

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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(No) Thanks For The Memories

To the best of my memory, I have never willfully criticized players in this column. It very rarely serves any purpose to find fault with a kid who is trying his best but somehow comes up short.

The people who berated Eddie George for his fumbles against Illinois are the same ones who cheered for him when he scored three touchdowns against Syracuse. Likewise, the ones who bad-mouthed Jeff Cothran for the Citrus Bowl fumble or are critical of Kirk Herbstreit for throwing poorly against Georgia are the same ones who marveled at Cothran's blocking and Herbstreit's leadership all season long.

Those guys are all classy individuals on a team that has a lot of classy guys.

Steve Tovar has a lot of class. He has spoken his mind about many topics, has been eloquent about his feelings about choosing Ohio State over Michigan, and has been gracious both in victory and defeat. He also honored his commitment to play four seasons for the Buckeyes and, in so doing, is on time to graduate.

Tim Williams has a lot of class. After missing a potential game-winning field goal against Illinois, he faced questions from reporters for several minutes despite the fact he seemed to be on the brink of tears. That was likely the worst time in Williams' young life, but he stood there like a man and answered every question put to him.

There are those on the team, however, who do not measure up to their teammates. Some may have all the talent in the world, but simply do not measure up on the character issue.

There are those players who would lead you to believe one thing when, in reality, they represent something else entirely. That, ladies and gentlemen, is being hypocritical.

Webster's defines a hypocrite as "a person who pretends to be what he is not." For me, that pretty well sums up the tumultuous three-year ride we have had with Robert Smith.

As a high school senior, he always seemed very gracious during the difficult recruiting process. He remained that way throughout his freshman season while he was setting records and earning awards.

Then something seemed to change Smith. He left the team just before the 1991 season began under circumstances that remain a bit cloudy to this day. I continue to defend his decision to leave. If he truly thought that he was being forced to decide between academics and athletics, he had every right to do what he did. Every athlete at every school in America has that same right.

What I do not defend is the way he went about leaving the team. He trashed everything and everyone in sight, laying the Ohio State program to waste in nearly every major newspaper in the country.

Then he visited Southern Cal and Stanford last winter before deciding he'd come back to the Buckeyes. No problem there. Any team would welcome a player of his caliber.

And Smith came back, and although he didn't equal the numbers he had as a freshman, he appeared to play at a different level. He gained the tough yards, he played hurt, and he led by example.

Unfortunately, he continued to be enamored of the sound of his own voice. He granted interviews to many publica-

Editor's Notebook with Mark Rea

talk to several reporters who covered the Buckeyes on a day-to-day basis.

Smith once refused to talk to a reporter because that reporter's brother, who worked in a different medium, had dared to criticize him. When he did talk, he was either pontificating on the Ohio State tradition or comparing himself favorably to a pair of running backs who finished second and third in the Heisman Trophy balloting.

After the next-to-last game of the regular season, played at Indiana, Smith entered a packed press tent, then quickly exited, telling a member of the OSU sports information department he would talk to only two reporters. One of those two reporters gently but firmly told Smith he could not ignore the rest of the media that day.

Then he decided to talk to the rest of the reporters — with the notable exception of yours truly. The previous week, I had written a column which — I thought — praised Smith for being a free thinker and one who would stand beside his comments despite the fact some of what he said was unpopular with the masses.

Whether or not he took umbrage with something I wrote in that column, or whether he disliked our letters to the editor critical of him or the OSU program, I still do not know. Through several third parties, I asked what was bothering Smith about *BSB*. I never got an answer and I don't expect to get one now.

It bothers me not in the least that Smith refused to talk to me. There are more than 100 other players on the Ohio State football team who make for good stories.

What bothers me is that Smith made himself out to be something of a champion for the college athlete against the nasty establishment that uses up players to make money, then throws them away like yesterday's garbage when their eligibility is gone. Now he's using that establishment to further himself by leaving school early to enter the NFL draft.

Once again, I have no problem with that. No one has ever questioned the fact that Smith is an exceptionally gifted football player. He will probably become an excellent professional player. And he should not be prevented from starting his professional career whenever he chooses.

But just as the way he left Ohio State the first time leaves a bad taste, this time leaves an equally sour taste. Here is a guy who repeatedly said how much an education meant to him — and even left football for a year to concentrate on that education — and now he has decided to shuck that schooling for a while to pursue a professional sports career.

Ohio State football was here long before Robert Smith came on the scene, and I suspect the Buckeyes will be playing football long after Smith's career is over.

It was a pleasure to watch Smith perform for two seasons, and the impact he had on the OSU program on the playing field will continue to live on in the record books.

Hopefully, though, the lifespan of the impact he had on the program off the field will not be nearly as long.

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*Buckeyes Set Record With Fifth Straight Season-Ending Defeat***Bowl Loss Has No Effect On Cooper's Status**

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

As Ohio State president Gordon Gee stood in the press box shaking hands with members of the media covering the Florida Citrus Bowl, there was something familiar about him.

The smile was back.

The usually affable Gee had turned grim during the last few days of the 1992 football season as rumors circulated that he would have to dismiss head coach John Cooper if the Buckeyes did not beat Michigan and win their bowl game.

But in the wake of OSU's 13-13 tie with Michigan and a favorable review of Cooper by athletic director Jim Jones, Gee could return to his smiling self, even though the Buckeyes dropped a 21-14 decision to Georgia in the Citrus Bowl.

"That's all behind us," Gee told reporters. "John Cooper is our coach, he will remain our coach, and we won't say we'll evaluate him any more."

And had the Buckeyes been soundly defeated by the Bulldogs?

"If we had gotten beat by two or three touchdowns," Gee said, "we would have gotten beat by two or three touchdowns."

Cooper signed a new four-year contract in July that runs through the 1995 season. He will return to Ohio State for a sixth year as head coach next season, making him only the fifth man in history to last that long with the Buckeyes.

Woody Hayes coached for 28 seasons, followed by John Wilce with 16, Earle Bruce with nine and Francis Schmidt with seven.

THE BUCKEYES set a dubious school record with the loss to Georgia. It marked the fifth straight season in which they had finished the year with a loss, the first time that has ever happened in school history.

The last time Ohio State won a season finale was in 1987, when the Buck-



Ohio State tailback Robert Smith (26) rambles through a gaping hole in the Georgia defense for his second touchdown of the Citrus Bowl, a five-yard scamper that tied the game 14-14 in the third quarter. Smith rushed for a team-high 112 yards, caught two passes for 49 yards and scored two touchdowns for the Buckeyes, but it wasn't enough as Georgia prevailed by a 21-14 score.

eyes upset Michigan 23-20 in Bruce's final game as head coach. The Buckeyes finished 6-4-1 that year and did not go to a bowl.

The bowl loss also ran the team's

postseason losing streak to four. The Buckeyes haven't won a bowl game since beating Texas A&M 28-12 in the Cotton Bowl following the 1986 season.

The loss in the Citrus Bowl dropped Ohio State's overall bowl record to 11-14 and equaled a school mark for four straight bowl losses. The Buckeyes' other four-game bowl drought occurred from 1978-80 with consecutive losses in the Sugar, Gator, Rose and Fiesta bowls to Alabama, Clemson, Southern Cal and Penn State, respectively.

Despite the end-of-the-season slide, the Buckeyes still achieved some things this season they never had under Cooper.

The 8-3-1 overall record was the best in the coach's five-year tenure. Likewise, the Buckeyes finished the season ranked among the country's top 25 teams for the first time in five seasons under Cooper.

OSU SENIOR middle linebacker Steve Tovar finished his career in style, registering a team-high nine tackles against the Bulldogs.

It was also his devastating sack of Georgia quarterback Eric Zeier in the fourth quarter that caused a fumble and led to the Buckeyes' getting a chance for a go-ahead score.

However, Tovar admitted to having some problems early in the game, trying to adjust to Georgia's overall team speed.

"I don't think you can simulate the kind of speed that they had," Tovar

said. "I think we tried to in practice, and we worked hard. But in certain situations, they just seemed to have too much speed."

Tovar especially singled out the play of Georgia running back Garrison Hearst, who gained 163 yards and scored two touchdowns to win game most valuable player honors.

After trying to chase Hearst all over the field, Tovar gave him some high praise. Despite playing against backs such as Anthony Thompson of Indiana, Tico Duckett of Michigan State, Nick Bell of Iowa, and Ricky Powers and Tyrone Wheatley of Michigan, Tovar said Hearst eclipsed them all.

"I've played against some good backs over the years," the OSU linebacker said. "He's probably most like Vaughn Dunbar of Indiana, except Hearst is a lot faster, a lot quicker and a better athlete. I think very highly of Vaughn Dunbar and what he did in the Big Ten, but definitely, over my career, I think Garrison may be the best I've ever faced."

FOR SOMEONE who had performed above and beyond the call of duty all season, it was tough to watch quarterback Kirk Herbstreit struggle through-out the game with his passing control.

Several times, Herbstreit was victimized by dropped balls. But there were many other times when he simply over-threw potential receivers by several feet.

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As a result, he completed only eight of 24 attempts for 110 yards, his worst completion percentage of the year and his second lowest yardage total.

"For some reason, I was pressing a little bit," Herbstreit explained. "I really couldn't find my groove. I was trying to loosen up on the sideline and I just couldn't do it. Also, mix that in with them doing a good job of covering our people downfield."

Herbstreit's longest completion of the day was his screen pass to tailback Robert Smith in the fourth quarter, a catch-and-run play that covered 45 yards. His next longest completion was a 17-yarder to senior split end Brian Stablein on the second play of the game.

Herbstreit's favorite target all season, Stablein was sidelined late in the second quarter by strained knee ligaments. He was coming over the middle on a third-down play and was hit hard by a Georgia defender, knocking him out of action for the rest of the day.

"That hurt us tremendously just because of the fact that Brian has been there all year for me," Herbstreit said. "Whenever it's third and five or 10, nine times out of 10, we're going to Stablein. To lose him early in the game really hurt us. I'd be lying if I said it didn't."

"The other guys stepped up and did a good job. Greg Beatty and Chris Sanders and Allen DeGraffenreid all did a good job for us. But it really hurt not to have Brian in there."

Herbstreit entered the game having completed 61.3 percent of his passes for the season, just ahead of Jim Karsatos, who set the school record in 1985 by completing 61.2 percent of his attempts.

However, Herbstreit's day against the Bulldogs dropped his season percentage to 58.7, still the third-best mark among OSU quarterbacks who have attempted 200 passes or more in a single season.

He also finished the year with 1,904 yards passing, the 10th-highest single-season total in school history.

DESPITE FAILING to click much of the day in the passing game, Ohio State still managed to total 289 total yards of offense. That includes 179 yards on the ground, about 15 more than the Bulldogs gave up on the average during the regular season.

Still, one member of the Buckeye offense thought his team should have gotten even more yardage.

"I think we were a little inconsistent on offense today," said OSU tailback Robert Smith. "Georgia is very quick up front defensively, and we had a little trouble. Not just the linemen, but a couple of times, (fullback) Jeff (Cothran) and I had a little trouble where exactly we should make a cut. It was an inconsistent day for us offensively."

Smith was on the receiving end of that 45-yard screen pass in the fourth quarter, easily Ohio State's most exciting offensive play of the game.

He got excellent blocks on the play from several teammates, including center Paul Long, tackle Alan Kline, tight end Cedric Saunders and Cothran, and appeared for a while like he might take the play all the way for a touchdown.

When asked to explain what happened on the play, Smith replied, "I caught the ball and ran and was tired afterward. I didn't think I was going to

go all the way because I was pretty well gone there at the end.

"I don't know what to say. It's a play that we work on every day, but it's never worked like that when I've been in there. I really can't say that play more than any other one got us going. I think every play you hope for a big gain. It was just another play."

It turned out to be Smith's last play from scrimmage in an Ohio State uniform. Three plays later, Herbstreit and Cothran mishandled an exchange and fumbled, a turnover the Bulldogs eventually turned into the game-winning touchdown.

Smith got his hands on the football

only once more in the game, returning a punt 12 yards in the final seconds. Three days after the game, he announced his intention to forgo his final two years of college eligibility to go pro.

His final college game was a good one — 112 yards and two touchdowns on 25 carries, two pass receptions for 49 yards and 28 more yards on kick returns.

He refused any comment on his future plans after the game, but when a reporter asked him if he would be satisfied with his performance if it was his last at OSU, Smith replied, "No. We lost, and I'm never satisfied with a loss."



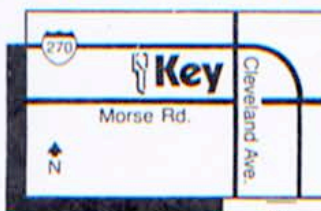
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Georgia Turns OSU Fumble Into Winning Touchdown Drive

Citrus Bowl Mistake Costs Buckeyes Dearly

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Although the team that makes the fewest mistakes usually wins, that cliché did not hold true for Ohio State in the Florida Citrus Bowl.

The Buckeyes really made only one mistake during their New Year's Day battle with Georgia, but that mistake wound up costing them the game.

OSU quarterback Kirk Herbstreit and fullback Jeff Cothran got their signals crossed on a simple trap play at the Bulldogs' 16-yard line, resulting in a fumble that Georgia defensive tackle Travis Jones recovered.

Eleven plays later, the Bulldogs got the game-winning touchdown on a one-yard plunge by backup running back Frank Harvey. The score made the difference in the game as the Buckeyes lost 21-14 to their Southeastern Conference rival.

It marked the fourth consecutive postseason defeat for Ohio State, leaving the Bucks with a final record of 8-3-1. The loss also marked a school-record fifth straight year in which the Buckeyes have finished the season with a loss.

The defeat wasted a superlative game by OSU sophomore tailback Robert Smith in what proved to be his final game as a Buckeye.

He rushed for 112 yards and two touchdowns and also grabbed two passes for 49 yards. It was his exciting



Georgia quarterback Eric Zeier (10) prepares to throw a pass despite the efforts of Ohio State defensive end Derrick Foster (94) to block it. Zeier completed 21 of 31 passes against the Buckeyes, helping his team to a 21-14 win in the Florida Citrus Bowl.

45-yard run with a screen pass from Herbstreit in the fourth quarter that helped the Buckeyes get so far into Georgia territory before they committed

the costly turnover.

Smith wound up the season with a team-high 819 yards rushing, remarkable in that he missed two whole games, and significant parts of two others. After the game, he refused to speculate on whether or not he had played his final game for Ohio State.

When asked after the game if he was coming back to Ohio State, Smith replied, "Yes. I think the plane leaves at 7:30. I'll be back there tonight."

After another reporter pressed the issue, Smith refused to answer, saying he would accept questions related only to the Citrus Bowl. Two days later, however, he announced that he will forgo his final two years of eligibility and jump to the NFL.

Smith measured up respectably to Georgia running back Garrison Hearst, who piled up 163 yards and two TDs in the game. Hearst was named the game's most valuable player, while Smith earned offensive player of the game honors for Ohio State.

While the game was billed as a

Hearst-Smith showdown, it came down surprisingly to a show of defenses. The Bulldogs allowed only 289 total yards to the Buckeyes, while OSU surrendered 444 total yards to Georgia.

But the Buckeyes also made some big plays, including recovering a pair of fumbles. Both were extremely important.

The first came with about seven minutes left in the first half. The Bulldogs were nursing a 7-0 lead but had just crossed into Ohio State territory. However, UGA quarterback Eric Zeier mishandled the snap from center, and Ohio State sophomore defensive end Randall Brown pounced on the loose ball.

The turnover not only stopped Georgia's momentum, but also gave some to the Buckeyes' offense, which had sputtered to that point. Eleven plays later, Smith waltzed into the end zone from one yard out to give OSU a 7-7 tie before the half ended.

Ohio State's second fumble recovery appeared at the time like it might set up a Buckeye victory. With the score tied 14-14, the Bulldogs were driving and had a first down at the OSU 28. On that first-down play, Zeier faded to pass and was bent almost in half by Ohio State senior linebacker Steve Tovar. Zeier coughed up the football and nose guard Greg Smith smothered it to gain possession for the Bucks.

OSU looked as though it would not cash in on the break, though, as two running plays netted only four total yards. Then, on third-and-six from the OSU 40, Herbstreit faded to pass and was chased from the pocket. He appeared to fade back deeper and deeper, but it turned out to be a ploy by the Buckeye quarterback.

Getting a block from offensive tackle Dave Monnot, Herbstreit dumped a pass in the right flat to Smith, who had circled around the charging Georgia rush. Getting a release block from center Paul Long and two excellent downfield blocks from tackle Alan Kline and Cothran, Smith set off on a broken-field run that brought the crowd to its feet.

He finally ran out of room along the Georgia sideline, but not before Ohio State had a first down at the Bulldogs' 15-yard line.

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from place-kicker Tim Williams, the Buckeyes would get no further. Backup tailback Butler By'not'e was thrown for a one-yard loss on first down, then Herbstreit threw an incompleting on second down. On third-and-11, Cothran and Herbstreit ran into one another, fumbled, and Georgia recovered, setting up the game-winning march.

"We had our opportunities," said OSU head coach John Cooper. "Robert made a nice run and gave us the ball down deep in their territory."

"Our thinking was to run a trap play. It's a play that you check at the line of scrimmage which way you're going to run it, and (Cothran) did not hear the audible and went the wrong way. From that point on, it was pretty much Georgia's game."

Herbstreit explained that the Georgia contingent among the crowd of 65,861 may have had something to do with Cothran's inability to hear.

"The Georgia fans were getting pretty loud at that point," he said. "I called the 'white' call, which is a trap to the left, and (Cothran) thought I had said 'red.' He went to the side he thought he'd heard it, and I went to the side where I'd called it. There was a collision and the ball just popped out."

Herbstreit said, in fairness to Cothran, "I usually call the color twice, but this time, I only called it once. I should have turned around to make sure he heard it."

Ohio State still had a couple of late chances to pull out a victory, but the Bucks could not muster any kind of sustained attack and finally lost the 21-14 decision.

"You have to give Ohio State a lot of credit for creating our mistakes," said Georgia head coach Ray Goff, who is now 2-1 in postseason action with the Bulldogs. "We never could quite put the knockout punch on them. We kept thinking we were close to doing that, but they would bounce back."

The Buckeyes were forced to play catch-up all day after Georgia took its opening possession 80 yards for a touchdown, getting a one-yard run from Hearst.

OSU tied it just before halftime on Smith's run, but the Dawgs used a big kickoff return by Andre Hastings to open the second half and took just 93 seconds to make it 14-7 on another touchdown run by Hearst.

The Buckeyes took advantage of a short punt by Georgia to tie the game again, getting a five-yard run from Smith with 3:31 left in the third period. That preceded the fourth-quarter turnovers by both teams that resulted in Harvey's game-winning TD.

Buckeye fans also witnessed the final game by Tovar. The senior linebacker did not disappoint the faithful, registering nine tackles, including two for loss, and causing one fumble.

It also marked the final game for Herbstreit, who had an uncharacteristically poor afternoon throwing the ball. Entering the game having connected on 61.3 percent of his attempts, the Buckeye QB completed only eight of 24 passes against Georgia for 110 yards.

Herbstreit's passing game was hampered by the loss of his favorite receiver, Brian Stablein, to a knee injury midway through the second quarter.

In addition to Hearst's big game, the Bulldogs also had excellent performances from Zeier and wide receiver Andre Hastings.

Zeier completed 21 of 31 passes for 242 yards. Meanwhile, Hastings was on the receiving end of eight of those

throws for 113 yards. Both the reception and yardage figures set new Georgia bowl records.

SCORING SUMMARY

UGA — RB Garrison Hearst runs one yard for a touchdown with 6:48 remaining in the first quarter. PK Todd Peterson adds PAT kick. Fourteen-play, 80-yard drive. Time elapsed 6:18. Key plays — Hearst runs for 14 yards on third-and-one to the UGA 40. Hearst runs for seven yards on third-and-one to the OSU 44. Hearst runs for four yards on third-and-three to the OSU 7. Georgia 7, Ohio State 0.

OSU — TB Robert Smith runs one yard for a touchdown with 1:17 remaining in the second quarter. PK Tim Williams adds PAT kick. Eleven-play, 54-yard drive. Time elapsed 5:35. Key plays — Drive set up when DE Randall Brown recovers fumble by QB Eric Zeier on OSU 46. QB Kirk Herbstreit throws high for receiver on third-and-six, but Georgia is called for offside penalty, then Smith runs for two yards on third-and-one to the UGA 29. TB Butler By'not'e runs for seven yards on second-and-four to the UGA 5. Ohio State 7, Georgia 7.

UGA — Hearst runs five yards for a touchdown with 13:27 remaining in the third quarter. Peterson adds PAT kick. Five-play, 45-yard drive. Time elapsed 1:33. Key plays — KR Andre Hastings returns second-half kickoff 49 yards to the OSU 45. Hearst runs for 34 yards on second-and-seven to the OSU 8. Georgia 14, Ohio State 7.

OSU — Smith runs five yards for a touchdown with 3:31 remaining in the third quarter. Williams adds PAT

kick. Eight-play, 33-yard drive. Time elapsed 3:41. Key plays — PR Walter Taylor returns punt 17 yards to the UGA 33. Herbstreit sneaks for two yards on fourth-and-one to the UGA 9. Ohio State 14, Georgia 14.

UGA — RB Frank Harvey runs one yard for a touchdown with 4:32 remaining in the fourth quarter. Peterson

adds PAT kick. Eleven-play, 80-yard drive. Time elapsed 4:06. Key plays — Drive set up when DT Travis Jones recovers OSU fumble at the UGA 20. Zeier throws for 21 yards to TE Shannon Mitchell on first-and-10 to the OSU 35. Hearst runs for eight yards on third-and-two to the OSU 5. Georgia 21, Ohio State 14.

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The View From 15th and High

By Frank L. Moskowitz, Publisher

Fans Concerned With State Of Program Have Legitimate Beef

Back in October, when veteran sportscaster Jimmy Crum was calling for John Cooper's scalp following Ohio State's two straight losses, I disagreed with Crum's timing. I think coaches need to be evaluated on their full season. After all, the Bucks could have come back and won out, beating Michigan and winning their bowl game. That would have been an acceptable season by virtually everyone's standards.

Well, the season's over now and it's time for evaluation. Of course, the Buckeyes fell short of winning out.

It would have all been so much easier if Ohio State had defeated Georgia in the Citrus Bowl. The tie with Michigan, while a solid performance by the Bucks, was really a swing game. If they had defeated the Bulldogs, fans would be talking about how the Buckeyes closed with strong performances against highly ranked Michigan and Georgia, performances to go along with their strong early season showing against Syracuse.

With the loss to Georgia, however, instead of remembering the fine performance against the Wolverines, many are left recalling that the Bucks under Cooper have yet to beat Michigan or win a bowl game.

And I think those fans concerned with the state of the Buckeye program have a legitimate beef. You have to begin to wonder, after five years under Cooper, if the team has reached the level they are going to reach with him at the helm. The records are starting to seem so similar — 8-4, 7-4-1, 8-4 and 8-3-1, following a 4-6-1 campaign in Cooper's first year. It's taken the Buckeyes five years to get back to within a half-game of the 9-3 level that used to be unacceptable at Ohio State.

I know the Buckeyes have improved. I think anyone who has watched them

has to concede that. Unfortunately, football teams are not measured in terms of improvement. They're measured in terms of wins and losses. And somehow, the Bucks keep falling slightly short on that measuring stick, at least by Ohio State standards (or what used to be Ohio State standards).

At some point, the head coach has to be held accountable.

Let me make an analogy with another sport. If a boxer dominates a fight for 11 rounds, I mean he just does everything right, but is knocked out in the 12th round, are people going to remember that he fought a great fight? No. They'll remember that he lost. That's the reality of big-time sports.

And I'm a little fed up with this "parity" excuse. The word parity is for losers. Parity hasn't bothered Michigan, the team closest to Ohio State in the Big Ten in terms of opportunity and tradition and a team that has finished in the national top 10 every year that Cooper has been at OSU.

In that same time frame, Iowa has had a 10-1-1 season, Illinois has posted a 10-2 campaign, and Michigan State has equaled OSU's best of 8-3-1, finishing ahead of the Buckeyes in the conference three of five years. Additionally, incoming Penn State has an 11-2 season to its credit. It's not unreasonable for Buckeye fans to expect a nine, 10 or 11-win season at some point.

As I seem to say at this time every year, Cooper can make all of these discussions go away. All he has to do is lead the Buckeyes to a big season next year. Six years is more than enough time for a coach to show his stuff. If the Bucks are in that eight-win range again, throw me in with Jimmy Crum.

BSB LETTER writer Charles Toft of Columbus makes an interesting point in this issue, noting that traditional powers OSU and USC have gone dif-

ferent routes, with the Buckeyes retaining Cooper and the Trojans forcing Larry Smith out. Toft wonders which team will return to the Rose Bowl first.

For the record, Southern Cal last appeared in the Rose Bowl following the 1989 season, while the Buckeyes last traveled to Pasadena following the 1984 campaign.

I FEEL bad for Jeff Cothran. The OSU fullback will probably be most remembered for helping cause the fumble that contributed to the OSU loss to Georgia.

That's too bad because I believe, after Kirk Herbstreit, Cothran was the most valuable player on the offense, if not the team.

GOOD RIDDANCE to Robert Smith. I know Robert is a super talent, but I don't believe he's the type of player who you build championship teams around. His mouth and his ego are too big and too much of a distraction.

Time and time again, Smith seemed to act like he was bigger than the Ohio State football program. Two times now, he's quit on his teammates, the second departure seeming to contradict the reasons for his first departure. I don't think Robert is nearly as smart and worldly-wise as he and certain reporters seem to think he is. Maybe the NFL will teach him a little humility.

WITH FOOTBALL out of the way, perhaps basketball can finally take the spotlight it deserves.

The Buckeyes have performed about as you would expect a young but talented team to perform. The ambush at West Virginia or the loss to powerful North Carolina were not entirely unexpected. Nor was it that surprising that the Buckeyes came back from Oregon with a tourney title.

And a sluggish performance by the Bucks against lowly Penn State fol-

lowed by a huge upset of Iowa may be the type of inconsistent performance Buckeye fans should prepare for while this team jells.

The big surprises for me this season have probably been Tom Brandewie and Derek Anderson. True, Brandewie has fallen from the starting lineup, but even off the bench, his play has been more than I expected. I'm sure Randy Ayers was glad to have the senior's nine rebounds against Oregon State or his six rebounds and physical play with Acie Earl in the upset of Iowa.

Anderson, a late signee, seemed to be lost among all those "Mr. Basketballs" when he arrived with the other freshmen. But even with an injured hand, the Louisville native seemed to be the first of the freshmen to gain Ayers' confidence.

Another freshman, Greg Simpson, was a bit of an early disappointment, but, with a 23-point performance against the Hawkeyes, he seems to be coming on strong. Ayers admitted before Simpson arrived that the guard from Lima would have to curtail the free-wheeling shooting style he was allowed in high school. I think, at first, Simpson was tentative with his shot, but as he understands more and more when he should be shooting, he should only get better.

My biggest disappointments have probably been Charles Macon and Jimmy Ratliff. Maybe my expectations for Macon were a little high as he came to OSU with the Indiana "Mr. Basketball" award and that great nickname of "Killer." I think Macon was hurt by the shorter preseason practice and should contribute more as the season progresses.

Ratliff was the surprise of the competitive Worthington Summer League and people were expecting big things from him this season. He earned a starting spot but has since lost it and seems to be moving farther down the bench. If Ratliff gets his confidence back, he may be heard from yet this season.

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Please note that this is the first 1993 issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin. We will be on the weekly schedule for 10 straight issues and then publish every other week for four issues, before going monthly in June, July and August. BSB is published 30 times a year.

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