

Wilkinson Rated One Of State's Top Defensive Linemen

Prep Lineman Can Fill Variety Of Spots

By Brent LaLonde

When asked what position star lineman Dan Wilkinson could play in college, Dayton Dunbar coach Tom Montgomery had a simple answer.

"Anywhere he wants," Montgomery said.

The same can probably be said about at which college Wilkinson will play.

The 6-5, 290-pound senior has been a starter on the offensive line at Dunbar since his freshman year. And, since midway through his sophomore year, he has also started at defensive tackle.

Montgomery said Wilkinson is just as proficient regardless of which side of the ball he lines up on.

"To me, he is the best I've ever had as a two-way tackle," said the veteran Dunbar head coach. "He has tremendous speed. Last year he ran a 4.9 in the 40 and he was lugging around 300 pounds. This year, he is so much quicker."

"I've talked to a lot of recruiters, and some say offense and some say defense. Whatever they take him as, they are going to get a good ballplayer. I guess it will depend on who wants him and what system they want to use."

Wilkinson, who goes by the nickname "Big Daddy," was rated by national recruiting expert Tom Lemming as one of the top 10 players in the state of Ohio. Lemming rates Wilkinson and Cleveland St. Ignace defensive tackle Trent Zenkewicz as the top defensive

line prospects in the state.

"He is a super prospect," Lemming said. "No matter what school we visited in the Dayton area this summer, everyone wanted to talk about 'Big Daddy.' He could be a force at defensive tackle, although many college scouts think Dan could be a dominant offensive lineman."

Besides playing offensive tackle for Dunbar, Wilkinson has played three positions on the defensive line this year, including tackle, end and nose guard. He says he doesn't care where he plays in college.

"It really doesn't matter now," Wilkinson said. "I like offense and defense about even."

Through Oct. 18, he had led Dunbar to a 7-2 record and an apparent spot in the Division I playoffs. Wilkinson has been dominant on offense and defense throughout the season, according to Montgomery.

"I had him at nose guard, and he was tremendous," the Dunbar head coach said. "You'd think with his size he would just bully the center. But no way. He would just swing right around them because he's so quick. He's just a good ballplayer."

According to Montgomery, Wilkinson's body has matured over the past year, and the result has been a quicker version of "Big Daddy."

"Maturity will do that for you. That is the difference, I believe, in a 16 and 17-year-old," Montgomery said. "When



Dan Wilkinson

he's 20, I probably won't even know him because he'll be so quick. When a kid is that big, he usually doesn't move that quick."

Wilkinson, who works out three times a week and bench presses 425 pounds, has narrowed his list of prospective colleges down to Ohio State, Michigan, Miami (Fla.), Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Southern Cal and "a couple of others."

He said Ohio State is right in the thick of the running for his services.

"They look pretty good. They're right up there," Wilkinson said. "But I really haven't been talking to too many of the Ohio State people."

Montgomery said he will leave the task of choosing a college up to Wilkinson.

"I told him to just remain open-minded and pick five good schools to visit. I told him if he asked my opinion, I would give him my opinion," Montgomery said.

Wilkinson said he really hasn't given much thought yet as to choosing a col-

lege.

"I have to take care of high school football first," he said.

If Wilkinson was getting excited about one school, Montgomery said he probably wouldn't show any signs of it anyway.

"He doesn't get real excited about anything," the coach said. "He always looks the same, after a win or after a loss. I've really only seen him get all excited once. But, hell, he'll get hyped up if you put some food in front of him."

Montgomery said Wilkinson has focused more on football during his senior year.

"He plays his best in his biggest games. He's punctual, and you can always rely on him. He's been a little more enthusiastic lately, and he's beginning to show his leadership and get others pumped up," Montgomery said.

Wilkinson has played basketball and run track the past three years at Dunbar, but said he will probably sit out basketball this year. He plans, however, to go ahead and participate in track again this season, but for a good reason.

"I did play basketball, but I don't think I'm going to play this year," he said. "I also throw the shot and discus in track, but I just do that to keep in shape for football."

Wilkinson became a legitimate Division I prospect during his sophomore year at Dunbar.

"As a freshman, he had some problems and was not that impressive," Montgomery said. "He was just another big kid. But during the middle of his sophomore year, he started both ways and has been there ever since."

Wilkinson carries a 2.40 grade-point average at Dunbar. He was scheduled to take the American College Test on Oct. 27. He said academics will play a role in choosing a college.

"I'll be looking for a good education," he said. "The schools I'm interested in will have to have good academic standings. I want to play football, but my education is important to me, too."

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THE WILKINSON FILE

NAME — Dan Wilkinson

HIGH SCHOOL — Dayton Dunbar

POSITION — Offensive tackle, defensive lineman

HEIGHT, WEIGHT — 6-5, 290 pounds

BENCH PRESS — 425 pounds

40-YARD DASH TIME — 4.80 seconds

GRADE-POINT AVERAGE — 2.40

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS — Scheduled to take ACT on Oct. 27

VITAL STATISTICS — Rated by national recruiting expert Tom Lemming as one of the top 10 players in Ohio, Wilkinson has helped Dunbar to a 7-2 record through Oct. 19 and an almost sure berth in the state playoffs. Has been a two-way starter since his sophomore year. Most college scouts believe Wilkinson will be a defensive lineman, but many others look at him as an offensive tackle prospect. Totaled 72 tackles and eight sacks last season.

COACH'S COMMENT — "I have never had a player who excelled as much on both offense and defense as Daniel. Usually, a high school player will prefer either offense or defense, and the one they prefer will be the one they are usually the best at playing. That's not the case here. It really doesn't matter to Dan which one he plays. Most people figure he's going to be a defensive lineman in college, but he just as easily could wind up playing on the offensive side." — Dayton Dunbar head coach Tom Montgomery

HOBBIES — Lifting weights, basketball

SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN — Ohio State, Michigan, Miami (Fla.), Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Southern Cal and several other schools

Buck Beat

Continued From Page 4

"I would never do anything to jeopardize my teammates," Reynolds told *The Columbus Dispatch*, "but I have to stand up for my rights. I have never used steroids before and steroids have never been in my body."

"As long as I'm living on this Earth, Butch Reynolds will continue to fight to clear his name."

OSU Wins All-Sports Title

Ohio State won the 1990-91 Big Ten all-sports championship, outdistancing Indiana by just 2.5 points.

The Buckeyes, helped by conference championships in baseball, men's basketball and men's tennis as well as runner-up finishes in men's golf, men's gymnastics, men's outdoor track and women's volleyball, scored 129 total points in the rankings.

The Hoosiers were second with 126.5 points, followed by Wisconsin with 109, Michigan with 108 and Iowa with 106.

Points are awarded on a 10-9-8 basis with 10 points given for finishing first in a sport, nine points for second and so on. Standings in 21 intercollegiate sports — 11 for the men and 10 for women — are computed to get the all-sports standings.

Top Ohio Prep Lineman Set To Sign With Bucks

By Mike Wachman

Ohio State's 1991 football recruiting effort, thought to be all sewed up last February, may not be finished quite yet.

The Buckeyes' class of 19 incoming freshmen may increase to an even 20 with the signing of lineman Dan Wilkinson of Dayton Dunbar.

Wilkinson told *BSB* that he would sign a national letter of intent to play football for the Buckeyes on July 10 or 11.

He was one of the most highly sought linemen in the country last fall until it appeared he would not be able to qualify for freshman eligibility under Proposition 42. However, he achieved a passing score on the ACT on his final attempt at taking the test and should be eligible to play in the fall.

As *BSB* went to press, there was still a question regarding Wilkinson's grade-point average, but it appeared the question would be resolved.

Wilkinson made a name for himself as both an offensive and defensive lineman, earning All-Ohio honors and *Parade* magazine All-American plaudits.

"I decided a couple weeks ago that it would be Ohio State," the 6-6, 295-pounder said. "It came down to them and Tennessee. Basically, it was because it was close to home and (OSU track team member) Chris (Nelloms, also from Dayton Dunbar) told me that it was a good school."

Wilkinson, who can bench press in excess of 425 pounds and run the 40 in 5.0 seconds, is not sure exactly where on the defensive line he will play.

"They have a lot of good players, but I'm pretty good, too," he said. "Getting this out of the way, boy, what a relief. Now I can relax and take things easy until I get to Ohio State. Then it will be time to get down to business."

All-Star Recruits

Three future Ohio State players will appear in a high school uniform for the final time July 13 at the 46th annual Ohio All-Star Football Game.

The contest is scheduled to be played beginning at 7 p.m. in Massillon's Paul Brown Tiger Stadium.

Bob Hoying of St. Henry will quarterback the South squad in the contest. Also scheduled to appear for the South squad are defensive back Marlon Kerner of Columbus Brookhaven and place-kicker Mike Jones of Steubenville.

Hoying and Kerner were both awarded scholarships last February while Jones, rated as one of the top kickers in the state last fall, will join the Buckeyes as a walk-on.

Mallon Wins LPGA

Former Ohio State golfer Meg Mallon rolled in a 10-foot birdie putt on the final hole of competition to win the LPGA Championship in Bethesda, Md., June 30.

Mallon carded a 72-hole score of 274, 10-under-par, to beat LPGA stars Pat Bradley and Ayako Okamoto by a single stroke. In capturing her first major title on the LPGA tour, Mallon pocketed \$150,000.

She played for the Lady Buckeyes from 1982-85, earning All-Big Ten honors in her junior and senior years.

Divers Make Pan Am Team

Former Ohio State divers Karen LaFace and Patrick Jeffrey earned berths on the U.S. diving teams scheduled to compete in the Pan American Games next month.

LaFace won the three-meter springboard event at the HTH Classic in Princeton, N.J., June 15, earning an automatic berth on the Pan Am women's team.

Jeffrey finished in second place in the men's platform event at the same meet, earning his spot on the Pan Am men's roster.

LaFace was a three-time All-American for the Buckeyes from 1986-88. She was the national collegiate one-meter champion in 1987.

Also a three-time All-American, Jeffrey was the national collegiate champion in 1988 in both the one and three-meter springboard events.

WLAFF Gets Stadium OK

The Ohio State Athletic Council has approved use of Ohio Stadium for World

League of American Football games if Columbus is awarded a franchise.

The promoters of a WLAFF franchise in Columbus hope to enter a bid to the international league's New York headquarters around July 13. At that time, the WLAFF will weigh expansion from the present 10 teams to as many as 16 teams for the 1992 spring season.

The only remaining hurdle in using Ohio Stadium for the professional football games is a Big Ten conference rule forbidding the use of member facilities by professional teams.

OSU and the proposed Columbus franchise would need a waiver from the Big Ten in order to use Ohio Stadium, site of several pro football exhibitions, but never a full slate of regular-season pro games.

Lachey Receives Honor

Former Ohio State lineman Jim Lachey, currently with the Washington Redskins, received the John Mackey Award as the NFC's top offensive lineman at a banquet June 23 in Chicago.

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Buckeye Defense More Than Happy To Be Making Room For 'Big Daddy'

By RICH LEONARDO
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If the Ohio State football team were going to develop a series for television, it might very well have come up with a remake of the timeless classic "Make Room For Daddy."

However, the title would probably have been changed slightly to "Make Room For Big Daddy."

The Buckeyes' defensive line was

decimated following last season with the graduation of three-year starter Rich Frimel and the NFL's early call to standout Alonzo Spellman. The void left by their departures certainly hastened a switch to defense for "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson, and he has answered the call.

"You just don't see a player with Daniel's talent very often," OSU defensive coordinator Bill Young said. "By that, I mean being big, fast, strong

and having excellent coordination. Plus, he's so smooth when he runs that he looks like a track runner. Honestly, it's very rare to have a player with all of his capabilities. This is a once-in-a-great-while opportunity."

Ohio State has not produced an All-American defensive lineman since nose guard Aaron Brown was so honored 15 years ago. Wilkinson might be the next.

"I think Daniel can be one of the best defensive tackles in the Big Ten, if he's not already one of them," Young said. "He's got as much talent as anybody I've ever coached, and several of those former players are playing in the NFL right now."

"If he keeps on the right track and stays healthy, I'm certain good things are going to happen for both him and us."

Good things have already begun as the 6-5, 299-pound redshirt freshman led the Buckeyes in sacks all season. He wound up the regular year with 6.5 sacks and 10.5 tackles for loss among his 44 total stops.

It appears if Wilkinson isn't making a tackle, he's certainly at least occupying more than one offensive player.

"Starting with the second game, I've been double-teamed on virtually every play," Wilkinson said. "Sometimes I'm triple-teamed by the guard, the tackle and the fullback, but I guess I'm getting used to it."

"Really, by me occupying two or three players, it usually frees up Steve (Tovar) or someone to slip in there and make the tackle. But, hey, I get off, too. They can't keep me out of there all day. But it doesn't matter to me who gets the tackle. I'll do whatever is best for the defense as a whole and I'll do it completely."

The term "complete" seems appropriate when describing the boundless abilities of the young Buckeye defender. To go along with his size and strength, Wilkinson also runs the 40-yard dash in 4.9 seconds and has a



Dan Wilkinson

standing vertical jump of 30 inches.

"Big Daddy has had a heckuva season for us so far and if he continues to progress like he has, he'll end up being one of the top defensive linemen in the country," OSU head football coach John Cooper said. "He got banged up a little bit with a sprained shoulder, but he's darn tough and he was out there the majority of the time."

Wilkinson might have seen playing time last year as a true freshman if not for one thing — a weight problem. He came to Ohio State weighing 348 pounds and was subsequently red-shirted and moved to offensive tackle.

"Defense is what I play. There's no doubt about which side of the ball I'm supposed to play on," Wilkinson said. "That switch to offense last year was punishment for my coming to camp 50 pounds overweight. But at one time during the season, I weighed out at 287 pounds; so I'm in the best shape of my life."

"I'm just hitting my stride now; I'm comfortable. I know what I can do and I know what I will do. There are things I can do now where the man playing across from me cannot stop me. Week in and week out, I'll continue to be more and more relentless."

"All things considered, I do need to



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improve in some areas, but I'm feeling confident right now; so I'm sure everything will fall into place."

Things have been falling into place for OSU's young defensive tackle for quite some time now. As a prepster at Dayton Dunbar High School, Wilkinson dominated the competition and was generally considered one of the top defensive line prospects in the country. Due to his schoolboy prowess, Wilkinson was flooded with scholarship offers, but a problem with qualifying to play as a freshman left him unsigned on national signing day.

A few months later, Wilkinson got squared away on his entrance tests and schoolwork, and the Buckeyes were one of the few schools that remained in touch with him.

"I always did like Ohio State and when it came time to decide, I chose OSU over Miami of Florida," he said. "But really, the choice was easy because I always wanted to be a Buckeye."

Being a Buckeye can also create a lot of pressure for a young player, especially if expectations run high.

"I don't know about anybody else, but we as coaches put some pressure on him because he does have so very much talent," Young said. "We feel Daniel has the potential to be one of the best players in the country and as he keeps improving each week, he also continues to meet all of our expectations, and his future becomes more and more unlimited."

"I think he's had a really good season, plus he's done everything we've asked of him and a little bit more."

Doing a little bit more has become the norm for Wilkinson, as he seems to have a knack for raising his level of play at some very opportune moments. For instance, in the season opener against Louisville, it was his tremendous pass rush that forced Cardinals quarterback Jeff Brohm into misfiring on a two-point conversion attempt that would have secured a first-game loss for the Buckeyes.

"Opposing teams might not have been real aware of Big Daddy at the beginning of the season," Cooper said, "but you can bet the farm on the fact that they know exactly where he's lining up now. He's a force, that's for sure."

Wilkinson's presence has had a major impact on OSU's defense this year, and his performance has people forgetting about the departed Spellman.

"I don't feel any pressure about having to fill Alonzo's shoes, but I do feel pressure from what outsiders might expect me to do and from what I expect from myself," Wilkinson said. "I wasn't real sure about how I'd perform at this level, but I certainly never worried about trying to be the next anybody."

"I do what I have to do to succeed, and while I don't tune out the media, I realize all I have to do is take care of business and the rest of that stuff will take care of itself."

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Bucks' Defensive Line Anchor Preparing For Sophomore Season

'Big Daddy' Keeping Praise In Perspective

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Even with the intensity of football season still two months away, huge defensive tackle "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson is sacking the spotlight.

That's because, while many other athletes have gone home for the summer or are logging time at seasonal jobs, Wilkinson, a human wrecking ball at 6-5 and 312 pounds, is gearing for what could be the most dominating display by a Buckeye since Chris Spielman knocked woody 205 ball carriers in 1986 or Keith Byars rambled for 1,764 yards and 24 touchdowns in 1984.

After finishing with 46 tackles, a team-high 6½ sacks and a bevy of big plays during last year's debut, Wilkinson has given the OSU faithful great reason to anticipate. His numbers and imposing talent earned him praise as a first-teamer on the All-Big Ten list.

But Buckeye fanatics are not the only ones anxiously awaiting Wilkinson's encore performance. Professional scouts are checking in regularly to see if "Big Daddy" is as determined as he is talented.

Noted draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr. is already convinced. In his recent preview of the 1994 NFL draft, Kiper touted Wilkinson as the number one defensive tackle in the country. He even proclaimed the Buckeye phenom as a "strong possibility" of being the number one pick overall if he chooses to come out — powerful words about a young man who has played in just 12 collegiate games, 10 as a starter.

Wilkinson more realistically feels he has a long way to go.

"There were times last season when people would come up to me and say, 'Great game,' and I don't think I did that much," he said. "Most of the time, I feel like I could have done a lot more. Sometimes I come off the field with a clear conscience, not thinking I did good or bad."

Wilkinson is still trying to get used to the praise. In April, he was named to *Playboy* magazine's preseason All-American team. The magazine arranged a Florida getaway and will publish a full-color photograph of Wilkinson and America's top college performers in the fall, but the young lineman was not very impressed.

"I was expecting to see all the bunnies and I didn't see any. It (bleeped) me off because that was the main reason I went down there," he said with a smile. "It was a good visit, getting to know the other guys, but I wanted to



The sight of Ohio State defensive lineman "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson wrapping up an opposing quarterback became a familiar one to Big Ten opponents last season, and may become even more frequent this season. Fresh from a stellar rookie campaign, Wilkinson returns to anchor what many experts agree is the finest defensive front wall in the conference.

Ayers, Buckeyes Continue To Wait For Word Of NCAA's Final Ruling In Case

By MARK REA

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

With an off-season of discontent coming directly on the heels of a troubled regular season, Ohio State head coach Randy Ayers is looking forward to putting the past couple of months behind him.

After back-to-back Big Ten championships, the Buckeyes experienced growing pains and found life without Jim Jackson a bit tough as they tumbled far back in the conference pack and then stumbled out of the blocks in the National Invitation Tournament.

Since the season ended, things have gotten worse. In late May, the NCAA charged the program with 17 recruiting

violations involving incoming guard Damon Flint, ruling him ineligible to play for the Buckeyes. A couple of weeks later, two of the team's major inside forces — senior center Lawrence Funderburke and junior forward Antonio Watson — underwent minor knee surgery.

And Ayers has yet to emerge from the long, dark tunnel. A final ruling on the Flint case is expected from the NCAA sometime within the next month, keeping the Buckeyes on the proverbial pins and needles awhile longer.

"I don't have any indication when they will come in and make a final decision," Ayers told *BSSB*. "The university attorneys are handling all of that. My understanding is that when they find out something, that's when I'll find out."

The NCAA has declined comment on what further sanctions could be levied against the OSU program. Punishment could be as severe as losing scholarships and being ruled ineligible for the NCAA Tournament. On the other hand, the NCAA could simply tell the Buckeyes to keep their noses clean and declare the matter closed.

Until then, Ayers focuses squarely on the light at the end of the tunnel. The first glimpse was set to come July 5, when coaches were allowed to get back on the road to recruit, attending several of the annual summer all-star camps.

The fifth-year OSU head coach admitted that he really did not know how

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Wilkinson's Summer Spent In Weight Room

Continued From Page 1

see some more legs."

After hanging out with the likes of Heisman Trophy hopeful Marshall Faulk of San Diego State, Florida State quarterback Charlie Ward and other sure-fire All-Americans, Wilkinson took the honor in stride and returned to Columbus, ready to start summer conditioning with a focus toward the 1993 season.

Then he caught wind of Kiper's glowing assessment of his potential.

"When I first heard about that, I was real happy and pumped up for a while," he said. "But I can't relax on that. There's a lot of work to be done. I guess the best thing about it is knowing I'm in the position I want to be in. Now, it's up to me."

To make sure he upholds his end of the bargain, Wilkinson is working out like a bull with the team these days under the watchful eye of strength and conditioning coach Dave Kennedy.

"Danny is as impressive as anybody I've worked with," said Kennedy, who helped preserve Nebraska's reputation for great team strength while coaching there.

He added that Wilkinson may even have more potential than All-Pro defensive lineman Neil Smith, a former disciple of Kennedy's at Nebraska. Smith, who weighed 265 pounds and posted a 40-time of 4.4 seconds in college, was the third pick of the 1988 draft by the Kansas City Chiefs.

"Danny's a great kid. He's a phenomenal specimen. He's super strong," Kennedy raved. "He's just a genuine guy who takes coaching very well and is always respectful. It's just a pleasure to work with him."

"I think he's still only at the tip of the iceberg in terms of how good of a player he's going to be."

Not surprisingly, Wilkinson started gaining extra attention quickly while at Dayton Dunbar as a prospect who could play on either side of the ball. But entering his senior season, his academic eligibility was still in question.

Suddenly, Wilkinson was much more concerned about his books than his football options, and several schools backed away. Because of that, Big Daddy ended up a Buckeye and not a Miami Hurricane, his first choice for most of the recruiting process.

Wilkinson, who inked his letter of intent in July of 1991, was one of the final recruits to sign on with Ohio State that year. He made the grade, but OSU coaches decided to redshirt the star-in-waiting to help the youngster get acclimated to the demands of college life and shed some of his weight. He had reported at a robust 348 pounds.

He admits that the redshirt year was a success.

"I think it made me stronger and a lot more focused," said Wilkinson, who works with 425 pounds on the bench press (five reps, four sets) and can lift up to 495. "I came in that next year wanting to get my job done instead of beat around the bush."

Seeing a need to replace the departed Rich Frimel, a sturdy, three-year starter at defensive tackle, the OSU brass switched Wilkinson from offensive to defensive line last spring. The result was a practice period so impressive that head coach John Cooper said Wilkinson should attain immediate status as one of the nation's best defensive linemen.

Of course, Wilkinson lived up to the billing last fall. He single-handedly preserved a one-point win over Louisville by causing an errant throw on a late two-point conversion attempt. He also did all he could in a loss to Illinois, logging a career-best 10 tackles and three sacks.

"The best feeling is always getting a sack on the quarterback after a nice little chase," he said.

Indeed, Wilkinson's mobility, determination and speed (Kiper lists his 40 as less than a 4.7) are what have pro scouts excited and Buckeye teammates thankful.

Cornerback Tim Walton said one of his two interceptions last season was a direct result of Wilkinson's prowess. The pick came against Syracuse when

Wilkinson flushed All-American quarterback Marvin Graves out of the pocket and rambled stride for stride with the fleet-footed QB, forcing him to throw across the grain. Walton simply stepped in front of the intended receiver for a big play. He hopes for many more, thanks to Wilkinson's presence.

"Big Daddy was a key to my success last year, and this year I'm counting on him to get in a lot of quarterbacks' faces and cause a lot of quick releases," Walton said. "To me, he's the best defensive lineman I've ever seen. He's strong, he's fast, he's mobile, he has agility, he can stop the run and he can pass rush. If there's somebody in college who's better than him right now, I'll be shocked."

Wilkinson's consistent pressure is amazing for a player of his girth. In seventh grade, he already weighed 260 pounds, earning the nickname from his coach at the time, Alfred Powell.

"It started out as 'Big Beef,' and it grew into 'Big Daddy' in about a month and stuck with me ever since," Wilkinson said of his familiar moniker, which he shares with former Philadelphia Eagles All-Pro Carl Hairston.

Wilkinson remains one of the guys despite the awe around him. And like

everyone else, he can't wait to see what the vaunted OSU defense can do come fall.

"Teamwise, I see great things happening," he said. "We might have a little more than last year and I think we'll be hungrier because the younger guys are starting to see what this is all about. We're right there, we just have to push it."

"I know when I take the field I'm going to go crazy. I'm going to try to do the unexpected."

Wilkinson may have to brandish a cape and fly in hero-like fashion to go beyond the expected this year, especially since he is a sure target for double teams all season. Ohio State coaches are already mapping out ways to handle such attention.

Some also may worry about what the inevitable dollars of the NFL can do to a young player, but Wilkinson is not concerned.

"I think it will only help motivate me and help me have a great year," he said. "I'm not going to get caught up in that. For me to know I'm going to leave, I would have to definitely know that I'm going in the top five or top three. That's the only way. If things are iffy at all, then I won't chance it."

Kiper Places Plenty Of Buckeyes Among Top Prospects In '94 Draft

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

"Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson isn't the only member of the Ohio State football team who would make a good NFL player.

According to draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr., Wilkinson is only one of four Buckeyes to earn a five-star rating, the highest Kiper issues in his 1993 Draft Review.

Along with Wilkinson, five-star ratings were given to offensive tackle Alan Kline, offensive guard Jason Winrow and defensive end Jason Simmons.

Kiper rates Kline as the number two offensive tackle in the country, commenting, "If he plays to the level expected, Kline should be a solid mid-first-round selection" in next April's NFL draft.

Winrow checks in as the fourth best offensive guard. Kiper says that Winrow's "computer numbers are that of a high first-round pick." And Simmons is rated fifth among defensive ends. Kiper describes him as having a "motor that never stops running."

One other upperclassman was selected in the top five at his position. Senior safety Chico Nelson was rated

fifth by Kiper but did not receive a five-star rating.

Other veteran players ranked by Kiper included seniors Jack Thruish 13th at center, Cedric Saunders 15th at tight end, Jeff Cothran 17th at fullback, Dave Monnot 20th at offensive guard, Tim Walton 24th at cornerback, and Butler By'not'e 31st at running back. Kiper also mentioned former OSU cornerback Foster Paulk, ranking him 12th at the position.

Seven other Buckeyes were given rankings by Kiper in the underclassmen division, led by sophomore Eddie George, rated the number one fullback prospect in the country among second-year players.

Travis McGuire, who was redshirted as a freshman last season, is ranked third at running back, while sophomore Craig Powell is third at linebacker. Sophomore Korey Stringer is fourth at offensive tackle, and junior Matt Bonhaus is ranked fifth among defensive linemen despite the fact he has played sparingly in his career so far.

Two players OSU is counting on heavily this season — sophomore quarterback Bob Hoyer and junior wide receiver Joey Galloway — rank sixth at their respective positions.



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Funderburke had undergone surgery on both knees to repair tendon problems in the kneecap region and appeared overweight and out of shape as the season began. His minutes were down and so was his output.

However, after a four-point game against Iowa, Funderburke came back with 16 points and nine rebounds in the team's 69-55 loss to Wisconsin.

Despite his early season troubles, Funderburke remained the team's leading rebounder at 5.8 per game and was fourth on the team in scoring with an average of 11.3 points.

Through Jan. 8, Funderburke needed only 115 more points to become the 34th player in OSU history to score 1,000 in his career.

It's Still Bombs Away

OSU senior guard Jamie Skelton collected two more three-point field goals among his team-high 20 points against Wisconsin.

That pumped Skelton's career mark to 108 three-pointers, putting him within reach of the top two spots in Ohio State history.

Chris Jent and Jamaal Brown, teammates from 1989-92 on the Buckeyes, are the leading three-point shooters in school history. Jent bagged 112 treys in his career, while Brown had 109.

Skelton has also attempted the most three-point shots in school history with 316. He started the season in third place but has already passed Jent (293) and Brown (281).

Incidentally, Skelton is also getting within reach of the 1,000-point mark for his career. The 20 points against Wisconsin pushed him past the 800 mark to 802. At his scoring pace through Jan. 8, he would reach 1,000 points in the March 6 home game against Indiana.

Football Roundup

After putting the finishing touches on a 10-1-1 season, the Ohio State football team wound up with its first top 10 finish since 1986.

The Buckeyes were 10th in the final coaches poll by USA Today/CNN and 11th in the final writers poll released by *The Associated Press*.

In addition to posting their best record since finishing 11-1 in 1979, the Buckeyes also captured their first Big Ten championship since 1986 and their first postseason victory since the Cotton Bowl following that year.

Junior split end Joey Galloway wound up the team's scoring leader with 13 touchdowns, becoming the first receiver to lead the team in scoring since Robert Grimes tied for the lead in 1952.

Ohio State's offense averaged 29.3 points per game, the most for an OSU team since 1984. The Buckeyes also threw 15 touchdown passes compared to five in each of the past two seasons. OSU hasn't thrown for as many as 15 TD passes since Greg Frey threw 16 in 1990.

On defense, Ohio State has given up an average of only 14.9 points per game since 1991. During that 36-game span, the Buckeyes have also held 15 opponents to less than 100 yards rushing.

"Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson and Korey Stringer both made first-team All-American from several sources, marking the first time in history that OSU had two sophomores make first-team honors.

And the bowl victory improved the program's postseason record to 12-14, including a 2-0 mark in the Holiday Bowl. The team is also 5-7 in the Rose Bowl, 1-0 in the Orange and Cotton bowls, 1-1 in the Fiesta, Liberty and

Citrus bowls, 0-1 in the Sugar and Gator bowls and 0-2 in the Hall of Fame Bowl.

Computer Says OSU Fifth

The Buckeyes' narrow victory in the Holiday Bowl over Brigham Young certainly didn't carry much weight with the pollsters.

They came out of the postseason with the same rankings from the writers and coaches that they had going in.

However, while some lamented the fact that several teams with lesser records — including Penn State, which was defeated soundly by the Buckeyes in the regular season — jumped above Ohio State in the final rankings, OSU can still be proud of finishing fifth in the so-called "power rankings."

The computer poll, devised by MIT graduate Jeff Sagarin, is designed to reward teams that do well against good

opponents. Strength of schedule is one of the determining factors in ranking the teams with the computer.

In that poll, Florida State was the national champion with a rating of 102.1. Nebraska was a distant second at 97.52, with Notre Dame finishing third at 97.29. Florida was fourth at 94.97, barely squeezing past Ohio State, which was fifth with a rating of 94.65.

Rounding out the computer's top 10 were Penn State (93.99), Wisconsin (92.70), Texas A&M (92.32), Tennessee (92.32) and West Virginia (91.74).

Of the top 10 teams, Penn State's schedule was rated the toughest, getting a rating of 78.54. Ohio State was second at 78.49, followed by Florida State at 78.31.

Is Jack Back?

Former Ohio State golfer and PGA legend Jack Nicklaus is making noise

that 1994 could be a comeback season for him.

Nicklaus won the senior tour division of the Mercedes Championship — formerly the Tournament of Champions — and kicked off a '94 season in which he believes he can still win a major tournament on the PGA Tour.

"You may laugh at me," said the 53-year-old golfing great, "but if I think in my own mind I can be competitive, then I believe I can be competitive. This could be a fun season. I'm going to try to make it one."

Nicklaus shot a four-under-par score of 68 in the final round to come from three shots off the pace. He posted a 72-hole score of 279, nine under par.

His last regular-tour victory came in the 1986 Masters, but it was his seventh victory in 20 Senior Tour tournaments.

Wilkinson Decides To Head For NFL, Galloway To Stay With Bucks For '94

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

One's going and one's staying.

With just one season logged in the college ranks, Dan Wilkinson already knew the National Football League was awaiting his entrance with baited breath.

But Joey Galloway figured his date with untold riches could wait another year.

As a redshirt freshman, Wilkinson, a 6-5, 300-pound defensive tackle, had lived up to his nickname of "Big Daddy" and was beginning to hear talk of commendation in the off-season. He found himself on a plane to Florida as a *Playboy* All-American, and scouts and coaches were calling regularly to tell him he was a gem of a player.

During the progression of the 1993 season, a 10-1-1 campaign partially highlighted by the dominating play of Wilkinson, it further became apparent that "Big Daddy" was ready for the big time.

Days after the Buckeyes defeated Brigham Young in the Holiday Bowl, Wilkinson could not hold his breath any longer. Word of his decision to turn pro became public even before a scheduled press conference.

"I pretty much knew this is what I'd do all year," he told *BSB*. "I knew if I didn't get injured and had a pretty good season I'd be ready. There was no question in my mind."

"It's going to be an adjustment, a new way of life, but I don't think it's going to be a big deal."

With his 21st birthday still two months away, Wilkinson is not yet old enough to buy a beer. But pretty soon he could buy an entire bar if he so chooses. Wilkinson appears locked into a top five position in the April NFL draft, which generally translates into a multiyear, multimillion-dollar contract. Some, including noted NFL draft analyst Mel Kiper, have projected Wilkinson as a possible number one pick overall.

"That's pretty crazy," said the low-key Wilkinson.

Many figured similar dollar figures would spin the head of Galloway and that the junior would join Wilkinson and a growing list of underclassmen who have declared for the draft. When the school announced Galloway had



Joey Galloway



Dan Wilkinson

scheduled an afternoon press conference for Jan. 10, the last day players with remaining eligibility can declare for the NFL, the suspense seemed over. Galloway certainly was leaving.

But during his address, Galloway announced the unexpected. Dressed casually and seated alone without a written statement, he unveiled his thought process: "I had an opportunity to go home and meet with my parents, sit down and weigh both sides of the decision. I think I'm in a great situation, since if I decide to come out there's a lot of money out there, and I think I could be very successful in the NFL. Also, this is a great place to play football, as everyone that's around here knows."

"It's a great place and hard to leave. Therefore, I've decided to return for my senior season."

Galloway, who tied Cris Carter's single-season record with 11 touchdown catches and led the team with 47 receptions for 946 yards this season, made reporters giggle when he told them he made his final decision about an hour before the press conference. He admitted that his cloudy status — scouts told him he would be picked anywhere from the first round to the fourth — factored into the picture.

He severely injured his right knee and missed nearly all of the 1992 season. He banged it up again in the bowl game and though he was not seriously hurt, he feared the NFL would take note.

Another consideration was what the

elusive Galloway could display with another season in scarlet and gray.

"There are some things I want to accomplish before I leave," he said. "Number one, I'd like to play in the Rose Bowl, I'd like to get a second Big Ten championship ring, and there are some personal goals."

Galloway said the money can wait.

"Money is important, don't get me wrong, but it's not driving my life. I don't really put much emphasis on material things because I wasn't brought up that way. That money will be there also," he said.

Galloway did say, however, that if he were in Wilkinson's position, he too would have opted for the league early. To help him retain some value and to ease the fear of now losing his high status, Galloway plans to take out an insurance policy soon.

Wilkinson continues to prepare for his big step by seeking advice and preparing both physically and mentally for his career. He is working out for the upcoming league combine camp, where he plans to show off a 510-pound bench press. He also wants to show a level head, advice that came from a group of friends now in the NFL that includes Green Bay defensive end Reggie White, Dallas defensive tackle Russell Maryland and former Buckeyes Jim Lachey of Washington and Steve Tovar of Cincinnati.

The Bengals, incidentally, own the top pick in the draft and may opt for Wilkinson, a native of nearby Dayton.

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Bengals, Wilkinson Camp Far Apart In Early Contract Negotiations

Cincinnati Makes Big Daddy Number One

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

After everyone had told him he would be the number one pick in the NFL draft, even after he made the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, Dan Wilkinson could not believe it.

"I'm just another guy," he said. "I never considered myself special. I knew that I would be taken pretty high — that's why I came out in the first place. But until that telephone rings, you never know."

It didn't take long for that phone to ring April 24. Just a few minutes after the NFL draft began in New York, the Cincinnati Bengals were placing a long-distance call to Wilkinson, informing him he would be their first selection, the number one overall pick in the draft.

"To tell you the truth, I'm very happy this whole thing is over," Wilkinson told *BSB* from Newport Beach, Calif., home base of his agent, Leigh Steinberg. "I'm not one for all of this hype and attention. I'm very happy that Cincinnati has the confidence in me to make me the number one pick in the draft, but I'm glad it's over."

"Now, hopefully, we can get down to business at the bargaining table, get a good contract signed and I can get in camp. I want to sign right away. I hope that can happen."

In preliminary talks between the Bengals and Steinberg, it appears that an agreement is still a ways away. Before the draft, Cincinnati tendered an offer reported to be a five-year deal worth about \$9 million. Steinberg's first counter was reportedly \$15 million for five years with part of that money front-loaded into a huge signing bonus.

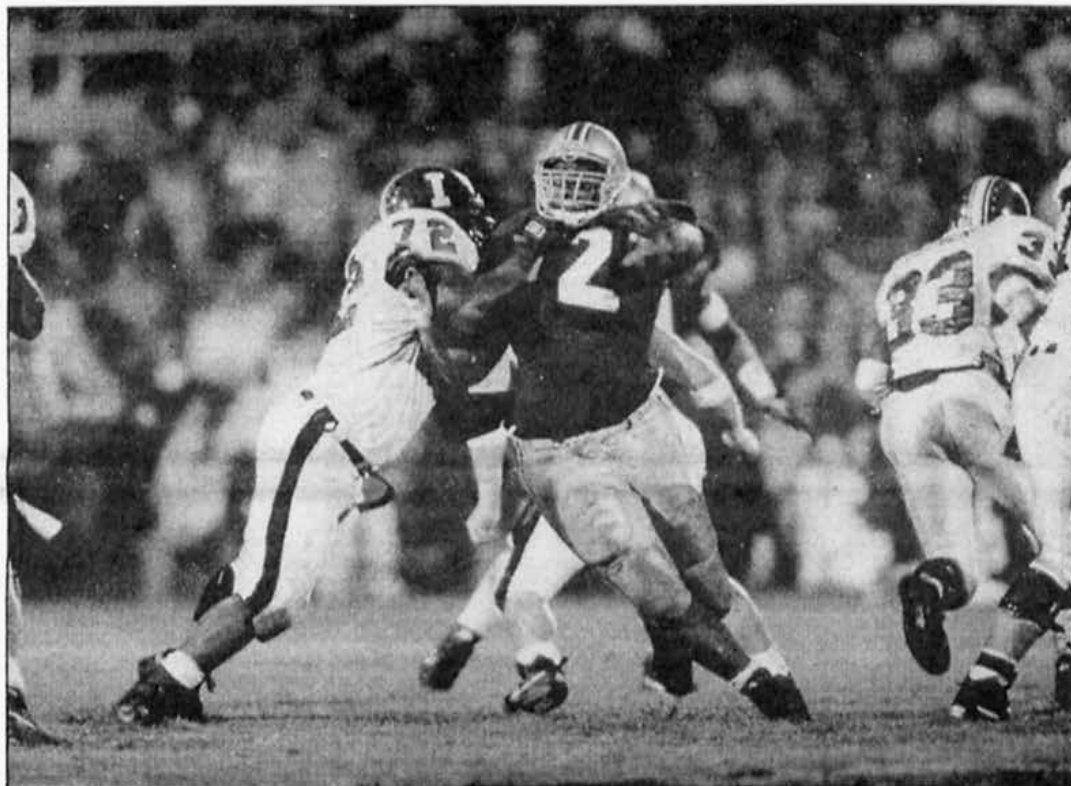
The Wilkinson camp is said to be using as a guideline the package defensive lineman Steve Emtman received from Indianapolis when he was the number one selection in 1992. The Colts ponied up a four-year deal worth \$9.165 million to Emtman.

Last year's top pick, quarterback Drew Bledsoe of New England, got a six-year deal worth \$14.8 million, which included a signing bonus of \$3.2 million.

The Bengals have been notorious for allowing their high draft choices to sit around unsigned for several months. In fact, both of their last two first-round selections — defensive lineman John Copeland and quarterback David Klingler, whose agent is also Steinberg — went through protracted holdouts before signing their contracts.

Copeland signed last year for \$5.9 million over five years with \$3.2 million of that as the signing bonus.

However, with the NFL implement-



NUMBER ONE SELECTION — Ohio State defensive lineman "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson, shown here during last season's game against Indiana, left school with two years of eligibility remaining to make himself available for the NFL draft. That early departure paid off April 24 when the Cincinnati Bengals made Wilkinson the overall number one selection in the draft.

ing a salary cap that includes a limit for spending on rookies, Steinberg believes Wilkinson and the Bengals will get together well in advance of the opening of training camp for the 1994 season.

"This player will not be a minute late for training camp," Steinberg said. "I'm set on getting Dan to camp on time. This is going to be the fastest signing year for draftees. In the past, players signed against an owner's pocketbook. Now it's the amount of rookie money available. When that money is gone, it's gone. You have a series of players competing against each other rather than an owner's pocketbook."

The Bengals had ample opportunity to trade the number one pick before draft day. The New England Patriots and Arizona Cardinals reportedly made the most attractive offers. The Patriots were ready to send their first- and second-round choices, as well as starting offensive lineman Eugene Chung, to the Bengals, while the Cardinals were

willing to part with their first- and third-round picks, along with running back Garrison Hearst.

No matter how tempting those offers seemed, however, Cincinnati didn't bite.

"I think I counted 21 teams that I talked with over the last few weeks, and at no time did I come close to trading the pick," Bengals general manager Mike Brown told reporters in Cincinnati.

That was because the team sized up all of its needs in the draft and continued to come to one conclusion — no one could help them as much as Wilkinson.

"Dan is the kind of player with such rare abilities that there really wasn't much debate as to which direction we would go," said Cincinnati head coach

Continued On Page 23

BSB Now On Biweekly Schedule

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is currently on a biweekly (every two weeks) publishing schedule through early May.

The publication date for the next issue of *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is May 14. That issue will feature coverage of OSU's spring football game as well as expanded coverage of spring sports, especially baseball.

After the May 14 issue, *BSB* will switch to its summer publishing schedule of one issue each in June, July and August.

Wilkinson Only Second OSU Number One

Continued From Page 1

Dave Shula. "Once all the information was in for all the workouts and we had had time as coaches to digest all the film from their playing careers, there really wasn't much debate at all into which direction we would head."

Brown said that he relishes teaming Wilkinson alongside Copeland in the Bengals' defense, a unit that has improved steadily despite the team's 3-13 record last season.

"I think with Copeland and now Wilkinson, we have the two top defensive linemen in the last two years," he said. "That's going to begin to show as soon as they have the necessary experience."

Another young performer on that Cincinnati defense is former OSU linebacker Steve Tovar, who said he will welcome his former Buckeye teammate with open arms.

"I think Big Daddy can help us," Tovar told BSB. "We're beginning to put together a pretty good defense in Cincinnati with a lot of good, young players."

"Plus, we've signed some free agents. We're going to be a force, maybe surprise some people as early as this year. I think Big Daddy is just another piece to the puzzle."

As far as contract negotiations are concerned, Wilkinson said he has turned everything over to Steinberg.

"I've got my man for that and that's what he's getting paid for," Wilkinson said. "The only thing I've told him is that I don't want to sit around. I want to get into camp as soon as possible. I won't settle for something that isn't right, but I also don't want to quibble over a dollar or two."

"I'm ready to go and I want to start as soon as I can. I'd love to be able to get into mini-camp (which begins May 6) and start learning what I need to learn to get ready to play this season."

The 6-5, 310-pound Wilkinson is only the second Ohio State player ever to be selected as the overall number one in the NFL draft. The first was linebacker Tom Cousineau, who was drafted by the Buffalo Bills with the first pick of the 1979 draft.

However, Cousineau opted not to sign with the Bills, playing instead in the Canadian Football League for the Montreal Alouettes. He played three seasons in the CFL before beginning his NFL career in 1982 with the Cleveland Browns.

"I think it's terrific that Danny got picked number one," Cousineau told BSB from his home near Cleveland. "It's always been a source of pride for me, as I'm sure it will be for him."

"Of course, it's just momentary. Once camp begins and everybody is fighting for a job, you're just another one of the guys. But it is a pretty small club. There's only one every year and it's something that you can look back at with pride over the years."

Wilkinson was a preseason Playboy All-American last season before registering 44 tackles, including a team-high 13 for loss. He was a consensus first-team All-Big Ten selection and earned five different first-team All-American nominations.

But as good as he was in games, he was even better when it came to working out for pro scouts. At the NFL Scouting Combine in Indianapolis,

Wilkinson put on a weightlifting exhibition by bench pressing 32 reps of 225 pounds.

A few weeks later, at a private workout at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center on the OSU campus, Wilkinson dazzled the scouts again, this time by running the 40-yard dash in 4.72 seconds and showing off a vertical leap of 29 1/4 inches.

"He is a phenomenal athlete," Shula said, "but there will be an adjustment process. The best offensive lineman Dan Wilkinson ever faced during his career at Ohio State could not start in the NFL right now. There is a physical adjustment to the size and the speed and the quickness of the offensive linemen that he'll now be facing."

"But we believe he will make those adjustments and become a great player for us. If we didn't think so, we wouldn't have made him the number one selection in this year's draft."

Wilkinson is the fourth straight first-round draft pick for OSU following Robert Smith by Minnesota (1993), Alonzo Spellman by Chicago (1992) and Vinnie Clark by Green Bay (1991).

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Buck Beat

On Perpetual Hold

Ohio State continues to play the waiting game as the NCAA still has not made a final judgment in its yearlong investigation into the Buckeyes' basketball program.

It has been that way almost from the outset of the investigation, begun last May when OSU was charged with 17 different violations while recruiting Cincinnati Woodward basketball star Damon Flint.

The investigation was reportedly to take only 30 to 60 days, but it has stretched out over the past year. In mid-April, the NCAA's committee on infractions met in Baltimore to discuss the case and was to have rendered a decision within a month, but still no end seems imminent.

WBNS-TV in Columbus reported May 6 that the NCAA had notified the school of its penalties, but university officials denied that.

The television station reported the NCAA would slap Ohio State with a one-year probation, the loss of one scholarship and the removal of one assistant coach from off-campus recruiting for a year. The probation, according to the report, would not affect OSU's eligibility to appear on television nor would it keep the Buckeyes out of the NCAA Tournament.

However, OSU vice president for student affairs David Williams II told *BSB* that the NCAA has not reported back to the university.

"Not only has there been no agreement, the NCAA has requested we supply additional information to them regarding our response to the investigation," Williams said. "That doesn't mean they have found anything further, just that they want everything exactly as it should be."

"So not only is this thing not over yet, it may actually be another several weeks before we have any kind of announcement."

Williams indicated the new information requested by the NCAA would be forwarded by May 10.

Prep Honors Awarded

The Columbus City League made it a clean sweep of the annual "Mr. and Miss Basketball of Franklin County" awards, which are co-sponsored by *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* and American Awards of Grove City.

Both winners, Carlos Davis of Eastmoor and Tomika Patterson of South, will play basketball at Ohio State.

Davis, a 6-3½ guard, averaged 20.9 points, eight rebounds and 5.9 assists per game in leading Eastmoor to the regional finals in the state playoffs.

Patterson, a 5-8 guard, averaged 18.4 points and over six assists per contest for South, where she finished her career as the school's all-time leader in scoring, assists and steals. This marks the second straight year Patterson has won the award.

Davis edged teammate Lamont Barnes and Shaun Stonerook of Westerville North for the award, while Patterson was a unanimous selection. Helen Darling of Brookhaven was a distant second.

Voting for the boys award were Grandview High School athletic director Larry Larson, Brian Rapp of Suburban News Publications, Ohio State assistant coach Dave Cecutti, Bob Whitman of Allen Publications and Dave Hoover, boys coach at Westerville North.

On the girls' side, voting was handled

by Larson, Rapp, Whitman, OSU assistant coach Melissa McFerrin and Northland High School coach Elaine Boltz.

Previous winners of the boys award were Lawrence Funderburke of Wehrle (1988), Sean Charlton of Eastmoor (1989), Jermaine Guice of Westerville South (1990), Antonio Watson of Eastmoor (1991), Gary Trent of Hamilton Township (1992) and Samaki Walker of Whitehall (1993).

For the girls, winners include Jai Jones of Brookhaven (1988), Monica Ganes of Hartley (1989), Betsy Odita of Upper Arlington (1990) and Amanda Hayes of Beechcroft (1991 and 1992).

Bryant Makes It

Defensive back Che Bryant of Canton McKinley achieved a score of 17 on his ACT, making him eligible to play for Ohio State next season as a freshman.

"I'm grateful for the fact that I passed the test, but I never had any doubt that I would, really," Bryant told *BSB*. "I was very close the last time I took it, just a couple of hundredths of a point off. I knew that I would get what I needed the next time and I did."

A first-team *Parade* magazine All-American, the 6-3, 180-pound Bryant recorded 68 tackles as a senior and also had five interceptions and two fumble recoveries. He is also considered to be a top running back prospect with more

than 2,000 yards combined in his final two prep seasons.

Bryant became the 19th in the Buckeyes' 21-member recruiting class to achieve his freshman eligibility. Yet to do so are linebacker Roedell Dupree of Jersey City (N.J.) Ferris and defensive lineman Calvin Brown of East Cleveland (Ohio) Shaw.

Both players are taking the SAT and have two more chances to achieve a minimum score of 700. Both have indicated they will enroll at Ohio State next fall even if they do not satisfy Proposition 48 requirements.

The Buckeyes had no Prop 48 players last year and had only one the year before. That was defensive back Dan Colson of Middletown, Ohio, currently a redshirt sophomore trying to crack the depth chart in the OSU secondary.

Is Drug Testing Legal?

Ohio State officials are uncertain how their substance abuse policy will be affected after the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal May 2 to allow random drug testing at the University of Colorado.

Without comment, justices left intact a Colorado Supreme Court ruling that said such testing violated privacy rights for student-athletes.

"No one has charged that it's a violation here," OSU vice president for student affairs David Williams II told *The Associated Press*. "Until someone does

that, we don't have a practical problem. But if, in fact, it does say we've got a problem, then, yes, I guess you have to figure out how to take care of it."

Williams is also an associate professor of law at Ohio State.

The action by the U.S. Supreme Court could hamper other government-run schools' efforts to keep their athletic programs drug-free.

Random drug testing was instituted by the NCAA and member schools several years ago to help combat the use of steroids as well as to detect the use of other illegal drugs such as marijuana and cocaine.

OSU Police Blotter

Ohio State basketball player Greg Simpson pleaded guilty May 4 to driving without headlights and failing to maintain control of his car. He was fined \$200.

Simpson had been charged March 17 in his hometown of Lima, Ohio, for driving under the influence of alcohol, underage possession of alcohol and driving with no headlights on.

In exchange for a guilty plea, the DUI charge was reduced to failure to control and the underage alcohol possession charge was dropped.

According to Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles records, Simpson has been convicted of two other moving violations since December — reckless operation in January and speeding in December. His

Bengals Open Up Vault For Big Daddy, Sign Him To Team's Richest Deal Ever

By MARK REA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

In a surprising move, the Cincinnati Bengals signed their number one pick "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson of Ohio State just 11 days after the draft, giving him the largest contract in franchise history.

During a press conference May 5, the Bengals announced they had agreed to a six-year contract with Wilkinson and his agent, Leigh Steinberg. Terms of the contract called for Wilkinson to receive a total of \$14.4 million. He gets an immediate signing bonus of \$5 million and then receives an initial salary of \$965,000 for the 1994 season. That base salary escalates each year until it's worth over \$2.1 million in 1999.

The contract is comparable to that of the 1993 number one selection, quarterback Drew Bledsoe of New England. He received a six-year deal worth \$14.8 million with a \$4.5 million signing bonus.

"I'm so pleased and happy to be signed and a certified Bengal," Wilkinson told reporters at the press conference. "Like I said from the start, I felt the process would happen a lot sooner than people thought."

The Bengals have been notorious throughout the years for allowing their high draft picks to sit around while negotiations dragged on into training camp. In fact, the team's last two first-round picks — quarterback David Klingler and defensive lineman John Copeland — were signed late in training camp and were well behind the rest of the team when the regular season opened.

"We felt it was important to get Dan



Dan Wilkinson

signed and get him in here," Cincinnati general manager Mike Brown told reporters. "It does send a signal to the community that we're trying to get this thing in the direction it needs to be going."

The Bengals finished last in the AFC Central Division last season with a 3-13 record and haven't made the NFL playoffs since 1990.

During the press conference, Steinberg announced that Wilkinson would be setting up various networks to share his newfound wealth. Part of his first-year salary will create a \$25,000 scholarship fund at his high school alma mater, Dayton Dunbar, in the name of his late father, Oliver.

Also, he will donate money to help upgrade equipment in the Ohio State weight room and will also start "Big Daddy's Kids," a foundation that will

aid charitable projects for children in Cincinnati. Steinberg said \$100,000 will be earmarked for that charity in the first year.

"It's very important to me," Wilkinson said of the charities. "I always thought about being able to do something as a role model for underprivileged kids. I have the opportunity to do that now."

Wilkinson is the first of five Ohio State players taken in the NFL draft to sign. Others selected were Raymont Harris by the Chicago Bears, Jeff Cothran by the Bengals, Butler By'not'e by the Denver Broncos and Jason Winrow by the New York Giants.

Several other OSU players have signed free-agent contracts with various teams. They include Alan Kline with New Orleans, Chico Nelson with the New York Jets, William Houston with Indianapolis, Cedric Saunders with Tampa Bay, Jason Simmons with Washington, Mark Williams with Green Bay and Tim Walton with Atlanta.

Rod Smith was set to sign a contract with Cleveland but failed a physical exam due to a kidney ailment.

In addition to those signings in the NFL, former Buckeyes Tim Williams, Zack Dumas, Paul Long and Jeff Ellis have all signed to play in the Arena Football League with the Cleveland Thunderbolts. Coaching the team this season will be former OSU head coach Earle Bruce.

And former OSU running back Carlos Snow signed a contract with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League. Snow signed with Denver out of college but missed the 1992 season on injured reserve with a cracked kneecap and then sat out all of last year.

BUCKEYES IN THE PROS

Wilkinson Emerges As Standout For Bengals

By JEFF RAPP

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Don't believe all the preseason hype that came just short of proclaiming Dan Wilkinson as the NFL's new sack king now that his team, the Cincinnati Bengals, has moved him to defensive end. And don't believe for a second the move was made to save a disappointing career.

The reality is that the Bengals still consider Wilkinson a vital player for their team and still deem his talents as worthy as the day they made him the No. 1 pick of the 1994 NFL draft out of Ohio State.

It's just that becoming a dominant, sure-fire All-Pro, Hall of Fame inductee takes time. And Wilkinson, a 24-year-old lineman, has plenty of that. While everyone else waits for him to set the world on fire, Wilkinson is maturing and developing gradually.

"I'm going to get better and better every year, whether it's Pro Bowl this year or not," Wilkinson told *BSB* prior to the season. "I believe this team's getting better and I want to raise this team up to a championship team."

"I think I've had a pretty good career so far, but I think there's a whole lot more to come."

Most in the NFL would agree.

Opposing head coaches admit to designing blocking schemes centered on holding down Wilkinson, affectionately known to Buckeye fans as "Big Daddy," a 1993 All-American at OSU. Players who face Wilkinson heap praise on his abilities. So does his position coach.

"The big key — and everyone knows this — is having him play consistent football," Bengals defensive line coach Tim Krumrie said. "If he plays consistently, he can be one of the greatest players to ever play. It's up to him."

Wilkinson is expected to make big strides again this season even with an overhaul of the Cincinnati defense. Out is the 4-3, reactionary philosophy, in is coordinator Dick LeBeau (also a former Buckeye) and his attacking 3-4 scheme. Wilkinson could even drop into pass coverage in LeBeau's zone-blitzing system.

"We won't ask him to make a living in coverage, that's for sure," LeBeau said. "He's still a pass rusher."

Wilkinson led the Bengals with 6-1/2 sacks and 37 QB hurries last year, but those still aren't the numbers most people associate with a No. 1 overall pick. But there's reason to expect at least statistical improvement. The rival

Pittsburgh Steelers ranked second in the NFL in sacks under LeBeau in 1996 with 51. Carolina, another 3-4, zone-blitzing team, was first with 60. The Bengals, 25th in total defense a year ago, had just 36 sacks.

But Cincinnati expects to build on that total even with Wilkinson lining up outside.

"It's really no big deal," Krumrie said. "He's just moving over half a man from playing over a guard to playing over a tackle. He is not going to be an outside rusher type just because in a three-man front he's going to be down tight over a tackle. We're not going to put him in space or play out of position at all, so he'll be just as dominant there as he was inside."

"Without a doubt, I'm excited about the defense, big time," Wilkinson added. "I think it's going to really benefit me and other players in our defense. As soon as we get it all down and know the system real well and can run it without Dick making corrections, I think we're going to be very, very good."

And even if Wilkinson's numbers don't climb dramatically, there is every reason to believe he's primed for a critically acclaimed year.

First of all, he's in the best shape of his life, a human wrecking ball at 6-3 and 313 pounds. Second, he's more at peace with himself than earlier in his career, as problems from the past finally seem to be staying there. Wilkinson bought a house familiar to Columbus residents, the Al DeSantis mansion, a sprawling north-west estate along Riverside Drive. Friends say living in central Ohio closer to his college stomping grounds actually has made him more at ease.

But most of all, Wilkinson has grown up. The sometimes standoffish young lineman has transformed into a more pleasant, team-oriented sort. Teammates and coaches decided to recognize this new state by voting Wilkinson a team captain along with likable quarterback Jeff Blake and hard-working linebacker James Francis.

Team president Mike Brown, who desperately wants to re-sign Wilkinson at season's end, also showed his star lineman a touch of respect recently when he moved a training camp practice to Centerville High School, with Wilkinson's blessings.

"I talked to Mike Brown about it. He asked me what I thought and I told him good things about it," Wilkinson said at the time. "He said hopefully next year we



PAUL LEVY

GROWL OF A LEADER — "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson figures to earn his stripes as a team leader for the Cincinnati Bengals this season. Wilkinson, a former No. 1 pick out of Ohio State, is lining up at defensive end for coordinator Dick LeBeau.

can get to Columbus. It's a good thing for the Bengals because we're the only (pro) team in Ohio now."

"Big Daddy" was a hit at the workout. He toiled through drills flawlessly under the close watch of fans, a moment that conjured up images of his days at Dayton Dunbar High School, a rival of Centerville.

"It feels pretty good to be here. It feels like old times," he said. "I only played in this stadium twice, but it feels good to see old high school teachers and stuff out here."

"Plus, I think this is probably the biggest year as far as fan anticipation since I've been here. They understand we have a good team and we just have to go out and execute and practice hard and play hard."

But after a tepid 1-1 start in which Wilkinson recorded the team's only sack, he criticized the attitude of some of his teammates, saying, "Right now we have a couple guys who don't know we're serious and we're in this thing to win it. You're in this profession for one thing and that's to win. The money is great, but after a while, hell, the money's all the same, you can only do so much with it."

Indeed, the Bengals, still struggling to regain their Super Bowl form of 1988,

could be victims of high expectations this season. The AFC Central appears up for grabs and Cincinnati, some feel, has as much talent as any team in the division.

But, Wilkinson points out, you've got to prove it on the field.

"Reading all the tabloid stuff and getting caught up in all the hype can only do bad things for your outlook," he said. "The best thing to do is to come out here every day and practice hard."

Wilkinson has taken the lead in that regard, an improvement from the early part of his career, when his desire was questioned.

LeBeau said Wilkinson reported to fall camp in good shape and his mind is set right for big things in 1997.

"It's exciting as a coach to have an athlete like Danny to work with. He was the No. 1 pick in the country and there's only one of those every year," said LeBeau, a defensive back for the 1957 OSU national championship team. "He's very strong and he has athletic ability

to go with his strength. Really, for a man his size he runs pretty well. There are a lot of things you can do with a guy like that and as a coach it is very intriguing."

While Wilkinson leads the team in raw ability, several other talented players litter the defense, including ex-Buckeye Steve Tovar, who returns to the starting linebacking corps. Tovar suffered a serious knee injury last season but is back in the lineup and ready to help Wilkinson lead the defense.

"When you've got Big Daddy, Cope (John Copeland), (Bo) Orlando, Ashley Ambrose and all those guys out there — the guys on the second team are my friends as well — but there's something about going out there with the first group and representing the best that Cincinnati has to offer," Tovar said.

"We think Big Daddy is a great player who gets things going for us, but we've always felt that way around here."

"He's the same old Danny," agreed running back Ki-Jana Carter. "When I first came in the first day I asked him what it was like to be the first pick and he just kind of shrugs it off."

But behind the shrugs lies a relit fuse, and that could mean dynamite in several NFL backfields this season.

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BUCKEYES IN THE PROS

Children, Teammates Have Influenced Wilkinson

By DAVID DRIVER

Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Dan Wilkinson has witnessed his own maturation, and he said a lot of that has to do with his four children.

"They make you mature," he said. "You have to be smart with the money you make, the decisions you make."

Wilkinson, the former Ohio State standout now with the Washington Redskins, admitted he has had his share of off-the-field problems in the past.

But he said in an extended interview recently that the influence of current and former Redskins has helped him bring his daily life into better focus.

He cited the addition of veteran defensive end Bruce Smith and defensive back Deion Sanders prior to this season as vital cogs for the Redskins, who are pegged by many observers as a Super Bowl contender.

"You (gain) by bringing a group of veteran guys who have been through championships," said Wilkinson, who starred at OSU in 1992-93. "The influence and knowledge they've brought to the team has been great. They are men that are married with children."



Dan Wilkinson

Wilkinson, 27, is also married with children. He and his wife, Shawnda, have four children, ranging in age from 12 years to 14 months.

Wilkinson came to Ohio State in 1991 as a 348-pound offensive lineman. He was redshirted that first year, but, after dropping down to the 300-pound range the following season, became a mainstay for the Buckeyes. He earned All-American honors in 1993 as the Buckeyes won their first Big Ten title in seven years.

After his early departure from OSU, Wilkinson was taken by the Cincinnati Bengals with the first overall pick in the 1994 draft. He played four seasons in Cincinnati, just down I-75 from his hometown of Dayton, but never seemed to fit in with the Bengals. He has found a home in Washington, though.

He has become so at home with the Redskins that Wilkinson has his home in Dublin, Ohio, on the market. He has already purchased four acres of land in affluent Potomac, Md., and plans to build a house there.

Wilkinson notes that several former Redskins — such as Charles Mann and Art Monk — have made the Washington area their home after they ended careers with the Redskins.

And now Wilkinson, who went to Dayton Dunbar High School, plans to do the same thing.

"The community, the family, the friends I have made here, the schools, business opportunities," said Wilkinson, running off a list of factors why he wants

Galloway Out For Season After Suffering Knee Injury

As if the season didn't begin badly enough for the Dallas Cowboys with a stunning 41-14 home loss to Philadelphia, it was learned Sept. 4 that off-season acquisition Joey Galloway will miss the rest of the year with a torn knee ligament.

Galloway, who caught four passes for 62 yards and a touchdown in the Cowboys' loss, was taken off the field on a cart. Tests showed that Galloway, who suffered a knee injury prior to his sophomore season at Ohio State, tore the knee ligament on the touchdown catch.

There was some brighter news for a few Buckeyes on the opening weekend of the NFL season.

Arizona's David Boston, thrust into a feature role after a preseason knee injury to receiver Rob Moore, caught nine passes for 128 yards and a pair of touchdowns in the Cardinals' 21-16 loss to the New York Giants.

Minnesota tailback Robert Smith also had a big day, rambling for 109 yards on 14 carries in the Vikings' 30-27 victory over Chicago.

Pittsburgh quarterback Kent Graham wasn't quite as lucky as those two, turning in a miserable day against Baltimore, a game the Steelers lost 16-0. Graham, who edged Kordell Stewart to become the Steelers' opening day starter, completed 17 of 38 passes for 199 yards. He was knocked down repeatedly by the Ravens.

Opening Day Rosters, Cuts

There were 35 former Buckeyes on active NFL rosters for the first weekend of action.

Fullback Matt Keller is also still employed. He signed with Tampa Bay and was placed on the Buccaneers' practice squad. The rookie was originally picked up by Arizona as a free agent.

Other Buckeyes weren't quite as fortunate, getting cut in the final two weeks of training camp. Those players included the following.

• **Chicago (2)** — DE James Cotton, WR Dee Miller

• **Green Bay (1)** — LB Kevin Johnson
• **Jacksonville (1)** — LB Matt Finkes
• **Kansas City (1)** — S Percy King
• **New England (1)** — RB Raymond Harris
• **New Orleans (1)** — DT Winfield Garnett
• **San Diego (1)** — LB Marcel Willis
• **Washington (1)** — C Juan Porter

Here is a look at Ohio State players on opening NFL rosters.

• **Arizona (1)** — WR David Boston
• **Buffalo (1)** — CB Antoine Winfield
• **Chicago (1)** — P Brent Bartholomew
• **Dallas (3)** — WR Joey Galloway; DT Alonzo Spellman; RB Michael Wiley (Rookie)
• **Detroit (2)** — WR Brian Stabile; QB Mike Tomczak (IR, broken leg)

• **Green Bay (2)** — S Gary Berry (R); LB Na'il Diggs (R)

• **Indianapolis (1)** — G Ben Gilbert (R)
• **Kansas City (1)** — OG Rob Murphy (IR, shoulder)

• **Minnesota (3)** — WR Cris Carter; RB Robert Smith; OT Korey Stringer

• **New England (2)** — WR Terry Glenn; LB Andy Katzenmoyer

• **New Orleans (2)** — FB/LS Kevin Houser (R); S Rob Kelly

• **New York Giants (1)** — RB Joe Montgomery

• **New York Jets (1)** — P/QB Tom Tupa

• **Oakland (2)** — TE Ricky Dudley; QB Bobby Hoyer

• **Philadelphia (1)** — S Damon Moore

• **Pittsburgh (2)** — QB Kent Graham; DE Mike Vrabel

• **St. Louis (3)** — QB Joe Germaine; OT Orlando Pace; LB Lorenzo Styles

• **San Diego (1)** — LB Steve Tovar

• **San Francisco (1)** — CB Ahmed Plummer (R)

• **Seattle (1)** — CB Shawn Springs

• **Tampa Bay (1)** — RB Matt Keller (R, practice squad)

• **Tennessee (2)** — RB Eddie George; WR Chris Sanders

• **Washington (1)** — DT Dan Wilkinson

— Mike Wachsman

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to move to Maryland on a full-time basis. "There are so many great reasons."

Potomac is in Montgomery County, which is considered one of the top public school districts in Maryland. Wilkinson said that he grew tired of switching schools twice a year for his son Brooklyn, 12, from Ohio to northern Virginia, where the family currently lives.

On the field, Wilkinson and his teammates are gearing up for what they hope is a trip to the Super Bowl in January in Tampa, where the team began the pre-season in August against the Bucs.

"It's a good thing that is our number one goal, not just to get there but to win it," Wilkinson said. "Our intensity and focus is there. It has been going very well. There is no fear of a letdown. We know we have a long way to go."

Wilkinson, now in his seventh NFL

season, made a career-high 60 tackles in his first season with the Redskins in 1998. Last year, when the team made its first playoff appearance in six seasons under head coach Norv Turner, he led the team in sacks with eight.

But his most memorable play in 1999 occurred when he returned an interception 88 yards for a touchdown against the Chicago Bears.

It was the longest return ever by a Redskins lineman, and Wilkinson said it was the first time he ever scored a touchdown — high school, college or pro.

"It has been talked about a lot. I've seen it quite a few times," Wilkinson said with a grin.

The play was shown over and over on Washington television stations, and the sight of the huge lineman lumbering down the field — with speedy Darrell Green serving as his escort — brought smiles to even non-football fans.

Soon after the touchdown last October the 6-5, 313-pound lineman received a framed photo of himself in the end zone on the play from Redskins owner Daniel Snyder, who bought the team prior to last season.

"He has been the greatest blessing," Wilkinson said of Snyder. "He does a lot for this team that the media and fans don't know about. What better owner can you have?"