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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

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SONNY BROCKWAY

ROSY FINISH – Head coach Urban Meyer (center) led Ohio State to a 28-23 win in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1, marking his final game with the Buckeyes. He celebrated postgame with his wife, Shelley (third from right), daughter Gigi (second from right) and son, Nate (right).

Meyer Caps Ohio State Career With Rose Bowl Victory

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

When Urban Meyer woke up on the final day of 2018, there was about 48 hours left in one of the most decorated coaching tenures in Ohio State history.

That ending would wait for a little while, though. He had to lead the sixth-ranked Buckeyes in the Rose Bowl against No. 9 Washington first, and even before that, he had one last pregame press conference to attend – along with Huskies coach Chris Petersen.

The two coaches arrived Dec. 31 for what is typically a boilerplate press conference ahead of a bowl game. But there was nothing typical about Ohio State's postseason this time around: The press conference took place 27 days after Meyer announced his retirement, effective Jan. 2, 2019. The Rose Bowl – the Granddaddy of Them All – was an afterthought. On that morning, so was Petersen.

Both coaches gave opening statements, and then the moderator opened proceedings up for questions – the first seven of which were directed at Meyer. The aim was to get Meyer to open up more about his career, what brought that to an end and his legacy overall.

He had a different focus – only fitting, since that was always the case with Meyer.

"I don't want to devalue the experience, but we're here to win a football game," he said. "And the best part of doing a bowl experience is to do your very best to go win and winning it. We've been working hard on that, realizing who we're playing, how good they are."

For The Roses

About 30 hours after those comments, it was time for Ohio State to attempt

to do just that. And for the first 45 minutes of the 105th Rose Bowl Game, it looked like Meyer would be going out on top with one last dominating victory.

That might not have been quite fitting for a coach whose biggest highlights at Ohio State came with hard-fought, down-to-the wire wins.

You can go back to Meyer's first season in Columbus – 2012 – for a prime example of that. The Buckeyes, boasting a 7-0 record, hosted Purdue and found themselves trailing, 22-14, in the fourth quarter with star quarterback Braxton Miller sidelined via injury. Kenny Guiton guided Ohio State on a scoring drive, hitting Chris Fields with three seconds left then finding Jeff Heurman for the 2-point conversion to force overtime, where the Buckeyes won on a 1-yard run by Carlos Hyde.

It was one of the first major highlights for Meyer, who began his career at Ohio State 24-0 before losing back-to-back games to Michigan State and Clemson to end the 2013 season.

Then came 2014, a national championship season that included a double-overtime win at Penn State and a 42-35 victory over No. 1 Alabama in the Sugar Bowl.

The 2015 season was highlighted by a loss in a close game – 17-14 to Michigan State – and the high note of 2016 was a double-overtime win over Michigan in a game that pitted the No. 2 Buckeyes against the third-ranked Wolverines.

The 2017 season had its share of drama, too. The Buckeyes stormed back from a 16-point deficit to beat Penn State, 39-38, and backup quarterback Dwayne Haskins replaced an injured J.T. Barrett to lead the Buckeyes to a comeback win at Michigan to end the regular season.

This year, there was another one-point win at Penn State and a

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OPINION

Urban Meyer's Final Season By The Numbers



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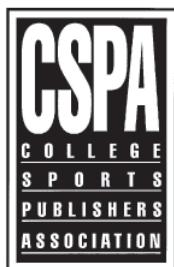
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Charter Member

I've always been kind of a numbers guy. I loved math in school – real math, not that algebra nonsense – and have been fascinated by statistical information ever since I can remember.

I probably learned at a very young age how to do long division by calculating batting averages and completion percentages, so it stands to reason I enjoyed digging into what was a historical 2018 season numbers-wise for the Ohio State football team.

Here are some of the most outstanding numbers put up by the Buckeyes this past season.

1 – Ohio State finished the 2018 season with 13 victories, the first time in program history the Buckeyes had won that exact number of games. The team has two 14-win seasons, and each of those produced national championships (2002 and 2014).

2 – Washington joined Purdue as the second team this season to have a 300-yard passer, 100-yard receiver and 100-yard rusher in the same game against the Buckeyes, a feat that hadn't been accomplished against Ohio State since Clemson did it during its 45-30 win in the 2014 Gator Bowl. Never before this season had two opponents in the same season ever had a 300-yard passer, 100-yard receiver and 100-yard rusher in the same game against OSU.

3 – Ohio State finished No. 3 in the final Associated Press writers' poll, marking only the second time since the AP poll began in 1937 that the Buckeyes had finished in the No. 3 spot. OSU has finished among the top five in the writers' poll on 27 occasions, but the only other time it has finished third was in 2012.

4 – Urban Meyer became only the fourth man in history to capture a Rose Bowl victory in his final game as a college head coach. The others are Fritz Crisler of Michigan, Clarence "Biggie" Munn of Michigan State and Dick Vermeil of UCLA.

5 – The Buckeyes finished the 2018 season boasting a program-record five receivers on the roster with 10 or more career touchdown catches – Terry McLaurin (19), Johnnie Dixon (16), Parris Campbell (15), Benjamin Victor (12) and K.J. Hill (10).

6 – Dwayne Haskins became the sixth Ohio State quarterback to win Most Valuable Player honors at the Rose Bowl. The other five are Terrelle Pryor (2010), Joe Germaine (1997), Cornelius Greene (1974), Rex Kern (1969) and Dave Leggett (1955).

7 – At just seven letters, Ryan Day has the shortest name of any Ohio State head football coach in history. Jack Ryder (1892-95, 1898), Perry Hale (1902-03), John Wilce (1913-28) and Paul Brown (1941-43) each had nine letters in their names.

8 – Ohio State captured its eighth Rose Bowl victory in 15 appearances. Eight wins ties Michigan for the most victories by a Big Ten school (the Wolverines have made 20 trips to Pasadena) but still trails USC by a wide margin. The Trojans have appeared in 34 Rose Bowl games, winning 25 times.

10.5 – Sophomore defensive end Chase Young notched a sack in the Rose Bowl to run his total to 10.5 for the season, making him the first OSU defender to notch double digits in sacks since Joey Bosa had 13.5 during the 2014 national championship run. Before Bosa, you have to go back seven more years to find an Ohio State defensive player with 10 or more sacks in a season. That was Vernon Gholston, who totaled 14 sacks in 2007.

13 – Tight end Rashod Berry became the first Ohio State player ever to score a Rose Bowl touchdown while wearing jersey No. 13. In fact, only one other Buckeye in history has ever scored points in a Rose Bowl while wearing that jersey number. Vlade Janakievski kicked three field goals during OSU's narrow 17-16 loss to USC in the 1980 game.

31 – During his tenure with the Buckeyes, Meyer was a perfect 31-0 in games that had a noon Eastern kickoff.

37 – The longest play for Washington during the Rose Bowl was a 37-yard pass from quarterback Jake Browning to wide receiver Aaron Fuller midway through the fourth quarter. It was the only play in the game of 30-plus yards for the Huskies – pretty significant since the Ohio State defense during its previous 13 games had allowed 37 plays of 30 yards or more.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

43.2 – Drue Chrisman averaged 43.2 yards on 61 punts in 2018, and his career average actually went down. Chrisman, who had averaged 44.2 yards per attempt heading into the 2018 season, now carries a career average of 43.6, which is still good enough for fourth all-time in program history behind Andy Groom (45.0, 2001-02), Cameron Johnston (44.9, 2013-16) and Tom Tupa (44.7, 1984-87).

50 – Haskins established a new single-season record at Ohio State for touchdown passes with 50. To put that into some sort of historical perspective, Art Schlichter established the program's career record in 1981 with 50 TD passes, and he held that mark for 14 years.

54 – The number of regular-season Big Ten victories for Meyer. That ranks him in a tie for 21st place all-time with Ray Eliot, who coached at Illinois from 1942-59. In case your math isn't serving you well, it took Meyer only seven seasons to win the same number of conference games it took Eliot a total of 18 years to accomplish.

90 – Campbell caught 11 passes during the Rose Bowl, giving him 90 receptions for 2018 and establishing a new single-season record at Ohio State. David Boston had held the record since 1998 when he caught 85 passes.

160 – Campbell teamed with Hill, who had 70 receptions this season, to give the Buckeyes a record-setting receiving tandem. The 160 passes caught by Campbell and Hill broke the previous program mark set in 1998 when Boston and Dee Miller combined for 144 receptions.

172 – OSU kickers Blake Haubeil, Sean Nuernberger and Tyler Durbin have put together a streak of 172 consecutive PATs. The Buckeyes have converted each of their PAT kicks since Durbin missed one during the 24-21 loss at Penn State on Oct. 22, 2016.

216 – Nuernberger, who suffered more stops and starts than a city bus during his days as a Buckeye, finished his career with 216 consecutive PATs without a miss. That is good enough for the school record as well as the Big Ten career mark. Nuernberger also finished with 324 career points, fourth only to Mike Nugent (356, 2001-04), Pete Johnson (348, 1973-76) and Dan Shultz (342, 1997-2000).

357 – The Ohio State defense gave up 357 points this season, breaking the old record of 330 set during the 2014 national championship run. OSU opponents averaged 25.5 points per game, and that's also a new record. The 1989 team gave up an average of 24.7 points per game.

403.4 – As long as we're on the subject, the Buckeyes surrendered an average of 403.4 yards per game this season, and that shattered the old mark of 385.7 set during the 1988 season. That was John Cooper's first season as head coach at Ohio State, and the team finished with a 46-1 record, one of only two losing seasons in the past 52 years.

499 – Haskins re-established his own single-game record with 499 yards during the Big

Ten Championship Game against Northwestern. It was one of five games this season during which the OSU quarterback topped the 400-yard mark – remarkable in that the Buckeyes had only one such performance in their history coming into this season. Schlichter threw for 458 yards during a 36-27 loss to Florida State in 1981.

.902 – Meyer's winning percentage at Ohio State. If the conference weren't such a stickler for using 10 years as its coaching yardstick, Meyer would be the Big Ten's all-time leader in win percentage, topping Fielding Yost of Michigan, who posted an .888 win percentage with the Wolverines during the early part of the 20th century.

1,053 – Sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins finished the season with 1,053 yards rushing, making him the first player in OSU history to crack the 1,000-yard mark as both a freshman and sophomore. Dobbins' feat meant that Meyer had a 1,000-yard rusher in each of his seven seasons with the Buckeyes, something he had never enjoyed in 10 years as a head coach before he got to Columbus.

1,063 – Campbell finished his senior season with 1,063 yards, the first OSU player to crack the 1,000-yard mark in receiving since Michael Jenkins had 1,076 in 2002. Only three other Ohio State receivers have ever enjoyed 1,000-yard seasons. Boston set the program record with 1,435 in 1998, Terry Glenn had 1,411 in 1995, and Cris Carter totaled 1,127 receiving yards in 1986.

1,131 – Ohio State ran 1,131 offensive plays this season, breaking the record of 1,099 set by the 2014 team. The Buckeyes have run 1,000 or more plays in a season only four times in their history, and each occurred during the Meyer era. Before Meyer got to Columbus, the record for most plays in a season was 939, a mark established in 1995.

2,469 – Ohio State receivers accounted for 2,469 yards this season after the catch. Leading the team was Campbell with 784 of his 1,063 receiving yards coming after the catch was made.

2,676 – Mike Weber finished his OSU career with 2,676 yards, good enough for 15th on the school's all-time rushing list. Weber also totaled eight games of 100 yards or more during his career, and only 18 other players in program history have had more.

4,831 – Haskins obliterated the program record for most passing yards in a season, finishing with 4,831. Joe Germaine had held the old mark of 3,330 since 1998.

5,100 – Thanks to Haskins' record-setting performance, the Buckeyes blew away their single-season mark for most passing yardage with 5,100. The old record of 3,707 was set in 2014.

91,853 – The official attendance figure for the 2019 Rose Bowl Game, which was well off the record of 106,869, set on New Year's Day in 1973 when top-ranked USC rolled to a 42-17 win against No. 3 Ohio State. However, seating in the Rose Bowl stadium was reconfigured after the 1998 game, and its official capacity is now listed at 90,888. That made this year's Rose Bowl one of only two bowl games that were sold out. The other was the Orange Bowl between Oklahoma and Alabama, which served as one of the College Football Playoff semifinal games.

0 – The sum total of Big Ten Coach of the Year awards won by Meyer despite the fact he won a division title in each of his seven seasons with the Buckeyes as well as three conference titles and the 2014 national championship. Zero is the same total of Big Ten Coach of the Year awards won by Jim Tressel in 10 seasons with Ohio State, and Tressel won seven league titles or co-titles (including a record-tying six in a row) and the 2002 national championship. Apparently, at least in the Big Ten, consideration for coach of the year honors comes only if you are not expected to win.

COVER STORY

Meyer Celebrated Rose Bowl Win Before Next Steps

Continued From Page 1

back-and-forth, 52-51 overtime win at Maryland.

It was only fitting that Meyer's final game would land in the dramatic category despite a 28-3 lead going into the fourth quarter.

The Huskies certainly weren't going to let it happen any other way.

"I think on the sideline the whole time just saying keep swinging and keep getting after it," Washington quarterback Jake Browning said of how the Huskies fought back. "Just a couple plays away from getting that first score."

The Huskies finally found the end zone with 12:17 remaining when running back Myles Gaskin hit Drew Sample for a 2-yard pass, capping a 10-play, 66-yard drive that drained 4:38 off the clock. Gaskin himself scored from a yard out with 6:42 to play then again from 2 yards out with 42 seconds left



SONNY BROCKWAY

WHAT'S NEXT? – Urban Meyer (left) is set to teach a leadership class at Ohio State while serving as an assistant athletic director.

to make it 28-23 as the Ohio State offense struggled to regain a spark after Haskins threw three first-half touchdowns and running back J.K. Dobbins scored early in the third.

"Right down to the stretch I was worried," said Ryan Day, Ohio State's offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach and also the man who took over the program from Meyer the following day.

After Gaskin's second touchdown, the Huskies lined up for a crucial outside kick, needing a touchdown to win the game. Meyer kept coaching down to the final moments – after the Huskies lined up, he took a timeout to reassess Ohio State's plan for a recovery.

Washington lined up again and, fittingly, beloved team captain and fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon came up with the ball, clinching the Rose Bowl for Ohio State and sending Meyer out with an 83-9 record for the Buckeyes.

The Aftermath

After Dixon's recovery, the celebrations began for Ohio State – which included a video on the scoreboard featuring a few players, Dixon included, thanking Meyer for everything he has done for the program. The coach also made sure to salute the band and acknowledge the crowd – just as he has always done.

"I told you that when adversity strikes and people scatter," he said, "and when I needed them the most, you gave us the very best. The band didn't scatter. The band was there. Buckeye Nation was there. We saw that all throughout the adversity that we went through. And I can't tell you – my love affair for Buckeye Nation has never been as strong."

Meyer embraced his wife, Shelley, and celebrated with his son, Nate, and daughter Gigi – his other daughter, Nicki, was back in Ohio after recently giving birth to Meyer's second grandson.

The coach even took a moment to hug university president Michael Drake, who was one of the central figures in Meyer's three-game suspension to start the 2018

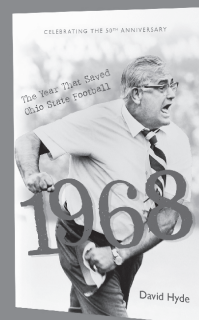
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COVER STORY

season, which possibly played a role in his decision to retire, along with serious health concerns regarding headaches caused by an arachnoid cyst on his brain.

As Meyer celebrated on the field, though, he didn't seem any different than after any other big win in a career that included many. The difference was simply that when he woke up the next day he would no longer be the head coach at Ohio State, for better or for worse.

"This has always been very personal," Meyer said. "I'm from the great state of Ohio, and I'm very proud of my state. I've been a

Buckeye fan, like I said, as long as I can remember.

"And I operated – it's not healthy all the time – but I operated under the sense of fear. When I would see our former players come around this program – and you know I was in the elevator yesterday

with Archie Griffin, a dear friend, and John Cooper is a dear friend, and we lost Coach (Earle) Bruce recently and Jim Tressel is a dear friend of mine – and I just felt an obligation to not let them down."

That intensity, perhaps more than anything, played a huge role in Meyer's career coming to an end at the age of 54. At least he says it has come to an end. The now-former coach is set to join the Ohio State staff as an assistant athletic director while teaching a leadership class at the university.

Whether his coaching career is really over nobody can know for sure. But his time as the head coach in Columbus is over, and Day found himself hitting the ground running after the win.

For one night at least, though, Day was still Meyer's employee, and the Buckeyes wanted to celebrate one last win.

"There's a lot to go through and the focus is all about winning this game," Day said, "because if you don't do that, then you don't do a service to obviously Coach Meyer and the seniors and this team."

"So the focus was winning this game. I thought the guys played really well in the first half and kind of hung on there at the end. Celebrate it tonight then go about the business tomorrow."

The Transition

After that celebration ended, Day was the head coach. That's a new feeling for a man who has never been a head coach at any level of football – apart from serving in an interim capacity while leading the Buckeyes to a 3-0 start in 2018.

"It's an amazing feeling. It is," Day said. "To be the leader of such a special place, special group of men, this program, Buckeye Nation, it's an honor."

For Day, the moment was full of excitement. For Meyer there was certainly excitement, too, but he was heading into an unknown as a 33-year coaching career came to a close.

"I have no idea, to be honest with you," Meyer said when asked about how he would feel Jan. 2. "I've been thinking about that a little bit and trying not to think about it

because it gets in the way of these (players) and the team."

"But I have the best athletic director (Gene Smith) around. I have a school that I love dearly. I feel very welcome in Buckeye Nation and here, and I'm an Ohioan. So my job as we move forward is to make Coach Day, who is an elite coach, make this program even stronger, and that's all our focus. That's their focus, my focus, Gene Smith's focus. It's a very strong program, but we're going to make it stronger."

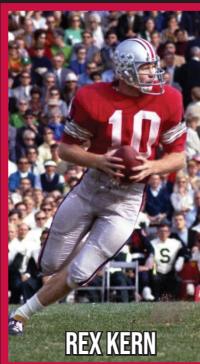


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URBAN MEYER

Remembering Meyer's Time As OSU Head Coach

By JOE DEMPSEY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

On Jan. 1, Urban Meyer coached his last game at Ohio State, leading the Buckeyes to a 28-23 win over Washington in the Rose Bowl.

He coached the Buckeyes for seven seasons, going 83-9 with three Big Ten titles and a national championship to his name. All in all it adds up to one of the most successful careers in Ohio State history – even in college football history, if you add in the two national championships at Florida as well.

With Meyer's coaching career coming to an end with his retirement, BSB spoke with a selection of media members and former Ohio State players and coaches to discuss Meyer's time in Columbus and his legacy at Ohio State.

Bill Conley

Former Ohio State player and assistant coach.

On Meyer's legacy: "I think he accomplished as much in his seven years here as many coaches have not accomplished in twice that many. Not only his exceptional record in terms of wins and losses, his success over archrival Michigan, his tremendous bowl record and his recruiting, above all, have been remarkable. His ability to go into any high school in the country and legitimately have a shot at a player and get them on campus for visits, which is a big part of that. And of course that tied in directly with the great number of players he's put in the NFL. So I don't know how anybody could have accomplished more in that amount of time.

"I think he brought Ohio State to be consistently talked about as one of the top five programs in the country every year, one of the elite programs. We've always had great tradition and great football here but there was no real drop-off in a year. It doesn't matter how many guys graduated or whatever, we're always one of the most elite teams in the country."

A memory of Meyer: "I remember him as a (graduate assistant). He was a GA on our staff under Earle Bruce in the '80s and you could tell the guy was going to be a success, because he took his job very seriously for a young man, and really wanted to be successful and become a student of the game of football."

Cornelius Green

Three-time Big Ten champion quarterback for Ohio State in the 1970s. (Green spelled his name with an "e" on the end during his playing days.)

On Meyer's legacy: "Urban's just a leg-

end. Love him, hate to see him go, but see why he has to go. But just cementing his legacy with Ohio State. I went up to the Rose Bowl just to witness his last game, so, very heartfelt for me. That was a milestone for me. Winning that Rose Bowl game, seeing Urban get the joy and all the accolades that he received after the game was just awesome.

"He's right up there. He had one of the greatest winning percentages of all time, so you've got to put him up there with the Mount Rushmore of great coaches. As much as I loved Coach Hayes and all the great coaches here, you've got to give due where it is. Urban's record is just undeniable. He's one of the greatest to ever do it."

A memory of Meyer: "Personally, I'm very lucky because Archie Griffin was Urban's favorite player, so he had to see me if he loved Archie. When I met Urban, he got into a quarterback position and started running the option – he was trying to emulate me. So we just started laughing and hugged, it was just a great feeling. He made me feel like a million dollars."

Jack Park

Radio commentator for Sports Radio 97.1 The Fan, author and Ohio State football historian.

On Meyer's legacy: "Urban stands out to me in three ways. A tremendous recruiter, that might have been his greatest talent, really. And all we have to do is look at the people, and it was done very consistently. He was a great organization man. He saw the big picture, which helped him become such an outstanding leader. And of all the coaches that I've followed, he was as good a leader maybe as we've ever had or maybe football's almost ever had."

"If there's one incident that I will remember about Urban Meyer's leadership ability, it's the first seven weeks of this season. And those first seven weeks of this season are the four weeks of fall camp and the first three games – and he wasn't there. So why would I remember that? Urban Meyer had such a great organization put into place that if he had to leave for a period of time, the organization continued to function at a very high level, and that's one of the greatest compliments a leader can earn."

A memory of Urban: "I have a new book ('Buckeye Reflections') that I co-authored that just came out last year. Maureen Zappala and I, we did a book signing prior to that dinner and we donated a lot of the proceeds to the fundraiser, but then we attended the dinner, Urban was the keynote speaker that night. And I remember thinking I've never heard him speak as well. And the lady that's my co-author, Maureen Zappala, she is an excellent, nationally recognized professional

speaker. She speaks all over the country on leadership topics, and she does a lot of coaching of other professional speakers and executives and so forth at a pretty high level. So she has seen quite a few keynote presentations over the years. I had never been able to get the two of them together until she got to meet Urban that night."

"They got to spend just a couple minutes together, but at the end of the speech she said that's the best keynote speech she ever saw. And another interesting thing about that, he talked that night in that speech about what Earle Bruce meant to him. And Earle, he said, meant more to him and did more for him than any man in his life except his father. And that was on a Thursday night, I think it might have been the 19th of April. And he really talked about Earle, and Earle died the next morning."

Tim May

Longtime OSU football beat reporter for The Columbus Dispatch who, like Meyer, retired following the 2018 season.

On Meyer's legacy: "Bottom line, he's a winner extraordinaire. That's reflected in his record and in his championships. Like a lot of modern-day coaches... I think he's taken it to another level in trying to develop his players and open the eyes of his players to life other than, and after, football, which I think is totally underrated."

"Everybody always wanted to point to the amount of money (Urban Meyer and Jim Tressel) were making, and they were making a lot of money, but the bottom line is almost anytime you would go to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, those guys would be there working. And I'm not privy to how much vacation Urban Meyer ever took while he was the head football coach at Ohio State, but it might surprise you how little vacation he took."

A memory of Meyer: "Speaking about the Real Life Wednesday program with just the passion he had for it was really impressive to me. Only because it definitely meant something to him. And it was coming from his heart to a certain extent because he had two daughters who were scholarship volleyball players and there were things during their recruitment process – and even from the way things went with him at their respective colleges – that he wanted it to be different for Ohio State football players. He wanted there to be more to it than just the actual athletic part of it, the sport of it."

"I think that is genuine with him, and the way he went out of his way to make that program work – we talked about it several times, and it meant as much to him as the spread zone-read option. It definitely did. And think about it, the Real Life Wednesday program goes on longer than the football season does. So that's his point, there's got to be more to it than just the football part."

Doug Lesmerises

OSU football beat reporter for Cleveland.com.

On Meyer's legacy: "Urban Meyer's not the first guy to do this, where the greatness sort of takes its toll and shortens your career a little bit. But he is firmly in that group – when you win national titles at two different schools, when you are one of the originators of the spread offense, when you are one of the leaders in sort

of the way recruiting has changed – that mark matters."

"He saved (Ohio State football). He fell through the sky like a miracle and to think about where Ohio State football would be if Urban Meyer didn't exist, they wouldn't be here. And I thought after what happened with the NCAA issues and Tressel's resignation, that there was going to be a black cloud hanging over Ohio State for a while. And he came in and wiped that away and nobody else could have done that. To have a two-time national championship head coach who grew up in Ohio watching the Ohio State-Michigan game, was a fan of Woody Hayes, his mentor was Earle Bruce, and he's available. He's unemployed when the Ohio State football program explodes is a miracle."

A memory of Meyer: "I asked him in a news conference about the way he was looking on the sideline. I brought to his attention that Kirk Herbstreit said he looked anguished on the sideline, and in that news conference he sort of said people shouldn't worry about me, I'm fine. But quickly after that, that day, I was told that he wasn't happy with that answer, he felt like he wasn't being 100 percent truthful. I think he had been thinking about it already, but he then decided he was going to let people in and tell the fans what was really going on with his health. And so to go from that moment to then later that day being in his office with a couple other reporters and him explaining just how serious a health issue this was – again, you're talking about one of the 10 best coaches ever, sitting in his office with just a couple people talking about what was the beginning of the end."

Ari Wasserman

OSU football writer for The Athletic and former BSB writer.

On Meyer's legacy: "I would say that he's probably a top-five coach of the modern era because he won three national championships and obviously, we know how hard it is to win a national title in this era, in this realm of college football, and winning three is incredible. But he also revolutionized the spread offense, he changed the entire way that the game is played across the country. He innovated recruiting tactics and techniques, he made programs for the athlete within the college football program that helps recruit. And I think he basically was the reason the entire Big Ten is better now."

"It's hard to compare him to Woody Hayes because it's two different eras, because Woody didn't even have a scholarship limit. So based on the parity, the stakes, the money, television, recruiting and how much of a circus that's become, I would say he's the greatest coach in Ohio State football history."

A memory of Meyer: "The thing that I think has always stood out to me about Urban in every single situation that I've had with him, both in press conferences and one-on-one, he has an aura about him when you're in the room with him or having a discussion with him or talking to him, where he always makes the people in that room want to be better. And it's not just his team, it's his coaches, it's the media, it's everybody. And I think that that is a God-given, inherent trait that is part of the reason why he will go into the College Football Hall of Fame."

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OHIO STATE VS. WASHINGTON

OSU Takes Rose Bowl Despite 2nd-Half Stress

With less than a half to play, the 105th Rose Bowl was well in hand for the team wearing scarlet and gray. At least, that's what it looked like on New Year's Day in Pasadena, Calif.

GAME NOTEBOOK Tim Moody

No. 6 Ohio State scored on a 3-yard run from sophomore back J.K. Dobbins with 8:23 to play in the third quarter, putting the Buckeyes ahead of No. 9 Washington, 28-3. The Huskies had hardly moved the ball, and Ohio State was scoring with relative ease.

Those turned out to be the Buckeyes' final points of Urban Meyer's tenure as head coach, but Ohio State (13-1) was still able to hold on for a 28-23 victory over Washington (10-4).

The swing started in the third quarter after Dobbins' touchdown when the Buckeye offense stalled. Offensive coordinator Ryan Day, who took over as head coach after the game, said the offense struggled to get in a groove with Washington controlling the clock.

"Really in the third quarter, they kind of ate up a bunch of clock and so we never really got into a rhythm," Day said. "We got that first touchdown drive and then I think the third quarter we only had the ball maybe four minutes, so we kind of got stagnant there."

"We had some three-and-outs, we tried running the ball to eat up some clock because the defense was on the field. We're a rhythm offense, so in hindsight we probably should have just kept the foot on the gas a little bit more, but we won the Rose Bowl."

Almost a quarter after Dobbins' touchdown, the Huskies struck back with 12:17 to play when running back Myles Gaskin threw a jump pass to Drew Sample to make it 28-10. Less than six minutes later, Gaskin punched the ball in himself from a yard out, and he



SONNY BROCKWAY

PROLIFIC FINALE – Fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell (21) caught 11 passes for 71 yards and a touchdown in his final game as a Buckeye.

scored again with less than a minute to play to make it a one-possession game for the first time since Ohio State went ahead 14-3 early in the second quarter.

"At halftime, we just said take it one drive at a time," Washington quarterback

Jake Browning said after the game. "And I think coming out in the second half, Myles definitely sparked it. And fourth quarter we were able to move the ball up and down the field pretty well, and we were just a little too little too late."

"But we're always going to keep swinging, we always did keep swinging, and I think that's kind of how we are as a team. We're never out of it. Just keep battling."

Washington's final chance came down to an onside kick. Ohio State called a timeout just before the first attempt, and the second was recovered by fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon, allowing the Buckeyes to kneel out the remainder of the clock.

Day admitted that he was worried about the outcome "right down to the stretch."

Meyer Victorious In Finale

Wins are nothing new for Meyer at Ohio State (or at any of his four head coaching stops). The 54-year-old has been a head coach for 17 seasons, spending two years each at Bowling Green and Utah before six at Florida and seven at Ohio State. That's all part of an overall coaching career that spanned 33 years.

The Rose Bowl marked the end to all of that – assuming things go as planned – sending Meyer out with an 83-9 record at Ohio State and a 187-32 record overall.

Of all those 187 wins, though, the last one was a little bit different.

"I would have been on the phone recruiting the last half of the walk off the field if it wasn't our last game," Meyer quipped in the postgame press conference about what it would have been like if he was coming back. "And right now I'd be starting to put pencils to who is coming back, who is not coming back, and what do we do at left tackle, what do we do this, what do we do that. But the new guy's got to worry about that, and we're certainly going to help him. So it felt different."

While Meyer has said on numerous occasions that he doesn't expect to coach again – in fact he is set to serve an assistant athletic director at Ohio State after his retirement – plenty of speculation has continued. For her part, Meyer's wife, Shelley, told ESPN that she has a firm opinion on that front.

"I would be ecstatic if he didn't (coach again)," Shelley Meyer said. "I'm done. I want him to be done. He's too intense."

Campbell Sets New Single-Season Mark

Parris Campbell was targeted early, and he was targeted often. That could describe the entire season for Ohio State's fifth-year senior starting H-back, or it could refer to the Rose Bowl alone.

Campbell, an Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary product, reeled in 11 receptions on New Year's Day as the Buckeyes topped Washington. That total gave Campbell 90 receptions for the season – the most ever for an Ohio State player in a single year.

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OHIO STATE VS. WASHINGTON

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The pass offense. Dwayne Haskins didn't miss a beat after a month-long layover since the Dec. 1 Big Ten Championship Game against Northwestern, a 45-24 win over the Wildcats, as the sophomore quarterback carved Washington's 21st-ranked pass defense (185.4 yards allowed per game) for 251 yards and three touchdowns on a 25-of-37 (67.6-percent) clip. Haskins hit nine different targets with fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell (11 receptions for 71 yards), fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon (two receptions for 27 yards) and junior tight end Rashod Berry (one reception for a yard) the receivers to haul in scores. The Huskies, who entered the Rose Bowl ranked 12th in total defense (301.8 yards allowed per game) were arguably the best defense Haskins faced over the course of the 2018 season, and he still managed to make the Buckeyes' offense pick up where the unit left off.

What Didn't Work

The offensive line. While junior Joshua Alabi filled in admirably for sophomore left tackle Thayer Munford, who didn't dress with an undisclosed injury, OSU was out of sorts at times up front. Ohio State committed nine penalties for 53 yards, with false starts in abundance while Washington got after Haskins for three sacks. Junior running back Mike Weber ran hard with 15 carries for 96 yards, but the Buckeyes struggled to consistently open up the

ground game with only seven totes for 24 yards by sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins, including a 3-yard touchdown plunge that made it 28-3 in the third. The inconsistency up front slowed Ohio State's offense and kept the Huskies hanging around.

Play Of The Game

All season long, the Buckeye defense has been a glaring weakness, but they made their stops when the stakes were highest down the stretch. OSU's offense stalled throughout the fourth quarter, allowing UW to creep back into the ballgame behind a trio of Myles Gaskin touchdowns – one passing and two rushing – in the final 12:17. Washington might have been able to take the lead on one of those had its offense mounted one more scoring drive between those Gaskin scores.

The Huskies had the ball on their own 15 with 4:57 to go and picked up 7 yards on Jake Browning to Andre Baccellia on first-and-10 before an incompletion on second-and-3 from the 22 brought up a critical third-down situation for Ohio State. On that third-and-3 from UW's own 22, Browning found Gaskin on swing pass left out of the backfield with room to run, but sophomore safety Brendon White timed it perfectly and blew up the would-be conversion for a 5-yard loss. The Buckeyes' contingent at Rose Bowl Stadium erupted, and Washington punted away, all but securing the OSU victory.

– Garrett Stepien

The previous record of 85 was set by David Boston in 1998, but Campbell had already surpassed that mark with seven receptions before halftime.

In the victory, Campbell also became just the fifth player in program history to tally 1,000 or more yards receiving in a single season, joining Boston (1,435; 1998), Terry Glenn (1,411; 1995), Cris Carter (1,127; 1986) and Michael Jenkins (1,076; 2002). Campbell finished his final collegiate season with 1,063 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns through the air.

Haskins Reaches 50 Touchdowns

With three touchdown passes in the first half, Ohio State sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins became the sixth player in NCAA Division I history to throw 50 scoring strikes in a single season.

The first to accomplish the feat was Houston's David Klinger, who threw 54 touchdowns in 1990. Hawaii's Colt Brennan set the all-time mark with 58 in 2006 while Texas Tech's B.J. Symons had 52 in 2003. Haskins is now tied for fourth in the NCAA record books at 50 with Fresno State's Derek Carr (2013) and Oklahoma's Sam Bradford (2008).

"I saw a lot of growth," Day said of Haskins. "I saw a guy who played at a high, high level – and obviously played his best football toward the end of the season, so I'm proud of him there."

Overall in the Rose Bowl, Haskins completed 25 of 37 passes for 251 yards and those three early scores, but he struggled for much of the second half as Ohio State scored just seven points after the break. He improved to 13-1 as a starter, though, in what

was his last appearance for the Buckeyes before heading off to the NFL, although he said after the game that he hadn't yet made a final decision.

"I still have a lot of time making the decision, working with my family and my teammates and coaches to figure out what's best for me," Haskins said. "But right now I'm excited to get this win. Excited to leave Coach (Meyer) with

this victory for myself and the rest of the teammates. It's a blessed situation right now."

White Earns Defensive MVP Honors

Haskins was named the offensive player of the game for his performance, while sophomore safety Brendon White earned the top defensive honors in the 105th Rose Bowl.

White finished the game second among Ohio State player with eight tackles (all solo), including two tackles for loss, to go with a pass breakup. He also had an interception on Washington's fourth-quarter two-point conversion attempt that, if the Huskies had converted, would have made it a three-point game before they attempted to kick onside.



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OHIO STATE VS. WASHINGTON

OSU Overcomes Late Surge To Take Rose Bowl

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State careers of head coach Urban Meyer and third-year sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins ended triumphantly, although not without some uneasiness until the final seconds at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains on New Year's Day, 2019.

Haskins passed for three touchdowns in the 28-23 victory for No. 6 Ohio State over No. 9 Washington in the 105th edition of the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif.

Meyer, who announced his retirement on Dec. 4, had to wait four more weeks to fulfill a goal of going to the Rose Bowl. He finished 83-9 in seven seasons with the Buckeyes, including 5-2 in bowl games.

"It's something I've dreamed about as long as I've been watching Ohio State football, which is as long as I've been around," he said. "And it was everything and more."

As was the game, although it appeared for a while that Meyer could relax and enjoy the moment, if that was possible.

The Buckeyes (13-1) cruised to a 28-3 lead midway through the third quarter, but the offense disappeared and they punted their final five full possessions as many of the scarlet- and gray-clad fans among the 91,853 in attendance squirmed.

Washington (10-4) scored three touchdowns in the fourth quarter, and the game was not sealed until fifth-year senior receiver Johnnie Dixon recovered an onside kick at the 50-yard line with 42 seconds left and the Buckeyes ran out the clock.

Haskins was 25 of 37 for 251 yards. His three TDs were a program record in the Rose Bowl. He finished with a school-record 50 passing TDs for the season and on Jan. 7 declared for the 2019 NFL draft.

His favorite target was fifth-year senior Parris Campbell, who had 11 receptions for 71 yards and a TD and now owns the OSU mark for most catches in a season with 90. Junior Mike Weber, who said Dec. 16 that he would enter the NFL draft, rushed for 96 yards on 15 carries in his last game. Sophomore J.K. Dobbins added 24 yards on seven rushes with a score.

Washington quarterback Jake Browning had a brilliant fourth quarter to overshadow a poor first 45 minutes and finished 35 of 54 for 313 yards.

Andre Baccellia had 12 catches for 109 yards. Running back Myles Gaskin had 121 yards and two TDs on 24 totes plus he threw a 2-yard TD pass for the Huskies.

Washington outgained the Buckeyes 444 (315 pass, 129 run) to 364 (251, 113).

Junior safety Jordan Fuller led the Buckeyes with nine tackles (eight solo), and



SONNY BROCKWAY

ADDING TO THE ADVANTAGE – Fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon's second-quarter touchdown gave Ohio State a 14-3 lead.

sophomore Brendon White added eight solo tackles.

The Buckeyes improved to 8-7 in the Rose Bowl while the Huskies fell to 6-8-1.

How It Happened

After OSU and Washington, in that order, had three-and-outs to start the game, the Buckeyes went 77 yards on 11 plays in 2:45, for a 7-0 lead on a 12-yard pass on second down to Campbell for the 7-0 lead on an Instagram-worthy, gorgeous, 60-degree afternoon.

Make no mistake, it was Weber's drive. His first four carries of the game went for 52 yards, including a 19-yard jaunt to the 12 on fourth-and-1 from the UW 31. He also had runs of 9, 14 and 10 yards. Sophomore Demario McCall contributed a 9-yard run just before Weber's long gainer.

Washington finally got untracked two possessions later and used a 15-yard catch by Jordan Chin and an 11-yard run by Gaskin

among the plays that allowed the Huskies to penetrate to the OSU 23, but false start and holding penalties on consecutive plays pushed them back to the 38.

Passes to Salvon Ahmed and Baccellia got the Huskies to the 21, but they had to settle for a 38-yard field goal by Peyton Henry to make it 7-3 with 1:19 left in the first quarter to finish the 55-yard, 11-play drive that consumed 4:57.

Ohio State increased the lead to 14-3 at 12:23 of the second quarter with Haskins finding Dixon for a 19-yard scoring strike.

The 75-yard, 10-play, 3:56 series got off to an inauspicious start with a false start penalty to fourth-year junior left tackle Joshua Alabi, who made his first career start for the injured Thayer Munford. Weber got 2 yards back before Haskins found fifth-year senior Terry McLaurin for a 32-yard gain to the Washington 46. Weber gained 10 yards on a 2-yard run and a catch for 8 to end the first quarter.

Later, facing third-and-3 from the UW 29, Dixon had an 8-yard grab to keep the drive alive. Weber ran for 3 and Dobbins had a catch for 4, but a false start on senior right tackle Isaiah Prince pushed the Buckeyes back to the 19. That was only a slight detour as Haskins connected with Dixon in the end zone on the next play.

Late in the second quarter, sophomore Drue Chrisman punted 30 yards to the Washington 8 with 1:21 left. The Huskies used all of 21 seconds, and the Buckeyes did not have to spend a timeout to get the ball back before scoring a critical TD before the break.

After Washington's punt to the OSU 43, Haskins passed 10 yards to junior Binjimen

Victor and 19 to Campbell, whose 86th catch broke the program's single-season mark set by David Boston in 1998.

A pass interference against the Huskies on a ball intended for Victor resulted in a first down at the 13. Haskins scrambled for 3 yards then hit sophomore tight end Luke Farrell for 9 to the 1. OSU took a timeout with 18 seconds remaining.

Haskins made it 21-3 with a 1-yard toss to junior tight end Rashod Berry with 14 seconds to go at the end of a five-play, 57-yard march in 46 seconds.

The Huskies got the ball to open the second half and had a solid series going, but after they advanced to the OSU 32, a sack by junior defensive end Jashon Cornell (7 yards) and a 4-yard rushing loss by Ahmed knocked them back to the 43 and Joel Whitford's punt went into the end zone.

OSU needed seven plays and 2:02 to go 80 yards for a 28-3 lead at 8:23 of the third quarter. Campbell had catches of 19, 5 and 6 yards, and junior K.J. Hill followed with grabs of 11 and 34 yards to set up a 3-yard TD run by Dobbins.

The Huskies got the ball back and drove to the OSU 22 only to be stopped on fourth-and-4 on their 12th play on a pass breakup by sophomore cornerback Jeffrey Okudah.

Washington closed to within 28-10 on a possession that started in the third quarter and ended early in the fourth when Gaskin took the snap and made a jump pass of 2 yards to Drew Sample on fourth down with 12:17 left in the game.

The 10-play, 66-yard, 4:38 sequence began with a 24-yard catch by Hunter Bryant to the OSU 42.

Four plays later a defensive holding call on White placed the ball on the OSU 21. Gaskin and Baccellia had catches for a combined 16 yards to help set up the scoring play.

OSU punted and once again the Huskies moved across midfield, this time being stymied on a fourth-and-6 at the Ohio State 48 on an errant pass.

After Chrisman's partially blocked punt went 16 yards to the UW 34, Washington needed only five plays to go 66 yards, using 1:30 and make it 28-17.

Baccellia had a 24-yard catch and Aaron Fuller another of 37 to the OSU 5. Gaskin rushed for 1 and 3 yards then scored from the 1 with 6:42 left.

OSU made one first down but had to punt, and the Huskies started from their own 15 with 4:57 left. On third down, White tackled Gaskin for a 5-yard loss on a pass to bring up fourth-and-8, and the Huskies punted 36 yards to the OSU 47 with 3:49 left.

The Buckeyes punted a fifth straight time, and UW began from its 29 with 2:50 to play. Pass interference on White put the Huskies at their 47. A great leaping catch of 17 yards by Bryant on third down moved the ball to the OSU 36. Bryant had a 3-yard reception and Ahmed another for 9 to the 24 and a first down.

Aaron Fuller's catch moved the chains to the 11, and Ty Jones had a reception of 7 yards to the 4. A pass interference on Okudah placed the ball on the 2, and Gaskin ran to the right pylon to make it 28-23 with 42 seconds left following a review to see if he had indeed scored.

Browning's pass for the two-point conversion was intercepted in the end zone by White, and he returned it to the OSU 45 before being tackled.

After the onside kick, Haskins took two knees, and the season and Meyer's career were over.

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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL ANALYSIS

OSU's Season A Success Despite Small Failures

On the first day of 2019, Ohio State wrapped up another season with a victory over Washington in the Rose Bowl. The next day, Ryan Day officially took over as head coach as Urban Meyer rode off into a potential sunset on his coaching career.

Since then, the Buckeyes have begun a whirlwind offseason amid coaching changes and roster additions (and subtractions) heading into the winter.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin editor Tim Moody and staff writers Garrett Stepien and James Grega sat down after the season to break down the 2018 campaign and what comes next for Ohio State football.

How would you assess the overall success or failure of Ohio State's 2018 season?

Tim Moody: Thirteen wins and one loss. That's a successful season no matter how you shake it.

But the thing is, at Ohio State at least, success isn't always measured in such simple terms. The Buckeyes expect to compete for championships – which they did, winning the Big Ten – but to have a one-loss season and miss the College Football Playoff is a sign of an issue for Ohio State.

For two years in a row now, the Buckeyes have lost a heartbreaker on the road to a team that should have been completely over-matched. That loss at Purdue makes 2018 less of a resounding success than if, say, the Buckeyes had suffered a loss against TCU only.

No, the Horned Frogs didn't have a great season, but if Ohio State's one loss had come by say three points in week two instead of 29 at West Lafayette, the Buckeyes would have been in the playoff.

But then again, 13 wins, a Big Ten title and a Rose Bowl victory should never be scoffed at.

James Grega: Considering everything that happened before the season concerning Urban Meyer and Zach Smith, I will view the 2018 Ohio State season as a success, but not an overwhelming one.

If you had told Ohio State fans before the season that the Buckeyes would get waxed by 29 at Purdue yet would roll Michigan and win a Big Ten title and a Rose Bowl, 99 percent of them would take it. On top of that, Dwayne Haskins had the best season by any quarterback in school history and sent Meyer out a winner.

I know most Ohio State fans view any season that ends in a missed CFP appearance as a failure, but that isn't realistic. The Buckeyes had a very good season and should be commended for it.

Garrett Stepien: When one mentions the whole Meyer-Smith fiasco from the summer, it's important to remember the adversity and triumph was overcome by the players and then-acting head coach Ryan Day – not Meyer.

The self-inflicted drama at Ohio State certainly could have derailed the Buckeyes' season, however, which only saw more ups and downs from Nick Bosa's early-fall departure to Meyer's health concerns. OSU still managed to rally, winning 13 games and losing just one, coming away with its first Rose Bowl win in nine years — that shouldn't be overlooked.

James sums things up best by saying Ohio State's 2018 campaign was successful but surely not overwhelming. The Buckeyes had probably the best quarterback the program's ever seen and weren't able to crack



SONNY BROCKWAY

A SUCCESSFUL FINISH – Ohio State went 13-1, won the Big Ten and added a Rose Bowl victory in Urban Meyer's final season as head coach.

the College Football Playoff for the second straight year.

In Columbus, that's the standard, and OSU came up short due to a multitude of head-scratching struggles from coaching to personnel.

Ohio State sent Meyer out on top and ushered in Day's beginning with momentum, putting the Purdue debacle behind as the Buckeyes won out. The torch passed. Day has already begun to keep Meyer's foundation intact while implementing his modifications from coaching staff tweaks to rebuilding the roster via recruiting and transferring. When one considers how badly things could have gone back in August, though, wins are wins and OSU chalked up 13 of them despite every reason for several losses to pile on.

What was the biggest surprise of the year?

JG: I mean, it's obvious isn't it? Getting pummeled by Purdue in late October is something I will never fully comprehend. With the story surrounding the late Tyler Trent, I have a hard time believing there wasn't a higher power involved in that one.

Watching Ohio State get outcoached and outplayed by a team that finished 6-7 and gave up 63 points in a bowl game is something that will leave me scratching my head for a very long time.

TM: Purdue, of course, was a shock in the way it happened, but there were whispers throughout the lead-up that West Lafayette is a dangerous place to play – especially for Ohio State in the past two decades.

For me, the biggest surprise was the lack of a credible running threat for stretches during the season. I still contend that J.K. Dobbins is Ohio State's best offensive player (outside of Dwayne Haskins last year), but the offensive line struggled so much at times

that neither he nor Mike Weber could get anything going. That played a huge role in the loss at Purdue and could easily have derailed the season in close games against Indiana, Minnesota and Nebraska.

GS: Purdue is obvious, as the others note, but I'll go with Nick Bosa's season-ending injury. Bosa was an iron man in his first couple of years at Ohio State, following older brother Joey's footsteps as defensive line coach Larry Johnson's best product ever. He was on pace to have a historic junior campaign, playing just six full quarters of OSU's opening three games and dominating opposing offensive tackles.

When Bosa went down in the third quarter at TCU, I thought he pulled his groin and might be back within a few weeks. Things obviously snowballed from there, though, which left everyone wondering "what if" while Ohio State's deep but different defensive line was forced to retol and adapt without him. The Buckeyes built momentum with early experience for their freshmen as they rotated increasingly for significant snaps and showed promise for 2019 and beyond, but considering how badly the defense as a whole struggled over the course of the year, just imagine what more OSU might have been able to do with Bosa back in the mix.

If you were to hand out a season-long Buckeye Leaf on offense, who would get it? And on defense?

GS: The answer has to be Haskins. People thought Haskins had the ability to elevate Ohio State's offense after its past two stagnant seasons, with all due respect to three-time captain and former quarterback J.T. Barrett, but the sophomore's one-and-done campaign far exceeded expectations.

Numbers do the talking, but Haskins also grew into his role as a leader when he need-

ed to. Haskins picked apart some of college football's best defenses throwing the ball but developed the necessary grit and toughness to tuck the ball and run when the Buckeyes' offense became too one-dimensional.

And on defense, I'll go with Dre'Mont Jones. The junior defensive tackle came back to Ohio State to boost his stock, and he did just that, equally elevating the Buckeyes' defense when the unit needed him most.

Jones' numbers – 43 tackles (13 for loss), 8½ sacks and two touchdowns, one interception return and one fumble recovery – were outrageous, especially considering the injuries he battled through. OSU needed its defensive line to collectively step up, and the unit did just that after Bosa's exit, exhibited by sophomore defensive end Chase Young's 10½ sacks, but Jones was the glue that held it together in the absence of the defense's best player.

JG: If you finish third in the Heisman, you are probably the best player on your team. Haskins was incredible all season and threw 50 touchdown passes. This answer is pretty easy.

Haskins is going to be the first quarterback taken in the 2019 NFL draft and rightfully so. What he did in one season as Ohio State's quarterback might never be done again.

Defensively, I will go with Chase Young. In Nick Bosa's absence, Young played extremely well, especially down the stretch. After dealing with lingering injuries for most of the season, he showed up when Ohio State needed him the most, playing his best football in Ohio State's last four games against Maryland, Michigan, Northwestern and Washington. Buckeye fans should enjoy him in 2019, because it will be his last season with the Scarlet and Gray, barring a severe injury.

TM: Yeah, of course Haskins is the obvi-

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL ANALYSIS

ous pick – but I'll always be the first to throw Parris Campbell's hat in the ring for credit where credit is due. The senior wideout had one of the best years by a Buckeye pass-catcher ever, setting a new record with 90 receptions and cracking the 1,000-yard mark.

Campbell came a long way in his career and – at long last – became the on-field performer Ohio State thought he could be this season.

Defensively, I have to pick Jones. With Bosa out, he was the heart and soul of a defense that needed every last ounce of his leadership. Jones also played through a string of injuries. As a player who already knew he was leaving for the NFL, he easily could have opted to just call it a career like Bosa did. Instead, he stuck it out and made huge play after huge play for the Buckeyes.

Looking ahead, Urban Meyer's coaching career is (most likely) over. What are your expectations for Ryan Day in year one?

TM: This is still a Meyer-built roster for the most part, so the Buckeyes are going to be good. Are they going to go undefeated and win a national championship? Maybe. Are they going to fall to 8-4 and play in the Outback Bowl? No chance.

There really shouldn't be a big on-field drop-off next season for Ohio State. The bigger question is how will Day recruit in year one? I expect him to string together a strong 2020 class that will rank in the top five nationally. If his new staffers can hold up their end, the Buckeyes could be competing for the top recruiting spot once again – just as Meyer did for so many years.

GS: It's absolutely insane to expect Day to uphold Meyer's success. Meyer went 83-9, winning 90 percent of his games as he elevated Ohio State's football program to levels far beyond where even predecessor Jim Tressel took it.

With that said, Meyer's recruiting efforts have led to the Buckeyes' current roster, which remains among the top five in college football for talent. While offensive line (one returning starter) is OSU's biggest concern, returning speed and athleticism is back on both sides of the ball.

Day takes into 2019 the 3-0 record from his interim stint in 2018, but it's unrealistic to think he escapes year one without a blemish. Given the talent and returning experience collectively, though, it's fair to again expect 10 wins on the regular slate with room for more if moving parts such as Georgia transfer Justin Fields at quarterback turn out to be as advertised.

JG: Ohio State's 2019 conference schedule is absolutely brutal. The Buckeyes draw Michigan, Nebraska and Northwestern on the road in addition to home tilts against Wisconsin, Penn State and Michigan State. The Cornhuskers will be vastly improved, and Michigan on the road is never a guarantee so Day will have to take his lumps in 2019.

I expect at least two regular-season losses for the Buckeyes in 2019, and three wouldn't shock me. Ohio State will be breaking in a new quarterback and head coach and an almost entirely new defensive coaching staff. Continuity could very well be an issue for the Buckeyes in year one of the Day era so the Buckeye fans will have to be patient. That said, another Rose Bowl and Big Ten title is still on the table with a 10-2 regular season.

Justin Fields' transfer to Ohio State is the biggest story of Day's tenure so far. Assuming he is eligible in 2019, how do

you see the quarterback room shaking out for the upcoming season?

JG: Now that Fields is in and Tate Martell is in the transfer portal, I fully expect Fields to be Ohio State's starting quarterback in 2019, assuming he gets his hardship waiver approved by the NCAA. If Martell does leave, Ohio State needs to find immediate replacements at the backup spot. Outside of Matthew Baldwin, the Buckeyes don't really have any options at quarterback. If Ohio State can keep Fields healthy, then this doesn't become much of an issue. However, an injury to Fields could potentially derail Ohio State's season.

GS: Martell and junior walk-on Kory Curtis have been in the NCAA transfer portal since the week before BSB went to press, so the room might take a depth hit with two fewer bodies in the trenches. With that said, if Martell's transferring, Ohio State has to feel good about Fields' chances of getting the hardship waiver for immediate eligibility.

As long as that turns out to be the case, the Buckeyes should have Fields – a perfect fit for Day's pass-heavy scheme – in line to start. That leaves Baldwin (redshirt freshman), fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov and sophomore walk-on Danny Vanatsky next in line.

Given how historically bad the 2019 recruiting class was considered for quarterback depth, it's unlikely OSU would want to waste a scholarship on a signal caller this late in the cycle with any of the good ones already signed, sealed and delivered to respective schools. Day has expressed his desire to have four scholarship quarterbacks in the room, however, which means he should try to hit the graduate-transfer or junior-college market hard for a shorter-term option.

Considering graduate transfers' desire to play elsewhere, though, it's unlikely the former happens – Alabama's Jalen Hurts, Notre Dame's Brandon Wimbush and other starters are already reportedly in the mix to play right away at other Football Bowl Subdivision programs. So the latter, junior college, becomes the safer bet to fit Day's four-scholarship preference.

TM: With Martell out, there has to be an addition to that room – even with Justin Fields coming in.

Fields has been billed as some sort of combination of Terrelle Pryor, Dwayne Haskins and Cam Newton, it seems, and he's the highest-rated recruit to ever make it into the Ohio State roster in the Internet rankings era. That said, he's never started a college game, so there will be at least some growing pains with Fields in the fold.

And you just need depth – Matthew Baldwin could be a star in the future, but Chris Chugunov can't be the answer behind Baldwin. You need four legit bodies at quarterback, so expect another grad transfer to come in sometime before fall camp. It won't be a big name, and he might never play a down in Columbus, but it will add necessary depth.

As for Fields, he should win the job and have a huge season. I expect him to largely live up to the hype because, quite honestly, I have no reason to doubt a player with that skill set if Day is coaching him.

And finally, what should Day's to-do list look like before spring camp begins?

JG: First and foremost, get the quarterback situation figured out. Second, figure out who your leaders and captains are going to be.

The Buckeyes lost a lot of leadership

Continued On Page 18



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OHIO STATE FOOTBALL ANALYSIS

OSU Quarterback Situation Sorting Itself Out

Continued From Page 17

from the 2018 team, and with a new coaching staff, player leadership becomes crucial. Figure out who your leaders are going to be, and make sure the younger players buy into the new staff. If that happens, Ohio State should be poised for a successful season.

GS: Before spring ball, I don't think Day necessarily has to get the quarterback situation "figured out." Fields appears to be Ohio State's guy, far and away, but let's see how Baldwin competes and develops as he

returns more than a year removed from his torn ACL last January.

On that note, though, the Buckeyes need to know about Martell staying or going and fill out the room from there with another scholarship. Day's coaching staff appears set, on top of OSU's support staff being retained, so recruiting – which never stops – slides to the top.

NFL draft decisions are done, so Day should have a better sense about Ohio State's scholarship situation and how much more the Buckeyes can add – if they want to – before the Feb. 6 National Signing Day.

Among those priorities, Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley 2019 four-star offensive guard Doug Nester and another lineman are absolutely crucial for Day and position coach Greg Studrawa to continue building depth into next season and beyond.

TM: Let's be honest, apart from adding one more body for depth, the quarterback situation is already figured out. Fields is highly likely to get his waiver, and he's going to be the starter in 2019.

The most important thing right now is to start sorting through the jigsaw puzzle that is going to be Ohio State's offensive line

next season. Michael Jordan leaving for the NFL threw a wrench in things and left the Buckeyes with just 11 scholarship linemen as things stand.

Nester signing is priority No. 1, and Ohio State needs to add one more lineman in the 2019 class in February as well. From there, the Buckeyes should sift through the transfer market to try to get one more veteran in that room.

After that, it'll be time to ramp up for spring camp and really dive into recruiting for the 2020 class with a largely new coaching staff on board.

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THANK YOU, COACH.

OPINION

Day Off To Whirlwind Start As OSU Head Coach

It was either William Shakespeare or Ferris Bueller who said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while you could miss it."

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

I had this column pretty much written when news of Tate Martell putting his name into the NCAA's transfer portal surfaced. This on the heels of Martell saying that he was certain he would win the starting quarterback job in spring ball and that Georgia transfer Justin Fields should not "swing and miss ... a second time."

That news came on the heels of receiver K.J. Hill announcing he would return for his senior year. Which was preceded by the worst kept secret in Columbus, that quarterback Dwayne Haskins was making himself available for the 2019 NFL draft. Just before that, offensive lineman Michael Jordan announced he was leaving for the pros.

All this while Ryan Day assembled what amounted to an almost entirely new defensive coaching staff.

Whew.

Let me catch my breath.

To say that the days after the Buckeyes winning the Rose Bowl have been frantic would be an understatement.

Day, who loves to play tempo football, has been operating at a breakneck tempo himself. He's been recruiting, mining contacts to join the coaching staff, strengthening relationships with players on the team. Basically becoming the face of the program, which was the role of his predecessor, Urban Meyer.

Mining those contacts turned out to be gold – or maize, anyway – when Michigan staffers Greg Mattison and Al Washington were hired as OSU assistants.

Mattison has a history of coordinating strong defenses, including the 2011

Baltimore Ravens, who were top three in the NFL in most important statistics. Michigan has been known for its defenses over the years, and the 69-year-old Mattison still has the energy of someone 20 years his junior.

Washington mentored Michigan's linebackers, including All-America selection Devin Bush, and has been hailed as one of the Wolverines' best recruiters. Washington is a Columbus native – his dad, Alvin, is still among Ohio State's top 10 tacklers – and knows well how important the game with the rival from up north is.

They replace Greg Schiano, who left to "pursue NFL opportunities" and Alex Grinch, who left to run his own show at Oklahoma. Grinch was touted as a miracle worker after lifting Washington State's defense from the depths of college football to the top 40. But the secondary was a mess all season – one reason he is gone – and Grinch never really seemed to be on the same page with Schiano. There were personnel issues, scheme issues, things that plagued the Buckeyes all season.

So maybe fresh faces will help OSU's D return to top-10 status, where it was in 2016 and 2017.

The story on the minds of most in Buckeye Nation will be the quarterback saga.

Now, just because Martell put his name into the transfer portal, it isn't a guarantee that he is leaving. What this does is allows other teams to contact him without penalty. He can decide to take his name out and stay at Ohio State, or he could just decide to go.

Spring ball was going to be very interesting with Martell and Fields battling it out. Both highly touted prepsters, Martell seemed a better fit for Meyer's RPO heavy offense. Fields is more of the passer Day craves, though he can run a bit, too. Throw in Matthew Baldwin, a big-armed Texas gunslinger handpicked by Day, and you have the makings of a genuine quarterback derby.

Now that doesn't seem likely to happen. And compounding matters is the fact that Fields is not yet eligible to play at Ohio State.

He left Georgia after a racial incident

during a football game which involved a member of the Bulldogs baseball team, and he will claim to the NCAA that there are "mitigating circumstances that are outside the student-athlete's control and directly impact the health, safety and well-being of the student-athlete."

Now, I like Fields as much as the next guy. He was rated the No. 2 quarterback in the 2018 class, behind Clemson's Trevor Lawrence, who just led his team to the national championship. If Fields is anywhere near as good as Lawrence, the Buckeyes have a real keeper. But here is my problem.

The player was kicked off of the Georgia baseball team, and Fields' sister stayed at the school, where she plays softball. Could she not be in the same situation? It's a flimsy argument, but one that Fields will likely win because the NCAA doesn't want to deny someone who has experienced racism a chance to play. So, look for Fields on the field.

Which leads us to Martell.

A brash, dynamic athlete from Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, Martell was on the radar of many big-time programs. Despite standing less than 6 feet tall, Martell was coveted because of the pressure he can put on a defense with his running ability. His passing skill was a work in progress, though he showed flashes while at Ohio State. However, there weren't many instances of him operating from the pocket, going through progressions and getting the ball out quickly and to the right guy. That's what Day will demand of a quarterback, so maybe Martell saw the writing on the wall shortly after Fields' arrival.

It also couldn't have helped that Fields was sitting courtside with Haskins and Meyer at a recent OSU men's basketball game while Martell was up in the 100 section. It appeared that Haskins was doing his best to entertain Fields, to tell him everything he needed to know about quarterbacking the Buckeyes. That had to be a blow to the brash Martell's considerable ego.

It doesn't bother me that Martell may leave – if a kid wants playing time but isn't going to get it at his current school, then he is by all means within his rights to transfer out. I have not been terribly impressed with Martell in his short stints of action and don't believe the Buckeyes would be championship material with him behind center.

But if he departs, and if Fields doesn't get his waiver – what then?

OSU would be looking at an untested freshman in Baldwin, with little depth behind him in the form of West Virginia graduate transfer Chris Chugunov. It's likely that the Buckeyes will secure a grad transfer or sign a quarterback in the normal recruiting period, because if they go into the season with just two quarterbacks, any designs on a return to the playoff are finished before they even start.

So, Day may indeed want to slow down – may need to slow down. But there's too much going on right now in Columbus for him to do so.

Classic Send-Off

It was well-documented in the lead-up to the Rose Bowl that Meyer had never coached in the Granddaddy of Them All. It was a bucket list thing for him, so it was fitting that he was doused with a Gatorade bucket as the clock hit zero and the Buckeyes were on the right side of a 28-23 contest that was closer than it needed to be.

It couldn't have done Meyer – who is fading into the background due to health concerns stemming from an arachnoid cyst in his brain – any good to see his team take its foot off the gas and let an offensively-challenged Huskies squad back into the game.

But whether it was five points or 50 points, the victory was enough to send Meyer out in style.

"I'm a very blessed man," he said afterward. "I'm blessed because of my family, this team this year, I love this group as much as any I've ever had."

And they loved him back – evidence of that coming via video presentation just prior to the championship trophy ceremony. Players talked about how much Meyer meant to them and the kind of lasting impact they would feel from having played for him. The public outside of Ohio State probably doesn't care much for Meyer, believing he's a shady opportunist who will be coaching again sooner rather than never.

But the players spoke volumes with their spoken words, and around these parts Meyer is revered. That will happen when you go 83-9, beat your rival seven straight times and win a national championship.

"Every week, every yard, every down, when we recruited these players, I just wanted to make sure that we made the great state of Ohio proud," Meyer said. "We weren't perfect, but we did a lot of good things."

The Buckeyes led 21-3 at halftime behind three TD strikes from Haskins – to Parris Campbell, Johnnie Dixon and Rashod Berry, the last with just 14 seconds left in the half. The lead was pushed to 28-3 after J.K. Dobbins – don't worry, he'll be back – burst into the end zone from 3 yards out with a little more than eight minutes remaining in the third quarter. Some fans started to leave the stadium, but Washington ended up making it very interesting.

As they have been prone to do under Meyer, the Buckeyes lost focus – and nearly the game.

First it was trickery as Washington's brilliant running back Myles Gaskin threw a 2-yard TD pass minutes into the fourth quarter. Gaskin then bulled in from a yard out with 6:42 to play, cutting the deficit to 28-17. It was a hat trick for Gaskin as he scored on a 2-yard run with under a minute to play, and suddenly the OSU faithful were wondering if this game might turn out the same as the one where Chicago Bears running back Gale Sayers dedicated the day to sick teammate Brian Piccolo – a loss.

The Buckeyes managed to corral the onside kick, and the celebration began.

Though Meyer often wears his emotions on his sleeve, he doesn't always allow himself to enjoy the moment. He did this time. He smiled, looked around at the setting and embraced numerous players, a change of pace from his usual routine.

"He is a really tough guy," said running back Mike Weber, another player who is leaving early for the pros. "Sometimes you never really know what he is thinking. He really doesn't show a lot of emotion, but I felt him today. You could tell he was giving his all. It felt a little different."

It may have felt different, but it ended the same as most of Ohio State's games under Meyer. In victory.

As one chapter closes, and a coach finally walks away on his own terms, a new one begins.



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Rose Bowl Stood Out Amid Lackluster Bowl Season

Longtime readers of this column know that I have lamented what I perceive as the loss of prestige of the Rose Bowl for many years now in light of America's obsession with the College Football Playoff.

After this season's Granddaddy of Them All – the nickname alone should tell you something about this very special bowl game – I have slightly altered my view on this subject. I think the Rose Bowl still holds a special place for fans of Big Ten and Pac-12 teams. At least it appeared so among Buckeye fans this time around, as the disappointment of not making the final four seemed to give way to excitement about making the trip to Pasadena. I know I was excited.

As for the rest of the college football world beyond the two prestigious conferences that make up the bulk of the Rose Bowl's history, they were never privy to the special nature of the bowl in the first place. That's one of the things that made the Rose Bowl so special. No matter how good a football team you had, if you weren't a member of the Big Ten or the conference on the West Coast with the variety of names and numbers, you weren't going to Pasadena.

It was kind of snobby on our part, but who cares? No one in the Midwest or on the coast worried about the national championship back then. If you were voted champion after the Rose Bowl, that was icing on the cake. The quest was to make it to Pasadena.

So to Alabama or Clemson fans for example, now that there is a playoff, I am sure that the Rose Bowl is little different than my new favorite, the Bad Boy Mowers Gasparilla Bowl – just one in a vast wasteland of bowl games that guarantees postseason action for any team with a .500 record and programming for ESPN and the like for the entire final half of December.

As an aside, imagine my irritation when on a recent Sunday, a letter writer to Columbus Dispatch sports editor Ray Stein from nearby Lewis Center referred to the Rose Bowl as a "second-tier bowl game." The Rose Bowl is *not* second-tier. The current bowl system is second-tier. By the way, I looked the letter writer's name up, and he is not a BSB subscriber.

Now maybe there was a little more excitement in the air above Buckeye Nation because this edition of the Rose Bowl was going to be Urban Meyer's final game. Sure that added to it. But it was also a pleasant reminder of the days when the object in Columbus was to beat Michigan and make it to the Rose Bowl. And to go out there and win the game? That might just mean a national championship, as it did in 1954, 1957 and 1968.

And win in Meyer's last game, the Buckeyes did. There was, of course, no national championship. The CFP – and Ohio State's absence – had already guaranteed that.

But this whole scenario brings up the question of how successful Ohio State's 2018 season was. By the old standards, with an incredible 62-39 thrashing of Michigan, a victory over a scrappy Northwestern team to secure the Big Ten title, a Rose Bowl win over a scrappy Washington team, a 13-1 record and final ranking of No. 3 in the nation, the season would have been considered a rousing success in pre-CFP days.

By today's playoff-centric standards, maybe not so much.

But by my standards, when you consider where Ohio State was in August, trying to wade through Zachgate; in fact when you consider where they were as late as Nov. 17, following the fiasco at Maryland, and to come back from that – this was one of the more special seasons in Ohio State football history and a true testament to the team and coaches. Maybe some of the coaches on the defensive side of the ball could

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH

Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

have done a better job putting a more polished product on the field, but from Meyer and Ryan Day to the assistant coaches, to the players, to the ball boys, everyone associated with the Ohio State football team deserves credit for avoiding what could have been a disaster of a season. Think 2011.

Everyone points to the stunning loss to Purdue as the reason Ohio State didn't make the playoff. I think that game against the Terps – along with the 39 points Ohio State gave up in their also stunning victory over the Wolverines – had just as much to do with the Buckeyes' ranking of No. 6 in the final CFP poll.

Keep in mind, however, that despite yielding 51 points and being taken to overtime by the Terrapins, the Buckeyes somehow won that game. No victory there and I am writing a completely different column right now. The next week Ohio State embarrasses its rival and the Buckeyes are on their way to Indianapolis and Pasadena.

Maybe this was a year to go old-school and take the traditional trip west. Some playoff-obsessed Ohio State fans would say that if the Buckeyes had made it to the playoffs, with Meyer at the helm and Dwayne Haskins under center, they could possibly have made some noise. Maybe, maybe not.

But I am perfectly content with an old-style happy ending and sending Meyer out with a win in the Rose Bowl, a place where, despite three national championships, the Ohio native had never coached. If you are going to ride off into the sunset, the sunsets don't get any more spectacular than the ones in Pasadena on Jan. 1.

Why All The Excitement?

The biggest question coming out of the Rose Bowl seems to be how was Washington able to come back and make the game way more interesting than it had to be. The consensus among Buckeye fans seems to be that Ohio State somehow took its foot off the gas after it got out to a 28-3 lead as the third quarter approached its midpoint.

One thing that I will point out is that in the first half, when Ohio State seemed to be playing pretty well on both sides of the ball, the Buckeyes didn't convert that good play into points. In fact, at the 1:21 mark of the second period, Ohio State led just 14-3. This despite the fact that the Buckeyes' much-maligned defense had given up just 147 yards and three points. Remarkably, the Huskies' longest play from scrimmage against the big-play susceptible OSU defense to that point was a 16-yard pass to Andre Baccellia.

That's when I believe one of the most crucial sequences of the game occurred.

Washington took over at its own 8 after a Druce Chrisman punt. The Huskies used all of 21 seconds and did not force Ohio State to use a timeout before punting the ball back to the Buckeyes at their own 43 with exactly a minute to play. It took Haskins and Co. – sparked by a 10-yard pass to Benjimen Victor, a 19-yard catch by Parris Campbell and a pass-interference call against the Huskies – just five plays and 51 seconds to march the 57 yards to make it 21-3 at the half. No touchdown there and the results after the late Washington rally could have been much different.

Ohio State recorded just 92 of its 364 total yards and gave up 293 of Washington's 444

yards in the second half. The Buckeyes had five first downs in the second half, while the Huskies had 18 in the final 30 minutes. Eighty of Ohio State's second-half yards and four of its first downs came on the Buckeyes' first possession after the break, which resulted in a J.K. Dobbins touchdown and the 28-3 lead. That score seemed to lead to complacency on the part of the players or a coach-not-to-lose attitude by Meyer, the supposed king of the pedal to the metal.

As John Cooper was fond of saying, and I am fond of quoting, "Sometimes we don't give enough credit to the other team. Their players are on scholarship too."

The Huskies could have tossed in the towel when they still trailed by the 28-3 margin at the start of the fourth quarter, just as many of their fans, who started streaming out of the Rose Bowl, did. But the Pac-12 champion and No. 9 team in the country fought back and fought back hard.

Much of the blame might go to the Ohio State defense, which yielded 170 yards, 10 first downs and 20 points in the final quarter. But the Huskies were not just battling the Buckeyes, they were battling the clock. If the OSU offense had picked up a key first down here or another critical one there, Washington would have run out of time much sooner than when the Huskies failed to cover an onside kick with 42 seconds remaining. Instead the Buckeyes moved the chains just once and gained only 15 yards in the fourth quarter.

It's a 60-minute game, however, and Ohio State held on for the satisfying – though not without its anxious final moments – victory.

A Final Tribute

While there are many outside the boundaries of Ohio and the extended Buckeye Nation who consider Meyer some sort of win-at-all costs miscreant, I have seen over the past seven years a true indicator of the coach's positive effect on the program by watching such things as the scholar-athlete list and, more importantly, the list of football graduates, a list that for many years was populated by bunches of reserves and walk-ons. That important list has been rapidly improving, with many major contributors earning the right to walk across the stage.

This fall's list of football graduates was small – just five – but nonetheless impressive.

Graduating on Dec. 15 were Campbell, Johnnie Dixon, Dre'Mont Jones, Malcolm Pridgeon and Brady Taylor. Nary a walk-on in the bunch. I am eager to see the list in the spring.

Your 1st Rose Bowl

I have always maintained that you never forget your first Rose Bowl. For BSB editor Tim Moody and staff writers James Grega and Garrett Stepien, this was their first trip to Pasadena, and I enjoyed reading their thoughts on *their* first Rose Bowl (see page 11).

Mine was after the 1984 season.

The things I remember the most were off the field. There was an elaborate gala to which media members were invited and that featured the immortal Bob Hope as the headliner. Then there was the morning of the game. Media members were also invited to the Rose Bowl parade. I woke up around 5:30 and, boy, I just wanted to go back to sleep.

Fellow BSB staffer Rich Exner and his wife,

Janine, convinced me to get up and catch the shuttle bus to the parade. Boy, was it worth it, so spectacular that I recall that experience more than I do the actual game.

As for that game, I know that a team that featured the likes of Keith Byars, Cris Carter, Sonny Gordon, Eric Kumerow, Jim Lachey, Kirk Lowdermilk, Chris Spielman, Mike Tomczak, Tom Tupa, William White and many more should not have lost to a nondescript USC team with an even more nondescript coach in Ted Tollner.

Sometimes, back then, I felt like Ohio State spent so much energy and emotion defeating Michigan just to get to the Rose Bowl – the Buckeyes defeated the Wolverines 21-6 to earn the trip to Pasadena after being left for dead following losses to Purdue and Wisconsin – that the Rose Bowl was almost anticlimactic.

We are encouraging Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers to share their first experiences at the Rose Bowl. Either mail your thoughts to BSB at P.O. Box 12453 or email them to BSB@buckeyesports.com.

Forum Heating Up

Kudos to the regular posters on The Forum at our BuckeyeSports.com website. Along with members of the BSB staff, they have really spurred increased activity on this message board, access to which is free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

We notice many more of you looking in but not participating. Jump in. Your opinion is as good as anyone else's, including the staff's, and posters frequently see items and post them before the staff does. As we like to say, "If you see something, say something."

If you are not already enjoying BuckeyeSports.com, with The Forum and its 24/7/365 coverage of Ohio State sports, see the simple instructions of page 5 of this issue.

Salary Inflation

In our "From the Pages of BSB" feature on page 2, we learn that 30 years ago, Earle Bruce jumped from Northern Iowa, to which he was relegated after being fired by Ohio State, to Colorado State at a starting salary of \$70,000. I know Colorado State was not the Big Ten, but it still seemed a small salary to me, even in 1989. But Earle obviously wanted to get back in on the bigger school action.

"I'm a Division I-A coach and I belong in Division I-A," Bruce said. "Sometimes you have to take control of your life and do what you have to do."

As a point of comparison, current CSU coach Mike Bobo recently declined an automatic \$100,000 raise in his salary after the Rams went 3-9. That left his stipend at a paltry \$1.8 million.

A Look At The QB Greats

We have been featuring Ohio State quarterbacks for some time now, starting with our poll to determine the greatest Buckeye signal caller of all time.

With Kliff Kingsbury in the news recently after he ended a very brief stay at USC to take the head job with the NFL's Arizona Cardinals, we decided to take a different direction with our ongoing feature. We are going to chronicle quarterback greats who have faced Ohio State during the Buckeye Sports Bulletin era as part of our Reprint Thursdays on BuckeyeSports.com. Kingsbury led Texas Tech against the Buckeyes in their national championship year of 2002, and his game was featured on Jan. 10.

Stanford's John Elway will be featured next on Jan. 17, and upcoming spotlight quarterbacks will include the likes of Peyton Manning, Drew Brees and Tom Brady.