

OHIO STATE VS. TEXAS TECH

Texas Tech Totally Toasted

Bucks Dominate All Facets, Coast To Pigskin Victory

By STEVE HELWAGEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Throughout 2002, much has been made about whether the Ohio State offense — and particularly the injury-plagued offensive line — would be able to answer the call.

But if the season opener is any indication, that unit could be something to reckon with — and the OSU defense isn't too shabby, either.

The 13th-ranked Buckeyes jumped on Texas Tech early and cruised to a 45-21 win in the Pigskin Classic before a crowd of 100,037 Aug. 24 at Ohio Stadium.

The OSU offense churned out 477 yards and 24 first downs, doing much of its damage on the ground with 317 yards in 57 attempts. Meanwhile, the defense kept Tech's star passer, Kliff Kingsbury, in check much of the day.

"Our defense worked hard and created some opportunities," said OSU coach Jim Tressel. "Our offense took advantage of them and our special teams stepped up."

"Overall, for an opening ball game

against a good team, it was very solid."

The game served as the coming-out party for freshman tailback Maurice Clarett, who finished the day with 175 yards and three touchdowns on 21 carries. He had spectacular breakaway touchdown runs of 59 and 45 yards as the Buckeyes built a 38-7 lead and coasted to the win.

"I was like a kid living a dream," said Clarett, who was believed to be the first true freshman to start a season opener at tailback for OSU since at least World War II. "But I know if I want it to happen again, I'll have to practice really hard."

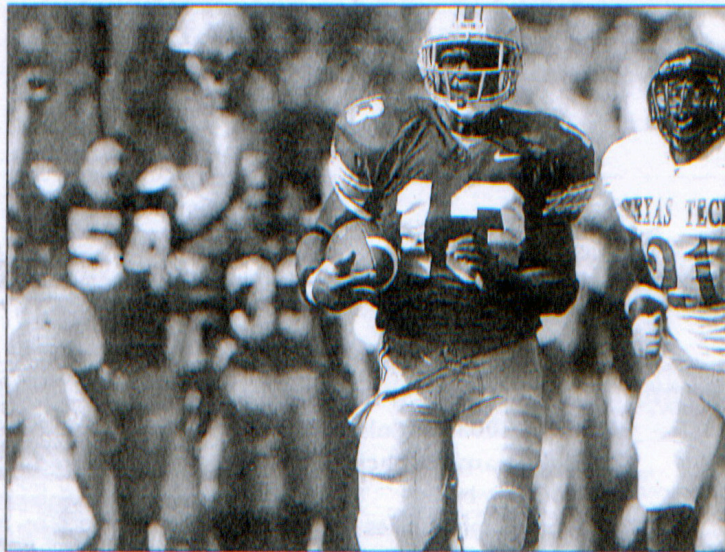
Clarett actually split time at tailback with sophomores Maurice Hall and Lydell Ross. Hall added 74 yards on 13 carries, while Ross had 40 yards and two touchdowns on 16 attempts.

Junior Craig Krenzel moved into the quarterback role on a full-time basis and took command of the OSU offense. He hit on 11 of 14 passes for 118 yards and also carried four times for 34 yards.

"It was just fun to sit back there," Krenzel said. "I had the opportunity to be relaxed and get the ball to our playmakers and let them make some plays."

The OSU defense kept Texas Tech's potent spread offense bottled up most of the day. Kingsbury, who threw for nearly 4,000 yards last year, ended up 26 of 44 passing for 341 yards with three touchdowns and one interception.

"They jumped on us and we really didn't recover," Kingsbury said. "We got down



JEFF BREHM

SO LONG — With Tim Anderson (54) and his teammates cheering him on, OSU freshman running back Maurice Clarett (13) outruns Texas Tech's Ricky Sailor to score his first touchdown, a 59-yarder.

21-7 and were kind of scrambling for things to do."

The OSU defense twice slammed the door on the Red Raiders when the game was still in doubt. OSU stopped Tech on fourth-and-goal at the 1 just before half-time, while cornerback Dustin Fox intercepted Kingsbury at the goal line early in the third quarter.

"I didn't think we played together consistently," said Tech coach Mike Leach. "Defensively, we gave up big plays. We could have gotten more out of special teams. Offensively, we never really got in sync."

"The biggest thing was big plays on the run. We gave up big plays on the run. That's probably most disturbing."

As It Happened

OSU scored touchdowns in workman-like fashion on its first two possessions.

The game began on a good note for the Buckeyes as freshman linebacker Bobby Carpenter dropped Tech kick returner Ivory McCann at the 8-yard line. Kingsbury was sacked at the Tech 5 on third down and, after a punt and a 14-yard return by Mike Doss, the Buckeyes were in business at the Red Raiders' 32.

OSU needed seven plays to find the end zone. Krenzel rifled a 17-yard pass to Michael Jenkins. Then, on third-and-7 at the Tech 12, Krenzel scrambled and dropped the ball to Clarett, who powered down to the 4 for a first down.

Two plays later, the Buckeyes faced

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second-and-goal at the Tech 2. OSU lined up in a jumbo right formation but pulled back left and Ross followed the blocking for the 2-yard touchdown run and a 7-0 lead with 10:53 left in the first quarter.

"When we got into the red zone, the offensive line made it happen," Ross said. "They created the holes and I was able to get through and score."

Field position was not in OSU's favor a series later, when the Red Raiders' punt rolled dead at the OSU 4. But the Buckeyes needed just six plays to go the 96-yard distance and extend the lead to 14-0.

Facing third-and-5 on the OSU 9, Krenzel stepped up and tucked the ball for a 23-yard gain and a first down. Three plays later, OSU had third-and-1 at the OSU 41. Claret took a handoff and slid by Tech's Ricky Sailor at the line of scrimmage and was gone down the right sideline. Tech's Joselio Hanson tried to make a last-ditch tackle attempt, but Claret stiff-armed him at the 10 and finished off the 59-yard TD run with 5:10 left in the first.

Texas Tech answered with a nine-play, 72-yard scoring march. Kingsbury hit on 5 of 6 passes on the drive. Facing fourth-and-2 at the OSU 37, he hit Carlos Francis on a quick slant. Francis got by OSU cornerback Richard McNutt, who took a bad angle, and was gone on a 37-yard touchdown that cut the lead to 14-7 on the final play of the first quarter.

"We checked to a slant and Carlos just did a good job taking it to the house," Kingsbury said.

OSU went three-and-out on its third offensive series but rebounded for a 10-play, 75-yard touchdown march on the fourth.

Again, Krenzel stepped up and scrambled for 16 yards and a first down. He then hit tight end Ben Hartsock, who made a juggling 10-yard grab for a first down at the Tech 13. Claret converted a third-and-1 at the 4 with a 3-yard run down to the 1. On the next play, Ross followed left guard Mike Stafford into the end zone on the 1-yard TD run that pushed the OSU lead to 21-7 with 7:40 left in the first half.

The Red Raiders drove 78 yards down to the OSU 1 as Kingsbury completed passes of 29 yards to Wes Welker and a 28-yard to Mickey Peters. An OSU face mask penalty also helped Tech.

But on fourth-and-goal from just outside the 1, Tech's Foy Munlin tried to go over right tackle to no avail. OSU line-backers Matt Wilhelm and Cie Grant got great penetration to stop Munlin for no gain.

"We had figured that when Kingsbury was under center that they would run the ball," Wilhelm said. "It was a great call by our coaches. We called 'Bullets' and that is where Cie Grant and I try to get through the 'B' gap. I just tried to get skinny, get through there and make a play."

Leach lamented not using one of his three timeouts to plan a better play.

"I'd definitely call timeout," Leach said. "I'd probably still go for it, though."

The 21-7 score stood at the half before the Buckeyes came out on the first possession of the second half and went 80 yards in a quick four plays to extend the lead.

Hall picked up 18 yards on first down before losing 5 on the second. Krenzel then found Jenkins for a 22-yard gain to the Tech 45.

On the next play, Claret went right behind pulling guard Stafford and sprinted Tech's Byron Johnson to complete a 45-yard TD run and up the lead to 28-7 with 13:08 left in the third quarter.

Tech again moved into the red zone, but Kingsbury's first-down pass at the OSU 17 was intercepted by Fox, who fell on the goal line for a touchback.

"It was a nice play by their guy," Kingsbury said. "I just underthrew it."

Fox added, "He was rolling out to his left and I actually thought he was going to run the ball. I came up and I may have baited him. He tried to toss it over my head, but I was able to get back there and get it."

OSU then moved 52 yards before Mike Nugent came on and drilled a 45-yard field goal to make it 31-7 with 6:46 left in the third.

Chris Gamble set up OSU's next touchdown with a 27-yard punt return down to the Tech 33. Hall ripped off a 20-yard run, but Claret capped the seven-play drive with a 1-yard TD run to make it 38-7 with 1:56 left in the third.

Kingsbury hit Welker for a 34-yard touchdown pass with 9:23 left in the game. B.J. Symons then came on and hit Anton Paige for the two-point conversion, cutting the lead to 38-15.

OSU backup quarterback Scott McMullen then led OSU on a 12-play, 76-yard scoring drive, keyed by his 26-yard toss to Drew Carter. McMullen capped the drive with his 1-yard quarterback sneak on second-and-goal, extending the lead to 45-15 with 2:24 left.

Kingsbury had one last bullet in his holster, though, as he piloted Tech on a last-ditch scoring drive capped by his 36-yard bomb to Welker that made it 45-21 with 12 seconds left. Kingsbury's two-point conversion pass failed.

Game Notes

- The game was not a sellout, snapping OSU's string of 31 straight sellouts dating to the 1997 Eddie Robinson Classic with Wyoming.

- OSU improved to 2-0 all-time against Texas Tech. OSU defeated the Red Raiders 17-10 in 1990 in Columbus.

- The Buckeyes won their third straight season opener, dating to a 1999 loss to Miami (Fla.) in the Kickoff Classic.

This was OSU's 24th straight home opener win, dating to a 1978 loss to Penn State. OSU's all-time opener record is now

Ohio State 45, Texas Tech 21

Aug. 24, 2002 — Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
TEXAS TECH	7	0	0	14	21
OHIO STATE	14	7	17	7	45

First Quarter

OSU — Ross, 2 yard run (Nugent kick), 10:53; 7 plays, 32 yards, 3:00

TOP

OSU — Claret, 59 yard run (Nugent kick), 5:10; 6 plays, 96 yards, 2:44

TOP

TT — Francis, 37 yard pass from Kingsbury (Trecee kick), 0:00; 9 plays, 72 yards, 4:58 TOP.

Second Quarter

OSU — Ross, 1 yard run (Nugent kick), 7:40; 10 plays, 75 yards, 4:47

TOP

OSU — Claret, 45 yard run (Nugent kick), 13:08; 4 plays, 80 yards, 1:44 TOP.

TOP

OSU — Nugent, 45 yard field goal, 6:46; 11 plays, 52 yards, 4:28 TOP.

OSU — Claret, 1 yard run (Nugent kick), 1:56; 7 plays, 33 yards, 3:34 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

TT — Welker, 34 yard pass from Kingsbury (Paige pass from Symons), 9:23; 6 plays, 80 yards, 1:57 TOP.

OSU — McMullen, 1 yard run (Nugent kick), 2:24; 12 plays, 76 yards, 6:49 TOP.

TT — Welker, 36 yard pass from Kingsbury (pass failed), 0:12; 8 plays, 72 yards, 2:03 TOP.

Att. — 100,037

Weather — Pleasant, 83 degrees; wind, 5-7 NW

Team Statistics

	TT	OSU
First Downs	17	24
Rushing	2	15
Passing	13	8
Penalty	2	1
Rushes-Yards	20-31	57-317
Passing-Yards	341	160
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	44-26-1	17-13-0
Offensive Plays	64	74
Total Net Yards	372	477
Third Down Efficiency	7-15	10-25
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	0-0
Punts	6-40.8	4-48.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties	3-43	5-37
Time of Possession	24:04	35:56

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) — TT: Henderson 3-31; Munlin 7-18; McGuire 1-9; Kingsbury 9-(-27). OSU: Claret 21-175; M.Hall 13-74; Ross 16-40; Krenzel 4-34; Team 1-(-1); McMullen 2-(-5).

PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD) — TT: Kingsbury 44-26-1-341-3. OSU: Krenzel 14-11-0-118-0; McMullen 3-2-0-42-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) — TT: Welker 5-117; Francis 5-67; Paige 5-44; Peters 3-43; Glover 3-39; Munlin 2-10; Henderson 2-4; McGuire 1-17. OSU: Claret 4-30; Jenkins 3-58; M.Hall 2-25; Gamble 2-11; Carter 1-26; Hartsock 1-10.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) — TT: Greathouse 6-40.8-48. OSU: Groom 4-48.0-55.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — TT: Welker 4-39. OSU: Gamble 2-40; Doss 1-14.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) — TT: McCann 4-98; Henderson 2-27; Welker 1-5. OSU: M.Hall 2-41; Doss 1-24.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES — TT: None. OSU: None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) — TT: None. OSU: Fox 1-0.

SACKS — TT: Page 1-6; Hunt 1-3; Duckett 1-2. OSU: Grant 2-17; W.Smith 2-7; Peterson 1-5; Wilhelm 1-2; Anderson 1-0; Scott 1-0.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) — TT: Hunt 2-4; Page 1-6; M.Turner 1-5; Sailor 1-3; Aycock 1-2; Duckett 1-2; M.Smith 1-1. OSU: W.Smith 4-10; Grant 2-17; Peterson 1-5; Wilhelm 1-2.

TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.) — TT: Flugence 15-5-20; Aycock 6-2-8; M.Smith 5-3-8; Hunt 5-1-6; Sailor 4-1-5; B.Johnson 4-1-5; Turner 3-1-4; Page 3-0-3; Harmon 3-0-3; McCann 2-0-2; Hanson 2-0-2; Anderson 2-0-2; Duckett 2-0-2; McKinney 0-2-2; Dorrough 1-0-1; Saldi 1-0-1. OSU: Wilhelm 8-1-9; Doss 5-1-6; McNutt 5-0-5; Grant 5-0-5; W.Smith 4-0-4; Peterson 3-1-4; Carpenter 3-0-3; Anderson 1-2-3; Jacobs 2-0-2; Underwood 2-0-2; Sallee 2-0-2; Nickey 2-0-2; Scott 1-1-2; Allen 1-0-1; Fox 1-0-1; Conwell 1-0-1; Reynolds 1-0-1; Nugent 1-0-1; D.Andrews 1-0-1; Childress 1-0-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME — TEXAS TECH: Offense, Loper, Cecil, Campbell, Richards, Keck, Kingsbury, Munlin, Welker, Peters, Paige, Francis, Trecee, Defense, McKinney, Anderson, Hanson, Hunt, M.Smith, Flugence, Turner, Sailor, Aycock, B.Johnson, Hanson, Greathouse, Reserves, Symons, Bachman, Mack, Saldi, Glover, Haverly, Boyd, Dorrough, Henderson, C.Davis, Wesley, Bartee, Woods, McCann, Hartfield, Norman, Pierce, McGuire, Rodriguez, Threault, Whitley, Gandy, Hawkins, Duckett, Christensen, Paige, Wyatt. OHIO STATE: Defense, W.Smith, Anderson, Peterson, Scott, Grant, Reynolds, Fox, McNutt, Doss, Nickey, Allen, Groom, Offense, Jenkins, Douglas, Stafford, Stepanovich, Bishop, Olivea, Hartsock, Hamby, Gamble, Krenzel, Claret, Nugent, Reserves, Childress, Uhlenhake, D'Andrea, Carter, Jacobs, Chattams, McMullen, Boone, Conwell, Sallee, M.Hall, Ross, Everett, Wilhelm, O'Neill, Matthews, Carpenter, Schnittler, Pagac, Hawk, Tucker, Underwood, Kudla, K.Andrews, Clarke, Fraser, Hollins, Bond, Green, Thompson, D.Andrews, Penton.

97-12-4.

- The Buckeyes are now 4-2 all-time in August, including 2-0 in the Pigskin

Classic. The Buckeyes won the 1994 Pigskin game, defeating Fresno State 34-10 on a neutral field in Anaheim, Calif.

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Defense Kicked Raiders When They Were Down

The way to beat a bully is to fight back, and the Ohio State defense had learned that all too often in the past few seasons. The Buckeyes would get fat and happy, absorbing body blows and haymakers and turning victories into defeats.

So when Texas Tech and its play-ground style of football invaded Ohio Stadium, there were definite concerns.

This time, however, the Buckeyes were the ones sending the message, knocking Tech down and continuing to kick sand in its face in a 45-21 season-opening victory that wasn't as close as the scoreboard said.

Tech averaged 35 points per game last season behind the deadly effective arm of quarterback Kliff Kingsbury and figured it could knock Ohio State down a peg or two with its four- and five-wide receiver sets.

INSIDE THE GAME

with

**Mike Wachsman
and Jeff Rapp**

Not this time.

"We played as a unit, which was very important against a team like this one," All-American strong safety Mike Doss said. "We just knew we had to do our job and work as a group and good things would happen."

The Buckeyes held the Red Raiders to 372 yards, a few yards below their 418 yards-per-game clip from a year ago.



JEFF BREHM

HI, MY NAME IS WILL — Texas Tech running back Taurean Henderson (19) shakes the cobwebs from his head after being slammed to the ground by OSU defensive end Will Smith.

"We knew we had a chance on national TV to make a statement against a pretty good offense," free safety Donnie Nickey said. "We knew we had the potential to do this."

Kingsbury was sacked just 25 times on nearly 600 pass attempts last year, so for the Buckeyes to get to the senior Heisman candidate seven times says something about the defense's attitude.

"I know our players like to press, and if you hold up the pressure you're OK," coordinator Mark Dantonio said. "Sometimes we got beat, but we recovered and made a play the next time."

The Kaiser Rolls

Matt Wilhelm was seldom 100 percent a year ago after suffering an early-season ankle injury. It was bad enough that it needed surgery, which forced him to miss spring ball.

So to be out on the field, in the first game of his last year at



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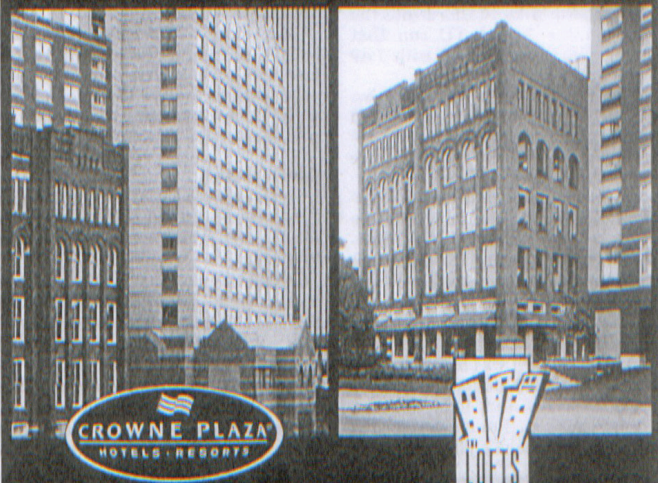
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OSU, was an incomparable feeling.

"I wanted to get off to this kind of start, and I think we sent a message today," Wilhelm said.

The senior led the Buckeyes with nine stops, none more important than a hit in the backfield on Tech's Foy Munlin on fourth-and-goal at the 1 with the Red Raiders trailing 21-7 with just under three minutes to go in the half.

Had Texas Tech hit pay dirt, it could have meant a momentum swing. Wilhelm knifed through the gap like he knew the play was coming.

Well, he sort of did.

"When Kingsbury lines up under center it's typically a running play," Wilhelm said. "The coaches sent me and Cie Grant into the B gap and I was able to stop his momentum and keep him out of the end zone."

Cornering The Market

One question coming into the season and this game especially was how well Ohio State's inexperienced cornerbacks would hold up.

Dustin Fox and Richard McNutt got substantial time in January's Outback Bowl due to an injury to Derek Roas but neither had started a game in the

Horseshoe against such a vaunted passing attack.

Kingsbury's first pass was designed to test Fox's mettle, and the sophomore came through with a vicious hit on Tech receiver Wes Welker on a pass that was much too high to corral.

"A lot of people questioned how good our corners were, but I think we showed we're going to be all right," Fox said. "Hopefully this can continue. I felt good out there, I felt comfortable and going into the season I had a lot of confidence. We all do back there, really."

The only real misstep came when Carlos Francis took a slant pass from Kingsbury 37 yards to the house after McNutt appeared to take a bad angle and missed an open-field tackle.

The Buckeyes kept their heads up, though, and kept the Red Raiders out of the end zone after that until the fourth quarter. More importantly, OSU's leaders sought out McNutt and let him know how things were.

"If you make a mistake you want to correct it," Doss said. "We didn't get down on Richard. We just told him to work harder and he'd get 'em next time."

Fox may have been the recipient of

some good fortune on a third-quarter interception in the end zone.

Kingsbury was flushed out of the pocket and looked like he was going to tuck it and run, so Fox bit and started moving to make the tackle. Behind him, Nehemiah Glover waited alone in the end zone.

Kingsbury lofted one of the day's few errant throws, a floater that allowed Fox to recover and pick it off in the end zone.

"It was happening so fast that I'm not really sure what happened," Fox said. "I had the man and then left him which I probably shouldn't have done, and then he lobbed it up there and it came to me."

The Coverages: They Are A-Changin'

Kingsbury has been around a while and has seen a lot.

That's why the Buckeyes were intent on mixing up coverages in an attempt to throw the Big 12 passing champion off his game.

"They played some odd defenses and utilized some down linemen as linebackers," Tech coach Mike Leach said.

The disguises fooled Kingsbury at

times and took him off his game — despite the fact he tossed for 341 yards and three touchdowns.

"It looked like we were playing a five-man front, but then we'd drop back into coverage," Wilhelm said. "I think that surprised him a little and took him out of rhythm."

When OSU wasn't dropping eight, they were bringing zone blitzes and stunting linemen up front.

"We went into the game feeling we were going to pressure the quarterback," Dantonio said. "We tried to get him off-balance and I think we did that."

Crowding the line with a linebacker or safety seemed to put Kingsbury's head on a swivel, and that affected some of his throws.

"We would show guys blitzing and those guys wouldn't come. It was someone else," Grant said. "We made him think a lot, and football is a game of reacting, not thinking."

Even though the Buckeyes forced just one turnover, they definitely dictated play and set the tempo with their

Continued On Page 14

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Archie's Freshman Mark Safe For Now

Continued From Page 13

pass rush.

"If you get someone out of their comfort zone they won't perform as well, and we got him out of his comfort zone," defensive end Simon Fraser said. "There were some nervous jitters in the first quarter but I settled down and was able to get into the flow of the game. Everyone up front was outstanding and we had a lot of chances to get into their backfield."

Kingsbury left Columbus with nothing but praise for the Buckeye defense.

"Those guys were good, those three guys up front," he said. "They were dropping eight into coverage and still getting a lot of pressure on me."

Tech generally counteracts the pass rush with unorthodox line splits. The offensive linemen will stand two to three feet apart to create passing lanes for Kingsbury, and while it's good in concept, it doesn't always work if the team across from you has bigger, stronger players.

No one on the Red Raiders line was able to stop defensive end Will Smith, who finished the day with four tackles, all for lost yardage.

"When they give you offensive line splits like that you have to take them," Dantonio said. "Whether it's with a linebacker or safety, you cannot allow them to split you out like that and rush the edge. We dropped people and brought some of the linemen under. We lost contain at times but Kingsbury got flushed out and we felt if we could get him going to his left he wouldn't be as effective."

Grinding It Out

Early in the second half, the Buckeyes — and specifically freshman tailback Maurice Claret — ruined any chance at suspense for the ABC broadcast.

Taking the field with the same momentum gained in the first 30 minutes, the Buckeyes opened up a 28-7 lead on a 45-yard scamper by Claret. There wasn't any mystery as to what was going on: Tech could not stop the run and the Buckeyes had no intention of doing much else.

As Claret racked up 175 yards in the first three quarters and OSU's lead swelled to 38-7, thoughts shifted to the idea of Claret taking a shot at Archie Griffin's freshman single-game rushing record of 239 yards. Claret, however, took just one fourth-quarter handoff before giving way to tailbacks Maurice Hall and Lydell Ross, who also enjoyed productive afternoons.

"I can't control that," Claret said. "The coach controls it. I'm just happy everybody got in there."

So were Ross and Hall. Ross found the end zone twice on short touchdown runs in the first half. He finished with 40 yards on 16 carries. Hall took 13 handoffs and amassed 74 yards including one run of 27 yards. He averaged 5.7 yards per carry even though OSU's offensive mission was clear most of the time he was on the field.

"It's fun to come in there and help

put the game away like that," said Hall, a speedy 5-10, 190-pound sophomore not known for pounding into defenses.

It's also enjoyable for the offensive line, especially an Ohio State quintet that was nothing short of maligned throughout fall camp.

Among those feeling his oats was right tackle Shane Olivea.

"We knew after the second touchdown we had this game," he said. "We were going to run the ball and they couldn't stop us. They were soft."

With the Claret train running downhill, the line in a physical mood and the scoreboard more than in his favor, head coach Jim Tressel ordered his offense to grind out the win. In fact, 80 percent (32 of 40) of the play calls in the second half were runs.

"When you get on a roll with something you go to it until the well runs dry," center Alex Stepanovich said. "We came out, we did some throwing. The run was established, obviously, and so was the pass, and the run was just working for us. We were excited to be able to run the ball as we did."

On the afternoon, the Scarlet and Gary racked up 317 yards on the ground and averaged 5.6 per rush. That's a testament as much as anything to the offensive line, said fullback Brandon Schnittker, one of the line's top defenders all fall.

"Like I've said before, I'm confident in our offensive line," Schnittker said. "I think it showed today. What a great job they did. They're blowing people off the ball, they're making the right calls against defenses that we've seen and it made it real easy for the fullbacks to get the one block we're going to get and then for the tailbacks to be athletic and make plays like they're supposed to."

"I can't say enough about the performance of the offensive line and the way they played physical today."

About the only people in Ohio Stadium who didn't seem too impressed were the Red Raiders, who repeatedly told reporters afterward that OSU's rushing success was merely due to "missed assignments."

"We had too many mental mistakes," Tech linebacker Mike Smith said. "Those long runs they had for touchdowns were all package mistakes. Two times it was the wrong call and the other time we didn't fill that gap. You can't have that."

"It was tough to hear out there. That's just stuff we need to take care of. We didn't stop them when we needed to."

Captain Craig

One reason for OSU's success was the early accuracy and constant poise shown by junior quarterback Craig Krenzel. Even with a short field to start OSU's first drive, Tressel and offensive coordinator Jim Bollman called on Krenzel twice as the Buckeyes grabbed a quick 7-0 lead. He converted second-and-10 and third-and-8 on the drive with strikes to split end Michael Jenkins and Claret.

When OSU got the ball back on its



JEFF BREHM

EYE ON THE BALL — A pass is within the grasp of Ohio State split end Michael Jenkins (12), but Texas Tech cornerback Ricky Sailor is right there with him.

own 4, Krenzel converted a third down with a nifty 23-yard run and completed his fourth pass attempt with a 9-yard connection with Hall before Claret ignited his outstanding day with a 59-yard TD blast.

"We've got some playmakers, as you all saw today," Krenzel said. "It gives me the opportunity to be relaxed, get the ball to those guys and watch them make some plays."

Krenzel was asked to throw just 14 times all day, but he completed 11 for 118 yards, hit five different receivers and never even flirted with disaster. He also showed early in his second-ever collegiate start that he wasn't going to succumb to nervousness — or anything else, for that matter.

"He's never been one to panic and he's always had a cool head," Olivea said. "Even when he gets hit, he's always encouraging. To me he's never been someone who buckles under pressure. He's always been ready for anything and he's a good leader. To me, nothing rattles the kid."

Krenzel served as the captain of the offense for the Texas Tech game and, to ask his teammates, he lived up to that moniker.

"He's not one of those guys who's going to be real boisterous, but you can tell he's got that kind of confidence to him," Stepanovich said. "He's just a great natural leader. He has a good way of telling you to do things. He gets on your butt the right way."

Added Hall, "Craig's a leader on the field and off the field. Craig, he's just a good guy and he's ready to play every time. We just really look up to Craig and whatever he has to say, we listen."

When asked if being named captain for the game helped him to focus, Krenzel said, "Not really. It was a tremendous honor. I would love to have the opportunity to do it game-in and game-out for the season, but it's not going to change the way I address each game and how I prepare and how ready I am to play."

Where's The Fullback?

For months now the Buckeyes had been dealing with off-season questions about the offense, including the back-

field. Fullback certainly was not immune with no one on the roster appearing to be capable of picking up where Jamar Martin left off.

The position came more into focus at the start of fall camp when the projected starter, Branden Joe, was cited for drunken driving and suspended from the team. Near the conclusion of pre-season camp another bombshell came down — Jesse Kline, who had worked his way into the starting fullback role, suddenly quit the team.

All this seemed to at least bode well for Schnittker, a 6-1, 250-pound red-shirt freshman. But when OSU took the field for the first offensive series of the season, Schnittker, too, was on the sideline.

Instead, the coaches decided to come out with Ryan Hamby as an H-back in a two-tight end set along with Ben Hartsock. The play seemed to help confuse the Red Raider defense, especially when Hamby went in motion and either went into a pass pattern or got a moving start to block for running plays.

"Hey, that's our game plan," Schnittker said. "We set up our game plan week by week, and with the defenses they had we knew going in we were going to try to throw the ball on them because they didn't expect us to do that, and then when it came down to it and we wanted to run the ball we came in and did a great job."

"So I wasn't disappointed. I was expecting that and everybody's got a role on the team. If I sit and pout about not being in the first play, then when I do get in my mind is not going to be right to do the job. I was just waiting for my chance to get in and make the play."

Schnittker said the tactic was the first of many wrinkles the offense would like to utilize this season.

"We're trying to mix it up," he said. "The defenses are so used to Ohio State being one tight end, two receivers, two backs and just pound it up the middle. We like to give them different looks to just keep them on their toes. I think we succeeded with that because we have a lot of guys who can do different things. Last year Jamar did all the blocking. This year we've got fullbacks and tight ends mixing in."

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 45, Texas Tech 21

OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel on whether he considered it a showdown between him and Texas Tech quarterback Kliff Kingsbury: "The most important stat when you look at a quarterback is the win-loss record. That will be the same throughout the season. I have to play well and make good decisions and not turn the ball over. I know there will be some games down the line where we will be called upon to make some plays in the passing game. We need to be ready to respond."

Tech coach Mike Leach on the play of Kingsbury: "He did some good things, but there is plenty of improvement for him. We were inconsistent on protecting, we were inconsistent on catching them and he was inconsistent on throwing them on time."

Texas Tech wide receiver Carlos Francis said OSU's two red zone stops played a big role in his team's defeat: "That was almost a 28-point turnaround. That hurts real bad. That hurts on PlayStation and it hurts in real life."

Tech's Kingsbury on OSU's fourth-down goal-line stop of Foy Munlin in the second quarter: "We had a chance down there at fourth-and-1 to make it 21-14 going in at halftime and we didn't get it. Things just kind of snowballed from there."

OSU safety Donnie Nickey said the Buckeyes deserve credit for turning the Red Raiders away on that series: "That just shows our heart and determination, not letting them score and letting them have easy points. In the past, they might have scored. That just shows our toughness."



JEFF BREHM

TURNING POINT — OSU linebacker Matt Wilhelm (35) emerges from the scrum after helping stonewall Texas Tech's Foy Munlin on fourth-and-goal at the 1-yard line with 2:45 left in the second quarter to preserve a 21-7 OSU lead.

OSU offensive guard Mike Stafford on how the line came together: "You just have to be confident in yourself and be confident in the guy next to you. The more confidence you have, the better you will jell and work together."

Krenzel on dumping passes to the running backs and tight ends after six of his 11 completions went to players at those positions: "That's just given to us by the defense. We

don't run any plays that are designed solely to get the balls to the tight ends or the backs. It's all about reading your progressions. We have wide-outs out on every play. Sometimes, pressure forces you to drop it off to the backs."

OSU offensive coordinator Jim Bollman said it helps to occasionally break a long run: "It's nice. Whenever you have a back that you can get through the line and he has the threat of going the distance, boy, that's really a blessing. That's part of the thing that makes those guys pretty good is they have good speed."

Stafford said many even in the OSU camp believed the Buckeyes would have to throw the ball to beat Texas Tech: "It's amazing how the game plans change. We came in thinking we would throw the ball a lot and we ended up running for a lot of yards."

Texas Tech linebacker Mike Smith sized up the Ohio State offensive line: "They were a good offensive line. They weren't the best we've ever faced. They were physical, but that's nothing we haven't seen before."

OSU offensive guard Shane Olivea had the last word on pregame talk from the Red Raiders: "They just didn't have anybody to back it up. They talked all that junk and trash-talked and they just got slapped in the mouth. We slapped them again, we kicked them down. They can just go back to Texas and keep on talking like that and let someone rush for 320 yards (actually 317) again."

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