

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$2.00

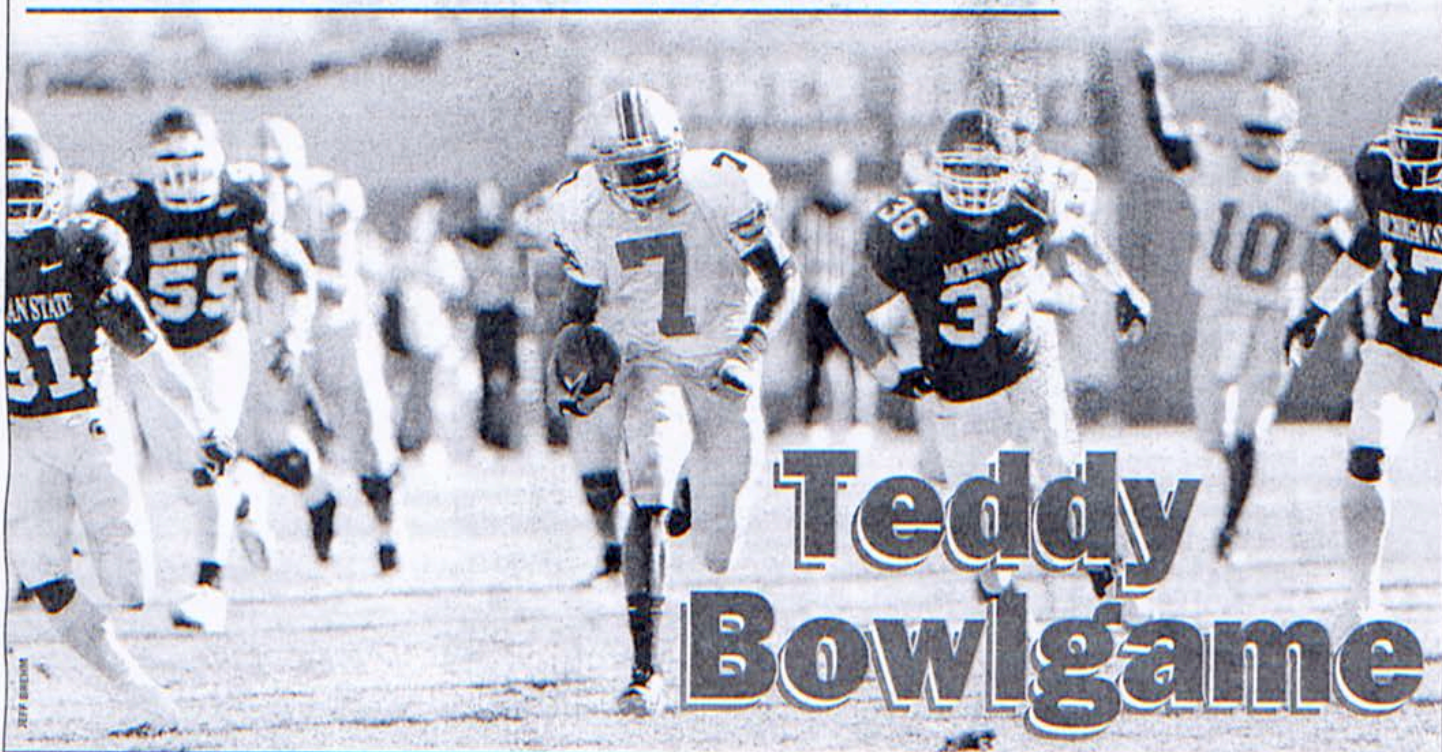
PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!

Vol. 24, No. 10

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

November 13, 2004

Three TDs For Ginn & A Postseason For OSU



THREE FOR THE ROAD — Ohio State freshman Ted Ginn Jr. (7) leaves a host of Michigan State defenders in his dust on the way to the Buckeyes' game-clinching touchdown against the Spartans. Ginn scored on a reverse, punt return and pass reception in the 32-19 victory.

By CHRIS NIDA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

He runs the ball. He catches the ball. He returns punts.

And, as it turns out, Ted Ginn Jr. dabbles in prophecy, too. The wunderkind admitted as much after his three-touchdown performance that sparked Ohio State to a 32-19 win over Michigan State Nov. 6.

"It's kind of odd," Ginn said, "because I told my coach during practice this week that I was going to try to get three touchdowns."

And what did Darrell Hazell, the man who tutors Ginn both at the wide receiver position and on kick returns, say in response?

"He said, 'OK, Ted,'" Ginn said.

What more could Hazell have said? In the week leading up to the game with Michigan State, Ginn had already established himself as a threat. He served notice with a 65-yard punt return against Wisconsin, made jaws drop even farther with a 59-yard scoring reception against Indiana in which he eluded no fewer than three would-be tacklers, and followed that up with another punt return for a score against Penn State.

But nobody — teammates, opponents or onlookers — was prepared for what happened in East Lansing. Ginn scored on a reverse, a punt return and a reception, the latter of which was a 58-yard touchdown with 1:37 remaining in the

fourth quarter that gave the Buckeyes a 23-19 lead they would not relinquish.

For the afternoon, Ginn totaled 169 yards — 21 on the ground, 77 via the air and 71 on punt returns. His total yardage would have approached 200 had not another long rush been called back by a holding penalty.

Just nine games into his college career, Ginn has already set the Ohio State single-season record for punt return touchdowns and tied the career mark in the process.

"Every once in a while, a special player comes along and you can't put many words on it," said senior Branden Joe. "The things that he does on the field just leave you speechless and puts chills on you. He's that type of player and he's showing that he's capable of blowing games wide open. He did that today."

OSU head coach Jim Tressel has raved about Ginn's hands at the receiver position, and defensive lineman Simon Fraser compliments Ginn's vision. Without question, though, his most dazzling on-field attribute is his speed.

One of the top prep track performers in the country for the last couple of years, Ginn barely missed qualifying for the 2004 Olympic trials. Everybody knew he was a burner, but there's always some caution as to how the speed of a high school track star — even one generally considered to be one of the top five prep football players in the country — is going to translate to the college gridiron.

Turns out, there was nothing to worry about. Ginn simply runs right by most would-be tacklers, changing direction without missing a step. On his scoring plays this season, defenders have barely laid a hand on Ginn, who has been touched on just one of his six touchdowns.

"This is college football, and we play hard-nosed, tackle football in the Big Ten," Joe said. "He has scored six touchdowns now. I've seen them all, and five of them would have been touchdowns in flag football."

Once Ginn gets into open space, defenders might as well forget about it. Asked if he has ever been caught from behind, the freshman pondered for a moment and responded, "Not in a long time."

Seen It All Before

Ginn's performance against the Spartans left most onlookers in awe. But nearly 300 miles away, in a hotel room in Youngstown, Ohio, one observer simply saw virtually the same thing he's been seeing for going on four years now.

"That's the way he's always been," said Ted Ginn Sr., who in addition to being Junior's father doubled as his prep coach at Cleveland Glenville.

Perhaps the major difference between Ginn's performance at Michigan State and his stand-

Continued On Page 10

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

Vol. 24, No. 10
November 13, 2004

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833) is published 30 times a year (weekly September through November and January through March, biweekly March through May and monthly June through August and December) by:

Columbus Sports Publications
1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
(614) 486-2202

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$59.95 per year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

MANAGING EDITOR
Mark Rea

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

NON-REVENUE SPORTS EDITOR
Mike Wachsman

SENIOR WRITER
Jeff Rapp

PHOTOGRAPHY
Jeff Brehm Kevin Dye
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
David Newman

CONTRIBUTORS
Darrell Dawson Julie Roy
Rich Leonardo Mark Schmetzer
Eric Loughry Steve Siegfried
Chris Nida Stacey Stathulis
Bob Roehm Nicole Weis

DIRECTOR OF GROUP AND CO-OP SALES
Jack Woodworth

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Ron Friedman Elizabeth Gaeta

2004-05 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 24)

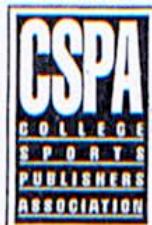
No. 1 Sept. 4	No. 16 Jan. 22
No. 2 Sept. 11	No. 17 Jan. 29
No. 3 Sept. 18	No. 18 Feb. 5
No. 4 Oct. 2	No. 19 Feb. 12
No. 5 Oct. 9	No. 20 Feb. 19
No. 6 Oct. 16	No. 21 Feb. 26
No. 7 Oct. 23	No. 22 March 5
No. 8 Oct. 30	No. 23 March 12
No. 9 Nov. 6	No. 24 March 26
No. 10 Nov. 13	No. 25 April 9
No. 11 Nov. 20	No. 26 April 23
No. 12 Nov. 27	No. 27 May 7
No. 13 December	No. 28 June
No. 14 Jan. 8	No. 29 July
No. 15 Jan. 15	No. 30 August

The next issue (Nov. 20 cover date) will be mailed on Nov. 16.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is a privately owned newspaper and is not affiliated directly or indirectly with The Ohio State University.

BSB World Wide Web site address is:
<http://BuckeyeSports.com>
BSB e-mail address is:
bsb@buckeyesports.com

Charter Member



P.O. Box 13113 • Columbus, OH 43260
1-800-763-3318

OPINION

No Maybes About It: He Is Amazing

I've run out of superlatives for Ted Ginn Jr. so I thought I'd let some others describe the freshman sensation who is rapidly becoming the star of the 2004 season for Ohio State.

"He's so special," said senior fullback Brandon Joe.

"It's hard to describe that kind of ability except to say that it obviously comes from above," said senior tailback Maurice Hall.

"Absolutely phenomenal," offered co-captain Dustin Fox.

"All I can say is that I'm glad he's on my side," added defensive end Simon Fraser.

"One word is all I get?" asked quarterback Troy Smith. "How about amazing? That's about as good as I can do with only one word."

Whether you choose amazing or consult your thesaurus and settle on brilliant, exceptional, fabulous, stunning or just plain great, Ginn looks like he is one of those comes-around-only-so-often type players who can turn the course of a game on a dime.

After he started out the Buckeyes' win over Michigan State with two first-quarter touchdowns and then finished it with a 58-yard streak across the field in the final 97 seconds, newspaper reporters and media members were also stuck trying to find the appropriate way to describe Ginn.

Throughout Ohio, newspapers splashed Sunday morning headlines such as "Ginn, as in win," "Just Ginn, baby" and "Ginn and a-Ginn and a-Ginn."

Even our own publication, trying to stay away from last name references, rejected the perfectly suitable "The Ted Offensive" and "Ted On Arrival" before settling on "Teddy Bowlgame."

We all knew that Ginn had the talent to become a college football star. Recruiting services hit and miss on their ratings of high school athletes, but they were on target last year when Adrian Peterson of Oklahoma was considered the nation's top offensive prospect and Ginn was placed as the No. 1 player on defense.

Peterson, of course, is going to get a lot of consideration for the Heisman Trophy and could become the first freshman ever to win that award. Ginn, meanwhile, has taken a little longer to burst onto the national scene, but does anyone believe that he won't continue to get better and better?

Against Michigan State, he looked effortless in scoring touchdowns in three different ways, and that's saying something. In the Big Ten, which still prides itself on being a smash-mouth league where bloody-nosed linebackers still outnumber receivers by a wide margin, Ginn simply overwhelmed the Spartans.

He scored the Buckeyes' first two touchdowns of the game on a 17-yard reverse and a 60-yard punt return then took a short pass on a slant route and turned it into a 58-yard score to put OSU back on top after the Spartans had taken their first lead of the game.

But it's not just that Ginn is scoring touchdowns — it's the way he is scoring touchdowns. His speed in the open field renders opposing defenders almost

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

with

Mark Rea

defenseless. There have been times when defenders have been 5 yards in front of him and Ginn simply runs past them.

It is a cliché, but Ginn makes opponents look like they are running in slow motion. On his reverse, the entire Michigan State defense was in pursuit and never laid a hand on him.

On his punt return, MSU defensive back Tyrrell Dortch — not exactly slow by any comparison — lunged at Ginn as he went past and grabbed nothing but a handful of air.

Then, on the game-winning touchdown, Ginn beat safety Eric Smith to the ball and then outraced cornerback Jaren Hayes to the end zone. Hayes is supposedly one of the fastest players on Michigan State's team, and Ginn widened the gap to almost 20 yards on Hayes between the 40-yard line and the end zone.

Against the Spartans, Ginn touched the ball eight times and picked up 169 yards and scored three touchdowns. For the season, he has 24 touches for 484 yards and six TDs. That is an average of better than 20 yards every time he gets his hands on the football and a touchdown every four times he touched the pigskin.

His punt return for a score was his third in the last five games and allowed him to tie the Ohio State career mark for most punt returns for touchdowns. There is little doubt in anyone's mind that if he stays healthy, Ginn will break that and push the mark into the stratosphere.

I have done a lot of research in the past several months on Chic Harley and Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy. I have listened to OSU football historian Jack Park talk about the many things that Vic Janowicz could do. I watched Archie Griffin play. It was my pleasure to cover Eddie George during much of his OSU career.

I certainly would not want to put Ginn into that company at this early stage of his career. But he has certainly shown over the last month or so that he is capable of becoming one of those players who transcends stardom and moves onto a whole other plane.

There is no doubt that Ohio State has had more than its share of football stars in recent years. Maurice Clarett was probably the last one who actually made the Buckeyes better by his mere presence in the lineup.

But Ginn has the intangibles that Clarett seemed to lack — football sense on the field combined with common sense off it, not to mention a sense of purpose, world-class speed and a shrug-your-shoulders type of personality when it comes to discussing himself.

A week ago when Ginn answered a reporter's question by saying, "Maybe I am amazing," the normally skeptical press wondered if maybe the freshman

was a little too self-confident.

After his performance against Michigan State, perhaps he was understating the obvious.

Some Props To Hazell

Before we begin to believe that Ginn is doing all of this on his own, let's give a little credit to assistant coach Darrell Hazell, who has obviously breathed some life into what had been sorry OSU kick return performances the past couple of years.

Before Antonio Holmes returned a punt for a touchdown in the second quarter against Northwestern, the Buckeyes had taken exactly one punt to the end zone in their previous 46 games — last year's 54-yarder by Michael Jenkins against Iowa.

Now, in the space of just six Big Ten games, the Buckeyes have returned four punts for touchdowns, three of them by Ginn.

It stems from the idea to put both Holmes and Ginn back as potential return men in punt formations. Hazell, who was in charge of a potent return game while he was at Rutgers, came up with the idea of using two speed merchants instead of just one to prevent opposing punters from kicking away from just one.

I will say, however, that Hazell had plenty to work with. The best thing I like about Ginn — and he has this over Holmes — is that the freshman returns kicks the way Deion Sanders and every other great returner does. He fields the ball and immediately takes off. He doesn't juke and jive and run east and west. Most great kick returners run right at the oncoming traffic then make subtle cuts to make defenders miss.

That's simple talent and something you really can't teach. Sanders had it — actually, he probably still does — and Ginn has it, too.

The kickoff return game is also doing a much better job this year, averaging 24.7 yards per return. That ranks third in the Big Ten and is substantially better than the dismal 17.6-yard average the Buckeyes had in 2003.

But it has now been 95 games and counting since OSU returned a kickoff for a touchdown. Michael Wiley was the last Buckeye to turn that trick, returning one 100 yards against Bowling Green in 1997.

Pretty Good Company

With his three punt returns for touchdowns in the last five weeks, Ginn has broken the OSU single-season record in that department and matched the career mark set by Garcia Lane (1981-83) and later equaled by Jeff Graham (1988-90).

The old single-season record of two was set in 1969 by Larry Zelina and matched by the late Neal Colzie in 1973, Lane in '83 and Graham in '90.

One record that Ginn can still shoot for is Lane's mark of two punt returns for touchdowns in a single game. He did that during a 33-22 win over Purdue in 1983. Lane, of course, is the father of current OSU freshman defensive back Shaun Lane.

OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

Ginn Found Lanes; OSU's Bowling

Bucks Stay Hot With 32-19 Win Over Spartans

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Ted Ginn Jr. took control of a ballgame like few other players in recent Ohio State memory have done, scoring three times in three different ways and helping the Buckeyes notch an extremely important 32-19 victory over Michigan State.

The victory was the third in a row for OSU on the heels of a three-game losing streak to start the Big Ten schedule. It made the Buckeyes bowl-eligible for the 15th time in the last 16 seasons and also broke a three-game conference road losing streak that stretched back to last year's Michigan game.

Perhaps most important of all, it was a victory that tested the Buckeyes' mettle as a team and challenged their character.

After breaking out to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter, OSU squandered all of that margin and found itself trailing 19-17 with just 3:06 remaining in the game. But for the first time since trailing by 10 points late to Northwestern, the



TED DOES IT A-GINN — Ted Ginn Jr. (7) has breathed life into a largely moribund Ohio State offense in recent weeks. He's been dangerous all season on returns, but he added more to his repertoire against Michigan State, scoring on a reverse and a reception as well as taking back his third punt for a score this season.

Buckeyes stared down adversity.

Taking the field with 76 yards of real estate in front of them and only 175 total yards behind them in the first 57 minutes of the game, the offense suddenly became a lot better when they got the ball into Ginn's hands. Sophomore Troy Smith was incomplete with a short pass to tight end Ryan Hamby on first down then connected with flanker Antonio Holmes for a 13-yard gain to move the ball to the OSU 37-yard line.

The next play seemed to take the Spartans — and probably everyone else who has watched the Buckeyes this season — by surprise when Smith found freshman fullback Dionte Johnson in the right flat for a 5-yard gain. Not only was it Johnson's first catch of his college career, but it was only the fourth reception this season by an Ohio State fullback.

One play later, with the Michigan State secondary playing back in what appeared to be a cover-2 zone, Ginn lined up on the far right side and made one slant move toward the middle of the field. As the OSU speed demon split safety Eric Smith and cornerback Jaren Hayes, Smith delivered the ball perfectly. Ginn gathered in the ball just past midfield and turned on the afterburners, leaving Hayes in the dust and tallying a 58-yard touchdown.

It was his third TD of the game after scoring on a 17-yard reverse and a 60-yard punt return in the first quarter.



Now with 8 Central Ohio Locations!

Columbus

1800 Bethel Rd.
614-459-4444

Grandview

1669 W. 5th Ave.
614-583-8230

Marysville

1055 W. Fifth St.
937-642-5010

Worthington

6880 N. High St.
614-431-8888

Westerville

501 W. Schrock Rd.
614-583-8259

Powell

4078 Powell Rd.
614-583-8313

Mill Run

3580 Fishinger Rd.
614-850-4444

Gahanna

406 Granville St.
614-583-8300

Member FDIC/Equal Housing Lender

Banking ♦ Wealth Management ♦ Insurance ♦ Investments

OHIO STATE VS. MICHIGAN STATE

Ginn's three touchdowns vaulted him into a tie with Holmes for the team touchdown lead with six. The punt return also was his third in the last five games, breaking the OSU single-season record and already matching the school career mark for most punts taken back all the way.

"I'm just trying to do what I can to help this team win some games," said the soft-spoken Ginn. "When I get the ball, I'm thinking about taking it all the way every time. Today, I had a couple of pretty good lanes and some great blocks. If I can get that far in the open, I'm usually thinking nothing but six (points)."

Michigan State actually pegged Ginn before the game as a player to watch. But even the Spartans were dazzled by the raw speed the freshman sensation displayed.

"We knew coming into the game that Ohio State had some good receivers, but we knew that they were young," said Spartans safety Jason Harmon. "We had our eye on Ginn, but we had no idea that he was going to do that to us."

Ginn finished the contest with 169 all-purpose yards and would have had even more had another reverse that went for 25 yards not been wiped out by a holding penalty. As it was, he had four receptions for 77 yards and a touchdown, two runs from scrimmage for 21 yards and a score and a pair of punt returns for 71 yards and another TD.

His heroics wiped out an afternoon that might have turned out with a different outcome as the Ohio State offense couldn't generate much during most of the afternoon and the defense was getting worn out after another game in which it struggled getting its opponent off the field on third down.

In fact, when the game entered the fourth quarter, the Buckeyes were still clinging to a 17-16 lead but had only six first downs and 140 yards of offense. That point total hadn't changed since the first period when Ginn began his mastery over the Spartans.

Explosive Beginning

The teams swapped rather pedestrian three-and-out possessions to start the game, and nearly four minutes passed before either managed a first down.

That came in the second Michigan State drive, but two plays later Spartans QB Damon Dowdell made one of the few mistakes he would make during the game, throwing behind his intended receiver and straight into the arms of OSU cornerback Ashton Youboty.

Making his second interception in as many weeks, Youboty grabbed the ball at the MSU 43 and returned it 26 yards to give the Buckeyes their best field position of the day to that point. Two plays later, Ginn lined up to the right, took a reverse to the left and scampered 17 yards untouched — thanks in part to a thunderous block on the goal line by OSU offensive lineman Doug Datish — into the end zone. When Mike Nugent tackled on the extra point, Ohio State enjoyed a 7-0 lead with 9:43 left in the first quarter.

It didn't take Ginn long to trump that run.

The Spartans had another three-and-out series and instructed punter Dave Rayner to try to keep the ball away from the Buckeyes' dual return men of Holmes and Ginn. Rayner took the snap, ran out to his right and kicked the ball rugby style, keeping it low to the ground. But the ball bounced right into

Ginn's hands, who picked it up, made one cut to his right and was gone again, this time running 60 yards as MSU defenders swiped at nothing but air.

Nugent added the PAT to push the Buckeyes' lead to 14-0 with 8:15 remaining in the opening period.

The OSU defense held Michigan State to its fourth straight three-and-out and again took advantage of a short field thanks to a 14-yard punt return by Holmes. The Buckeyes managed to move only 19 yards, but it was close enough to get Nugent into field-goal range. He drilled a 53-yarder through the uprights to put his team on top by 17 points with 2:50 still remaining in the first quarter.

To that point in the game, the Buckeyes had 17 points but only 45 yards of total offense. That was better than the Spartans, though, who had just 14 yards to show for their first four possessions. But the game seemed to turn around completely at that point. OSU appeared to play as if it thought 17 points would be enough to win, while the Buckeyes' third score seemed to enliven Michigan State.

After averaging just over a yard per play for much of the first quarter, the Spartans suddenly kicked into gear and embarked upon a 15-play, 86-yard drive that ate up 4 1/2 minutes and suddenly made the game much closer.

Dowdell ran the MSU offense almost to perfection during the march, running and throwing with equal success. He scrambled for 12 yards early in the drive to get his team out of a first-and-18 hole then connected with receiver Matt Trannon for 10 yards on a third-and-6 to keep things going.

A 16-yard pass to wideout Agim Shabab got the ball to the Ohio State 11, then on third-and-7, Dowdell found another receiver — Jerramy Scott — in the end zone for the touchdown. In the drive, the Spartans QB ran for 19 yards and threw for 46 more as Michigan State cut the Buckeyes' lead to 17-7.

Later in the first half, the Spartans mounted two more scoring drives, both of which resulted in field goals by Rayner. The first was a 27-yard chip shot while the second was from 44 yards out. He had a chance for a third on the final play of the first half, but his attempt from 54 yards away was wide to the right.

Nevertheless, the Spartans had clawed their way back to make it 17-13 and were looking for more as the second half began.

Saving It For The End

The Buckeyes actually began to muster some offense in the third quarter but committed two costly penalties, including the holding that wiped out Ginn's 25-yard run early in the period. But the game turned again on the first play of OSU's second possession of the third quarter.

Playing his first game in three weeks, senior tailback Lydell Ross had his best run of the afternoon as he broke through the middle of the line and fought ahead for extra yardage. But as he was tackled by safety Smith and whirled around, the football came loose before Ross hit the ground and Harmon came up with the fumble at the OSU 42.

The Spartans didn't do much with the ball, but they pushed it ahead 6 yards and that was enough for Rayner, who kicked a 53-yard field goal to get his team within a single point at 17-16 with 7:54 left in the third quarter.

It allowed Rayner to set a new Michigan State career record with his 59th field goal, and then he extended that mark to 60 late in the fourth quarter with a 29-yarder into the wind. It topped off a 14-play drive that covered 67 yards and nearly six minutes, pushing the Buckeyes behind for the first time in the game and leaving them only 3:06 left to do anything about it.

It wouldn't take Ginn half that long. Smith completed the passes to Holmes and Johnson before firing the strike to Ginn that quickly erased Michigan State's two-point lead and gave the Buckeyes a 23-19 advantage. Smith also added a two-point conversion — although it took the Big Ten's instant replay to overturn a call on the field — to push the lead out to 25-19.

The Spartans tried to rally with just 1:37 left, and Dowdell did a good job of giving the Buckeye fans in attendance a reason to hold their collective breath. He completed his first two passes of the possession for 11 and 8 yards, then after MSU got a first down at its own 42, Dowdell went back to the air. On first down, his short sideline pass to tight end Kyle Brown was ruled incomplete when replay officials determined Brown's foot came down on the sideline.

On the next play, Dowdell was flushed from the pocket and rolled out to his right. As he tried for another sideline pass, OSU linebacker A.J. Hawk stepped in front of the intended receiver and made a diving interception, snuffing the Spartans' rally and preserving the Buckeyes' victory.

Three plays later, senior tailback Maurice Hall put the icing on the game when he bounced outside on a third-and-5 play and then outraced everyone to the end zone for a 51-yard touchdown.

That big run allowed Hall to finish as the game's leading rusher with 83 yards on 11 carries. Ross added 34 more on seven carries.

Smith scrambled 13 times for 41 yards and added another 138 yards through the air on 13-for-21 passing. Holmes matched Ginn with four receptions while Smith's other five completions went to five different receivers, including freshman Devon Lyons, who notched the first catch of his career.

Dowdell, who had lost his starting job earlier this season, filled in admirably for sophomore Drew Stanton, who had separated his shoulder the week before in a triple-overtime loss at Michigan. Dowdell completed 29 of 46 passes for 262 yards and added another 32 yards on the ground. But he was intercepted three times, including by sophomore safety Brandon Mitchell on the final play of the game.

The Buckeyes finished with a respectable total of 307 total yards, but

that paled in comparison to the Spartans, who rolled up 407. Six different receivers had four catches each while tailback Jason Teague was the team's leading rusher with 69 yards on 11 carries.

OSU limited senior DeAndre Cobb to just 11 yards on six carries before Cobb limped off the field early in the second half. He had topped the 200-yard mark the week before against Michigan.

On defense for the Buckeyes, linebacker Bobby Carpenter led the team with 13 tackles while Youboty had 12, 11 of them solos. Hawk added 10 while Mitchell and defensive tackle Quinn Pitcock each had six.

Game Notes

• Nugent's 53-yard field goal was his fifth three-pointer of 50 yards or more this season and extended his school record to eight field goals of 50-plus yards.

Nugent is now 8 for 9 from that range in his career and 64 for 80 in field-goal percentage, an even 80.0 percent.

With the field goal and three PATs, the senior co-captain upped his career scoring total to 323 points, getting him within 19 of Dan Stultz (1997-2000) for the all-time scoring lead among Ohio State kickers.

Nugent needs another 25 points to catch school career leader Pete Johnson (1973-76).

• The game pitted two of the top kickers in Big Ten history with Nugent and Rayner, who became Michigan State's all-time leading scorer with his four field goals and one PAT to push him to 312 career points.

Nugent now ranks fifth and Rayner sixth in career scoring among Big Ten kickers. They are behind Dan Nystrom of Minnesota (1999-2002) and Nate Kaeding of Iowa (2000-03), who share the career lead with 367 points, Travis Dorsch of Purdue (1998-2001) with 355 and Stultz with 342.

The all-time leading scorer in Big Ten history is former Heisman Trophy winner Ron Dayne (1996-99), who totaled 71 touchdowns in his career with Wisconsin for 426 career points.

• Although there appeared to be several empty seats in the upper regions of the stadium, Michigan State announced the paid attendance at 72,222.

That was the 38th consecutive sellout at Spartan Stadium, meaning the Buckeyes have played before sellout crowds in each of their nine games so far this season.

• Michigan State's total yardage figure extended its streak to six games in which the Spartans have topped the 400-yard mark. However, the Buckeyes limited MSU to just 145 yards on the ground, and that snapped the Spartans' string of five straight games in which they had run for 200 or more.



**Gas Powered
STAND UP Scooters**

We Buy & Sell

SUPERSONIC GO-PEDS
1386 Fields Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211

614-299-8480

nathan peselnick
go-ped Rep.
(cell) 614-560-4276



**SALES
SERVICE
PARTS
ACCESSORIES**

**PERFECT HOLIDAY
GIFT!**

Dublin

Delivers Championship Hotels
at Affordable Rates.

Book your OSU Football Weekend Getaway
in Dublin, Ohio online NOW:

www.dublinvisit.org

15 minutes NW of Ohio Stadium

Easy access from I-270 (Columbus Outer Belt)

Choice of 5 great hotels

Breakfast packages available

Check rates & availability instantly ... online



EMBASSY SUITES
HOTEL

Columbus - Dublin

All-suite, full-service hotel; includes
cooked-to-order breakfast.

614/790-9000



Full-service hotel; breakfast packages
available. 614/791-1000



Indoor swimming pool and whirlpool;
breakfast packages available.
614/764-9393



All-suite hotel; Includes hot breakfast
buffet. 614/791-0403



BY CRUISE HOTELS
DUBLIN

Full-service hotel; breakfast packages
available. 614/764-2200

Book immediately online at
www.dublinvisit.org

800/245-8387



COVER STORY: TEDDY BOWLGAME

Just Like In High School

Continued From Page 1

out final three years at Glenville was that against the Spartans, he did much of his damage from the wide receiver position.

Ginn's primary action at wide receiver in high school came during his sophomore year when Troy Smith was the Tarblooders' quarterback. His final two years, Ginn played both quarterback and wide receiver on offense in addition to his duties at cornerback.

The defensive back position was where most — Ginn included — expected the freshman to make his impact at Ohio State. Rated by Rivals.com as the nation's No. 1 corner coming out of high school, he admitted his preference was to play on the defensive side of the ball at OSU but that "receiver's not bad."

"When I came in, I expected to play both sides of the ball," he said. "I didn't really learn that I was going to be playing strictly offense until two weeks before the season."

The elder Ginn, though, had an inkling before that.

"I kind of knew when he was recruited," the Glenville coach said. "He's a great corner, but I knew that after he got in camp they would find out that he was a playmaker. Tress made that decision to keep him on that side of the ball because he's seen that he can run and catch and had that type of playmaking ability."

"I wasn't surprised at all. You have to realize he's still young in that position. He's been a full-time corner and a part-time receiver and quarterback."

For that very reason, Ginn has been brought along slowly this year. His first catch of the year came in the season opener against Cincinnati, and it went for a loss of 7 yards.

For the next several weeks, Ginn saw the football rarely, catching one pass for 10 yards against Marshall and returning a kickoff 23 yards against North Carolina State.

The turning point may have come against Northwestern when the coaching staff made the decision to put Ginn deep alongside Antonio Holmes on punt returns. Holmes was the one who benefited immediately, returning a punt for a score against the Wildcats, but Ginn has scored at least one touchdown in four of the five weeks since.

"I wasn't frustrated," he said of not touching the ball frequently early in the year. "You just had to go with your role. I was a freshman and I just had to show them what I can do. Once you show what you can do, then they will find a way to get you the ball."

The Buckeyes have done just that, and there's no reason to think it won't continue in the final three weeks of the season. As far as his father is concerned, that's just fine.

"I just think they need to work him harder," Ginn Sr. said with a laugh. "I'm just being honest with you. I think he's not being worked hard enough, but that's me. I think he's getting away with murder."

Coaching Credit, Too

Ginn deserves all the credit in the world for making the plays that he did in East Lansing, but it's worth noting that he had been sufficiently prepared for just about every situation in which he found himself.

The first time he touched the ball, Ohio State was facing a second-and-10 at

the Michigan State 17-yard line and opted to turn to Ginn for the end-around. Spartans defensive end Michael Bazemore came up the field and was in proper position to make a play on Ginn, but the freshman simply ran around him and then turned upfield, cruising into the end zone to put the Buckeyes up 7-0.

"It's definitely a mismatch," Ginn said. "All week we worked on letting the defensive end come up and run around him and stuff like that. It just got perfected in the game."

Just over a minute later, Ginn found himself in another familiar situation. With MSU in a fourth-and-5 situation on their own 25-yard line, the Spartans opted to turn to senior Dave Rayner to punt. Sophomore Brandon Fields was leading the nation in punting average, but Rayner is a rugby-style kicker whose line drive punts hit the ground spinning hard and continue to bounce awkwardly along the playing surface.

That wasn't a problem for Ginn, who had seen that type of punt all week in practice. He went after the ball hard, picked it up, found his lane and was gone. Less than six minutes into the game, it was Ted Ginn 14, Michigan State 0.

"I was going full-go after that ball," he said. "All week we worked on the squib and the bouncy balls and all that. You just go attack and get to the house."

In this case, being just a year removed from the high school level would appear to have benefited Ginn.

"That's something he has a knack for," Ginn Sr. said. "He loves the line-drive kicks. He loves the ones on the ground because he thinks those are the ones you can take to the house."

"A lot of the time in high school teams don't have great punters or great special teams. He would pick those up and get away on you. If you're going to punt, punt out of bounds, because if it's on the ground he can beat your coverage. He goes after that ball."

After the punt return, Ginn wasn't heard from much until the Buckeyes got the ball back on their own 24-yard line after a Rayner field goal had pushed the Spartans ahead 19-17.

On second-and-10 from the 24-yard line, a 13-yard slant pass to Holmes gave the Buckeyes a first down.

Smith completed a 5-yard pass to full-back Dionte Johnson to put OSU at its own 42, and the coaching staff called again for the play that Holmes had turned into a first down.

This time, Smith looked to the opposite side of the field, where Ginn caught the pass in stride and didn't stop until he had again found the north end zone.

"The one he caught for a touchdown was the very same play that Antonio caught for the 13-yard gain a little bit earlier, but it was a different coverage this time," Tressel said. "You asked how did Troy do it? He went away from the primary to what the coverage gave him and we won the game."

Spartans safety Eric Smith said later that a hip injury suffered the play before prevented him from being in position to stop Ginn before he got going, but one has to wonder whether on that afternoon Ginn wouldn't have found some way to make the play.

"He's got unbelievable speed and he just gets to the second level and runs by everyone," linebacker A.J. Hawk said. "I don't think he'll ever get caught."

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 32, Michigan State 19

Nov. 6, 2004 — Spartan Stadium; East Lansing, Mich.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	17	0	0	15	32
MICHIGAN STATE	0	13	3	3	19

First Quarter

OSU — Ginn Jr., 17 yard run (Nugent kick), 9:43; 2 plays, 17 yards, 0:54 TOP.
 OSU — Ginn Jr., 60 yard punt return (Nugent kick), 8:15.
 OSU — Nugent, 53 yard field goal, 2:50; 7 plays, 19 yards, 3:39 TOP.

Second Quarter

MSU — J.Scott, 8 yard pass from Dowdell (Rayner kick), 13:13; 15 plays, 86 yards, 4:33 TOP.
 MSU — Rayner, 27 yard field goal, 7:11; 10 plays, 56 yards, 4:24 TOP.

MSU — Rayner, 44 yard field goal, 1:08; 8 plays, 27 yards, 1:58 TOP.

Third Quarter

MSU — Rayner, 53 yard field goal, 7:54; 4 plays, 6 yards, 1:39 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

MSU — Rayner, 29 yard field goal, 3:06; 14 plays, 67 yards, 5:59 TOP.
 OSU — Ginn Jr., 58 yard pass from T.Smith (T.Smith run), 1:37; 4 plays, 76 yards, 1:24 TOP.

OSU — M.Hall, 51 yard run (Nugent kick), 0:25; 3 plays, 56 yards, 0:20 TOP.

Att. — 72,222

Weather — 51 degrees, sunny; wind, 14 mph from W/SW.

Team Statistics

	OSU	MSU
First Downs	12	22
Rushing	5	8
Passing	7	13
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Yards	35-169	34-145
Passing Yards	138	262
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	21-13-0	46-29-3
Offensive Plays	56	80
Total Net Yards	307	407
Third Down Efficiency	6-14	8-17
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0
Punts	7-44.4	5-47.2
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties	7-50	6-60
Time of Possession	30:07	29:53

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — OSU: M.Hall 11-83; T.Smith 13-34; Ross 7-26; Ginn Jr. 2-21; Joe 1-5; D.Johnson 1-0. MSU: Teague 11-69; Caulcrick 9-33; Dowdell 8-32; Cobb 6-11.

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — OSU: T.Smith 21-13-0-138-1. MSU: Dowdell 46-29-3-262-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — OSU: Ginn Jr. 4-77; Holmes 4-41; Gonzalez 1-11; D.Johnson 1-5; Joe 1-3; M.Hall 1-1; Lyons 1-0. MSU: Alexander 4-56; Shabaj 4-49; Trannon 4-35; J.Scott 4-32; Teague 4-30; Love 4-5; K.Brown 2-37; Randall 2-12; Caulcrick 1-6.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — OSU: Turano 7-44.4-68. MSU: Fields 3-54.0-62; Rayner 2-37.0-39.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Ginn Jr. 2-71; Holmes 2-22. MSU: Shabaj 3-46; K.Brown 1-0.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Holmes 1-19. MSU: Cobb 1-12.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) — OSU: None. MSU: Harmon 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Youboty 1-26; Hawk 1-0; Mitchell 1-0. MSU: None.

SACKS — OSU: None. MSU: Vickerson 1-7.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — OSU: Fraser 2-3; Hawk 2-1; Kudla 1-6; Pitcock 1-1; D.Patterson 1-1. MSU: Vickerson 1-7; E.Smith 1-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Assst.-Tot.) — OSU: Carpenter 6-7-13; Youboty 11-1-12; Hawk 3-7-10; Mitchell 3-3-6; Pitcock 2-4-6; Fox 3-1-4; Fraser 2-2-4; Schlegel 3-0-3; Team 3-0-3; Everett 2-1-3; Penton 1-2-3; D.Patterson 1-2-3; Green 0-3-3; Whitner 1-1-2; Kudla 1-0-1; Turano 1-0-1; Freeman 0-1-1; Joe 0-1-1. MSU: Stanley 5-4-9; Hayes 7-0-7; E.Smith 5-2-7; Ryan 3-2-5; Dortch 2-3-5; Herron Jr. 1-3-4; Maples 3-0-3; Team 3-0-3; Bazemore 2-1-3; Campbell 2-0-2; Vickerson 2-0-2; Thornhill 1-1-2; Harmon 0-2-2; McKinney 0-2-2; Dukes 1-0-1; Bell 1-0-1; Teague 1-0-1; Dowdell 1-0-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — OHIO STATE: Defense, Fraser, Green, Pitcock, Kudla, Hawk, Carpenter, Fox, Youboty, E.J. Underwood, Everett, Mitchell, Turano. Offense, Holmes, Rehling, Downing, Datish, Kne, Barton, Hamby, R.Hall, T.Smith, D.Johnson, M.Hall, Nugent. Reserves, Matthews, Childress, Ginn Jr., Whitner, Gonzalez, A.Smith, Freeman, Lyons, Ross, Welch, Joe, Terry, Hoobler, DeMaria, Schlegel, Mangold, Conroy, Andrews, McLaughlin, Schafer, Coleman, Hollins, Cotton, D.Patterson, Penton, Richardson. MICHIGAN STATE: Defense, Trannon, Wheeler, Cook, C.Morris, Whitticker, Poole, Randall, K.Brown, J.Scott, Dowdell, Teague, Rayner. Defense, Dukes, Vickerson, McKinney, Ryan, Stanley, Herron Jr., Dortch, Hayes, Harmon, E.Smith, Maples, Fields. Reserves, Shabaj, Knott, Alexander, Watson, Simon, Key, Love, Cobb, S.Adams, Bell, Cooper, Caulcrick, Beltinck, Corey, Bazemore, Tabatchnick, Thornhill, McKenzie, Andino, Campbell, Bury, Toth, Niebylski, K.Davis, Walters, Woods, Peko.

Season Statistics

Date	Opponent	Result/Time
Sept. 4 (9)	CINCINNATI	W, 27-6 104,604
Sept. 11 (9)	MARSHALL	W, 24-21 104,622
Sept. 18 (9)	at N.C. State	W, 22-14 56,800
Oct. 2 (7)	at Northwestern	L, 33-27 (OT) 47,130
Oct. 9 (18)	WISCONSIN (15)	L, 24-13 105,090
Oct. 16 (25)	at Iowa	L, 33-7 70,397
Oct. 23	INDIANA	W, 30-7 104,538
Oct. 30	PENN STATE	W, 21-10 104,947
Nov. 6	at Michigan State	W, 32-19 72,222
Nov. 13	at Purdue	3:30 p.m.
Nov. 20	MICHIGAN	1 p.m.

* OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
First Downs	138	167
Rushing	55	74
Passing	71	84
Penalty	12	9
Average Per Game/Rush	131.1	136.1
Average Per Game/Pass	164.8	187.8
Total Offense	2663	2915
Total Plays	553	648
Average Per Game	295.9	323.9
Average Per Play	4.8	4.5
Penalties-Yards	50-378	62-478
Fumbles-Lost	18-12	10-3
3rd Down Efficiency	43-124	58-148
Percentage	35%	39%
4th Down Efficiency	2/4	4/11
Percentage	50%	36%
Sacks-Yards	19-120	20-122
Time of Possession Avg.	29:01	30:57

Score By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	72	53	23	55	0	203	22.6
Opponents	24	57	37	43	6	167	18.6

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	5	523,801	104,760
Away	4	246,549	61,637
Total	9	770,350	85,594

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Lydell Ross	101	369	3.7	3	68
Antonio Pittman	58	342	5.9	1	43
Maurice Hall	43	207	4.8	1	51
Troy Smith	48	132	2.8	0	13
Brandon Joe	20	50	2.5	1	5
Justin Zwick	39	32	0.8	0	22
Ted Ginn Jr.	3	26	8.7	1	17
Santonio Holmes	1	19	19.0	0	19
Dionte Johnson	3	9	3.0	0	5
Roshawn Parker	1	3	3.0	0	3
Team	5	-9	-1.8	0	0
OSU Totals	322	1180	3.7	7	68
OPP Totals	349	1225	3.5	8	41

Passing Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD/INT	Rating
J. Zwick	81	160	50.6	10/20	5-6 106.99
T. Smith	41	70	58.6	4/63	5-0 137.70
Team	0	1	0.0	0/0	0-0 0.00
OSU Tot.	122	231	52.8	14/83	10-6 115.83
OPP Tot.	169	299	56.5	16/90	10-11 107.68

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Santonio Holmes	43	623	14.5	5	80
Bam Childress	16	193	12.1	0	28
Roy Hall	16	189	11.8	1	50
Ryan Hamby	13	139	10.7	1	29
Ted Ginn Jr.	11	187	17.0	2	59
Lydell Ross	5	42	8.4	0	23
Tony Gonzalez	4	41	10.2	0	11
Antonio Pittman	4	11	2.8	0	16
Brandon Joe	3	27	9.0	0	15
Maurice Hall	3	-2	-0.7	0	1
OSU Totals	122	1483	12.2	10	80
OPP Totals	169	1690	10.0	10	42

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FGSAFPTS
M. Nugent	—	21-21	—	—	— 69
S. Holmes	6	—	—	—	— 36
T. Ginn Jr.	6	—	—	—	— 36
L. Ross	3	—	—	—	— 18
T. Everett	1	—	—	—	— 6
M. Hall	1	—	—	—	— 6
R. Hall	1	—	—	—	— 6
R. Hamby	1	—	—	—	— 6
B. Joe	1	—	—	—	— 6
R. Nicol	1	—	—	—	— 6
A. Pittman	1	—	—	—	— 6
T. Smith	0	—	1	—	— 2
OSU Totals	22	21-21	1	—	— 203
OPP Totals	19	17-18	—	—	— 167

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Mike Nugent	4-4	4-4	3-5	5-6	16-19
OSU Totals	4-4	4-4	3-5	5-6	16-19
OPP Totals	6-6	0-1	5-6	1-2	12-15

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Kyle Turano	48	2050	42.7	0	68
Justin Zwick	2	56	28.0	0	32
OSU Totals	50	2106	42.1	0	68
OPP Totals	58	2541	43.8	0	78

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ashton Youboty	3	63	21.0	0	35
Bobby Carpenter	2	4	2.0	0	4
A.J. Hawk	2	0	0.0	0	0
Tyler Everett	1	24	24.0	1	24
Donte Whitner	1	24	24.0	0	24
Brandon Mitchell	1	0	0.0	0	0
Nate Salley	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	11	121	11.0	1	35
OPP Totals	6	21	3.5	0	16

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Santonio Holmes	18	200	11.1	1	63
Ted Ginn Jr.	8	231	28.9	3	67
Bam Childress	1	2	2.0	0	2
OSU Totals	27	433	16.0	4	67
OPP Totals	21	189	9.0	0	32

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Maurice Hall	11	321	29.2	0	62
Santonio Holmes	8	186	23.2	0	32
Ted Ginn Jr.	2	40	20.0	0	23
Brandon Joe	1	13	13.0	0	13
Brandon Schnitker	1	9	9.0	0	9
OSU Totals	23	569	24.7	0	62
OPP Totals	15	329	21.9	0	49

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
A.J. Hawk	49	62	111	6.5-11	1-0-3
Bobby Carpenter	38	33	71	5.0-12	1-0-7
Anthony Schlegel	37	25	62	8.0-38	3.5-21
Donte Whitner	40	17	57	3.0-14	—
Nate Salley	26	24	50	—	—
Ashton Youboty	36	10	46	2-0-8	1-0-7
Quinn Pitcock	17	21	38	5.0-17	2-0-13
Marcus Green	14	14	28	3.0-11	2-0-10
Tyler Everett	18	7	25	1-0-1	—
Simon Fraser	9	15	24	4.5-15	1.5-9
E.J. Underwood	13	11	24	—	—
Dustin Fox	16	5	21	—	—
David Patterson	9	7	16	4.5-14	2-0-10
Mike Kudla	10	5	15	3.0-21	2-0-15
Jay Richardson	9	5	14	2.0-16	1-0-12
Mike D'Andrea	7	6	13	3.5-4	1-0-1
OSU Totals	392	293	685	56-201	19-120
OPP Totals	346	266	612	56-196	20-122

Fumbles Forced
 1 — Marcus Green, A.J. Hawk, Dustin Fox, Sirjo Welch.

Fumbles Recovered
 1 — Tyler Everett, Marcus Green, A.J. Hawk.

Blocked Kicks
 1 — Tyler Everett.

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Recruiting Analysts Had Ginn Pegged Correctly

I'm not a big one on football recruiting rankings. Evaluating prep talent for college potential is an inexact science at best. Top 100 lists and the like make for plenty of discussion among recruiting aficionados, many of whom seem to care more about how their favorite team does in February than how it does during the actual football season.

But having a high ranking from the so-called experts doesn't guarantee success on the college gridiron.

Every once in a while, however, a player comes along like a Chris Spielman or an Orlando Pace or an Andy Katzenmoyer or — dare I mention him — a Maurice Clarett, who lives up to the must-have billing and lives up to it almost immediately.

I think all of us are beginning to realize that Ted Ginn Jr. is one of those very special players.

Ginn started off slowly enough this season, as he learned the nuances of Ohio State's offense and waited for his chance to get the ball — via kick, pass or run — in the open field. Many, myself included, started to get a bit impatient when he continued to get playing time but was able to produce just three receptions for a paltry 9 yards and a couple of nondescript returns in his first four games.

Once he got untracked with a 65-yard punt return against Wisconsin in the fifth game of the season, he has pretty much been wowing observers ever since. He has now scored six touchdowns, and the TD plays have averaged an incredible 54.3 yards each.

It's not just Ginn's raw speed that impresses me. There is this little move he makes — I call it a pivot — where he changes direction at full speed. It's not just that he makes the move, but that he knows when to do it and which direction to head for. That's not speed, that's football sense — or a gift.

This is a player who can change the course of a game in the blink of an eye, and the offensive staff needs to continue to find ways to put the ball in his hands. Give him the ball enough and something is going to happen and probably something good.

There's also a sub-benefit to Ginn's highlight-reel antics.

Many Buckeye observers have been concerned that Jim Tressel's vanilla offense will hurt recruiting because some of the skill position players will not want to go to a school where the attack makes Woody Hayes' "three yards and a cloud of dust" seem wide open. Ginn's weekly appearances on "SportsCenter" and the nightly news will help keep the Buckeyes on the minds of prep players considering their college options.

While Ginn helped the Buckeyes win the game, OSU's offensive line continues to struggle. Ohio State tailbacks combined for just 19 yards on nine carries in the first half (a 2.1-yard average) against Michigan State.

I'm starting to detect ever so slight improvement from the guys up front, though. There were a few holes in the second half, including the one that Lydell Ross blew through for an 8-yard gain before losing the ball on a fumble. Ross' fumbling at critical times is getting old. He needs to remember that the football is not a lady at a gentlemen's club. The object is to keep your hands on it, not off.

Defensively, I still worry about the Buckeyes' inability to stop the run. Much

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH
Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

was made of the fact that Ohio State held Michigan State to 145 yards on the ground, well below their 232.2-yard average. That average was racked up with elusive quarterback Drew Stanton at the controls for the Spartans, but even without him, MSU averaged 4.3 yards a carry against the Buckeyes.

One way to improve the rushing defense is to improve the tackling, which was nothing short of atrocious against Michigan State. Anthony Schlegel was one of the worst offenders for the Buckeyes. Frequently, he was in the right position for a key stop but could not wrap up the Spartan ball carrier.

Several other Buckeyes looked like they were more anxious to make the "SportsCenter" hit than to practice sound, fundamental tackling and stop Spartan drives. Ginn or Mike Nugent cannot bail out the Buckeyes weekly. It's time for the defense to pull its weight, and that's difficult to do if the unit defenses a play well and then fails to make the stop on initial contact.

Interestingly, two of the best tacklers on the team appear to be kickers Nugent and Kyle Turano. Nugent had a couple of touchdown-saving stops on kickoffs earlier in the season, and Turano displayed picture-perfect form while thwarting a possible score on a punt return by Michigan State.

There was much excitement about the victory over the Spartans making OSU bowl-eligible. Who cares if the Buckeyes are bowl-eligible if that bowl game is one of the City Bowls — Motor or Music? Those are bowls for schools like Minnesota.

The Buckeyes need to keep improving, beat a struggling Purdue team on the road and then come back and beat Michigan. That would make for a pretty good bowl game and a pretty good season, especially when you consider where the Buckeyes were just a few short weeks ago.

And just a note for the Buckeye offensive coaches. Both of your rushing touchdowns against MSU came on runs to the outside. Maybe you should try that a little more. In case you haven't noticed, the inside running game hasn't really been working.

Other Random Thoughts

- Troy Smith has a real cannon for an arm. He doesn't have it completely under control yet, but with experience he should get the touch he needs to become a good passer. Hopefully, the coaches will let him continue to learn and use all of his skills.

- Santonio Holmes has been somewhat quiet since his 10-reception, 218-yard performance against Marshall in the second game of the season. In the seven games since, he has caught 29 passes, but they were good for an average of just 10.8 yards a catch and two touchdowns. Holmes is a more explosive player than that. His season reception average has dropped from 22.1 yards after the Marshall game to 14.5.

- Punt returns — with Holmes and Ginn leading the way — and kick returns — with Maurice Hall's record-setting performance — are not the only returns on which the Buckeyes are racking up yards.

Ohio State is averaging 11.0 return yards on 11 interceptions. Ashton Youbety has been especially effective on the pick and run. He has returned his team-leading three thefts for 63 yards and a 21.0 average.

Donte Whitner and Tyler Everett have each returned interceptions 24 yards, with Everett's going for a touchdown.

- The Buckeyes were whistled for another delay-of-game penalty against Michigan State. Ohio State's inability to get plays into the huddle in a timely fashion continues to baffle me, though it seems to be less of a problem with Smith at quarterback than it was with Justin Zwick.

While the penalties are obvious, the stat sheet doesn't show the number of times Buckeye quarterbacks have had to rush plays or did not have enough time to survey the defense and possibly make a change of plays at the line of scrimmage or the times when OSU has had to burn a timeout.

Making a decision and getting the play in is basic football.

Special Holiday Promotion

We are proud to announce one of our most exciting holiday promotions ever.

Buy a year of BSB for yourself or as a gift at the regular price and we will send you two great Buckeye DVDs — "Beyond

the Gridiron: The Life and Times of Woody Hayes" and "The Greatest Rivalry in College Football" — absolutely free.

"Beyond the Gridiron," produced for the Public Broadcasting System, is the definitive documentary on Hayes. It features rare photos and footage of the legendary coach as well as interviews with Tressel, Jack Nicklaus, Archie Griffin, Bo Schembechler, Rex Kern and many others. There are clips from Hayes' famous OSU graduation address and President Nixon's eulogy upon Hayes' death.

"The Greatest Rivalry in College Football," produced by WBNS-TV in Columbus, salutes the 100th anniversary of the Ohio State-Michigan game. There are recaps of all 100 games, interviews with former Buckeyes, the top 10 OSU plays against Michigan and an in-depth look at the 10-year war between Woody and Bo.

You get both of these hard-to-find videos free with your subscription. You simply pay \$5.95 shipping and handling. Keep the DVDs for yourself or give them as gifts.

And speaking of gifts, here's the good part. Buy one subscription with the DVDs at the regular price and you can buy as many additional gift packages, including a year's subscription and both DVDs, for just \$29.95 with postage and handling included. That's the perfect gift for any Buckeye fan — a \$105.80 value for just \$29.95.

Watch your mailbox for information or give us a call at (614) 486-2202 with any questions or to place an order.



Wellesley Inn & Suites

**FOOTBALL FRENZY WEEKEND
SPECIAL RATES START AT \$69.00
JUST MINUTES FROM OSU!**

**SPACIOUS SUITES
FREE CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
FREE PARKING
FULLY EQUIPPED KITCHENS
FITNESS CENTER
HEATED OUTDOOR POOL (Polaris Only)**

Offer expires December 30, 2004. Package rates are plus tax, per room, per night on Friday and Saturday only based on availability. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion and/or package.

<p>DUBLIN 614-760-0245 5530 Tuttle Crossing Blvd. Dublin, Ohio 43016</p>	<p>POLARIS 614-431-5522 8555 Lyra Drive Columbus, Ohio 43240</p>
--	--

**** PLEASE ASK FOR FOOTBALL FRENZY
WEEKEND SPECIAL WHEN CALLING**