

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 23, No. 3

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

September 20, 2003



**DRIVE SAFELY, FOLKS** — On the final play of the game, A.J. Hawk (47) helped stop N.C. State's T.A. McLendon a half-yard short of the end zone.

## Buckeyes Enjoy Affinity For OTs

*OSU Nips N.C. State, 44-38, In Horseshoe's Longest Game*

By MARK REA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

After not playing a single overtime game in the first six seasons after the NCAA decided to install the present tie-breaking format, Ohio State has suddenly become quite comfortable going the extra mile for a victory.

After the overtime rule went into effect for the 1996 season, the Buckeyes played 84 games without finishing in a tie at the end of regulation. And perhaps that was to be expected. In the program's previous 650 contests before the overtime rule was enacted — dating back to the first year of Francis A. Schmidt's coaching tenure in 1934 — only 22 of Ohio State's games had wound up in a tie.

But after OSU finally played in its first overtime game last year, it suddenly developed an affinity for them. Three of the Buckeyes' last six games have now gone to overtime, each one stretching a little longer than the one that preceded it.

Ohio State first dipped its toe into the overtime pool at Illinois last season as it took one extra session to defeat the Illini 23-16.

Just two games later, the Buckeyes went to double overtime before ending the University of Miami's 34-game winning streak with a 31-24 victory in the Fiesta Bowl that topped off the national championship.

On Sept. 13, OSU finally brought its overtime show home for the first time and had to go three additional periods before outlasting North Carolina State by a 44-38 score.

"I think there is a comfort level in our ability and our confidence when we get in these situations," said OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel. "We have been in that position so many times now that we feel like we're comfortable with it."

Krenzel capped an excellent four-quarter performance in overtime by running or throwing for all of his team's 75 extra-period yards. He

was 10 for 12 in the passing department for 70 yards and three touchdowns and also ran for the other 5 yards.

For the game, he completed 26 of 36 passes for 273 yards and four scores and also led the team in rushing with 37 yards on 14 carries.

"He's the leader and there's no question about that," said tight end Ryan Hamby, who caught a touchdown pass for the Buckeyes in the second overtime period. "Craig is so calm in the huddle that it just relaxes everyone. And once you've been in the position we were in so many times before, there's no panic."

Even first-year starters overcome any close-game jitters because of Krenzel.

"When the first overtime began, he was so calm in the huddle," said wide receiver Drew Carter. "He looked at us and said, 'We've been here before. We've done this before. We're used to this. Let's go get this done.' That's exactly what you want to hear from your quarterback in that situation."

Even those who were watching from the sidelines have faith.

"We never quit," said junior tailback Lydell Ross. "We have heart. That's what this team is all about. We're about heart and never quitting. That's why we're successful in these situations."

### Close Calls

Cardiac finishes have been the staple of Ohio State's current 17-game winning streak. Nine of those wins have now come by seven points or less.

"And I think that's part of the mentality, too," said junior tailback Maurice Hall. "It makes a huge difference in that it boosts our confidence to know what we've been able to do in the past. We know that we can depend upon each other in the clutch to get things done."

In the nine games that have been decided by a touchdown or less, the Buckeyes have been creative in find-

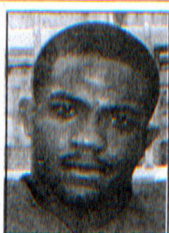
## Report: Clarett May Challenge Pro Rules

By CHRIS NIDA  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When Ohio State director of athletics Andy Geiger announced Sept. 10 that running back Maurice Claret would be suspended for the entire 2003 season, he left open the possibility of Claret returning to the program in the future.

Although Claret initially said he wanted to take Geiger up on his offer, reports circulating several days after the announcement seemed to indicate otherwise.

According to a Sept. 14 report on CBS.Sportsline.com, Claret attorney Alan C. Milstein faxed NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue and NFL Players Union executive director Gene Upshaw a letter asking that Claret be allowed to enter the 2004 draft.



**Maurice Claret**

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OHIO STATE VS. NORTH CAROLINA STATE

# Panic Button Goes Unused Again

## Overtime? No Problem. OSU Outlasts N.C. St.

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Just when you thought Ohio State couldn't make things any more interesting than it did last year, the Buckeyes invented a new way to scare the bejesus out of their fans and still win the game.

The Buckeyes blew a 24-7 fourth-quarter lead against North Carolina State Sept. 13 then outlasted the Wolfpack 44-38 in three overtimes, stopping star tailback T.A. McLendon just inches from the goal line to end the game.

"Our guys never stop playing," said OSU head coach Jim Tressel. "They never stop believing they have a chance."

That mentality was forged in seven victories last year by seven points or less by the Buckeyes, wins that included going to overtimes to beat both Illinois and Miami (Fla.).

But even those wins seemed to pale to the Buckeyes' win over N.C. State in which both teams seemed to stand toe to toe like heavyweight champions and trade potential knockout punches.

When the smoke finally cleared, it was Ohio State standing in the center of the ring with its 17th consecutive victory, the second most in school history and the longest current streak in college football.

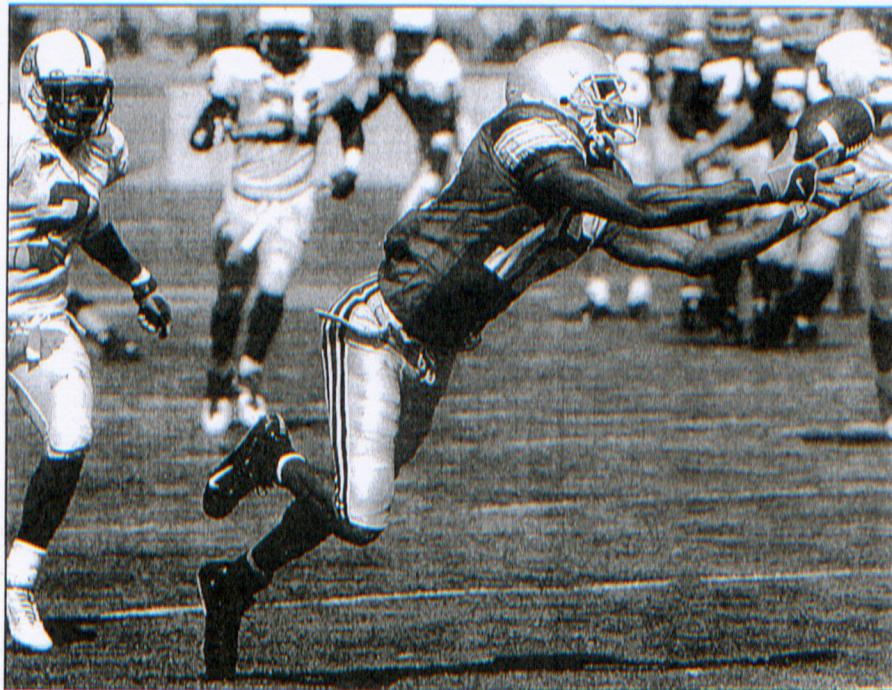
"I don't know what it is about overtime," said OSU senior co-captain Tim Anderson. "We don't seem to panic. We seem to get focused even more. Even though they had come back on us to tie the game, we had a good feeling about taking them in overtime."

The Buckeyes not only overcame the Wolfpack in OT, but they also overcame another of their own anemic offensive performances. Ohio State all but abandoned the running game down the stretch and totaled 75 of its 317 total yards and nearly half of its points in the three overtime periods.

"It goes to that focus factor," said OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel. "We got in the huddle when we started overtime and I just told everybody to relax because we'd been in that position before. We played as well as we played all day from that point on."

Krenzel was a machine in the extra periods, completing 10 of 12 pass attempts for 70 yards and three TDs. He scrambled for the other 5 yards gained by the Buckeyes in the OTs.

But while the passing game clicked, the running attack remained in neutral for the second straight week. When OSU got its final possession in regulation with 5:50 left, it couldn't run out



JEFF BREHM

**IN HIS GRASP** — Ohio State senior receiver Michael Jenkins (12) extends to make a 29-yard reception in the fourth quarter that set up the Buckeyes' final touchdown in regulation. Jenkins finished with seven catches for 124 yards and two scores.

the clock. A first-down play by Maurice Hall went for a 3-yard loss and the Buckeyes never handed the ball to a running back for the remainder of the game.

"It's a combination of things," Hall said of the running game problems. "It's one thing on one play, and something else on another. I do know this: We need to get it straightened out. But I think we will."

Krenzel was actually Ohio State's leading rusher in the game with 37 yards and one TD on 13 carries. Hall finished the game with 13 carries but had only 2 net yards. The entire team accounted for only 44 yards on the ground.

But Krenzel rebounded from a poor performance against

San Diego State to complete 26 of 36 attempts for 273 yards and four touchdowns. He also pitched a trio of interceptions. Each of those numbers represented career highs for the OSU quarterback.

Like Ohio State, the Wolfpack was hampered by the lack of a sustainable running attack as McLendon played only sparingly because of a knee injury. The tailback, who totaled over 1,100 yards and 18 TDs last year as a freshman, managed only eight carries against the Buckeyes for 32 yards and one TD.

N.C. State quarterback Philip Rivers almost single-handedly kept his team in the game, completing 36 of 52 passes for 315 yards and four touchdowns. He also threw two interceptions — both of which resulted in scores for Ohio State — and was sacked three times.

"It was the most fun I've ever had on a football field, except for the loss," Rivers said. "I don't know how much more we could have done."

The Wolfpack managed only 21 yards rushing as the Buckeyes' defense took advantage of McLendon's extended absences from the lineup. OSU also totaled 13 tackles for loss in the game.

Sophomore linebacker A.J. Hawk again led the team in tackles with 12, including two for loss. He also grabbed an interception that set up a Buckeye field goal.

Senior safety Will Allen totaled nine tackles, broke up a pass and recovered a fumble, while senior defensive tackle Tim Anderson added six stops and had two sacks.

### Easy Enough Start

Ohio State threatened to make the game a laugher early, getting two first-quarter touchdowns for a 14-0 lead.

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## OHIO STATE VS. NORTH CAROLINA STATE

Krenzel hit Michael Jenkins on a simple crossing pattern late in the period, and Jenkins outraced two N.C. State defenders to the end zone to finish off a 44-yard play.

On the ensuing kickoff, Wolfpack return man Richard Washington took his eye off the ball and the kick bounced off his helmet. Allen scooped up the loose ball at the NCSU 3-yard line. Two plays later, Lydell Ross bulled his way through the Wolfpack line to give the Buckeyes a 14-0 lead with 1:24 left in the first period.

OSU gave Rivers different looks on defense throughout much of the first part of the game, confusing and confounding the N.C. State quarterback.

But he came to life late in the first half and directed his team on a 74-yard drive in eight plays that took only 75 seconds.

He went 7 for 7 during the drive, picking up five first downs and capping it off with an 11-yard scoring strike to Jericho Cotchery.

But even though the Wolfpack took momentum into the locker room, Ohio State was the team that responded earliest in the second half.

Hawk stepped in front of a Rivers pass in OSU territory and returned it 55 yards to the N.C. State 7-yard line. Unfortunately, the great field position was squandered and the Buckeyes had to settle for a 22-yard field goal from Mike Nugent to make it 17-7.

Ohio State received even more good fortune when the Wolfpack turned the ball over on their next possession as OSU safety Brandon Mitchell was credited with an interception that appeared to bounce on the ground before he corralled it.

Nevertheless, the Buckeyes cashed in this time, putting together a 42-yard drive in five plays culminating in Krenzel's 6-yard scamper to give OSU a 24-7 lead with 11:25 left in the game.

The game seemed well in hand when the OSU defense forced N.C. State to punt on its next possession. But Santonio Holmes was charged with a fumble on the punt return although it appeared that he was down by contact before the ball came loose.

Like Ohio State, the Wolfpack turned its good fortune into a touchdown as Rivers found Cotchery again, this time for a 9-yard TD.

The Wolfpack got another turnover when Krenzel was intercepted on the Buckeyes' next possession and turned that into a 24-yard field goal from Adam Kiker to cut the Ohio State lead to 24-17.

Then when the Buckeyes could not get a single first down to run out the clock, Rivers drove his team 86 yards in eight plays, tossing a 5-yard TD pass to T.J. Williams with just 21 seconds left in regulation and sending the game into overtime.

#### And The Fun Begins

Tressel turned the reins of the offense over to Krenzel in the overtime periods and he responded. His first pass was a sideline dump to tight end Ben Hartssock that went for 11 yards, and the two hooked up three plays later for a 10-yard touchdown.

N.C. State responded with a 17-yard TD pass from Rivers to Tramain Hall, who caught nine balls on the day for 67 yards. The Wolfpack drew first blood in the second OT when they crossed up the

defense by handing the ball to McLendon, who got around right end from 2 yards out for the score.

But the Buckeyes came right back. Krenzel started with a 12-yard pass to Jenkins then found tight end Ryan Hamby in the end zone for a 2-yard score to send the game into its third extra session.

In the third OT, Krenzel again completed his first pass, this one a short 4-yard dump to Drew Carter. The OSU quarterback found Hartssock again for 7 yards and a first down then found Jenkins again for a 7-yard TD.

NCAA rules dictate teams must go for a two-point conversion beginning with the third overtime, and Krenzel's pass to a wide-open Jenkins was batted down at the line of scrimmage.

Then it was N.C. State's turn to try to match the score. Aided by three defensive penalties by OSU, the Wolfpack had a first-and-goal at the 5-yard line. But a pair of quarterback sneaks and an incomplete pass later, they were forced to try McLendon on fourth down. He was sub-marined by Hawk, and the N.C. State star's backside hit the turf just short of the goal line as he stretched the ball toward the end zone.

After a brief consultation, the officials determined McLendon had been stopped short of the goal and Ohio State had its 44-38 victory.

#### Game Notes

The contest marked the first-ever meeting between the two teams. OSU is now 8-6 against teams currently competing in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The last regular-season loss to a current ACC team was a 34-17 decision to Florida State in 1982. However, the Seminoles were not yet an ACC member.

Ohio State's last regular-season home loss to a team that was a member of the ACC when the game was played came in 1955 when NFL Hall-of-Famer Sonny Jurgensen led Duke to a 20-14 victory over the Buckeyes in Ohio Stadium.

Rivers broke several ACC passing records in the contest.

He passed Chris Weinke of Florida State to become the all-time leading passer in conference history with 10,061 yards. Weinke had 9,839 yards during his career from 1997-2000.

Rivers also broke a long-standing mark for career pass completions in the conference, moving past Ben Bennett of Duke (1980-83), who had 820 in his career. Rivers now has 839.

Ohio State's consecutive game winning streak is now 17, the second longest in school history. The Buckeyes strung together 22 wins in a row from 1967 to 1969.

The Buckeyes also are now a perfect 3-0 in overtime games. After never going to extra periods in the first six years of Division I-A overtime, OSU has stretched three of its last six games past regulation.

Tressel's record as OSU head coach is now 24-5, giving him the best record in school history through 29 games.

Earle Bruce (1979-87) and Francis Schmidt (1934-40) were both 23-6, while John W. Wilce (1913-28) was 22-5-2 through his first 29 games as Ohio State head coach.

*"The tradition at Ohio State just blew me away. It was all I had ever wanted."* \*

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\* Eddie George, page 312

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## OHIO STATE VS. NORTH CAROLINA STATE

# For Second Week In A Row, Big Play Seems To Find Allen

In just one week, Will Allen went from being a hundred-yard hero to a half-yard hero.

A week after taking an interception from goal line to goal line for the team's only touchdown against San Diego State, the Ohio State senior helped make a crucial stop on a third-overtime fourth-and-1 play against North Carolina State.

**INSIDE  
THE DEFENSE  
with  
Mike  
Wachsman**

With help from linebackers A.J. Hawk and Robert Reynolds, Allen denied Wolfpack running back T.A. McLendon the end zone, preserving the Buckeyes' nation-best winning streak, which now stands at 17 games.

"They caught us off-guard toward the end (of regulation)," Allen said. "In the beginning, we had them shut down. Then they tried to do the same play they scored with



JEFF BREHM

**TURNING POINT** — OSU safety Will Allen comes up with a first-quarter fumble recovery on a North Carolina State kickoff return that led to the Buckeyes' second touchdown.

in the first overtime. We were ready for it the second time."

McLendon came up about 18 inches short and OSU was able to exhale.

That Allen has become the Buckeyes' top defensive playmaker isn't surprising to his teammates.

"Somehow the ball seems to find him," defensive end Simon Fraser said. "He has a great attitude and a great work ethic and he's a great leader for this defense."

It's not by accident that Allen, who had nine stops against the Wolfpack, is in the right place at the right time.

"Will Allen is a big-play guy," defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio said. "He's very serious and prepares very well."

Allen also scooped up a loose ball after a fumble by N.C. State on a kickoff, which led to OSU's second touchdown and a 14-0 first-quarter lead.

"I saw it bounce because (the return men) ran into each other," Allen said. "I picked it up and should have scored. That would have been two touchdowns in two weeks."

Allen feels like he's simply doing his job.

"I take advantage of my opportunities," he said. "I just run hard and play hard, each down, each play."

## Rivers Runs Through It

Much of the pregame hype centered around N.C. State quarterback Philip Rivers, who finished with 315 yards and four touchdowns. He became the ACC's all-time passing leader in the second quarter and could put the record out of reach with a big season.

His resourcefulness and the ability to get rid of the ball when it appeared that nothing was there frustrated the Buckeyes, who had nothing

# OSU Defense Would Not Be Fooled Again

By MIKE WACHSMAN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

Ohio State avoided being fooled for the second time when it snuffed out a fourth-down running play from the 1-yard line, preserving a triple-overtime win against a game North Carolina State squad.

Wolfpack tailback T.A. McLendon, who led his team with 32 yards rushing after being questionable to play, scored on a toss sweep on first-and-goal in the second overtime. McLendon lined up offset as the lone back behind quarterback Philip Rivers and motored to the corner to put N.C. State up 38-31.

The Buckeyes subsequently tied the game and took a lead in the third overtime, but the Wolfpack looked ready to tie the contest again with first-and-goal at the OSU 4.

Two sneaks by Rivers gained 3 yards, and on fourth-and-1, N.C. State was looking for something that would prolong the game to a fourth extra period.

Instead of going with a pass, though, the Wolfpack lined McLendon up in his familiar spot in the backfield. But while the Buckeyes were fooled in the second overtime, they weren't going to make the same mistake in the third OT.

Linebacker A.J. Hawk was the first to get to McLendon, and Will Allen hit him straight on so that McLendon's backside touched before he was able to get the ball over the goal line.

"I just reacted to the football," Allen said. "I had to get off a block to stop him. It felt great to make the hit."

Hawk, who came in unblocked, was able to collar McLendon before Allen made the decisive wallop.

"I just wanted to run to the ball and get him before he had a chance to get to the end zone," Hawk said. "Right afterward, I was checking with the ref to see what the call was. It was a crazy day with the refs, so I wasn't sure. Once we saw he didn't get in, it was a great feeling."

McLendon, who had his moments against the Buckeyes but was for the most part shut down, felt the play call was a sound one. And he thought he had a chance to reach pay dirt.

"I saw an opening," he said. "I don't know who hit me, but I felt with my arms in the air. I think I have it every play, but I guess I didn't here."

OSU's defense knew the play was coming, so it simply came down to a matter of execution.

"I thought our guys cut the field off," defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio said. "We had pursuit coming inside out and we had a chance to make a hit. It was whether he was going to power it in or not."

Defensive end Will Smith was near the goal line when McLendon went down.

"He broke one tackle and spun before he hit the ground," he said. "He reached over the goal line, but I thought he was short. I guess the refs saw what I saw."

The tipoff that the play was coming to the left side was in the Wolfpack's set. They featured a bunch formation with a tight end on that side, and after some shifting, McLendon lined up to Rivers' left. The run to the strong side had worked on other occasions, but N.C. State went to the well once too often.

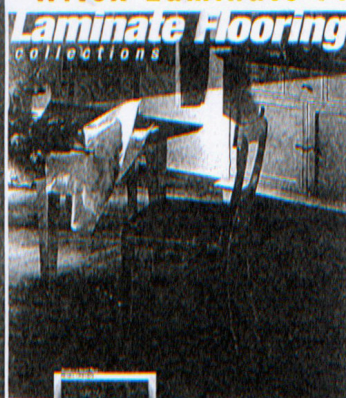
"We knew they'd run a toss there," Smith said. "They had funny formations and were moving around, but every time (McLendon) was in the game he got the ball. So we were ready."

The grueling day of football was a long, memorable one, but coming up inches short of a landmark victory will stick in Rivers' craw for some time.

"This is the worst loss I've been through by far," he said. "You tie it up and you're fighting, then you lose. It comes down to a few inches against a great team."

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## OHIO STATE VS. NORTH CAROLINA STATE

but praise for the All-America candidate.

"He can play," said Hawk, who led the Buckeyes with 11 tackles. "I like how he has great command of the team. He makes the right checks and the right throws and big plays when they need him to. I was impressed by him."

Rivers attempted 52 passes in the game, and while he was sacked just three times, he was pressured often in the first half. He went to the locker room with just 98 yards at halftime but really turned it up in the final 30 minutes.

"We hit him a few times," safety Nate Salley said. "He never quit, though. He played hard and kept coming back at us. We both played our hearts out all game and it's great that we came out with a win."

Rivers was a master at the dink-and-dunk, choosing safe passes over downfield bombs. The way he evaded trouble was something the Buckeyes knew could potentially cause problems.

"We saw a few times on film where he'd be in a horrible situation but always found a receiver," Salley said. "We tried to limit that as much as we could, but he still hit a couple. Whenever they caught the ball, we wanted them to know we were there."

Allen paid Rivers the highest possible compliment after the game.

"He's one of the best quarterbacks I've ever played against," the OSU senior said. "I'd compare him to Drew Brees when he was in college. Brees picked you apart and knew how to dump it off when he got into trouble and stayed poised in the pocket. Rivers did that today."

"In the first half, we shut him down a little bit. But in the second half he got his poise back and his swagger back about him. We had him a little confused and frus-

trated and we got pressure on him, but he started coming through in the second half."

Rivers, who led N.C. State to six scores in seven trips to the red zone, lauded the OSU defense as well as his own troops.

"Every play was a battle," he said. "We would get into good field position but kept digging ourselves a hole. We got into a rhythm in the second half, but Ohio State is a great team. It hurts, but you move on. We're going to keep our heads up. We just kept fighting and never quit, even when it was 24-7."

#### Been There, Done That

OSU has now won eight of its last 10 games by seven points or less, and three of the last six have needed extra time to finish.

Having that frame of reference came in handy when overtime started.

"We were there twice last year, so (overtime) wasn't a huge shock for us," Fraser said. "We knew we had to go out and take a huge breath and compete. It was back and forth the whole game and fortunately we came out on top."

Though more is on the line in overtime because any play could be the game winner, Ohio State doesn't treat it any differently.

"One of the reasons we're successful in these tight games is because we forget about the last play," defensive tackle Tim Anderson said. "Once that play is over, there's nothing you can do about it. It's time to get ready for the next one."

#### Lacking Killer Instinct?

After leading 24-7 with 11:25 remaining in the fourth quarter, things fell apart quickly for Ohio State.

Rivers found a groove and threw a pair of touchdown passes in the final eight and a half minutes, the last one a 5-yarder to tight end T.J. Williams with 21 seconds to play.

The comeback wasn't a surprise to N.C. State coach Chuck Amato.

"In the first half, we got down 14-0 and I'll bet a lot of people switched the TV to a different game," the Wolfpack coach said. "I probably would have, too, if I didn't know the kind of kids we had."

The comeback was similar to others involving the Buckeyes, including a few in the early days of the Jim Tressel era that resulted in heartbreaking losses.

Ohio State got out with a win, but the close call taught the defense a valuable lesson.

"(You have to) keep playing," Hawk said. "The defense gave up 17 points there pretty quick, and we have to learn that it's a 60-minute game and we have to play the whole time."

Rivers threw for 123 yards in the fourth quarter alone and was able to rally his charges from a deep deficit.

"We've just got to play hard," senior co-captain Will Smith said. "I think we let up and everybody got complacent in this game when it was 24-7 in the fourth quarter. Everyone said, 'Oh, game's over.' The defense was put into a situation it doesn't like, but we still have to step up and make the play."

As the Wolfpack gained confidence, the Buckeyes began to feel a few moments of uncertainty. But OSU was able to reach back into its storehouse of close shaves and come out on top.

"It's a momentum shift," cornerback Dustin Fox said of N.C. State's fourth-quarter comeback. "Things like that happen. Luckily we were able to pull together and get something going in overtime. We didn't quit. Adversity is tough, but we deal with it pretty well around here."

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## COVER STORY: BUCKEYES ENJOY AFFINITY FOR OTS

# Heart-Stopping Finish Not Unprecedented

Continued From Page 1

ing different ways to grab the victory.

It started last year at Cincinnati when Krenzel scrambled for a 6-yard touchdown with 3:44 remaining to pull out a 23-19 win over the Bearcats. Then, Will Allen began his penchant for displaying last-second heroics by grabbing an interception with 26 seconds left.

Four games later, the Buckeyes got a short TD pass from Krenzel to tight end Ben Hartsock in the fourth quarter to account for the game-winning points in a 19-14 win at Wisconsin.

The following week, OSU's offense committed four turnovers against Penn State and the Buckeyes scored their only touchdown on a 40-yard interception return by Chris Gamble. But it was enough for a 13-7 win.

Two weeks after that, it was the "Holy Buckeye" call from Brent Musberger after Michael Jenkins hauled in a 37-yard pass from Krenzel on fourth-and-1 with 1:36 remaining, giving Ohio State a 10-6 win at Purdue.

Next up was the first overtime game in school history. Hall scored on an 8-yard run to open the extra period, then OSU defensive tackle Tim Anderson battered down a fourth-down pass from Illinois QB Jon Beutjer to preserve the 23-16 win.

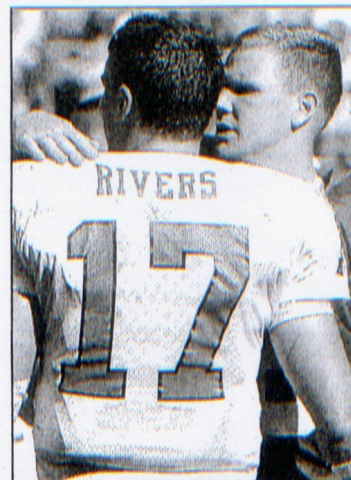
That was followed by the 14-9 win over Michigan. Hall scored the game winner for the second week in a row, bursting into the end zone with just 4:55 remaining in the game. Then Allen sealed the deal with an interception of John Navarre on the final play of the game.

And, of course, Ohio State had to go to two overtimes to beat Miami for the national championship, getting overtime touchdown runs from Krenzel and Maurice Clarett before the defense battered Hurricanes QB Ken Dorsey into submission in the 31-24 victory.

Ohio State had probably hoped the fantastic finishes had become a thing of the past, but they returned against San Diego State when the Aztecs surprised the Buckeyes and stayed tough throughout the game before OSU could pull out a 16-13 win. Allen was the star again, returning an interception 100 yards for the Buckeyes' lone touchdown of the game.

### Pulse-Pounding By Design?

Even though the Buckeyes are mak-



JEFF BREHM

**GOOD JOB, BUDDY** — Winning quarterback Craig Krenzel of Ohio State (right) greets his counterpart, Philip Rivers of N.C. State.

ing a habit of winning every close game during their winning streak, they insist they're not making a habit of keeping the outcomes close by design.

"Despite what some people might think, we don't like it," Carter said. "We don't like it at all. We'd rather win big every week, but sometimes bad stuff happens. We just have been able to drive through the bad stuff, and that has created a better team. The best teams sometimes have a scare, but they also show that they can win the ball game no matter what."

Anderson believes the Buckeyes actually get stronger during overtime.

"We seem to get even more focused," he said. "Maybe it's the adrenaline that takes over, but I think it goes back to practice tempo and how hard we go in practice."

In Tressel's 29 games as head coach of the Buckeyes, more than half have been decided by seven points or less. OSU has an 11-4 record in those games, and while most of the talk for such success centers about experience, focus and determination, there could be at least one other factor.

"There's probably a little bit of prayer involved, too," Hamby said with a slight grin.



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# The Numbers Game

## Ohio State 44, North Carolina State 38 (30T)

Sept. 13, 2003 — Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT1	OT2	OT3	F
NORTH CAROLINA STATE	0	7	0	17	7	7	0	38
OHIO STATE	14	0	3	7	7	7	6	44

### First Quarter

OSU — Jenkins, 44 yard pass from Krenzel (Nugent kick), 4:13; 7 plays, 70 yards, 3:52 TOP.  
OSU — Ross, 2 yard run (Nugent kick), 2:47; 2 plays, 3 yards, 1:24 TOP.

### Second Quarter

NCSU — Cotchery, 11 yard pass from Rivers (Kiker kick), 0:18; 8 plays, 74 yards, 1:15 TOP.

### Third Quarter

OSU — Nugent, 22 yard field goal, 0:00; 4 plays, 2 yards, 1:41 TOP.

### Fourth Quarter

OSU — Krenzel, 6 yard run (Nugent kick), 11:25; 5 plays, 42 yards, 2:40 TOP.

NCSU — Cotchery, 9 yard pass from Rivers (Kiker kick), 8:26; 4 plays, 17 yards, 1:00 TOP.

NCSU — Kiker, 24 yard field goal, 5:51; 4 plays, 5 yards, 0:50 TOP.

NCSU — T.J. Williams, 5 yard pass from Rivers (Kiker kick), 0:21; 8 plays, 86 yards, 2:57 TOP.

### First Overtime

OSU — Hartsock, 10 yard pass from Krenzel (Nugent kick); 4 plays, 25 yards.

NCSU — Hall, 17 yard pass from Rivers (Kiker kick); 3 plays, 25 yards.

### Second Overtime

NCSU — McLendon, 2 yard run (Kiker kick); 3 plays, 25 yards.

OSU — Hamby, 2 yard pass from Krenzel (Nugent kick); 4 plays, 25 yards.

### Third Overtime

OSU — Jenkins, 7 yard pass from Krenzel (pass failed); 5 plays, 25 yards.

Att. — 104,890

Weather — 74 degrees, sunny and pleasant; wind 2-3 MPH from S.

### Team Statistics

	NCSU	OSU
First Downs	28	15
Rushing	5	3
Passing	16	12
Penalty	7	0
Rushes-Yards	30-21	32-44
Passing Yards	315	273
Passes (Att.-Comp.-Int.)	52-36-2	36-26-3
Offensive Plays	82	68
Total Net Yards	336	317
Third Down Efficiency	4-14	6-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	0-0
Punts	7-41.6	5-49.4
Fumbles-Lost	4-1	2-2
Penalties	6-46	14-129
Time of Possession	29:29	30:17

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** — NCSU: McLendon 8-32; Hall 4-13; Washington 3-12; Cotchery 2-8; J.Brown 1-6; C.Jackson 2-(-1); Rivers 10-(-49). OSU: Krenzel 13-37; Schnittker 1-5; M.Hall 13-2; Ross 4-1; Team 1-(-1).

**PASSING (Att.-Comp.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** — NCSU: Rivers 52-36-2-315-4, OSU: Krenzel 36-26-3-273-4.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** — NCSU: Hall 9-67; B.Clark 6-73; Washington 5-39; Cotchery 4-44; T.J.Williams 4-18; McLendon 3-56; C.Jackson 2-15; Barrett 2-5; Hicks 1-(-2). OSU: Jenkins 12-14; Hartsock 7-65; Carter 6-39; Schnittker 2-17; Holmes 1-29; Hamby 1-2; M.Hall 1-0; Ross 1-(-3).

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** — NCSU: Herbert 7-41.6-53. OSU: Sander 5-49.4-57.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — NCSU: Hall 1-(-2). OSU: Holmes 2-12; Gamble 2-10.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** — NCSU: Golden 2-46; Reid 1-12; Team 1-(-7). OSU: Gamble 1-19.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES** — NCSU: Golden 1-9; Cotchery 1-0. OSU: Allen 1-0.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** — NCSU: A.J. Davis 1-17; Golden 1-0; Reid 1-0. OSU: Hawk 1-55; Mitchell 1-0.

**SACKS** — NCSU: Aughtry-Lindsay 1-5; Thomas 1-3. OSU: Anderson 2-15; Scott 1-2.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** — NCSU: Thomas 2-6; Hoyte 2-6; Aughtry-Lindsay 1-5; J.Martin 1-5; Moses 1-3; M.Williams 1-3; Maddox 1-1; Lewin 1-1. OSU: Anderson 3-20; W.Smith 2-5-6; Scott 2-6; Gamble 2-3; Hawk 2-2; Allen 1-2; Fox 0-1.

**TACKLES (Solo-Assist-Tot.)** — NCSU: Thomas 6-2-8; Graham 4-4-8; Hoyte 3-4-7; Maddox 4-2-6; Golden 2-4-6; Lewin 2-3-5; Aughtry-Lindsay 2-3-5; Reid 3-1-4; Lawson 2-2-4; Moses 2-0-2; M.Williams 1-1-2; C.Jackson 1-1-2; Stephens 0-2-2; Tulloch 1-0-1; Holloway 1-0-1; J.Martin 1-0-1; B.Clark 1-0-1; Tyler 0-1-1; Charles 0-1-1; Herndon 0-1-1. OSU: Hawk 6-6-12; Allen 4-6-9; Gamble 6-2-8; Reynolds 5-3-8; Anderson 2-4-6; Bailey 4-1-5; W.Smith 2-3-5; Fox 2-3-5; Mitchell 2-2-4; Scott 2-2-4; Carpenter 3-0-3; Everett 2-0-2; Green 0-2-2; Underwood 1-0-1; R.Hall 1-0-1; Carter 1-0-1; Fraser 0-1-1; Sims 0-1-1; Childress 0-1-1.

**PLAYERS IN THE GAME** — **NORTH CAROLINA STATE:** Offense, Cotchery, McKeon, L.Harris, Paulson, Fowler, Locklear, Ritcher, T.J.Williams, Rivers, Washington, C.Jackson, Kiker, Defense, M.Williams, Holloway, Lewin, McCargo, Aughtry-Lindsay, Hoyte, Thomas, Maddox, Graham, Golden, Reid, Herbert, Reserves, A.J. Davis, J.J. Jones, Hicks, Stephens, J.Davis, Deraney, Barrett, Moore, Hall, J.Brown, Hawkins, Gibson, Pollard, Cross, McLendon, E.Jones, Moyer, Tulloch, Herndon, Tyler, Young, Bertrand, B.Clark, Lawson, J.Martin, Moses, Charles. **OHIO STATE:** Defense, Fraser, Scott, Anderson, W.Smith, Hawk, Pagao Jr., Reynolds, Fox, Gamble, Salley, Allen, Sander, Offense, Jenkins, Sims, Clarke, Mangold, Bishop, Olvera, Hartsock, Carter, Krenzel, M.Hall, Schnittker, Nugent, Reserves, Underwood, Childress, Holmes, D'Andrea, Everett, Whitner, Young, Moore, Ross, Mitchell, Harley, Matthews, Carpenter, Kne, Kudla, K.Andrews, Olds, Schafer, Hamby, Izarray, R.Hall, Hollins, White, Pitcock, Bond, Green, Patterson.

## Season Statistics

2003 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent (AP Rank)	Result	Crowd
Aug. 30	(2) WASHINGTON (17)	W, 28-9	105,078
Sept. 6	(2) SAN DIEGO STATE	W, 16-13	104,433
Sept. 13	(3) N.C. STATE (24)	W, 44-38 (30T)	104,890
Sept. 20	BOWLING GREEN	12:10 p.m.	
Sept. 27	NORTHWESTERN	TBA	
Oct. 11	at Wisconsin	9:08 p.m.	
Oct. 18	IOWA	3:30 p.m.	
Oct. 25	at Indiana	TBA	
Nov. 1	at Penn State	TBA	
Nov. 8	MICHIGAN STATE	TBA	
Nov. 15	PURDUE	TBA	
Nov. 22	at Michigan	12:10 p.m.	

#OSU's gameday AP ranking is in parentheses before the opponent, while the opponent's ranking is after the name.

Team Statistics		OSU	Opp
First Downs		46	63
Rushing		17	8
Passing		27	38
Penalty		2	17
Average Per Game/Rush		102.0	18.7
Average Per Game/Pass		184.0	252.7
Total Offense		858	814
Total Plays		196	222
Average Per Game		286.0	271.3
Average Per Play		4.4	3.7
Penalties-Yards		30-293	22-156
Fumbles-Lost		6-5	6-5
3rd Down Efficiency		13/44	11/46
Percentage		30%	24%
4th Down Efficiency		2/2	1/4
Percentage		100%	25%
Sacks-Yards		10-84	8-51
Time of Possession Avg.		30:22	29:34

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	41	7	10	10	20	88	29.3
Opponents	7	7	6	26	14	60	20.0

Attendance	Games	Total	Avg.
Home	3	314,401	104,800
Away	0	0	—
Total	3	314,401	104,800

Individual Statistics		Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Rushing						
Maurice Hall	47	151	3.2	1	33	
Craig Krenzel	31	78	2.5	3	23	
Lydell Ross	23	60	2.6	2	15	
Chris Gamble	1	15	15.0	0	15	
Brandon Schnittker	1	5	5.0	0	5	
Ira Guilford	5	2	-0.4	0	2	
Troy Smith	1	2	2.0	0	2	
Team	2	-2	-1.0	0	-1	
Roshawn Parker	1	-5	-5.0	0	-5	
OSU Totals	112	306	2.7	6	33	
OPP Totals	80	56	0.7	2	27	

Receiving		Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Michael Jenkins	15	228	15.2	2	44	
Brew Carter	8	97	12.1	0	37	
Ben Hartsock	8	66	8.2	1	16	
Ryan Hamby	3	54	18.0	1	31	
Maurice Hall	3	8	2.7	0	8	
Santonio Holmes	2	37	18.5	0	29	
Bam Childress	2	18	9.0	0	11	
Brandon Schnittker	2	17	8.5	0	9	
Lydell Ross	2	9	4.5	0	12	
Roy Hall	1	18	18.0	0	18	
OSU Totals	46	552	12.0	4	44	
OPP Totals	86	758	8.8	5	34	

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPP	FG	PTS
Mike Nugent	—	10-10	—	—	4-5	22
Craig Krenzel	3	—	—	—	—	18

Lydell Ross	2	—	—	—	—	12
Michael Jenkins	2	—	—	—	—	12
Maurice Hall	1	—	—	—	—	6
Ryan Hamby	1	—	—	—	—	6
Ben Hartsock	1	—	—	—	—	6
Will Allen	1	—	—	—	—	6
OSU Totals	11	10-10	—	0-1	4-5	88
OPP Totals	7	6-6	0-1	—	4-5	60

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	INT	TD	Rating
Craig Krenzel	46	83	55.4	552	4	4	117.55
Scott McMullen	0	1	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
OSU Totals	46	84	54.8	552	4	4	116.15
OPP Totals	86	142	60.6	758	4	5	111.39

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Mike Nugent	1-2	3-3	0-0	0-0	4-5
OSU Totals	1-2	3-3	0-0	0-0	4-5
OPP Totals	1-1	0-1	3-3	0-0	4-5

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
B.J. Sander	19	815	42.9	0	68
OSU Totals	19	815	42.9	0	68
OPP Totals	22	907	41.2	0	56

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Will Allen	1	100	100.0	1	100
A.J. Hawk	1	55	55.0	0	55
Robert Reynolds	1	19	19.0	0	19
Brandon Mitchell	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	4	174	43.5	1	100
OPP Totals	4	31	7.8	0	17

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Chris Gamble	10	63	6.3	0	12
Santonio Holmes	4	16	4.0	0	7
OSU Totals	14	79	5.6	0	12
OPP Totals	5	47	9.4	0	20

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Maurice Hall	3	60	20.0	0	27
Chris Gamble	2	46	23.0	0	27
OSU Totals	5	106	21.2	0	27
OPP Totals	8	142	17.8	0	35

Defensive Leaders	Solo	Ass.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
A.J. Hawk	11	15	26	5.0-23	2-18
Will Allen	10	10	20	1.0-2	—
Dustin Fox	12	5	17	1.5-2	—
Robert Reynolds	11	5	16	1.0-11	1-11
Will Smith	7	7	14	4.5-16	1-7
Nate Salley	6	7	13	—	—
Chris Gamble	10	3	13	2.0-3	—
Brandon Mitchell	9	4	13	1.0-1	—
Tim Anderson	2	9	11	3.0-20	2-15
Simon Fraser	7	4	11	3.0-18	1-11
Darriin Scott	4	5	9	3.0-7	1-2
Bobby Carpenter	7	1	8	1.0-8	1-8
Fred Pagao Jr.	1	4	5	—	—
E.J. Underwood	3	1	4	—	—
Mike D'Andrea	3	1	4	—	—
Marcus Green	1	3	4	—	—
Tyler Everett	3	1	4	—	—
Ashton Youberty	3	0	3	—	—
Thomas Matthews	1	2	3	—	—
OSU Totals	116	92	208	27-123	10-84
OPP Totals	111	88	199	22-83	8-51

Fumbles Forced	1 — Will Allen, Darriin Scott, Mike D'Andrea, Tyler Everett.
Fumbles Recovered	1 — Will Allen, Brandon Mitchell, David Patterson.
Blocked Kicks	1 — Dustin Fox.

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## BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 44, North Carolina State 38 (30T)

Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel's assessment of the game: "What a great football game we witnessed today. Two teams went after it, played their hearts out, and it ends on the half-yard line. College overtime is, I think, extraordinary. It's great football."

North Carolina State head coach Chuck Amato's assessment of the game: "This was great for our kids. It was against a physical, Midwest football team and we accepted the challenge. In five years, this game will be on ESPN Classic."

OSU flanker Drew Carter on the Buckeyes' experience in overtime games and thrilling finishes: "Overtime is overtime. You know you have to step it up or you're going to lose the game. This was an emotional game, too. I'm beat right now, but it's a good beat. You feel good when you put it all on the line and come out victorious."

OSU strong safety Will Allen on his game-ending tackle of N.C. State tailback T.A. McLendon just short of the goal line: "You have to give your body. You can't have any remorse for your body. It's do or die, him or me. I didn't want it to be me."

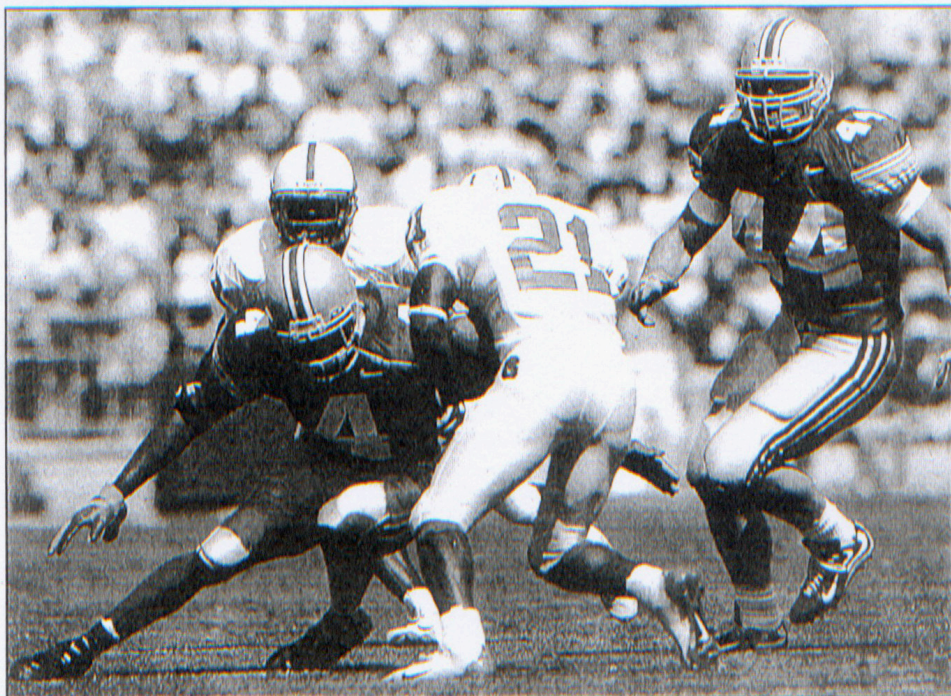
OSU defensive tackle Tim Anderson on the mood in the huddle before that fourth-down play: "It was really no different than any other play. We knew we had to stop them, but there was no worry or concern or anything like that. Everybody knew what they had to do and we did it."

N.C. State flanker Jericho Cotchery on his impression of the Buckeyes: "They showed why they are national champs. They have been in these kind of games before, and they didn't budge one bit. They came back and scored, and that's the mark of a championship team."

OSU cornerback Dustin Fox on whether he is used to overtime games now that the Buckeyes have gone to extra periods in three of their last six games: "No. I don't want to play all day. We'd love to win it and not be out there for six hours or whatever it was. We could do without the drama."

OSU linebacker A.J. Hawk on his second-quarter interception: "(Wolfpack QB Philip Rivers) threw the ball right to me, but I attribute that to good coaching. I knew right where I was supposed to be because of our coaches."

Hawk's reaction when he was caught from



JEFF BREHM

**HIT ON 21** — OSU strong safety Will Allen (4) and outside linebacker Robert Reynolds (44) prepare to lower the boom on N.C. State H-back Tremain Hall (21).

behind after a 55-yard return: "I was mad at myself, to tell you the truth. Anytime you get an interception, you want to score. I saw the end zone for a little bit, but I got caught from behind. I guess I'm going to have to work on my speed a little bit."

Rivers on his team's mind-set when it faced a 24-7 deficit on the road to the nation's third-ranked team: "There's a bunch of teams, I imagine, that would have quit at 24-7. We just kept fighting and kept fighting."

OSU tight end Ryan Hamby on his touchdown catch in the second overtime period: "It's a simple play we run every day in practice. I just got lost in the back of the end zone and Craig found me. If you go back and look at the tape, you'll see the ball go right over No. 52 (N.C. State linebacker Pat

Thomas). It went right over his fingertips and I just grabbed it."

Amato on his sprint toward the ACC officiating crew after the game: "I just wanted to go out and tell the officials what a good job they did. I mean that. Really."

When asked about the call on the last play, Amato replied: "I'm sure it was the right call that they made because all the calls they made today were exactly on the money."

Rivers on the questionable play-calling on his team's final series that called for three runs in the last four plays: "We can analyze every play down there to death. You just keep playing. We had our chances."



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## COVER STORY: CLARETT MAY CHALLENGE PRO RULES

## Investigation Concludes With 16 Violations

Continued From Page 1

If the request is denied, the letter stated that Clarett was willing to sue the league, the report said.

NFL rules state that for a player to be eligible for the annual draft, he must be at least three years removed from high school. It is widely believed that the NFL's rules would not stand up to a legal challenge, but the league has repeatedly promised to vigorously fight any challenge to its rules, effectively delaying any player's early entrance by up to a year or more.

The news of Clarett's potential challenge came just four days after Geiger's announcement of Clarett's one-year suspension, which came as a result of an investigation that began with a visit from NCAA enforcement staff members June 26.

That investigation discovered that Clarett had violated two separate NCAA bylaws dealing with amateurism and

ethical conduct.

Geiger told reporters that there were two violations of Bylaw 12, involving improper benefits worth "thousands of dollars," and 14 violations of Bylaw 10, which involved "patterns of false and misleading statements."

Based upon NCAA precedent, Clarett would be required to miss at least 50 percent of the season for the violations of Bylaw 10, in addition to at least 50 percent of the season for the violations of Bylaw 12.

"This is a sad day," Geiger said. "We regret deeply what Maurice Clarett has lost and what the Ohio State University, our football family and our fans have lost for this year. A very talented football player will not be able to share his talent and this community will not get to see this gifted athlete compete.

## BYLAW, ARTICLE 12

## Amateurism

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the NCAA, the Big Ten Conference and this university. Foremost among these are the requirements to be ethical and honest and to preserve amateur standing."

Should Clarett's college career be over, it would be by his choice since OSU's suspension did not necessarily end Clarett's tenure as a Buckeye. However, for Clarett to continue his collegiate career, the school would have to apply for his reinstatement, which Geiger said the university would do, provided Clarett meets certain conditions.

Those conditions include making sat-

isfactory academic progress toward his degree, not accepting any further impermissible benefits or violating NCAA rules, making restitution for the benefits he has received by making a donation to the charity of his choice, and making progress on conditions involving "personal growth."

Geiger would not elaborate on what the last condition entailed, but he did say that Clarett told him he wanted to get his degree from Ohio State.

Before learning of Clarett's renewed interest in challenging the NFL for early inclusion, OSU head coach Jim Tressel was hopeful his star running back would return to the team at some point in the future.

"We certainly want him to remain at Ohio State and continue to move toward his degree and, if it's his choice, try to make every effort to get back into step, moving toward the goals that he has set since he's come here," Tressel said.

Continued On Page 24

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## COVER STORY: CLARETT MAY CHALLENGE PRO RULES

# Questions That Remain Prove That Matter Isn't Over

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor

Just in case you thought Ohio State's Sept. 10 announcement about the suspension of Maurice Clarett would be the final word on the matter, think again.

Several loose ends still remain, including the actual length of the suspension, the options that remain open to Clarett and whether an ongoing academic investigation by the university will have any bearing on the situation.

OSU athletic director Andy Geiger discussed various aspects of the case with reporters prior to the Buckeyes' game with North Carolina State three days later, filling in some blanks and admitting there was still some information regarding the situation he did not know.

"Maurice has indicated that he wants to play here again, and we want him to play again," Geiger said. "In order for that to happen, we have to apply for reinstatement of his eligibility because we are the people that declared him ineligible."

"If he goes to (another school) at any level, as long as it's in the NCAA, the institution where he goes must apply for his reinstatement."

While the suspension is for one year at Ohio State, it could conceivably be shortened should Clarett seek a transfer.

"If he goes to another school, that institution could apply for his reinstatement now," Geiger said. "But I don't know the technicality of whether or not he must serve the penalty that we imposed. I don't know how much of it travels with him. You would have to ask the folks at the NCAA about that. I have enough on my hands trying to do the Ohio State part of this."

The OSU athletic director said he had no reason to believe that the NCAA would not allow Clarett to return once the university had applied for his reinstatement.

"I think it depends upon the progress that he makes," Geiger said. "Then the energy that you put into the effort to reinstate him would be to make the argument that it's the right thing to do."

OSU head coach Jim Tressel has indicated that if Clarett



DARRELL DAWSON

**'THIS IS A SAD DAY' — Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger steps up to the microphone Sept. 10 to inform the media of OSU's findings in the Maurice Clarett matter.**

does what is outlined in the university's suspension, he could be welcomed back to the squad as a practice player this season.

But Geiger would not speculate on that possibility. When asked if the suspension was for one calendar year or one football season, he simply replied, "It's until we apply for reinstatement."

And when he was quizzed on Clarett's possible availability for spring football, Geiger said, "I don't know. I don't even want to speculate on that."

One of the stipulations of Clarett's suspension is to make restitution for the improper monetary gifts he received. But that brings the question of how any student-athlete can repay "thousands of dollars" under the NCAA restrictions of making a maximum of \$2,000 during the year at any job, although that number is unlimited in the summer.

"He has options," Geiger said. "He could take less from his scholarship check as a way of making restitution, or he could work out some sort of payment plan. He doesn't have to pay back 100 percent of the money immediately. All that would do is exacerbate the problem."

He added there is no timetable for Clarett to make full restitution. "We have to work on that," Geiger said.

The Ohio State AD said he had had no contact with Clarett and anyone in his camp since the suspension was handed down. But he added that he believed the star tailback would remain in school and apply to rejoin the team next year.

"I have had no indication that there is anything different," Geiger said.

Although the university's portion of the NCAA investigation has now wrapped, the school continues its separate probe into allegations of academic infractions.

Geiger said he did not know how that 10-person panel investigation was progressing.

"All I know is totally from hearsay, and I don't want to characterize it in any way from that," he said. "We have wanted that to be independent and without influence from any outside source."

"Obviously, they are going to interview (coaches and athletes). But what happens when their doors close and what kind of discussions they will have, I can't characterize because I frankly do not know."

Should the panel find wrongdoing in the academic arena, more problems could be felt in the athletic department. But again Geiger refused to speculate.

"I just don't know," he said. "I don't know where (that investigation) is going or what it's about. In the abstract, if they find wrongdoing and additional culpability, then there's an issue. But I absolutely do not know."

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## COVER STORY: CLARETT MAY CHALLENGE PRO RULES

# The Ghosts Of Iconoclasts Past

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Maurice Claret isn't the only one who feels lost at sea by his suspension from the Ohio State football team and the long-awaited ruling on his eligibility by the secretive NCAA.

Information-starved fans have been clamoring for an explanation for weeks. Members of the team, despite their best efforts to suppress the "distraction," have admitted feeling like they are in limbo.

And then there are those who often add perspective to things surrounding OSU football: historians, sports information personnel, reporters and former players. BSB tracked down representatives from each group and asked them if they had ever seen a firestorm like the one that has surrounded Claret since July, when allegations of shaky academic conduct arose and were followed by a myriad of other headaches.

The short answer from all the correspondents was consistent.

"I don't think there's anything close," former Buckeye running back Jeff Logan said. "I just don't know who would even compare to Maurice in terms of the negative attention he's brought to the program and how often he seems to meet with trouble."

"We had guys who got (former coach Woody Hayes') attention and acted a certain way, but there always seemed to be a breaking point and then it was get back in line."

"I can't think of anybody," said Bruce Hooley of The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer, who has been on the football beat since 1988. "Robert Smith certainly was a lightning rod for a while there. For one, he had a near direct hand in getting a top assistant coach (Elliot Uzelac) fired. But really, no one is in Maurice's league."

Added former longtime OSU sports information director Mary Homan, "I'm afraid Maurice Claret is unique."

Reports that Claret could be facing a suspension of eight to 10 games or more even had OSU football historian Jack Park scratching his head about any precedent.

"In all my time in covering and being around college football, I don't know anything that approaches that severe a punishment," Park said. "It's probably unprecedented, especially when you consider that 10 games used to mean an entire season."

"This whole investigation and everything around it has been one of the most unusual things I've ever seen. I don't know if there's ever been as much coverage of a story that so many people knew so little about."

Former NFL stars Paul Hornung and Alex Karras were suspended by that league for a full year when it was discovered they had dealings with bookies. Former OSU quarterback Art Schlichter was suspended twice from the NFL for gambling, but his problem never surfaced while he was at Ohio State.

The Buckeyes, meanwhile, have lost their share of standouts in Cris Carter, Vince Workman and Joey Galloway for taking money from agents, although Galloway's 1994 infraction cost him just two games.

Homan said that he dealt with a few public relations nightmares in his days as SID, including the firing of Hayes in 1978. But as far as off-the-field problems for players in the 1950s, '60s, '70s and even '80s, most never even found the newspaper and very few involved scandal and NCAA investigation.

Things changed with the recent information age that includes national publications such as USA Today, sports magazines galore, all-day television stations devoted to sports news such as ESPN, and, of course, the Internet.

"The only thing in my memory that remotely approaches (the Claret situation) is when OSU declared Cris Carter ineligible (in 1987)," Homan said. "Without question, he was one of the outstanding pass catchers in college football even though we didn't throw it a lot, and that was widely covered."

"But even that was a very quick thing. It was clear-cut and obvious he had availed himself to either money or goods from an agent. When (former athletic director) Rick Bay found out about it, that was the end of Cris Carter."

Several Buckeyes through the years have been in the doghouse without even nearing the national spotlight. A classic example is former fullback Hubert Bobo, who flamed out of the program after helping the Buckeyes to the 1954 national cham-

pionship.

"Bobo was like an uncontrolled rocket," former teammate Frank Machinsky said. "It was hard to keep him in line. Woody told me one time that one of his biggest disappointments was that he couldn't straighten out Bobo."

Now one has to wonder if Jim Tressel's first-ever commitment to Ohio State will haunt him the same way. To this point, it appears no one can help Claret gain control of either his emotions or his actions.

"With most guys, Ohio State is successful in teaching them that there are times when it really is in their best interests to shut up," Hooley said. "Maurice never took to that idea."

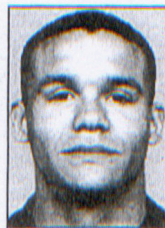
Added Homan, "I don't know if you call it youthful exuberance or what, but his behavior has gotten him in too far. I don't think Maurice is what you would call a bad person, but obviously he doesn't use very good judgment and there is reason to believe now by what is being reported that he may have tried to lie his way out of the predicament. If that is so, then he has no one to blame but himself."

"It's beginning to look like he's his own worst enemy."

However, Claret's indiscretions are leaving a profound mark on Ohio State's reputation, and that's both sad and frustrating to people like Logan, who lettered for OSU from 1974-77.

"It hurts, especially those of us that had a lot of pride not only on the athletic side but the academic side as well," said Logan, who remains an OSU football analyst on WBZ-FM. "I think of all the positive things and advances Jim Tressel has made here in the last 30 months — and it's gone. Of course, it's not really gone, but the public perspective out there is totally different now."

"If I felt there was something I could do, something I could say and pull that kid aside, then I'd do it. But we've got guys like Jim Tressel and Archie Griffin right there near the situation, and I have nothing but respect for them. So if they can't get through to him, then there's nothing Jeff Logan or (former Columbus mayor and Buckeye captain) Greg Lashutka or Cris Carter or anyone else can do."



Robert Smith

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## Geiger Tells OSU's Side

Continued From Page 22

### Judgment Day

Bits and pieces of information regarding the Claret saga had been emerging on a daily basis for nearly a month, but soon after Sept. 10 dawned, it became apparent that it would be a watershed day.

Claret and his mother, Michelle, arrived at the Schottenstein Center early that morning to meet with OSU administration officials. There, Claret was informed of his penalty, though neither he nor his mother confirmed that to reporters upon emerging from the meeting.

Said Maurice, "There's two sides to every story," with his mother adding that there had been no decision regarding Claret's future made.

"Nothing has been decided if we go, if we stay, if we dance or not," she said. "So to ask that question and expect a black-and-white answer, you cannot have one."

About five hours later at 3 p.m., Geiger held his press conference in the Varsity O room at Ohio Stadium.

It was a sometimes contentious meeting, as reporters pried for information as to the nature of Claret's offense and whether OSU should have known about the types of benefits he was receiving.

Geiger said he believed that some of Claret's transgressions occurred "partially" during OSU's 2002 national championship season, but because the university did not know about them, it cannot be held responsible.

"If the university was unaware or involved, then the university is not culpable whether or not he was playing football,"

the OSU athletic director said.

NCAA spokesperson Kay Hawes confirmed as much.

"It would be premature at this time to speculate whether or not games could be vacated at this time, because there is no indication of any institutional involvement," Hawes told BSB.

She also confirmed another of Geiger's assertions during his press conference, that no word on the NCAA's response to Claret's suspension will come until the university asks for his reinstatement, which is contingent upon the running back meeting the aforementioned requirements.

"The next time the NCAA would get involved would be if the student-athlete completes conditions set for him and a reinstatement request is made," Hawes said. "Based on Andy Geiger's statement, I don't think that will take place until the conclusion of the academic year at the earliest."

Of course, should Claret choose to pursue an NFL career, a response from the NCAA would be moot.

Geiger remained relatively calm during his press conference, but his frustration with the matter did shine through at times, particularly when the topic of blame for the situation was brought up.

"Gosh, I don't know who I blame when somebody doesn't tell the truth," he said sardonically.

But that doesn't absolve the OSU administration from examining how it has handled the situation.

"I keep searching in life for 'overs,' ways to do it again and to do it differently," Geiger said. "I don't know, standing before you, just exactly what we would have done differently, but I'm not very happy with the outcome. So in time, we'll examine all of this and take a look at everything that we do, as we always do, to try to get better, and try to improve what we do."



## COVER STORY: CLARETT MAY CHALLENGE PRO RULES

Among those in attendance at Geiger's press conference was Archie Griffin, current associate athletic director and future president of the OSU alumni association.

He declined comment to BSB.

"I'm going to let Andy's comments stand and speak for the athletic department," Griffin said.

Tressel met with reporters later in the day, following the Buckeyes' practice. He expressed his disappointment with the outcome of Clarett's situation, not only from a coaching standpoint, but from a personal one as well.

"It's obviously very distressing because I happen to think that the sky is the limit as to what he can be and what he can accomplish, and really the positive impact that he can make," Tressel said. "We haven't gotten there. So it is personally disappointing."

Like Geiger, Tressel was open to the possibility that OSU could have done some things differently over the course of the past year and a half.

"I can remember once or twice in the last year and a half saying, 'Hey, I heard that you have this or that,'" Tressel said. "And he would give a response as to what that was all about. So, obviously, maybe we should have hoisted some red flags that we didn't."

#### The Aftermath

In the days following the announcement of Clarett's suspension, but before it became known that he was looking into challenging the NFL rule, the man responsible for at least some of Clarett's problems was identified in various published reports as Bobby Dellimuti, a resident of Warren, Ohio, where Clarett attended Harding High School.

Dellimuti has been unavailable for comment.

"He's scared to death," Thom McDaniels, Clarett's coach at Warren Harding, told the Dayton Daily News. "I don't think he's done anything wrong, but he feels like he's to blame for some of this. The guy is under a rock right now."

NCAA rules are such that any benefits provided to a student-athlete are permissible only if the provider of the benefits has a "prior relationship" with that student-athlete.

What constitutes a "prior relationship" can be a bit of a gray area, but evidently OSU decided it did not exist as the NCAA defines it in this case.

McDaniels is among those who disagree.

"There's nothing illegal," he said. "There's nothing shady. This same individual has done things like this for kids at other colleges who were Warren Harding players. It's because (he has) no children, he's well off, and he can afford to do it."

"It's someone who knew Maurice during his entire experience in Warren. He has attended two Ohio State games in

## Fans Lament, Brush Off Loss Of No. 13

By CHRIS NIDA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Now that it is official that sophomore running back Maurice Clarett will not be with the Ohio State football team this year, most fans are attempting to put that situation behind them and focus on who is available to play during the 2003 season.

That doesn't mean that many of those same fans don't hold an opinion on the embattled running back, and many are more than willing to share that opinion.

That was the case with several of the 104,890 fans inside Ohio Stadium Sept. 13 prior to Ohio State's game with North Carolina State, who were happy to express their feelings on the matter when queried by BSB.

David DeWeese of Hilliard in suburban Columbus was not alone in suggesting that the Buckeyes should part ways with Clarett.

"I think they need to let him go, because I'm afraid what's going to happen next year," DeWeese said. "It's just going to be a rewind."

DeWeese holds no personal animosity toward Clarett but believes that all parties could benefit from an amicable parting.

"I think this whole situation is too bad for him and too bad for Ohio State," he said. "I think he's better off going and starting over new someplace. I think it's better off for our program."

DeWeese was in attendance with his son, David II, who was most interested in making sure the university emerged from the situation unscathed.

"My personal feeling is if he didn't follow the rules, I think he should pay the price," the younger DeWeese said. "I think it's the right thing to do by protecting the university."

He also was able to offer a somewhat unique perspective on the topic as a college student himself.

Everyone who has attended college knows how lean those years can be, and NCAA regulations and the time commitment involved with participating in athletics at the Division I-A level leave little opportunity to earn any kind of spending money.

"Even though they explain and define all the rules, as a college

student myself, it would probably be hard to say no to money and illegal benefits," the younger DeWeese said. "As students, we're allowed to take that stuff, but as athletes, they have to follow certain rules by the NCAA."

Chris Price of Delaware, Ohio, attended the N.C. State game clad in a Buckeye jersey emblazoned with Clarett's No. 13.

Were it up to him, Clarett would pay his penance so that "the best running back in the country" could continue to excel, both collegiately and at the next level.

"He just needs to do what they tell him to do so he can get back on the field, for his college career and his NFL career," Price said.

Like the younger DeWeese, Price sympathizes with Clarett's predicament of being a teen-ager thrust into the limelight and celebrity lifestyle that comes with such athletic prowess for the Ohio State University.

"When you're an 18-year-old kid and you come out of high school early ... and then you get a whole bunch too soon, you just don't know how to deal with it," Price said. "Sometimes it takes a few years to learn how to deal with that type of thing."

Some people, both locally and nationally, have criticized the way the OSU athletic department — particularly director Andy Geiger and head football coach Jim Tressel — have handled the entire Clarett affair.

They say that perhaps the OSU brass should have paid more attention to their star player's dealings and known what types of temptations he was facing.

Since the true inner workings of the athletic department may never be known by those outside of it, Price prefers to reserve judgment on the matter.

"There's a lot of things that go on behind the scenes that we don't know," he said. "We get a little piece here and there, and you run with it. You just don't know, so sometimes it's hard to make judgments when you don't know all the facts and know both sides of the story."

DeWeese II was more emphatic about his faith in OSU's higher-ups.

"I trust Tressel and Geiger and their integrity," he said. "I wouldn't rather have two other people in the world running our program."

his life. He has zero affiliation (with the school)."

Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown, also speaking to the Dayton Daily News before the news that Clarett was seeking to challenge the NFL rule broke, may have hinted at such a challenge.

"It seems to me they really don't want him back, because they're putting almost impossible criteria in front of him," Brown said.

OSU's rushing attack against North Carolina State Sept. 13 was again anemic, but Clarett's name was scarcely mentioned in the postgame interview room.

#### City Attorney Files Charges

All of the news regarding Clarett's status with Ohio State came on top of the Sept. 9 announcement by the Columbus city attorney that the OSU star had been charged with one count of falsification, based on the police report he filed with OSU police after his car was burglarized in April while parked at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center.

The complaint states that on or about April 18, Clarett "did knowingly make a

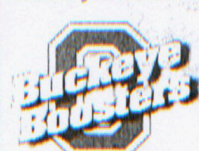
false statement, or knowingly swear or affirm the truth of a false statement previously made, when the statement (the report of a theft of personal property from his automobile) ... was made with purpose to mislead a public official (Ohio State University Police Officers) in performing their official function."

Falsification is a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. As a first-time offender, however, Clarett is not likely to face more than probation.

He is due to appear in court in Columbus on Oct. 10 at 9 a.m. to face the complaint.

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