

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 35, No. 15

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Jan. 30, 2016

Triple Play

Buckeyes Secure Trio Of Scout 300 Prospects

By RYAN GINN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Urban Meyer's yearly reminder that he's not to be doubted on the recruiting trail came early this year.

In what should not be mistaken as a coincidence of timing, the Ohio State head coach famous for his National Signing Day heroics landed three four-star prospects during a four-hour period on Jan. 18, bringing in quarterback Dwayne Haskins, linebacker Keandre Jones and wide receiver Binjimen Victor. All come from territories Meyer aspires to control and play positions of need for the Buckeyes.

Meyer's success as a recruiter over the last decade has raised expectations to a level nearly impossible to fulfill, and any misstep on the recruiting front is dissected under an increasingly large magnifying glass. The late months of the



LEFT/CENTER: COURTESY OF SCOUT.COM; RIGHT: FILE PHOTO; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY TIM MOODY
THREE'S COMPANY – Linebacker Keandre Jones (left), quarterback Dwayne Haskins (center) and receiver Binjimen Victor (right) all committed to the Buckeyes on Jan. 18.

2016 recruiting cycle presented seemingly more opportunities than ever for criticism and second-guessing.

The Buckeyes lost five-star running back Kareem Walker, who later flipped to Michigan. Four-star quarterback commit Tristen Wallace decided he was better suited for wide receiver at the next level and switched his commitment to Oregon, which was more willing than OSU to bring in a raw talent at wideout. Five-star defensive tackle Rashaan Gary, the No. 1 overall recruit in the country, rejected Ohio State's attempt to land an official visit and remained an overwhelming

favorite to commit to Michigan. Four-star defensive tackle Antwan Jackson chose Auburn over Ohio State, dealing the Buckeyes a frustrating setback in a battle they thought they'd won.

Through it all, Ohio State was still managing to put together one of the best classes in the country, highlighted by five-star defensive end Nick Bosa, four-star defensive end Jonathon Cooper and four-star receiver Austin Mack, all of whom rank among the top 50 overall players in the country.

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Buckeyes' Season Beginning To Slip Away

By BLAKE WILLIAMS
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Thad Matta's 12th season in Columbus has been full of firsts.

Ohio State's four-game nonconference losing streak, one that featured home losses to the likes of UT-Arlington and Louisiana Tech, was the longest of Matta's tenure and the program's worst since the 1957-58 season.

Although the Buckeyes rebounded with a win over then-No. 4 Kentucky, they went on to lose 100-65 to Maryland on the road Jan. 16, the first time an Ohio State team has been beaten that badly in the Matta era.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the 2015-16 Buckeyes – a roster that features just one scholarship junior, four sophomores and six freshmen – are the youngest team ever fielded by Matta at OSU.



KEVIN DYE

STRUGGLING – Thad Matta (center) and the Buckeyes fell to 4-3 in Big Ten play after starting 3-0.

Now the head coach is looking to avoid a second in his career, not wanting to replicate the 2007-08 season – the only time at Ohio State that he has had an eligible team fail to make the NCAA Tournament.

"I haven't," Matta said Jan. 20 when asked if he had talked to his team about the postseason. "It's been more just in terms of us and what we have to do better to play better. That's really been the entire focus with this team, just trying to find and point out and teach and coach, all those things that allow these guys to understand the process a little bit better and understand what it takes mentally to play at this level."

A day after Matta made those comments, the Buckeyes suffered another road loss, falling 75-64 at Purdue. While the defeat at the hands of the Boilermakers was characterized by better effort

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COVER STORY

Jones, Haskins Flip To Boost OSU's 2016 Class

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However, there were still holes in the class as the calendar flipped to 2016. Wallace's exit left OSU without a quarterback, and the departure of nine underclassmen – including receiver Michael Thomas and linebacker Darron Lee – upped the urgency.

Those concerns were quickly resolved, however.

On the afternoon of Martin Luther King Day, Meyer and the Ohio State staff threw themselves a Twitter party with a larger-than-normal audience thanks to the government holiday. Victor committed at noon, just one day after he took an official visit to Tennessee. Haskins and Jones, a pair of Maryland commits, were reportedly set for a 10 a.m. announcement in which they'd commit to Ohio State, but a last-ditch effort from Maryland's coaches delayed the process. Meyer hopped on a flight to the Washington, D.C., area and got it done in person, and by 4 p.m. the duo were Buckeyes.

Because of an otherwise slow news day and the anticipation that had built over the course of six hours, Ohio State and its fans got to revel in a public showcase of the program's recruiting prowess.

"It created such a buzz throughout the recruiting world and put all the eyes on Ohio State," said Scout.com recruiting analyst Bill Greene. "To get one guy like that would be amazing because they're all among the highest rated at their position, but then to land three in a matter of hours created a lot of buzz and contributes to the perception that Ohio State can get whoever they want. They're right up there with Alabama in terms of being able to do what they want and get who they want."

There was certainly a noticeable degree of difficulty in landing each of the prospects, and that started with the work OSU put in on Victor.

Throughout the summer it seemed likely that Mack would be Ohio State's only true wide receiver in the class of 2016. As Ohio State turned up the heat on its pursuit of Victor, a four-star receiver out of Coconut Creek, Fla., those odds began to shift. The Buckeyes spent the late summer months trying to get Victor to hold off on a commitment to Florida and then watched as wide receiver



COURTESY OF SCOUT.COM

FLIPPED – Like Keandre Jones, Dwayne Haskins (pictured) was verbally committed to Maryland before deciding to flip to Ohio State.

ers coach Zach Smith – an ace recruiter in south Florida – went to work on bringing aboard the nation's No. 66 overall prospect.

Any notions that the trio of commitments came as some sort of coincidence shouldn't have made it past noon, when Victor announced on Twitter that he was committed to Ohio State. He was one day removed from an official visit to Tennessee and had scheduled an official visit to Florida (one that was canceled in the wake of his commitment). All indications at that point were that Victor would announce on signing day. Instead, Smith did what he does best and helped close the deal early.

"I feel like Coach Zach is going to be a great coach for me," Victor told Scout.com after his announcement. "I talk or text with him mostly every day. It doesn't matter how we connect, we just talk and it's not only about football, but about life and school as well. That did a lot for me, and I feel like he's a great coach and great person."

Victor, who is the No. 10 wide receiver in

the class of 2016, was highly coveted by the Buckeyes because of his ability as an outside receiver. The Buckeyes have had plenty of shifty, hybrid-type receivers on the roster in recent years but Victor (6-4½, 173) presents a deep threat that was lacking in 2015 following the graduation of big-play receiver Devin Smith.

Scout.com recruiting analyst Chad Simmons said he sees Victor developing into a double-digit-touchdown type of player for the Buckeyes, although he and Greene both agreed that some physical development will be necessary for Victor to reach his full potential in Columbus.

"He's so thin and I don't think his frame will ever change, but he's got to get stronger," Greene said. "He's a legit 6-4 and can go up and over people. He's got really good hands and great length. He's more quick than he is fast, but his size and length are going to create a lot of problems, especially if you have a 5-10 or 5-11 corner on him. He's going to be a matchup nightmare."

Haskins and Jones were supposed to get the day started but instead helped to finish it with a flourish.

Jones was fresh off an official visit to Ohio State that had been kept a secret until his arrival the weekend of Jan. 15. The four-star linebacker out of Olney (Md.) Good Counsel was viewed as unlikely to flip from Maryland, but by the night of Jan. 17 rumors were already circulating that he'd informed the Terrapins of his intent to decommit. Jones does not have a Twitter account and did not confirm the news to any reporters that night, but all eyes were focused on him the following morning.

Jones (6-3, 202) is the No. 13 outside linebacker and No. 242 overall prospect in the class of 2016, and his addition to the class gives Ohio State another linebacker to pair with four-star early enrollee Tuf Borland.

"I saw him the week of the Under Armour All-American Game, and he's a guy that can really run," Greene said. "He'll probably top out at 220 or 225 pounds and play as an outside linebacker. I didn't see him in coverage but he should be able to do it because he can flip his hips and run. He can blitz off the edge, stick his foot in the ground and go. He would be a Ryan Shazier or Darron Lee type of player."

Haskins committed at the same time as Jones, announcing the commitment for both of them by posting a picture of them on his Twitter page.

"Keandre and I are like brothers," Haskins wrote. "Blessed to say he's family and joining me at Ohio State."

All indications are that neither Victor nor Jones would have been sure things to Ohio State without assurances from Haskins that he'd be there, too. The four-star quarterback from Potomac (Md.) Bullis School is one of the most magnetic personalities in the class of 2016 and is viewed as a leader among his peers.

"He's definitely a guy who takes control of the huddle and has the respect of other players, and you can even see that on Twitter," Greene said. "Every kid in the country responds to him and likes him, so he's got that going for him."

Haskins is arguably the most important commit in Ohio State's class of 2016 because of what he means for the quarterback position at Ohio State. Bosa and Cooper are more highly rated, but neither was a must-have to the same degree as a quarterback. As the No. 13 quarterback and No. 227 overall prospect, Haskins (6-3, 204) will provide more competition for Joey Burrow once J.T. Barrett leaves Ohio State. Taking a quarterback in each recruiting cycle is a must, and the Buckeyes got a good one with Haskins.

"He'll redshirt next year, and that will be the very best thing for him just to build his body," Greene said. "He's not a runner, but it's not like he's Joe Bauserman, either. He can move around in the pocket and make plays, but he's not a 20-carry guy and doesn't want to be."

"You're bringing him in to run the team and get the ball where it needs to go. He's really accurate on the short and intermediate stuff. He struggled throwing deep when I saw him, but I think it's because he's not physically strong enough. As his arm gets stronger he'll get better at the deep ball. There's a lot to like about him as a quarterback."

There was a lot for Ohio State to like about the day as a whole, when Meyer reminded the college football world that he can recruit with the best of them and restocked the cupboard at three critical positions.

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RECRUITING WRAP-UP: OSU'S 2016 CLASS



JORDAN FULLER

CB • 6-2 • 200
Old Tappan (N.J.)
Northern Valley
Rank: N.J. 4, CB 10, Overall 127



ACCOLADES: Fuller was a U.S. Army All-American, one of many honors to come his way over the course of his high school career. He was the Gatorade New Jersey Player of the Year and NJ.com Player of the Year his senior season, beating out No. 1 overall prospect Rashan Gary for both honors. He scored 15 touchdowns and made six interceptions in his senior season.

FULLER SAYS: "We met with (Greg Schiano) as a family, and then we went over some football stuff. He coached me up as a corner, looking at down and distance and how you can get the advantage by what the offense is going to do in those situations. I really learned a lot there. I definitely know he knows what he is talking about. He's a good coach."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Fuller is versatile and can play several positions and on both sides of the ball. He projects best as a defensive back because of his length, acceleration, instincts and ability to change direction. He drives on the ball well, and when a play is in front of him, he comes up from his safety position and bursts into the ball carrier to make a strong hit." – Brian Dohn

PERSONAL: Fuller is the son of Cindy Mizelle and Bart Fuller. He is the fifth New Jersey prospect in the last four years to sign with Ohio State. His brother, Devin, played football at UCLA. Fuller chose OSU over Michigan and Notre Dame.

COMMIT DATE: Feb. 1, 2016



TYLER GERALD

OL • 6-5 • 330
Bradenton (Fla.)
IMG Academy
Rank: Fla. 20, OG 9, Overall 158



ACCOLADES: Gerald was selected for the Under Armour All-American game but couldn't play because of a shoulder injury that ended his senior season after six games. When healthy, he played a significant role in IMG's undefeated season.

GERALD SAYS: "I am extremely excited to get up there. I almost can't put it into words. It is a great experience and there is so much to learn from everybody there and everybody that will be around me. I just want to be able to get in and compete, and I am just excited to go and compete with the best in the country. It is up to me on how much playing time I get or how my grades go and all that stuff. I am extremely grateful for the guys and the coaches that gave me the opportunity."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He's a physical player with great brute strength and is capable of pulling and reaching second-level defenders. He bends well with good hip explosion and does a great job of setting up a strong base. He must keep his weight in check and work on pass protection techniques." – Dave Berk

PERSONAL: Gerald is the son of Carrie Gerald. He spent the majority of his high school career at Portsmouth (Ohio) Sciotoville East before transferring to IMG. Along with Malik Barrow, he is one of the first two IMG products to sign with Ohio State. He's expected to recover from his injury in time to contribute in some fashion during spring practice.

COMMIT DATE: June 19, 2014



MALIK HARRISON

ATH • 6-4 • 215
Columbus
Walnut Ridge
Rank: ATH 53, Overall NR



ACCOLADES: A three-year starting quarterback for Walnut Ridge, Harrison projects as a linebacker or wide receiver for the Buckeyes. Harrison accumulated 2,058 total yards as a senior while also totaling 40 tackles and five sacks on the defensive side of the ball. He was named third-team Associated Press Div. II all-state and first team all-central district in 2015.

HARRISON SAYS: "I picked Ohio State because it's close to home and it's a great place to go for my future to be bright on and off the field."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "There is absolutely no doubting the fact that Malik Harrison has enough athletic ability to play for Ohio State, and the question will be what position is best for him? Harrison will need to make the transition from athletic high school quarterback to refined linebacker at Ohio State, and he will probably need a redshirt year to accomplish that. If he can make that jump effectively, the Buckeyes will have a very athletic defender on that side of the football. If defense does not work out, Harrison could play wide receiver." – Bill Greene

PERSONAL: In addition to his success on the football field, Harrison is also a standout on the basketball court. Harrison helped Walnut Ridge to its first state tournament appearance since 1971 in the 2014-15 season in which he averaged a double-double (14 points and 10 rebounds per game). As a basketball player, Harrison was also honorable-mention all-state and second-team all-central district. He is the son of Donetta and Charles Harrison.

COMMIT DATE: Feb. 3, 2016



DWAYNE HASKINS

QB • 6-3 • 204
Potomac (Md.)
Bullis
Rank: Md. 7, QB 13, Overall 227



ACCOLADES: Haskins was an Under Armour All-American as a senior and is regarded as one of the top pure passers in his class. He completed 170 of 286 passes as a senior for 2,217 yards and 20 touchdowns. For his varsity career, Haskins threw for 54 touchdowns and 5,308 yards. As a sophomore and junior, Haskins led his team to consecutive IAC titles. His junior season, he was the Maryland Gatorade Player of the Year.

HASKINS SAYS: "I describe my game as a game-changer. When I have the ball in my hands, I like to make plays and get the ball out to my receivers and let them make plays also. I hope the future holds a great experience in college (and I) potentially play in the NFL. If not, I will have a great degree in the process and be a successful businessman outside of school."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He's not a runner, but it's not like he's Joe Bauserman, either. He can move around in the pocket and make plays, but he's not a 20-carry guy and doesn't want to be. You're bringing him in to run the team and get the ball where it needs to go. He's really accurate on the short and intermediate stuff. As his arm gets stronger he'll get better at the deep ball. There's a lot to like about him as a quarterback." – Bill Greene

PERSONAL: Haskins moved to Maryland from New Jersey in the ninth grade and is the son of Tamara and Dwayne Haskins Sr.

COMMIT DATE: Jan. 18, 2016



JAKE HAUSMANN

TE • 6-5 • 240
Cincinnati
Moeller
Rank: Ohio 6, TE 5, Overall 147



ACCOLADES: A first-team Division I all-state performer as a senior, Hausmann finished his high school career with 95 receptions for 1,349 yards and 17 touchdowns. Hausmann was a member of Moeller's 2013 state championship team as a sophomore and was second in the Greater Catholic League in receptions as a junior and senior. Hausmann was selected to play in the U.S. Army All-American bowl after his senior season.

HAUSMANN SAYS: "A lot of things went into the decision, but I had four criteria I was looking for – tradition, coaching, relationships and academics. I think Ohio State encompassed all of that, and that's what made me pull the trigger."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "He's a pro-style tight end with above-average blocking skills and the ability to release off the line and get open in the 5- to 10-yard range with the best of them. At times he drops the easy pass but is capable of making the hard catch look easy. He does a great job of getting his body in position to make the catch. He must continue working on straight-line speed." – Dave Berk

PERSONAL: Hausmann's parents Vicky and Pete both attended Ohio State and his older sister, Madeleine, currently attends Ohio State. He also has a younger sister, Kirsten. Hausmann has gone on multiple mission trips and participates in service projects such as the Moeller Little Buddies Program. At Moeller, Hausmann carries a 4.0 GPA and has been an honors student in every quarter.

COMMIT DATE: Jan. 25, 2015



KIERRE HAWKINS

TE • 6-4 • 225
Maple Heights, Ohio
Rank: TE 15, Overall NR



ACCOLADES: A third-team Associated Press Division I all-state performer as a senior, Hawkins helped Maple Heights to a 7-3 record in 2015 and led Devlin Culliver's team to the state playoffs with 14 touchdowns and 803 rushing yards as a junior.

HAWKINS SAYS: "I've never looked back at that decision at all, because it was a great decision on my part. Being at the facility makes me feel like I'm right at home, and I can't wait to play here. This is where I'm supposed to be. I really believe that in my heart. I've always felt that way. This was my dream, and the offer I wanted most. There's no other school in the country I would even talk to, because for me there's no place like Ohio State."

EXPERT'S TAKE: "Hawkins has size, speed and athletic ability, which is exactly what you look for in an impact player at the tight end or H-back position. He is a very raw athlete and should flourish when he can concentrate on one position at the next level. He has the frame that should fill out to 245 pounds and still be a threat running down the seam against a linebacker or safety." – Bill Greene

PERSONAL: The son of Connie and Sterlie Jones and Wilbur and Kelly Hawkins, the Ohio product grew up rooting for the Buckeyes and lists Cris Carter and Troy Smith as two of his all-time favorite Ohio State players. Hawkins writes poetry and enjoys listening to motivational speeches in his free time.

COMMIT DATE: Oct. 18, 2014

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Next Man Up

Haskins Leads Buckeyes To Comeback Win In Ann Arbor

JOSH WINSLOW

OFF THE BENCH – Backup quarterback Dwayne Haskins (7) entered Ohio State's game against Michigan in the third quarter when the Buckeyes trailed, 20-14, before guiding the team to a comeback win.

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By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Imagine the most critical situation the Ohio State football team could face during a regular-season game.

There might be various responses to that prompt, but a scenario where the Buckeyes are trailing in the second half against Michigan would probably come to mind. Throw in an injured fifth-year senior quarterback being replaced by a redshirt freshman playing his first meaningful snaps, and you've got a pretty dire situation.

That's exactly what Dwayne Haskins faced when he entered Ohio State's game at Michigan in the third quarter Nov. 25 with the Buckeyes trailing, 20-14.

The moment was monumental. Ohio State (10-2, 8-1 Big Ten) had its season on the line. The thing is, Haskins wasn't thinking about the score. He wasn't thinking about the situation. He wasn't thinking about three-time team captain J.T. Barrett, who had just left the game with an apparent right knee injury – nobody knew if Barrett would return.

Haskins was thinking about making sure he

clapped loud enough. That's the first thing fifth-year senior center and team captain Billy Price told him, after all.

"I forgot we were down. I was in the game," Haskins said. "First thing I get told by Bill was, 'Clap loud.' So I just forgot we were down by anything."



Terry Glenn
1974-2017

See Page 15

When Haskins, a Potomac, Md., native, entered the game, the Buckeyes were facing a third-and-1 at their own 31. With the backup QB in the game, Ohio State opted to keep it simple at first, as Haskins handed off to freshman running back J.K. Dobbins, who moved the chains with a 4-yard run.

"After that first handoff, I think it was J.K. got the first down, I was like, 'All right, we've got the ball rolling now, it's first down, actually can start the drive.'" Haskins said. "After that play it was like, 'Let's keep moving, let's go score the ball.'"

"That's exactly what the Buckeyes did, and Haskins played a big role in the drive.

Ohio State eventually drove down to the Michigan 43-yard line, setting up third-and-3. After consecutive false starts, though, that turned

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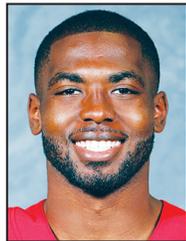
Barrett Becomes 1st QB To Go 4-0 In 'The Game' Despite Freak Pregame Injury

By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

J.T. Barrett's career against Michigan ended the way it began in more ways than one.

First off, and more importantly for Barrett and the Buckeyes, his tenure as Ohio State's starting quarterback in The Game was capped with a victory against the Wolverines. That's how it began as well when the then-redshirt freshman from Wichita Falls, Texas, guided his team to a 42-28 win over Michigan in Columbus in 2014.

On Nov. 25 in Ann Arbor, Barrett again started for Ohio State against Michigan, and once again, the Buckeyes were victorious, 31-20. The victory made Barrett the first quarterback in the history of the rivalry – on either side – to go 4-0 as a starter.



J.T. Barrett

The 2017 win was different for the fifth-year senior, though, but it wasn't completely unlike the win in 2014. Back in his first experience playing in The Game, Barrett suffered a broken ankle in the second half, ruling him out for the rest of the season. That time around, the Buckeyes were already in command as Cardale Jones came in to finish off the win.

This year, Barrett was once again unable to finish the game.

After Michigan scored a touchdown with 7:07 left in the third quarter to go ahead, 20-14, the Buckeyes took over at their own 22 after a 12-yard kick return by sophomore running back Mike Weber. Barrett rushed for a loss of 1 on first down before picking up 10 on second. But after that carry, the Buckeyes' only three-time team captain stayed on the Michigan Stadium turf before eventually being helped up and making his way straight to the locker room with a heavy limp.

At the time, it seemed like an in-play injury, but after the game head coach Urban Meyer revealed there was much more to the story.

"I'm just so upset with myself – it was a non-football injury," Meyer said in his postgame press conference. "Too many damn people on the sideline and a guy with a camera hit him in the knee. I'm going to find out who."

After a win, especially a road win against Michigan that moved the Buckeyes to 10-2 (8-1

Continued On Page 9

Haskins Entered Game With OSU Trailing, 20-14

Continued From Page 1

into third-and-13, and the Buckeyes had no choice but to trust in Haskins' arm.

He took the third-down snap and dropped back, eventually throwing toward the right sideline into tight coverage. The throw beat the defense, and sophomore wide receiver Austin Mack – Haskins' roommate – made the catch for 27 yards and a first down.

"Somebody had to make a play," Mack said. "They called an isolation pass to me, a fade route, and I went up and made a play."

Two plays later Haskins scrambled for 22 yards, coming up just short of a touchdown. But Dobbins cleaned it up, forcing his way in from the 1-yard line to put the Buckeyes ahead, 21-20.

By the end of the game, Haskins had led the Buckeyes to 10 more points, helped along by a few key third-down pass completions, and a 31-20 victory in Ann Arbor.

He finished the game with six completions on seven attempts for 94 yards, and perhaps most importantly, the Buckeyes didn't turn the ball over with him in the game. After Haskins took the field, Ohio State outscored the Wolverines, 17-0.

"He took care of the ball," head coach Urban Meyer said of Haskins. "That was the No. 1 thing, he took care of the ball."

And it all happened just a week after Haskins had a fumble returned for a touchdown in the Buckeyes' 52-14 win over Illinois



JOSH WINSLOW

CLUTCH CATCH – Austin Mack (11) made a key 27-yard reception on third-and-13 on Dwayne Haskins' first drive at quarterback.

on Nov. 18. After that fumble, Haskins was pulled as Meyer put the starters back in the game to avoid a potential "clown show."

"There's a lot of credit that needs to go to his preparation," Price said of Haskins. "He's

very cool when he's back there. The kid is a gifted, freak athlete. If you saw what he did on third-and-13, as a 19- or 20-year-old young man, that's incredible.

"I told him, 'Hey, just trust the offensive

line, just make your decisions and don't turn the ball over.'"

While none of his teammates admitted to having doubts when Haskins took the field, it would be safe to assume that nobody knew what to expect. That includes the quarterback himself, who admitted after the game that he surprised himself with his own comfort level.

"It was really unreal, honestly," Haskins said. "You'd think that you'd be nervous, and honestly, I wasn't. I had the O-line. I had the receivers. Billy and everybody else was behind me the entire way and I got the snap and we were just moving the ball down the field, play by play, it happened."

With the regular season in the rearview mirror, Haskins had played in eight of the Buckeyes' 12 games. He completed 40 of 57 passes for 565 yards and four touchdowns to one interception, which was returned for a touchdown during Ohio State's win over UNLV.

Going forward, Haskins will likely reassume his role as Barrett's understudy after Barrett said he'd be ready to go for the Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin on Dec. 2.

But, after his performance against Michigan, the Buckeyes know they have a backup quarterback with the ability to go in and make the plays necessary to win if called upon.

"It's not just a one-night thing, it's a whole year," Mack said of his roommate. "He's being a pro. Dwayne takes that, the edge, the seriousness to the game so that when that time comes and his number is called, he can be able to produce."

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COVER STORY

Barrett Exits In 3rd Quarter In Final Michigan Game

Continued From Page 1

Big Ten) on the season, the head coach would typically be ecstatic. But after the game Meyer was anything but. He was visibly frustrated as he attempted to break down the game, but Meyer, who improved to 6-0 in The Game, kept coming back to the freak injury.

"Imagine someone on your freaking sideline hurt your quarterback," he said. "I'll find out who that was."

Barrett explained that the initial injury occurred before he had even stepped on the field. While the Buckeyes were forcing Michigan into a punt on the first defensive series of the game, Barrett was behind his team's bench warming up.

At some point, someone on the crowded sideline – Meyer believed it was a photographer – tried to squeeze between Barrett and a cart, bumping into the quarterback's right knee in the process.

"It bumped me and my knee kind of shifted in, which has happened before," Barrett said.

He noted that he experienced a similar situation during Ohio State's season opener against Indiana. He's had issues at other times as well, but he was usually able to "unlock" his knee without the assistance of trainers.

Before the game, the Buckeyes got his knee unlocked, as Barrett put it, and he was able to start.

"J.T. said he was fine," fifth-year senior center Billy Price said. "If something was bothering him, you couldn't tell. He is such a true warrior and a true leader that he didn't allow it to affect his play."

But the early going was tough for Ohio State. After the teams traded punts to open the proceedings, Michigan embarked on a 13-play, 77-yard drive that was capped by a 2-yard touchdown plunge from Khalid Hill, giving the Wolverines a 7-0 lead.

On the second-to-last play of the opening frame, Michigan freshman wide receiver Donovan Peoples-Jones – a one-time Ohio State recruit – returned a punt 42 yards, and with a holding call against the Buckeyes



JOSH WINSLOW

EARLY EXIT – Quarterback J.T. Barrett (16) did not return after aggravating a right knee injury in the third quarter against Michigan.

tacked on, the Wolverines took over at the OSU 5-yard line. On the first snap of the second quarter, Michigan made it 14-0 when fifth-year senior quarterback John O'Korn hit tight end Sean McKeon for a 3-yard touchdown.

At the time, Michigan had gained 105 total yards on 23 offensive plays. The Buckeyes had minus-6 yards on nine first-quarter plays, marking the first time since 2010 that Ohio State had lost yardage in a quarter.

That's when Barrett, who was showing no signs of the pregame injury, and the Ohio State offense turned it on. On the ensuing drive, the Buckeyes marched 75 yards in 11 plays, capped by a 21-yard touchdown scramble by Barrett.

After another Michigan punt, it took just three plays for Barrett to find tight end

Marcus Baugh for a 25-yard strike to tie the game.

From there, neither team scored until Michigan made it 20-14 in the third, and then Barrett aggravated the injury. He finished the game with three completions on eight attempts for 30 yards and a score while carrying the ball 15 times for 67 yards and another touchdown.

With Barrett out, the Buckeyes turned to redshirt freshman Dwayne Haskins, who guided Ohio State to two more touchdowns and a field goal to cement the victory (a full breakdown of Haskins' heroics can be found on the cover of this issue).

"To think they scored after a punt return on the 5-freaking-yardline," Meyer said. "So our defense played well, our kickoff team played well, but it was a street

fight and we hung in there and found a way to win."

While he wasn't on the field in the final moments, Barrett gets his credit for the win. The victory made him 36-6 as Ohio State's starter, tying him with Art Schlichter for the most wins in school history. He also became just the second player in FBS history to throw for 100 or more touchdowns and rush for 40 or more scores in a career – 102 and 40, respectively – joining Central Michigan legend Dan LeFevour (102 passing, 47 rushing).

Barrett's record at Ohio State is set in stone. His name is plastered all over the school record books and likely will be for some time. What exactly happened to him at Michigan Stadium on Nov. 25, though, is less clear.

While Barrett had an idea of what happened, he didn't know who bumped him, or what exactly made contact with his knee. But he was pretty sure the culprit wanted to distance himself from the situation.

"I didn't really see a camera," Barrett said. "I mean, I remember he was wearing something gray and he just continued to walk. I'm pretty sure he got a little nervous but, yeah. That's what happened."

Barrett seemed lighthearted about the incident, even standing up from his table at the press conference to give a hands-on demonstration of what happened. Meyer, on the other hand, was furious.

"It's an all-out investigation," he said. When Meyer was asked if he thought the incident could have been intentional, he simply said, "I don't know."

Barrett, when asked the same question, was a bit more sure, saying, "No, I don't know. I mean, I hope not. I don't think it's that type of rivalry where you do that. Nah."

After the game, it was not clear exactly what happened. In the long run, it might not even matter. The Buckeyes got the win to cap the regular season, sending them into the Dec. 2 Big Ten Championship Game against Wisconsin on a high note.

As for Barrett's status for that showdown in Indianapolis?

"I'll play next week," he said.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

With Burrow Gone, Buckeyes Are Haskins' Team

By RYAN McGLADE
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When Urban Meyer walked away from the lectern following Ohio State's spring game on April 14, the quarterback situation was still as foggy to the public as it was when spring practice began on March 5.

In his press conference immediately after the intra-squad scrimmage, Meyer said he and offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Ryan Day and offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson would meet in the week that followed to evaluate the spring as a whole and then meet with Joe Burrow, Dwayne Haskins and Tate Martell to give some kind of private assessment of where everybody stood.

Burrow, who graduated on May 6 with a degree in consumer and family financial services, provided clarity to the matter when he announced on May 8 that he was transferring from Ohio State. Ten days later, he revealed that was headed to LSU as a graduate transfer with two years of eligibility remaining.

Speaking at the Pro Football Hall of Fame Luncheon Club on May 14 in Canton, Ohio, Meyer confirmed what Burrow's transfer means: Haskins, who will be a third-year sophomore in the fall, is in position to be the Buckeyes' starting quarterback for the 2018 season.

"This is really the first time I've talked about this since the spring game, but as of now it looks like Dwayne Haskins will get the first opportunity to be the starter," Meyer said at the luncheon, according to The (Canton) Repository.

The head coach noted how Haskins took over for the injured J.T. Barrett in the third quarter of the game at Michigan last season with OSU trailing, 20-14, and led the team to a 31-20 victory. On Haskins' first drive of that game, he threaded a 27-yard pass between two Michigan defenders to Austin Mack to convert a third-and-13, which was set up because of back-to-back false start penalties. Two plays later, Haskins scampered for 22 yards before J.K. Dobbins punched it in from a yard out to give Ohio State the lead for good. Haskins (6-3, 218) finished the contest completing 6 of 7 passes for 94 yards with no touchdowns or interceptions while running three times for 24 yards.

"Dwayne is a young guy that came in against our rivals and did a heck of a job," Meyer said. "You go back and watch that again, he came in on the first drive and took us down the field and scored on that first drive against that defense. So he's got a great release, he's got good size and he's a mobile-enough quarterback. It is going to change how we attack defenses."



TIM MOODY

HIS TEAM – After competing with Joe Burrow and Tate Martell in spring practice, Dwayne Haskins (7) enters the summer as Ohio State's undisputed starting quarterback.

While Meyer talked about what Haskins will bring to the squad, he made sure at the luncheon to share his feelings toward Burrow, who broke a bone in his throwing hand during fall camp last year.

"He's a very good player," Meyer said of Burrow. "I love Joe. I love his family. He did everything the right way. I have nothing but good things to say about him. Joe and I are extremely close."

Haskins came to Ohio State as a four-star product out of Potomac (Md.) Bullis School, where he racked up 5,308 yards and 54 touchdowns in his high school career. He threw for 1,963 yards and 24 touchdowns as a junior in 2014, when he was named the Maryland Gatorade Player of the Year. He then completed 170 of 286 passes as a senior for 2,217 yards and 20 scores. The New Jersey native helped Bullis to consecutive Interstate Athletic Conference titles as a sophomore and junior.

Directly observing Haskins' development as a prepster, Bullis head coach Pat Cileto told BSB that Haskins has more than earned

his shot at being the starting signal caller for the Buckeyes.

"The kid deserves it," Cileto said. "He's one of the hardest-working kids that we've had come through here. I've never seen a kid so in-tune to football. I'm not going to say he's the hardest worker in the weight room or anything like that, but I've never seen a kid perfect his craft the way he has. He would leave practice, he would go throw in the indoor facility because he didn't like the way the ball was coming out. He didn't stop working until he had it down to where it was perfect throwing the ball."

Cileto said Haskins routinely returns to Bullis to work with the quarterbacks

currently playing for the high school or to throw with the receivers. In fact, Cileto said Haskins was back in town in early May for six days, three of which he spent working out with the quarterbacks.

Cileto said Haskins' latest visit is just an example of how much the student-athlete has grown over the years.

"The biggest change that I've seen over Dwayne in the last three or four years is his maturity level," Cileto said. "It just continues to grow and grow, and he gets more and more serious about it every time I see him. Since he was here, it was football and school. That was it. There were no distractions. You can just see he's got more focus now than he ever has."

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JOSH WINSLOW

PULLING AWAY – Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell (21) caught six passes for 192 yards and two touchdowns as the Buckeyes topped Michigan and head coach Jim Harbaugh (pointing behind Campbell), 62-39, for a seventh straight victory over the Wolverines.

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Buckeyes Roll To Statement Victory In 'The Game'

By **TIM MOODY**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Winning The Game is nothing new for Urban Meyer's Ohio State. He was 6 for 6 against Michigan as the head coach in Columbus heading into 2018 with his eyes set on a perfect 7-0 start. This time, though, the Buckeyes weren't supposed to win – at least if you ask almost anyone outside the program.

Michigan was ranked fourth in the nation. The Wolverines were 10-1 overall and a perfect 8-0 in the Big Ten. They were favored in The Game in Columbus for the first time since 2004.

It was Ohio State that was coming off a 52-51 overtime win against unranked Maryland. It was the Buckeyes who had struggled on defense all year and who were preparing to face the No. 1 defense in the nation in various major categories.

But when the clock struck zero at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 24, it was Meyer's Buckeyes ahead once again. And it wasn't close. Ohio State responded to being the underdog by shellacking the Wolverines, 62-39. Meyer's perfect streak against Michigan stayed alive in resounding fashion.

At this point, the Ohio State players themselves can hardly remember The Game going any other way.

"I don't recall the last time they won against us, I was definitely a little boy and we did not want to be part of the team that gave them the first dub (win) in, what, 10 years?" said junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones.

Seven years, actually. But Jones was still a high school freshman at the time.

For Ohio State's seniors – playing on Senior Day – it was a fourth pair of

gold pants, five for some like Parris Campbell, who caught six passes for 192 yards and a two scores, including a 78-yard catch-and-run, in his final game at the Horseshoe.

For those seniors, it was the perfect cap to a regular season that was marred by off-field controversies out of their control. Meyer commended his team for fighting through that – it was him who was suspended three games to begin the year, not them – to come out with a win on the biggest stage yet.

"I'm extremely proud of our players, the way they've fought through it," Meyer said of the distractions. "Like someone was saying, nothing's ever good enough. And obviously, there was some adversity earlier in the year – not some, big-time adversity. And to come back against your rival and play like that, that's a focused team that loves each other and cares about each other."

For Michigan's seniors, it was a fourth loss when a win would have meant more than anything. Ahead of the season, Michigan set its sights on a "revenge tour" after losing to Michigan State, Penn State, Wisconsin and Ohio State last season. The last stop in that tour was Columbus after the Wolverines dispatched the other three teams with ease, but what became another career highlight for one set of seniors was a fourth (or fifth) lowlight for the others.

"That's the toughest part," Michigan senior safety Tyree Kinnel said. "I'm going to have to sleep on that the rest of my life, I wasn't able to win in this game. Other than that, I'm blessed to be here."

Slow Devastation

For Ohio State in The Game, it wasn't just a win. The Buckeyes turned a game many expected them to lose into one of the most resounding victories in the history of the rivalry.

Continued On Page 8

COVER STORY

Buckeye Seniors Finish Undefeated Against U-M

Continued From Page 1

Neither team had scored more than 42 points in The Game since Ohio State's 50-14 win in 1968. The Buckeyes had never scored more than 50, and Michigan reached 60 or

more just once – all the way back in 1902, an 86-0 victory for the Wolverines in the fourth-ever matchup between the two schools.

Ohio State – again, the underdog – posted 567 total yards, including 396 through the air. Nobody had gained 300 passing yards

against Michigan's No. 1 pass defense this season.

The Buckeye defense allowed 401 total yards, but it came up big when it mattered most, stopping Michigan on 8 of 14 third-down attempts and getting a pair of interceptions in the second half.

It was a dominant performance in many regards for Ohio State. From Michigan's perspective, it was slow devastation – at least that's how Kinnel put it.

"They slowly devastated us throughout the

game," he said. "Knowing all the yards they were putting up and how easily they were scoring, it was tough. It was very tough. They completely beat us everywhere. Run game, pass game, everyone is to blame."

It wasn't always rosy for Ohio State, though. The Buckeyes found themselves ahead, 21-6, with 3:18 left in the first half. The rout was on – at least momentarily.

Michigan's ensuing drive was extended when Ohio State junior cornerback Damon Arnette was flagged for pass interference on

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COVER STORY

third-and-9 near midfield. Three plays later, Michigan signal caller Shea Patterson hit receiver Nico Collins for a 23-yard score.

Then disaster struck. Ohio State sophomore H-back Demario McCall fumbled the ensuing kickoff, and Michigan recovered at the 9. The Wolverines scored on a pass from Patterson to Chris Evans on first down and lined up to go for two and the tie. The Buckeyes forced an incomplete pass, though, to keep a two-point advantage. Then sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins guided a seven-play, 74-yard drive in the final 41 seconds of the half to get Ohio State in field-goal range, giving the Buckeyes a 24-19 lead at the break.

Despite letting most of a once-big advantage slip away, Jones said the Buckeyes stayed confident in the halftime locker room. They knew they had the upper hand. They felt they had the better team, and they were playing like it.

"Pretty composed and calm," Jones said when asked what the mood was in the locker room after 30 minutes. "We gave up some points that we kind of gave them. We felt like they didn't take over the game. We felt like we were very much in control, and we came out, we hit them right in the mouth off the top."

After the defense and special teams had slipped up toward the end of the first half, it was time for the offense to get some help. The Buckeyes had a nine-play, 56-yard drive early in the second half, but the offense stalled, settling for a chip-shot field goal, making it 27-19.

Then the defense got a stop, forcing fourth-and-8 at the Michigan 36. Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave blocked the ensuing punt, and fellow freshman Sevyn Banks returned it for the score.

After nearly allowing Michigan to tie the game late in the first half, the Buckeyes suddenly had a big lead once again at 34-19. From there, the Wolverines had some success on offense, but the Buckeyes dominated the game with their aerial attack while getting timely running – like Campbell's 78-yard scamper that made it 48-25 early in the fourth quarter.

"I don't know about 62 (points), but I knew we were going to come out and put on a show," Haskins said. "I'm proud of how we played today. It started up front with the O-line. And the playmakers made plays. That's what mattered."

A Statement Win

After The Game, Ohio State fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon was asked if he thought his team was one of the top four in the country.

"I think it is," he said. Unfortunately for Dixon and the Buckeyes, it's not his opinion that counts. It's also not a conversation that was ready to be settled considering Ohio State has one more game – the Big Ten title bout in Indianapolis against Northwestern on Dec. 1 – before the College Football Playoff field is announced.

Dixon noted that he thought Ohio State made a statement. At this level, statement wins

always come back to the playoff conversation, but for this year's Ohio State team, the playoffs are only part of the equation.

Throughout the year, the Buckeyes have heard a lot of noise from the outside.

Meyer was suspended, and some thought he should have been fired. The Buckeyes lost to Purdue, and they were written off by many. Ohio State struggled against Nebraska and Maryland – it was just more

of the same, a talented team failing to live up to expectations.

Then there was the rampant speculation about Meyer's health, calling into question his status for next season. For now, though, all of that was pushed to the back for Ohio State, and that's where the statement came in.

"People are going to say what they're going to say," Dixon said, "but at the end of the day you still have to go on that field and play."

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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 62, Michigan 39

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on the crowd in Ohio Stadium: "We asked them at the Skull Session, 'When I need you the most, would you give us your very best?' And our fans and student body who we love just gave us their very best."

OSU sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins on the postgame celebration: "All the fans just flooded the field, and it shows how much love that this football team gets from this university. And just really a great win. And we played great and looking forward to next week."

Haskins on his motivation for The Game: "I mean, we didn't need the underdog score point. We didn't need the 'revenge tour.' We didn't need the guaranteed win. We know what this game means to our school, to our teammates and to our coaches."



Dwayne Haskins

OSU senior right tackle Isaiah Prince on the importance of keeping the Buckeyes' streak against U-M going on Senior Day: "To be honest, that was the only thing I cared about. I prayed before the game. I said, 'I don't care what happens as long as we win.' For it to happen on my Senior Day made me the happiest person."

Meyer on whether he expected an offensive performance of that caliber from the Buckeyes: "Just great players and a really good offensive staff, and that's how you do what you did. Did we see that? No, no. The guys just went out and played."

Haskins on facing Michigan's top-ranked defense: "I was licking my chops. I see the one-high covers and that's a quarterback's dream. The biggest responsibility for me all week was to be able to pick up blitzes and protection, because we saw a lot of different fronts and exotic looks. I spent hours in the film room just trying to figure out how we can pick the blitzes up. And once we picked it up, receivers make plays, and I'm going to put it there. And it was just a great overall team effort today."

OSU junior Malik Harrison when asked how important it was for the linebackers to have a big game: "It was real important, especially playing The Team Up North. Everybody – me, Tuf (Borland), (Dante Booker), Pete (Werner), we just came with our 'A' game."

OSU junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones on the defense: "We work really hard at practice from Sunday to Friday just going over, understanding our game plan, going over signals that we need to know and then to come out and see how we handled this team is just a crazy feeling. It kind of feels like all your hard work has been accomplished."

Harrison on having his best game in his hometown: "It makes it even more special. My family in the stands, we were always Buckeye fans growing up. So it was just being able to play my best game against The Team Up North – it was great."

Meyer on where this game ranks among his seven wins against Michigan: "I'm not going to short-change any of those other efforts that we've had. But the team we beat today was very good. It was a very, very good team with excellent players all over the field. And so where does that rank? I don't know. But I know the team we beat, that's a heck of a team we beat."

Meyer on the next steps for his team: "They celebrate the right way with their families, do the right things. And then they come back tomorrow and they accept their next mission assignment directive. And that's a big one. That's in Indianapolis."

OSU fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon on what's next for the Buckeyes: "For us, we always think we can do better, we always think we can do better. So I still don't think we're at the best level we can be, but it's better. We're moving in the right direction."

Prince, when asked if he felt OSU made a statement for the College Football Playoff committee: "Yeah, I think we made a statement. That was a pretty good defense we played against today. There is always room for improvement. We played hard for one another."

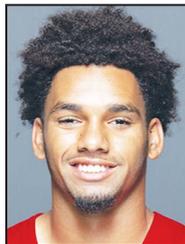
OSU fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell on whether the Buckeyes' goals are still in reach: "Definitely. Everything is still in front of us. We'll celebrate this win, get back to work next week and get better to beat Northwestern."

Dixon on his Senior Day emotions: "I knew it was going to be emotional. I thought Senior Tackle was going to be the day for me, but it wasn't. I knew coming in and knowing this was my last time playing in front of the fans, it kind of hit me."

"It hit me starting in our pregame video we watched today. I kind of shed a tear in there because it was just so emotional."

Dixon on freshman wide receiver Chris Olave: "I told you guys right after camp, I told y'all. I don't know if you all took me seriously or not, but the kid is the truth. He can play ball. I haven't seen a freshman come in like that, ever."

Olave, when asked if the performance was more than a dream: "Definitely. I kind of dreamed for this my whole life, and actually being put in the spotlight is unreal. So I thank my teammates and coaches and every-



Chris Olave

body."

Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh on OSU: "Well, they played great, their third quarter especially. They ran a lot of speed plays that got out on the perimeter and got loose. We also set them up in good field position with a couple turnovers, and of course the blocked punt, which contributed to the score as well."

Harbaugh on how he expects his team to respond: "We'll come back motivated and make darn sure it doesn't happen again."

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