

# Buck Beat

Spring football came to a close with several Ohio State players thinking about ways to shed unwanted pounds.

Head coach John Cooper, a strong proponent of improvement through weight training, saw a few players this spring who had bulked up in the wrong places.

Cooper singled out several players as being "too heavy," but quickly added that he didn't believe the extra weight would be a problem in the fall.

Cited as being over their playing weights were sophomore tailback Dante Lee and a trio of redshirt freshmen — fullback William Houston and offensive linemen Rod Smith and Jason Winrow.

"I think Dante is seven to 10 pounds too heavy right now," Cooper said. "I think he was a little bit concerned with adding weight during the off-season and I think it slowed him down a little."

"But he's not the only one who's overweight. I think William Houston is too heavy right now. I think Rod Smith and Jason Winrow are too heavy. But when it gets hot this summer and two-days roll around, a lot of these guys will drop weight. We're not too worried about it."

Lee's normal playing weight is 175, but he was up around 185 for much of the spring. Houston was around the 260-pound mark, up from his listed playing weight of 235, while Smith (290) and Winrow (280) both carried 10 to 15 extra pounds during spring drills.

OSU TIGHT end Jeff Ellis suffered a setback in his comeback from reconstructive knee surgery after being allegedly assaulted April 28.

According to OSU police, Ellis was driving in the campus area about 2:30 a.m. when he stopped to avoid a man standing in the street.

When Ellis got out of his car to tell the man to move out of the way, the man allegedly struck Ellis on the top of the head and on his knees.

The man, Donald D. Wade, 21, of Columbus, was later arrested and charged with one count of assault and one count of vandalism.

Ellis was treated at University Hospitals and released. He reportedly stretched ligaments in his surgically repaired knee, moving his rehabilitation schedule back two to three weeks.

He was still scheduled to return to full strength in time for the Buckeyes' 1990 regular-season opener Sept. 8.

TWO BUCKEYES were rewarded with scholarships for their hard work during spring practice.

Cooper awarded scholarships to sophomore nose guard Greg Smith, who won the starting job over senior Kenny Coleman and junior Corey Pargo, and sophomore split end Brian Stablein, who will share the number one position with fellow sophomore Greg Beatty.

Smith and Stablein are the fourth and fifth walk-ons to receive scholarships in Cooper's three years with the Buckeyes.

Immediately after last season, senior punter Jeff Bohlman received a grant, while senior quarterback Chris Stablein, Brian's brother, got one after last year's spring practice.

After Cooper's first spring practice, Bobby Olive was placed on scholarship.

TWO FORMER Ohio State football players signed free agent contracts with NFL teams.

Defensive back David Brown signed with the Atlanta Falcons, while former place-kicker Matt Frantz signed with

the Philadelphia Eagles.

Brown played for the Buckeyes from 1986-89, while Frantz played in 1986 and 1987.

Three OSU players were selected in this year's NFL draft. Jeff Davidson was chosen by the Denver Broncos, Joe Staysniak was picked by the San Diego Chargers and Tim Moxley went to the Washington Redskins.

In related news, former OSU wide receiver and kick returner Jamie Holland was traded from San Diego to the Los Angeles Raiders for an undisclosed future draft choice. Holland played for the Buckeyes in 1986.

FORMER OHIO State offensive lineman Doug France was hospitalized in serious condition May 6 after an auto accident in Laguna Hills, Calif., that killed another motorist.

France, who played for the Buckeyes from 1972-74, was arrested for investigation of felony drunken driving after the accident near his home.

According to police reports, France was driving his car at an estimated 70 to 85 mph when he apparently lost control and veered into the path of another car, driven by Maria Contreras, also of Laguna Hills. Contreras was killed in the crash.

France was hospitalized with major head injuries and a broken pelvis.

He played in the NFL from 1975 to 1981 with the Los Angeles Rams.

ANOTHER FORMER Buckeye has chosen a boxing career over football.

Derek Isaman has selected Detroit-based manager Ernie Brooks and New York-based promoter Shelley Finkel to direct his professional boxing career.

Isaman began by working with

world-ranked heavyweight Riddick Bowe in New York and was set to move to Tampa, Fla., in June to train under Joey Fariello, who also works with former Olympic gold medalist Mark Breland.

Isaman, who was an alternate for the 1988 U.S. Olympic boxing team, has an amateur boxing record of 85-10. He said he hoped his first professional bout could be held in Columbus at the Ohio State Fairgrounds Coliseum.

OSU HEAD basketball coach Randy Ayers and freshman forward Jim Jackson have been invited to the World Championships/Goodwill Games basketball trials, scheduled for May 17-22 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Jackson, the Big Ten freshman of the year and the Buckeyes' leading scorer with an average of 16.1 points per game, was one of the 66 players invited to compete for 12 spots on the U.S. team.

Ayers is one of several college head coaches who will help evaluate the talent.

The Goodwill Games will be held July 23-29 in Seattle and the World Championships are set for Aug. 8-19 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

THE BASKETBALL Buckeyes' exhibition tour of Europe's schedule has been finalized.

The team will play eight games between Aug. 25 and Sept. 4 in Belgium, France, Germany and Holland.

NCAA rules allow schools to take one international trip every four years. The Buckeyes have made two such trips — a tour of Finland and Sweden in 1978 and

a swing through Spain in 1982. Both trips were made under then-head coach Eldon Miller.

In 1986, another opportunity to travel was lost during the transition from Miller to his successor, Gary Williams.

The Buckeyes will report for their first workout Aug. 18, practice twice each day Aug. 19-22 and then have a final tuneup Aug. 23 before departing for Belgium. Their first game overseas will be Aug. 25.

OSU will take 12 players on the trip, including non-scholarship players Scott Reeves and Nick Hodak. NCAA rules prohibit freshman signees from participating in the trip.

TWO FUTURE Ohio State athletes had excellent track meets May 5.

Football recruit Robert Smith of Euclid, Ohio, took part in four first-place finishes, helping Euclid High School win the 38th annual Euclid Relays. He won the 100 and 200-meter dashes and anchored the 4x200 and 4x400-meter relays.

Track recruit Chris Nelloms of Dayton ran the 110-meter high hurdles in 13.62 seconds during a meet in his hometown. It was the best time among U.S. prepsters this spring.

NCAA ALL-AROUND gymnastics champion Mike Racanelli of Ohio State will take on former three-time world champion Kurt Thomas May 19-20 in a regional qualifier for the U.S. Gymnastics Federation Championships.

Ohio State will host the regional qualifier. The championships are set for June 8-10 in Denver.

## Dudley Inks OSU Cage Letter, Still Needs To Meet Minimum

By Mark Rea

Ohio State's basketball recruiting class for 1990 swelled to four members May 1 when Henderson, Texas, power forward Ricky Dudley signed a letter of intent to become a Buckeye next season.

Dudley has yet to qualify for freshman eligibility under Proposition 48, awaiting scores from the ACT he took for a second time in early April. He scored 16 on his first ACT, two points lower than the minimum score now required by the revisions in Prop 48.

Dudley and the Buckeyes have an agreement that states if Dudley cannot achieve the minimum score of 18 on the ACT, the letter of intent will be voided.

"If that happens, I'll go the junior college route," Dudley told BSB. "But I'm confident I can pass the test. I really enjoyed my visit to Ohio State and I'm looking forward to becoming a Buckeye next year and playing for a team that's going to be a national power."

The 6-7, 225-pound forward averaged 19.0 points and 10.0 rebounds as a senior and fills a void for the Buckeyes, who were seeking inside help for centers Perry Carter and Bill Robinson.

Dudley earned all-state honors on the hardwood as well as Texas 4-A player of the year honors on the gridiron. Using his 4.6 speed in the 40-yard dash, Dudley piled up 36 receptions for 940 yards and 14 touchdowns



Ricky Dudley

as a wide receiver.

Schools such as Southern Cal, LSU and Miami (Fla.) wanted his name on a football letter of intent, but Dudley resisted.

"Everyone says I should play football, but basketball is my first love," he said. "I want to play basketball and I want to play for Ohio State."

Dudley's decision affected the Buckeyes' recruiting plans for next season. Head coach Randy Ayers had five

scholarships to award this year and planned on banking two after signing Ohio recruits Jimmy Ratliff, Joe Reid and Jamie Skelton.

Should Dudley pass his entrance exam and become a Buckeye, Ayers would have only three scholarships to give next season — one left over from this year and the grants from Treg Lee and Carter when they complete their senior years.

OSU is reportedly interested in several players next season including 6-8 forward Chip Hare of Massillon Perry, 6-8 center Antonio Watson of Columbus Eastmoor, 6-2 guard Dejua Townsend of Columbus Whetstone, 6-0 point guard Doug Etzler of Convo Crestview and 6-8 forward Will Macon of Pittsburgh (Pa.) Perry Tradition.

"We originally planned to limit this year's recruiting class to three," Ayers said. "But when you have a chance to recruit a player like Ricky Dudley, you go after him."

Dudley selected the Buckeyes over Big Ten rival Indiana. He also considered Louisiana Tech, where his uncle is on the basketball coaching staff.

Should he be eligible, Dudley is expected to compete for playing time as a power forward along with fellow recruit Reid. Their presence will allow Chris Jent, a starter at forward this season, to move back to guard, his natural position.



## Cage Recruit Has Traveled Rocky Road To Get To OSU

## Dudley Prefers His Anonymity For Now

By Mike Wachsman

By all indications, incoming Ohio State freshman basketball player Ricky Dudley should be one of the bright lights in the Big Ten over the next few years.

However, at the present time, Dudley wishes he had a dimmer to make the spotlight fade.

A much-heralded player out of Henderson, Texas, the 6-8, 235-pound Dudley is receiving a great deal of attention for his play in the competitive Worthington Summer Recreation League.

His defensive skills, along with a physique that appears to have been chiseled from stone by a master sculptor, make that spotlight tough to escape.

"It's not my time to shine yet," Dudley said. "I don't see that me getting publicity is necessarily good. I haven't really contributed to the team yet, so why should I get this much publicity?"

The publicity comes, in part, because experts believe Dudley can help replace longtime center Perry Carter, who graduated after last season. Still, Dudley isn't sure he can fill Carter's shoes, or anyone else's, for that matter.

"I can't say I can come in and contribute right off," Dudley said. "I say let the success of the team go on and I can move in gradually. I will probably take Perry's role, but I won't be playing center."

While Dudley will officially become a member of the Buckeyes this fall, his road to St. John Arena has been a long one.

He failed to pass the ACT, being stuck at 17 three times, and was desig-

nated as a Proposition 42 student. However, instead of enrolling at Ohio State and having just three years of eligibility remaining, he spent one year at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, a prep school that allowed him to keep working toward passing the ACT while also playing organized basketball.

Within the last year, Dudley finally achieved a passing grade on the ACT and led Fork Union to a 24-3 record, averaging 19 points and 10 rebounds per game.

"When I didn't pass my ACT and went to Fork Union, (OSU head) Coach (Randy) Ayers kept my head up," Dudley said. "He called me the day after I didn't make it and told me that it would give me a year of maturity and it would be a straight year of basketball."

"I had played football in the past, in high school, and that kind of cut into my productivity in basketball."

Not only did Dudley play football, he played it extremely well. He was named the Class 4-A player of the year in Texas as a senior and had numerous big-time programs trying to recruit him for his gridiron skills.

With his impressive frame, which he says has had only one season of weight work at Fork Union, it is easy to see why people might mistake him for a football player. But he will concentrate on the hardwood.

"I never really saw myself playing college football," Dudley said. "I said if I got a good enough school to play basketball at, then I'd take it. That's what I got, too."

"I think I have more potential to be better in basketball. You strive for more playing a sport you like more, and I like basketball a lot more than I like football."

Dudley's football squad made the state semifinals, but he was denied the same opportunity in basketball when it was learned that he had taken a visit to Ohio State during a time period illegal in the Texas high school rule book.

Despite that snafu, Dudley said he knew he wanted to move to Ohio after visiting the Columbus campus. In fact, the move in less than a year from Texas to Virginia to Ohio was a welcome change.

"Basically, I knew what Ohio would be like," Dudley said. "It was the best visit I had. I knew what would be in store for me when I got here this summer. I was just really excited to come up here. I need to get used to the surround-

ings and the campus a little bit, but I know I'll like it."

Dudley is a very soft spoken individual away from the competition. But get him on a basketball court in the heat of battle and he transforms into something else.

"I'm not really sure what it is," he said. "On the court, I tend to get a little mean and aggressive. When I'm around people, I just try to be myself. I try to be polite and mannerable to everybody."

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## Muscular Freshman Prefers To Make Name For Himself

# Dudley Claims He Is Not Another Carter

By Rich Leonardo

When former Ohio State center and resident strong man Perry Carter graduated last year, Buckeye fans far and wide feared this year's team would lack inside strength, rebounding and intimidation.

Fear not, Buckeye faithful.

Help has arrived from the Longhorn State in the muscular form of 6-7, 240-pound freshman forward Rickey Dudley.

But the OSU freshman cautions fans not to expect the same things from him that they got used to from Carter.

"There's only one Perry Carter and I'm the only Rickey Dudley, and there will probably never be another Perry Carter," Dudley said. "So I'm going to go out and do what I can for both the team and myself and not try to fill anybody's shoes."

Whether Dudley likes it or not, his chiseled, muscular frame and strength in the paint are certain to remind people of the stoic Carter.

"When people look at Rickey's physique, they're quick to think, 'Man, this guy's going to just dominate out there,'" said OSU assistant coach Les Fertig. "So consequently his appearance leads to comparisons to Perry, and that's simply a cross that Rickey will have to bear."

"But Rickey is making a name for himself, although people need to remember that this is only his second year of playing basketball year-round."

Dudley's year-round basketball has been limited to the past two seasons because of his immense talent on the gridiron as well as on the court.

Coming out of Henderson (Texas) High School, Dudley was one of the most sought-after tight ends in the country, being named Texas player of the year following his senior season.

"Ohio State somewhat recruited me as a football player, but Miami (Fla.) and Southern Cal were the two schools who showed the most interest in me," Dudley said. "But I guess I always knew I was going to pick basketball over football anyway."

Despite his prowess on the football field, basketball was equally a good choice for Dudley.

A three-year starter at Henderson, he averaged 19 points and 12 rebounds per game as a senior. Last year, after failing to qualify for college freshman eligibility under Proposition 48, he prepped at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, averaging 19 points and 11 rebounds per contest.

From Texas to Virginia to Columbus, Ohio, seems like quite a trek for a young man, but for Dudley, it was the only way to go.

"I've only been here this year, but I feel like I've been here about two years," he said. "All of the guys have made me feel so much a part of this team that it's been wonderful. The atmosphere here is like one big family, and when I experienced that feeling, there was no doubt about where I was going to school."

Dudley isn't the only one happy about his decision to spend the next four years at Ohio State.

"Rickey has made some nice adjustments and I feel he's right where he should be at this time," Fertig said. "All he needs is more minutes, but with us right in the middle of the Big Ten season, those developmental minutes are hard to come by. But with time, his progress will come along a lot quicker than people might expect."

Through Feb. 15, Dudley was averaging 1.8 points, 2.1 rebounds and about eight minutes of playing time per game. He has proved that he has good offensive skills (shooting 63.6 percent from the field) as well as excellent defensive skills (21 of his 29 rebounds were off the defensive glass).

"I feel I've contributed pretty well as far as playing goes, but more than anything, my job this year is doing duty in practice," Dudley said. "Getting our starters ready for games not only helps us prepare for a victory, but also helps me become a better player."

"Plus, it's been a great privilege for me just to be part of this team and the winning tradition here at Ohio State."

Dudley's physical strength should enable him to become an even bigger part of OSU's winning tradition, but he knows it will take more than muscle.

"My strength is an asset for me," he said, "but knowing how to play an opponent is more important than being able to outmuscle them."



Ohio State freshman center Rickey Dudley (40) has been muscling his way into increased playing time lately. Dudley has provided some key rebounding off the bench for the Buckeyes, grabbing 21 of his 29 season rebounds off the defensive boards.

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Dudley's ability to think beyond his biceps has OSU head coach Randy Ayers more than pleased.

"Rickey's coming along quite well and he's really starting to feel more comfortable as the year goes on," Ayers said. "His biggest adjustment, like all newcomers, comes when we change our plays.

"When we call a play in the huddle and then are forced to change it because of the defense we're faced with, the quick on-the-court audible becomes difficult. Overall, though, I'm very pleased with Rickey's play and work ethic."

Having that work ethic seems appropriate for any competitor wanting to achieve success in the ultraphysical Big Ten.

"It's physical out there, but then I'm used to a physical game," Dudley said. "Adjusting to each opponent and having to think and react instead of just reacting has been the biggest adjustment for me."

Dudley's wisdom about dueling Big Ten opponents appears to be growing with each passing week.

"I think we'll see more of Rickey as the season goes on, especially since he came in and did so well against Michigan and Illinois," Fertig said. "What people don't realize is that Rickey is not a back-to-the-basket type of player. He's much better off running the open floor, facing the basket."

Whether running the open floor or buried under the bucket, Dudley's basketball education appears to be top-notch.

"Rickey has picked up a lot this year," Fertig said. "He's learned the system well, he knows what's expected of him and he works hard every day. All things considered, I'd have to say he has a definite edge on next year's incoming freshmen, and he's a guy they'll have to

beat out for playing time.

"Without a doubt, I project Rickey as a player who'll see a ton of action at Ohio State before his career is over."

While Fertig's assessment of Dudley's future appears boundless, the muscular freshman has his mind set on exact goals.

"This year, I wanted to come in, make my stand, be ready and become an asset to the team," Dudley said. "I wanted to establish myself as a future threat in this league, but I never had any crazy goals like being freshman of the year or anything."

"Just coming in and proving to myself that I could play at this level was a high enough goal for me."

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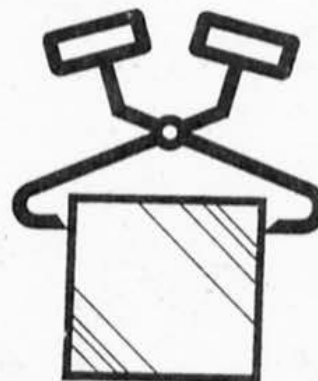
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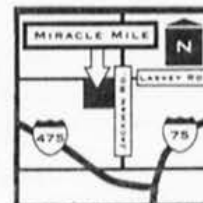
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## '91-'92 Schedule

Nov. 26 Miami (Ohio), W 94-61  
Nov. 30 Chicago State, W 116-44  
Dec. 4 Ohio University, W 78-52  
Dec. 7 Oregon State, W 84-56  
Dec. 14 Howard, W 114-53  
Dec. 18 UC-Santa Barbara, W 82-75  
Dec. 21 Southern Cal, L 79-77  
Dec. 29 American Univ., 96-70  
Jan. 2 Penn State, W 73-63  
Jan. 7 Michigan State, W 62-46  
Jan. 11 Northwestern, W 60-52  
Jan. 14 Indiana, L 91-83  
Jan. 19 Iowa, W 85-81  
Jan. 22 Minnesota, W 72-69  
Jan. 26 Seton Hall, L 68-64  
Jan. 30 Illinois, W 74-72  
Feb. 2 Michigan, W 68-58  
Feb. 5 Wisconsin, W 86-72  
Feb. 8 Purdue, W 71-59  
Feb. 15 Wisconsin, W 67-63  
Feb. 18 at Iowa  
@ 7:30 p.m./ESPN  
Feb. 23 INDIANA  
@ 2 p.m./CBS  
Feb. 26 at Purdue @ 8 p.m.  
Feb. 29 at Michigan State  
@ 1 p.m.  
Mar. 3 MICHIGAN  
@ 7:30 p.m./ESPN  
Mar. 7 NORTHWESTERN  
@ 3 p.m.  
Mar. 11 ILLINOIS @ 8 p.m.  
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*Sophomore Giving Buckeyes Much-Needed Help On Boards***Dudley Elbowing His Way Out Of Shadows**

MIKE GREER



Ohio State sophomore forward/center Rickey Dudley (40), shown here jockeying for position under the basket, has provided the Buckeyes with rebounding help this season. Through 12 games, he was averaging 6.6 boards per game.

By JEFF RAPP  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

With a chiseled 6-7, 235-pound physique and the competitive fire of a bull, it's hard to believe that Rickey Dudley has grabbed so little attention on the basketball court over the years.

Maybe it's because the soft-spoken, sleepy-eyed Texan was never considered a major basketball prospect while at Henderson High School. Maybe it's because, in just two seasons at Ohio State, Dudley has already stood in the huge shadows of forwards Jim Jackson, Chris Jent and Lawrence Funderburke. Or maybe it's because few people fully appreciate the tireless efforts of a player who has to grunt and sweat for every statistic he can muster.

But Dudley, a sophomore center/forward for the Buckeyes, isn't out for fame. If he were, he no doubt would be playing football at one of the more than one hundred universities that begged the All-Texas tight end to come aboard.

Instead, Dudley shunned them all and committed to play on the hard court for Ohio State in 1990, adding a much-needed Big Ten body to the Buckeye roster. He also agreed to attend Fork Union Military Academy in Virginia that year to help him adjust and maintain four years of college eligibility.

So far, the plan is working to perfection.

Dudley, the ultimate hard-hat player, was an ideal lift off the bench last season, especially during OSU's draining run in the NCAA Tournament. And this season, he has quickly become a key front-line player for the Bucks, just in time to help resurrect a team smarting from the loss of inside players Jackson, Jent, Bill Robinson and Steve Hall.

"Rickey's played well," understated Ohio State head coach Randy Ayers.

"He's been a force for us all year long and he's our best inside defender. Plus he's been more of a vocal leader for us, which is surprising because he's a pretty quiet guy."

Of course, Dudley is not overstepping his boundaries by being a more verbal player this year. As much as anyone on the team, he has a full understanding of his role.

"I just feel like I'm doing the things I need to do this year," he said. "I'm not one to try to do more than I should, but I'm not going to back down from a challenge, either."

"This year, I needed to show I can play hard for more than a few minutes at a time. So I'm just trying to stay confident and focused out on the court."

Once Dudley started proving his stamina and confidence this season, Ayers moved him into the starting lineup along with 6-2 guard Jamie Skelton in time for the Dec. 28-29 Far West Classic.

Behind inspired play by its two new starters, Ohio State won the four-team tournament and went on to five straight wins before dropping its first Big Ten game, a 77-60 loss to Michigan State Jan. 13.

The change made sense for a team needing to assert its quickness and defensive pressure, especially early in games. But slotting Dudley and Skelton in for a pair of 6-8 forwards — Tom Brandewie and Jimmy Ratliff — has caused Ayers constant concern in the rebounding department.

But Dudley has been doing his part to make sure rebounding does not become a seasonlong problem for the Buckeyes. In his six games as a starter, he has ripped down 45 rebounds (7.5 per game), including 16 vs. Oregon in the Far West title game.

"He's rebounding the ball for us, he's really giving us a presence on the backboards, and he's been active," Ayers said. "If he can get us eight rebounds a game, we'll be very happy with that."

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Dudley's recent surge on the boards tied him with Lawrence Funderburke for the team lead in rebounds with 79 through Jan. 13. A team-best 28 of Dudley's caroms have come off the offensive boards.

"It's a matter of establishing yourself and holding your position underneath," Dudley said of his rebounding mastery. "Sometimes I give away some height, but I'd like to think that I can't be moved out of there very easily."

That formula sounds simple, but it also seems difficult to accomplish for a guy who is smallish for his position by Big Ten standards. But looking up at much more heralded players like 6-10 Acie Earl of Iowa and 6-11 Mike Peplowski of Michigan State hasn't fazed Dudley yet. And with a multitude of 6-9 talents such as Chris Webber (Michigan), Glenn Robinson (Purdue), Alan Henderson (Indiana) and Deon Thomas (Illinois) waiting to do battle, there's no time for him to get scared.

"It seems like every team in the league has a talented big man and it's going to be up to me to hold them down, but that's the kind of challenge I like," Dudley said. "A lot of people talk about me being shorter than those guys and how we won't be able to match up, but to me being 6-7 isn't a disadvantage."

"Even when I give up inches to someone, I feel like I have the strength to contend with those taller players. Plus, they've got to deal with my quickness, which is something I'm trying to use more and more."

Dudley also has made opponents respect his jump shot this year, a part of his game that was not even shown last season.

"Last year, I'd come in and just look to grab a rebound and play good defense. It seemed like whenever I touched the ball on offense, I'd just swing it back around and never look to shoot," said Dudley, who attempted just 17 field goals in 216 minutes last season, making nine.

"This year, I'm looking to shoot my shot when it's there, and I've worked on my shot a whole lot."

For that reason, it has not been unusual to find Dudley firing up the basketball from 15 to 18 feet away from the hoop. More often than not, the ball has found the bottom of the net, and the Buckeyes hope he takes that shot even more often.

Dudley's offensive improvement has been aided by special tutoring from Mark Anderson, a first-year OSU assistant coach who excelled as a shooting forward while playing at Missouri from 1973-76. Now Dudley no longer looks to

get rid of the ball as soon as it hits his palms and his consistent jumpers have given OSU another weapon.

After scoring just 38 points in 26 games last year, Dudley had already tossed in 78 in 12 games through Jan. 13 this year, hitting 29 of 53 field shots for 54.7 percent.

His 20-of-31 shooting (64.5 percent) at the foul line is also up from last year's 20-for-35 (57.1 percent) showing.

Dudley's much more assertive play appears to be a big jump, but player and coach don't see it that way.

"I think that comes from being more confident each year," Dudley said. "Between my freshman and sophomore year, a lot of people were telling me I could be a good player and some guys were even expecting me to start. That really makes you want to push yourself."

Ayers figures that it was only a matter of time before Dudley asserted him-

self on the basketball court.

"I think you have to remember that this is Rickey's third year out of high school," Ayers said. "I think the year in the prep school really helped him from an emotional standpoint."

"Certainly now that he's concentrating totally on basketball, his basketball skills have really improved. We're just hoping for continued improvement because he's still a young player, being only a sophomore in terms of eligibility."

Dudley agreed that his trek to Virginia gave him the maturation and basketball confidence he needed to be successful in the rugged Big Ten.

"I knew it was going to be real physical in this league and I concentrated on that before I got here," said Dudley, who averaged 19 points and 11 rebounds a game during his year in prep school. "I think that year at Fork Union helped a lot because it was my first year without

football and I kind of needed that time to think about just basketball."

With Funderburke, Skelton and others leading the way, Dudley is still the fourth or fifth option in the Buckeye offense, but he likes it that way.

"It's just great to play with a guy like Lawrence because he's going to draw one or two or even three guys every possession and eventually I'm going to get some buckets because people are laying off me and he's a good enough passer to find me," Dudley said. "Once I score a few, then people have to play me straight up, which helps our offense."

Chances are that Dudley will score a few, maybe just enough to return Ohio State to the NCAAs. But odds also favor Dudley receiving minimal acclaim should the Buckeyes have another successful season.

"I just want us to win and have a chance to defend our Big Ten title," he said. "Basketball is a team game and I'm just trying to do my part."

## Former Captain Returns To OSU To Finish Work On Degree, Help Ayers

By MARK REA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

The closely cropped beard is not familiar, but the face and the big smile certainly are.

Jamaal Brown has returned to the Ohio State men's basketball team, albeit as an undergraduate assistant coach.

After finishing his career with the Buckeyes last season and captaining the team to a second consecutive Big Ten championship, Brown had hoped for a tryout with a team in the National Basketball Association.

His choices were limited, however, and he accepted an offer to play for the Columbus Horizon of the Continental Basketball Association. The Horizon got off to a horrible start, though, and Brown's tour of duty lasted only 10 games. He shot only 32 percent and averaged 5.7 points per game during the brief stint.

Less than a month later, Brown was back in school at Ohio State, taking a full load of class work and trying to obtain his degree in communications.

That's when he was approached by OSU head coach Randy Ayers.

"I was enrolled back in school, taking 15 hours this quarter, and hoping to get my degree by the end of this summer," Brown told *BSB*. "In the meantime, Coach asked me if I wanted to help out

with the team a little bit and I said yes."

So far, Brown is feeling his way along as an unpaid assistant.

"I'm just going to be helping out a little bit, talking to the younger players and doing a little editing on tape," he said. "We have this new computer program in the locker room where we can edit tapes, and I'm doing some of that. I'm doing a little bit of everything."

Ayers stressed that Brown's main concern at the moment is to obtain his degree, but he added that he's happy to have one of his former players around whenever he has the time.

"I've always liked Jamaal, and I think he'll be a positive influence on our young kids," Ayers said.

A four-year starter for the Buckeyes from 1989-92, Brown finished his career 25th on the school's all-time scoring list with 1,139 points. He is also tied for first in games started (126), second in games played (127), second in career three-pointers (109) and tied for third in

career steals (158).

But playing the game was all that ever mattered to the Arlington, Texas, native. Coaching was something he never really thought about.

"I never really did," Brown said. "I don't even know about it now. I'm trying it. I don't know what I'm getting myself into, really, but you never know. I might like it."

In addition to lending the experience culled from being a four-year starter and two-time Big Ten champion, Brown also says he can learn from his coaching experience.

"It's going to give me a chance to stay in basketball and continue to learn from Coach Ayers and the other coaches," he said. "Plus, I get to shoot around a little bit. I still haven't stopped wanting to fulfill my dream, and that's to play professional basketball."

"I'm only 22. I've got a long time ahead of me, and hopefully by next summer I can get to some camps and try it again."



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## Junior Co-Captain's Outside Shooting Work Beginning To Pay Off

# Dudley Looks To Step Up On Offensive End



**BOXING THEM ALL OUT** — Ohio State junior forward Rickey Dudley (40) will box out opponents and teammates alike when going for a rebound. This year, though, Dudley is looking to improve his offensive output with more outside shooting.

By JEFF RAPP  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Hundreds of miles away in the sleepy hills of Virginia, Fork Union Military Academy head basketball coach Fletcher Arritt has not been able to keep in contact with Ohio State forward Rickey Dudley, his former player.

But during a recent interview with *BSB*, Arritt gave a message.

"My advice to Rickey is very simple: Score!" Arritt said. "Rickey was a good scorer here, but he's looked real unsure of himself offensively from what I've seen of him on TV. He needs to get that scorer's mentality back."

Dudley, a Texas native who attended Fork Union for one year, must have caught a sound wave or two from his old stomping grounds.

Despite being 6-7, the well-muscled Dudley has been one of the more dependable rebounders in the Big Ten in his first two seasons with the Buckeyes. Last year he played in all but one game, started nine and averaged nearly as many rebounds (4.8) as points (5.1).

But after watching OSU struggle with a shooting percentage of 45.7 last year as a sophomore and knowing he could be better served as an offensive threat this year, Dudley worked diligently in the off-season on his outside shooting.

"He's worked on it an awful lot," OSU coach Randy Ayers said. "He's been in the gym an awful lot, so he's done a good job. If he continues to get better facing the basket, that's certainly going to help us because now we can play him at the three spot."

To this point in his career, Dudley has strictly been a four, or power forward, with emphasis on the power. But with the return of 6-9 forwards Lawrence Funderburke and Antonio Watson, the emergence of 6-11 sophomore center Nate Wilbourne, who has started the first four games of the season, and the successful debut of 6-11 freshman Gerald Eaker, Dudley is getting his chance on the wing.

He doesn't plan to abuse the privilege by shooting without conscience but would like to knock down enough jumpers to make opponents think.

"It's not a factor of trying to come out and score every time, but if I have the opportunity, I want to be a threat to the basket," said the junior co-captain. "Working on my shot really gave me confidence to be a threat."

"I worked a lot on my outside shots and it's starting to pay off. I knew my inside moves would always be there. I just needed to add to what I can do."

Ayers had a chance to experiment with Dudley in the second half of OSU's blowout win over UNC-Asheville on Dec. 4. Feeling he was out of position, the Bulldog defenders often tried Dudley alone in the corner. He tried to prove them wrong by firing up a couple of shots, but both of them hit the short end of the rim.

"The shots didn't go down and I was kind of disappointed, but one thing Coach Ayers told me was that he could live with those shots," Dudley said. "That really helped me out because I worked so hard on my shooting this summer and I want those shots to fall for my confidence."

"Coach Ayers picked me up pretty quick by saying that. Hopefully, I'll come back and hit those shots next time."

Still, Dudley has been more of an offensive force. While starting the first four games of the year, he has done his normal work on the boards with 29 rebounds, but he has been a consistent scorer as well with 35 points.

The newfound offensive confidence may be attributed not only to hard work, but also positive feedback from his teammates. Just prior to the season, Dudley was surprisingly named a co-captain along with senior guard Jamie Skelton.

"It's a great honor," he said. "It shows my teammates respect me as a person and a leader, so it means an awful lot."

Ayers was pleased with the choice, especially since Dudley has always been a player willing to contribute in any way.

"Rickey is sort of our blue-collar player," Ayers said. "He's the guy who does a little bit of everything. If he can continue to progress on the defensive end in guarding quicker front-line players, it's really going to help us because now we can rotate those four guards at two positions and have a bigger look on the front line."

Dudley already seems ideal for Ayers' full-court pressure set. His role is to harass the inbounder, then hustle to the first pass receiver to place an aggressive two-man trap. It's the kind of role best suited for a big, quick, all-out defensive player who can intimidate. It's a role made for Dudley.

"When Rickey's on the ball, he's very good because he has a low center of gravity, he gets the traps established quickly, and it really helps our interceptors," Ayers said. "He has a lot of value on this team and we're looking for a productive year from him."

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# More To Dudley's Talents As Captain Than Scoring, Rebounding For Bucks

By RICH LEONARDO  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When skies are sunny and seas are calm, being the captain of any ship seems like an easy job.

However, the true grit of any skipper comes to the forefront when skies turn stormy and waves push their vessels off course.

This season, Ohio State has endured some rough sailing, struggling to a 10-10 record and leaving the Buckeyes tied for eighth place in the Big Ten standings.

Throughout the team's early season success and its difficulties of late, junior co-captain Rickey Dudley has managed to keep a firm grip on the Buckeye helm.

"I did set some personal goals for this season, but I prefer to keep them to myself," he said. "My goals are mine and I don't like to bring them out into the public to be scrutinized, but being named captain was a nice accomplishment for me. It let me know that both Coach (Randy) Ayers and the team had a lot of confidence in me and my ability to lead this squad."

Burning up the nets with points or mastering the "no-look" pass are not prerequisites for being a good leader. Through Feb. 5, Dudley was averaging only 3.9 points and 4.1 rebounds per game and was shooting less than 38 percent from the field. But his contributions are more far-reaching than can be seen on a stat sheet.

"Rickey has given us good leadership this year and since the players selected him as a captain at the start of this season, I think he's given them exactly what they expected of him," OSU assistant coach Dave Cecutti said. "Even though we're going through some rough times, Rickey has been keeping the guys together and making sure everybody stays on the same page."

As a 6-7, 235-pound small forward,

the herculean Dudley strikes an imposing figure and seems well suited for his role as a captain.

"Rickey's appearance alone demands respect, plus he's really one of the more vocal guys on our team and he has taken his role as a co-captain very seriously," Ayers said. "His attitude toward being a captain proves to me that the team made a good decision in making their selections. Leadership is an attribute that you just can't coach."

Coaching the team to victories was something Ayers had become accustomed to in the past, but this season has been one filled with hard work and frustration for nearly everyone involved with the basketball program.

"Hey, I always work hard at everything I do," Dudley said, "and while I do feel positive about my adjustment to playing the small forward position, I can't feel too positive about anything as long as our losses keep mounting. It's been a long season for all of us and I think a lot of people are overlooking just how hard some of us have been working, especially since our record isn't what it should be."

"Yet I feel that I haven't performed all that well either, since I'm sure our record would have a lot more wins than losses if I had."

Despite Dudley's displeasure with his own performance, he has been a constant presence for the Buckeyes through both good and bad times as he's seen action in all 20 games this season while being in the starting lineup for 14 of those games.

"By having Rickey in the starting lineup, it gives us a bigger look, plus I feel he always gives us a good boost at the beginning of the game and gets us going in the right direction," Cecutti said. "Plus, sometimes you need someone on the floor who's willing to do things other than score and I think Rickey is doing just that. He's looking to get other people involved at both ends of

the court."

Involving his teammates is a chore Dudley readily accepts, even if it means passing up some potential shots himself.

"I can score and I am looking for my shot, but at the same time, I'm trying to be unselfish and move the ball around," he said. "We need to get the ball to our go-to guy, which lately has been (Lawrence) Funderburke."

While Dudley's unselfishness is admirable, the lack of scoring the Buckeyes get from his small forward position is quite a change from past OSU teams, especially during the three years that Jim Jackson manned that post.

"We are used to getting a lot of scoring from the small forward position, especially when Jimmy was here," Ayers said. "But now we've refocused our offense to get the ball into Lawrence and Jamie (Skelton) and hopefully let them score a lot of points for us. It's been a tough adjustment for both our players and our coaches, but we're coming along all right now."

While Dudley has labored in his offensive game, his performance on defense has been stellar.

"Defensively, Rickey always seems to draw the toughest assignment, so consequently, we're not too concerned with his offensive output," Cecutti said. "However, his defense, rebounding and leadership have been invaluable to us this year."

"Really, I think you have to consider Rickey one of our best defensive players, especially when you realize we ask him to defend opposing forwards, guards and centers depending on the personnel in the game. His great athleticism allows him to handle those tough assignments."

Dudley's defensive prowess is certainly not lost on Ayers.

"No doubt Rickey is one of our better defenders and I feel he has the ability to contain some of the top skill players in the league," the OSU head coach said. "You don't shut down the great scorers in the Big Ten, but Rickey with his athleticism can usually check them as well as anybody."

Dudley's talent was evident even back at Henderson (Texas) High School, where he was named all-state as he averaged 19 points and 12 rebounds per game his senior year. Following his final season at Henderson, Dudley attended prep school at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, where he averaged 19 points and 11 rebounds per contest.

Along with his hoop talents, Dudley was also a standout high school football player, earning all-state honors along with receiving much-heralded recognition as the player of the year in Texas. Dudley's gridiron exploits as a tight end had college recruiters banging down his door and consequently, since his arrival at Ohio State, speculation has surfaced yearly about the possibility of his playing football for the Buckeyes. Even if Dudley never dons the scarlet and gray for John Cooper, the possibility of getting drafted by the NFL on potential alone is possible.

But he insists that a return to the gridiron never crosses his mind.

"I've heard nothing about playing pro football from anybody, so I really don't have any comment on that," Dudley



Rickey Dudley

said. "Anyway, I'm here at Ohio State to get my education and play basketball. Basketball is the sport I am committed to."

While Dudley's commitment is to basketball, his dual talents could allow him the luxury of choice in selecting a future in professional athletics.

"Nothing is out of the realm of possibility, but I think Rickey is truly dedicated to this basketball program," Cecutti said. "After he has accomplished his goals on the basketball court, I'm sure if he wanted to he could choose because Rickey is a very gifted all-around athlete."

For Dudley, whose goals are team-oriented, the rewards he has received this season have been minimal.

"Obviously, we wanted to win the conference championship and, with the talent we have, I put being champions as a top priority," he said. "It's real hard now realizing that we're not going to win the conference title, plus knowing that we've really got to gut it out just to have a chance to play in the NCAA Tournament is tough to accept."

"Although a lot of our goals won't be achieved this year, some, like reaching our academic goals and having our seniors go out with a winning record, are still within reach."

For OSU's seniors to go out on a winning note, Dudley said he feels a certain part of the Buckeyes' game must improve quickly.

"The last five minutes of a game are crucial to the outcome of most contests in the Big Ten," he said. "We've taken both Michigan and Indiana to overtime on the road and come away each time with a loss. We have to be thinking and execute properly right up until the final buzzer if we're ever going to come out on top during these close games."

OSU's blowout victory over Wisconsin Feb. 5 saw the Buckeyes not only outscore the 16th-ranked Badgers 73-57, but also rebound them 26-23. For the Buckeyes, coming out on top of the rebounding battle with Wisconsin marked the first time during conference play that they have won that statistical war. Could this be the start of a positive stretch run for the Buckeyes?

"If we win out, I feel we should still be invited to play in the NCAA Tournament. But despite that, we need to go out and play with some pride," Dudley said. "I mean, if we go out and lose our last nine games, what would that say about our team and our character?"

"We should have a much better record than we do and with our talent and some hard work, I expect us to end this season with a good winning record."

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# Dudley Now Has Center Stage At Tight End Spot

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

What was once a position of strength for Ohio State — the tight end spot — is suddenly a position of concern.

Senior Rickey Dudley, who started five of OSU's 13 games last year, returns as the starter. But, for various reasons, OSU's depth at this key spot has been depleted:

- Senior D.J. Jones, who started 11 games (four in a double-tight end set with Dudley) last year, will miss the 1995 season after undergoing open-heart surgery to remove the pericardial sac around his heart. Jones is recovering from the procedure and hoping for a return to football in 1996.

- Redshirt freshman John Lumpkin dazzled the coaches with a fine showing in spring practice. But the 6-9, 260-pound Lumpkin suffered a stress fracture to a bone in his right foot during a Big Ten-sponsored basketball trip to Japan. He will miss at least the season opener against Boston College as he recovers.

- Junior Max Langenkamp, who logged time in all 13 games as a backup tight end and special-teamer, quit the team during spring practice.

- Junior Bob Houser moved to

fullback in the spring due to a lack of depth there, but the sudden losses at tight end have moved him back to tight end and into a backup role behind Dudley.

- Freshman Steve Wisniewski was among OSU's top recruits this year, but because of the lack of depth, he will be thrust into the fire quickly to see what he can do. While the coaching staff would like the luxury of redshirting him, he may be pressed into service against Boston College due to Lumpkin's absence.

Dudley, a 6-7, 240-pound converted basketball star, had nine catches for 108 yards and two touchdowns in his first effort on the gridiron since he was the Texas Class 4A player of the year as a high school senior (playing split end and free safety) in 1989.

Then, last winter he joined the OSU basketball team for his senior season, but he rarely granted interviews. However, on OSU's Photo Day Aug. 6, Dudley greeted the media and addressed the difficult road ahead for OSU's tight ends.

"I think the situation with D.J. is very unfortunate, but I guess the team has to go on and I know D.J. will be supporting us," Dudley said.

"Myself, I have to step up to that challenge and do the things that D.J. would do as far as playing, working hard every day, and do the little things that this team needs you to do," he said.

Obviously, Dudley is a big target with good speed. During spring drills, he was regularly used as a downfield receiver to stretch defenses, something rarely seen from an OSU tight end.

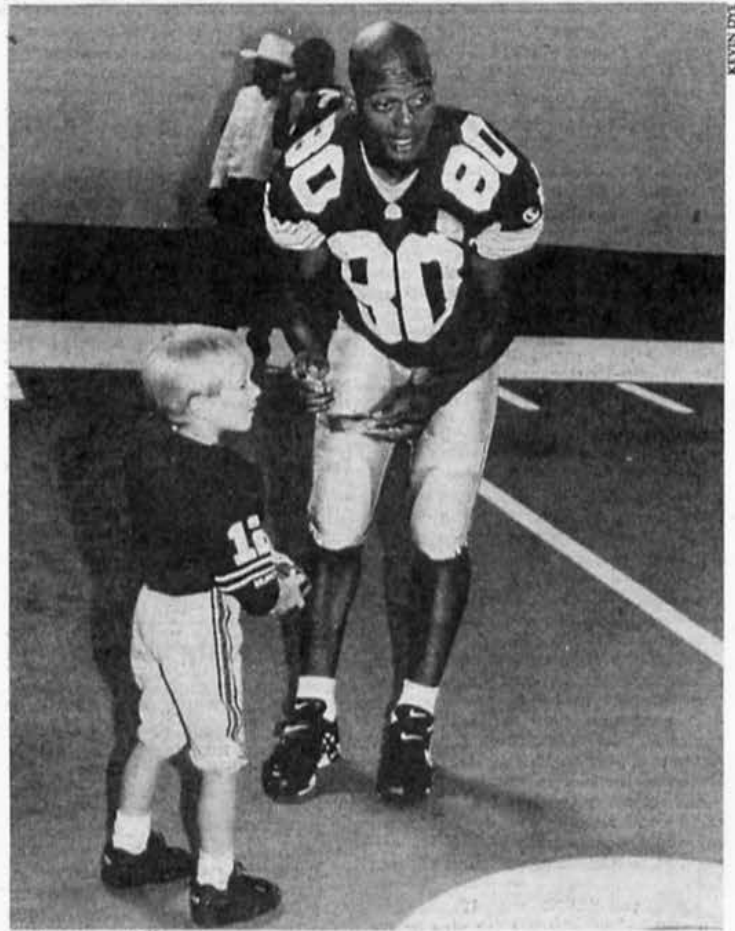
"I think the situation with the tight ends is a lot better than it has been in the past because I think I'm much more of an athletic type," Dudley said. "I'm probably a little faster than the tight ends we've had and I think that's a benefit for us to take advantage of, and hopefully we will."

Dudley's sudden move to football last year spurred speculation that he could move to the National Football League as almost a prototype, Eric Green-like tight end. But Dudley maintains he is not looking ahead to the fat paydays of the NFL.

"I'm not really looking at it like that at all," Dudley said. "I'm looking at it as if I can do the things to make the team successful, then if that opportunity comes for me it will come."

"If you're doing good and your team is doing good, then that's when they really look. So hopefully if this team does good, then my success will be good," he said.

OSU coach John Cooper is glad to



**THANKS, RICKEY** — Ohio State senior tight end Rickey Dudley takes time during the team's photo day to sign an autograph for youngster Matt Jenkins of New Boston, Ohio. Dudley will open the season as OSU's starting tight end.

have at least one sure hand with Dudley back at what has become a key spot for the offense.

"Rickey Dudley is a great athlete, as you know from watching him play basketball," Cooper said. "And, now that we've lost D.J. Jones, we are obviously very pleased to have Rickey playing football."

"I thought he did a good job for us last year. He's had an exceptional spring, and this summer he's worked as hard as any football player I've been around to put himself in position to have a great senior year. He can run. He can catch. He needs to work on his blocking right now, but I think he's a great athlete and all he needs is a little bit more experience to become an outstanding tight end."

JONES IS recovering at his family's home in Lebanon, Ohio. He underwent the open-heart procedure in mid-June at Ohio State University Medical Cen-

ter.

All signs, at this early stage, are good for Jones to make a full recovery.

"To see how happy the doctor was with my progress was reassuring," Jones told *The Columbus Dispatch*. "And to hear him once again tell me there will be no problem with my competing again next year was good to hear."

Jones has regained the 25 pounds he lost in the period after his surgery and is back to his playing weight of 245.

"It's up to me now, whether I play again or not," he said. "It's going to be a matter of how quick I can get myself back in shape."

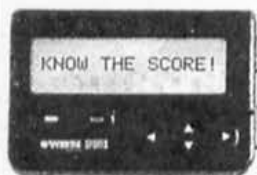
Jones played his first three seasons at OSU, thus he has a redshirt year to use this year. The surgery was required after a virus hardened the sac around his heart, limiting the amount of blood flow through the heart during strenuous exercise.



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## Texas Native Came To OSU On Basketball Scholarship

## Dudley Realizing That Football Is His Sport

By RICH LEONARDO  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State offensive stars Terry Glenn, Eddie George and Orlando Pace all bring their own special qualities to the Buckeyes.

Glenn provides great speed, while George gives power running a new meaning and Pace epitomizes the art of effective blocking.

While each of these Buckeyes is an exceptional athlete in his own right, there is one player on the team who possesses all three qualities along with the physical attributes that put fear in the hearts of defensive backs and dreams in the minds of NFL scouts.

OSU tight end Rickey Dudley has emerged as arguably the best athlete on one of the greatest Buckeye teams in history.

"Now, I don't know for sure, but I'd say it's a good bet that Rickey is probably the fastest tight end in the country," OSU head coach John Cooper said. "In addition to his speed, he also runs extremely hard with the ball and he does a good job of blocking, so I'm not at all surprised by the success he's had this year."

This season, Dudley has snared 32 receptions for 469 yards and six touchdowns, while his blocking has been essential in helping pave the way for George to rush for an OSU record 1,826 yards and a possible Heisman Trophy.

"It feels good to go out there and execute a running play the way it's drawn up by making a very effective block," Dudley said. "Eddie and I talk all the time about how I'll block my man and he lets me know how he intends to cut, so really, our communication, teamed with the success he's had running the ball this season, has really made it a joy to be out there blocking for him."

Some of the joys Dudley has reaped this season are by no means accidental. The 6-7, 240-pound senior was named the Texas Class 4A player of the year



**DUDLEY CARRIES DEFENDERS** — Ohio State senior tight end Rickey Dudley, pictured here carrying several Notre Dame defenders with him into the end zone, has become a potential prospect with his play for the Buckeyes this season.

following his final season at Henderson, Texas, High School. There he totaled 36 receptions for 940 yards and 14 touchdowns.

Dudley's prep success saw him emerge as one of the most highly recruited athletes in the country, but his love of basketball won out over football and he came to Ohio State on a basketball scholarship.

"I don't feel that playing basketball

has really helped or hurt me as a football player," Dudley said. "The sports are so different from each other that all I really feel is blessed to have been able to compete successfully in both at this level."

Success has indeed followed Dudley to whichever sports venue he has tried. He played four years of basketball at OSU and was a three-year starter while also being named team captain and most inspirational player as a junior. It was following his junior campaign that Dudley decided to give football a try, then promptly worked his way up to No. 2 tight end on the depth chart. Two days after the Buckeyes played in the Citrus Bowl, Dudley returned to the Buckeye basketball team for his senior season, which turned out to be his best. Starting 17 of the remaining 19 games, he averaged 13.3 points and 7.5 rebounds per game.

"Being a basketball player and having that additional height makes Rickey an excellent receiving target and, as a football coach, I've always looked to the

basketball courts and wondered what would happen if one of these tall, athletic guys were to put on the pads and give football a try," OSU offensive line coach Mike Jacobs said. "Well, what happened in our case was we found ourselves one very good tight end."

Dudley's success on the gridiron becomes even more impressive when considering the fact that he hadn't played football for almost four years and had never so much as played a down at the collegiate level.

"Coming into a program like Ohio State's after having been away from football for a number of years would be extremely difficult for anyone, but Rickey has enough athleticism to adapt to anything and he took to the receiving part of our game very quickly, and now his blocking has been getting better and better with each game," Jacobs said. "Against Illinois, he was matched up opposite their All-American linebacker, Kevin Hardy, and on several occasions Rickey was the main man at the point

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of attack and he executed his blocks with the effectiveness and enthusiasm that you love to see.

"Rickey has great speed for such a big tight end, so he really makes it difficult for defenses to contain him in our passing scheme. Plus, he's done an outstanding job of running with the ball after making the catch," Jacobs said. "His ability to take a 5-yard pass and turn it into a 30- or 40-yard gain has really been an integral part of the success of our passing game."

Dudley enjoys being an integral part of OSU's aerial attack.

"Being a skill position player on offense, I want to be the guy the team goes to in crucial situations," Dudley said. "I thrive on making the big plays against the top teams. Against Penn State, my number was called at a critical time in the game and I was able to respond positively and in turn help us win the game."

Dudley notched career highs in catches (five) and yards (97) and made the play of the day when he snared a 32-yard pass in heavy traffic from quarterback Bobby Hoying on OSU's game-winning drive against the Nittany Lions.

"Dudley's had a great year for us," Cooper said. "He's got great height, great speed and his ability to catch balls down the middle of the field has been a huge factor in several of our big victories."

Considering the murderous schedule the Buckeyes faced this year, the success the team has enjoyed has certainly surprised all of the so-called experts and even raised a few eyebrows among the players themselves.

"Looking all the way back to the opener against Boston College, I think we surprised ourselves a little bit by controlling the ball like we did and also by scoring so frequently. Boston College was supposed to be a solid defensive team, so we wondered if they were overrated or we were really better than we thought. Now considering the season we've had, I guess the answer is that we are truly a versatile and efficient offense," he said.

While Dudley certainly planned on being a part of OSU's offense this season, he was not prepared to have the starting job dropped in his lap without a battle from incumbent tight end D.J. Jones. Jones is sitting out this season after undergoing open-heart surgery to correct an infection over the summer.

"Coming into this year, I was really looking forward to the battle D.J. and I would have waged for the starting tight end position," Dudley said. "I know I would have had to beat him out for the job, but I feel I was up to the challenge. Then when his heart problem occurred, I knew I had to step up my performance and work even harder to help us reach our goals for this season."

As most of the team's goals have been met, the evaluation of Dudley's individual performance and his possible future in football become food for thought.

"Obviously I'm prejudiced in this matter, but Rickey has contributed greatly to our success, so I think when you look at our record, you should get a good idea about how good a football player he is," Jacobs said. "He's got the athleticism, height and speed to certainly play football at the next level. Now, I can't predict the future, but if Rickey continues to take care of business the way he has been, then great things will certainly come his way."

On any given day, there are numerous NFL scouts observing OSU's practices and more times than not, Dudley has been the focus of their attentions.

"I'll tell you this, all the NFL scouts are looking at Rickey," Cooper said. "If they're not, they should be because, without a doubt, he'll be yet another Buckeye playing football on Sundays next year."

The specter of playing in the NFL, with all its fame and fortune, is something Dudley is aware of, yet is able to put in its proper perspective.

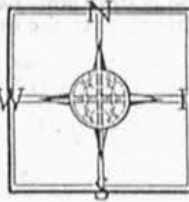
"It's exciting to know that some NFL teams are looking at me, but I feel any time a team has the success we've had this year, it draws a lot of attention to players who might otherwise go unnoticed," Dudley said. "So I guess I should really thank the entire team for playing so well this year and in turn allowing me to be a part of it and maybe getting the opportunity to continue playing football at the next level."

As the NFL and possible stardom loom on the horizon, the realization that Dudley was a basketball player first, who just happened to give football a try, makes his rise to the top of the football world all the more amazing. Despite his proficiency on the football field, one couldn't help but wonder if the former Buckeye cage captain is missing his battles under the boards.

"The other night I saw the team's preview on television and it pulled at my heart a little bit," Dudley said.



**DUDLEY IS TWO-SPORT STAR** — OSU's Rickey Dudley, pictured here against Indiana's Alan Henderson in a game from last year, played four seasons with the OSU men's basketball team. He is in his second year with the OSU football team.



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# Kiper: Dudley Could Be Top-10 Pick In NFL Draft

By STEVE HELWAGEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Former OSU tight end Rickey Dudley probably made himself several million dollars by preparing diligently for his NFL draft combine appearance, according to ESPN draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr.

The 6-7, 240-pound Dudley was originally pegged as a late first-round pick. But he wowed NFL scouts at a March 8 workout at OSU's Woody Hayes Athletic Center. Now, Kiper says, Dudley could have pushed his way into the top 10 picks of the NFL's April 20-21 draft.

"Rickey Dudley has got a chance to go somewhere in the top 10," Kiper told BSB. "It may be a situation where a team will trade up to that spot to get him. Oakland may be the team. They are pretty desperate right now for a tight end."

Dudley, who caught 37 passes for an un-tight end-like 575 yards (15.5 average) and seven touchdowns last year, may have moved past a pair of his highly publicized teammates, Fred Biletnikoff Award-winning receiver Terry Glenn and Heisman Trophy-winning tailback Eddie George.

"He did well at that workout, but he also had a great year," Kiper said. "He runs a 4.49 40 at the workout and then shows his strength with 26 reps at 225 pounds. Plus, he has such long arms."

Glenn, OSU's speedy record-setting flanker, was originally tabbed as high as the seventh pick. But after a poor showing at OSU, Kiper has moved him down a few notches.

"He has hurt his stock a little bit," Kiper said. "He ran a 4.51 40 and that wasn't what everyone expected, especially when Rickey Dudley outruns you. But by the same token, 4.51 is still not bad."

"He showed last season that he has big-play ability. I've got him in the middle first round. (Syracuse's) Marvin Harrison has probably passed him as the No. 2 receiver, behind (USC's) Keyshawn Johnson."

Glenn, who vowed to get in better shape and run again for the scouts, is expected to stage another OSU workout — along with former special teams star Alonzo Shavers — on April 10.

George's status has remained basically unchanged, Kiper said. The Heisman winner played most of the year at around 230 pounds, but he ballooned slightly during the off-season.

"Right now, I still have him in the mid-first round, probably to Minnesota with the 16th pick," he said. "He came

to the combine a little overweight at 238 pounds, but that's probably due to the banquet circuit."

"But he's pretty much shown that he is a productive, hard-nosed, versatile running back."

While some have said that quarterback Bobby Hoying could sneak into the first round, Kiper is a little less sure of that.

"I would say it's 80-20 against it," Kiper said.

Hoying, who became the first OSU passer to surpass the 3,000-yard mark in a single year, is rated as Kiper's top quarterback, just ahead of Michigan State's fast-rising Tony Banks.

But Kiper said he does not foresee any of the teams with late first-round picks using one to snatch Hoying with an eye on developing him for the future.

"Most of those teams late in the first round like Pittsburgh and Dallas have been hit by free agency and they need help right away," Kiper said. "They can't throw away any picks."

"Plus, you don't see teams pick quarterbacks and develop them like they used to, especially after Scott Mitchell burned Miami and went to Detroit. You can't afford to use a first-round pick on a guy like that who you develop for four years and then lose to free agency," he said.

"It's hard to predict, but I think Hoying will go anywhere from the mid-to-late-second round down to the third round," he said.

OSU's four offensive stars may be the only Buckeyes taken in this year's draft. Kiper has offensive guard Jamie Sumner and defensive tackle Matt Bonhaus projected as free agents.

"I know that the New York Giants may like Sumner," he said. "They may take him late in the draft or maybe invite him in as a free agent."

KIPER ALSO shared his top five picks for the draft.

As of April 4, he had USC's Johnson still going to the New York Jets with the top pick. Illinois outside linebacker Kevin Hardy is tabbed second to the Jacksonville Jaguars, UCLA offensive tackle Jonathan Ogden is picked to go third to the Arizona Cardinals, Illinois defensive end Simeon Rice could go fourth to the Baltimore Ravens (formerly the Cleveland Browns), and Syracuse's Harrison is tabbed to go fifth to the New York Giants.

Kiper produces a periodic *Draft Talk* newsletter with updated draft projections and player ratings. Those interested can write him at Draft Publications, Inc., 1705 Quenon Court, Jarrettsville, Md. 21084.



**HEADED TO THE PROS** — OSU tailback Eddie George, flashing a smile after returning to Columbus with the Heisman Trophy in December, is projected as a solid mid-first-round pick in the upcoming NFL draft. The draft is set for April 20-21.

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