaranteed a starting spot, but sophomores Isaiah Pryor and Jahsen Wint were battling to replace Damon Webb at free safety. The question became even bigger, though, when Fuller was ruled out for the game with a hamstring issue, meaning both Pryor and Wint got the start.

Sophomores Amir Riep and Brendon White rotated in on the back end of the defense when the second-teamers took the field.



Isaiah Pryor

A full projected depth chart for the week-two matchup with Rutgers can be found on page 25.

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Ohio State sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins when asked if there was any doubt in his mind that he would be where he is today when he was competing with Joe Burrow to be the starter: "(There was) no doubt in my mind. It wasn't even necessarily about Joe or any other quarterbacks, just knowing that I put the work in to be here and one day it would pay off. And it did."

Haskins when asked if he feels pressure stepping in for J.T. Barrett: "Not at all. J.T. had a remarkable career, and my goal is just to do the same thing."

Ohio State junior defensive end Nick Bosa on if he feels pressure from the expectations on him: "Definitely a lot of pressure but when you can just go out and have fun like I did today and enjoy who you're doing it with, that is what really matters. When you feel that pressure, you just have to remember what's important."

Ohio State fifth-year senior receiver Terry McLaurin on the team's depth at wideout: "There is no excuse not to be in and give 100 percent because you know you have a guy that's just as good that is right behind you coming in. Everybody on the outside might not understand the reasoning behind it, but it makes a big difference for us because when we go tempo like we did today, you can start getting the defense tired when you have a fresh wideout coming in that can run just as fast and run just as good of routes. I think it's a strength of ours."

Ohio State acting head coach Ryan Day on the

team's ability to push the pace: "We have a lot of depth at receiver. So we're able to play multiple receivers and stay fresh, which I think you could see. Our offensive line is in tremendous shape."

Day on some of the top performers against Oregon State: "We brought three guys up in the locker room. (Mike Weber) was one of them. Malcolm Pridgeon was another one. And Terry McLaurin was the third. And those three guys have arguably been three of the best practice players we have. And they had really big days for us today. So that was great."



Terry McLaurin

Day on scoring 77 points against Oregon State: "Well, I thought that we played with tempo today. And we were aggressive. I thought we stretched the field horizontally and we stretched it vertically, which is the goal. But I thought the tempo was really good."

Day when asked if he proved anything to himself: "Again, I don't think I proved anything to myself. It was just one of those things where you've got to jump into the pool with two feet, just do it. And it was like standing in the tunnel and looking up at Ohio State and the Horseshoe, about to run out with the team and I looked over at (graduate assistant) Quinn (Tempel), and I'm like, 'We really doing this?' He said yeah. And I had a smile on my face and ran out. But, again, when you have those guys behind you and this coaching staff behind you, that's what it is."

Day on being the interim head coach: "I've said this before. My job is not to replace Coach (Urban) Meyer. My

job is to just keep this place until he gets back, and I never wanted to replace him. I just want to keep this thing going in the right direction."

Ohio State co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach Alex Grinch on whether he was upset with the defensive performance or enjoying the win: "You make sure you enjoy wins. It's hard. And obviously the scoreboard went a certain way today and you can allow yourself to get a little bit naive to that. But there's a much higher expectation than what we played today, and I think every member of the staff would say that. I think every player would say that. But we're not in the business of making excuses, and we've got to come up with solutions. Again, regardless if a young guy made a mistake, OK he's not a young guy anymore. You're playing at Ohio State. We play a lot of young guys. We've obviously got to get some things corrected."

Ohio State fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell on whether the performance was the vision for the offense at its best: "I think no matter who we play, we always want to execute. As long as we're in the game, starters are in the game, I think the goal is to score as much as we can. And that's not disrespect to any other teams, it's just we want to be clicking on all cylinders at all times, so I think that's always the goal."

Campbell on what he ate during the long weather delay: "I had a ham sandwich, Rice Krispie Treat, Gatorades. I was snacking. I was chilling."

Oregon State head coach Jonathon Smith on the loss to Ohio State: "Obviously, that's a good football team we were playing. But there's some things we can control and improve on in that game."



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

Staff, Captains Take Charge In Meyer's Absence

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer was placed on paid administrative leave Aug. 1. Two days later, the Buckeyes took the field for the start of fall camp with acting head coach Ryan Day, normally the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, running the show.

With Meyer sidelined, the Buckeyes completed all of fall camp without their head coach. He wasn't there leading up to the season opener on Sept. 1 against Oregon State, either, as his suspension – which was announced Aug. 22 – ran through the Sunday after the game.

All in all, though, things weren't much different from normal inside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center this August.

"It really hasn't (been)," said junior safety Jordan Fuller, one of Ohio State's seven team captains, when asked how different practice has been with Day calling the shots. "Our culture is our culture, playing 4-6, A to B every play, and it really hasn't been so much different."

Fuller's comments came the Tuesday before the Buckeyes dispatched the Beavers, 77-31, to open the 2018 campaign, marking the first time any Ohio State players had met with the media since Meyer was placed on leave. Fuller's opinion was shared by various teammates as well.

Sophomore linebacker Tuf Borland, another team captain, noted that the thought



TIM MOODY

FAST START – Ohio State acting head coach Ryan Day led the Buckeyes to a 77-31 win in his first game in place of the suspended Urban Meyer.

process all along was to stay focused on the season, blocking out any outside noise. At times, that can be easier said than done, but Borland reiterated that the Buckeyes never lost track ahead of the opener.

"From day one this team has stuck together and been completely focused on week one, being 1-0 and beating Oregon State," Borland said. "We've taken it day by day."

The Players

When it comes to hitting the field for

practice, the absence of the head coach doesn't drastically change things at Ohio State. Portions of two fall camp practices were open to members of the media, and they looked largely identical to any practice previously seen in the Meyer era – other than the fact that there was one fewer coach wandering around.

During practice, the assistant coaches – not Meyer – are the ones working with the players in a hands-on role. Meyer, essentially the CEO, acts as an overseer, lending

help where it's needed. With him sidelined, the defensive players still worked with the defensive coaches, and the offensive players still worked with the offensive coaches. And strength coach Mickey Marotti still provided the heart and soul for the Buckeyes.

Junior defensive end Nick Bosa said he saw no reason practice would need to feel different without Meyer on the field.

"I don't know what other way it would be," Bosa said. "We have amazing coordinators and amazing position coaches, and they have taken the role in stride. I think that's what Coach (Meyer) would want us to do. Keep everything normal, doing the same routine. Just practice hard and get better."

Fuller noted that, even without Meyer, the goals don't change. The aim in camp is to improve and work toward the season. That was the same in 2018 just as it has been in the past.

"Camp's the same as every year, just trying to get better every day," Fuller said. "I can speak for the safeties – we've definitely come a long way. We've been working hard every day. I'm just really proud of how we've been working as a team and just staying focused and doing our jobs."

The Coaching Staff

When Meyer was first placed on administrative leave, some were surprised that Day was named acting head coach. He's a rising star in the profession, but the former NFL assistant coach has never been the head of a program at any level. Day even admitted that he was surprised by the decision.





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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

"I was very surprised," he said. "It did catch me off guard. It was one of those things where you just wake up the next day and you think, is this really happening? And then you just kind of put one foot in front of the other. I don't think anyone could have expected any of this."

In addition to Day's lack of experience, Ohio State does have two former collegiate head coaches on staff – including one who was an NFL head coach as well.

Defensive coordinator Greg Schiano was the head coach at Rutgers from 2001-11 before joining the Tampa Bay Buccaneers from 2012-13. Offensive coordinator and tight ends coach Kevin Wilson ran the Indiana football program from 2011-16.

When the decision was made to put Day in charge, though, Schiano and the rest of the staff were immediately behind him.

"Ryan is certainly qualified to do this," Schiano said Aug. 27. "Kevin Wilson, myself and the rest of the staff, guys like (defensive line coach) Larry Johnson, have done this a long time. We all said we have to step up. We're missing our leader, we're one down right now, and I think the staff has done that and I think in turn the players have followed our lead."

"We have some great leadership, and all that combined I think is what's going to allow us to be successful."

Day, for his part, admitted that the process has been a whirlwind. For the most part, though, that whirlwind took place behind closed doors. Day didn't make his first public remarks as acting head coach until Aug. 27, five days after Meyer's three-game suspension was announced.

The assistant, who is set to make \$1 million in 2018, second only to Schiano's \$1.5 million, noted that he wasn't taking the program over. Instead, he served and is serving as a caretaker in Meyer's place.

"My goal in this thing was never to replace Coach (Meyer)," Day said. "That's not what I wanted to do. What I wanted to

do is empower the coaches, empower the leaders and just keep this thing moving, and I think we have done that."

Day also noted that he's leaned on Schiano and Wilson a lot as he navigates the head coaching waters for the first time.

"I have so much respect for both of those guys and for the whole staff," Day said. "This is an experienced staff. It's going to be the best staff in America. When you think about Larry Johnson, (linebackers coach) Billy Davis, (co-defensive coordinator) Alex Grinch, when you go through all the guys we have on our staff, it's amazing – a lot of experience, real professionals."

"But like I said before, what Greg and Kevin have done for me is something that I won't forget, and their counsel has been amazing over this stretch and I've learned a lot from them. Obviously they have been in my shoes before, and so it's meant a lot."

A Short Reunion

Meyer's suspension was decided on and handed down on a Wednesday. The next day, he was at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center for about 45 minutes to meet with the coaching staff and address his team – a meeting that was granted as part of the terms of his punishment for mishandling the employment of former wide receivers coach Zach Smith.

Players and coaches refrained from going into detail about what was discussed during Meyer's return to the Woody, but there was one common theme: Everyone was glad to see the head coach after a long absence.

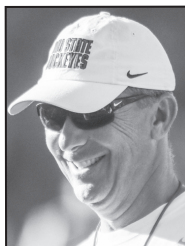
During his paid leave and suspension, Meyer was restricted from contact with anyone in the program, and he was not allowed in the football facilities.

When permissible, though, Schiano said he was glad to have chances to speak to Meyer.

"Well Urban is, before he's my boss, he's a friend," Schiano said. "I've known him for over 20 years. So when I was allowed to, I did communicate. And that's personal. It wasn't about football. It was about him, because I was worried about him. I'll leave it at that."



Greg Schiano



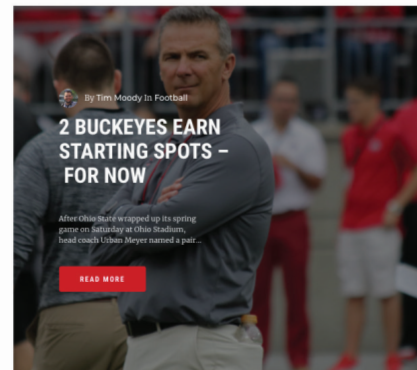
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OPINION

Buckeyes Impress In 1st Look After Unusual Camp

Wasn't it nice to finally watch some Ohio State football, instead of another episode of OSU's version of the Jerry Springer show? I am always eager for the start of Buckeye football season, but I was ready for that first kickoff even more so this year.

One of the occupational hazards of having a job at Buckeye Sports Bulletin is the fact that virtually everyone you bump into or speak to on the phone wants to talk Buckeye football. Do you want to know something funny? In the month of August, prime time for people wanting to talk about Buckeye football, I don't think I fielded one question about the team.

Oh, I fielded questions. But it's been all about Zach-gate and Urban Meyer's role in it and his ultimate punishment. What's even funnier is the fact that preseason practice was locked up so tight that I wouldn't have been very good at answering people's questions about the team anyway.

Now we can all talk somewhat intelligently about the Buckeyes. Isn't it refreshing?

My big question heading into the Oregon State game was the same as yours. How was Dwayne Haskins going to look as the starting quarterback? Sure he was brilliant in relief of J.T. Barrett in last season's Michigan game, but being the starter is a whole different animal.

On Haskins' first pass of the game, a crisp toss to Terry McLaurin for 27 yards, it was clear that there was a new sheriff in town. Two plays later there was an equally crisp pass to McLaurin for a 2-yard touchdown. It's not that Barrett couldn't have completed those passes, as McLaurin was wide open on both plays. There was just a certain zip on the passes that was not generally present when Barrett took to the air and a decisiveness from the new field general when he went back to pass that I also think was missing.

That zip was there for most of the afternoon as Haskins went 22 of 30 for 313 yards and five touchdowns, the latter two figures high-water marks for a first-time starter at Ohio State. Sure there was that interception in the third quarter. I think we will see things like that from time to time this season as Haskins grows into the position. But there is no denying his Cardale Jones-like arm, though we didn't really see the long ball in this outing.

That will come. But the long ball doesn't have to be overabundant on a Meyer-built team. There should be a wealth of receivers who can take a short- or medium-range pass and turn it into a big play with their speed and athleticism. We saw that on McLaurin's second score of the day, a play on which he took a nice pass from Haskins and turned on the jets for a 75-yard jaunt, Haskins' longest completion of the game. I was very impressed with the fact that two Oregon State defenders had solid angles on McLaurin on the play, but he scored regardless.

When Meyer arrived in Columbus, he famously called the receivers he inherited a "clown show." He has recruited his own athletes over the years, but last year in particular, I didn't find the wideouts much better than the previously criticized circus performers.

It was so nice in the 77-31 win over the Beavers to see so many receivers open so much of the time. Was Haskins throwing them open, not a Barrett strong suit, or were they getting open on their own? Or was it a combination? There were a lot of them getting open, not just McLaurin. In all, Haskins hit seven different receivers before yielding to Tate Martell, led by K.J. Hill with six receptions for 82 yards, Austin Mack with five for 69 and McLaurin with his four catches for a game-high 121-yards and the two scores.

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

Couple that passing with a strong rushing attack led by Mike Weber (186 yards) and J.K. Dobbins (74 yards), and Haskins and Martell were able to lead Ohio State to a balanced 375 yards rushing and 346 yards passing for 721 total yards. That was the second highest total in school history to the 776 run up against Bowling Green in 2016.

I know the Beavers are not Penn State or Michigan, but they are not BG either. (No offense, Bowling Green. I have a special place in my heart for you, my first sports journalism employer.) I was pretty impressed.

I was struck by something new (and also former) Rutgers offensive coordinator John McNulty said in the preview of the upcoming game with the Scarlet Knights found elsewhere in this paper.

"The only way to score is to get some big plays," McNulty said, talking about the Knights, but also offense in general. "I hope we have a lot of 14-play drives, but I just know the reality is that you've got to strike down the field and operate at different tempos to get (defenses) off balance.

"When you hit a big play, you've got to get up on the ball and try to hit another one. I just think (the big play) is essential to scoring. I don't think we're going to just throw a bunch of 5-yard routes and hit some 4-yard runs and try to score. I think we want to advance the ball in chunks."

McNulty's vision is kind of what we were promised when Meyer arrived back in 2012. But when the team evolved into a club that featured "J.T. left and J.T. right," the big play became less of a factor. Barrett was a terrific runner but he didn't have the real breakaway capabilities of a quarterback such as Braxton Miller, and he didn't have the arm to pick up chunks of yardage through the air unless his receivers caught it and ran. J.T. was a great QB, a great leader and a winner, but not necessarily the guy to operate a big-play offense – not that he didn't do it at times.

We know Ohio State has two big-play running backs in Dobbins and Weber. Perhaps now, with Haskins at the aerial controls, the team can also feature the bevy of receivers on the club who, for whatever reasons, have underachieved and the Buckeyes can rack up the video game-type yardage that the fans love and opposing defensive coordinators hate.

And I don't want to forget the offensive line. No offense can run up over 700 yards and 70 points – seven points were scored by the defense – on such a balanced attack without strong play from the big uglies, and this was a real area for concern heading into the season. I was especially pleased to see that acting head coach Ryan Day had special praise for guard Malcolm Pridgeon, a lineman who came to Columbus from the JUCO ranks to much fanfare but had accomplished little to date. I am excited to finally see what Pridgeon (6-7, 310) can do in his final season.

Of course the Buckeyes are going to need all the help they can get from the offense if the defense is going to be giving up 31 points per game as they did against the Beavers. I am going to need to watch another game or so to figure out what was wrong with the defense, assuming it doesn't improve in the next game with Rutgers.

One thing that struck me in the opener, especially on the lengthy runs by Artavis Pierce early in the third quarter, was the lack of speed displayed by members of the Ohio State secondary. I don't know how fast Pierce is, but he was leaving Buckeye defenders in the dust. As I alluded to previously, Meyer recruits for speed. If you have earned a spot in the Buckeye defensive backfield, you have the jets. I worry that the Ohio State defenders were either confused or not putting in the effort, neither thing good. Or maybe Pierce and the Beavers are just that fast. It's something I will be watching, and I know the coaching staff will be, too.

One defender who lived up to his billing – and it was pretty lofty billing to live up to – was Nick Bosa. The junior all-everything defensive end was a human highlight film in the first half against Oregon State, with four tackles, including two sacks, and two fumble recoveries, one for a touchdown. The way to win postseason awards is to get lots of exposure on "SportsCenter," and I have a feeling that, barring injury, Bosa is going to be a mainstay on ESPN's flagship show – and other shows – this season.

On another defense line note, we had heard rumblings that Dre'Mont Jones was going to add pressure on the quarterback from his tackle position this season, and the 6-3, 286-pounder didn't disappoint with two sacks of his own.

Special Teams Notes

Will we recognize football in 10 years? This fair catch on kickoffs rule is about the stupidest rule I have seen in some time, and that's among a lot of recent changes I don't like. Talk about watering down one of the most exciting plays in football. Nothing can turn a game like a long kick return, and a big hit on coverage can ignite a team and its fans.

This change in rules could have a unique and unintended effect on Meyer's Buckeyes. It has been a tradition under the coach for younger players to earn their playing time by performing well on special teams. The rules makers are limiting a stage upon which young Buckeyes can audition.

On another special teams note, why does it seem like Meyer's Buckeyes continue to struggle on punt returns? Fan favorite C.J. Saunders looked uncomfortable on punt returns against Oregon State and coughed up the ball on one of his attempts, giving the Beavers possession at the Buckeye 24.

On the positive side, Demario McCall later returned a punt 26 yards to give Ohio State good field position at the Beaver 46, setting up the Buckeyes' 10th touchdown. I thought McCall, who also returned a kickoff 21 yards, was going to be Ohio State's primary return man. McCall's kick return equaled the longest of the game and was one of only four returns on 18 kickoffs during the contest.

Springer Show Continued

OK, what's a column without some mention of the Zach and Urban controversy.

I remain surprised at how many of you are so surprised at the bashing that Ohio State has been taking nationally over what rival fans and most pundits perceive as a slap on the wrist – if that – for Meyer. The only thing that would have satisfied the masses would have been a firing,

forfeiture of games, a reduction in scholarships, a bowl ban and, possibly, a prison sentence for the three-time national championship coach – and I don't mean at Club Fed. And that punishment would have led to weeks more of gleeful discourse.

This national hysteria is actually a validation of the status of the Ohio State program. There is a reason that Maryland, involved in a scandal of a far more serious nature than Ohio State, is flying under the sports radio radar. No one cares about Maryland football. Buckeye football is a big deal, and so is Meyer.

When will this all go away, I am frequently asked. When a new scandal involving a college or pro team of note comes along to replace it. There's a lot of air time and Internet space to be filled, and Meyer and Ohio State are the hot topic right now. If the story fades a little bit, it will heat back up when Meyer takes the sidelines against Tulane on Sept. 22.

As for the many Buckeyes fans I have spoken to, it seems like 80 percent think Meyer's punishment was proper and just. Another 10 percent are adamant that Meyer did nothing wrong and did not deserve any punishment. The remaining 10 percent are equally adamant that Meyer should have been fired, as he is a disgrace to Ohio State.

One thing I have thought about quite a bit recently involves a central figure in this whole mess who is not present to tell his side of the story (please put the mobile devices down, participants) – Earle Bruce.

I can't help but wonder if things might have been different if Earle had been around and in good health over the past few years. Would he have told Meyer, his protégé, to cut Zach Smith loose sooner? Would he have told Smith, his grandson, to straighten up and tend to his job and family? Would he have done nothing because he felt it was none of his business? We will never know, but I doubt things could have been worse if he were around to offer his perspective and advice.

I know this: No one loved Ohio State football more than Earle Bruce, and I am sure he would be mortified with what is going on today.

In-Game Participation

While you might not think about it, during a Buckeye game is a great time to hop on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin crew is on the Forum throughout the game offering their analysis of the contest and reporting on injuries and offering other updates. When I got bored during the rain delay I jumped on and put my two cents in.

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