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Vol. 31, No. 23

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

July 2012

Time & Change... Offensive Makeovers Not Unprecedented

 By **MARCUS HARTMAN**
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Urban Meyer's spread offense has gained plenty of attention since the coach was hired in November, but he's just the latest coach to bring his own style of moving the football to the Ohio State football program.

Even the legendary Woody Hayes made changes when necessary during his 28-year run, and others since have added their own pieces to the Buckeye attack.

"Three yards and a cloud of dust" – the offensive identity most often associated with Ohio State for much of the past six decades or so – can be traced to 1951.

That season Hayes became the 19th head coach of the Buckeyes, bringing with him the T-formation offense from a successful stint as head coach at Miami (Ohio).

Though the formation was not entirely new to Ohio State, the focus on it was. Hayes' predecessor, Wes Fesler, ran a mixture of the T and the single-wing offense, a dual strategy that enjoyed increasing success through Fesler's four years at the helm at his alma mater.

Fesler, a three-time All-America selection as an end for the Buckeyes from 1928-30, saw his first Ohio State team stumble to a 2-6-1 record in 1947 while scoring only 60

points, but that output was more than tripled a year later as the Buckeyes improved to 6-3 while scoring 184 points.

In 1949, Ohio State scored 207 points as quarterback Pandel Savic led the school to a tie for the Big Ten championship and a berth in the Rose Bowl, which the Buckeyes won for the first time in school history with a 17-14 triumph over California.

Savic told BSB the method of attack – single-wing or T – varied from game to game, often depending on particular matchups with the opponent.

"We could get in the T, and if I saw something, we could shift into the single wing then," Savic said. "I would move over from underneath the center and I'd go two or three steps and then the ball could be snapped back directly to the tailback or the fullback. From there, we could run some plays we called the buck-lateral series where the fullback got the ball and he started to come up, and I could spin and he would hand me the ball and I could turn and throw from there. It varied, and it was a pretty good offense really overall."

Fesler's offense hit its peak a year later, piling up 286 points with Vic Janowicz, a junior from Elyria, Ohio, starring at halfback. A multitasking weapon, Janowicz led the Big Ten in total offense (703 yards)

and scoring (48 points) during conference play and went on to win the Heisman Trophy. He passed for 561 yards and ran for 314 in the Buckeyes' nine games, but he would not reprise that performance as a senior.

With Hayes installing his offense after Fesler resigned under pressure at the conclusion of the 1950 season, Janowicz became just another cog in the machine as a senior. He led the team in rushing (376 yards), but quarterback Tony Curcillo took over the passing lead with 912 yards. Janowicz touched the ball 138 times in '51, 54 fewer than the year before.

The switch proved to be a painful one for the team as a whole. The Buckeyes' offensive output slipped from 31.8 points per game to a meager 12.1.

There would be better days ahead, of course.

Keeping Up With The West

Hayes' program did not need much time to get established.

He won his first national championship in 1954 with a team that averaged 24.9 points per game and added another three years later with a 9-1 squad that piled up 267 points. His third national title team averaged 24.5 points per game while going undefeated



JOSH WINSLOW

DIFFERENT LOOK – The Ohio State offense under Urban Meyer will not resemble recent versions.

(9-0-1) in 1961, but that season had a bitter ending as a vote of the university's Faculty Council denied the Buckeyes a trip to the Rose Bowl.

That sent Ohio State into a five-year Big Ten title drought, but Hayes rallied to bring in what would prove to be one of the best classes of all time for 1967.

When the "Super Sophomores" became eligible to play in '68, Hayes gave them a new weapon courtesy of newly hired assistant coach George Chaump, who suggested Hayes supplement his venerable T with the I-formation that was popping up around the country, notably at USC.

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...Has Surely Shown Smith Happy With Rebound From Previous Year's Issues

 By **JEFF SVOBODA**
 Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

One year ago, it is safe to say the Ohio State athletic department was in a state of flux and uncertainty as it went through what were the dog days of summer in more ways than one.

Wildly popular and successful football head coach Jim Tressel, perhaps the best mentor the program had ever known, had resigned May 30 after admitting to NCAA violations. History-making quarterback Terrelle Pryor chose to move on a few days later, and the school was in the midst of preparing a response to college sports' ruling body while investigating seemingly endless claims of wrongdoing ranging from sweetheart car deals to rigged raffles.

Add all of it up and Ohio State's name was being battered across the country in media reports and

fan message board postings. As a result, many thought the seat occupied by athletic director Gene Smith was as hot as the summer temperatures.

One year later, then, it's fair to say the athletic program headed by Smith has made a major rebound. After a tough football season – one that featured more NCAA controversy and ended with a 6-7 record, the program's first below .500 since 1988 – the school quickly hired two-time national championship coach Urban Meyer, an Ohio native who brings a nearly spotless résumé and loads of enthusiasm to Columbus.

There was also the negativity of a one-year bowl ban levied in December, but that decision brought to a close an NCAA investigation that at times appeared to threaten the very fabric of the Ohio State athletic department.



MATTHEW HAGER

BETTER TIMES – Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith has more to smile about this summer, a year after the football scandal that ended the Jim Tressel era.

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OPINION

Postseason Change Does Not Solve All Problems

The four-team playoff system announced June 26 by college football really isn't a playoff at all. In reality, it should be called "The BCS Plus One."

In case you haven't been paying attention, beginning in 2014, the national championship at the Football Bowl Subdivision – or whatever level they're calling Division I-A these days – will be determined by a mini-tournament consisting of four teams. It replaces the Bowl Championship Series, which fans had come to hate, which was a micro-mini-tournament consisting of two teams. In other words, the new format simply expands the failed and much-maligned BCS model by only two teams.

Nevertheless, university presidents are sore from slapping themselves on the backs after announcing this brave new endeavor.

"A four-team playoff doesn't go too far," Virginia Tech president Charles Steger told reporters. "It goes just the right amount. We are very pleased with this new arrangement."

Likewise, most of the fan sentiment seemed optimistic that anything would be preferable to the BCS. Unfortunately, this is almost exactly like the BCS. You still don't have to win your conference or division to qualify. Big-name, well-heeled conferences will continue to receive favorable treatment, and the selection process went from bad to worse.

When the university presidents had the chance to eliminate the human element from the selection process, they proceeded to implement a process that relies 100 percent on the human element. No computerized rankings, no scientific polling, just a bunch of conference commissioners, athletic directors, former coaches and/or media members coming self-equipped with whatever personal bias they might harbor.

For argument's sake, let's say that some season in the not too distant future, you have a final regular-season poll that shows undefeated LSU, USC, Ohio State and Boise State in the top four spots with a once-beaten (likely by LSU) Alabama in the No. 5 position. Does anyone truly believe a selection committee would vote Boise State into the four-team tournament over Alabama?

Perhaps you could make a strength-of-schedule argument against Boise State. Remember, though, that the Broncos are moving to the Big East in 2013.

If you don't like the aforementioned scenario, how about this one: Ohio State is the only undefeated team at the end of the regular season, but Alabama, LSU, USC, Oregon, Texas, Oklahoma and Clemson each have just one loss. Now what do you do? I guess that would depend upon how many selection committee members have ties to those schools.

The obvious way to have gone – obvious to everyone apparently except for those who have foisted this latest farce upon us – was to completely dismantle the BCS and go to an eight-team playoff. Personally, I would prefer at least a 16-team format – Division I-AA is expanding its playoff system from 20 to 24 teams in 2013 – but I could have lived with eight.

A major reason expanded formats are far superior is that you are virtually assured of getting the best teams into the playoff. With only four teams in the mix – as everyone found out with only two – there will be some team with a legitimate beef nearly every year that it has been left out of the mix. That wouldn't happen with an eight-team format. Very rarely are you going to have a No.

9-ranked team in any final regular-season poll that has a salient argument for why it should have a chance to play for the national championship.

Yet, BCS executive director Bill Hancock had the audacity to describe the new four-team format this way: "It's an awesome day. It's a historic day. It's a great day for college football."

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

It was so awesome and so historic that the university presidents stuck us with the new system through 2025. There will be no trial period to tweak any unforeseen problems or discover if this thing works at all. In essence, fans of college football received the most watered-down playoff format possible under the guidelines college football's hierarchy set for itself – namely the continuation of unequal access, the retention of the current bowl structure and total, tight-fisted control.

In the end, the BCS is history. But the BS remains.

No Happiness In Happy Valley

I have been thinking a lot lately about Penn State football as it pertains to the child sexual abuse scandal that put former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky in prison for the rest of his life.

Mostly, I can't get out of my mind the puzzled look on Sandusky's face as he was led away June 22 after being found guilty on 45 of 48 counts that ranged from child endangerment to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse.

It seemed Sandusky truly thought he had done nothing wrong. That is a sentiment seemingly shared by a vast cross-section of those inhabiting the tight-knit cocoon that is State College. Penn State football will continue, of course, with new head coach Bill O'Brien stepping into the shoes of the late Joe Paterno, and Beaver Stadium will routinely attract crowds of more than 100,000 fans this fall.

But the lid has been blown off the dirty little Sandusky secret, and with it has gone the previously spotless reputation of Penn State football.

Despite protestations from those either unwilling or unable to think otherwise, Paterno bore at least a modicum of responsibility for what happened. After all, Paterno helped recruit Sandusky to play at Penn State, kept him on as a graduate assistant on his first staff in 1966 and then lured him back to State College in 1969.

Now, emails have surfaced that appear to indicate Paterno knew much more than he admitted about the 2001 shower incident involving Sandusky and a young boy.

Exactly how much Paterno knew will always be a source of conjecture since the legendary coach is no longer around to confirm or deny his culpability. What remains, however, are Sandusky's victims, who will undoubtedly seek retribution from a university that apparently harbored a known child sexual predator.

Additionally, if Penn State president Graham Spanier and athletic director Tim Curley did not alert the proper authorities to the 2001 allegations against Sandusky – and the recently uncovered emails indicate

precisely that – how could the NCAA view their actions as anything less than lack of institutional control?

I realize the NCAA never again wants to implement the so-called death penalty that left the SMU football program in ruins from which it has never recovered. Yet, if the NCAA is ever to use its nuclear option again, now might be the time – for no other reason than to set a precedent that this type of behavior as well as attempting to cover it up will not be tolerated by a civilized society.

Finally, a word regarding the deplorable circuslike atmosphere outside the Centre County Courthouse in Bellefonte, Pa., after the Sandusky verdict was announced.

The case did not involve some game with an outcome to be cheered. Yes, there was some satisfaction that a serial child sex abuser got what was coming to him. But we should never lose sight of the fact that several young lives have been forever scarred and a once-noble institution will undoubtedly buckle under the weight of future litigation.

I don't believe any of that to be a source for celebration.

A Few Parting Shots

- I have never been a proponent of paying college athletes, but I'm beginning to change my mind at least where football players are concerned. No one would argue that football is the single largest moneymaker for any athletic department with football players among the most marketable faces on campus. That said, and in light of the increased revenue of the enlarged "playoff" format, not to mention the ongoing studies surrounding concussions, don't these young men deserve a little something extra?

- The NCAA said June 29 it would reconsider scholarship reductions imposed on the Boise State football program. The university appealed the sanctions, arguing that the NCAA's history of scholarship reduction penalties was inconsistent with penalties imposed in the Boise State case, and the appeals committee agreed. In light of that ruling, perhaps Ohio State should at least explore the possibility of appealing the football team's postseason ban since that penalty also seems inconsistent with penalties the NCAA has levied in similar cases.

- While we're on the subject of NCAA rules, how ludicrous is the one that allows athletes to graduate from one school and transfer to another with immediate eligibility? Wisconsin benefited from the rule last year with quarterback Russell Wilson, and the Badgers will do so again this year with Wilson's replacement, Danny O'Brien. The best news of all for Wisconsin is that O'Brien – formerly of Maryland and the ACC Rookie of the Year in 2010 – has two years of eligibility remaining.

- July 1 marked an important day on the college football calendar – the first day schools celebrated realignment and official-ly joined their new conferences. In case you need a reminder, TCU and West Virginia joined the Big 12, replacing Missouri and Texas A&M, which each jumped to the SEC. Temple will take West Virginia's place while returning to the Big East, TCU leaves the Mountain West to be replaced by Nevada, Fresno State and Hawaii, and Massachusetts fills the MAC slot vacated by Temple. Who fills the void created in the WAC by the mass exodus of Nevada, Fresno State and Hawaii? Texas State and Texas-San Antonio – as if you really cared.



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Ohio State Adds Trio Of 2013 Verbal Commits

Urban Meyer's dominance on the recruiting trail seemed to take a bit of a hiatus during spring, as Ohio State went nearly two months without picking up a verbal commitment in the 2013 class.

Meyer made up for the drought when he secured pledges from three players during the month of June in punter Johnny Townsend of Orlando (Fla.) Boone, athlete Darron Lee of New Albany, Ohio, and defensive tackle Michael Hill of Pendleton, S.C.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK

Ari Wasserman

The most recent commitment was Hill's, as his pledge to the Buckeyes on June 27 gave the program yet another highly regarded defensive lineman to add to what has already been an impressive haul at that position during the last few years.

Hill, a four-star prospect rated by Scout.com as the top player in his state and the No. 14 defensive tackle in the nation, chose the Buckeyes over such programs as Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Georgia Tech, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Despite playing for a high school that is roughly five minutes from Clemson's campus, Hill ultimately chose the program he has been rooting for since 2006 and the days of Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Troy Smith.

"That's the world of ESPN - they've always been his favorite team to watch on TV since the time he was a 300-pound ninth grader," Pendleton head coach Paul Sutherland told BSB. "He would always tell you that Ohio State was his favorite team to watch. With Coach Meyer coming in, that just validated that."

At 6-2, 315 pounds, Hill figures to be a solid middle-of-the-line guy for Ohio State for years to come. He joins fellow tackle Billy Price of Austintown (Ohio) Fitch in a class that also features five-star defensive end Joey Bosa (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.) and three-star end Tracy Sprinkle (Elyria, Ohio).

Ohio State always seemed to lead the way for Hill, though many didn't expect the Buckeyes to pull such a talented defensive tackle out of the southern part of the country. Given that Southeastern Conference coaches tend to favor athletic defensive tackles who sport the same attributes that Hill does, Meyer had his work cut out for him.

Sutherland, however, gives a lot of credit to Ohio State defensive line coach Mike Vrabel for the recruitment of Hill, who had recently taken visits to Alabama, LSU and Florida before issuing his commitment.

"I told him, 'Son, you're going to Clemson and South Carolina - that's my obligation - and then I'll get you anywhere else you want to go,' and he wanted to go to Ohio State so I contacted them," Sutherland said. "Then I took him to Columbus and he had a great trip up there and felt very much at home, especially with Coach Vrabel. He deserves a lot of credit as his position coach. It was just a gut feeling that he stuck with."

Hill posted 25 tackles for loss last year, which is production Sutherland said he's never had from someone at his tackle position. Hill, who runs a five-second 40-yard dash, is an immovable force who is very light on his feet despite his size.

The string of defensive linemen signed

by Meyer in his time at Ohio State has been unparalleled by any other program in the country. Now with the addition of Hill, Sutherland understands exactly what Meyer is aiming to do.

"Coach Meyer's exact words when I called him were, 'Hot dog, I just got an SEC defensive lineman up here in the Big Ten,'" Sutherland said. "You don't have to convince everyone in this part of the country that the defensive line is where the game is won and lost."

"The Big Ten gets tired of hearing this, but that's the one area where the SEC separates itself. Coach Vrabel and Coach (Everett Withers) told me this: 'That's what an SEC defensive lineman looks like.' Ohio State is building that kind of defensive front right now with all those kids."

The recruitment of Lee was quite different given the fact the athlete plays his high school football less than 20 minutes from Ohio State's campus. A player regarded by most experts as a fringe prospect when it came to garnering an offer from the Buckeyes, Lee had to earn the coveted scholarship before issuing a commitment.

Lee is rated a three-star prospect and the No. 59 safety in the country, but he starred at quarterback for New Albany last season. While participating in multiple camps at Ohio State during the month of June, Lee turned in solid performances for the program's coaching staff on both sides of the ball.

"I got the offer a short while ago when I spoke to Coach (Luke) Fickell," Lee told BuckeyeSports.com recruiting analyst Bill Greene shortly after issuing his commitment June 26. "He told me they were offering me a scholarship, and I couldn't believe it. Before I could even commit, Coach Fickell made me call my mom and my head coach to tell them the news."

"Once I called the both of them, I was back on the phone with Coach Fickell, and I told him I wanted to be a Buckeye. My mom and I had discussed this earlier, and the plan was always to take the offer if it came. There was no reason to wait and think it over. This is my dream come true. My mom and I knew they had limited spots, and getting a scholarship would be tough."

Despite earning offers from Boston College, Cincinnati, Illinois, North Carolina State, Purdue and others, Lee committed himself to working diligently to earn an offer from the Buckeyes.

Though Lee grew up in Tennessee and has been living in the Columbus area for less than five years - his mother, Candice, is a news anchor for NBC4 in Columbus and previously held a job at a station in Chattanooga - he found a strong connection to the in-state program. Fickell saw Lee's passion during his camp performances and knew he had what it takes to be a Buckeye.

"A big shout out to Coach Fickell from me," Lee said. "He really went to the wall for me to get offered, and he told me he was going to fight for me to be a Buckeye. He

means a lot to me, and the same for Coach Withers and Coach (Kerry) Coombs because they were on my side as well. Obviously, I would run through a wall for this coaching staff for giving me this opportunity."



Johnny Townsend

"I'm excited to play for Coach Meyer, and he told me he was going to take the word of his coaches. It's rewarding to play for a staff that is upfront and honest with you and I feel blessed."

Though Lee projects at multiple positions - he could end up at safety, linebacker, wide receiver or quarterback - there were no discussions with the staff about where they envision him playing when he gets to Ohio State.

Lee told BSB that he loves playing on the offensive side of the ball because he feels like he makes the most impact with the ball in his hands, but he's more than content working where the staff feels he's most likely to make a difference.

"We didn't really talk about position and it doesn't matter to me," Lee admitted. "After camp, we talked about playing linebacker, safety or possibly at the nickel back position. We have to wait and see when I get there, and we will figure that out. Coach Fickell said he would find me a home."



Darron Lee

The commitment that got the ball rolling for Ohio State was Townsend's, as the punter issued his pledge June 19 after growing up in Florida rooting for Meyer while he was coaching the Gators.



Michael Hill

While attending a camp at Ohio State in mid-June, Townsend saw all he needed to before electing to play his collegiate career as a Buckeye under Meyer.

"I had been talking to Ohio State a little bit," Townsend said. "I went to their camp and did extremely well and they told me to stay in touch. Then my dad and I called Coach Meyer (the morning of June 19) and I immediately accepted. I had to take him up on that."

Current Ohio State punter Ben Buchanan will enter his senior season with the Buckeyes this year, so Townsend could find an immediate path to the field as a freshman. Not nervous at all about the climate differences between Ohio and Florida, Townsend said he was happy to begin focusing on preparing for the collegiate level.

"It's an incredible feeling," Townsend said. "The tradition is one of the best in the nation. The fan base is absolutely incredible. They're a highly respected school. I look forward to being a Buckeye and coming in and developing my form to the highest level."

Scout.com has ranked only five punters in the class of 2013, and Townsend is not among that limited group.

OSU Hosts Prospects In June Camps

Like many top collegiate programs, Ohio State hosts instructional football camps for prep players looking to hone their skills during the summer months. Also used as

a recruiting tool, the two senior advanced camps and a high-level underclassman camp hosted by the Buckeyes in the month of June gave the staff the opportunity to work and interact with many of the nation's top prospects.

Following are updates on prospects who made it to Columbus during June with details on their performances and communication with Ohio State's coaching staff.

• **2014 QB Kyle Allen, Scottsdale (Ariz.) Desert Mountain** - One of the emerging quarterback prospects in the country in his class, the 6-2, 195-pounder used his camp experience to become more comfortable with the OSU coaching staff, including offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Tom Herman.

"We landed in town around 4:30 and met with Coach Herman," he said. "He showed us around the facilities and stuff. After that, we went to dinner with him and talked football for a while. The next day, I woke up and went to camp. Before camp, we went in and talked to Coach Meyer and Coach Herman for a while. We talked to Coach Meyer again after camp and then went and saw campus."

After the camp Allen spoke to Meyer, and the OSU head coach approved of his performance but indicated he wasn't ready to issue 2014 offers to quarterbacks. Allen, however, left Columbus impressed.

"I loved OSU," Allen said. "I loved the coaches up there. I love Coach Meyer. He's a great guy, and Coach Herman is a great guy too. I loved the campus. They have a really nice campus up there."

• **2013 CB Adrian Baker, Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade Madonna** - Baker has racked up an impressive scholarship offer list, but he still is hoping for one from Ohio State after participating in camp in Columbus.

Baker, a three-star prospect, recently released a top five that consisted of Ohio State, Oklahoma, Clemson, Vanderbilt and Florida State, but he doesn't yet have a committable offer from the Buckeyes.

"I went to Ohio State's camp and it was good," Baker said. "I spent a lot of time with the coaches. I went to compete and thought I did pretty well. They're having a staff meeting (soon) so I'm waiting to see if they're going to offer me."

Sources close to BSB indicate that Baker would be a likely commit if Ohio State comes through with an offer, but the coaching staff is still in the process of figuring out the numbers game before making that decision. Baker (6-1, 165) has scholarship offers from each school in his top five except Ohio State.

"I'm just going to relax, wait to hear from Ohio State then get better over the summer and help lead my team to a state championship," Baker said.

• **2013 S Vonn Bell, Rossville (Ga.) Ridgeland** - Given that Bell is universally regarded as one of the top safeties in the 2013 class, it wasn't a surprise that the five-star prospect was perhaps the top performer of any Ohio State camper this summer.

Rated the No. 3 player at his position in the class, Bell played both sides of the ball in front of the OSU coaching staff and came away more than comfortable with the plays he made.

"I thought I did pretty well," Bell told BSB. "I had two interceptions. I wasn't going to let anyone score on me. I got on the offensive side of the ball, too, and I scored two touchdowns. I had a lot of fun out there."

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2013 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
J.T. Barrett	QB	6-2	205	★★★★	Wichita Falls (Texas) Rider
Marcus Baugh	TE	6-4	230	★★★★	Riverside (Calif.) John W. North
Joey Bosa	DE	6-5	270	★★★★★	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas
Cameron Burrows	CB	6-2	195	★★★★	Trotwood (Ohio) Madison
Ezekiel Elliott	RB	6-0	195	★★★★	St. Louis (Mo.) John Burroughs
Michael Hill	DT	6-2	315	★★★★	Pendleton, S.C.
Darron Lee	ATH	6-2	205	★★★	New Albany, Ohio
Evan Lisle	OT	6-6	275	★★★★	Centerville, Ohio
Jalin Marshall	RB	6-1	190	★★★★★	Middletown, Ohio
Billy Price	DT	6-4	265	★★★★★	Austintown (Ohio) Fitch
Tracy Sprinkle	DE	6-4	250	★★★	Elyria, Ohio
Jayme Thompson	S	6-2	185	★★★	Toledo Central Catholic
Johnny Townsend	P	6-2	200	NR	Orlando (Fla.) Boone
Eli Woodard	CB	6-0½	180	★★★★	Voorhees (N.J.) Eastern

A 6-1, 190-pound prospect, Bell has emerged as one of the most sought-after recruits in the nation. With scholarship offers from Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Texas and many others, he certainly has his options open when selecting where he'll play college football.

Bell had already visited Ohio State in the last few months and had an offer in hand before attending the camp. Because he made the effort to make the second trip to Columbus to see Meyer and Withers, one could infer that he has serious interest in the Buckeyes. Bell recently trimmed his list of more than 30 scholarship offers to just Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Vanderbilt, Clemson and Ohio State.

"It was a good experience going through the camps and meeting the other prospects and everything," Bell said. "It was a nice experience visiting with Coach Meyer again and Coach Withers."

Bell doesn't anticipate participating in other camps this summer and returned to Georgia with a lot to think about after having conversations with Meyer and Withers.

"It was more about football than anything," Bell said of his interaction with the OSU coaches. "It was about business and what side of the football I want to play - if I want to be on offense or defense. I really just want to play safety and stick to one side of the ball and make some plays. Coach Urban Meyer said he wants me to play a little bit on offense, but we're going to see what happens."

• **2014 QB Reggie Bonnafon, Louisville (Ky.) Trinity** - The 6-1, 175-pound dual-threat quarterback has already earned a Big Ten offer from Illinois and one from Louisville, but Bonnafon is hoping the camp trail will produce more opportunities.

"Ohio State went really well," he said. "I had a great day. I threw the ball very well and the coaches were impressed with my testing numbers, too."

Bonnafon ran a 4.46-second 40-yard dash while at the camp, and the Ohio State coaches promised the prospect that they'd be in touch.

• **2013 CB Caleb Day, Hilliard (Ohio) Darby** - A three-star prospect already boasting offers from Purdue and Illinois, Day arrived at OSU's June 10 camp hoping to grease the wheels on receiving a Buckeye offer.

Day, who had an offer on the table from the previous coaching staff, felt as if his performance was good enough to warrant further evaluation from the current staff, especially because he worked out at wide receiver to show his versatility.

"I really wanted to work out at receiver this time to show that I'm diverse and that I have different skills," Day told BSB. "I thought I did better at receiver because I

caught more passes. I didn't really work with the DBs as much."

It appears Day didn't get the answer he wanted, though, as the 6-1, 185-pounder committed to Illinois on June 21.

• **2014 QB Joey Duckworth, Louisville, Ohio** - With plenty of quarterbacks in his class hoping to earn a scholarship from Ohio State, the 6-3, 195-pound in-state signal caller worked himself into consideration after participating in camp.

"I always have expectations for myself, and I always think I can do better, but I thought I did pretty well," Duckworth said of performance. "It was great speaking to Urban Meyer, and he offered some instruction on throwing the football. They worked with me on my drop and stressed how to keep my feet, and I appreciated the advice."

Duckworth had stellar camp performances at Toledo and Bowling Green this summer, both of which led to offers from the host schools after the camp. With similar performances heading into his junior season, Duckworth could continue to move up as one of the most sought-after quarterbacks in his class.

• **2014 OT Jamarco Jones, Chicago De La Salle** - Jones participated at Ohio State's June 10 camp, and the coaching staff offered him a scholarship. Jones (6-5, 285) is widely considered to be one of the best offensive line prospects in the 2014 class, and Scout.com recruiting analyst Allen Trieu believes Jones could be a four- or five-star recruit when his initial ratings are released.

"I'm pretty excited," Jones said when describing his new Buckeye offer. "They were pretty intense and energetic and showed a lot of passion for what they do, and the campus was great. I really liked it a lot."

• **2013 OT Kyle Meadows, West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West** - Meadows already has three schools that have stood out in his recruitment, but things could change quickly if Ohio State becomes a serious factor.

The performance the 6-6, 275-pound lineman put on at Ohio State's camp could force the Buckeyes' staff to become seriously involved quicker.

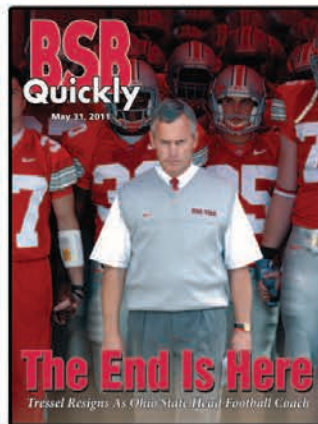
"They basically said I was the best offensive lineman there, but they have to talk and see how the evaluation goes and that they'll call me soon," Meadows told BSB shortly after his performance.

The three-star offensive lineman favors Illinois, Indiana and West Virginia, but things could change if the Buckeyes issue him a scholarship.

"If I get an Ohio State offer then I will probably turn some things around," he said. "If I don't get an Ohio State offer, my three would still be Indiana, Illinois and West Virginia, but if they come in I'll probably eliminate one of the other three first."

Continued On Page 10

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Prospects Descend On Ohio State For Camps

Continued From Page 9

• **2013 DE Tyquan Lewis, Tarboro, N.C.** – When Lewis stepped onto the field at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on June 10, he knew he had something to play for. OSU had already expressed interest in him, but the three-star defender knew he had to perform well enough to leave a lasting impression on the Buckeyes staff. He was successful in doing so, as he left Columbus with a committable offer from Ohio State.

"It was non-committable before," Lewis told BSB when describing the offer he had from the Buckeyes heading into the weekend, "but today (they gave me committable one). It means a lot. I have to get my mom back up here and we are going to sit down and discuss this and talk academics and things like that and see how everything is."

Rated by Scout as the No. 61 defensive end in the country, the 6-4, 220-pound prospect has seen his recruitment take off in recent weeks. With offers from Auburn, Clemson, Kentucky, North Carolina, N.C. State, Pittsburgh, South Carolina, Virginia Tech and others already to his name, Lewis feels the most recent offer from Ohio State is just more verification that he is one of the most coveted defenders in the nation.

Lewis recently named a top five consisting of Ohio State, LSU, Ole Miss, North Carolina and Vanderbilt. Right after his performance in Columbus, Lewis wasn't bashful about the impression the Buckeyes made.

"When they first came at me I knew with the new program and Coach Meyer coming in, it is just going to be amazing," Lewis said. "I expect to win. I won three years in a row (in high school) and I am going for my fourth, and if I come here, if that's the case, I expect to come and win. I just want to win."

"Ohio State is up there pretty high now. I loved it. It was a great visit. I don't want to make a decision based on a place I've never been, so that was another reason that I came up here. The facilities are top-notch. Everything is nice here. It was probably one of the best visits I've taken."

• **2013 C Lovell Peterson, Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne** – The 6-3½, 270-pound prospect has been thought to be on the fringe of an Ohio State scholarship for months, but he has yet to secure the coveted offer. However, recent camp performances could put the three-star player over the edge.

"I think it was an overall good day," Peterson told BSB when describing his camp performance. "I felt I excelled during one-on-one drills, and the coaches seemed happy with my performance."

Given Peterson's prowess as a track star in throwing events, some have wondered if football is a top priority for him. Peterson, however, has made it clear that football is what he's focused on, which could have been the last step toward moving into the good graces of the Ohio State coaching staff.

"The Ohio State coaches said they still have one or two offers to give out along the offensive line," said Peterson, who said he'd like to play college football with his former Wayne teammate, current OSU quarterback Braxton Miller. "Hopefully I'll be one of those."

• **2014 RB Devine Redding, Mineral Ridge, Ohio** – After rushing for more than 1,000 yards as a sophomore, Redding has taken to the camp trail this summer to try to earn some attention from college programs.

Redding (5-10, 190) has garnered one

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

20 Years Ago – 1992

There was no word on the eligibility status of football signees Dan Colson, Eric Moss or Eric Starks as BSB went to press. All three players reportedly took the ACT on June 13 in a final attempt to attain freshman eligibility.

For the class of high school seniors-to-be, four Ohioans were named preseason All-Americans by SuperPrep: Norwood running back Marc Edwards, Mentor Lake Catholic wide receiver Joe Jurevicius, Massillon defensive back Dan Hackenbracht and St. Mary's Memorial athlete star Mike Elston.

15 Years Ago – 1997

There were reports that two Ohioans had committed to become Buckeyes while attending Ohio State's summer football camp, but either that was not the case or both rethought those decisions upon returning home.

Tony Fisher, a running back from Euclid, told OSU head coach John Cooper he was very interested in attending Ohio State but he would hold off on a decision until he could visit some of his other suitors, a list including Penn State, Michigan and Notre Dame.

Nate Clements, a defensive back from Shaker Heights, went a step further and apparently actually issued a commitment while at the camp but was told by his father, Nate Sr., to rescind the gesture.

scholarship offer from Indiana and could be on the verge of a hectic recruiting process if his successes carry over into his junior season. After Redding's positive day in Columbus, Ohio State could be one of the programs keeping tabs on the youthful running back.

"It was great being at Ohio State, but it was hard, too," he said. "They worked us very hard, and I didn't expect that at all. The facilities are just great and I liked everything about Ohio State."

Redding is also hearing from Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Michigan State and Notre Dame.

"The coaches liked my performance, especially (running backs coach Stan) Drayton," he added. "They said they are going to review the videos to see how everyone did. I thought I did great, and I beat all the linebackers in the passing drills. I did everything they asked me to do."

• **2014 QB Jordan Severt, Austin (Texas) Westlake** – The 6-4, 227-pound prospect grew up in Cincinnati before moving to the Lone Star State when he was in sixth grade. With Ohio roots, Severt participated in Ohio State's camp in mid-June.

"The coaches were all really intense," he said. "They want you to play as hard as you can and go as fast as you can. I got to work with Coach Herman. I like him a lot. He's from Texas, too, so we can relate. I got his phone number so I'll probably be in contact with him."

Severt has secured a scholarship offer from SMU and is expected to pick up more in-state offers in the near future having garnered interest from TCU, Texas and Texas A&M. Though Severt likes living in Texas, he said a program like Ohio State could persuade him to leave the state for collegiate football.

"It really just depends on what my choices are," Severt said. "I like Texas. I'd like to stay in Texas if it could be, but it's tough to say no to places like Ohio State and Stanford. I pretty much like anyone who likes me. That's how it is right now."

• **2014 OT Kyle Trout, Lancaster, Ohio** – Considered to be one of the top

"He committed without talking it over with his parents," the elder Clements told BSB. "It's an honor for him to have a scholarship offered to him and I think he's firm about wanting to go there, but this isn't something we want him to rush into."

10 Years Ago – 2002

With a 24-team passing tournament and four camp sessions, almost 3,000 kids attended the Ohio State summer football camps. That group included one player who offered a verbal commitment during the proceedings – North Canton (Ohio) Hoover defensive back Curt Lukens.

Meanwhile, two members of the class of 2002 remained in academic limbo. Both North Carolina offensive tackle Derek Morris and Cleveland wide receiver/quarterback Troy Smith graduated from high school with acceptable grade-point averages, but both also continued to attempt to achieve high enough standardized test scores to become full qualifiers as freshmen.

Morris missed a chance to retake the ACT in June as his family was in the process of moving to Columbus, but he planned to petition the NCAA for a chance to retake the test in July.

Smith retook the test in early June and was awaiting his test score as of press time.

offensive tackle prospects in the 2014 class, Trout went camping this summer to prove the hype surrounding his game is warranted. Trout camped at Ohio, Cincinnati, Wisconsin and Ohio State.

"I did really well," Trout said of his performance at OSU. "Obviously there are things I could improve on, but I feel like what I knew how to do I did really well."

The 6-6, 280-pound prospect has picked up offers from Toledo, Ohio, Cincinnati and Illinois. After his performance at the Ohio State camp, he also grabbed an offer from Bowling Green.

Trout, however, is hoping his list will sport more Big Ten offers in the future. Trout said he's been an Ohio State fan his entire life, and the Buckeyes staff said they'd be in touch with him in the future.

"I talked to pretty much all of the coaches," Trout said. "They said that I was one of the top two linemen that were there today and I did really well. And there were some things that I did really nicely, and then other things that I didn't do bad – I just looked raw and needed to work on."

• **2014 CB Damon Webb, Detroit Cass Tech** – Though Webb plays for a high school generally regarded as a pipeline to Michigan, the 6-0, 175-pounder made the effort to attend camp at Ohio State this summer. Webb's performance was enough for him to leave with something he didn't have before getting to Columbus.

"It was great being (in Columbus), and an Ohio State offer means a lot to me," Webb stated. "This is one of the greatest programs in the country, and to have an offer from Urban Meyer personally is very exciting for me. To think I could be playing college football here is amazing, really."

"I was just offered by Michigan too, so my recruiting is going great. The Michigan offer was special to me, and I don't know how I could compare the two schools. I just know that both of these are really big offers to me."

Webb's performance was dynamic enough for Meyer to issue him the scholarship during the lunch break rather than doing what's conventional and waiting until the conclusion of the camp.

Five Year Ago – 2007

Ohio State's senior advanced camp attracted quite a star-studded group, including the nation's No. 1 prospect, Terrelle Pryor, and every player to have already committed to be Buckeyes in 2008.

Neither Pryor nor anyone else opted to join the fold, but prior commitment Mike Adams, an offensive lineman from Dublin (Ohio) Coffman, came away feeling good about the weekend because Pryor seemed to come away from it with a positive view of the Buckeyes.

"I feel like Ohio State's probably where he will end up," Adams said. "Time will tell."

One Year Ago – 2011

Ohio State picked up commitments from a pair of in-state defensive backs but lost a highly regarded offensive lineman.

Cleveland Glenville safety DeVan Bogard and Steubenville cornerback Najee Murray gave pledges to be Buckeyes while Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward offensive lineman Kyle Kalis rescinded his.

"I want to keep all my options open and will consider several programs going forward, including Ohio State," Kalis said. "That's really all I want to say about my recruitment at this time."

He also confirmed plans to visit Michigan in the near future.

"Coach Meyer was the one that offered me the scholarship in his office," he said. "We went on a tour during the lunch break of the whole campus. When we came back and went to his office, he offered me. He said he wanted me and told me I have a scholarship to Ohio State. I thanked him for the offer and told him I appreciated it."

• Other notable camp participants in the 2014 class were Hebron (Ky.) Conner quarterback Drew Barker; Speedway, Ind., wide receiver Justin Brent; running back Calvin Gordon of Madison, Ohio; Elyria (Ohio) Catholic quarterback Jeremy Holley; Holland (Ohio) Springfield running back Charles Smith; tight end Chance Sorrell of Middletown, Ohio; Lima (Ohio) Central Catholic safety Darius West; Beverly Hills (Mich.) Detroit Country Day School quarterback Tyler Wieggers; and Trotwood (Ohio) Madison defensive end Verdndae Wilkinson.

Recruiting Notes

• Westerville (Ohio) South safety Marcus Ball was expected to attend an Ohio State camp in June but was a no-show. The three-star prospect may have had a reason for not attending the Buckeyes' camp, as he listed Wisconsin, Notre Dame, Arizona, USC, Michigan State and Penn State as the programs he's most interested in. LSU, Alabama and Oregon could also work their ways into his recruitment in the near future, but the local prospect left Ohio State off his list for consideration.

• Ohio State is still heavily pursuing 2013 running back Derrick Green of Richmond (Va.) Hermitage despite rumors that the staff could be cooling on the 5-11, 220-pound back. Green hasn't narrowed down his list of 32 offers but has isolated Ohio State as the only school that will certainly get an official visit.

• Former Ohio State commitment Alex Anzalone (6-3, 220) has narrowed down his list to a final three, and the Buckeyes didn't make the final cut. The 2013 linebacker from Wyomissing, Pa., will choose from Notre Dame, Florida and Penn State when participating in Nike's The Opening camp in Beaverton, Ore., in early July.

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

It's Coming: College Football Adopts Playoff

By JEFF SVOBODA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

After years of debate and dissatisfaction over the way college football determined its national champion, a playoff is on the horizon for the sport.

College presidents met June 26 and agreed on a four-team, seeded playoff that will begin with the 2014 season. That came one week after conference commissioners and Notre Dame athletic director Jack Swarbrick recommended that setup be used to determine college football's national champion.

About one month after telling reporters that his conference preferred to stay with the status quo – in which the top two teams in the BCS standings, a matrix of human polls and computer rankings, regardless of league affiliation battled for the title – Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany trumpeted the new system.

"The Big Ten Conference is pleased with the decision made by the presidential oversight committee to implement a four-team playoff for college football," Delany said. "We feel that this system will protect the regular season, preserve the tradition of bowl games and further enhance the Big Ten's partnership with the Pac-12 and Rose Bowl while simultaneously allowing for great innovation.

"It was a great day for college football student-athletes, coaches, administrators and fans."

As for the reason for the Big Ten's change in tune, Delany admitted that public outcry – which has existed for years but reached a fever pitch after this past title game rematched SEC West foes Alabama and LSU – and lower television ratings signaled that change was in the offing.

"I'm not suggesting people can't criticize," he said. "I'm just saying the level, the drumbeat of criticism, was so significant over time that it forced the change."

The playoff will be the first ever in the history of Division I-A football, which dawned in 1869 and has used bowl games instead of a playoff for its postseason since the beginning of the 20th century. It replaces the BCS, a four-bowl rotation which will have lasted for 16 seasons when the current contract runs out after the Rose Bowl hosts the BCS National Championship Game to conclude the '13 campaign.

The presidential oversight committee agreed on a 12-year contract for the new system.

Though some items will still need to be ironed out, the framework has become clear. The two semifinal games each season will rotate year-by-year between six bowl sites and take place on either New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. The championship game will be bid out to a neutral site, and the contest will

take place on a Monday evening later in the month.

The Big Ten and Pac-12 will also be able to continue their tradition of having league champions that do not qualify for the playoff meet in the Rose Bowl. In addition, the SEC and Big 12 have agreed to a bowl that will match teams from their conferences, while the ACC and another league are expected to ink a deal with the Orange Bowl to continue that tie-in.

When it comes to determining who will take part in the four-team playoff, the BCS standings will no longer play a part. Instead, a selection committee – which the NCAA uses in most sports to determine postseason fields – will come together to pick those four teams. They will be seeded one through four, with the top team facing the No. 4 squad and Nos. 2 and 3 battling.

The selection committee's members still must be chosen, the bowls that will be part of the deal must be selected and the all-important monetary issues have to be sorted out, but Delany said the framework in place is solid and has broad-based support.

"We're very unified," Delany said. "There are issues that have yet to be finalized. There's always devil in the detail, from the model to the selection process, but clearly we've made a lot of progress."

The response from fans and media across the country has been generally positive, as the debate about which teams have deserved to be in the BCS championship game in past years has been strong. In 2004, an undefeated Auburn team did not make the title game, while such schools as TCU and Boise State have posted unblemished campaigns in recent years but not had access to a national title.

Some years have resulted in consensus matchups – such as in 2002 when Ohio State and Miami (Fla.) were both undefeated – but others have produced decisions that were questioned, such as in 2008 when Texas and Oklahoma each lost only one game but Oklahoma – which fell to Texas at a neutral site during the regular season – went on to the championship only to lose to Florida.

But while many see doubling the number of teams that will play for a title as a positive outcome, others see it as the first step toward a monster playoff – one that will eventually reach eight, 16 or perhaps even 24 teams like the newly approved Division I-AA format.

Some also expect similar controversy to the past decade and a half, as the committee that chooses the top four teams will certainly be left open to criticism should the public disagree with its choices.

No matter what, major change is on the way.

Ohio State Reacts

For many years, those with the biggest

stake in things at Ohio State have been against changes to the postseason system.

President E. Gordon Gee was perhaps the most outspoken. The man known for his ability to turn a phrase – both good and bad – famously drew a line in the sand a few years ago putting Ohio State firmly on the non-playoff side of the debate.

"I'll say it again – over my dead body," Gee told The Lantern, the school newspaper, in 2009. "Mark that down – we will not have a playoff in this era – period."

More recently, new head coach Urban Meyer said he was against the possibility of a playoff upon being hired.

"I wouldn't change (the BCS)," he said in January. "I love what it is. I really do."

The former Florida coach pointed to his experience winning BCS titles in 2006 and '08 when discussing his stance. His Gators captured two titles under the modified BCS system, which began in 2006 with the creation of the BCS National Championship Game.

Before that, the title was determined in a 1 vs. 2 contest that happened as part of a bowl game, but the system adopted in '06 moved the matchup into the newly created title game staged at one of the bowl sites about a week after the rest of the BCS games. That left five games as part of the BCS, with the host site also staging its original bowl close to New Year's Day.

"We were the first school (in 2006) to be a week removed from all the other bowl games and that was awesome, that whole experience," he said. "You couldn't do any better."

Meyer also was against adding games through a playoff because of player welfare. Under the new system, a team that wins its conference title game and then makes the national title game will play 15 contests, while teams are limited to 14 now.

"We were on fumes in '08 when we beat Alabama (in the SEC title game)," Meyer said. "If we had to play the next week or the next two weeks or three weeks or four weeks, you're toast. I don't know how you'd do it. Those teams were completely spent."

Meyer has not released any statements since the playoff deal has been announced, but BSB did speak with athletic director Gene Smith about the situation. Smith also spoke of how he was against any changes but said Ohio State would adapt with the times.

"We kind of evolved, just like the final recommendations evolved," he said. "The status quo was fine with us. The regular season is the best it's ever been, so initially the status quo was fine with us. When we realized we had

no choice, we moved to review the plus-one (proposal, which would have added a post-bowl title contest). We've looked at it hard and it will work.

"Then we moved to the one-through-four model and started to look at it and began to embrace it."

Smith said the school is also in favor of some of the details that have been hashed out, such as the establishment of a selection committee that will weigh such factors as strength of schedule and a conference championship.

"We felt very strongly that if we were going to have it, it had to have a human element to it in some form or fashion," he said. "The polls are good, but there's weakness in the polls. We felt strength of schedule was important, otherwise everyone's nonconference schedule would be very interesting. And then we felt that there should be some credit to conference champions in some form or fashion."

Smith was also one of those in favor of on-campus sites hosting early playoff rounds, a Big Ten idea that was ditched early in the process.

"We realized we probably couldn't win the campus sites option, which was a great idea, but none of us at the end of the day after we went through it thought we could win enough votes to win that," he said. "I would have absolutely loved it. I think it would have been cool, but we realized we couldn't get the votes.

"As you go through this process, you're evaluating what is possible and what is not. I think that's why you saw all the conferences from the beginning, you heard a lot of stuff and you saw people shifting positions because the collaboration was going on. We were part of that. We shifted positions as the collaboration was going on. You hear pros and cons and what's realistic."

With on-campus sites out of the picture, the usage of bowl sites to stage the semifinals was important to Smith and Ohio State.

"We still feel that playing the semifinals in the bowl games is very important," he said. "The bowl system is good. It's solid. The bowl structure, the local organizing committees are organized to host these events. They know how to do it. They know what the kids need. It won't be like bowl games because let's say you play on Saturday, you'll go in on Thursday, play on Saturday and go home. You won't be going down on Sunday and staying the whole week. It's a whole new ballgame.

"So we feel in the Big Ten that the bowls know how to do this, and the semifinals are so important."

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Offenses Have Evolved Throughout OSU History

Continued From Page 1

Rex Kern, who would take over at quarterback in '68, told BSB that Hayes initially resisted the move before relenting. That turned out to be the right move.

The Buckeyes doubled their scoring output (from 16.1 to 32.3 points per game), went undefeated and won the national championship in 1968.

Looking back decades later, Kern said he felt the I-formation enhanced what the Buckeyes could do by giving them more ways to use their weapons, including fullbacks Jim Otis and John Brockington and halfbacks Dave Brungard, Leo Hayden and Larry Zelina.

"The I-formation gave you the opportunity to get around the corner much quicker," he said. "The old-timers will remember the old button-shoe (his term for the 'full-house' T-formation) offense was from tackle to tackle. The I-formation was really from tackle to sideline, so it really just expanded the field and gave us more attack points. We could put our skill people against our opponents' skill people instead of us putting our interior line against the interior defense. We were good at either one, but this just gave us a better opportunity."

Hayes did not completely abandon the T. It remained his weapon of choice once the Buckeyes reached the red zone.

"Woody loved the straight T, and he wouldn't let anybody tell him any different," Kern said. "Always in short yardage or goal line we would go to straight T offense. As the season progressed, he would say, 'Do you know how many touchdowns we scored inside the 10-yard line?' And he would give the number then ask what offense they used and the answer was the T – but that was the only formation we ran then!"

"His point was this is my bread and butter and when I need it I'm going back to it."

Kern threw for 972 yards and ran for another 534, a rushing total second on the team to Otis' 985.

The 10-0 Buckeyes piled up 323 points, but they were just getting warmed up. They totaled 383 a season later despite playing one fewer game, though a late-season upset loss to Michigan kept the team from repeating as national champions.

"When you look at our sophomore year we were still refining our offense," Kern said. "We found more things to do our sophomore year as we got better and better and better at it, and then of course our junior year we did exceedingly well."

From Ice Age To Stone Age

The end of the Hayes era gave way to the leadership of one of his former assistants, Earle Bruce. The men share many common traits when it comes to coaching football, but Bruce was more willing to open things up somewhat to take advantage of another sophomore quarterback who like Kern wore No. 10.

This time it was Art Schlichter, one of the most ballyhooed recruits in Ohio history and a freshman starter in '78, Hayes' last season.

Schlichter, who is currently serving a 10-year prison sentence for running a bogus ticket-selling business, told BSB during a 2009 interview that the offense was more complex his sophomore season.

"It was a whole different ballgame with Coach Bruce," Schlichter said. "We started throwing the ball on first down a little bit

more, and though we weren't racking up the yardage we did in the later years, we finally mixed the passing game in with the run and made the passing game effective enough that it helped the run. That's really what you want to do. You run to set up the pass and you pass to set up the run. We started doing that more and we had more success offensively."

After completing 87 of 175 passes for 1,250 yards in '78, Schlichter went 105 for 200 for 1,816 yards as a sophomore.

Whatever differences there were between the Bruce and Hayes offenses, they shared at least one significant trait – all of the passing was out of play-action, regardless of down and distance. Schlichter never dropped straight back after taking the snap.

"That was a result of our protection," said Schlichter, who described the offensive progression as moving from the Ice Age to the Stone Age. "Coach Bruce liked the turn-back protection. He thought it protected the quarterback as much as anything, so we used that protection to play-action pass. Third-and-long, we were throwing out of a play-action set. I had hoped that we would have gotten away from that, but we never really did."

Schlichter led the Buckeyes to within a point of the national championship in 1979 and ended up with just about every Ohio State passing record before he was finished. His single-season record of 2,551 yards in 1981 has since been broken three times, but his career marks of 7,547 yards and 951 pass attempts remain school records, as does his mark of 458 yards in a loss to Florida State in 1981.

Schlichter's wishes for more ways to deploy the passing game were eventually granted, but not until seven years after he had used up his eligibility.

Bruce was fired with one game left in the 1987 season, and successor John Cooper brought in offensive coordinator Jim Colletto to jazz up the aerial attack. Colletto's solution seems quaint by today's standards but was practically revolutionary in Columbus in 1988.

"All we're trying to do is give the offense a few more weapons to try and play the game with," Colletto said then. "The drop-back will open up the game and make it more difficult for defenses to gang up on us. We're trying to become a proficient drop-back passing team."

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

Among formations the Buckeyes would run were the I, the split-back, one-back and shotgun.

Colletto seemed to feel the need to explain the latter was not as revolutionary as it might seem to those not used to seeing it at Ohio State.

"That can be a very exciting part of an offense," he told reporters in April 1988. "It will be part of our everyday plan. We don't consider it unusual at all. Most quarterbacks welcome the chance to operate from the shotgun."

Although everyone left spring practice saying the right things that year, early results were not too promising.

The passing game actually lost some proficiency (from a 54.1 percent completion rate to 51.8) from 1987 to '88, and the offense managed only five more total points (224 to 229). The Buckeyes stumbled from 6-4-1 in Bruce's last campaign to 4-6-1 in '88 under Cooper, but the offense was hardly alone in taking blame for that.

Cooper shared openly his surprise at the lack of talent he found on the roster, and he was forced to break in a new quarterback that season.

That was Greg Frey, a highly touted signal caller who had run a wide-open offense at Cincinnati St. Xavier High School (where Meyer was a 21-year-old coaching intern) and who was happy to see the changes Colletto had in store.

He completed 152 of 293 passes for 2,028 yards as a sophomore in 1988 and finished his career second only to Schlichter in career passing yards (6,316) at Ohio State. He remains fourth on that list and is the only Buckeye to throw for more than 2,000 yards in three different seasons.

Frey is a private quarterbacks coach today and told BSB he still appreciates what Colletto brought to Columbus in the late '80s.

"Jim Colletto was a great strategist when it came to the passing game," Frey said.

"We did have a very modern passing game. Not the one-back, four-wide stuff you see now, but he understood the passing game quite well."

Tressel's Tweaks

By the time Jim Tressel took over for Cooper in 2001, the landscape of college football had started to shift.

Oklahoma won the national championship the previous season with a combination of stifling defense and a pass-happy offense.

Closer to home, two of the three teams that tied for the Big Ten title in 2000 were running spread offenses as well. Michigan won a share of the title with its familiar pro-style attack, but Purdue and Northwestern crashed the party with unique versions of the spread.

That had folks in Columbus wondering if their new coach, a man who had operated largely below the radar as head coach at Division I-AA Youngstown State, might do the same.

"I've never been much of a revolutionary guy," Tressel said during spring practice in 2001. "There are certain fundamentals that are long-standing that have stood the test of time. Your offense has got to be in concert with your defense and special teams. It cannot be an entity in and of itself."

He went on to describe the importance of having an effective running game, citing a study the coaching staff did when it was hired that revealed the Buckeyes had won more than 90 percent of the time they ran for 200 yards or more in a game during the previous 10 seasons.

However, offensive coordinator Jim Bollman did not rule out an infusion of spread formations, and players such as two-year starting quarterback Steve Bellisari spoke excitedly of using more four-receiver sets both for running and passing.

Reporters allowed to attend practice noted the expanded use of the shotgun, and a pass-heavy spring game (57 pass attempts compared to just 32 runs) bolstered fans' hopes for a versatile attack come fall.

As it turned out, the change was not drastic. The percentage of run plays increased from 60.5 in 2000 to 65.7 in the first year under Tressel, and the team's scoring declined from 27.6 points per game to 26.0.

Tressel stressed the main differences involved the language used to call the plays rather than the actions themselves, something quarterback Craig Krenzel confirmed was the case in a recent interview with BSB.

"Styles weren't that drastically different, but nomenclature changes," said Krenzel, who was a third-year sophomore in 2001. "Understanding what you're trying to accomplish changes, and once you can get through all that you just have to be prepared. Life changes all the time, you have to be able to prepare, to grow and adapt."

That was particularly true for Krenzel, who began the season as the third-string quarterback behind Bellisari and classmate Scott McMullen but ended it in much different circumstances.

Bellisari had an uneven beginning to the season but reeled off three consecutive 200-yard passing games from the last week of October into the middle of November.

He had the Buckeyes in contention for the Big Ten title until a DUI arrest sidelined him for the last two games of the regular season. McMullen started a 34-22 loss to Illinois that knocked Ohio State out of the Big Ten race, and Tressel went to Krenzel the following week for the traditional regular-season finale against Michigan.

The unranked Buckeyes traveled to Ann Arbor as underdogs but knocked off the 11th-ranked Wolverines with a stirring 26-20 victory.

They won at Michigan Stadium for the first time since Bruce's last game in 1987 with a formula that would become familiar to Buckeye fans during the following decade – a strong running game and dominant defense.

In the years to follow, Tressel adapted to his personnel and tweaked his schemes accordingly from year to year, including the infusion of some of the option game with quarterbacks Troy Smith and Terrelle Pryor that is a signature of Meyer's attack.

That figures to help bridge the gap from the previous era to this one.

"I think it's not as big a change for them now as it would have been from maybe 2004 or 2003," said Krenzel, who led the Buckeyes to the 2002 national championship.

"The funny thing about offensive football is that coaches are all trying to do the same thing. They're all trying to create space and creating favorable matchups. They're going to do it in different ways and different formations and with different personnel, but you're constantly trying to get to the same endgame – that's creating space and creating favorable matchups."

And so as Hayes and Kern shared that common goal with Tressel and Smith, Meyer figures to do the same with Braxton Miller.

Time will tell how his tenure matches those who came before him.

BSB staff writer Ari Wasserman contributed to this story.



Woody Hayes



Earle Bruce

Smith Speaks To BSB About Range Of Topics

Continued From Page 1

With the football program seemingly having returned to an upward track, Ohio State showed the strength of its overall athletic department during the 2011-12 academic and athletic seasons.

The school finished the campaign fourth in the standings for the Directors' Cup, the yearly trophy that tabulates the on-field success of a school across the breadth of its sports. Ohio State finished in the top four for the second consecutive year after posting a second-place finish in 2010-11.

The Buckeyes' fencing and synchronized swimming programs earned national championships, while the men's basketball squad captured the attention of not just Buckeye Nation but the entire country by reaching the Final Four for the second time under Thad Matta.

In addition, the wrestling and rowing teams finished fifth in the national, men's tennis reached the NCAA quarterfinals, men's and women's gymnastics each placed seventh in the country and the field hockey, women's soccer and women's volleyball programs reached the final 16 of the NCAA tournament.

On the individual level, Ohio State saw Christina Manning capture a pair of national championships on the track on the way to being named the Big Ten's Suzy Favor Female Athlete of the Year. Wrestler Logan Stieber; synchronized swimmers Yuliya Maryanko, Alex Beckett and Paige Ramsey; fencers Katarzyna Dabrowa and Zain Shaito; the rowing First Varsity Four crew of Alex Sawatzki, Taylore Urban, Katie King, Stephanie Johnson and Emily Ralph; and men's tennis athletes Chase Buchanan and Blaz Rola also won national event titles.

Moreover, 10 current or former Ohio State athletes have qualified for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games that will begin in July in London, England, proving yet again that Buckeye athletes can and do succeed on the international scale.

Ohio State's athletes had a banner year in the classroom, as well. A record 548 finished winter quarter with cumulative grade-point averages of 3.0 or higher, allowing them to be honored at the annual Scholar-Athlete Dinner in May.

In all, 174 athletes graduated from Ohio State during the academic year, and the Buckeyes led the league again in Academic

All-Big Ten choices. Five athletes – led by men's basketball star Aaron Craft – were named Academic All-Americans, and five programs including football finished in the top 10 percent of their sports in the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate.

With all that in mind, Smith was in a good mood when he sat down to review the year with Buckeye Sports Bulletin on June 21. Speaking in a conference room at the Fawcett Center, just down the hall from his office, Smith was at ease when talking about both the hardships and accomplishments of the past 12 months.

What follows is a partial transcript of the interview with Smith.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin: A year ago at this time, you had just parted ways with a very popular and successful football coach. You still had NCAA issues on the horizon. Recently, you said you just had to get to "blue skies" at that time. Now do you feel like you have gotten through that rough patch and can feel pretty good about things?

Gene Smith: "Yes, it's behind us. It's obviously a teachable moment, a lot of things we've learned, some hard challenges throughout that process, but we are (past it). We have a new leader for our football program who is doing a marvelous job. Our kids have bought into his plan. We're moving forward, so we're to blue sky."

BSB: And even from a whole athletic department standpoint, not just football, you have to be encouraged by the success on the field and off the field.

Smith: "It's unbelievable. We've had such a great year. We're fourth in the Directors' Cup, which is four years in a row where we're in the top 10. That's the best run we've ever had. Academically, we had 174 graduates this year, which I'm proud of. We had 312 Academic All-Big Ten honorees, and our overall GPA was 3.07. It was a phenomenal year for us on a lot of fronts."

BSB: We'll get a little more in-depth with that in a second, but going back to saying you had to get to blue skies – was it hard going through it to know that you would eventually get there? Did you have to remind yourself every day that it wasn't going to be

a permanent thing, that you were going to eventually reach a point where it was going to be all right?

Smith: "We did. I had to come to work each day with that focus. We couldn't lose our primary responsibility, which was to focus on our student-athletes, help them have the experience that we promised them. Now that we've finished the year, we look back and we were able to do that."

"I had to be supportive of our staff. I wasn't the only one going through this. There are 350 employees – people who work in our business office, people who work in the camp office, and they all were stressed by that experience. I had to be sure that I was providing the shadow of a leader and making sure that they stayed focused and stayed positive and understood that we still have to serve our kids."

"It was hard every day, and then there was uncertainty. You watched – there was uncertainty what was ahead of us each week. But blue sky brought certainty, finality, and we moved on."

BSB: You told us in Boston when the men's basketball team made the Final Four that there's not a lot of universities like Ohio State that could have gone through what the school went through and gotten through it the way Ohio State did. What do you think it is about Ohio State that allows it to do that?

Smith: "I think first and foremost, Buckeye Nation is strong and deep. We have a great institution that is stronger and stronger every single year, a great, rich tradition and history. So we have a platform that allows us to recover, and we're in a great state. If you look at Ohio and look at what we're able to do, particularly in football, we're able to recruit talent in our state and then obviously go outside of it, but we have a great base. It allows us to recover faster."

BSB: It's been more than six months since you hired Urban Meyer. He hasn't coached a game yet ...

Smith: "(Laughs) I remind him that. He hasn't played a game yet, so enjoy the moment."

BSB: He is undefeated, but I think at the time you said you thought you'd hired the best coach in America. How has the working relationship been there?

Smith: "It's been great. He's done everything the right way. He's very communicative, so we're always texting or calling one another. He's just on top of things. I really meant what I said when I introduced him, and I still introduce him this way."

"We are all the sum of our experiences, and for him to have that experience at Bowling Green and then go to a Utah, which is culturally a totally different place, and then go to Florida – culturally a different place – as the CEO, what a growth opportunity to go through that."

"But the greatest unique thing that we'd all love to have in life is a chance to step away from our jobs for a year and evaluate, to pause and say, 'OK, what did I learn? What could I have done better?' And then to have a chance in a role (as an ESPN commentator) to evaluate other people who do our job and then go back in it – I think anybody that has that opportunity has a chance to be better, so he was ready on all levels."

"We're in a great situation because of timing and place and everything that we're able to get him here, but he's done a great job – his staff, recruiting, current kids, community work, work around the state. He's in Cincinnati and Cleveland throwing out the first pitch (at Reds and Indians games in June). He's been everywhere, and that's what we needed him to do to help us move forward and continue to move toward our goals. It's been great."

BSB: I have to ask about current events. His contract was released the other day, and there was strong compliance-related language in that. I think the answer is obvious, but what prompted you to make that clear when you approached that?

Smith: "Well, we already had a pretty strong contract with compliance things in it, but the learning experience over this past year afforded us (a chance) to look at it differently and put some more things in it that made it stronger. We were more definitive (in terms of) communication, so it was important to do. We beefed it up a little bit."

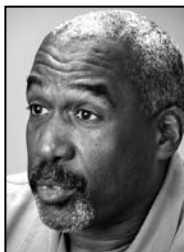
BSB: And he's a guy that hasn't had any troubles where he's been before.

Smith: "No, no, a clean background from that perspective, so we were fortunate. I know he probably peeked at it, but it's not something that we have to say, 'How are you doing relative to your contract?' We don't live that way, but we felt it was important to protect one another, not just us but him as well."

BSB: Speaking of compliance, there was talk last summer and into the fall that there was going to be a university-wide look at the way compliance things were done. Has that resulted in any changes in the way you do things or any changes since things have happened in the past year?

Smith: "We've made a number of procedural changes in how we manage our compliance and how we do certain things. The university is looking at a vice president for compliance that would collapse athletics with other units on campus like the medical center, research and some other areas. Texas does it, and the greatest thing about that is it takes people who do the same job and it brings them together, the intellectual properties in the same room, the regulatory mind-set, so to speak. They can share ideas and experiences and best practices, and we can do better things because of what we might learn from research."

"It's actually happened in our academic area. We moved our academic support in 2006 into our provost's office, and we found that our athletic academic counselors working with the college counselors on a closer basis day to day, we got better."



Gene Smith

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COVER STORY

"Then as far as inside, it's just procedures on how we track our cars, how we track housing, things of that nature – procedural things, paperwork-type of things. Education, there was a huge change in the way we educate. More small groups as opposed to big groups, a little bit more focus that way."

BSB: Finishing up the football aspect of this, I have to ask this, as you look back over the past year and everything that happened starting from March 8 when we had that press conference (to announce Tressell's NCAA violations), is there anything that you wish you or the department had done differently through the whole thing?

Smith: "Obviously, we wish we weren't there, first and foremost, but of course. You're always looking in the rearview mirror for a short period of time to make sure you learned everything from the experience, and then you move on. The things that we felt we needed to improve upon, we've done that. We've looked in the rearview mirror, evaluated, shut it down, move on. So that's where we are."

BSB: Anything you care to elaborate on?

Smith: "No, just more compliance things. We had those accusations about the cars, so we strengthened our registration program. There were no findings there, but we looked at it and said, 'You know what? We probably could strengthen this part and this part.' So we have a little bit better checks and balances on that, things of that nature. But obviously the biggest thing is we wish we weren't there."

BSB: I wanted to switch gears and talk about academic success. When I talked to Coach Meyer at the Scholar-Athlete Dinner, he mentioned talking to you about how he was stunned by how many people were there. He had never heard of an athletic department that was succeeding that way academically. What leads to that, in your eyes?

Smith: "It was huge. We had 548 Scholar-Athletes, and the main thing for us, when I came here in 2005 and looked at our academic support program, we did not have an individualized focus. My whole mantra was, 'Guys, we have to shift gears. We have to take this athlete and figure out, what are their strengths and what are they deficient at?'"

"So we were able to develop individualized academic game plans for each athlete that comes in here. Obviously, a lot of them are very strong, but for even the strong ones, how do we help them get postgraduate scholarships? This past year we had \$64,000 that was won by student-athletes and postgraduate scholarships. We focus on both ends."

"If you're deficient, how do we strengthen that? How do we encourage you to be as competitive in the classroom as you are on the field or in the gym? That's our mantra – and in the first six weeks. How do we strengthen that deficiency? If it's math or English composition, whatever it is, how do we help you overcome that and give you the confidence to be competitive in the classroom?"

"I'm pretty passionate about that because I'm a product of that. That was what I grew up with in the public school system in Cleveland. When I went to school, I had deficiencies, and I know I was able to overcome them because of that focus. We have a great focus. We have a great academic support team, and our coaches recruit great kids. The numbers are working for us."

BSB: Where did the idea for individualized academic plans come from?

Smith: "It was groupthink. I led the discussion with our people. The institution had already started looking at whether we should change the location of athletic academic services, so in 2006, we actually made it happen."

"We had apprehension because anytime you take a big unit and give it to somebody else, there's a loss of control – 'Will it really work

the way we theoretically think it will?' And it's worked marvelously. In fact, the benefits that were derived, we didn't even project some of them. So the collaboration and the communication, the access to faculty, are so much better because it's in the provost's office and not in our office. Our student-athletes are better served."

"A lot of this is personal because I went to a public school all the way to ninth grade, and I struggled when I made the transition into private school for my last three years. I know that some of our young people come to us and they are deficient in some areas, so I don't want it to be a group thing. I don't want 15 guys sitting in a room for two hours at study table with the books open and we're praying that they're reading."

"I want a check-in system and a check-out system. I want an interview with them when they walk out of the room and ask, 'Tell me, what did you learn in those five chapters that you read?' Then you let them go."

"So that's something that we really focused on that a lot of people don't see. It's really one of the coolest things that we do. And we hired math learning specialists and writing learning specialists in 2007. Those are people who actually focus strictly on strengthening those tools and helping you overcome that deficiency so that you can rock and roll in the classroom."

"It all comes together. It's happening, and our numbers are showing it. Football is huge, and then it's the culture of the coaches. Our coaches bought in. They want to recruit talented kids, but they also make sure that our kids take the time to study and get it done the right way. They'll pull you off the field or pull you out of the pool or whatever."

"Now that Scholar-Athlete Dinner, everybody wants to be there. It's just grown. I think it was 434 (student-athletes) in 2006 and now it's 548. It's a huge jump. Next year, it's got to be bigger. This year we had 900-some athletes – close to 1,000, so we should be (getting bigger). We have a big number so we should grow every year. I love that part."

BSB: And then in a similar vein of things people don't talk about as much is the Olympic sports. It's two consecutive top-five Directors' Cup finishes. Does that speak to the overall plan that you have in place and the overall health of the athletic department?

Smith: "It really does. We talk about it a lot. Sometimes we create posters and put up Directors' Cup posters, and we have it on our webpage. Our coaches know where their team stands. Everybody watches that thing because that's where we want to be. One day, we want to knock Stanford off the perch. Since its inception in 1994, I think North Carolina is the only other school that's ever won it. We want to knock Stanford off. We have to figure it out. Maybe if we add a sport like archery or something, or bowling would be cool (laughs)."

BSB: If only you still had the bowling alley from the old Ohio Union from back in the day.

Smith: "That's right! But our coaches buy into (the Directors' Cup standings), our athletes buy into it. They know about it, they track it. It's a standard that you're measured by, and even to be in the top five is phenomenal when you look at the schools. We're four straight years in the top 10. That's huge."

BSB: One thing I've wanted to ask is something I've noticed recently. When you got here, you had a lot of coaches who were very successful who had been entrenched for a while. You had a lot of facilities that were built up by Andy Geiger, and he left things in good hands for you.

Smith: "He did, oh my goodness."

BSB: But recently, you've had some long-term coaches who have left. You've had the whole thing that happened with football. Does this maybe feel more like your athletic department than it ever has before?

Smith: "It's funny, I've never operated that way."

BSB: I figured you would say that, but it's struck me recently.

Smith: "That's not my mantra."

BSB: There is change happening, though.

Smith: "There is change, no question. But I've never thought of it as mine. It's ours, the institution. I've just never thought of it that way, but my predecessor Andy did a marvelous job doing the heavy lifting. The stadium was huge, that renovation. Building The Schott was significant. Bill Davis Stadium is phenomenal. Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium is an unbelievable facility."

"My thing when I came from a facilities point of view was to continue to focus on the Olympic sport facilities, so we dealt with the softball facility, we dealt with indoor tennis, we moved field hockey out of the football practice area so we could have a football complex."

"People don't see all those moves, but the football piece was very important to us, to build that football practice complex with lights and towers so football has its place, everything contiguous. You talk to Urban about that and he'll tell you there's no better place in the country where your offices are in there in the indoor facility next to the outdoor fields. Everything is there in that space."

"We added some practice fields and some grass fields because you can't have enough grass fields with all the sports we have, not just for the individual sports but for camps. We have 9,500 campers here in less than five weeks this summer, so they're all over the place. So I had to focus on those facilities and we have others down the road we'll be focused on."

"And then with the coaches, there's a leadership time for the right people, and sometimes change is necessary because of the time. We've had some changes, and we've been blessed to hire some good coaches. I think Mark Osiecki in ice hockey is going to do a great job. (Baseball coach) Greg Beals is going to be phenomenal. We just hired Ed Beathea in track. We're coming off one of the top five recruiting classes in track, so it's a huge part of that. Change occurs, and we just have to make sure we find good leaders so that we can stay on this trajectory that we're on."

BSB: The news came out recently about the possibility of playing the 2013 spring game in Cincinnati. You're a Cleveland guy, so I'm sure you've heard from people in Cleveland who have had their say.

Smith: "I got a couple of texts (laughs)."

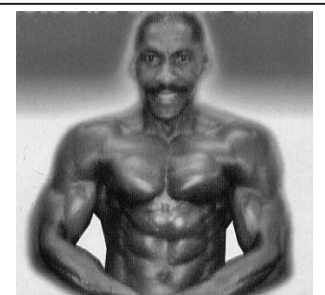
BSB: But is it good to take the spring game somewhere else to draw interest, or would you rather it be here?

Smith: "Of course we prefer to have it at home in the 'Shoe. We're renovating the 'Shoe next year, which is critical. We'll start as soon as the season is over, and we'll phase it to a point where we can hold commencement because we couldn't get in the way of commencement. We have to do that."

"Urban and I have discussed it. We've been to Cleveland – with intent. I talked to Thad about playing in Cleveland and we played Cleveland State there. We did the two-for-one deal (in football) with Toledo and played in Cleveland (at Cleveland Browns Stadium in 2009)."

"As we talked about it, we just felt like it's Cincinnati's turn. We need to have a presence in Cincinnati. We hadn't been there in a couple of years, so we decided that it made sense. We looked at Columbus Crew Stadium, we looked at Massillon, Ohio, but Cincinnati has a large stadium and we just haven't been down there in a while, so it seemed like the right thing to do."

To read Smith's thoughts on the recently agreed upon college football playoff, see page 11.



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OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Sullinger Slips In NBA Draft, Picked By Celtics

Had Jared Sullinger formulated a thought a few months ago about what he'd be doing the day of the 2012 NBA draft, he likely would have placed himself in a custom-made suit in the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J., waiting to hear his name called along with the other top college players in attendance.

Instead he sat in Eddie George's Grille 27 near the Ohio State campus with a group of his closest friends and family June 28 before he was selected by the Boston Celtics with the 21st pick in the first round.

COURT REPORT Ari Wasserman

It's a far cry from where many thought Sullinger would be drafted even before he ever played a minute of college basketball, but the former Buckeye forward told the media after he was selected that landing in Boston, albeit down on the draft boards, was a "blessing in disguise."

"When you've got a team that took the Miami Heat to seven games and you have a core (group of veterans) like Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce and Rajon Rondo," he said, "to be able to go in there and learn from somebody like Kevin Garnett, it's just a blessing."

The fall down the draft boards didn't cost Sullinger only a reserved seat at the NBA draft, but his initial contract with the Celtics will be millions of dollars less than the one he would have signed had he been drafted in the lottery like most had projected his entire career.

Despite being a projected top-five selection after his freshman season, Sullinger returned to Ohio State for a second year. His father, Satch, told BSB that move wasn't something

the family now regrets because it was something the forward needed to do in order to be fully ready for the next level.

In his second year at Ohio State, Sullinger found more success, repeating as a first-team All-American and helping Thad Matta's program earn its second consecutive Big Ten regular-season title and a trip to the Final Four.

Despite his continued dominance on the floor as a sophomore – Sullinger averaged 17.5 points and 9.2 rebounds per game – questions lingered after he suffered from back spasms following OSU's blowout win over Duke in late November that caused him to miss two games.

Sullinger, of course, participated fully in the remainder of Ohio State's season, but at times he didn't look as explosive as onlookers had become accustomed to early in his career.

Concerns about back issues became a hot-button issue after ESPN.com reported that some team doctors who examined the big man marked him as a red flag for "back issues that could shorten his NBA career" just weeks before the draft.

Satch Sullinger told BSB the injury wasn't career-threatening and shouldn't affect his productivity if he uses the proper health precautions, including stretching methods and care from the team's physicians.

The uncertainty of Sullinger's health, however, was likely the reason he fell as deep in the draft as he did. Though there's no denying the appeal of partaking in the NBA draft firsthand, Sullinger said he was pleased to spend it with the ones who joined him on Ohio State's campus for the big night.

"If you look at every person who was in here, they helped me get to this spot," Sullinger said. "A lot of guys complain about not being in the green room. I was actually excited when I didn't get invited because that

way I could spend it with all my family and not just some."

Despite being drafted in the lower half of the first round, Sullinger is viewed by most experts as a value pick. Satch Sullinger had no reservations describing the type of player Boston will have on its roster next season.

"They (got) one of the top five players in this year's draft, period," Satch Sullinger said. "He has done it over and over and over again. The bottom line is they're going to get a basketball player. They might not get an athlete, but they're going to get a basketball player."

Matta agreed. "Boston will be getting a quality person and a tremendous basketball player," Matta said. "Jared was an integral part of our success the last two years, and I suspect he will be equally successful in the years to come. This is a day the Sullinger family has been looking forward to for many years. I know they are proud of Jared's accomplishments and will be avid supporters throughout his professional career."

Celtics general manager Danny Ainge has become known as one of the best in the business, especially after putting together Boston's "Big Three" of Garnett, Pierce and Ray Allen that won the NBA championship in 2008.

Ainge has been known for making value picks in the draft, too, and the latest example was Avery Bradley in the 2010 NBA draft. Bradley was a projected lottery pick that season, but an ankle injury before the draft caused him to slip down the boards.

Boston grabbed him at No. 19 and now Bradley could be establishing himself as the organization's starting shooting guard moving forward. Despite concerns with Sullinger's back, Ainge has visions that the Buckeye is more than able to live up to his college billing.

"We didn't necessarily draft on need, although big guys are hard to find," said



FILE PHOTO

SWAPPING COLORS – Former Ohio State men's basketball player Jared Sullinger (left) was drafted by the Boston Celtics on June 28 with the 21st overall pick in the NBA draft.

Ainge, who also selected Syracuse big man Fab Melo at No. 22. "We're really excited about the results. When the day started I didn't think he'd be there at 21. We got wind that the back issues were causing him to slip in the draft. He was projected a lot higher, so we're fortunate to get him."

Ainge did acknowledge that there are some long-term concerns with Sullinger's back but was confident the team's medical staff could help the big man succeed for a long time in the NBA with proper care.

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OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

"We were concerned," Ainge admitted. "We did our research on the back issues and we felt comfortable. There are some issues there and our medical staff thinks that short-term and long-term that there may be some. (Celtics coach) Doc Rivers played with a herniated disc for 13 years, so it may need surgery at some point, it may not."

The slip down the draft boards likely made for some stress for Sullinger in the weeks leading into it, but now the big man is focused on continuing his basketball play as a professional.

"It's great," Sullinger said. "You couldn't go to a better place than Boston. Great fans. I experienced a little bit of Boston when I was there for the (NCAA) tournament. I think it's a blessing in disguise."

"I'm ready to dominate, ready to play as hard as I can, ready to learn as fast as I can and ready to win. That's what it's all about is winning. I'm ready to win."

Buford Goes Undrafted

The NBA draft came and went and former Ohio State guard William Buford didn't hear his name called, another surprise given many thought the guard was ready for professional basketball after his sophomore season with the Buckeyes.

Buford, who was named Mr. Basketball as Ohio's top prep player while at Toledo Libbey in 2008, started four years at Ohio State, most recently helping the Buckeyes reach the Final Four. After not being drafted, Buford must try to find an opportunity as a free agent and play for an NBA team's summer league squad as a tryout for a coveted roster spot.

Despite the fact Buford averaged 14.5 points per game in his senior season, inconsistencies shooting the ball had a direct impact on his three-point shooting percentage, which dropped from 44.2 as a junior to 35.8 in his final season.

Though conditioning was never an issue for Buford in school – at least on the surface – more concerns arose during his performance at the NBA combine in Chicago where his 11.3 percent body fat was third highest among the 60 prospects evaluated. That is less than ideal for a guard.

A report surfaced in the week after the draft that Buford would work out with the Chicago Bulls, but he may have to explore opportunities in Europe as former Buckeyes Jon Diebler and David Lighty did a year earlier.

Hood Opts For Duke

Ohio State signed only one player in the 2012 recruiting class, but the Buckeyes' staff hoped it would land a big target via transfer after courting former Mississippi State forward Rodney Hood for much of the past few months.

Hood, a former AAU teammate of current Buckeye LaQuinton Ross, opted instead to transfer to Duke to play for Mike Krzyzewski despite multiple reports that Ohio State was the team to beat in the forward's recruitment.

"Duke is self-explanatory," Hood said after picking the school during the last weekend in June. "Coach (Krzyzewski) is the best coach in college basketball, and their assistant coaches are also great at developing pros. Duke is just the highest level of college basketball."

The 6-8, 204-pounder averaged 10.3 points and 4.8 rebounds per game for Mississippi State as a freshman before becoming the latest player to select Duke over the Buckeyes. The Blue Devils also landed five-star power forward Amile Jefferson of Wynnewood (Pa.) Friends' Central, who had OSU on his final list, in the 2012 class.

Hood, who decided to leave Mississippi State after head coach Rick Stansbury retired in March, must sit out the 2012-13 season

per NCAA transfer rules. Hood was a five-star small forward ranked the No. 26 overall player in the 2011 recruiting class, according to Scout.com.

Craft Has Procedure

Sophomore point guard Aaron Craft has played with a bone chip floating in his left ankle since high school and had surgery June 18 to remove it, an Ohio State spokesperson confirmed with BSB.

Craft has been restricted to crutches and has had a cast on his left foot in the time since his surgery, but Ohio State expects he'll be back in a full capacity within the next month and could be back to running by mid-July.

Though Craft averaged 10.4 points, 5.2 assists and 3.2 steals in five NCAA Tournament games while helping lead the Buckeyes to the Final Four, Matta mentioned before the Big Ten tournament that the point guard was dealing with an ankle injury that sometimes yielded extreme pain.

"When it gets hit or it turns a certain way, there's some excruciating pain involved," Matta said. "But he kind of plays his way (through it and) it goes away. I don't know how much it's affected him. He wouldn't tell me if it did."

Craft will continue to work out his upper body during the recovery process but will miss some summer activities with his team. The Buckeyes are scheduled to begin pre-season workouts in October, and the staff expects him to be fully ready for those.

Basketball Notes

- St. John Arena will again host basketball action July 7 when a number of former OSU stars and other notable Ohioans take part in "The Battle for Ohio," a charity game sponsored by Ohio Homecoming, the Columbus Bicentennial and Ohio State.

The game will pit a team representing the Cleveland area with one representing Columbus. Former OSU players Brian Brown, Terence Dials, Diebler, Ivan Harris, Dallas Lauderdale, Lighty, George Reese, Tony Stockman, Damon Stringer, J.J. Sullinger, Scoonie Penn and Evan Turner are expected to take part.

Former OSU player Brad Sellers and Columbus mayor Michael Coleman are slated to coach the two teams with Clark Kellogg and Ron Stokes named as honorary coaches.

The game will take place at noon with tick-

ets available at the St. John Arena box office the day of the game.

- After not being drafted last year, Lighty spent the season playing professionally in Italy. However, Lighty returned to Cleveland on May 12 and is working toward trying to earn a roster spot with an NBA team.

Lighty worked out with the San Antonio Spurs in early June, the Indiana Pacers on June 21 and the Cleveland Cavaliers on June 28. Lighty may also try out for the Atlanta Hawks or potentially join the organization's summer league team.

- Shooting guard Jalen Coleman, a 2015

prospect out of Indianapolis Cathedral, has picked up scholarship offers from Purdue, Notre Dame and Illinois. Coleman (6-4, 185) has also garnered serious interest early from Ohio State and has admitted to being intrigued by Matta's program.

"I had been out there before and I liked it," said Coleman, describing his June visit to Ohio State. "I went to a football game where they played Michigan State. It was a great experience. It is one of the biggest schools in the United States. I got to meet one of the best post players in Jared Sullinger. I liked it and I had fun at the team camp."



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Oct. 27, 2012	October 27-28, 2012	PENN STATE	\$399 per person <small>based on double occupancy</small>
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Minutes from OSU and Nationwide

Olympic Dreams Become Reality For 10

By JEFF SVOBODA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

No matter how long it has been since one has qualified to be an Olympian, the rush of reaching the pinnacle of one's sport doesn't subside easily.

That is true for the 10 current or former Ohio State athletes who have punched their tickets to London, England, for this year's Summer Games, which begin July 25.

Swimmer Samantha Cheverton, who qualified for the Canadian team in March, has had a few months to acclimate herself to the reality that she's an Olympic athlete, but it still takes her by surprise every so often.

"Having qualified in March, I have had some time to let the fact that I am going to the Olympics sink in, even though I still have times where I am just like, 'Wait, what?'" Cheverton told BSB. "When I think of how I am an Olympian for life and it is something I will be able to tell my children about, I get goose bumps."

The feeling is much the same for Katie Bell, an American diver who became the latest Ohio State athlete to qualify when she did so at the U.S. trials June 24.

"I'm still in shock," Bell said. "People keep asking me if it feels real and how I'm feeling, and I don't know. I don't think it's going to feel real until I'm at the Games and at the athletes' village and at the pool with USA behind me."

Those who have qualified are in the midst of preparing both mentally and physically for the Olympics, not the simplest of tasks. In addition to working on their craft, there has been worldwide travel, training camps and media attention.

"It's been seriously crazy," U.S. rifle shooter Amanda Furrer told BSB after qualifying. "I've had interview requests and reporters that want to come up to the house and see baby pictures, the whole bit. It's pretty cool. It's definitely a whirlwind, though."

Final preparations have begun for the athletes, who have spread out across the country and globe to train so that they can do their best and perhaps even capture a medal on the world's biggest stage.

"My training has continued to be pretty similar to what I was doing before trials," Cheverton said. "Every day that it gets closer to the day I leave, the more excited I get. I am starting to think about packing, travel, etc., and it is crazy to think that it is so soon."

What follows are thumbnail profiles of each OSU athlete to qualify.

Katie Bell, United States, diving – Bell finished second to Brittany Viola – the daughter of former MLB pitcher Frank Viola – at the U.S. trials in the 10-meter platform event with 1,024.40 points. The 2009 U.S. platform champion, Bell concluded her eligibility at OSU in 2011 after earning All-America honors in 2009 and '11. She is the ninth OSU diver to qualify for the Olympics under head coach Vince Panzano and expects to be in the running for a medal.

"I think with all the best dives I've done, I'm competing right up there with everyone," she said. "I know the list I did at the semifinals of the Olympic trials, if I do that same list, I'll definitely be a contender for a medal."

Samantha Cheverton, Canada, swimming – Cheverton took second at the Canadian trials in her hometown of Montreal in the 200-meter freestyle event, finishing in 1:57.98. That qualified her for London, where she will also compete in the 4x100 and 4x200 relays. In London, Cheverton will have to contend with Italian swimmer Federica

Buckeyes In The Olympics



Katie Bell
United States • diving



Samantha Cheverton
Canada • swimming



Roger Espinoza
Honduras • soccer



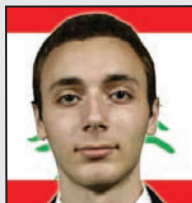
Amanda Furrer
United States • rifle



George Markovic
Serbia • swimming



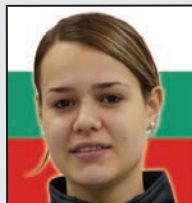
Mona Shaito
Lebanon • fencing



Zain Shaito
Lebanon • fencing



Margot Shumway
United States • rowing



Margarita Tschomakova
Bulgaria • fencing



Claudia Wurzel
Italy • rowing

Pellegrini, who holds the 200 free world record of 1:52.98. Cheverton completed her eligibility in 2011, winning the Big Ten title in the 200 freestyle as a senior.

Roger Espinoza, Honduras, soccer – Espinoza has parlayed his excellent season of play at Ohio State into quite the career. The 25-year-old – who had three goals and three assists for a Buckeye squad that made the 2007 NCAA title game – is a regular in the Sporting Kansas City lineup in Major League Soccer and also competed in the 2010 World Cup for his home nation. Each Olympic squad can feature three players above the age of 23, and Espinoza was named one of Honduras' over-age players June 21. *La Bicolor Olimpica*, who finished winless at the '08 Olympics, are drawn in a group with Morocco, Spain and Japan.

"It's very exciting and something I hoped would happen in my career," Espinoza said in a press release. "The coach knows I am working really hard. I'm very happy and proud to be given the opportunity to represent Honduras."

Amanda Furrer, United States, rifle – The Ohio State junior topped the field in the 50-meter three-position air rifle event at the U.S. trials, qualifying June 9-11 with a score of 1,957.9 to edge out fellow competitors Jamie Gray and Sarah Scherer. The 2007 Pan American Games bronze medalist has made the NCAA meet each of her three years at Ohio State, finishing seventh to earn first-team All-America honors in 2010. Gold medalist and Olympic record holder Du Li of China returns to the event after scoring 690.3 in 2008; Furrer shot 688.4 in one segment of the U.S. qualification.

George Markovic, Serbia, swimming – Markovic actually had a qualifying time to swim for his home country in 2008, but he did not make it to Beijing because of a citizenship issue. (Markovic was born in Yugoslavia but his family fled the war-torn country for Australia when he was young, leaving him without Serbian citizenship). That issue has been settled, though, and now Markovic will be in London after achieving a qualifying time of 3:52.58 in the 400 freestyle (the world record is 3:40.07 by German Paul Biedermann, who will compete). He will also

swim the 4x100 relay. Markovic was a captain on OSU's 2010 Big Ten title team as a senior and captured the league's 500 free crown that season before earning All-America honors.

Zain and Mona Shaito, Lebanon, fencing – The brother and sister each captured the foil championship at the Asian and Oceanic qualifiers in April to advance to London. The two helped Ohio State to the national championship in 2012, as Zain – a sophomore who was named OSU's male athlete of the year – won the NCAA foil title and Mona, a freshman, finished third. Both hail from Texas but have dual citizenship and will be representing the home country of their father, Talal.

Margot Shumway, United States, rowing – Shumway graduated from Ohio State in 2002 but is still making headlines after qualifying for the Red, White and Blue. She and partner Sarah Trowbridge will race in the double sculls following their first-place finish with a time of 7:03.96 at a multinational qualifying event in Switzerland in May. Shumway came to OSU as a walk-on in 2001 but helped the Second Varsity Eight to the Big Ten title a year later, and she competed in the 2008 Beijing Games as well.

Margarita Tschomakova, Bulgaria, fencing – A senior in 2012, Tschomakova secured one of four spots in women's sabre at the European qualifier in Slovakia in April. She outlasted Great Britain's Joanna Hutchison in the round of eight to qualify. Tschomakova – who has dual citizenship with Germany after being born in Bonn – finished seventh at the NCAA meet in 2012 after taking fifth in '11 and third in '10.

Claudia Wurzel, Italy, rowing – Wurzel was the first Buckeye to secure qualification, doing so in September 2011 when she and partner Sara Bertolasi won the "B" final at the 2011 world championships in Slovenia with a time of 7:22.67. Wurzel lettered at OSU from 2007-09 and helped the Buckeyes to top-10 NCAA finishes each year.

In addition, Ohio State assistant wrestling coach Lou Rosselli has been named a volunteer coach alongside United States head man Zeke Jones. Rosselli, a 1996 Olympian as a competitor, is a three-time coach of the U.S. world championships freestyle team.

He will have one familiar face there, as U.S. heavyweight qualifier Tervel Dlagnev has been training at Ohio State as part of the Ohio Regional Training Center residency program.

Some Fall Short

A number of Ohio State athletes ended up just shy of qualifying for London, a group led by Christina Manning.

The winner of two NCAA hurdles titles in 2012 and the Big Ten's top female athlete of the year, Manning breezed into the finals of the 100-meter hurdles but finished fifth there. Only the top three qualified, with Manning's time of 12.92 seconds just 0.06 behind third-place finisher Lolo Jones.

Also on the track, distance runners Jeff See and Cory Leslie made the finals in the 1,500 meters and the 3,000-meter steeplechase, respectively, at the U.S. trials in Eugene, Ore. Both finished ninth to see their bids come to a close. See competed at OSU from 2005-10, earning six All-America honors, while Leslie finished third at the NCAA meet in the steeplechase in 2012 as a junior.

Gymnast Brandon Wynn figured he had a good chance to go to London on the strength of his rings skills, but he placed ninth in the all-around at the trials during the last weekend of June and did not make the seven-man squad. He also finished second in his signature event to qualifier Jonathan Horton.

Ohio State sent 36 competitors to the U.S. swimming trials, but the team's best chance at a bid fell short when Tim Phillips placed sixth in the 100-meter butterfly on July 1. Phillips took the 2011-12 season off to train for the chance to go to London and will return to OSU with two years of eligibility remaining.

Elliott Keefer, who completed his OSU career in 2011, and Shannon Draves, a junior, also made finals. Keefer took fifth in the men's 200 breaststroke and Draves was seventh in the women's 200 butterfly.

Former OSU basketball player Byron Mullens, who suited up for the Buckeyes in 2008, was in the preliminary player pool for Great Britain – his mother is English – but withdrew because of a toe injury.

Not Everyone Is Happy Playoff Is Coming

Somewhere along the way, I missed the memo about how all of us are supposed to be for a playoff in college football. For whatever reason, it has never really bothered me that there was no playoff, which appears to put me in a distinct minority.

Every year that I can remember in my now almost 60 years, a champion was crowned by one process or another and, while I might have quibbled with that champion from time to time, I generally recognized that team. Some years Ohio State was in the equation, even winning it on occasion, and some years it wasn't. But I felt no void in my life without a playoff.

In fact, if the college football powers that be hadn't announced their decision to go to a four-team playoff, I was going to use this space to outline my vision of how a champion should be named.

It was going to be a mock column of sorts, as I was going to outline the way the college landscape was before first the Bowl Alliance and then the Bowl Championship Series, with my "innovative" idea that a limited number of bowl games be played, the most important of them all on New Year's Day, with the champion ultimately being decided by two polls, one made up of college coaches and the other consisting of media members. While the two polls would generally come to a consensus, on rare occasions there might be two national champions.

The centerpiece of my proposal would have been the Rose Bowl, which would have pitted the champions of the Big Ten and Pac-12 in Pasadena and would have been played in the premier time slot of that college football celebration held on Jan. 1. Teams from those like-minded conferences would aspire to earn the berth in Pasadena. The national championship would be a secondary thought and would come, if deserved, only after prevailing in the Rose Bowl.

In the tradition of true satire, I would have speculated that my proposal would have the potential to last for decades, which of course the old system (the basis for my new system), despite any of its flaws, did.

As I think about all of this, I realize that my indifference to the national obsession with a playoff is based in my growing up as part of the Rose Bowl generation. For Buckeye fans of that generation, the national championship was third in the successful season progression. The first goal for an Ohio State team was to beat Michigan, and frequently that critical victory led to a trip to the Mecca for fans of Big Ten teams and those of the Pac-12 and its predecessors – the Rose Bowl.

The beauty of that priority system was that you could lose a couple of games, especially in a year when the Big Ten was competitive, and still achieve the ultimate goal of going to Pasadena.

Ohio State's 1984 season always comes to mind for me. At one point that season, the Buckeyes were 6-2 after a loss to Wisconsin and seemingly out of the race for anything, let alone the national championship. Yet they won out in the regular season, defeating Michigan in the process, and earned the trip to the Rose Bowl. Most fans considered that a successful season – even though it still bothers me that Ohio State went on to lose to a so-so USC team in Pasadena – in a year when even if there were a four-team playoff, Ohio State would not have gotten a sniff.

And the quest for the Rose Bowl was not limited to Ohio State. It was that way all across the conference. I'll never forget when Wisconsin earned the trip following the 1993

season, the Badgers' first Rose berth in 31 years. Ticket demand was so great that many who were promised tickets as part of bowl packages were shut out and tickets could not be had at any price.

But I have to remember that it has now been 14 years since the Rose Bowl, recognizing the changing times, joined the BCS, sadly starting a steady decline in the significance of this once special bowl game. With each passing year, the game's greatness fades farther in college football's rearview mirror. For many younger college football fans, the Rose Bowl is of no greater significance than the Fiesta Bowl, for example – one of my favorite bowl games, but a Johnny-come-lately to the major bowl scene.

I felt a little less isolated in my feelings about all of this when Bob Hunter, the longtime columnist for The Columbus Dispatch, addressed the topic in his July 1 column.

"As the scene of some of Ohio State's most important games, the Rose Bowl has always drawn moon-eyed looks from the state's sports fans," wrote Hunter, who acknowledged that he has been a longtime proponent of a playoff. "It held a special fascination for most Midwesterners, a place many had on their bucket list before they even knew what a bucket list was."

Hunter went on to say, "The ill-fated Bowl Championship Series title game sucked up some of the Rose Bowl's magic, giving the game secondary status when the title game wasn't in Pasadena. But the four-team playoff will deal a near-lethal blow to a game that has been such a critical part of the sport's heritage."

Hunter spoke with legendary Buckeye John Hicks, a Rose Bowl Hall of Famer who was philosophical about the game and its demise.

"It is what it is," Hicks, who started three straight games in Pasadena from 1972-74, told Hunter. "I mean the Rose Bowl is outstanding. I had the greatest experience there that a young person can have. My mother adored it. My mother and father loved going to the Rose Bowl, and after my father died, my mother went in '97 when the Buckeyes did. But we've got to grow up. Times change."

Under the old system, the national championship was all about taking care of business. If you won your games, you would most likely be national champion, or at least in the discussion – and discussion is what it was all about back then, with no playoff.

A four-team playoff would have aided a team like the Buckeyes' 1998 squad, which was arguably the best team in college football that year. If there had been a playoff back then, perhaps Ohio State would have qualified despite losing to Michigan State in Ohio Stadium. But did the Buckeyes really deserve a mulligan after losing to the Spartans?

With the addition of so many conference championship games – a development designed to generate money and television programming (read: generate money) – I acknowledge that it will be more and more difficult to navigate an entire season undefeated or with one loss, especially if a team wants to schedule exciting and challenging nonconference contests.

So, true, a four-team playoff will still give teams with nominal losses a chance to play for the crown. If you expand again and start dipping into teams with more losses, however, I'm not certain those teams took care of business and earned the right to play for the championship, regardless of how strong their schedule.

Under the new system, it would seem that one team and its fan base will end the season truly happy and three teams will finish the season sort of happy. It would seem. I can't help but remember that after Ohio State played for the BCS championship following the 2006 and 2007 seasons, Buckeye fans were disgruntled with the team and head coach Jim Tressell after consecutive losses in those games.

So maybe only one team and its fans will be happy. That just doesn't seem like a lot of fun to me.

One suggestion that I do have, which will never be implemented because all-powerful ESPN needs the programming, is the return to a more limited bowl schedule. If bowl games go back to being a reward for a good season instead of rewarding mediocrity, maybe the bowl experience for those not part of the playoffs would regain some of its luster.

In closing, I'll make all of you a wager.

It was more than 50 years between the time Illinois defeated UCLA following the 1946 season to start the historic Rose Bowl arrangement between the Big Ten and its West Coast brethren and the time the game joined the BCS.

I bet the new playoff system doesn't last half that long.

Spielman Classic Dinner

I attended the recent Spielman Gridiron Classic Kickoff Dinner, held June 26 in Columbus.

The event honored former Ohio State football coach Earle Bruce, who received the 2012 SGC Inspiration Award.

It became apparent as the evening progressed that Spielman, who was recruited by Bruce to play at Ohio State, and the former Buckeye coach have a tremendous amount of mutual admiration.

"I've won a lot of great awards through the years, one of which is on my finger, my (college) Hall of Fame ring," Bruce told the crowd. "But this is the greatest award I've ever received."

Spielman told of how Bruce's behavior during the ill-fated Michigan week in November 1987, in which the coach was fired but still led the Buckeyes to victory over the Wolverines, had a major impact on his life. The way Bruce remained focused and kept the Michigan game of the utmost importance that week rather than his personal predicament stayed with Spielman.

When his late wife, Stefanie, was first diagnosed with breast cancer, Spielman told the audience that he drew on that inspiration to help make the decision to step away from football for a year and be at the side of his wife and family as Stefanie battled the disease.

"Family came first," Spielman explained, "just as the team came first for Coach Bruce."

Bruce also recounted how that 23-20 victory over Michigan led to another important moment in his life.

After the game, Bruce met with his Michigan counterpart and longtime Buckeye nemesis, Bo Schembechler.

"You know how I hate to lose," Schembechler told Bruce. "You know how I hate to lose. But today I didn't mind losing."

Those words really moved Bruce.

"That was the greatest thing anyone has ever said to me," Bruce said.

Spielman, who played for Bruce at OSU from 1984-87 and had 16 tackles, including 14 solos, in that Buckeye career-ending victory over the Wolverines, almost didn't become a Buckeye thanks to a culinary faux pas by Bruce.

The coach hosted Spielman at the Bruce household as part of the prep star's recruiting process. Bruce acknowledged to the crowd his lack of cooking prowess but said that he does pride himself in the making of a special dessert – Bananas Foster. After dinner with Spielman, Bruce excused himself to the kitchen to prepare his signature item.

Bruce served the dessert to Spielman with much fanfare, and the future great's response was simple.

"I don't like bananas!" he said.

"I'm thinking, 'That's strike one,'" Bruce recalled.

Spielman not only ended up coming to Ohio State and starring, he also had a highly successful career in the NFL. Along with Stefanie, who died in 2009, he has raised more than \$10 million to support breast cancer research.

The Spielman Gridiron Classic, which benefits the Stefanie Spielman Fund for Breast Cancer Research as well as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, started out as a single game in 2008. It reached 17 games in 2011 and is now open to any school in the state that would like to designate a regular-season game as a Classic contest, and the participating schools can also share in the proceeds. For more information, go to sgcfootball.com.

Previous winners of the Inspiration Award were Cleveland Glenville High School coach Ted Ginn Sr. in 2010 and Yvette McGee Brown, justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, in 2011.

Recruiting Scoop

If you did not access our June 19 electronic issue, you missed an interesting story by our Ari Wasserman from the June 10 advanced football camp at Ohio State. Wasserman chronicled the play of the relatively unheralded Darron Lee, a two-way prospect from nearby New Albany, Ohio.

Lee went head-to-head with safety Vonn Bell out of Rossville, Ga., arguably the top prospect participating, for much of the camp, earning praise for his play against the five-star player. Not long after the camp, Lee received an offer from Ohio State, which he quickly accepted.

This is just one more example of the type of stories you are missing if you are not enjoying all 60 issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin. The 36 electronic issues are available for free to all current paid print subscribers. While the next print edition of BSB is not scheduled until late in August, there will be electronic issues posted on July 17 and 31 and Aug. 7, 14 and 31.

If you have not already signed up to enjoy these issues, simply email us your name, address and phone number to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send easy instructions on how to access the electronic issues. For more information, see page 5 of this issue.