

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

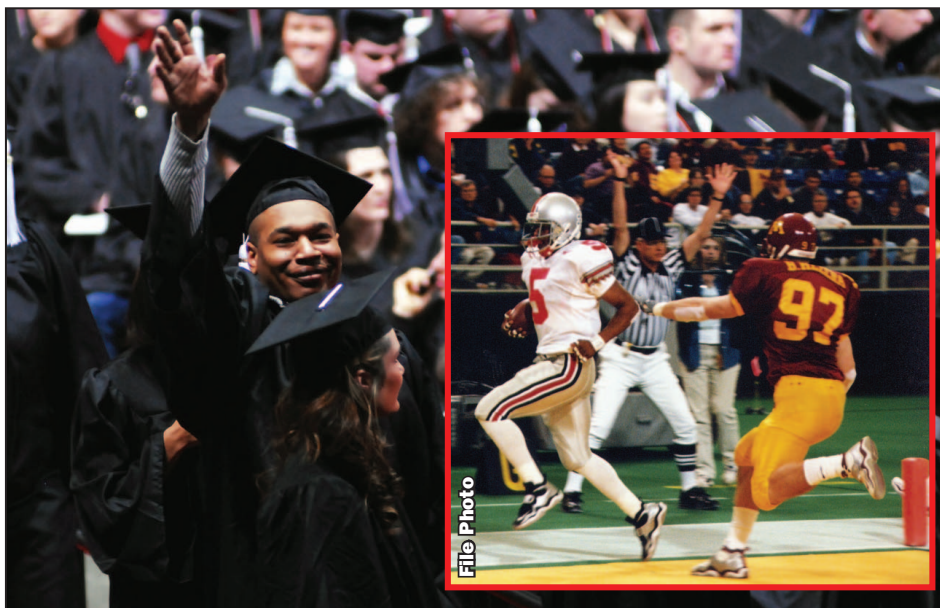
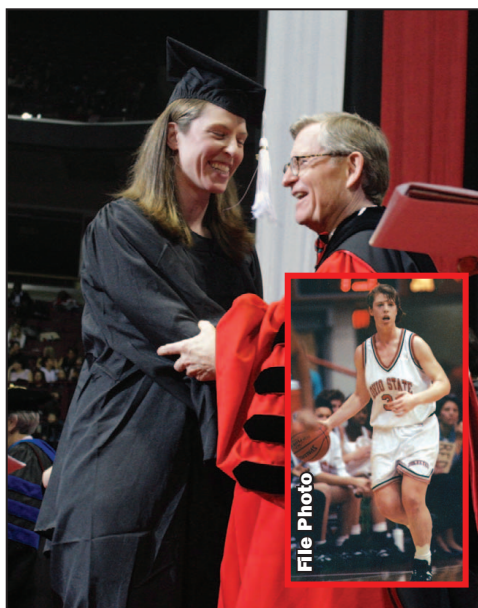
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Vol. 28, No. 26

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

June 2009



GRADUATION PHOTOS COURTESY OF OSU ATHLETICS & MICHAEL WILEY

WE MADE IT! – Former Ohio State women's basketball star Katie Smith (above left with university president Gordon Gee) and football star Michael Wiley (right) are recent success stories as participants in the Degree Completion Program. Smith, Wiley and many other former OSU athletes have returned under the program to complete their undergraduate studies and receive their degrees.

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

For the past 16 years of her life, Katie Smith has been a walking ambassador for Ohio State.

She burst onto the scene as a freshman in 1993, leading the Buckeye women's basketball team to a berth in the national title game. After ending her career as Ohio State's all-time leading scorer, she has become one of the most decorated professional basketball players in history, earning three Olympic gold medals and two WNBA titles.

There was just one thing missing from her résumé: an Ohio State degree.

"When people would say, 'Hey, when did you graduate?' I had to say, 'Well, I haven't,' " she told BSB. "I would have to go into this whole spiel."

Smith rectified that in the fall academic quarter of 2008, earning a degree in a personal study program after taking part in the Degree Completion Program, which is offered through the athletic department's Student-Athlete Support Services Office (SASSO).

Sponsored nationwide by the National Consortium for Academics in Sports, an organization of colleges and universities that have joined together for this cause, the Degree Completion Program at Ohio State has helped more than 100 former Buckeyes finish their undergraduate studies since Clark Kellogg became the first in 1996.

As a result, Ohio State has one of the more active Degree Completion Programs in college athletics. In January 2008, Ohio State was honored as one of the top two universities offering the program for the 2006-07 year, and the 2007-08 NCAS honor roll lists Ohio State at the top of the heap among all universities as far as degrees completed.

Though fellow Big Ten schools Wisconsin and Michigan State are also near the top of the nation, the program at Ohio State has been a leader at bringing back former athletes and making sure they have the tools necessary to earn their diplomas.

"It's a commitment by (athletic director) Gene Smith and the department of athletics and academic affairs to fund this," said John Macko, a SASSO academic counselor who works with those in the DCP. "When you see some of the athletes come back and get their diploma, it's kind of like this unfinished business. Once they get that diploma, it's something that nobody can take away from them."

"It just means so much. We get tickled to see the graduations, especially the ones that come back after so many years of work. It's just a tremendous feeling of pride."

Macko said that eight athletes are part of the program for the current spring quarter, down from 15 that took part in fall classes. Three – football

In This Issue Of BSB

- A profile of former Ohio State receiver Thad Jemison, who took advantage of the university's Degree Completion Program to earn his diploma more than 25 years after his last game with the Buckeyes (Page 7)
- Up-to-date coverage of Ohio State's efforts for the 2009-10 football recruiting season, including a spate of new offers (Pages 8-10)
- A profile on running back prospect Carlos Hyde of Naples, Fla. (Page 11)
- A wrap-up of Big Ten spring football including results, quotes and notes from each of the other 10 conference teams (Pages 12-15)
- The latest news regarding the Ohio State men's basketball team (Pages 16-17)
- Two new commitments for the women's basketball squad (Page 18)
- A recap of Ohio State's annual Scholar-Athlete Recognition Dinner (Pages 20-21)
- Summaries of the OSU baseball team's regular-season conference championship and drive to the NCAA tournament (Pages 22-24)
- Plus reports on other Ohio State sports as well as all of BSB's regular briefs, columns and features

Continued On Page 6

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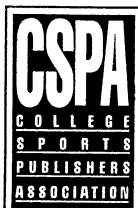
No. 1	Sept. 6	No. 15	Jan. 24
No. 2	Sept. 13	No. 16	Jan. 31
No. 3	Sept. 20	No. 17	Feb. 7
No. 4	Sept. 27	No. 18	Feb. 14
No. 5	Oct. 4	No. 19	Feb. 21
No. 6	Oct. 11	No. 20	Feb. 28
No. 7	Oct. 18	No. 21	March 7
No. 8	Oct. 25	No. 22	March 21
No. 9	Nov. 8	No. 23	April 4
No. 10	Nov. 15	No. 24	April 18
No. 11	Nov. 22	No. 25	May 2
No. 12	Nov. 29	No. 26	June
No. 13	December	No. 27	July
No. 14	Jan. 17	No. 28	August

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OPINION

Shortsighted Rules Killing College Basketball

Thanks to the greed of the National Basketball Association, not to mention the National Collegiate Athletic Association's usual shortsightedness, college basketball as we have known it will soon be on life support.

With its insatiable thirst for new, young talent, the NBA has systematically cannibalized what used to be a pretty good farm system. Until the early 1970s, college players were required to wait until their class graduated before they were eligible to play in the league.

That rule was challenged by University of Detroit sophomore Spencer Haywood, whose antitrust suit against the NBA was taken all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which voted 7-2 in favor of Haywood before the league decided to agree to a settlement.

Haywood's case was unique in that part of his argument for going pro so early was financial hardship. The NBA wrapped itself in that flag for a while, welcoming any player who wished to better his family or himself financially. By 1976, everyone stopped pretending and the hardship "requirement" was lifted and any graduated high school player was eligible for the NBA draft.

For that reason, we never got to see Kobe Bryant play for Duke, Kevin Garnett play for North Carolina or LeBron James play for Ohio State.

Then in 2005, when the NBA and the players association were negotiating a new bargaining agreement, the eligibility rules were tweaked again and the league instituted a minimum age limit of 19 for its players. That forced the majority of high school players – such as Greg Oden and Mike Conley Jr. – to enroll at colleges and play for at least one season until being eligible to join the NBA.

Coincidentally in 2005, the NCAA began to employ the Academic Progress Rate, which it claims is a system that measures the success or failure of collegiate athletic teams in moving student-athletes toward graduation. Would anyone care to explain how a straight-faced NCAA can use this system knowing full well that many elite basketball players are going to play one season and then leave school?

And just when you thought things couldn't possibly get worse, they did.

Sonny Vaccaro, the former sports marketing executive who ran various all-star summer camps while shilling for Nike then Adidas and finally Reebok, has decided his new venture in life will be counseling young players on the benefits of dropping out of high school for the training grounds of pro basketball in Europe.

Vaccaro's first coup in his new revolution is Jeremy Tyler, a 6-11 prospect who started his high school career in suburban San Diego before transferring to San Diego High for his junior season last year. Meanwhile, he verbally committed to Louisville. Now, thanks in part to Vaccaro's sage wisdom, Tyler has announced his intention to skip his senior year of high school and play pro basketball in Europe until he's eligible to play in the NBA.

What are the opinions of NBA commissioner David Stern, NBA Players Association president Derek Fisher or NCAA executive director Myles Brand on Tyler's announcement? Silence.

Perhaps a college education isn't a requirement for a successful life. There are plenty of people who have done quite nicely without one. But a high school diploma? How much can a person truly expect to achieve without one of those?

Such lack of opinion or any sort of guidance on the part of the NBA or NCAA is borderline criminal especially in light of a

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK with Mark Rea

recent study that reported 60 percent of former NBA players go broke within five years of retirement.

Fun With Numbers

Did you know that every recent BCS national champion has made it a point to utilize the tight end in its passing attack?

Every national champion since 2004 has boasted a tight end who totaled 30 receptions or more, a list topped by Texas tight end David Thomas, who had a team-leading 50 catches for 613 yards and five touchdowns during the Longhorns' title run in 2005.

USC employed a pair of lethal pass catchers in 2004, and the duo of Dominique Byrd and Alex Holmes combined for 61 receptions, 628 yards and three scores. One year after Thomas starred for the Longhorns, Florida used Cornelius Ingram (30 catches, 380 yards, one TD) to help win the 2006 championship. In 2007, LSU unleashed Richard Dickson on unsuspecting defenses, and the 6-3, 246-pounder responded with 32 catches for 375 yards and five touchdowns – two of them in the title game against Ohio State. And last season, Florida tight end Aaron Hernandez contributed 34 catches for 381 yards and five touchdowns to the Gators' second title in three years.

What's my point? Only that it seems like a long time since the Buckeyes used the tight end as much more than an extra offensive lineman. Last year, Rory Nicol was the leading OSU receiver among tight ends with six catches for 60 yards. He finished his career with 38 catches for 329 yards and six TDs.

The last time any Ohio State tight end caught as many as 30 balls in a single season was 2003 when Ben Hartsock had 33 receptions for 290 yards and two touchdowns. (FYI: Hartsock had 17 catches for 137 yards and two TDs during the 2002 national title season.)

Hartsock's output in 2003 still represents the only time during the Jim Tressler era that an OSU tight end has caught more than 18 passes in a season. If that trend is ever going to change, this could be the year.

The Buckeyes head into the 2009 season with a young and inexperienced receiving corps, so it's only natural to believe big targets such as Jake Ballard (6-6, 256), Nic DiLillo (6-5, 237) and Jake Stoneburner (6-5, 230) are in for more than just blocking duty this fall.

And Finally

• Ohio State set a new NCAA record April 25 with a spring-game crowd of 95,722. Alabama, which held the old mark at 92,138 set in 2007, finished second this year with 84,000 in attendance at its spring game. Nebraska was third at 77,670. On the other end of the spectrum was North Carolina, which drew only 2,000 to its spring game. In the Tar Heels' defense, the game was played March 28 – in the midst of the basketball team's run to the NCAA Tournament championship.

• To put Ohio State's record spring crowd into perspective, the average crowd for all of the spring football games at all of the Division I-A schools was just a little more than 13,000.

• A recent poll on CBSSports.com asked which team would win the 2009 Big Ten football championship. Ohio State was the runaway winner with 46 percent of the 3,296 votes cast. Penn State was second with 28 percent. Somewhat surprisingly, Michigan State was third – albeit a distant third with 6 percent.

• Forgive a little Ohio State bias here, but why did it take 22 years for Chris Spielman to make it to the College Football Hall of Fame and only 17 for Gino Torretta? Doesn't everyone know that Spielman is one of the most underrated linebackers ever to play the game while Torretta is quite possibly the weakest Heisman Trophy winner ever?

• The Big Ten will extend its football schedule past Thanksgiving beginning in 2010 but Ron Zook can't wait. Illinois has pushed this year's home game against Fresno State back two weeks – from Nov. 21 to Dec. 5. The rationale for the schedule stretching is to prevent Big Ten teams from going stale between the end of their regular seasons and bowl games. Of course, the Illini would probably be better served simply concentrating on qualifying for the postseason, something they have done only once over the past seven seasons.

• Just so you know, the Big Ten hasn't posted a winning record in the postseason since going 5-2 after the 2002 season. Since then, the conference has a 15-28 bowl record, including last year's dismal 1-6 showing.

• There is good news and bad news for the Big Ten if it wants to improve upon that postseason record (not to mention the national perception of being old-fashioned, slow and boring). The good news? The six top-rated quarterbacks from 2008 return this coming fall. The bad news? Four of those six ranked 31st or lower nationally in quarterback efficiency. Contrast that to the Big 12, which landed five QBs in the nation's top 10 last season. Maybe that's why the Big 12 has posted a winning bowl record in four of the past five seasons, going 21-17 during that stretch including 4-3 last year.

• California's Memorial Stadium in Berkeley is undergoing some temporary seismic improvements to guard against potential major earthquake damage. That's comforting news especially for Ohio State football fans. The Buckeyes are scheduled to visit Cal in 2013.

• You are no doubt aware that both former USC basketball star O.J. Mayo and former Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush have gotten their school in NCAA hot water for allegedly taking improper benefits. What you may not know is that the NCAA recently decided to combine the cases to streamline the investigation process.

That decision makes it much more likely that one or both of the programs could be forced to forfeit games and championships. In the case of USC football, that could include a pair of Pac-10 titles in 2004 and 2005. Don't think it means the Trojans would have to give up their 2004 national championship, though.

Because the NCAA doesn't stage a championship in Division I-A football, leaving that to the Bowl Championship Series, forfeits would only affect NCAA record books, conference championships and Pete Carroll's victory total. It would be up to the commissioners of the BCS to take away the national title, and no one believes that will happen.

That brings up a salient point initially raised by college football writer Dennis Dodd of CBSSports.com: Because a BCS title is essentially immune from NCAA sanctions, does that ratchet up the incentive to cheat to get one?

COVER STORY: NEVER TOO LATE TO GRADUATE

DCP Gives Buckeyes Chance To Return For Degree

Continued From Page 1

players Winfield Garnett, Rob Kelly and Nick Patterson – are set to graduate in mid-June, joining an illustrious list of former Buckeyes who have taken part.

Some of the names from past years to graduate include Smith and Kellogg, numerous football stars such as Butler By'not'e, Mike Nugent and Michael Wiley, and baseball player Christian Snaveley. Football stalwart Pepe Pearson is on track to finish soon, and current Columbus Blue Jacket R.J. Umberger has shown interest in taking part.

"We are blessed to have this program at Ohio State," football head coach Jim Tressel said. "It has made a difference for many."

Those who have been through it raved about the help the Degree Completion Program gave them in their efforts to become Ohio State graduates.

"The program was excellent," said football player Thad Jemison. "I've recommended to some of the guys I played with to look into coming back and finishing."

Spreading Word Is Key

Macko, who has been with the department of athletics for 25 years as an academic counselor, and fellow DCP and SASSO counselor Darin Meeker, who has more than 10 years of experience at OSU, have tried to bang the drum among the former athletes with whom they come in contact about the program.

In addition, Meeker said that individual SASSO counselors try to put the bug in the ears of athletes who are departing without having finished their schooling.

"When you have a student leaving for whatever reason – professional sports, personal circumstance, whatever it may be – who did not finish their degree, our counselors have those types of conversations and put together a plan to have them return to finish," he said.

When it comes to a sport like football, where athletes often leave early for professional reasons, a personal touch can make a huge difference. Many of the former gridiron Buckeyes contacted by BSB pointed to their

personal relationships with Macko and Meeker for bringing them back into the fold if they didn't already know about the opportunities provided by the Degree Completion Program.

"That plays a tremendous part because at an early age in your time at Ohio State you really start to develop a close relationship with those guys in that department," said former defensive end David Patterson, a history major who graduated in March.

Once the former student-athletes find out about the program, many of them like what they see. The DCP provides free tuition as well as tutoring and academic advising.

Stipulations include that the athlete is within 45 credit hours of graduating, has exhausted his or her athletic eligibility, was on a grant-in-aid at OSU and compiled at least a 2.00 cumulative grade-point average.

The prospective enrollees into the program then must complete an application and obtain an approved academic plan, all aspects that have been tightened over the years since the mid-1990s when Ohio State first started offering the program.

"It's formalized," Macko said. "We hold them to what they need to graduate. There are some parameters out there that we hold onto pretty tight."

Back In The Swing Of Things

Many of those who are part of the Degree Completion Program are returning after having left school early in order to pursue a professional career, though the time off ranges from as little as a few years – as it was for football player Marcus Green – to the more than a decade it took for Smith and Jemison.

No matter how much time had elapsed since they left OSU in the first place, all said that finishing up the degree was something they had to do.

"I believe that when you start something you should finish it," Patterson said. "Even though I was playing professional football, I realized that my education would be the most important thing to help me get further in life."

Timing is an essential element of the process. Garnett was able to find the time to return

to Ohio State for his three quarters necessary when the Arena Football League, in which he had played since 2004, canceled its season because of financial difficulties. Smith was able to find 10 weeks in her schedule in fall to finish up after fitting in some schooling over the past decade of trotting the globe to play basketball.

For some, it's still not that simple. Tom Askey played hockey at OSU from 1993-96 before embarking on a pro career that ended in early 2008. He settled in Kalamazoo, Mich., but needed to finish his degree in sociology, so he spent two quarters driving the five hours back and forth, spending weekdays in Columbus and weekends in Michigan.

"That was the most difficult part," said Askey, who graduated in March. "That's a lot of travel, a lot of time away from the wife and kids, but we figured it was going to be a short period of time in the larger scheme of things, so it was important that I get my degree finished."

Macko said that 90 percent of the athletes who do come back find that they are more serious about their schoolwork than the first time around.

"You're truly a grown man, not a kid anymore," said Garnett, who is finishing a degree in education. "It's a different atmosphere. You're just more focused on finishing. You don't want to waste time. I'm ready to get this degree and move on."

To that end, Patterson crammed 45 credit hours – the typical amount an Ohio State student will take over three quarters – into two quarters, necessitating he take 25 hours during one of his terms.

Macko said that the SASSO office will try to work with the athletes when it comes to time management. One major reason he advises those in the DCP – especially those who have been away from school for a while – to not bite off more than they can chew is the fact that most are left with upper-level classes when they resume their studies.

"We want them to be successful, not crashing and burning, especially with trying to balance all of the things that they're trying to balance," Macko said.

Lending A Helping Hand

One of the stipulations of the program, as mandated by the NCAS, is that athletes taking part must complete community service – ranging at OSU from 30 to 100 hours per quarter – in order to receive the free tuition.

For most athletes, that means completing work hours inside the department of athletics. Smith and Askey worked as general aides for their respective programs, while Green worked in the weight room at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center and Wiley and Askey were part of the study tables used by current student-athletes at the Younkin Success Center.

The close work with the current Buckeyes allowed those in the DCP to stay close to the programs for which they once played.

"It was fun," Smith said. "It's always been fun to go back and be a part of it and see the kids and learn who they are but also get some work done and be helpful."

Many are able to serve as mentors or sounding boards for current athletes. Wiley spent three years with the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL after leaving Ohio State following the 1999 season but saw his career come to an end because of a knee injury.

Having reached the level most of the current Buckeyes hope to attain, Wiley was able to bring a unique perspective into the team's facility.

"I let them know that everybody has their dreams, and the majority of people would like to go pro and it's something that's out there,

but education is something you always can fall back on," he said. "The other thing I tell kids is that I remember when I was a freshman and sophomore, I thought practicing football was tough. Now I told some of those kids that I am a father of two, married, have a full-time job and I'm going to school full time. Imagine trying to balance that rather than playing something you love."

Patterson was one who extended his work to outside of Ohio State, taking on a number of speaking engagements and staying active with Athletes in Action.

"It gives you a chance to be active in the community so while you're helping yourself you can help other people," he said.

In addition to manning the study tables at SASSO and volunteering with the hockey program, Askey earned service hours by helping out as a goaltending coach for the high schools in the Columbus suburb of Dublin.

"It was great," he said. "It's always good to help young people and help people develop on and off the ice."

For The Future, For Life

Wiley is one of the success stories of the DCP. He returned to Ohio State in 2006 and finished up in winter of 2008 with a degree in sociology. Since then he has stayed in the Columbus area working as a manager of a Kroger grocery store.

"I know when I first retired I was struggling," Wiley said. "I found a lot of stability when I graduated and then got a job within six months. Kroger is a great company and it's going to provide a lot of stability for me and my family. That probably wouldn't have been possible if I didn't get the degree."

Green, who graduated in March 2008 from the College of Education and Human Ecology, operates his own company and said his degree gives him credibility in his field.

A college diploma has obvious benefits to those entering the working world, but most also spoke of the feeling of personal accomplishment that comes along with completing such an important task.

"It's kind of like a rite of passage in my family," said Green, whose brother Justin will be a freshman football player at Illinois in the fall. "Of course I have a little brother too, so I wanted to set an example for him, let him know that getting a degree was important. It's not about how much money you make playing football and all that stuff."

"It sounds clichéd, but that degree is something that nobody can ever take away from you."

Smith isn't sure if she'll make her way to dental school or try to get into coaching when her WNBA career comes to a close. She also raised the possibility of trying to get involved with Ohio State in some capacity, and a degree should help in that regard.

"It's nice to put that on your resumé along with everything else that you've been doing," she said. "You persevere (to get it). It's not the normal route but you still find a way to get things done as you can. It's just nice to have that as I move forward in whatever I might do."

Whichever way she chooses to go, the diploma should help her in her career after basketball – and makes it easier when the topic of her years as a Buckeye comes up.

"It's nice to finally say I'm a graduate of The Ohio State University," she said. "It means a lot to finish it up and accomplish it."

BSB staff writer Marcus Hartman contributed to this story.

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OHIO STATE FLASHBACK

Jemison's Journey Led Him Back To Ohio State

By MARCUS HARTMAN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

For more than 20 years, it seemed Thad Jemison's final public appearance in any kind of Ohio State uniform would be in the Arizona desert in 1984, but a meeting with Jim Tressel and entrance into the athletic department's Degree Completion Program changed all that.

Instead, a smaller crowd was on hand and more conservative garb was appropriate when Jemison returned to an Ohio State stage in March.

Rather than donning a scarlet and gray Ohio State uniform, Jemison was clad in a black cap and gown for winter commencement, the culmination of his return to his alma mater to receive a degree in African-American studies more than 25 years after his last football game as a Buckeye.

There were not as many in attendance at St. John Arena on March 22 as there were at Sun Devil Stadium on Jan. 2 for the 1984 Fiesta Bowl, and certainly not as much attention was paid Jemison this time as when he hauled in the game-winning touchdown pass in the waning seconds of that game, but at least one important pair of eyes did find him at the right moment both times.

In '84, they belonged to quarterback Mike Tomczak, who found Jemison down the sideline for a touchdown that put the Buckeyes ahead for good at 27-23 with 39 seconds remaining.

In '09, the gaze came from Jemison's 15-year-old son, Traxon.

"As I walked across the stage I connected with my son, and you could see the joy that he had for me, so that was really important," Thad told BSB. "It was a good time. It really was."

And so culminated Jemison's second tour of academic duty at Ohio State, one Jemison said he enjoyed but was happy to have behind him.

"It was fun," he said. "I would say it was kind of easy because of my life experiences. I mean, I never had to speak Swahili (in everyday life), but my classes were related to basically my life. I saw it in those books and the readings. It was really easy to come back and get it done."

The main negatives were working third shift to accommodate his class schedule and living in Columbus, more than an hour away from his son, who remained in Cincinnati.

Jemison had no shortage of exposure to young people, though, be it in classes that included current Buckeyes Thaddeus Gibson and Doug Worthington or during tutoring sessions with Ohio State student-athletes at the Younkin Success Center to complete the community service requirements that are part of the program.

After spending nearly 20 years as an educational aide and coach at his high school alma mater, Cincinnati Princeton, working with young athletes was old hat for him.

He first entered the coaching profession as a means of staying in sports when he could not play anymore and then found the activity personally fulfilling.

"It fell into my lap and then I couldn't leave it," he said.

But eventually, he felt the urge for more. "I really think I outgrew high school," he said of coaching on the prep level. "It was time to move on."

The best way to do that was not immediately apparent, but a nudge from Tressel, Jemison's position coach when he was a

senior split end at Ohio State in 1983, helped him get moving in that direction.

Although Tressel was just Jemison's coach for one season, the then-30-year-old quarterbacks/wide receivers coach made an impression on the youngster.

"Tressel was special," Jemison said. "He had something special then that he does now, and I think these kids should be grateful and thankful they have a guy like him."

Both went their separate ways soon enough, with Jemison pursuing pro football in the NFL and then Canada before returning to Cincinnati and his high school alma mater and Tressel eventually becoming head coach at Youngstown State.

Those two jobs brought them back together in the 1990s when Tressel came calling on a recruiting trip. That meeting helped get Jemison a job at Ohio State's annual summer football camps, a duty he maintains to this day, and something that helped convince him college coaching could be something he would like to pursue.

"I am passionate about coaching, so my main goal is to coach at the collegiate level," Jemison said.

To figure out how to do that, he called upon his old position coach again.

"I wanted to talk to him about some of the things that were going on in my life, and he mentioned they had this Degree Completion Program here at Ohio State," Jemison said. "One thing led to another, and I ended up here."

And Tressel was glad he did.

"It was one of the proudest moments in my coaching career as Thad Jemison accepted the degree that he earned despite extremely tough odds," Tressel said. "That is what the Degree Completion Program is all about."

Earle Bruce, the Ohio State head coach during Jemison's entire Ohio State career and still a commonly seen face in the OSU football offices, raved about Jemison's time on his team, his decision to return to school and his prospects for the future.

"He was a very, very fine young man to coach," Bruce said. "He had a great career at Ohio State."

Ohio State entered the Fiesta Bowl 8-3 and coming off a 24-21 loss to No. 8 Michigan. The Buckeyes looked to be heading toward defeat before the heroics of Tomczak and Jemison, and though Jemison's Ohio State playing career was finished, the program was on the verge of winning the Big Ten outright and going to the Rose Bowl a year later.

"I remember that play like it was yesterday," Bruce said. "We ran an unbalanced line and we set the throwback up. Thad ran right by the defensive back and was in the end zone and Tomczak threw him the ball for the touchdown and won the game."

"It was really a great play to see, and it had so many ramifications. Thad caught the ball well and the ball was well-thrown but just to get the ball to him by Tomczak and read it right and he read it perfectly, so we got that. It worked out just the way it should, and it needed to be because it was the end of the ballgame. It was right there, buddy. It was up in arms."

The catch was Jemison's eighth of the game, and he finished with 131 yards and a touchdown. For his efforts, he was named the most valuable player of the game. On the season, he totaled 35 receptions for 558 yards.

Jemison finished his career with 51 grabs for 912 yards, but he said he had not spent a lot of time looking back until recently when his son began to ask questions.

"It was almost like maybe 10 or 15 years



BROCKWAY SPORTS PHOTOS

COLLEGE GRAD – Former Ohio State receiver Thad Jemison (88) returned to the university as part of the athletic department's Degree Completion Program and received his diploma in African-American studies more than 25 years after playing his final game for the Buckeyes.

ago that was over, it didn't happen," he said. "It was a memory, but it was gone. As my son got older and he started to play sports, he wanted to look at the pictures and all that, but it really wasn't until I came back and started working at those football camps that people would bring that up. It triggered the memories of that game."

"It was nice to come back to keep the memory alive of course but it's more so now for my son. As he sees pictures, he's like, 'Well, Dad, you did this? You did that?' and I say, 'Yeah, I did.'"

"It's more so for him than for me because I've lived my life, almost done everything I wanted to do, but it's nice when I go over to the campus and the guys want to know what happened with this and that, so I explain it to them."

And while those players hope for their moments like Jemison's Fiesta Bowl catch to come, he has something else for which they strive – a degree.

"I'm happy to see him get his degree," Bruce said. "I hope that he gets to do what he wants to do, and that's probably get a spot in some kind of high school and then go to college coaching."

Count Bill Leach among those impressed as well.

Leach was two years ahead of Jemison at Princeton and later coached with him and worked with him at Princeton as well.

When Leach became the head coach of the Vikings football team in 2006, Jemison was one of the first to contact him about joining his new staff in the attempt to rebuild one of Ohio's former powerhouse programs.

Jemison became a valued assistant quickly.

"As a coach he had a great relationship with the kids," Leach said. "He didn't let the little things slide. He held all kids accountable. I never saw him play favorites. He coached some very good players and treated them all the same."

Though the two spent many years in the Princeton school system together in one capacity or another, Jemison was an assistant on Leach's staff for only one year.

He told the head coach the following winter he was thinking of moving on, and by spring the decision had been made – not that it came as a surprise to Leach.

"I told him, 'You'd be crazy not to. I don't want to lose you, but looking out for what's best for you is what you've got to do,'" Leach said. "I hated to lose him, but I also understand guys who are that good are going to move on."

He said Jemison's departure left a hole in the program, but his success in earning his degree has turned that void into a point of inspiration.

"Now that he has graduated, he'll be a guy I can talk to the kids about and say, 'Here's a perfect example,'" Leach said. "The timetable is a little bit off, but the fact is he still went and he's got a degree."

Seeing him in action at an Ohio State camp last summer has Leach inclined to believe Jemison made the correct decision to expand his horizons, too. Jemison looked like a natural while putting kids through their paces and also looked comfortable interacting with campers and other college coaches alike.

"He walks into a drill and takes command," Leach said. "What I saw there is the same as what I saw when he was coaching kids here. 'You guys are all the same in my eyes. Here's what we're going to do, and show me what you've got.' He's always been consistent that way."

His old coach is a believer, too.

When told Jemison identified coaching as his personal passion, Bruce said, "I can tell after talking to him. I can see it in his eye. You've got to see it because that means it will be a possibility for him."

"I just got a good feeling about him just watching him," Leach added. "He just looked comfortable with it, like he was right at home with it. There's no question to me what he knows about the game and what he can get out of kids. It's just a matter of if someone is going to give him a chance to get where he wants to go."

Both Bruce and Leach sound optimistic Jemison is only now beginning a new journey up the coaching ranks, a belief Jemison shares after taking care of some unfinished business.

"The first step was to finish the degree, and from there we take it one step at a time to make sure I can put myself in a position to make that happen," he said.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Montana Still Interested In OSU Despite QB Offer

A new quarterback has emerged on Ohio State's radar, but that does not mean Nick Montana is no longer interested in becoming a Buckeye.

The son of Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana received a scholarship offer from OSU on Feb. 4 and was told that the Buckeyes would not offer another quarterback for the class of 2010 until they heard a final decision from him.

On May 24, Cincinnati Moeller quarterback Andrew Hendrix was speaking with OSU head coach Jim Tressel via telephone when he learned that the Buckeyes were issuing him a scholarship offer.

Putting two and two together leads to a conclusion that Montana has told the OSU coaches that he is no longer considering their school, but the four-star signal caller told BSB that is not the case.

"I know there's a lot of speculation and everything that they're dropping (on my list) because they offered another quarterback, but they're not at all," said Montana, who attends Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian. "I talked to Coach Tressel about it. He stressed to me the importance of getting a quarterback this year for them."

"I told them I appreciated them keeping their word until this point with not offering another quarterback because that's something they had promised me early on this year. I told them I appreciate it but I understand their situation and they don't have to worry about me. I told them, 'I'm not going to think any less of you guys because you have to do what you have to do.'"

As a junior, Hendrix completed 61.0 percent of his passes for 1,700 yards and 11 touchdowns against seven interceptions after splitting time during the first half of the season and also missing one game because of injury.

In addition to his offer from the Buckeyes, the 6-3, 220-pound Hendrix landed offers from Miami (Fla.) and Notre Dame during the final week of May. All told, he is up to nearly 20 scholarship offers from the likes of Tennessee, Illinois, Boston College, Kansas, Indiana and Virginia.

But an offer from the home-state Buckeyes clearly left an impression on Hendrix, who is a three-star recruit and listed as the No. 29 quarterback by Scout.com.

"It's a very prestigious school, one of the top five football schools in the nation year in and year out," he said. "It's an honor to get an offer from Ohio State. That and it being so close to home that if I went there, it would be a hop, skip and a jump away from Cincinnati. Those are two things that really stand out."

Hendrix said the OSU coaching staff had been to his school to check on both him and three-star, 74th ranked defensive end Marcus Rush.

"They said they liked me a lot, they just needed to go over a couple of more quarterbacks and then I would hear from them again," Hendrix said. "When my coach told me that they would like to talk to me and I would be getting a call from Coach Tressel on (May 24), I really was hoping for the best. The outcome that I had hoped for really happened. I was really excited but not surprised because I've really been expecting it for the past couple of weeks."

When asked if the Buckeyes became a

leader on his list when he received the offer, Hendrix said, "Absolutely. When you get an offer like that, it definitely shoots right up your list. They are very close to the top."

Hendrix hopes to cut his list early in June and make a final decision before his senior season. Montana said he does not have a decision date in mind, raising the possibility that the Ohioan could issue a commitment before him. In that case, OSU could take both quarterbacks, Montana said.

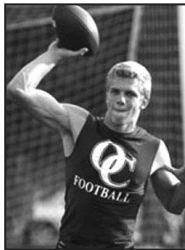
"I think so," he said, "but I don't know if they're aiming to."

Montana has cut his list to seven and claims no leader among Alabama, Georgia, OSU, Stanford, LSU, Notre Dame and

Washington.

Getting to that number required being proactive on at least one front.

"I've been on some trips and that helped me eliminate some schools," he said. "Some of the schools you just know in your head that that's not the place you want to be. You just know it's not going to be a good fit for you. Then I was looking at academics and the coaching staff, seeing if they put guys in the NFL. There's a lot of things that go into it."



Nick Montana

SCOUT.COM

Up next for Montana is a trip to Washington scheduled for the first weekend in June to visit new head coach Steve Sarkisian. The two are already acquainted from Sarkisian's time as an assistant coach at USC.

Although he said the recruiting process was enjoyable at first, the 6-1, 185-pound Montana is growing tired of the grind.

"It was all fun in the beginning," he said. "I don't even open mail anymore and e-mails are tough to keep up with all the time, especially toward the end of school."

Montana said both OSU tight ends coach/recruiting coordinator John Peterson and assistant quarterbacks coach Nick Siciliano have made visits to Oaks Christian as part of the parade of college recruiters who have been through the school's doors of late.

"I think it just comes down to comfort level," he said. "I still have a lot of thinking to do."

Busy Month Online At BuckeyeSports.com

Now that BSB has switched to its summer schedule, this will be the last issue you will see until the calendar flips over to July. If June is anything like May, you will want to be a frequent guest to our home online at BuckeyeSports.com.

What follows in this issue are looks at the top stories from the past month, but these are just sketches of what you can find online. In addition to much longer articles from all your favorite BSB writers, the Scout.com network ensures that every prospect receives serious, in-depth coverage – far more than could fit in any one newspaper.

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Coaches Travel Country, Extend New Offers

The past month has seen the OSU coaching

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Football players in the class of 2010 who have issued verbal commitments to play college football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	High School
David Durham	ILB	6-2	226	Austin (Texas) Westlake
Scott McVey	OLB	6-1	217	Cleveland St. Ignatius
J.T. Moore	DE/OLB	6-3	216	Youngstown (Ohio) Boardman
Andrew Norwell	OL	6-6	255	Cincinnati Anderson
Jamel Turner	DE	6-2	200	Youngstown (Ohio) Ursuline

staff travel the country from one side to the other evaluating prep talent. While coaches are allowed one phone call per week to recruits, they are not permitted to have face-to-face contact while making in-school visits.

The result has been a number of new scholarship offers extended by the Buckeyes to some of the top talent in the country. OSU remained fixed at five verbal members in the class of 2010 as of press time, but here is an alphabetical look at the newest prospects to hold offers from the Buckeyes.

Brent Benedict, OT, Jacksonville (Fla.)

The Bolles School: The 6-6, 290-pound offensive lineman is up to 46 scholarship offers, and the Buckeyes are now included on that list. So are the likes of USC, Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Virginia Tech.

OSU's interest has picked up in recent weeks, he said.

"It's very exciting," he told BSB. "Obviously Ohio State is one of the best programs in the nation, and there's no way you can overlook Ohio State. It's a very respectable program, very big time, and I've always been impressed with what they've done up there in every aspect of the game. I know Ohio State is a great academic school as well."

As a senior, Benedict earned first-team all-state honors. Scout rates him the No. 9 offensive tackle in the country and a four-star prospect.

Benedict's parents are originally from Pennsylvania and he has family in both the Keystone State and Indiana, so he plans to swing by OSU, Penn State and Notre Dame this summer while attending a family reunion.

Christian Bryant, CB, Cleveland Glenville: The four-star prospect has emerged as the most likely candidate to keep the pipeline flowing between Glenville and Ohio State. Bryant earned a scholarship offer from the Buckeyes on May 12, giving him 21 total offers.

This one might have meant a little bit more, however.

"It's pretty good, just knowing the pipeline of going to Ohio State is really good," he said. "I've talked to past players from Glenville and they said the experience at Ohio State is a great experience. I'm still really going to keep my options open and go through the whole process to see what really fits me at a college."

Last season, Bryant played slot receiver, quarterback, safety and cornerback for the Tarblooders. Head coach Ted Ginn Sr. said he feels Bryant will be a top-notch safety at the next level in the same vein as former Tarblooder and Buckeye Donte Whitner.

"I think he can be a good corner, but I know he can be a good safety because he'll come down and hit you," Ginn said. "They (both) have that toughness coming down into the box and striking you. Some people hit and some people strike. He will strike you. When you've got guys like that and you can put them in space and they can come down and hit like that, they're just like a linebacker."

Listed at 5-10, 175 pounds, Bryant is ranked the No. 12 cornerback in the country. Given the choice, he said he prefers to play cornerback but is amenable to moving to safety.

The likes of Tennessee, Michigan State, Illinois, Notre Dame and Iowa have offered him as well. He will take part in the annual Ginn bus tour that will take a number of prospects to college camps across the country.

Tony Creecy, WR/RB, Durham (N.C.) Southern: Although the 6-0, 190-pound Creecy has a top three consisting of North Carolina State, Duke and Wake Forest, the Buckeyes factor into his summer and fall plans.

The three-star prospect and No. 38 wide receiver prospect in the country plans on camping at OSU this summer and taking an official visit there this fall as well. Creecy will also be checking out LSU, Oregon, Ole Miss and Stanford this summer before taking official visits to those same schools save for Stanford.

As a junior, Creecy caught 48 passes for 863 yards and five touchdowns and rushed for three more scores.

C.J. Fiedorowicz, TE, Johnsburg, Ill.: An offer from the Buckeyes has them listed among the top four teams for the nation's No. 2 tight end prospect.

The 6-7, 240-pound four-star athlete had hoped to make a final decision sometime this spring but instead has cut his list to OSU, Iowa, Notre Dame and Wisconsin. The Buckeyes actually offered Fiedorowicz back in December or January, he said, but the offer was not publicized until recently.

"They've been recruiting me pretty hard," he said. "That's why they're at my top, because they're recruiting me harder than all the other schools, which shows that they have interest in me."

Fiedorowicz took an unofficial visit to OSU in early April to take in a spring practice. While there, he also got to spend time with Peterson, who is recruiting him.

Of Fiedorowicz's four top schools, the Buckeyes and Hawkeyes appear to be leading for his services. However, the lack of passes thrown at tight ends in Columbus in recent years has not escaped his attention.

"I wish they used the tight end more," he told the Chicago Sun-Times. "Last year, they used the tight end only 15 times (for passes). If they don't change, I'll probably go to Iowa. It's not fun to be a tight end if all you do is block. I want to catch the ball, go for deep and midrange passes. But with Terrelle Pryor in the offense, will they want to pass the ball to the tight end a lot?"

As a junior, he caught 49 passes for 809 yards and 11 touchdowns, earning first-team all-area honors for the second consecutive season. He plans on taking official visits before making a decision sometime this fall.

William Gholston, DE/LB, Detroit Southeastern: At 6-7, 245 pounds, the cousin of former Buckeye Vernon Gholston lines up as both a defensive end – where he's rated the No. 11 player at the position by Scout – and a linebacker and said he hopes to play the latter position in college. After transferring to Southeastern for his junior season, Gholston racked up 101 tackles including 22 for loss and 15 sacks.

The Buckeyes had been showing interest for some time, but they officially offered him a scholarship during the first week of May.

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

"It was unexpected, to tell you the truth," he told BSB of the offer. "I didn't expect to get that scholarship this soon. There really isn't too much to be said. There are a few schools where their school name speaks for itself, and there's nothing more to say. For me, I don't need too many more details about certain schools than their name because they're known for football."

Although he does not list a leader, Gholston named Michigan State, Tennessee, Miami, Alabama, USC, Oklahoma, OSU and LSU as schools showing what he described as genuine interest. All have offered the four-star prospect.

Tony Grimes, CB, Hollywood (Fla.) Hollywood Hills: After being visited by OSU linebackers coach Luke Fickell and safeties coach Paul Haynes during a spring football practice, Grimes called Fickell on May 21 and learned that OSU was issuing him a scholarship.

A 6-1, 185-pound athlete, Grimes is ranked by Scout as a four-star prospect and the No. 5 cornerback in the country. He holds a number of offers, and schools such as Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Alabama, Michigan and Oregon are on his list.

Although a final decision remains a ways away, Grimes said, one school is starting to separate from the pack.

"If I had to pick a school at the top it would be Georgia right now," he said. "I visited there a while ago and loved it. Ohio State is very high in my mind and I'm planning to take an official visit there next fall, probably for the USC game. I'm in no hurry to make a decision and I won't decide until after I take all five official visits."

As a junior, Grimes had 41 tackles, 15 pass breakups and five interceptions.

During the last weekend of May, Grimes took an unofficial visit to Michigan and came away impressed with what the Wolverines have to offer. While there, he bonded with Vlad Emilien, a former OSU recruit who hails from Plantation, Fla.

Up next is a trip to see Ole Miss, set for the weekend of June 5.

Brandon Linder, C, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas: Although he played left tackle last season, the 6-6, 285-pound Linder is listed as the nation's No. 1 center prospect. He has earned first-team all-county honors at each position, but he was named first-team all-state as a junior. Linder is being recruited as a left tackle, he said.

Although Linder said he probably will not make a final decision until National Signing Day, he has a list of his top seven schools – Miami (Fla.), Florida, Notre Dame, OSU, Georgia, Stanford and Florida State.

"Miami is in my back yard, so I'll probably go down there a couple times," he said. "I'll hit Florida, Florida State, and Georgia. I'll probably go to Notre Dame and Ohio State. After that I'll probably narrow things down to five or four schools and then shut things down. I'll stay in close contact with those five and gather my thoughts."

James Louis, WR, Delray Beach (Fla.) Atlantic: A scholarship offer and subsequent interest from the Buckeyes have been enough to convince Louis (5-11, 180) to take a closer look at them this summer.

A four-star prospect, Louis said he plans on checking out Georgia, Minnesota, OSU, Ole Miss and LSU this summer.

"Coach Tressel and I have a real good relationship," the nation's No. 27 wideout told Scout. "I also have a good relationship with their WR coach (Darrell Hazell). He thinks it would be the perfect fit for me."

As a junior, Louis earned third-team all-state honors after catching 56 passes for 1,128 yards. As a cornerback, he recorded 10 interceptions.

Terrence Mitchell, CB, Tampa (Fla.) Hillsborough: The Buckeyes jumped into the fray by offering the nation's No. 11 cornerback prospect, doing so right around the same time as Georgia.

OSU paid Mitchell's school a visit during the month of May, and the offer came during the middle of the month. Perhaps overshadowing all other offers is one from his childhood favorite of Miami (Fla.), but Mitchell claims no top schools and plans to take all five official visits this fall before making a decision.

The offers from the Buckeyes and the Bulldogs did spur interest by the 5-11, 160-pound, four-star athlete who had 34 tackles and two interceptions as a junior.

"I really don't know much about Ohio State and Georgia yet," he said. "I have to do my research on the schools this summer because I don't know much about schools outside of Florida. I am interested in a lot of schools."

Nickell Robey, WR/CB, Frostproof, Fla.: After landing offers from OSU, Virginia Tech, Georgia and Stanford in mid-May, the 5-7, 165-pound athlete is now up to 13 total. However, he has five schools listed as leaders and OSU is not one of them.

"Virginia Tech, Florida, Tennessee,

Georgia and Miami are in my top five right now," he told Scout. "I am really looking at those schools."

Robey's summer plans include trips to see the Hurricanes and Michigan as well. He finished his junior season with 1,900 all-purpose yards and 17 touchdowns. Scout ranks him the No. 19 cornerback and a three-star prospect.

Alex Welch, TE, Cincinnati Elder: An Ohio State offer proved to be too little, too late for the nation's No. 3 tight end. Although the Buckeyes issued a scholarship offer May 20, it came in about one week after Welch's dream school had done the same.

By the time the month was complete, Welch had issued a verbal commitment to Notre Dame. First, he took final unofficial visits to both schools, taking in the Fighting Irish on May 21 and the Buckeyes a day later.

After thinking things over during the weekend, he announced for Notre Dame on May 25.

"After my visit to Notre Dame, I just felt that it was going to be the right place for me," he told Scout. "Ohio State did offer me ... so I wanted to go down there and talk to Coach Tressel one more time and go on a visit to make 100 percent sure. Ohio State is an unbelievable

place and has one of the best programs in the country, but I just feel like Notre Dame is the right fit for me. I believe Notre Dame is where I belong for the next four or five years."

A 6-5, 225-pound target, Welch is listed as a four-star prospect by Scout. He follows former Elder standout Kyle Rudolph – an OSU recruit for the class of 2008 who was the top tight end in his class – to Notre Dame.

"There's a tradition at Elder and it's a Catholic high school," Welch said. "I just think Notre Dame is the next step up after being from Elder. I've dreamt of doing this my entire life and with my uncle playing at Notre Dame, it just helped. Kyle (Rudolph) going there helped out a lot as well. I'm not sure I would have made the decision already if it hadn't been for him. We talk all the time, almost every day since I got the offer."

In all, Welch held nearly 20 scholarship offers.

Zach Zwinak, FB, Frederick (Md.) Linganore: A late addition to the list, Zwinak is rated the No. 1 fullback in the country and a four-star prospect by Scout.

Continued On Page 10



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Visit To Ohio State Keeps It On Green's List

Continued From Page 9

As a junior, Zwinak carried the ball 133 times for 1,447 yards and 19 touchdowns and earned first-team all-area, all-conference and all-state honors as a running back. Listed at 6-2, 225 pounds, Zwinak has been timed at 4.5 seconds in the 40-yard dash.

Linganore head coach Rick Conner told Scout that Zwinak is now up to 16 scholarship offers, with the latest coming from OSU, Wisconsin, East Carolina and Louisville. Although the coach said Zwinak remains wide open, he added that the offer from the Buckeyes made an impression.

Anderson Settles In, Contemplates Future

Transferring schools is typically not an easy process, but Latwan Anderson is finding his new surroundings to his liking.

The four-star prospect has transferred from Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward to Glenville, and the change has already been a positive one, he said.

"I like it here," he told Scout. "I am adjusting well to my new school."

Anderson is ranked the No. 21 safety prospect by Scout, and he has been timed at 4.29 seconds in the 40-yard dash. The 5-11, 190-pounder holds offers from the likes of Michigan, Michigan State and West Virginia, but not Ohio State.

"I like Ohio State," he said. "I went to visit, and it was nice the way the players sat around and talked. The coaches want me to come up to their camp so they can see more of me."

One school Anderson also remains interested in is Michigan, and the Wolverines sent a coach to check him out during the last month. He plans to camp at Michigan this summer. In addition, North Carolina has asked for a transcript and wants him to attend a summer camp.

As a junior, Anderson earned second-team all-state honors after recording 50 tackles and five interceptions while playing safety, wide receiver and running back.

"I am wide open, and distance is not a factor for me," he said. "I will be looking at depth charts and coaches' job security. I just want to be able to get on the field early and play."

Buckeyes Make The Cut On Brown's List

For the second year in a row, the OSU coaching staff is recruiting a prospect hailing from Pennsylvania with the name Corey Brown. This year, that Brown is a four-star athlete from Springfield Cardinal O'Hara who is ranked the No. 12 running back in the country but projects to a number of different positions.

"Everybody is looking at me as an athlete," he told BSB. "It means wherever I can get on the field at, I don't have a preference."

The list of schools calling for Brown's services is not a short one. Brown could not remember just how many offers he has landed, but he did come up with a partial list that included Florida, Georgia, Alabama, West Virginia, Penn State, Ohio State, South Carolina, Miami (Fla.), Florida State, LSU, Louisville and Rutgers.

One school that will remain on the 5-11, 170-pound Brown's list when he starts eliminating teams is OSU, who sent Hazell to his school May 18.

"They definitely will (make the cut)," Brown said of the Buckeyes. "I like Ohio State a lot. I like everything. They're a young team on the rise. They always contend for national championships. They are not too far from my

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

20 Years Ago – 1989

Two of head coach John Cooper's 1989 football signees achieved passing grades to achieve freshman eligibility while another continued to try.

Still another player learned he would not make the cut, but not because of a poor standardized test score. The problem for Chuck Jones of Chillicothe, Ohio, was a failed government class that left him one-half credit short of being able to graduate from high school.

"I messed up," said the USA Today All-America defensive tackle. "It's nobody's fault but mine."

Better news came for defensive back Chico Nelson of Sarasota, Fla., and linebacker Alonzo Spellman of Mount Holly, N.J., both of whom were able to satisfy passing test scores.

That left linebacker Tyrone Morrison of San Diego the only member of the class whose fate was yet to be determined. He retook the SAT in early June and awaited his score as BSB went to press.

10 Years Ago – 1999

On the penultimate weekend of May, Ohio State played host to an unofficial visit from one of the nation's top quarterbacks.

house. They're about seven hours from where I live, so my mom could see me.

"Distance isn't a real big deal for me, but being right there wouldn't be that bad. It's a nice program. Coach Tressel is a good coach."

He is also being heavily recruited by Florida, which is targeting him as a potential Percy Harvin-type of player.

Injuries limited Brown to three games as a junior but he recorded around 600 rushing yards and 13 touchdowns. He has been timed at 4.45 seconds in the 40-yard dash.

Four-Star Wideout Visited By Buckeyes

Christian Green has served primarily as a quarterback for the last two years of his prep career, but that has not stopped him from being billed as the nation's No. 5 wide receiver and a four-star prospect.

A 6-2, 185-pound athlete from Tampa (Fla.) Catholic, Green took over under center as a sophomore and has played there ever since. This spring, the plan was for him to work out at both quarterback and wide receiver until the team's backup quarterback was shelved because of injury, handing the reins back to Green.

Given the choice, Green said he prefers to play wide receiver at the next level.

"Some schools are looking at me as a quarterback, like Michigan," he said. "Tennessee is looking at me to play a little bit of quarterback, and Alabama. I really enjoy playing wide receiver."

Although the spring has allowed Green to push recruiting to the back of his mind, he has not been able to shut it out completely. A number of coaches from across the country have been on hand to take in his practices including Hazell on May 19.

Although the coach who is primarily recruiting him is cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson, Green said he met Hazell while in Columbus this spring for an unofficial visit.

"I went up there this spring and I really enjoyed meeting everybody and stuff like that," he said. "It's been a real good, top-notch program. I came up during the spring. They weren't practicing, but we went up there, me

Jeff Smoker of Manheim (Pa.) Central said he stayed with a relative in nearby Plain City before touring the OSU campus.

"I talked with Coach Cooper for probably half an hour and I spent a lot of time with (quarterbacks coach Tim) Salem. He really knows his stuff and seems like a smart coach," Smoker said.

The 6-4, 195-pounder already boasted scholarship offers from Ohio State and Michigan and was looking at North Carolina, Kentucky and Michigan State.

"(Ohio State) said if I committed there they would only take one quarterback this year and they wouldn't go after anybody else," Smoker said. "That made me feel pretty good."

Five Years Ago – 2004

A pair of defensive linemen gave verbal commitments to be Buckeyes in the span of five days in late May and early June.

First came the May 27 commitment of Ryan Williams, a 6-5, 240-pound prospect from Mission Viejo, Calif., with roots in Ohio.

"I've always wanted to be a Buckeye," said the Washington Court House native who moved out west at a very early age. "Ever since I was born, it was the team I wanted to play for."

and my family and we visited some of the parts of the campus."

As a result of that trip, Green said OSU will be on his list when he starts narrowing his choices.

"I definitely enjoyed it," he said of the trip. "I think it's a great university. The people up there seem like they're real down-to-earth and good people to talk to. Everything from the equipment to all the top-notch stuff, they're definitely one of the best universities in the country, I think."

Noteworthy

• Ohio State is one of a number of schools recruiting four-star prospect Spencer Ware (5-11, 215) of Cincinnati Princeton. A multitasking player who also plays baseball, Ware is being recruited as an athlete by the Buckeyes.

"My impression from Ohio State is they are bringing him in as an athlete but they know he can play quarterback, they know he can run the ball and they know he can play defense," Princeton head coach Bill Leach told BSB. "I think they'll figure out where he fits in their system."

•According to St. Paul (Minn.) Cretin-Derham Hall head coach Mike Scanlan, the Buckeyes are legitimate players for the services of five-star offensive tackle Seantrel Henderson, who is rated the top prospect in the country regardless of position. Henderson is listed at 6-8, 301 pounds.

•Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bishop Dwenger defensive end Tony Springmann stands 6-8, 230 pounds and recorded 86 tackles and nine sacks last season as a sophomore. He told Scout that Ohio State, Purdue and Notre Dame are already showing interest.

Springmann said he plans to camp with the Buckeyes and the Boilermakers this summer.

In other news about juniors-to-be, the Buckeyes are looking at Miami Northwestern quarterback Teddy Bridgewater. According to the 6-3, 170-pound member of the class of 2011, OSU's Haynes and Fickell stopped in at his school during the spring.

•The Buckeyes visited Orchard Lake (Mich.) St. Mary's to get more information on safety prospect Earnest Thomas (6-2, 195), but

He figured to have to battle a lifelong Buckeye State resident for playing time after Troy native Todd Denlinger committed June 2.

"It's always been in the back of my head that that's where I want to go," said the 6-3, 280-pound Denlinger. "It's always been my dream."

One Year Ago – 2008

A pair of Michigan natives gave verbal commitments to Ohio State in May, giving head coach Jim Tressel and his program 15 prospects heading into June.

On May 12, word trickled out that Grand Ledge receiver James Jackson had joined the fold, though no official announcement was made. A little more than two weeks later, tight end Reid Fragel of Grosse Pointe South made his intentions known to BuckeyeSports.com.

"It is nice to be done with all this stuff," Fragel said.

The good news was tempered by the defection of another commitment.

Indian Head (Md.) Lackey cornerback Darrell Givens switched to Penn State after comparing the depth charts of the two schools, according to his high school coach.

they have not yet offered a scholarship.

"I talk to Coach Haynes a lot," the three-star prospect told Scout. "We always have real good conversation. I've been down there quite a few times, but he said if possible, for me to come down on a visit and maybe come to their camp again. It doesn't seem like they've offered as many kids that I know about. I think if I do see one from them, it would probably be later throughout the summer. Coach Haynes came and watched me work out, but it's still not out of the question that I'd go to their camp."

•The Buckeyes have shown increased interest in three-star offensive tackle Skyler Schofner, but that has not yet translated into a scholarship offer. A 6-6, 281-pound athlete, Schofner transferred to Johnstown (Ohio) Monroe in January after starting at Washington Court House.

Ranked the No. 56 tackle in the country by Scout, Schofner holds offers from Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina and others. OSU wants him to camp in Columbus before extending him an offer, but Schofner had no plans to do so as of press time.

A little higher in the rankings, three-star tackle Andrew Donnal from Whitehouse (Ohio) Anthony Wayne is receiving interest from the Buckeyes but does not yet hold a scholarship offer. Both OSU and Notre Dame have told the 6-6, 260-pound Donnal that they would like him to camp at their campuses this summer.

Scout ranks him the No. 34 tackle in the country.

•OSU has been paying more attention to four-star wide receiver prospect Shakim Phillips (6-2, 198) from Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic but no scholarship offer has yet been extended. As a junior, he caught 40 passes for 770 yards and 12 touchdowns.

•The highest-ranked verbal member of OSU's class of 2010, Cincinnati Anderson offensive tackle Andrew Norwell stayed active this spring by playing dodgeball in addition to his usual training.

A five-star prospect, the 6-6, 255-pound Norwell committed to the Buckeyes in February. Scout ranks him the No. 2 offensive tackle in the country.

BSB staff writers Marcus Hartman and Jeff Svoboda contributed to this report.



Christian Green

SCOUT.COM

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

Hyde Ready For His Ohio Homecoming

By ADAM JARDY

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Carlos Hyde has learned that in times of trouble, sometimes all you need is your family.

Although he has spent the last 2½ years as a resident of Naples, Fla., the four-star fullback prospect will be returning home when he enrolls in summer classes at Ohio State and begins his college football career.

Originally a native of Cincinnati, Hyde left behind his friends and family to move south and live with his grandmother in order to get away from what he viewed as an unhealthy situation. In doing so, he hoped to put himself on the path to a brighter future.

Now, less than a month away from starting college, Hyde has a legitimate chance to see playing time as a true freshman for the Buckeyes.

It sounds like he made the right decision. "I moved down to be away from Cincinnati so I wouldn't be in trouble and stuff," Hyde told BSB. "It was kind of hard because I was leaving my mom and my family behind, but it was all right because I was going to live with my grandmother. I have a real close bond with my grandmother."

Hyde's mother, Dermidia, was initially unsure of the move but eventually acquiesced. Hyde said he spent plenty of time at his grandmother's house during his tenure in Ohio, so moving in with her down south was not difficult. What was tricky, however, was getting used to his new school system and how different it was from what he was accustomed to.

"Florida is way different from Ohio, especially where I'm coming from," he said. "The schools I used to go to and the school I'm at now are way different. The teachers at the school I'm coming from, they didn't really care what you did. Down here, they really care. The teachers really help you out with stuff."

It was midway through his sophomore season at Cincinnati Princeton that Hyde packed his bags and headed to Florida. His grandmother was running her own cleaning business, and Hyde helped out at first until the demands of school and football became too great and he was forced to concentrate on them instead.

Naples head football coach Bill Kramer said he will always remember the first time he met Hyde.

Standing in the school's gymnasium, Kramer watched as Hyde stood directly beneath a basketball hoop, leaped straight up and dunked a basketball with both hands.

"That was the first time I saw him," the coach said. "Then I asked him if he was going to play football and he said, 'Yeah, I played some as a freshman. I didn't really play much.' He said, 'They had me at D-line,' and I was going, 'Wow. Evidently they never saw you play basketball.' That was my first impression, and it was a lasting one as well."

As a junior, Hyde took some time to establish himself as a force with the ball in his hands. Kramer said it was not until mid-season that Hyde began to find his niche as a running back.

He would finish the year with around 1,000 yards rushing and seven touchdowns as Naples went all the way to a state cham-

pionship. Achieving such a big victory was important to Hyde for a number of reasons, but one stands out in particular.

When the Golden Eagles finished out a 17-10 victory against St. Augustine in the Class 3A title game, it marked the only time Hyde's mother would experience watching him play the game of football during his time in the Sunshine State.

"That was the only game she came to," Hyde said. "It was cool to have my mom down. It was really nice to have her down there watching me. She had never been to Florida too, so it was nice that she was down."

During the game, Hyde had a 6-yard touchdown run to open the scoring.

Around that time, interest in Hyde began to pick up across the country. Following Hyde's junior season, Scout.com ranked him the nation's top fullback prospect based on his size (6-1, 230 pounds) and speed (4.65 seconds in the 40-yard dash).

He would eventually hold offers from the likes of Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Miami (Fla.) and West Virginia in addition to OSU, but through it all the desire to return home was in his thoughts.

"I learned more about it and I started thinking that I wanted to get an offer from Ohio State so I could go back home and my family could come see me all the time," Hyde said. "I was really hoping that I would get an offer from them. At first, I didn't think I was going to get an offer from them."

When the offer did come, it was all Hyde could do not to accept on the spot.

"I wanted to commit right then and there, but I realized I had never been to the campus and never been to Columbus to check out Ohio State, so I thought I would wait and check it out and see how that is," he said. "I took an unofficial visit up there. I liked the coaches and how much they care about the players and the tradition at Ohio State. I liked how big football is in Columbus."

In late June 2008, the Buckeyes landed a verbal commitment from Hyde. As a senior, he would rush for 1,653 yards and 16 touchdowns as Naples again made the playoffs. The OSU coaching staff went on to land two other smaller, faster running back prospects in the class.

When the entire team assembles for fall camp, Hyde will find that he is different from the other scholarship backs on the roster. Physically, he is more like former OSU tailback Chris "Beanie" Wells than, say, Dan Herron.

"They were telling me that they would use me like how they used Beanie," Hyde said. "They need that big back in the backfield because they only have little guys, so it's good that they're going to have another big back and they can use me like they have Beanie Wells in there."

"It's pretty exciting. I've got some big shoes to fill, but it's pretty exciting."

OSU running backs coach Dick Tressel voiced his approval of having Hyde as a running back and not a fullback.

"He's a tailback," Tressel said. "Carlos Hyde's a tailback absolutely, and I think that we would be mistaken if we didn't pursue that hard because he is different from the other guys. The fact that we have a variety of skills and physical attributes (at the running back position) is good."

The Hyde File

NAME – Carlos Hyde

HIGH SCHOOL – Naples, Fla.

POSITION – Running back

HEIGHT, WEIGHT – 6-1, 230 pounds

40-YARD DASH – 4.65 seconds

VITAL STATISTICS – As a senior, Hyde rushed for 1,653 yards and 16 touchdowns. He was named the Southwest Florida player of the year by The (Fort Myers) News-Press.

COACH'S COMMENTS – "I see a runner, a guy that is a quiet force. He really is a tough guy that just wants to play and finish plays, so that makes him really valuable as a ball carrier."

– Ohio State running backs coach Dick Tressel

HOBBIES – Hyde listed his favorite musical artist as rapper Young Jeezy.

SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN – Hyde signed with OSU after also landing offers from Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Miami (Fla.) and West Virginia, among others.



Carlos Hyde

Although he declined to speculate on what sort of impact Hyde might be able to have as a true freshman, Kramer said his former running back has all the tools to be an impact player in college.

"He has all the little-guy ball skills – balance and vision and all that stuff – in a real big body," Kramer said. "It's a unique combination. He's really fast and explosive. He can run routes, he can catch the football, he can make guys miss or he can run right

over them. He's a rare combination, which is why everyone in the country was recruiting him."

But only one school recruiting Hyde had the built-in home-state advantage, and now the Buckeyes will get to see if the native Ohioan can become an integral part of their offense.

"It's exciting," Hyde said. "I can't wait to get out of high school. I'm ready to move on to the next level and get started."

LIVE-360

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OHIO STATE FLASHBACK

From Buckeyes To Bronx Bombers

Swisher Still Getting Used To Life In New York

By DAVID DRIVER

Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

The season was not yet two months old, but Nick Swisher's introduction to being a full-time resident of New York City was hardly routine.

The former Ohio State baseball standout rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street, did a flying leap toward fans above the outfield wall in new Yankee Stadium, dealt with a minor elbow injury and even pitched one inning in mop-up duty.

Not bad for a Big Apple debut.

"Playing with the Yankees, you get to do some cool stuff," said Swisher, who is single, lives in Manhattan and peppers most of his sentences with "dude."

In addition to all of the "cool stuff," more important was the early-season offense he provided to his new team as the Yankees played until May 8 without injured third baseman Alex Rodriguez.

"It has just been a lot of fun," Swisher said recently. "New York kind of fits my personality a little bit. It's an awesome town. The fans are great, and it's a great place to play."

Swisher hit seven homers in his first 27 games with the Bronx Bombers after coming over from the White Sox in a trade last November that sent infielder Wilson Betemit and two minor leaguers to Chicago. Swisher didn't go deep for the White Sox for the seventh time in 2008 until the 62nd game of the season. Additionally, each of his first seven homers this season came on the road, and according to the Elias Sports Bureau he was the first Yankee to hit his first seven homers on the road since Bernie Williams did so in 2003.

Through May 28, Swisher had spent most of his time as the Yankees' regular right fielder and was hitting .223 with nine homers and 27 RBI. His play has caught the fancy of some New York fans who have begun a write-in campaign for their favorite player to start in the All-Star Game in St. Louis. They started an Internet site called VoteSwisher.com.

The switch-hitting Swisher homered from

both sides of the plate April 29 against Detroit, marking the eighth time in his six-year career he had done that. He joined Arizona first baseman Tony Clark and Yankees catcher Jorge Posada as the only active players to homer from both sides at least eight times in his career. Clark has been playing 15 years while Posada is a 13-year major league veteran.

Swisher, who spent the first four seasons of his career in Oakland before playing in Chicago last year, said the move to New York has been beneficial for him and it shows. He seems to slap hands with nearly everyone in the clubhouse before a game.

"I think your surroundings have a lot to do with it," he said. "We have quality people in the dugout and with the coaching staff. Obviously, New York is a bigger media market but it is still baseball."

After the trade from Chicago to New York, Swisher decided to spend the offseason in his home state of West Virginia.

"I have two beautiful homes in California, but I went back and lived with my dad (prior to this season)," he said. "I really needed to get back to the basics, and I think I have. I am trying to break out that talent I don't think I have uncovered."

Swisher's father, Steve, is a former major league catcher who had a nine-year career with the Chicago Cubs, St. Louis Cardinals and San Diego Padres. Nick did his regular workouts this past winter but felt the time talking to his father about hitting was helpful.

The younger Swisher began his career in the Oakland system in 2002 after he was taken as the 16th overall pick that June out of Ohio State. Swisher was one of the big bats in the Buckeyes' batting order from 2000-02 when he hit .322 with 35 homers and 156 RBI, helping OSU to the regular-season Big Ten championship in '01 and the conference tournament title in '02. He set career highs as a sophomore in 2001 with 15 homers and 56 RBI to go along with a .492 on-base percentage, and as a junior in 2002, he hit a career-best .348 with 10 homers and 52 RBI.

Swisher was on the fast track with the A's and quickly advanced through Oakland's minor league system, hitting .269 with 29 homers and 92 RBI at Triple-A Sacramento in 2004.

He made his big-league debut with the A's in September of that year, and made the big-league club the following spring and hit .236 with 21 homers and 74 RBI. His best year was 2006 when he hit .254 with 35 homers and 95 RBI.

Swisher raised his average to .262 in



COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK YANKEES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FITTING IN – Former Ohio State baseball star Nick Swisher has become an integral part of the New York Yankees in his first season with the team. Swisher provided an early-season spark for the Yankees as they waited for MVP third baseman Alex Rodriguez to return from hip surgery.

2007, but his power numbers were down with 22 homers and 78 RBI. That led to Oakland trading him to the White Sox in January 2008 and a rough year in Chicago. He hit only .219 with 24 homers and 69 RBI.

Still, he remains pragmatic about last season.

"I'm kind of glad it happened because it opened my eyes in order take my work ethic to the next level," Swisher said. He added that he also lost about seven or eight pounds off his 6-0, 194-pound frame before this season.

"I feel good, I feel strong, I feel confident," he said. "It has been a great start to the season."

On May 7, as he took the field in the top of the first at Yankee Stadium, Swisher did a running leap in order to slap hands with New York fans sitting in back of the outfield fence.

"It was just fun," he said. "It was something to get the team going. I didn't stick the landing, though. It was a 'Lambeau Leap' gone wrong."

The next night, the Yankees opened a series in Baltimore and welcomed back Rodriguez, who had missed the first 28 games with a hip injury. The third baseman provided an instant shot of team adrenaline when he smacked a three-run homer on the first pitch he saw from Orioles starter Jeremy Guthrie.

Swisher said having A-Rod back is "huge. You are talking about the best player in baseball."

While Rodriguez was sidelined, Swisher was about the only New York player hitting with any consistency. As a result, the Yankees were 13-15 and trailed by 5½ games in the American League East. Since Rodriguez's return through May 28, the team was 14-5 and tied for first place.

What is Rodriguez like as a teammate?

"I wish everyone else would get to know him the way we do," Swisher said. "He is a great dude. The fact is he is a great guy. When you play against a guy, you look at them differently. He is the most mentally strong guy I have ever met."

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THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH

Additional Access Means Better Coverage

If you thought Buckeye Sports Bulletin's coverage of Ohio State spring football was a little better than it perhaps has been the past several springs, it may be because head coach Jim Tressel allowed much greater access to the proceedings than he has in recent years.

Of course, I think we always do a good job of monitoring spring ball, but this year's effort was made so much easier as the coach allowed reporters to see numerous practices – and I'm not just talking about being allowed to see players limber up before being booted. Members of the media were allowed to watch actual practice.

This new policy gave the BSB staff a chance to see who had improved and who hadn't as well as who was challenging for playing time and who might not be. Those are the things spring ball is all about and the type of things that you, our readers, want to know this time of year.

Tressel's usual limited access for the media to his team has long been a sore spot among those who cover the team, especially those who cover it on a regular basis. It is difficult to crank out stories when the same players – players who are well-schooled on what to say and what not to say – are made available to reporters over and over again. The coach himself doesn't make life any easier with his usually noncommittal comments, more suited to a politician than a football coach.

I think of Tressel's reluctance to provide easy access for the media when his name comes up from time to time as a potential candidate for an NFL coaching position, frequently with his hometown Cleveland Browns.

I've never felt that Tressel's coaching style is particularly suited for the play-for-pay set. I don't see some of those high-paid athletes buying into the coach's notion of the team as family. Rooting for a teammate who plays the same position as you do is a lot less likely when there are millions of dollars at stake.

"Take that family stuff and your sweater vest back to Columbus, little man," I can hear some pro telling him.

Tressel himself acknowledged that he is probably not suited for the NFL back during this past bowl season when his name was floated as a possible replacement for Romeo Crennell as coach of the Browns.

"I'm not an NFL guy," he said. "I don't know that much about their world and all the nuances you have to do there. So I wouldn't be a good fit."

One of the "nuances" is dealing with a much more demanding media. NFL beat reporters would probably eat Tressel – who was chided by BCS officials for not making star quarterback Terrelle Pryor available to the media during preparations for the Fiesta Bowl – alive if he granted the same access to them as he does to Buckeye beat reporters.

I will never forget my first experience covering a pro football team. I had traveled to Chicago and the camp of legendary coach George Allen's Chicago Blitz of the ill-fated USFL. The team featured former Buckeyes such as Tim Spencer, Stan White and Lenny Willis, and I figured I could fill most of the July 1983 issue of BSB with stories garnered on the trip.

I was used to working at Ohio State. While there was much greater team access under then-coach Earle Bruce than there is today, you still had to go through proper channels to get interviews.

When I arrived at the Blitz camp, I figured that the publicity office would have set up interviews with the ex-Buckeyes. Instead, the

THE VIEW FROM 15TH AND HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

media man simply said "There's the locker room," and left me to fend for myself.

That was with a coach such as Allen, who had a reputation for managing even the smallest details – just like Tressel. The pros are a whole different world, and perhaps the current Buckeye coach isn't properly preparing his troops for the media exposure they will get if they are lucky enough to advance to the NFL.

That said, I say thanks to the coach for making our job a little easier this spring and perhaps it is a sign of things to come.

Parcells Likes Big Ten

While many belittle the Big Ten as a football conference, grid guru Bill Parcells seems to have a contrarian view.

According to Dolphins Digest, Parcells, who is currently Miami's executive vice president of football operations, has been involved in 21 NFL drafts as a head coach or administrator. In 10 of those drafts, Parcells has gone with a player from the Big Ten with his first-round pick.

Among those picks, Parcells chose three Buckeyes – offensive lineman William Roberts for the New York Giants in 1987, wide receiver Terry Glenn for the New England Patriots in 1996 and linebacker Bobby Carpenter for the Dallas Cowboys in 2006.

Other first-round picks for Parcells from the Big Ten while with the Giants included linebacker Carl Banks of Michigan State (1984), MSU wide receiver Mark Ingram (1987), tackle Eric Moore of Indiana (1988) and center Brian Williams of Minnesota (1989). While at New England, in addition to Glenn, Parcells plucked cornerback Ty Law from Michigan in 1995.

Parcells has chosen a player from the Big Ten both seasons he has been involved with the Dolphins' draft. Miami plucked Illinois cornerback Vontae Davis this spring after selecting Michigan tackle Jake Long in the first round in 2008.

Detailing The Draft

Speaking of the NFL draft, Draft Digest recently published its post-draft edition. As always, it is loaded with interesting facts and figures for Ohio State fans as well as any college or pro football fan.

At least for this draft, NFL talent evaluators seemed to disagree with Parcells. Only 28 players from the Big Ten were selected overall, and that tied the Big 12 for fourth most players from any conference. The SEC led the way with 37 players selected, followed by the ACC (33) and Pac-10 (32).

The Big Ten also had just four first-round picks, tied for fourth with the Pac-10. The SEC had eight players taken in the first round, while the Big 12 had seven and the ACC five.

Ohio State seemed to fare better than its conference brethren, having seven players taken in the draft. That tied with Oregon State and South Carolina for second to USC's 11. The Buckeyes also had two players – Malcolm Jenkins and Chris Wells – taken in the first round as did Georgia, Mississippi and Missouri. The Trojans again led the way with three top picks.

In a list of "The 10 Safest No. 1 Picks" in the draft, Jenkins, who was tabbed with the

14th overall pick by New Orleans, was ranked ninth. Meanwhile, on a list of the "riskiest" No. 1 picks, Wells, who was selected 31st by Arizona, was ranked sixth, presumably because of his history with injuries.

I'm not sure if it is any consolation to Ohio State offensive tackle Alex Boone, but he is ranked fourth among the "best college players who went undrafted." A possible reason is given for each of the leading undrafted players, and not surprisingly Boone's was "off-the-field issues."

Draft Digest ranks each team's overall draft and lists a "best move" for each of the clubs. The Saints' choice of Jenkins was listed as that team's best move in a draft and New Orleans ranked 18th overall. The Rams' selection of linebacker James Laurinaitis with the third pick of the second round was declared that team's best move in a haul that ranked St. Louis with the 13th-best draft overall.

Fans of Ohio's pro teams will be disheartened to hear that the Bengals' overall draft was ranked only 24th out of the 32 NFL teams, while the Browns, with hometown product Brian Robiskie as a second-round choice, were ranked 31st, ahead of only Oakland.

While Draft Digest may have deemed the selection of Wells risky, the publication seemed to find the big running back worth that risk so late in the first round. In the team-by-team analysis, the publication wrote that Arizona head coach Ken Whisenhunt had Wells "fall into his lap with the 31st overall pick."

Draft Digest also saw what Buckeye fans have seen when it comes to Jenkins and what many observers at NFL workouts seemed to miss.

Listing that pick by the Saints in the "Good Move" category, Draft Digest wrote, "No, cornerback Malcolm Jenkins didn't show great speed in pre-draft workouts, but what he showed during his time at Ohio State were tremendous cover skills and playmaking ability. For a team that badly needed secondary help, grabbing him when he was available at No. 14 overall was a no-brainer."

Also earning a "Good Move" designation was the Rams' selection of Laurinaitis: "The hard-hitting Laurinaitis adds some pop to the Rams' front seven and he has been compared to Chicago's Brian Urlacher. If he has the same early impact, then he will have been proven to be a good value in the second round."

We have copies of the post-draft issue of Draft Digest available for purchase at the \$7.95 cover price, which includes postage and handling. We also have a limited number of pre-draft issues of Draft Digest available, also at \$7.95. If you would like both issues, the total cost is just \$10.

Simply indicate which Draft Digests you want and mail your check, money order or credit card number to Draft Digest, c/o Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. You also can order by phone at (614) 486-2202.

Travel Tip

The Ohio State football team will be traveling to Penn State on Nov. 8 for one of the biggest games of the season. As anyone who has traveled to a game with the Nittany Lions

knows, getting in and out of State College is usually a time-consuming adventure.

Reynolds Travel is offering a solution to that problem this season. Ike Reynolds and his group are offering a same-day charter air trip to and from the game with Joe Paterno and his Lions. The "Buckeye Game Day Express" includes ground transportation from the airport to Beaver Stadium, and the flight will leave Columbus early enough to arrive in advance of pregame activities. Buckeye fans will return to Columbus immediately after the game.

Those fans will travel in style on a 50-passenger jet with the ever-popular open bar. Flight time is just one hour and 15 minutes – time usually spent caught in local traffic. Unfortunately, the Buckeye Game Day Express does not include game tickets. Reynolds Travel is, however, offering a two-day motor coach trip to State College that does include game tickets.

For information on either of these packages or any of the Reynolds Travel away trips this season, give Ike a call toll-free at (866) 880-0577 or check the company's website at ReynoldsTravel.net.

Hometown Hero Honored


London (Ohio) High School is turning to its most famous alum to help raise money for a new field house.

Dick LeBeau, former London, Ohio State and Detroit Lions great as well as current defensive coordinator of the Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers, will be honored at a "Night With the Coach," to be held June 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the London High School gymnasium.

Among those scheduled to speak at the event are Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin, Cincinnati Bengals head coach Marvin Lewis and Buffalo Bills head coach Dick Jauron as well as teammates of LeBeau from his days as a Buckeye and Lion.

Proceeds from the event, which will include dinner and a silent auction, go to the LeBeau Field House Project, an effort to build a new athletic facility adjacent to London's football field.

To order tickets, call London coach Bill Dennis at (740) 852-5705, ext. 1101, or (330) 763-0076.



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