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Vol. 38, No. 7

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Oct. 20, 2018



TIM MOODY

TOUGH RUNNING – Junior running back Mike Weber (25) accounted for 51 of Ohio State's 92 rushing yards in a 30-14 win over Minnesota.

OSU Searching For Answers As Rush Offense Struggles

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

If Ohio State were a heavyweight boxer, it would be fighting with one hand tied behind its back. Luckily for the Buckeyes, that one hand has been strong enough to deliver knockout blow after knockout blow against overmatched opponents.

Sometime, though, the Buckeyes – Mike Tyson in this scenario – are going to be pitted against a Buster Douglas. At that point, it will be up to the coaching staff to make sure the other hand gets untied in order to keep that perfect record intact.

The hand delivering the knockouts, of course, has been Ohio State's passing game, with sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins initiating most of the swings. That was the case again Oct. 13 when the No. 3 Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) dispatched Minnesota (3-3, 0-3), 30-14, at Ohio Stadium after trailing 14-10 early in the second quarter. Haskins was 33 of 44 for 412 yards with three touchdowns in the air, marking his second 400-yard passing game in a row. Before he threw for 455 yards a week earlier against Indiana, there had been only one such individual performance in program history (Art Schlichter's 458 yards against Florida State in 1981).

Complementing Haskins' prodigious passing talents was Ohio State's stable of talented receivers. In this instance, the Buckeyes were led by junior K.J. Hill, who had nine catches for a career-best 187 yards and two scores. Fifth-year senior Parris Campbell had eight receptions for 56 yards, and fifth-year senior Terry McLaurin had three snags for 55 yards and a touchdown. In total, 10 different players caught at least one pass from Haskins, and nine of them caught at least two.

In stark contrast, though, was the running game – the hand tied behind the back. The Buckeyes rushed 32 times for 92 yards. It was the first time they had failed to reach the 100-yard mark on the ground since a 31-0 loss to Clemson in the College Football Playoff semifinals back in 2016. They averaged just 2.9 yards per carry, marking the first time they had failed to clear the 3.0-yard average threshold since losing to Virginia Tech, 35-21, at home in 2014.

And it wasn't a new issue for the Buckeyes. After rushing for 375 yards and five touchdowns in the season opener, Ohio State saw its ground game diminish week by week. The Buckeyes had 225 yards against Rutgers in week two, then 182 against TCU and 151 against Tulane. It hit what looked like a low point Sept. 29 at Penn State when Ohio State ran for 119 yards on 37 attempts, then the Buckeyes managed 154 on 48 attempts against Indiana.

But all of that looked great in comparison to the 92 yards compiled against the Golden Gophers. Junior running back Mike Weber had 13 carries for just 51 yards to lead the group. Sophomore J.K. Dobbins ran 10 times for 35 yards, and Haskins had nine carries for 6 yards. The long run of the day was a 12-yard carry by Weber.

"The saying right now that I'm using is enhance our strengths and let's fix our weaknesses," head coach Urban Meyer said after the game. "We're going to have to get some things fixed."

The passing game – that vicious right hook – is certainly one of the strengths – maybe the only clear strength on either side of the ball. The running game might just top the list of things that need to be fixed.

As offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson pointed out after the game, Ohio State's passing game is firing on all cylinders. But as the sea-

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FAN FORUM

Buckeye Leaves

BSB's full-service website, BuckeyeSports.com, has 24/7 updates regarding all things Ohio State, including an active Forum where subscribers can chat with BSB staff members and other fans. The Forum also features a live thread during every Ohio State game where staffers and subscribers can share their thoughts, opinions and analysis. We'll also be handing out Buckeye Leaves after every game for standout performers, and we encourage subscribers to share their thoughts as well. Here's a sampling of what BSB staff members and subscribers had to say after Ohio State eased past Minnesota, 30-14.

Joe Dempsey: I am giving my Buckeye Leaf to junior receiver K.J. Hill. The Little Rock, Ark., native made more big plays than anyone else in the game against Minnesota.

Hill hauled in a 42-yard catch on the Buckeyes' opening drive to set up a Blake Haubeil field goal. He also came up with an impressive snag on fourth down to keep the chains moving in the second quarter. Later in the quarter, the junior wowed the home crowd with a spinning, one-handed grab that he took for a 36-yard touchdown. Later on, Hill helped put the Golden Gophers away with a 27-yard touchdown with 2:15 left in the fourth quarter to give the Buckeyes a 30-14 lead.

He finished his superb outing with a career-high 187 yards on nine catches, including the two touchdowns.

James Grega: It is hard not to give this to Dwayne Haskins every week and he is certainly deserving again this week, but I am going with K.J. Hill, who made multiple big catches against Minnesota in big spots to keep the offense moving.

While his one-handed stab on a 36-yard touchdown reception was the play that will deservedly get all the attention, it was a fourth-and-3 catch early in the game that stuck out to me. It is catches like that that make Hill so valuable to this Ohio State offense, even with a

significant receiver rotation. Hill is the most consistent receiver Ohio State has, and he is making a name for himself on a national scale with his performance.

Tim Moody: Where, oh where would this Ohio State team be without Dwayne Haskins? Maybe still undefeated, but probably not – and I mean no offense to Tate Martell. Haskins is just different, it's as simple as that.

He was different once again against Minnesota, throwing for more than 400 yards (412 this time) for the second game in a row. Previously, Art Schlichter's 458 against Florida State in 1981 was the only 400-yard passing game by an individual in program history. Haskins makes it look easy – he completed exactly 33 of 44 passes for the second game in a row, too, in addition to throwing for three touchdowns.

Without Haskins, the issues that this Ohio State team has would make it an average squad at best. With Haskins, the Buckeyes can still challenge for championships – but there's a lot they'll need to get fixed either way.

Garrett Stepien: Dwayne Haskins dazzled with another 400-yard performance passing and K.J. Hill registered a career-best day with nearly 200 yards receiving, but Blake Haubeil should have his helmet covered in Buckeye Leaves after he stepped in seamlessly for Sean Nuernberger.

After the fifth-year senior placekicker dressed but was held out due to an unspecified minor strain, the sophomore kickoff specialist slid into critical situations and played a key role in Ohio State's win over Minnesota. Haubeil split the uprights on three crucial field goals – a 21-yard chip shot in the first quarter, a 47-yard blast in the third quarter and a 27-yard dagger in the fourth quarter – pitching in nine of the Buckeyes' 30 points at pivotal moments. Not bad for someone lining up as a placekicker for the first time since high school two years ago – and doing so before an announced crowd of 100,042.

Frank Moskowitz: My instinct was to go with Minnesota's Emmitt Carpenter. In a game where Ohio State struggled for much of the contest, his missed field goals cost the Golden Gophers points and momentum.

However, I guess we're supposed to go with Buckeyes here. Each week I say that I could choose Dwayne Haskins, but that would be boring. This week I am going with Haskins. He was the only one who looked good for the entire 60 minutes, and if it weren't for him, others like K.J. Hill would not have had big days.

Special mention to Justin Hilliard, who returned from Siberia or wherever he's been exiled and knocked down two passes to go along with five tackles.

BSB Subscribers

K.J. Hill! What a game from him. I feel like he catches everything thrown his way.

– Tiffin Buckeye

I will go with K.J. Great game. Haskins had a pedestrian 75.0 percent completion percentage, 412 yards and three touchdowns. We are 7-0 and have not had a defensive player be player of the game yet.

– Blufftonbuck

Dre'Mont Jones. He has been playing through pain with a foot that he says is "sore as hell." He still had a sack and was providing visible leadership to a young, banged-up defensive line.

– AnthonyBuckeye

Every week, No. 1 is of course Haskins. My No. 2 this week is K.J. Hill. What a one-handed catch! Did he find some of that stickum that was once used?

– mrbigbux

How about Jordan Fuller? I think he had like 12 tackles and bailed the defense out so many times.

– AcrossTheField

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Concern For Meyer

The Buckeyes' win over Indiana on Oct. 6 was a good one. I think we're always happy with a win of those proportions, albeit the slow start.

Defensive problems aside, my biggest concern was Urban Meyer's headache spell in the fourth quarter. I don't think anybody realizes the physical toll that August and September took on him. It doesn't take much for us to picture ourselves in the same situation.

My prayers go out to him.

John Sheridan
San Antonio

"Student" Athlete

I read with interest the Oct. 13 edition of BSB, which included a page-four update on Nick Bosa's surgery done in Philadelphia. The article included a comment on his recovery progress at the Philly institute a week later.

Make no mistake, we all understand Nick Bosa will be a top NFL pick come next spring, but does he have any class responsibilities at OSU? Aren't players required to take at least 12 hours?

I'm sure Buckeye academia can be supportive but how's this work?

J.M. Zinn
Vienna, Va.

A Rebuttal

To Mr. John M. Masterson (BSB Letters, Oct. 13), as a season ticket holder and a Buckeye fan for over 60 years, I have seen it all from the good to the bad to the ugly and everything in between, so I do believe I have some perspective from which to make comments on what I see.

A lot of what I stated in my letter has been repeated by writers in this publication and sportswriters across the nation. And while my support for my Buckeyes has never wavered, I do feel compelled to speak my mind when I see things that do not sit well with me.

I have written many letters and try extremely hard not to bash individual players, and I don't believe that I did that in my letter. I pointed out some shortcomings but mostly bashed our coaches, who are paid millions to put our players in the best position to succeed, and when they don't, I will continue to express my opinions.

We did win the game (at Penn State) in a very hostile environment. However no one

could say we played well in that first half. And that "really good team" that you made mention of just lost to Michigan State at home, and let's not forget that MSU just lost last week to Northwestern!

Maybe it's your opinion that's laughable. We are 7-0 and that's fantastic, but we have a long way to go to be playing for a Big Ten title or national championship. I'll be in my seat in three weeks rooting on my team, but I will continue to voice my opinions on poor coaching and poor play.

Peter M. Carusone
West Middlesex, Pa.

Not Good Enough

With two minutes to play against Minnesota as I wrote this, it looked like the Buckeyes would win.

But, got to say I've never seen such pathetic play from both offensive and defensive lines for the Buckeyes. Also quite often the defensive backs.

Why does No. 59 (senior right tackle Isaiah Prince) continue to be on the field? Every game he has many false starts and pathetic blocking. Anybody on the bench could do as well.

In the beginning of the season, our defensive line was supposed to be top two or three in the country. What a joke. The depth of the defensive line – lose one or two and everything goes to heck. As good as Nick Bosa is, I don't think he could pick up the slack.

Our offensive line would have trouble blocking my gram, and she's 100 years old. What happened to our All-American running game?

If OSU gets to the playoffs they'll get killed by Alabama, Georgia and Clemson, among others. I'm thinking Mt. Union would give them a good game. Bottom line is where's the coaching?

Rich Foust
Troy, Ohio

If you would like to express an opinion concerning Ohio State University sports, please send your letter to BSB Letters, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212, or email it to bsb@buckeyesports.com for use in BSB. Letters must be signed and include the writer's hometown and a daytime telephone number for verification. Publication priority will be given to those letters that are brief, and we reserve the right to edit letters for publication.

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Charter Member

OPINION

OSU Must Improve To Keep Perfect Record

The closer the calendar gets to Halloween, the scarier things get for the Ohio State football team.

For the second week in a row, the Buckeyes allowed a less talented (but apparently more motivated) team to make things closer than they should have been before finally closing the book on a 30-14 victory against Minnesota.

The Golden Gophers entered the contest reeling from injuries to several veteran starters, a problem exacerbated by the fact the team already had the nation's highest percentage of freshmen on its roster. Minnesota was also coming off back-to-back conference losses to Maryland and Iowa during which its depleted defense had surrendered 40 or more points.

Add to that OSU's recent dominance of the series – 10 wins in a row, 26 victories in the last 27 meetings, and a 38-2 record since 1969 – and one would believe the Las Vegas line that installed the Buckeyes as 30-point favorites was just about right.

Apparently, no one told the Gophers they were supposed to take their requisite lumps and get on the bus for the ride home.

With the exception of Dwayne Haskins, K.J. Hill and a handful of other teammates, the Buckeyes had a thoroughly forgettable afternoon, making Minnesota look downright formidable while themselves looking anything but one of the country's highest-ranked teams on a fast track to the College Football Playoff.

OSU's offensive line struggled against a lighter, faster Minnesota defense, and that led to a season-low 92 yards rushing for the Buckeyes. That Haskins managed to throw for more than 400 yards for the second week in a row was remarkable enough, but even more so weighed against the pressure the Gophers were able to apply on the Ohio State quarterback.

Senior right tackle Isaiah Prince, starting his 33rd consecutive game, reverted to the inconsistency of two years ago when he was a constant source of criticism throughout Buckeye Nation. To be fair, Prince was usually lined up against Minnesota defensive end Carter Coughlin, who is already on his way to earning All-Big Ten honors this season with a conference-leading five sacks.

Even so, Prince knew what he was facing against Coughlin and still appeared to have no clue how to slow down the 6-4, 245-pound junior, who wound up with seven tackles, including three for loss and a game-high two sacks. Coughlin also forced Haskins to lose control of the football on one particular run-for-his-life scramble, although the Ohio State quarterback recovered his own fumble.

Coughlin wasn't the only thorn in the side of the OSU offensive line. The Gophers totaled nine tackles for loss thanks to a variety of twists, stunts and blitzes, many of which seemed to confuse the Buckeyes. Still, Haskins managed to escape long enough to complete 33 of 44 pass attempts – the exact numbers he posted the week before against Indiana – for 412 yards and three touchdowns.

If there's anyone out there still wondering if the sophomore quarterback should be included in the Heisman Trophy conversation, wonder no more.

Haskins has now thrown for 2,331 yards, a figure that already ranks as the 10th-best single-season total in program history, and he's barely past the halfway point of the regular season. His 28 touchdowns are already the fifth-highest total for one season in OSU history.

Nine of Haskins' completions went to Hill, who turned those catches into a career-high 187 yards. That figure tied for the seventh-best single-game total for an Ohio

State receiver in program history and was the most since Santonio Holmes had 224 receiving yards during a 24-21 win against Marshall in 2004.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Hill also scored the final touchdowns in both the first and second halves.

The first was highlight-reel worthy as Hill made a one-handed catch for what turned out to be a 36-yard touchdown and appeared to be unable to loosen the football from his grip as a mini-celebration in the end zone. The second is becoming standard fare for Haskins as he led Hill perfectly on a 27-yard score that caught the junior receiver in full stride at about the 2-yard line.

Haskins made use of 10 different receivers in the game, including Parris Campbell, who had eight more catches to bring his total to 32 receptions in just the last four games. Terry McLaurin also turned in a beautiful catch for his team's first touchdown of the day, a 41-yard play that ended with McLaurin making the grab in the end zone with Minnesota defensive back Coney Durr draped all over him.

It's a good thing that Haskins is throwing the ball all over the lot because it is becoming increasingly apparent that it will be necessary for Ohio State to score as many points as possible the rest of the way to make up for a defense that is simply not playing well.

I realize part of why Minnesota was able to exploit some of Ohio State's weaknesses was P.J. Fleck's long association with OSU defensive coordinator Greg Schiano. Fleck, currently in his second year as Gophers head coach, spent time on Schiano's staffs at Rutgers and with the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers, so he undoubtedly knows many of Schiano's tendencies.

But that's no excuse for allowing Minnesota to run the same elementary pass route over and over and over, a basic post pattern that wide receiver Tyler Johnson used to get loose eight times for 119 yards. That's no excuse for allowing Gophers redshirt freshman running back Mohamed Ibrahim to consistently gash your defense for a career-high 157 yards and two touchdowns.

With a sizable chunk of the season remaining, the Ohio State defense has already allowed four opposing players to rush for 150 or more yards in a game. That hasn't happened since 1988 when the Buckeyes gave up 150 or more yards on the ground to five different opposing players – and that 1988 defense is acknowledged as one of the most porous in recent OSU history.

Additionally, the Buckeyes have now allowed an opponent to have a 100-yard rusher and a 100-yard receiver in the same game three times this season. That hasn't happened since 1995.

I understand the defense is riddled with injuries. In addition to Nick Bosa, who won't be back until November (if then), the unit played against Minnesota without defensive end Jonathon Cooper and linebacker Malik Harrison. But I thought all of the four- and five-star talent signed by Urban Meyer these last several years was supposed to supply enough depth to overcome injuries.

I have to be honest. Although it came up with three turnovers and thwarted Minnesota

a total of five times inside OSU territory, and despite the fact it was playing several men down, the Ohio State defense simply did not play well and really hasn't played that well for much of this season. Linebackers were again constantly out of position – something Ibrahim exploited during the first half when the Buckeyes did not or could not set the edge – while safeties laid back and allowed Johnson to run free in the middle of the field.

Perhaps you think I'm being overcritical. Perhaps I am. After all, Ohio State remains undefeated and is now the consensus No. 2 team in the country. But you can't pass off the defensive performance against Minnesota as a one-game aberration. In the wake of how the unit played against Indiana, what could be dismissed as a fluke has turned into a full-blown trend.

It seems difficult to believe Ohio State can continue an undefeated season if the defense doesn't pick it up and pick it up quickly. And if you think Purdue is going to roll over and allow the Buckeyes to go into their open week unscathed, check out what happened in 2009 to a pretty good OSU team that showed up in West Lafayette as 14-point favorites.

To Sneak Or Not To Sneak

I realize this has been addressed more than once by Meyer, but there really is no excuse for a team of Ohio State's talent and ability not to be able to line up at any juncture of any game against any opponent and pound out a yard.

For the fourth time is as many weeks, the Buckeyes were faced with a fourth-and-short situation and failed to gain the requisite yardage to sustain a drive. It's one thing to be unable to pick up a fourth-and-1 against Penn State, but failure in short-yardage situations against the likes of Tulane, Indiana or Minnesota is inexcusable.

It hasn't hurt Ohio State ... yet. The Buckeyes were 2 for 3 on fourth down against the Gophers, and that made them an enviable 9 for 13 (69.2 percent) in fourth-down efficiency this season. Still, I contend that percentage would be closer to 100 if OSU simply lined up with Haskins under center and let the 6-3, 214-pound sophomore plow ahead on an old-fashioned quarterback sneak.

The cons of trying to pick up fourth-and-short situations in the shotgun formation far outweigh the pros. Nebraska found that out all too well in its overtime game against Northwestern. After blowing a 10-point lead with 5:41 remaining in the fourth quarter, the Cornhuskers experienced a bad shotgun snap on a fourth-and-1 in overtime, a mistake that handed them a 34-31 loss and sent the team to its first 0-6 start in program history.

On the flip side, LSU scored a pair of touchdowns when quarterback Joe Burrow – you remember him, don't you? – came up under center and (pardon the pun) burrowed his way into the end zone from the 1-yard line to help the Tigers engineer a 36-16 upset of No. 2 Georgia.

Obviously, Burrow and his team practice the old-fashioned sneak, something Meyer admits his team does not apparently because it takes time away from other, more important plays in the playbook.

Meyer has now coached exactly 212 more college games than I have. Therefore, I have no idea how much preparation it would take to install the quarterback sneak into the Ohio State offense. But it's difficult to imagine any team couldn't find 15 minutes during the week to practice such a simplistic play – especially when that simple play could someday mean the difference between a win and a loss.

OHIO STATE

INSIDER

Werner Drawing Attention

Ohio State sophomore linebacker Pete Werner might have been an afterthought to some.

A four-star prospect in the 2017 recruiting class, Werner was committed to Notre Dame up until Nov. 29, 2016. The Indianapolis Cathedral product gave his verbal pledge to the Buckeyes a couple of weeks later and signed his letter of intent on Feb. 1 of the following year.

He quickly earned praise from the coaching staff after arriving on campus, though, and became a contributor on special teams as a true freshman. Then, this season, Werner won a starting job out of fall camp and hasn't looked back.

Through seven games, Werner is second on the team with 28 total tackles to go with 5½ tackles for loss, three sacks, three pass breakups, a quarterback hurry and a forced fumble.

Going into Ohio State's matchup with Minnesota on Oct. 13, Werner's play drew praise from Golden Gophers head coach P.J. Fleck, who called him an instinctual linebacker who excels at tackling in space.

"He's a really talented football player," Fleck said.

Against the Gophers, Werner (6-3, 236) racked up 10 tackles, 2½ tackles for loss and a sack as the Buckeyes prevailed, 30-14, at Ohio Stadium.

Before posting double-digit tackles against the Gophers, Werner admitted that it was nice to earn praise from the opposition.

"I respect the guy, he's a great coach," Werner said of Fleck. "What he did at Western Michigan was great. It's an awesome feeling being recognized, but then again we still have a job to do to take care of, but as far as what he said about me – it's very nice of him, I respect him a lot."

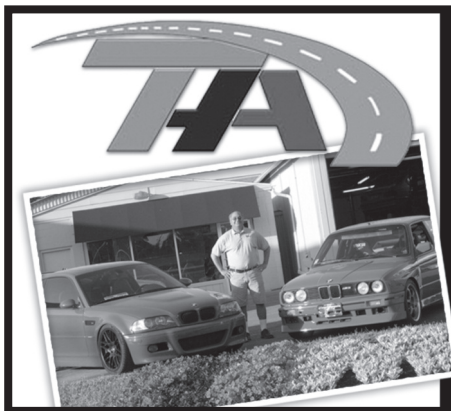
From his standpoint, Werner said he feels he's taken a big step forward after learning from the bench last season.

"I think I've just gotten better with my eyes," he said. "I've gotten a better feel for each game that I've come across. Every team



TIM MOODY

TAKING CHARGE – Ohio State sophomore linebacker Pete Werner registered 10 tackles, 2½ tackles for loss and a sack in the Buckeyes' 30-14 win over Minnesota.



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Problems Hammer Central Ohio

As postal problem pockets continue to pop up around the state and country for Buckeye Sports Bulletin, a unique situation seems to have arisen. Readers in central Ohio have been reporting waits of a week or more to receive their paper each week. Readers in Columbus and nearby suburbs have traditionally received the quickest and most consistent mail service.

"Nothing has been particularly quick or consistent this football season," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz admitted. "But the problems in Columbus are unprecedented and troubling. If there are issues in processing our mailings in Columbus, that can affect other readers all the way down the line.

"I am continuing to work with postal officials to correct the problems and thank our readers for their tremendous patience."

While Moskowitz attempts to speed up the delivery, Buckeye Sports Bulletin is offering two additional options to readers.

Subscribers can upgrade their delivery to first-class mail in an envelope for \$16 for the remainder of football season or \$26 through football recruiting season. Simply call (614) 486-2202 and we will upgrade you immediately, or send your check or money order to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 and mention the "Football" or "Recruiting" upgrade.

Readers may also read the complete edition of each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin online at BuckeyeSports.com on Mondays during football season, a free service with your subscription.

"By going to BuckeyeSports.com you can also enjoy several additional stories each day that don't appear in the print issue and participate on The Forum, where readers interact with the BSB staff and other Buckeye fans," said Moskowitz.

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has shown their different way, their different style of offense, and I feel like I've gotten a little bit more comfortable with each. It's the halfway point, so we've still got some ways to go, but I'm just getting more comfortable as we go on."

The linebacker has earned some praise from his own coach as well.

"He's an elite player, elite person," OSU head coach Urban Meyer said of Werner. "He's very gifted, a very talented guy – big, fast, extremely smart."

Ruckert Working Toward Expanded Role

Every year someone claims that it will finally be the "Year of the Tight End" at Ohio State. In most cases, those expectations aren't met.

Through six games in 2018, the tight ends had rarely been involved in the pass game for the Buckeyes. Against Minnesota in week seven, though, they got more of a chance.

Sophomore starter Luke Farrell reeled in two passes for 37 yards, including a long of 24, while junior Rashod Berry tacked on two catches for 20 yards.

The third guy in the tight ends rotation, though, didn't record a catch. But Jeremy Ruckert is a true freshman, after all, and he's been working his way into the rotation more and more.

"He's exactly what you look for in recruiting," Meyer said of Ruckert. "He's got a great future here."

Meyer noted that Ruckert's playing time is up to offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson and Tim Hinton, who is a special assistant to Meyer and a former tight ends coach. Ruckert played extensively with the second-team offense early in the season, but in the past few weeks he's finally started to earn his way onto the field with the first-team unit.

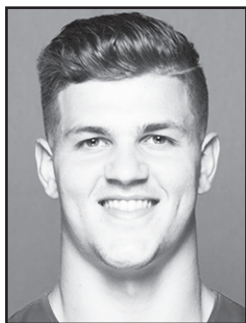
Against Penn State, he even delivered a

key block on a screen pass to J.K. Dobbins that resulted in a touchdown, giving Ohio State a third-quarter lead in the eventual 27-26 victory in Happy Valley.

Always billed as a talented pass catcher – Ruckert was the No. 2 tight end recruit as a four-star prospect in the 2018 class, according to the 247Sports composite – he needed to improve as a blocker to see the field. That's what he's done this season, and his role will likely only grow going forward.

"He's been doing great," Farrell said of Ruckert. "Ever since he got here this summer, he just wants to get better. It's awesome. He's doing everything he can to get better physically, mentally."

As the top-rated tight end recruit in program history, Ruckert was billed by many as a likely starter from day one. That didn't materialize – mostly due to the development of Farrell – but he could still be in line to be a key player down the stretch. Farrell said Ruckert has done a good job of putting his head down and going to work despite the high expectations.



Jeremy Ruckert

"He's handled it really well," Farrell said. "It's tough for a tight end to come in and start at this level. It's tough to develop and him coming in as more of a receiving guy.

"My mind-set was I can't wait to get him here and see what he can do. He's definitely exceeded expectations. His improvement has been great."

Haskins Not Focused On Heisman Hype

Ohio State sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins knows he's in the thick of the Heisman Trophy conversation, but he doesn't really care.

"I am aware of it, but it is not my main focus right now," Haskins said the Tuesday before he threw for 412 yards and three touchdowns in a win over Minnesota. "My main focus is getting better every day so I

2018 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 1	OREGON STATE	W, 77-31	ABC	1-5, off week
Sept. 8	RUTGERS	W, 52-3	BTN	1-6, 34-7 loss at Maryland
Sept. 15	vs. TCU#*	W, 40-28	ABC	3-3, 17-14 loss to Texas Tech
Sept. 22	TULANE	W, 49-6	BTN	2-4, off week
Sept. 29	at Penn State*	W, 27-26	ABC	4-2, 21-17 loss to Michigan State
Oct. 6	INDIANA	W, 49-26	FOX	4-3, 42-16 loss to Iowa
Oct. 13	MINNESOTA	W, 30-14	FS1	3-3, 30-14 loss at Ohio State
Oct. 20	at Purdue*	7:30 p.m.	ABC	3-3, 46-7 win at Illinois
Nov. 3	NEBRASKA	TBA	TBA	0-6, 34-31 overtime loss at Northwestern
Nov. 10	at Michigan State*	TBA	TBA	4-2, 21-17 win at Penn State
Nov. 17	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	4-2, 34-7 win over Rutgers
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN*	Noon	FOX	6-1, 38-13 win over Wisconsin
Dec. 1	Big Ten Championship@	8 p.m.	FOX	

* – 2017-18 bowl team

– at Arlington, Texas (AT&T Stadium)

@ – at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

can be in that conversation for the rest of the season. Right now, I am just focused on getting better every day."

From a numbers standpoint, it might be hard for Haskins to be much better. Through seven games – the first seven starts of his career – the Potomac (Md.) Bullis School product has racked up 175 completions on 242 attempts (72.3 completion percentage) for 2,331 yards and 28 touchdowns to just four interceptions. He's first in the nation in touchdown passes, third in passing yards, third in completion percentage and third in QB rating (188.10). He's already just seven touchdowns shy of tying the program's single-season record (35 by J.T. Barrett in 2017), and he has twice tied the record for completions (33, against Minnesota and Indiana). Barrett set that record against Penn State last year.

The most popular pick for the Heisman nationally seems to be Alabama sophomore quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, who has completed 88 of 123 passes for 1,760 yards with 21 touchdowns and no interceptions (248.08 rating) in seven games. Tagovailoa, though, left the Crimson Tide's game against Missouri on Oct. 13 early with an injury.

While they're from opposite sides of the country – Tagovailoa is a Honolulu St. Louis product – and they are competing for the Heisman, the two signal callers are actually friends off the field after meeting on the recruiting circuit in high school.

"He is an accurate guy, brings a lot to his offense," Haskins said of Tagovailoa. "He is a really upbeat, spirited guy. I admire his

game. We send each other scripture before games on Saturday and send our blessings to each other."

Ohio State hasn't had a player invited to the Heisman ceremony in New York since Troy Smith in 2006. Smith won the award that year after throwing for 30 touchdowns, which was then the program record. Barrett finished fifth in the voting as a redshirt freshman in 2014 after throwing 34 touchdowns.

With the Heisman presentation inching closer, Haskins said he and Meyer don't talk much about the prestigious award.

"We don't really talk about Heisman and stuff like that because everything is so far away," Haskins said. "With him, he just wants me to keep being the leader that I am, keep inspiring the guys, keep coming to practice with my hard worker mentality and we are going to get to that point. I appreciate Coach for keeping me grounded."

Buckeyes, Boilermakers Get Prime-Time Slot

The Buckeyes haven't played a night game in Columbus yet this season, but they're set for their third prime-time road game of the year Oct. 20 against Purdue.

When No. 2 Ohio State (7-0, 4-0 Big Ten) travels to West Lafayette, Ind., to take on the Boilermakers (3-3, 2-1), they'll be heading toward a 7:30 p.m. kickoff on ABC.

With the Purdue kickoff time announced, the Buckeyes are still waiting to find out start times for three of their final four games.

Continued On Page 6

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Continued From Page 5

After an off week, Ohio State is set to host Nebraska in Columbus on Nov. 3. A team spokesperson said on Twitter that the start time for that game will likely be announced Oct. 22. That game marks Ohio State's last chance for a prime-time home game this season, since the season finale against Michigan on Oct. 24 will kick off at noon.

Between the Nebraska game and the Michigan game, the Buckeyes have road matchups slated at Michigan State (Nov. 10) and Maryland (Nov. 17). A team spokesperson said the Maryland game is expected to be either a noon or 3:30 p.m. kick.

Hooker Loses Stripe, Makes OSU Debut

Ohio State freshman safety Marcus Hooker, the younger brother of former

Buckeye great Malik Hooker, had his black helmet stripe removed the week before the Minnesota game, the team announced via Twitter on Oct. 10. Three days later, Hooker made his collegiate debut, starting on the kickoff team for the Buckeyes.

Hooker worked through injury issues early in the year after being suspended for the first game due to a DUI over the summer. He has been listed as a fourth-stringer on the depth chart throughout the season.

Hooker became the 21st member of Ohio State's 2018 signing class to lose his black helmet stripe.

Buckeyes Rise To 2nd In AP Top 25

After its 16-point win over Minnesota on Oct. 13, Ohio State moved up one spot to second in the Associated Press top 25. The Buckeyes received one first-place vote, while No. 1 Alabama received 60. Clemson was third, Notre Dame was fourth and LSU – previously 13th – rounded out the top five.

The Buckeyes moved up one spot after Georgia fell to LSU and former Ohio State quarterback Joe Burrow, 36-16.

Michigan checked in at No. 6 – a six-spot rise – after beating Wisconsin, while Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma and undefeated UCF completed the top 10.

In addition to Ohio State and Michigan from the Big Ten, Penn State was 18th after a loss to Michigan State led to a 10-spot slide, Iowa was 19th, Wisconsin was 23rd and the Spartans, back in the rankings after being on the outside last week, were 24th.

Luke Fickell's Cincinnati team, still undefeated at 6-0, moved up five spots to No. 20.

Maryland also received two points in the voting.

Ohio State was second (one first-place vote) in the Amway coaches poll as well. Alabama (61) and Clemson (two) were first and third, respectively. The top five were the same as the AP rankings.

Michigan was seventh in the coaches' vote while Penn State (No. 16), Wisconsin (No. 19) and Iowa (No. 22) were ranked as well. Michigan State received 98 points in the poll.

Haskins Adds To Crowded Trophy Case

After completing 33 of 44 passes for 455 yards and six touchdowns against Indiana on Oct. 6, Haskins was named the Big Ten's offensive player of the week for the third time in a row and the fourth time this season.

The 455 yards were just three short of the single-game program record of 458 set by Art Schlichter against Florida State in 1981. The completions tied the program record, as did the six touchdown passes. Haskins also threw two interceptions in the 49-26 win.

If Haskins adds one more weekly conference honor, he'll tie Smith as the only two players ever to be named the Big Ten's offensive player of the week five times in the same season. Smith did it in 2006, the year he won his Heisman.

Former OSU Fullback Killed In Accident

Former Ohio State fullback Tyrone Harrison was killed Oct. 6 after being struck by a car taking part in a drag race on a road in New Jersey, according to a news release from Middlesex County prosecutor Andrew C. Carey and Piscataway, N.J.,

police chief Scott Cartmell, as reported by MyCentralJersey.com on Oct. 10.

Harrison, 49, was walking to a relative's house from a train station in Edison, N.J., when he was hit. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Harrison had been the vice principal at New Brunswick High School in New Jersey.

"He always showed tremendous pride in Ohio State," New Brunswick athletic director Craig Lowery said. "He always would talk about playing in the Horseshoe and how he wanted to have a connection and pipeline to Ohio State."

Harrison played for Ohio State from 1987-90 after starring in high school at Highland Park, N.J. With the Buckeyes, he lettered in 1989 and 1990, totaling 92 yards on 24 carries.

"Just hearing the news was terrible," said former Buckeye linebacker Brent Johnson (1988-92), who played with Harrison. "Tyrone was literally one of the nicest people that I've ever met. Even though Tyrone was a big, physical fullback and looked intimidating, he was one of the nicest, most down-to-earth, big-hearted people that I've ever met in my life. Everybody on the team loved him to death."

"Obviously, playing linebacker I didn't enjoy running into him all the time. I enjoyed hanging out with him much more than having to try to run through him to make a tackle, which was never fun. But it's just a shame, a person who was such a great person. I don't know anyone who ever had anything bad to say about him. And then just tragically walking down the street, getting killed, is just a little bit tough to deal with."

As of press time, two men had been arrested in connection with the crash.

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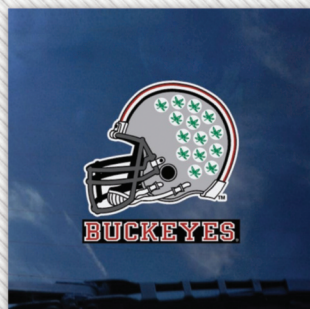
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Buckeyes Know Run Game Can Be Key To Success

Continued From Page 1

son progresses, he said, the Buckeyes will need both hands free to hit their opponents.

"Really good teams make you play with your left hand," Wilson said. "I think you've got to be able to go to the other hand."

"And right now, we need to be able to be good enough down the stretch in Big Ten weather, in Big Ten games, to have two hands. It's not taking anything – because again, to be a championship team you do need to be able to throw the ball like we're throwing it. But we've got to find the consistency and toughness that we need to get the run game going."

For the run game, everything starts with the offensive line. The Buckeye blockers have been mostly solid in pass protection – although they did allow Haskins to be sacked three times against Minnesota – but they've struggled to get a push up front.

In what has become a pass-heavy offense for the Buckeyes, Wilson said the line needs to keep a grind-it-out mentality.

"We have to maintain a physical presence as an offense to be a high-end, championship-type team," he said.

Against Minnesota, that physicality up front wasn't always there. At times, the Buckeyes seemed to find something that worked – especially when running outside the tackles – but at times, they also seemed to be meeting Golden Gophers as soon as the handoff occurred. In fact, Weber, Dobbins and Haskins all had carries that went for negative yards, including losses of



SONNY BROCKWAY

SLOW ROLLING – Ohio State sophomore running back J.K. Dobbins (2) carried the ball 10 times for 35 yards in the Buckeyes' 30-14 win over Minnesota.

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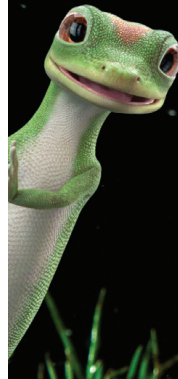
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nine for Weber and 19 (including sacks) for Haskins.

Wilson noted that part of the problem could be an inability to find an identity on the ground. The Buckeyes have an expansive list of skilled athletes on offense, and that leads to a big playbook. Within that playbook, they haven't found their bread-and-butter on the ground.

"I think, again, to be as good as we need to be, we've got to find what we're going to hang our hat on," Wilson said in regard to the running game, "to keep doing a lot of formations so we get a lot of plays and you get a little bit of your pop here and there vs. some rhythm, getting some consistency. So it's a talented group of linemen, we've got some backs and we've got to tighten it up to be the team we want to be."

For now, Ohio State might not quite know what kind of team it wants to be, at least offensively. The Buckeyes are historically known to be a dominant team on the ground, mixing in a balanced passing attack to keep defenses honest. Right now, though, Ohio State is arguably the nation's most dynamic



TIM MOODY

FINDING A WAY – Offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson said after the Minnesota game that OSU hasn't found an identity in the run game.

passing offense, but it hasn't found a complementary run game just yet.

"The offense, not everything's going to

be pretty," Haskins said. "There's going to be adversity no matter who we play, especially a team like Minnesota. They're a great

defense. We just had to fight through adversity, make the plays when they mattered, and that's a good learning tool for next week."

Next up for the Buckeyes is a road contest at Purdue. The Boilermakers are unranked, but they have talent on both sides of the ball. That could be a contest that calls for Ohio State to establish a running game, or it could be another game that Haskins and Co. can win more or less on their own from an offensive standpoint. They'll find out Oct. 20 in West Lafayette, Ind.

The good thing for the men in scarlet and gray is that the pass offense is good enough. Or it has been good enough so far. What happens next, only time can tell.

"It's discouraging a little bit, but once again, 7-0, and we're throwing for 412," Meyer said. "It is what it is. I just know the game of football, I've been around. At some point, you've got to line up and do what you do."



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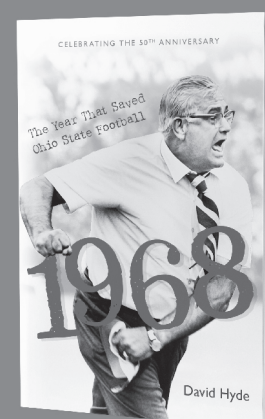
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WR Hill Has Career Day Against Minnesota

For every great quarterback, there is almost always a great wide receiver, and in a 30-14 win over Minnesota, K.J. Hill was the main beneficiary of Dwayne Haskins' skill set.

GAME NOTEBOOK James Grega

The gunslinger found Hill nine times for 187 yards and a pair of scores against the Golden Gophers on Oct. 13, tying him for the seventh-best performance in school history in terms of yardage. It was the best single-game receiving performance since 2004, when Santonio Holmes hauled in 10 passes for 224 yards in a win over Marshall.

The Ohio State single-game record for receiving yards is held by Terry Glenn, who caught nine passes for 253 yards against Pittsburgh in 1995.

Hill's first touchdown brought the nervous fans at Ohio Stadium to their feet in the second quarter as he hauled in a one-handed catch on a pass from Haskins up the left hash-mark for a 36-yard score. The touchdown put Ohio State in the lead for good, as the Buckeyes had been trailing 14-10 before his big play.

The Little Rock, Ark., native said he felt that the play helped electrify the team, which scored the final 20 points of the game.

"I stuck it. It was something I never did before. It just happened," he said of snagging the pass one-handed. "You don't think about it, it just happens. I feel like that gave us momentum. I just tried to make a play and give us a spark."

According to Haskins, however, the play almost didn't work as Hill got his head around for the ball just in the nick of time.

"At first, I was kind of mad because that play we've been working on all week in practice, and it happens a lot faster. So I wanted him to get his head around, so when he looked, the ball was already there, and it was a little behind him," Haskins said. "But he made a crazy play. Of course, K.J. is a little



TIM MOODY

HIGHLIGHT-REEL DAY – Ohio State junior wide receiver K.J. Hill tallied a career-best 187 receiving yards on nine catches with a pair of touchdowns against Minnesota.

character. He was pretty hyped up. He had a career day today."

Hill made a number of big catches in addition to the highlight-reel score, includ-

ing a fourth-and-3 conversion that helped sustain a drive in the second quarter that ultimately ended in no points when another fourth-down conversion failed. He capped

his big day with a 27-yard touchdown catch in the fourth quarter that helped salt away the two-score victory for Ohio State.

On a day in which the offense struggled to move the ball at times, Hill said he welcomed the pressure of being the go-to guy in a passing attack that is loaded with talent at wide receiver.

"I look at it as, every ball, you never know when you are going to see another one because we have so many great receivers on this team," he said. "I just try to take advantage of every ball they throw my way."

On the season, Hill has hauled in 40 passes for 551 yards and four scores, just off the pace of Parris Campbell, who leads the team with 43 receptions for 557 yards and seven touchdowns. Campbell caught eight passes against Minnesota for 56 yards. In all, nine different Buckeyes caught multiple passes against the Golden Gophers, with Terry McLaurin accounting for Ohio State's other receiving score.

Haskins Posts Another 400-Yard Game

There have been three 400-yard passing games in Ohio State football history. Two of them belong to Haskins, and they have come in back-to-back weeks.

After throwing for 455 yards against Indiana on Oct. 6, Haskins completed 33 of 44 passes for 412 yards against Minnesota, pushing his season total to 2,331, tops in the Big Ten.



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Game Analysis

What Worked Well

Despite its issues on both sides of the ball, Ohio State's offense received another enormous jolt from a passing game engineered by Dwayne Haskins. The sophomore quarterback overcame shaky protection and an absent ground game, slicing up Minnesota as he went 33 for 44 (75.0 percent) with 412 yards and three touchdowns to zero interceptions. Haskins, who filed his second straight 400-yard performance and fifth overall 300-yard effort in seven starts, accounted for 81.7 percent of the 504 total yards posted by the Buckeyes on offense with his passing (82.9 percent if you add his six net rushing yards). Whether it came on short crosses or downfield, Haskins and his array of weapons did damage against the Golden Gophers, who entered the game with the No. 21 total defense in the country. Haskins hit three passes for 35 yards or more, two of which came on touchdown tosses of 41 and 36 yards. It was another player-of-the-week type of performance that Haskins has frequently turned in this year.

What Didn't Work

Protection and pressure headlined several issues for Ohio State, which was frequently pushed around by Minnesota. In fact, the Buckeyes made the Gophers look like a classic Wisconsin team rather than a middle-of-the-pack Big Ten opponent. On offense, OSU's line was nonexistent at times. Minnesota managed to get to Haskins three times, two of which came off the edge against senior right tackle Isaiah Prince. The final sack, on first-and-10 from the Gophers' 27 midway through the third quarter, caused Haskins to roll up on Thayer Munford and led to a game-ending injury for the sophomore left tackle. On the interior, Ohio State saw very little push as its rushing attack mustered 92 yards on 32 attempts (2.9-yard average).

As for the defense, the Buckeyes' pass rush was lackluster with junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones registering the line's only sack. OSU did not record a single quarterback hurry. Minnesota also gashed Ohio State for 178 yards rushing on 33 attempts (5.4 average), headlined by Mohamed Ibrahim's 23 carries for 157 yards (6.8) and two touchdowns.

Play Of The Game

Unable to create any separation, the Buckeyes trailed the Gophers after Ibrahim's second scoring scamper – a 3-yard plunge – made it 14-10 at the 11:53 mark of the second quarter. OSU's ensuing drive stalled when Minnesota made a fourth-down stand at its own 17, giving the Gophers the ball back at the 7:31 point before they coughed it up 1:19 later in Ohio State territory on a Tyler Johnson fumble. After the Buckeyes amassed 17 yards in three plays, grabbing a first down and bringing the ball from the 24 to the 41, junior running back Mike Weber carried for 11 yards up the middle to put the Buckeyes in Minnesota territory.

On first-and-10, Haskins took his shot. Out of the shotgun, he ran a play-action to junior running back Mike Weber. With fifth-year senior Terry McLaurin and Hill bunched off the left side of the line, next to sophomore tight end Luke Farrell, McLaurin bounced up the left sideline while Hill sneaked up the seam. Seeing him uncovered, Haskins targeted Hill as Farrell's post across the right side of the field dragged the safety. Haskins hit Hill, but the ball was behind him and to his right. Hill somehow managed to turn in time and stick the fastball with his right hand at the 21, corraling it in stride at the 20 as he spun and waltzed into the end zone, giving Ohio State its 17-14 lead, which the Buckeyes never relinquished.

– Garrett Stepien

On a day in which the running game struggled, Haskins stood out, once again tying the program record for completions in a single game. That record was set by J.T. Barrett against Penn State in 2017 and matched by Haskins against the Hoosiers and Golden Gophers.

Haskins was sacked three times as the offense managed just 92 yards on the ground.

Haubeil Gets Kicking Call

Just prior to the game against Minnesota, sophomore kicker Blake Haubeil was notified that he would be handling the place-kicking duties, in addition to his regular job as Ohio State's kickoff specialist, for the first time in his Buckeye career.

Fifth-year senior Sean Nuernberger was dealing with what an Ohio State spokesman called a minor strain, and though he did dress for the game, he was unable to participate. Insert Haubeil, who converted on all three field-goal attempts and all three extra points in the win over Minnesota.

"Before the game, they told me Sean wasn't going to be able to go today," Haubeil said. "I was ready to go. I got some live reps before the game with (holder and punter) Drue (Chrisman) and (long snapper) Liam (McCullough), and we just went from there."

He admitted that he had some nerves before attempting his first kick but added that his prior experience as Ohio State's kickoff man helped ease him into the situation.

"Kicking in front of 100,000 people my first game last year, it's not easy. It is different for sure from a high school game," he said. "To get that experience from the past year and the first year, that definitely helped."

Haubeil's first kick was relatively routine, as he converted a 21-yarder in the first quarter to get Ohio State on the board. His second, however, was anything but routine as he split the uprights from 47 yards in the third quarter, the longest field goal made by an Ohio State kicker since 2014, when Nuernberger connected from 49 yards out in a 31-24 double-overtime win over Penn State.

The 47-yarder especially was special, Haubeil said, as it was his first real test as Ohio State's kicker in a crucial spot.

"It's a blessing," he said, "to be in that situation and to go out there and help in a huge team win. It was a team win today. We needed offense, defense and special teams, but it meant a lot. With the amount the specialists work and to get that result and see it go through the uprights was big."

The sophomore added a third field goal in the fourth quarter, a 27-yarder that put Ohio State up by two scores in the final frame.

Hilliard, Cornell Get 1st Career Starts

With junior linebacker Malik Harrison and junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper both in concussion protocol after the Indiana game, juniors Justin Hilliard and Jashon Cornell got the starts in their respective spots against Minnesota.

Hilliard collected five stops and a pair of pass deflections in the win, while Cornell tallied one solo tackle.

The first career start was special for Hilliard, who admitted he thought the day might never come. The Cincinnati native has battled nagging injuries for most of his collegiate career.

"It meant the most to me," he said. "I have been here for four years, this was my

dream school. It was something I always wanted to do, was be a starter here. To get that opportunity with those guys out there, it meant a lot. We (Hilliard and Johnnie Dixon) went through some dark times where we didn't think we were going to play again. We just fought through that. You try to stay as positive as possible, never feel sorry for yourself and just keep going."

Pryor Responds With INT

Ohio State's struggles at safety this season have been well documented. However the Buckeyes got some production from the position against Minnesota.

Sophomore Isaiah Pryor, one week removed from a first-half suspension due to targeting, collected five tackles and his first career interception, picking off Golden Gophers quarterback Zack Annexstad at the OSU 2-yard line to halt a Minnesota scoring threat in the fourth quarter.

Pryor crossed the field to make the play and said that despite early struggles this season, he has always been confident in his abilities at the safety spot.

"It's not so much of a confidence thing, it's just you've got to make sure that you're consistent, doing your job every time you get the opportunity, every time your number is called, so we just need to keep doing that," he said. "It was nice, but I'm still salty about some of the plays I could have made. I know that. I'll

just keep getting better in practice."

Pryor rotated at times during the game with redshirt freshman Shaun Wade, who finished with two tackles, a pass breakup and a forced fumble in the win. Wade is also Ohio State's primary nickel back.

Injuries Continue To Mount For OSU

Already without junior defensive end Nick

Bosa, Cooper and Harrison, the Buckeyes had to deal with more injuries in the win over Minnesota.

In addition to Nuernberger, the Buckeyes had to play portions of the game without sophomore left tackle Thayer Munford and junior cornerback Damon Arnette.

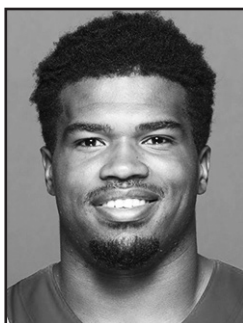
Munford left the game in the second half of the win after getting rolled up on following a sack of Haskins. He walked off under his own power and was taken to the locker room. He returned to the sidelines in street clothes, and though he didn't return to the field, Meyer said he doesn't believe the injury is significant.

"He rolled his ankle a little bit, and he's

got a little hip issue, but I think he's going to be OK," Meyer said.

Arnette played a significant amount of reps at corner but did not return to action after leaving midway through the game. No reason for his absence was given. However Arnette did suffer a head injury against Penn State on Sept. 29.

Defensive tackle Robert Landers, who missed the Tulane game with an unspecified injury, was limited against Minnesota and did not record a stat. In his stead, Davon Hamilton and freshmen Taron Vincent and Tommy Togiai played the majority of the game on the interior with Dre'Mont Jones. Jones tallied a sack in the win, while Hamilton, Vincent and Togiai all failed to record a stat.



Justin Hilliard



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Haskins, Hill Spark OSU Offense In 30-14 Win

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The running game is still bogged down. The short-yardage and red-zone plays are still not working. The defense is still prone to giving up big chunks at a time.

Oh, and Dwayne Haskins still piles up yards and touchdowns.

He's the reason No. 3 Ohio State was able to overcome the pesky Minnesota Golden Gophers for a 30-14 victory at Ohio Stadium on Oct. 13.

The third-year sophomore tossed three more touchdown passes to give him 28 for the season and for the second game in a row completed 33 of 44 attempts. He had "only" 412 yards vs. the Gophers (3-3, 0-3 Big Ten) after passing for 455 yards the previous game vs. Indiana.

Two of his TDs came as the Buckeyes (7-0, 4-0) took a 17-14 halftime lead, but in the second half OSU managed only two field goals for a 23-14 lead until Haskins connected with junior K.J. Hill for a 27-yard score with 2:15 remaining in the game to close out the scoring before the rare noon kickoff in front of a less-than-capacity crowd of 100,042 on a sunny, 46-degree day.

Hill had two TDs and a career-high 187 receiving yards on nine catches to lead the pass-heavy offense. Fifth-year senior Parris Campbell added eight catches for 56 yards.

OSU gained only 92 yards on the ground, led by junior Mike Weber's 51, and averaged 2.9 yards per carry after a 3.2 mark vs. Indiana. Sophomore J.K. Dobbins added 35 yards on 10 totes, and Haskins got 6 yards on nine runs.

The lack of rushing yards makes Haskins' numbers more remarkable.

"Toward the end of the game they started backing up a little bit trying to keep everything in front of them," said OSU fifth-year senior receiver Terry McLaurin. "We've got to make them come up for our run game."

"It's something you've got to keep cracking at the rock and eventually it will break."



SONNY BROCKWAY

BOX SCORE STUFFER – Sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins completed 33 of 44 passes for 412 yards and three touchdowns against Minnesota.

We have two great backs. They broke a couple for some 10-yard gains, but we're still looking to get over that hump."

OSU was 6 of 14 on third down and kicked two field goals on three trips to the red zone.

Junior safety Jordan Fuller led the Buckeyes with 12 tackles (nine solo).

Minnesota tailback Mohamed Ibrahim thrashed an injury-ravaged OSU defense for 157 yards and two touchdowns, although 105 of his yards and both scores were in the first half.

True freshman QB Zack Annexstad, a walk-on, was 13 for 23 for 218 yards and two interceptions. Tyler Johnson was his favorite target with eight receptions for 119 yards.

The Gophers had six plays of 20 or more yards.

How It Happened

Ohio State took an early 3-0 lead after junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield intercepted Annexstad on the fourth play of the game at the OSU 13. The Buckeyes went to the Minnesota 4, but a pass to junior Austin Mack was broken up and sophomore Blake Haubeil, replacing injured fifth-year senior Sean Nuernberger, kicked his first career field goal, a 21-yarder at 9:03 to cap the 12-play march. The big play was a 42-yard pass to Hill to the 9-yard line.

Minnesota responded with a well-crafted 75-yard drive, consuming 11 plays, 5:19 and two timeouts to take a 7-3 lead at the 3:44 mark of the first quarter.

Ibrahim out of the shotgun rambled 25 yards on a third-and-3 to the OSU 43. Annexstad later passed 14 yards to Bryce Williams to the 18. Wide receiver Seth Green, who hasn't caught a pass this season, took three direct snaps to gain 17 yards, and Ibrahim ran in from the 1.

OSU got a good start to its next series when Weber's 8-yard run was followed by a 15-yard face-mask penalty to put the ball at the Ohio State 48. Five plays later, Haskins threw a 41-yard touchdown pass down the middle to McLaurin for a 10-7 lead with 1:07 to go in the first quarter. The drive was six plays, 75 yards and 2:37 off the clock.

Minnesota was unfazed, and on its first play from scrimmage Johnson had a 29-yard reception to the OSU 46. After two plays gained nothing, the Gophers got a break when redshirt freshman cornerback Shaun Wade was flagged for pass interference on the first play of the second quarter, setting Minnesota up at the OSU 31.

Johnson had two more catches that moved the Gophers to the 5. Green ran for a pair of yards over right guard, and Ibrahim capped the nine-play, 75-yard, 4:14 possession with a 3-yard run to give Minnesota a 14-10 lead with 11:53 left in the second quarter.

On the Buckeyes' next drive, they were moving to retake the lead, but the 11-play series ended on downs when Dobbins, after an OSU timeout, lost a yard on fourth-and-1 from the Minnesota 17.

Ohio State got the ball back after Johnson made a catch at the OSU 32 and Wade forced a fumble that sophomore cornerback Jeffrey Okudah recovered at the 24.

The turnover led to OSU going ahead 17-14 on Hill's spectacular one-handed spinning grab for a 36-yard TD at the 3:59 mark. The Buckeyes needed only six plays – including a Hill 12-yard catch and Weber's 11-yard run – to go 76 yards in 2:13.

Haubeil added to the lead at 7:10 of the third quarter on a 47-yard field goal. OSU began the series at its 47 after a punt but couldn't take advantage of two catches by Campbell totaling 23 yards.

When Minnesota got the ball after the kickoff, Ibrahim had runs of 20 and 12 yards and Johnson a catch for another 18 yards, but a third-down pass knockdown by junior linebacker Justin Hilliard forced a 32-yard field-goal try by Emmitt Carpenter that was wide right and the Gophers got nothing for running 6:04 off the clock on 11 plays.

Ohio State didn't get any breathing room until Haubeil's 27-yard field goal made it 23-14 with 10:20 to play. It was a disappointing end to a 71-yard drive that was saved by a third-and-13 catch of 17 yards by junior Austin Mack to the OSU 34.

Hill added a 22-yard catch-and-run, sophomore tight end Luke Farrell had a 24-yard catch and Campbell another reception for a first down at the 12, but two passes to him netted only 3 yards and Haskins threw incomplete on third down.

Minnesota looked to strike back and opened its next drive with a flea-flicker from Annexstad to Bryce Witham for 41 yards to the OSU 34. The QB went to the air on the next play, and sophomore safety Isaiah Pryor made the interception at the 2 with 9:25 left.

The Gophers had another opportunity to cut into the deficit, but Carpenter missed a three-pointer from 49 yards with 5:46 left in the game.

OSU started at its 31 after the miss, and seven plays later Haskins had his third score, the second to Hill, on a 27-yard reception for the final points. Along the way, Farrell had a catch for 13 yards and Weber added notable runs for 9 and 12 yards.

Minnesota after five plays ended the game at its 40.



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 30, Minnesota 14

Oct. 13, 2018 – Ohio Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
MINNESOTA (3-3, 0-3 BIG TEN)	7	7	0	0	– 14
OHIO STATE (7-0, 4-0 BIG TEN)	10	7	3	10	– 30

First Quarter

- OSU** – Haubeil, 21 yard field goal, 9:03; 12 plays, 83 yards, 4:07 TOP.
- MINN** – Ibrahim, 1 yard run (Carpenter kick), 3:44; 11 plays, 75 yards, 5:19 TOP.
- OSU** – McLaurin, 41 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 1:07; 6 plays, 75 yards, 2:37 TOP.

Second Quarter

- MINN** – Ibrahim, 3 yard run (Carpenter kick), 11:53; 9 plays, 75 yards, 4:14 TOP.
- OSU** – Hill, 36 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 3:59; 6 plays, 76 yards, 2:13 TOP.

Third Quarter

- OSU** – Haubeil, 47 yard field goal, 7:10; 8 plays, 23 yards, 2:05 TOP.

Fourth Quarter

- OSU** – Haubeil, 27 yard field goal, 10:20; 12 plays, 71 yards, 5:46 TOP.
- OSU** – Hill, 27 yard pass from Haskins (Haubeil kick), 2:15; 7 plays, 69 yards, 3:31 TOP.

Att. – 100,042.

Weather – 46 degrees, cloudy; wind W 7 mph.

Team Statistics

	MINN	OSU
First Downs	19	29
Rushing	7	6
Passing	10	20
Penalty	2	3
Rushing-Yards	33-178	32-92
Passing Yards	218	412
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	13-23-2	33-44-0
Offensive Plays	56	76
Total Net Yards	396	504
Third Down Efficiency	4-9	6-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	2-3
Punts-Avg.	2-43.5	2-46.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-0
Penalties	4-60	5-36
Time of Possession	28:15	31:45

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – MINN: Ibrahim 23-157; Green 5-20; Williams 2-7; Annexstad 3-(-6). **OSU:** Weber 13-51; Dobbins 10-35; Haskins 9-6.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – MINN: Annexstad 13-23-2-218-0. **OSU:** Haskins 33-44-0-412-3.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – MINN: Johnson 8-119; Witham 2-62; Bateman 2-23; Williams 1-14. **OSU:** Hill 9-187; Campbell 8-56; McLaurin 3-55; Farrell 2-37; Mack 2-28; Berry 2-20; Saunders 2-14; Dixon 2-8; Dobbins 2-5; Weber 1-2.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – MINN: Herbers 2-43.5-44. **OSU:** Chrisman 2-46.0-46.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MINN: Douglas 1-12. **OSU:** Hill 2-(-1).

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – MINN: Douglas 1-14. **OSU:** None.

MISSED FIELD GOALS (Yds.) – MINN: Carpenter 32, 49. **OSU:** None.

FORCED FUMBLES – MINN: Coughlin. **OSU:** Wade.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds) – MINN: None. **OSU:** Okudah 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – MINN: None. **OSU:** Sheffield 1-0; Pryor 1-0.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – MINN: Coughlin 3.0-17; Cashman 2.0-6; Shenault 1.0-4; Thomas 1.0-4; Gibson 1.0-3; Martin 1.0-1. **OSU:** Werner 2.5-5; D. Jones 1.0-7; Young 1.0-1; Borland 0.5-0.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – MINN: Coughlin 2.0-16; Gibson 1.0-3. **OSU:** Jones 1.0-7; Werner 1.0-2.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – MINNESOTA: Offense, Greene, Olson, Weyler, Andries, Faalele, Annexstad, Ibrahim, Paulson, Bateman, Johnson, Autman-Bell, Carpenter. Defense, Delattiboudere, Moore, Silver, Coughlin, Martin, Barber, Cashman, Thomas, Durr, Huff, Shenault, Herbers. Reserves, Pickerign, Williams, Jordahl, Gibson, Smith, Williamson, Estes, Rush, Otomewo, Green, Huff, Sapp, Howden, Howard, Harris, Swenson, Kieft, Beebe, Sori-Marin, Schmitz, Mafe, Schlueter, Douglas, Witham, Morse, Renner, Hickcox, Smith. **OHIO STATE:** Offense, Munford, Pridgeon, Jordan, Knox, Prince, Farrell, Haskins, Dobbins, Campbell, Mack, McLaurin, Haubeil. Defense, Young, Landers, D. Jones, Cornell, Borland, Hilliard, Werner, Sheffield, Arnette, Pryor, Fuller, Chrisman. Reserves, Dixon, Hill, Okudah, Gant, Smith, Proctor, White, Browning, Vincent, Victor, Riep, Berry, K. Jones, Olave, WInt, Wade, Weber, Hooker, Teague, Pope, McCullough, Booker, Hamilton, Friday, Alabi, Cupp, Woidke, Myers, Togiai, Saunders, Hausmann, Ruckert, Jackson, Garrett.

Season Statistics

2018 Game-By-Game				
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	
Sept. 1	(5) OREGON STATE	W, 77-31	102,169	
Sept. 8	(4) RUTGERS	W, 52-3	93,057	
Sept. 15	(4) vs. TCU* (15)	W, 40-28	64,362	
Sept. 22	(4) TULANE	W, 49-6	103,336	
Sept. 29	(4) at Penn State (9)	W, 27-26	110,889	
Oct. 6	(3) INDIANA	W, 49-26	104,193	
Oct. 13	(3) MINNESOTA	W, 30-14	100,042	
Oct. 20	at Purdue	7:30 p.m.	–	
Nov. 3	NEBRASKA	TBA	–	
Nov. 10	at Michigan State	TBA	–	
Nov. 17	at Maryland	TBA	–	
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN	Noon	–	
Dec. 1	Big Ten Title Game**	8 p.m.	–	

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

* – At AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

** – At Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Team Statistics		
	OSU	Opp
First Downs	211	126
Rushing	78	43
Passing	115	65
Penalty	18	18
Average Per Game/Rush	185.4	148.0
Average Per Game/Pass	371.4	221.6
Total Offense	3,898	2,587
Total Plays	560	460
Average Per Game	556.9	369.6
Average Per Play	7.0	5.6
Penalties-Yards	56-521	37-375
Fumbles-Lost	5-2	12-7
Third Down Efficiency	48-98	31-98
Percentage	49%	32%
Fourth Down Efficiency	9-13	2-7
Percentage	69%	29%
Sacks-Yards	24-157	11-51
Time Of Possession Avg.	31:24	28:36

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	83	101	61	79	–	324	46.3	
Opponents	27	54	40	13	–	134	19.1	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
J.K. Dobbins	109	497	4.6	4	21
Mike Weber	87	471	5.4	3	49
Tate Martell	18	121	6.7	2	47
Master Teague	17	106	6.2	1	33
Dwayne Haskins	30	49	1.6	1	17
Brian Snead	11	37	3.4	1	5
Demario McCall	4	26	6.5	0	15
Parris Campbell	4	11	2.8	0	18
C.J. Saunders	0	8	0.0	0	0
K.J. Hill	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
TEAM	9	-25	-2.8	0	0
OSU Totals	290	1,298	4.5	12	49
OPP Totals	246	1,036	4.2	9	93

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
D. Haskins	175	242	72.3	2,331	28-4	188.10
Tate Martell	23	28	82.1	269	1-0	174.63
OSU Totals	198	270	73.3	2,600	29-4	186.70
OPP Totals	114	214	53.3	1,551	8-6	120.88

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Parris Campbell	43	557	13.0	7	71
K.J. Hill	40	551	13.8	4	42
Austin Mack	25	307	12.3	1	48
Johnnie Dixon	17	226	13.3	3	44
Terry McLaurin	16	332	20.8	7	75
J.K. Dobbins	11	130	11.8	1	35
Binjimen Victor	9	169	18.8	3	47
Mike Weber	9	53	5.9	1	15
C.J. Saunders	8	56	7.0	0	19
Luke Farrell	5	69	13.8	1	24
Demario McCall	5	46	9.2	0	35
Rashod Berry	3	26	8.7	2	11
Jaylen Harris	2	22	11.0	0	15
Chris Olave	2	19	9.5	0	14
Garyn Prater	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jeremy Ruckert	1	13	13.0	0	13
Jaalen Gill	1	11	11.0	0	11
OSU Totals	198	2,600	13.1	29	75
OPP Totals	114	1,551	13.6	8	93

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
S. Nuernberger	–	39-39	–	–	3-5	48
Parris Campbell	7	–	–	–	–	42
Terry McLaurin	7	–	–	–	–	42
J.K. Dobbins	5	–	–	–	–	30
K.J. Hill	4	–	–	–	–	24
Mike Weber	4	–	–	–	–	24
Johnnie Dixon	3	–	–	–	–	18
Binjimen Victor	3	–	–	–	–	18
Blake Haubeil	–	3-3	–	–	3-3	12
Tate Martell	2	–	–	–	–	12
Rashod Berry	1	–	–	–	–	6
Nick Bosa	1	–	–	–	–	6
Luke Farrell	1	–	–	–	–	6
Davon Hamilton	1	–	–	–	–	6
Dwayne Haskins	1	–	–	0-2	–	6
Dre'Mont Jones	1	–	–	–	–	6
Austin Mack	1	–	–	–	–	6
Brian Snead	1	–	–	–	–	6
Master Teague	1	–	–	–	–	6
OSU Totals	44	42-42	–	0-2	6-8	324
OPP Totals	17	14-15	0-1	0-1	6-12	134

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
S. Nuernberger	2-2	1-2	0-1	0-0	3-5
Blake Haubeil	2-2	0-0	1-1	0-0	3-3
OSU Totals	4-4	1-2	1-2	0-0	6-8
OPP Totals	1-1	4-6	1-4	0-1	6-12

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Drue Chrisman	26	1,157	44.5	0	65
OSU Totals	26	1,157	44.5	0	65
OPP Totals	42	1,676	39.9	1	53

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Kendall Sheffield	2	0	0.0	0	0
Dre'Mont Jones	1	28	28.0	1	28
Malik Harrison	1	13	13.0	0	13
Isaiah Pryor	1	0	0.0	0	0
Shaun Wade	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	6	41	6.8	1	28
OPP Totals	4	133	33.2	0	46

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
C.J. Saunders	8	50	6.2	0	20
K.J. Hill	6	17	2.8	0	17
Demario McCall	3	32	10.7	0	26
OSU Totals	17	99	5.8	0	26
OPP Totals	7	27	3.9	0	12

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Johnnie Dixon	5	118	23.6	0	38
Demario McCall	2	52	26.0	0	31
C.J. Saunders	2	24	12.0	0	14
OSU Totals	9	194	21.6	0	38
OPP Totals	13	201	15.5	0	22

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Jordan Fuller	27	12	39	1.5-2	–
Pete Werner	19	9	28	5.5-16	3.0-10
Tuf Borland	10	15	25	4.0-11	2.0-10
Malik Harrison	18	7	25	1.0-1	0.5-1
Jahsen Wint	18	5	23	0.5-1	–
Isaiah Pryor	14	9	23	1.0-1	–
Damon Arnette	19	2	21	–	–
Dre'Mont Jones	12	9	21	8.5-47	5.5-42
Chase Young	12	7	19	8.0-37	4.0-27
Jeffrey Okudah	14	3	17	–	–
Justin Hilliard	11	5	16	1.0-7	–
Shaun Wade	12	3	15	–	–
Baron Browning	6	9	15	2.5-10	1.0-6
Nick Bosa	11	3	14	6.0-43	4.0-39
Kendall Sheffield	12	1	13	2.0-4	–
Robert Landers	5	5	10	2.0-8	–
Keandre Jones	5	3	8	1.0-1	1.0-1
Dante Booker	5	3	8	3.0-19	1.0-12
Jonathon Cooper	3	5	8	3.0-7	1.0-3
Jashon Cornell	6	1	7	1.0-8	–
Tommy Togiai	5	1	6	1.0-2	–
Davon Hamilton	2	4	6	1.5-2	–
Dallas Gant	2	3	5	–	–
Tyreke Smith	1	4	5	–	–
Brendon White	1	3	4	–	–
Tyler Friday	3	0	3	1.0-6	1.0-6
Johnnie Dixon	1	0	1	–	–
OSU Totals	263	138	401	55-233	24-157
OPP Totals	334	212	546	35-105	11-51
Fumbles Forced:	7 – Tuf Borland 2, Nick Bosa, Dwayne Haskins, Dre'Mont Jones, Shaun Wade, Pete Werner.				
Fumbles Recovered:	7 – Nick Bosa 2, Dre'Mont Jones 2, Jordan Fuller, Davon Hamilton, Jeffrey Okudah.				

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 30, Minnesota 14

Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer on the win: "What we're going to do is enjoy our win, 7-0. Not many teams are 7-0. We'll get some things fixed and get ready for the trip to Purdue."

Meyer on OSU's rush defense: "I was disappointed in the run. That player, their back (Mohamed Ibrahim) had 160 (actually 157) yards rushing against us, and that's not acceptable."

Meyer on the defense's second-half turnaround: "The strength is that they came out and shut them out in the second half, a lot like the game last week where we held a team (Indiana) to (89) yards in the second half. And the best thing is we created some turnovers, and that was the difference in the game."

OSU sophomore safety Isaiah Pryor on his first career interception: "Well, it was a play designed up – we knew that we were going to put a linebacker in coverage on No. 2, so just make sure to lean to his side and just go snatch the ball out of the air, basically."

Meyer on the OSU offensive line: "I don't think we played particularly well today. We'll know more when we get a film grade. We gave up three sacks. We have to keep (sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins) upright. Short yardage is not a strength. Red zone is not a strength. And running the ball is not a strength. That's something we've got to get figured out."

Haskins on the Minnesota defense: "I'm pretty sure they're a top-25 defense in the country. What they did, they do it well. They're very consistent. We shot ourselves in the foot

a couple of times with some penalties, some third-and-long situations, first-and-long situations. Put ourselves behind the ball a couple times."

Haskins on if it was a frustrating performance for the offense: "Of course we wanted to finish a couple of drives, score some touchdowns and not have some penalties, but I wouldn't say frustration. We have higher expectations for ourselves than what we do sometimes on the field. Today was figuring out what worked and then going out and executing."



Isaiah Pryor

OSU junior wide receiver K.J. Hill on his touchdown celebration after making an acrobatic one-handed catch: "You got to do something extra when you make a play like that. And then (fifth-year senior receiver Terry McLaurin) came over and hit me with some more so I had to go along with it."

Hill on reaching 400 yards through the air for the second game in a row: "We were talking about it before the second touchdown. Dwayne said, 'I should have had 400, huh?' And I said, 'Yeah, you should have.' Then we came out and threw the post (for the final touchdown of the game) and I said, 'I told you.' That was a cool thing."

McLaurin on Hill: "He is so consistent. When it's third-and-short, fourth down, there's really no doubt in everybody's mind that he's going to make the play. To have a security blanket like that, I know that's big for our quarterback, that's big for our offense."

OSU offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson on the tight ends: "It's

nice for (junior Rashod Berry) to make a play, (sophomore Luke Farrell) had a couple nice ones and more than anything, the way they can block and block better to complement the line is going to make us a better run team and a more complete team."

Wilson on whether there could be any personnel changes along the offensive line: "I don't think so. The skill set and talent level is good, we've just got to get those guys playing – and we've got to put them in better places."

Pryor on the team's mentality after a pair of sluggish wins: "Just got to make sure we stay focused, you know? I feel like defense, we keep trying to play up to our potential, just need to keep working at it and getting better. I feel like we're kind of down because we know we could do better – so much better – so we need to keep working at it."

OSU sophomore kicker Blake Haubeil on if he was nervous about handing extra-point and field-goal duties for the first time: "Definitely. Going out there for the first time and hitting that first field goal in front of 100,000, there were a little bit of nerves, but full confidence."

Minnesota head coach P.J. Fleck on his team's defense: "We had to be able to mix up some coverages here and there and we executed that really well at times, but (Ohio State has) just freak players, in a good way. They can just play and when they had an opportunity to make a play, they did. I thought our rush defense was tremendous. I give our defensive staff a ton of credit, holding them to 23 points for the game and that last one in down time, he threw a 40-some-yard touchdown pass and I understand that."



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CB 'Rico' Aspiring To Reach Lofty Expectations

By JOE DEMPSEY
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Damon Arnette, who is also known by the moniker "Rico," came into the season with a lot of hype after receiving honorable-mention All-Big Ten honors as a sophomore a year ago. Sports Illustrated even named Arnette a preseason All-American along with junior defensive end Nick Bosa.

The lofty expectations for Arnette come with the reputation of Ohio State producing elite NFL cornerbacks. Former Buckeye standout corners Eli Apple, Marshon Lattimore, Gareon Conley and Denzel Ward were all selected in the first round of the past three NFL drafts. Lattimore was the AP NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2017, and Ward has already impressed, earning NFL Rookie of the Week with two interceptions in his first game for the Cleveland Browns.

"It's pressure, but you can't really focus on that because if you focus on it, you're not going to be really able to play to the first-round talent that's expected," Arnette said when asked about living up to the standard set by Ward and Co. "And they wouldn't still have the standard for the group of guys we have now if they didn't know that we all are capable of meeting that standard."

"So at the end of the day, you just go out there and play, have faith in God and the coaches, and we'll be able to uphold the standard."

The Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas product has remained focused on constantly improving. He said he realizes there is work to do for his team to reach its goals.

"We're definitely not to our potential yet," Arnette said. "We've still got faith in our talents, our coaching and God's will. The sky's the limit for us. We're getting better every day. There's just little things we've got to adjust to play better."

Cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson replaced Kerry Coombs after he took a job on Mike Vrabel's staff for the Tennessee Titans in the offseason. Johnson said he's been pleased with the effort and coachability of his players, but there have been some different techniques the corners are still picking up.



TIM MOODY

KEY PLAYER – Junior cornerback Damon Arnette is in his second season as a starter in Ohio State's secondary.

"Our consistency is the one thing that we have to just really fine-tune and really get better at," Johnson said. "And that's hard as a corner, that's hard as any player, but for sure at that spot, because every play is so different. It's like being a golfer. Every shot is totally different. I have to make sure that I'm just consistent and disciplined with my eyes and my technique every single play."

While Johnson admitted he is not content with how his group has played this season, he added that the mistakes are correctable. The corners have generally been in good position. The next step is making a play on the ball when it's in the air.

"We're getting hands on dudes, we're battling the dudes all the way up until the ball is being caught by the receiver," Arnette said, echoing his coach's sentiment. "So just as far as getting our head around, looking back for the ball and taking it out of the air – that's just something I feel like has to get better."

Arnette has tackled well, tied for second on

the team with 19 solo tackles despite leaving the game against Penn State early with a concussion. The 6-0 corner is also tied with Shaun Wade for second on the team with five pass breakups, trailing only fellow corner Kendall Sheffield, who has six.

"I think he needs to work on just his eyes," Johnson said when asked what Arnette needs to improve. "Damon's an aggressive player. He's a guy that's not afraid of anything. And that's how you want the guys out there. He's got confidence. He has all the intangible things. But now once he continues to put his eyes in the right spot when he's in man, when he's in zone, being able to transition his eyes, I think you're going to see him take off even more."

Arnette is noticeably aggressive for a cornerback and embraces the physicality that comes with making tackles and filling on outside running plays. A two-time state champion at St. Thomas Aquinas, he played outside linebacker and safety as a senior starter and did not convert to corner until arriving in Columbus.

"I've felt like I've always been considered an underdog," Arnette said. "So being considered an underdog and then being on a high-caliber team, that just pushes me to be the best."

Despite some of the hype, Arnette plays with a chip on his shoulder – constantly feeling like he needs to elevate his game with so much talent around him.

Johnson and Arnette have both been asked about the possibility of switching to more zone-coverage schemes as opposed to Ohio State's typical man-to-man coverage. Arnette said he prefers press-man as it gives the

corners an opportunity to be physical with receivers and throws off the timing between quarterback and receiver. His coach agrees.

"That's our job," Johnson said on playing man-to-man coverage. "That's what we signed up for. And we can. There's no doubt about that."

As a fourth-year junior, Arnette was a young player when Apple, Lattimore and Conley were at Ohio State, and he started opposite Ward last season. Now he is one of the most experienced players on the team and has taken on a leadership role.

"He's taken the guys under his wing," Johnson said. "He really does a good job in the meeting room and getting with the guys in terms of things on the field that go on that as a veteran player that you can relay to the other guys. And that's really helped. Because when you're a coach, you need guys that are on the field in the fire that understand to be able to relay things to the other guys immediately. And he's able to do that. So having him in there, that's been huge."

Arnette said he remains optimistic in spite of some tough breaks for the Scarlet and Gray secondary this season. He said the group is close to realizing its potential. It's just a matter of translating the hard work into production on game day.

"I see it being out here with these dudes," Arnette said. "I see it every day. It's just flashes of greatness. Now it's just transferring it to Saturdays. The main thing is just looking back for the ball, taking the ball out of the air, because I feel like that's the final step of our greatness."

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Cornell Has Chance To Shine After Position Switch

By CRAIG MERZ
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The final pages of the book on fourth-year junior defensive end Jashon Cornell have yet to be written, and it's up to him what the title will be.

That essentially is what Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer has been telling Cornell the past few weeks as injuries to the defensive line have given the St. Paul, Minn., native opportunities to live up to lofty expectations.

Cornell, during his junior year at Cretin-Derham Hall High School, was rated the top overall prospect for the class of 2015 by one national publication (ESPN). But injuries and changing positions on defense has stymied the four-star recruit's progress at Ohio State to the point where he's viewed as an underachiever.

"Just OK" is how Meyer described Cornell's career on Oct. 8.

Maybe not so coincidentally, Cornell used the same word in assessing himself.

"I've had a lot of bumps in the road fighting injuries, staying healthy," he said. "I've had an OK career so far, but I feel myself getting healthier, putting me at a better level."

Meyer three days later on his weekly radio show amplified his comment.

"He's a very intelligent guy, a great person," he said of Cornell. "We need a little more out of him. He's a guy that has talent. Obviously with some banged-



JOSH WINSLOW

EDGE RUSHER – After beginning his Ohio State career at defensive tackle, junior Jashon Cornell switched to defensive end during the offseason.

up players, we need him to become the player that we all want him to be and that he wants to be. I see it coming, and right now's the time."

The Buckeye D-line leading to the Oct. 13

game vs. Minnesota was ailing. All-America defensive end Nick Bosa was out indefinitely, defensive tackles Dre'Mont Jones and Robert Landers were struggling with minor injuries and defensive end Jonathan Cooper was in concussion protocol after the game vs. Indiana on Oct. 6.

"That's life," Cornell said. "That's like what we say, 'Next man up.' When one guy's (turn is) up, he gets the chance to play. That's one thing, we trust every lineman. Next man up. That's what we work for each and every day."

Yet he admitted the OSU pass rush has been suffering without the All-American Bosa.

"It's Nick Bosa. No one can replace Nick," Cornell said.

Cornell had one shining moment this season on Sept. 29 when his push off the snap and penetration helped free a lane for Chase Young to snuff Penn State running back Miles Sanders for a 2-yard loss at the OSU 45 on fourth down with 1:16 left in the game to seal the 27-26 victory.

"If it wasn't for Jashon getting up the field like he did, I wouldn't have made the play," Young said.

Cornell is still learning how to play on the edge after being groomed for a time as an interior lineman. He's also had to deal with a hernia injury as a freshman and several ankle injuries.

After redshirting as true freshman in

2015, he played five games the next season and all 14 in 2017 at tackle. Cornell is glad to settle in at defensive end for now, he said.

"It was a little tough at first, but now I'm getting adjusted to it," he said. "It's hard to play one position then go to the next and try to switch up the moves and learn the techniques."

It's an ongoing process.

"Rushing on the edge, that's way different," Cornell said. "You have a lot more space on the edge than inside. Inside is quicker so you don't have to think as much, but when you're on the edge you have to think a lot more, which is really good."

"It's going to help me in the long run because it shows that I'm versatile. Whatever the team needs I'm going to do."

Defensive line coach Larry Johnson said in April that Cornell (6-3, 273) showed the dedication needed to undertake a new role.

"We asked him to lose weight and get his body fat down," the coach said. "He has done that. Now, it's just learning the position for the very first time. He played defensive end in high school, but this is a whole different level. I thought spring-wise and evaluating him I think he did a good job."

Cornell's relationship with Johnson goes back to when he was recruiting him while a coach at Penn State. When Johnson joined the OSU staff in January 2014 the Buckeyes became his choice. Minnesota, by the way, was never in consideration.

"I built a relationship with him better than I did the relationship with the home team coach (Jerry Kill), that's what made me come here," Cornell said. "I felt like I had to get away from home to grow – grow as a player, a man too."

He's already graduated with a degree in family resource management and told reporters he wants to be a financial adviser to athletes. He took advantage of the school's resources and reach to intern at Merrill Lynch this past summer.

Meyer said he hopes what Cornell has accomplished in the classroom can be matched in games. In a recent meeting with him, Meyer talked of former players who bloomed late to make significant contributions.

"There's been extraordinary stories around here of guys who finished very strong from the Stevie Millers, there's the Reid Fragels of the world you never heard of, then bang, they come on," Meyer said.

"He's a wonderful guy, good student. He's got his degree. Real Life Wednesday stuff, we've already helped him. He's got a nice career set up. I'd love to have him be able to come back here with his children and show what he did on the field. That final two chapters is still to be written."



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Purdue Trying To Salvage Season After Slow Start

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The first year of the Jeff Brohm era went about as well as Purdue fans and their new head coach could have hoped.

The Boilermakers, after not having won more than three games since 2012, finished the 2017 regular season with a 6-6 mark, closing the campaign with a 38-35 win in the Foster Farms Bowl over Arizona. It was the first winning season for Purdue since 2011, also a 7-6 finish.

Despite graduating nine of their top 12 tacklers on defense following the 2017 season, expectations for Purdue entering 2018 were perhaps as high as they had been since the Joe Tiller era. However, things didn't go according to plan to start the year.

Purdue opened the season with four straight home games, including the season opener on national television against Northwestern on a Thursday night. The Boilermakers dropped a heartbreaker, 31-27, to the Wildcats before getting upset a week later by Eastern Michigan, 20-19.

Brohm's squad lost its third straight game to open the season on Sept. 15, losing another close game at the hands of Missouri, 40-37. Just when it seemed like the season was lost, though, Purdue rebounded by trouncing then-No. 23 Boston College, 30-13, to close out its four-game homestand.

"I think through the first three losses we knew we had to improve a great deal, and we have worked hard to do that," Brohm said. "I think we have been somewhat brutally honest as far as what our weaknesses are and how to try to go about getting them fixed. Our guys have done a good job of coming to practice and going hard and giving better effort, and hopefully we can continue to improve."

One week after getting in the win column, the Boilermakers took to the road for the first time in 2018 and collected a 42-28 win over Nebraska in Lincoln, Neb. After an off week, Purdue pulled back to even at 3-3 with a 46-7 win over Illinois.

"We need to have that same hunger, that same desire to win and improve," Brohm said. "There has to be that intensity on the practice field. We have to show that intensity, and we have to make sure we coach the effort and intensity still and stay on the small things so that they don't beat us."

"I think if we're doing that, hopefully we have a chance to win when we step on the field. But you're going to experience some tough times, and we have to fight through them when we do have them."

Quarterback Carousel

In an unprecedented move, Brohm brought two quarterbacks, Elijah Sindelar and David Blough, to Big Ten Media Days in July. His reasoning was that both were respected leaders on the team and both were expected to play in 2018, much as they did in 2017. However, through six games, it is Blough who has taken the controls of the Boilermaker offense.

Sindelar started the season against Northwestern but was promptly benched at halftime after throwing three first-half interceptions. Blough's comeback attempt came up just short against the Wildcats, and despite his performance, Sindelar was named the starter for the week-two loss to Eastern Michigan.

After suffering a minor injury in the loss to the Eagles, Sindelar has not recorded a stat. Blough has taken over and completed 68.4 percent of his passes for 1,695 and 10 touchdowns to just two interceptions through six games. He threw for a program-record 572 yards in the 40-37 loss to Missouri and, despite only starting three games, was third in the Big Ten through five games in passing yards per game, averaging 263.6.

Sindelar is now healthy and expected to back up Blough when the Buckeyes travel to West Lafayette, Ind. With Blough firmly entrenched as the starting quarterback, Brohm said he is pleased with the way the Boilermaker offense has been operating.

"David definitely has taken the reins and ran with it," Brohm said. "And his ability

Get To Know ... Purdue

About Purdue

- **2018 Record:** 3-3 (2-1 Big Ten).
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Multiple; Defensive Formation – Multiple; Starters Returning – Offense 13, Defense 4, Specialists 3.
- **Head Coach:** Jeff Brohm, sixth season, 40-19 (second at Purdue, 10-9).
- **Series History:** 57th meeting, Ohio State leads, 40-14-2.
- **School Facts:** Location – West Lafayette, Ind.; Enrollment – 39,409; Nickname – Boilermakers; Colors – Old Gold & Black; Conference – Big Ten (West Division); Stadium – Ross-Ade Stadium (Surface, Bermuda Grass; Capacity, 57,236).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
D.J. Knox	87	540	6.2	5	45
Markell Jones	50	296	5.9	2	32
Rondale Moore	9	139	15.4	1	76

Passing	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
David Blough	128-187	68.4	1,695	10-2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Rondale Moore	45	558	12.4	5	70
Isaac Zico	20	399	20.0	2	50
Jared Sparks	20	178	8.9	0	19

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 33.5
Rushing Yards Per Game – 179.3
Passing Yards Per Game – 330.8
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 510.2

2018 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)
Aug. 30	NORTHWESTERN	L, 31-27
Sept. 8	EASTERN MICHIGAN	L, 20-19
Sept. 15	MISSOURI	L, 40-37
Sept. 22	BOSTON COLLEGE	W, 30-13
Sept. 29	at Nebraska	W, 42-28
Oct. 13	at Illinois	W, 46-7
Oct. 20	OHIO STATE	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 27	at Michigan State	TBA
Nov. 3	IOWA	TBA
Nov. 10	at Minnesota	TBA
Nov. 17	WISCONSIN	TBA
Nov. 24	at Indiana	TBA

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Jacob Thieneman	29	16	45	4.5-30	3.0-28
Markus Bailey	30	13	43	5.5-20	3.5-16
Derrick Barnes	27	15	42	4.0-32	3.0-29
Navon Mosley	21	19	40	–	–
Cornel Jones	24	16	40	11.0-33	3.5-18
Antonio Blackmon	27	6	33	1.0-3	–

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Kenneth Major	3	11	3.7	0	10
Kai Higgins	2	2	1.0	0	2

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 23.2
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 146.8
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 267.5
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 414.3

to be aggressive up the field but yet sometimes pull it down and get his first downs when it's not there has definitely helped our offense."

Player To Watch

Offensively, there might not be a more electric freshman in the country than Purdue wide receiver Rondale Moore.

A one-time OSU recruit, Moore has been filling up the stat sheet since his first collegiate game against Northwestern. In that game, he caught 11 passes for 109 yards and a score while also carrying the ball twice for 79 yards and another score.

Through just six games, Moore ranked second in the Big Ten in receiving yards with 558 and second in yards per game (93.0). He

was first in the conference and third nationally in all-purpose yardage, accumulating 167.8 total yards per game through six contests while also serving as a kick and punt returner for the Boilermakers.

His play-making ability is not lost on Brohm, who said he has to make sure he and his coaching staff don't ask too much of him at times.

"I knew he could be a special player. We want to make sure we don't give him too much. I think he performed outstanding the first half," Brohm said of Moore's collegiate debut. "Second half we couldn't get him the ball as much. We'll continue to utilize him. At the same time, we have to make sure we utilize the others. He definitely showed what he can do on the playing field."

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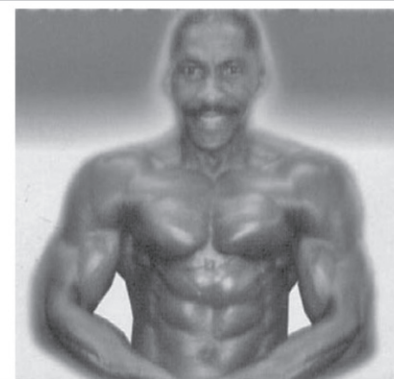
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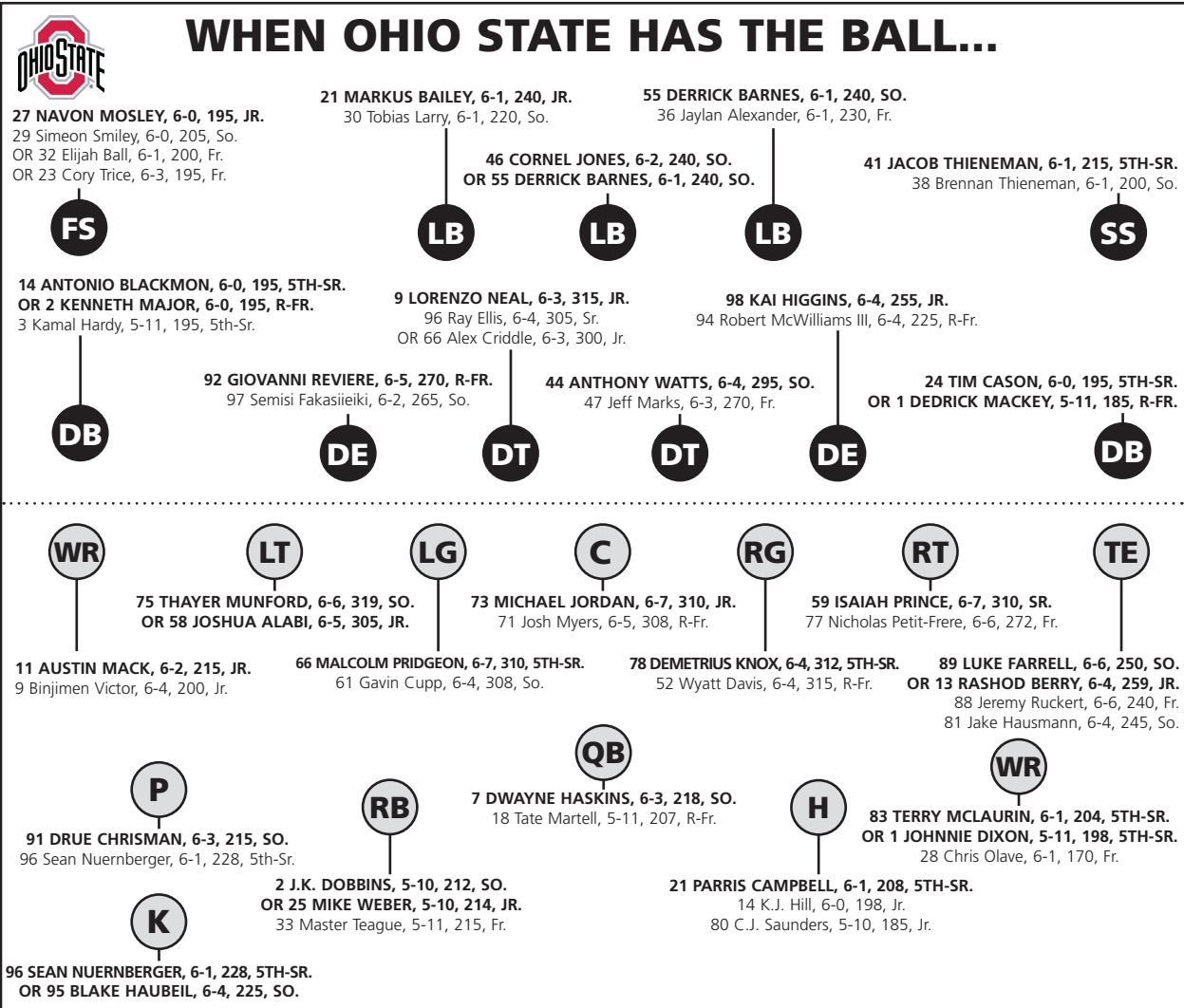


Ohio State vs. Purdue

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Projected Depth Charts



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. PURDUE RUSH DEFENSE

It probably hasn't been mentioned at all by any medium, certainly not on Twitter, so let it be known right here that Ohio State has trouble running the ball. A 3.2 yards per carry average in the sixth game against Indiana might have been an aberration with J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber as your ball carriers, but 92 net yards for a 2.9 average against the Golden Gophers of Minnesota on Oct. 13 is downright alarming. Weber had 51 yards on 13 carries (3.9) and Dobbins 35 on 10 (3.5). Quarterback Dwayne Haskins was a drain on the total. With his three sacks included, he gained a net of 6 yards on nine carries (0.7). For the season the Buckeyes rank seventh in the Big Ten (all games) with 185.4 yards per game. Purdue is sixth in rush defense (146.8) but limited Illinois to 69 yards on the ground in the 46-7 win on Oct. 13 after the Illini had run for at least 212 yards in each of their first five games. Teams are daring OSU to run and having success at stopping the Buckeyes. **EDGE: PURDUE**

PURDUE RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Boilermakers are a notch behind the Buckeyes at eighth in the conference with 179.3 yards per game. D.J. Knox is fourth in the Big Ten in yards with 540 in six games (90.0). He has five rushing touchdowns and averages 6.2 yards every time he totes the ball, including a long of 45 yards. Knox had 150 yards and an 8.8 average vs. Illinois. Ohio State is seventh in rush defense (221.6) and was pelted by Minnesota's Mohamed Ibrahim for 157 yards. The OSU defense, especially the line, has been inundated with injuries, but the touted depth and talent is lacking. **EDGE: EVEN**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. PURDUE PASS DEFENSE

This should be no contest. Haskins is tearing it up with 28 TDs, 2,331 yards, a 72.3 percent completion rate and 333.0 yards per game. He's 33 of 44 in each of his past two games and thrown for a total of 867 yards in them. K.J. Hill had a career-best 187 yards and two scores vs. the Gophers, and Parris Campbell has seven TDs and gets 13.0 yards a catch. The Boilermakers are 11th in the Big Ten, yielding 267.5 passing yards a game. So, why are OSU fans nervous? Haskins was sacked three times and flushed from the pocket a few more. Purdue had four sacks against Illinois, for what it's worth against a bad team. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

PURDUE PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

The numbers say OSU has the seventh-best pass defense in the Big Ten (221.6). It only seems worse because the Buckeyes have more leaks than a 4-year-old garden hose. They let Gophers true freshman Zack Annexstad pass for 218 yards, although he was picked off twice. Purdue quarterback David Blough is second to Haskins in yards per game (282.5) with 10 TDs and two interceptions. He threw for 377 yards, tossed three touchdowns and caught a TD off a double reverse against Illinois. Isaac Zico and Rondale Moore combined for 228 yards on nine catches as Purdue accumulated 611 total yards. **EDGE: PURDUE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

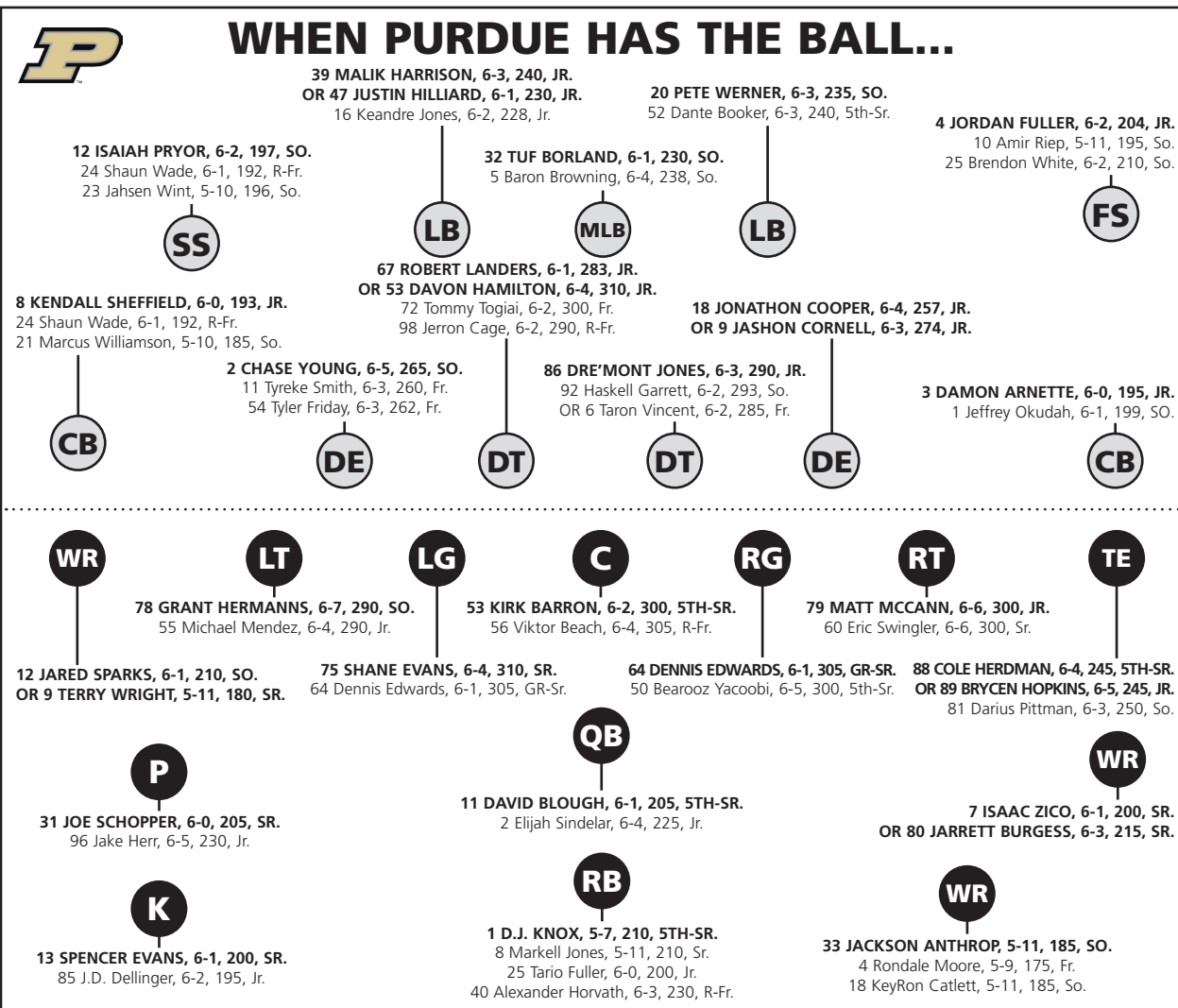
Kudos to Blake Haubeil for being a last-minute replacement for the injured Sean Nuernberger. The Buckeyes' kicking game is in good hands (Feet? Foot?) with the sophomore, who went 3 for 3, including a 47-yarder, in his first three collegiate attempts. Purdue's Spencer Evans (not to be confused with former Buckeye receiver Evan Spencer) is 11 for 14 (78.6 percent) with a long of 38 yards. In the past game he had an extra point blocked, and another failed because of a bad snap. Drue Chrisman continues to nail his punts for the Buckeyes (44.5); Purdue's Joe Schopper averages 42.4 a punt. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

There is something to be said for college kids playing with confidence. Purdue (3-3, 2-1 Big Ten) isn't as good as Ohio State (7-0, 4-0) but has won three straight and will be fed tales of past victories over better OSU teams in Ross-Ade Stadium. The Boilermakers are coming off a win in which they scored their most road points since 2007 (52 at Toledo) and their highest Big Ten away total since a 56-21 win at Northwestern in 1998. **EDGE: PURDUE**

PREDICTION

For all their faults (poor running, porous pass defense, failing short-yardage plays, excessive penalties) the Buckeyes have more playmakers than Purdue on both sides of the ball. Haskins will have to be monstrous again and the defense needs to show up in the first half, not just when (to the coaches' credit) adjustments are made at halftime. Ohio State must take the prime-time crowd out of the game as quickly as possible and not let the Boilermakers think they can win. Going to West Lafayette, Ind., was always going to be a challenge, but remember this: Purdue has not beaten a top-five team since 1999 and a top-two team since defeating the second-ranked Buckeyes 28-23 on Oct. 6, 1984. **OHIO STATE 42, PURDUE 30**



OSU Offense Flying High In Season's 1st Half

By JAMES GREGA
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Since Ohio State's national title season in 2014, the Buckeye offense had become the side of the football that has been criticized the most. Needless to say, that script has flipped in 2018.

Led by quarterback and Heisman Trophy contender Dwayne Haskins, Ohio State averaged 565.7 yards per game through six weeks, which was good for fifth in the nation. The Buckeyes also averaged 49.0 points per game through the first half of the season, which was also good for fifth in the country.

Ohio State wasn't without some slipups in the first six games, though, showing signs of weakness early in games against TCU and Penn State before coming on late in the second half to win both contests.

Head coach Urban Meyer's squad is lighting up the scoreboard early and often in 2018, and with half of the season gone, it is time for midterm exams.

Quarterback

It is hard to give Haskins anything less than an A with the way he played through the first half of the season.

He put himself in the middle of the Heisman race by throwing for 1,919 yards, completing 71.7 percent of his passes and throwing 25 touchdowns to just four interceptions in six games. He was also just 10 touchdown passes away from breaking the school record for touchdown passes in a single season, a record that was set just last year by J.T. Barrett (35).

Despite all of the hype, Haskins said he is focused on simply improving each week, although he did acknowledge he is aware of the national attention.

"I am aware of it, but it is not my main focus right now," Haskins said. "My main focus is getting better every day so I can be in that conversation for the rest of the season. Right now, I am just focused on getting better every day."

If Haskins continues to improve, that could be a scary sight for opposing defenses. The third-year sophomore gunslinger ranked through six games in the top 10 nationally in completion percentage (seventh), touchdown passes (first), passing yards per game (seventh), yards per attempt (10th) and total completions (sixth). That kind of production is something that Ohio State hasn't had at the quarterback position, perhaps ever, and the Buckeye offense is reaping the benefits.

He has even impressed Ohio State defensive backs coach Taver Johnson to the point where Johnson said you can hear Haskins' ball whistle through the air because he throws such a tight spiral.

"Man, I tell you what," Johnson said. "The way the ball comes off his hand. He throws a ball that's on the money. You can hear it spiraling through. The kid is special that way. He and (offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan) Day, they got some potion in there that they probably drink before practice and games or something. He does a really good job of reading it also. It seems like he can do a really good job of reading what he's going to get and being able to react."

It hasn't been just Haskins who has looked good for Ohio State behind center, howev-

er. In limited reps, redshirt freshman Tate Martell has impressed as well.

In three appearances, Martell had completed 23 of 28 passes for 269 yards and a touchdown, adding 18 carries for 121 yards and two scores on the ground, mostly in mop-up duty. He earned Big Ten co-freshman of the week honors after his performance against Rutgers in which he completed all 10 of his pass attempts for 121 yards and a touchdown to Terry McLaurin while also scampering for 95 yards on eight attempts with another

score.

Put these two together and you have a hard time finding a better quarterback unit in the Big Ten, so they start us off with top marks.

BSB Midterm Grade: A+

Running Backs

Through the first three weeks of the season, Ohio State's running backs might have graded out as an A, but ever since, the production has dropped tremendously.

Through the first five games of the season, the Buckeyes' production on the ground decreased each week. Against Oregon State, Ohio State rushed for 375 yards, with Mike Weber finding the end zone four times, three of which came on the ground. A week later against Rutgers, Ohio State compiled 225 yards rushing in a 52-3 win. Against TCU, that number dipped again to 182 and despite blowing out Tulane 49-6, Ohio State mustered just 151 yards on 38 attempts. The Buckeyes then hit a season-low in rushing yards against Penn State when they tallied just 119 yards on 37 attempts in a 27-26 win.

Despite rushing for more yardage (154) in its sixth game, a 49-26 win over Indiana, the Buckeyes recorded a season-low in yards per carry, averaging just 3.2.

The good news for Ohio State is that the running backs don't appear to be the problem in the running game. The offensive line play on run plays may not be what it should be.

Both J.K. Dobbins and Weber have shown explosiveness throughout the season. Weber rushed for a career-high 186 yards and three scores against Oregon State, and just two weeks later, Dobbins responded with his best

game of the season, a 121-yard performance against TCU, helping Ohio State salt the game away late in the fourth quarter.

Dobbins also stood out in the win over Penn State, but in the passing game, catching a pair of screens for 61 yards and a score, both resulting in arguably the biggest plays of the game outside of Binjimen Victor's touchdown.

All-in-all, this group performed admirably in the season's first half considering what they have had to work with, but the explosive fans are used to seeing, particularly from Dobbins, hasn't shown much this season, resulting in the B grade.

BSB Midterm Grade: B

Offensive Line

Perhaps the most unique position group on the Ohio State offense is the front five, a group that has experienced some of the highest highs, while also struggling mightily at times to create any space up front.

Granted, part of the struggles in the running game have to do with defenses not having to account for a running quarterback. However, that isn't an excuse for Ohio State and Meyer, who has said that the Buckeyes need to improve in the running game.

"This week we didn't play particularly well," Meyer said Oct. 8 following the win over Indiana. "So we have to get back to - I think protection was very good. We've got to get back to the word 'balance.' We've been saying that, and we're going to work again this week at that."

Through six games, Ohio State averaged 364.7 passing yards and 201.0 rushing yards per game. Meyer has said in the past that ideally, the Buckeyes want to average 250 yards in each category to maintain a balanced attack, but that has not been the case this season.

Ohio State's 119 rushing yards against Penn State on Sept. 29 were the least the Buckeyes have compiled since dropping a 31-0 contest to Clemson in the College Football Playoff semifinals in 2016. In that game, Ohio State managed just 88 yards on 23 attempts.

While the rushing attack hasn't been as effective, the Buckeyes have been superb in pass protection.

Through six games, Ohio State attempted 226 passes, which was tied for second most in the Big Ten behind only Northwestern (227). Despite the numerous drop-backs, Ohio State surrendered only eight sacks through the first half of the year, also tying for second-best

Rating The Offense

Here is where the OSU offense ranked among the Big Ten and nationally (statistics through the Indiana game).

Category	Stats	NCAA	Big Ten
Rushing Offense	201.0	41st	5th
Passing Offense	364.7	3rd	1st
Total Offense	565.7	5th	1st
Scoring Offense	49.0	5th	2nd
Turnovers Lost	6	T-25th	T-5th
Third Down Con.	.500	T-13th	1st

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MIDTERM EXAMS: OFFENSE

in the conference behind only Iowa, which allowed just five in as many games. For reference, Iowa attempted only 146 passes in those five games.

The rushing attack needs to improve, with or without a running quarterback, and that is on the offensive line. However, the pass protection has been consistent throughout the season for Ohio State, and that rounds out to a slightly above average grade for the Buckeye front five.

BSB Midterm Grade: B-

Tight Ends

It is hard to go against Meyer when he grades a position group, but it's necessary in this case.

Meyer graded his tight ends at a solid B on Oct. 10, just days after Ohio State hit the midway point of the season, but when it comes to production, we haven't seen much from this unit.

Three Buckeye tight ends combined for just five receptions through six games and while they have performed admirably in the run game, the receiving portion of their game has left much to be desired.

Rashod Berry let a pass go off his hands in a crucial moment of the win against Penn

State, leading to a Nittany Lion interception. Berry, who is entering his second full season as a primary contributor, has just one catch in six games this season – although it did go for a touchdown.

The leader of the group right now appears to be Luke Farrell, who tallied three catches for 32 yards and a score in the first six games of the year. He said that while he knows the Buckeye tight ends have to improve in the passing game, blocking is the first priority and he believes his unit is performing well.

"Guys have to always prove themselves, blocking first, which we've been doing pretty well," Farrell said Oct. 10. "Just cleaning stuff up, keep improving when we run our routes and do other things."

One player who has been turning heads is freshman Jeremy Ruckert, who came to Columbus as the second-ranked tight end in the 2018 recruiting class, according to the 247Sports composite.

Ruckert has just one catch for 13 yards this season but has seen increased playing time as the year has progressed. He made a crucial block on Dobbins' first touchdown in the win over Penn State and played 10 snaps against Indiana, the most in a game that didn't include mop-up duty. Meyer credited co-of-

fensive coordinator Kevin Wilson and special assistant to the head coach and former tight ends coach Tim Hinton for Ruckert's development and hinted that the freshman could see more playing time as the season goes on.

BSB Midterm Grade: C+

Wide Receivers

A year ago, the wide receiver unit was one of the most criticized position groups on the team. This year, they have become a team strength.

Whether it's the emergence of Haskins or veteran savvy, the Ohio State wide receivers are hitting on all cylinders halfway through the season.

Three Buckeyes were in the top 15 in the Big Ten in receptions as Parris Campbell ranked third (35 catches), K.J. Hill ranked fifth (31 catches) and Austin Mack ranked 11th (23 catches) through six games. Campbell led the league in receiving touchdowns with seven and was tied for sixth nationally in the same category.

Not only that, but the Buckeyes continue to boast one of the deepest units in the nation, with five different receivers grabbing double-digit passes in the first six games while six different wide receivers found the end zone.

In addition to their pass catching, the Buckeyes have proved an elite ability to block on the edge, an area that is led by Terry McLaurin, who was named player of the game against Penn State for his blocking efforts while not catching a single pass in the win.

The lone downside perhaps for the unit has been a handful of dropped passes, specifically from Mack in the win over TCU in which he dropped four in the 40-28 victory. The first half against Penn State also had a few drops, including an uncharacteristic one from Hill.

All in all, the first half of the 2018 season has been a success for the Ohio State wide receivers, led by new position coach Brian Hartline, who is filling in on an interim basis for the fired Zach Smith.

When asked about Hartline's performance as the wide receivers coach through the first half of the season, Meyer praised the former Buckeye star and added "he sure could" be a full-time staff member sometime down the line.

"He's been great," Meyer said of Hartline. "He's learning on the run still, doing some great things. And one thing about our job, it's very valuation-friendly. They're playing very well."

BSB Midterm Grade: A-



JOSH WINSLOW

TOP TARGET – Fifth-year senior Parris Campbell (21) led Ohio State in catches (35), receiving yards (501) and touchdowns (7) in the first six games.

Defense Has Room To Improve After Uneven Start

By TIM MOODY
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

After Ohio State beat Rutgers, 52-3, in week two, it seemed like the 31 points allowed against Oregon State in the season opener might have been an anomaly. A month later, it was clear that the opposite was likely true.

Through the first half of the season, the Buckeyes were allowing 365.2 yards per game (56th nationally and eighth in the Big Ten) and had already given up a pair of 93-yard touchdowns – one through the air and one on the ground – amid a plethora of big plays. The pass defense was ranked 60th nationally (222.2 yards per game), and the rush defense was 53rd (143.0), with both marks good for eighth in the conference.

The positive was that Ohio State was getting to the opposing quarterback 3.7 times per game – the fourth-best mark in the nation – and had gotten opponents off the field on third down nearly 70 percent of the time, ranking in the top 20 nationally and first in the Big Ten in those two categories. Ohio State had also limited opponents to 20.0 points per game – not a perfect mark, but it was 29th in the nation and fourth in the conference.

“We’re not coaching well enough and we’re not playing well enough right now for the standards of Ohio State defense,” coordinator Greg Schiano said after the Indiana game. “There’s a lot of things that go into that, but it’s our job to fix it, and that’s what’s going to happen – we’ll fix it.”



SONNY BROCKWAY

OUT FOR NOW – Nick Bosa (97), Ohio State’s top defensive player, hasn’t returned to the field since suffering a week-three injury against TCU.

Overall, the defense’s biggest problem was inconsistency, especially when it came to giving up big plays. Poor angles and blown coverages on the back end happened too often, leading to midterm marks that suggest the defense needed a few extra study hall sessions.

In fact, through six games, junior defensive tackle Dre’Mont Jones had given the defense a just-above-average overall grade himself.

“B-minus,” Jones said after the Indiana game, “maybe C-plus.”

What follows is BSB’s first-half assessment of the defense, including midterm grades for each unit.

Defensive Line

When the season began, the defensive line was far and away Ohio State’s best position group. Led by All-American Nick Bosa, the Rushmen lived up to that billing in the first

few weeks, getting after opposing quarterbacks at an alarming rate.

Then, in the third quarter of the TCU game Sept. 15, Bosa suffered a core muscle injury, and he hasn’t seen the field since. With Bosa out, though, the defensive line was largely dominant through the first half of the season anyway, until a quiet game against Indiana on Homecoming, that is.

Through six games, Bosa was still third on the team with six tackles for loss and tied for second with four sacks. Jones was first in both categories (7½ TFL, 4½ sacks), showcasing his talent as a likely first-round pick in the 2019 draft. Sophomore Chase Young, who took over Bosa’s starting spot, had seven tackles for loss and four sacks, including three TFL and two sacks in a dominant performance at Penn State on Sept. 29. Without the play of Young that day, there’s no guarantee the Buckeyes would have escaped Happy Valley with a 27-26 victory.

The depth has still been there, too, despite a couple of injury concerns for Jones and fellow starting defensive tackle Robert Landers, who missed the Tulane game and was limited against Penn State. Junior defensive tackle Davon Hamilton (six tackles, 1½ TFL) has been a breakout performer, while junior ends Jonathon Cooper and freshmen Tyreke Smith and Tyler Friday have flashed at times as well. Junior end Jashon Cornell is, perhaps, the one member of the rotation who needs to step up.

Overall, Hamilton was proud of how the line had played through six games.

“We’re performing well, especially with people going down and the fact that we have

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MIDTERM EXAMS: DEFENSE

a lot of people stepping up for the first time – freshman defensive linemen stepping up, it's new for them," Hamilton said. "I'm proud of how they've adjusted."

Along with Smith and Friday, freshman defensive tackles Tommy Togiai and Taron Vincent have made an impact as well. If those players continue to develop, along with sophomore tackle Haskell Garrett, Ohio State should be able to continue overcoming injury concerns and have a big second half of the season up front.

The grade would have been a perfect A if not for a below-par performance against Indiana.

BSB Midterm Grade: A-

Linebackers

More often than not, when the defense is struggling, the linebackers take the blame. That's just the nature of the beast at Ohio State.

This year, though, at least through six games, that probably isn't fair. To start the season, the starting trio was junior Malik Harrison, sophomore Baron Browning and sophomore Pete Werner. As his health improved after an offseason Achilles injury, sophomore Tuf Borland replaced Browning in the middle, and although they have missed a few tackles at times, the linebackers have been performing at a generally high level.

Perhaps the standout of the group has been Harrison, a first-year starter who was second on the team through six games with 25 total tackles. He's shown the ability to drop back in coverage, stop the run and rush the passer. Borland, for his part, is a step slower than the outside 'backers, but he's come up big with a pair of forced fumbles, 3½ TFL and two sacks. Werner looks like a rising star, and he had 18 tackles, three TFL and two sacks with one forced fumble through six games.

Schiano was asked three games into the season how the linebackers were playing – they had received plenty of flak from the fans and the media at that point – and he was overall pleased with the group.

"The linebackers, I think, we're not perfect by any means," Schiano said. "But I think (they are) really playing much more assignment-sound football than we were even in training camp. I think they're getting better and better."

Borland's return to health has certainly been a boost for the unit, and it has allowed Browning to play in spot situations while he continues to develop. Harrison and Werner are on the field most of the time, and both have seemed to improve week to week.

There have been missed tackles, and there have been bad angles for the linebackers, too. They're not blameless in the defensive struggles, but they've certainly received more than their fair share halfway through the season.

For that, the linebackers get a solid grade, with plenty of room to improve.

BSB Midterm Grade: B

Safeties

Perhaps more than any other spot on the team, safety play has been a concern for the Buckeyes – at least on one side of the equation.

In the season opener, junior Jordan Fuller, a team captain, was held on the sidelines with a hamstring issue, giving sophomores Isaiah Pryor and Jahsen Wint the first starts of their careers. The young safeties struggled, especially when it came to getting players to the ground if the front seven failed to make a stop.

Fuller returned in week two, and he has been excellent, leading the team with 27 total tackles through six games. Pryor earned the starting spot opposite him, and while he has taken a couple of bad angles leading to big

plays, he has improved on a weekly basis.

The issues were apparent again against Indiana in week six, though, as Pryor was held out for the first half after being called for targeting in the second half against Penn State. Wint got the start against the Hoosiers and struggled before eventually being replaced by redshirt freshman cornerback Shaun Wade, who had been practicing with the safeties but had been playing nickel back in games. Sophomore Amir Riep got some reps with the first-team defense against the Hoosiers as well.

Going forward, Ohio State could utilize Wade at safety more often, and that could be a boost for the defense.

"Probably experience was the biggest thing," Schiano said when asked about starting Wint instead of Wade against the Hoosiers. "Shaun came in and did fine, and Shaun's trajectory is going like this (up). He's doing well at the nickel position, and I think he'll grow in the safety position. It's only been a couple of weeks now, so he's accelerating quickly."

Through six games, Wint was second among the safeties and third on the team with 23 total tackles, but having two of the top three tacklers on the roster be safeties isn't ideal for Ohio State. Pryor had 18 total tackles as well.

Tackling in one-on-one situations on the back end had been a problem, though, especially for Wint, and the safeties hadn't produced any turnovers other than one fumble recovery by Fuller on a Borland forced fumble. Wade did have one interception, but that came while playing nickel, not safety.

Overall, the safeties have to receive a low mark, but that does seem a bit unfair for Fuller, who has excelled, so BSB is handing out an individual grade as well.

BSB Midterm Grade: D

Jordan Fuller's Midterm Grade: B+

Cornerbacks

Ohio State's cornerbacks haven't been terrible, but they haven't been at the level many

have come to expect in Columbus in recent seasons. They haven't made many plays on the ball, and they've been beaten downfield too often.

Position coach Taver Johnson said as much, at least.

"I don't think any of us are (happy with how the corners have played)," he said Oct.

9. "Because we've had our share of balls when we've been in position, we've had our share where we have been in position and have gotten some DPIs (defensive pass interference). That's out of our control.

"And then in some other situations we weren't (in position), so I think we're all understanding we've

got to get a lot better. We're working at it. And our guys will."

The starting cornerbacks have been juniors Damon Arnette and Kendall Sheffield. Arnette has struggled with penalty calls, and Sheffield has been solid, but not outstanding.

Rotation player Jeffrey Okudah, a sophomore, has flashed at times in addition to being one of Ohio State's best players on special teams. Through six games, though, Sheffield was the only one of the three with an interception, while Wade had a pick at nickel.

Ohio State employs a press-man look, and that has been exploited at times by opponents who have won 50-50 battles in the air against the cornerbacks.

Arnette said he expects the tide to turn for the cornerbacks, noting that Ohio State hasn't been beaten too often – the corners have just struggled to win the battles in the air.

"I see it as there's just certain things in practice that we have been practicing on that – just making the play on the ball – because dudes are not just outright beating us like that, it's just the ability to go in the air and make a play on the ball and that's just something that we've been emphasizing during practice the past two weeks," he said. "So I feel like there's going to be a difference in the play when it comes to making a play on the ball."

If those adjustments are made, then the Buckeye corners could be in for a high grade on their final exams. For now, though, they've proved that there's a lot of room to grow.

BSB Midterm Grade: C+

Rating The Defense

Here is where the OSU defense ranked among the Big Ten and nationally (statistics through the Indiana game).

Category	Stats	NCAA	Big Ten
Rushing Defense	143.0	53rd	8th
Passing Defense	222.2	60th	8th
Total Defense	365.2	56th	8th
Scoring Defense	20.0	29th	4th
Sacks/Game	3.7	4th	1st
Third-Down Def.	.303	17th	1st

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Ohio State Special Units Solid, Not Yet Spectacular

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Despite an offseason rule change from the NCAA and head coach Urban Meyer's temporary absence as he served his three-game suspension to start the season, Ohio State's special teams unit has adapted accordingly, turning in a solid start through the first half of the year.

At times during the 2017 campaign, the special teams unit was OSU's weakest among the three phases of football. While the various parts of it have been by no means perfect, Ohio State's top-15 tilts Sept. 15 against TCU and Sept. 29 at Penn State involved game-changing plays on special teams that allowed the Buckeyes to overcome slow starts and remain undefeated.

OSU passed what figures to be the hardest part of its regular-season slate with critical plays helping catapult the team to the second half. However, keeping the big picture of the College Football Playoff in perspective, the same consistency needs to remain while certain areas on special teams still need to get going.

What follows is an evaluation by BSB on each aspect of special teams, with a corresponding midterm grade for the first six games of the season.

Kicking Game

With the way Ohio State approaches kickoffs, no one knew what to expect when the NCAA installed its new rule for returns, starting possessions at the 25-yard line if a fair catch is signaled or a knee is taken.

Six games in, nothing much has changed for the Buckeyes. Meyer's philosophy of directing kicks between the left hash and the numbers between the 10 and the 5 remains.

After kickoff specialist Blake Haubeil ended his freshman season in 2017 with momentum, the consistency continued into a sophomore campaign in which he had 50 kickoffs for 285 yards (57.2 average) with 23 touchbacks in the first six games. The

positive results, however, go beyond just Haubeil.

With per-kick averages of 41.9 net yards and 3.7 yards allowed, OSU's kickoff coverage team ranked second in the Big Ten behind Rutgers (42.2 net yards) and Wisconsin (3.2 yards allowed) for each category. From true freshmen to seasoned veterans, the credit is widespread for lane discipline and pursuit in addition to Haubeil's accuracy.

The stability from Haubeil on kickoffs has allowed Sean Nuernberger to stay focused on extra points and field goals, where the fifth-year senior has turned in mixed results. At the rate Ohio State's offense scores, Nuernberger kept busy on point-after attempts, going 39 for 39 on splitting the uprights in the first half, extending his streak without a miss to 216.

When the Buckeyes have needed Nuernberger to tack on three points, though, his 60-percent clip tells the story of some inconsistencies. The sample size – 3 for 5 – was small, but the pair of misses came in critical spots of OSU's two biggest games.

Nuernberger went 2 for 3, and Ohio State overcame TCU for its 40-28 triumph in week three. That included attempts from 20 and 30 yards out to put points on the board and keep the Buckeyes in contention with the Horned Frogs after opening-half drives stalled. But when he went out for his 38-yard attempt with two seconds left in the second quarter, Nuernberger missed and OSU trailed 14-13 at halftime.

In week five at Penn State, Nuernberger whiffed with even bigger stakes. Of course, a 48-yard attempt before Beaver Stadium's record crowd of 110,889 is no easy task, but his second miss of the season came at a point when Ohio State could have extended its 14-13 lead in the third quarter if not for the wide-right push.

For his career through week six,

Nuernberger was 72.0 percent (36 of 50) on field goals. Extra points are a given, as they should be, but another shot for three in another big game could alter the Buckeyes' season for better or worse.

BSB Midterm Grade: B

Punting Game

Through the first four weeks, Drue Chrisman's role took a bit of a backseat as OSU's offense lit up opposing defenses for 54.5 points per game. But when Ohio State stalled at PSU, a game in which field position figured to be a key component, the sophomore punter rose to the occasion.

In the Buckeyes' 27-26 triumph against Penn State, Chrisman was the savior of sorts with the way he flipped the field. His

nine punts totaled 431 yards (47.9 average) with a long of 58 and three inside the 20. Those efforts to win the field-position battle were especially critical in the first half as the Nittany Lions dominated total yardage 293-93 but led only 13-7 at halftime.

"I could go on for the next hour and a half and talk about special teams because that was significant as anything, especially the punt – our punt coverage," Meyer said Oct. 1. "That's elite right now."

Chrisman earned the Ray Guy Award's weekly honor as the nation's top punter. In the first half of the season, his numbers – third in the Big Ten with 24 punts for 1,065 yards (44.4 average) and a long of 65 – are excellent. At the same time, though, Chrisman made sure to give credit where it is due with sophomore cornerback Jeffrey Okudah and fifth-year senior wide receiver Terry McLaurin highlighting the unit's coverage success as gunners on the outside.

"I fully believe we have the best punt team in America," Chrisman said Sept. 26. "Not just me, but our gunners, our long snapper, (junior) Liam (McCullough), our protec-

tion. We have the best gunners in America. I just put it out there. I know they're going to be giving him a fair catch. I have no doubt in my mind."

BSB Midterm Grade: A

Return Game

Fifth-year senior receiver Parris Campbell and junior running back Mike Weber are no longer back deep on kick return as they were in 2017, but Ohio State has shuffled several players in and out as the Buckeyes tinkered with ways to make an impact on the final aspect of special teams. The season started with sophomore H-back Demario McCall and junior wide receiver C.J. Saunders, but Saunders and fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon have mostly taken over since.

OSU's switch from McCall to Dixon on kick returns made an impact against TCU when Dixon, who was recognized by the coaching staff as a special teams player of the game, ripped off a 38-yard gain in the second quarter, which stands as the team's longest of the season. The new rule with fair catches has taken some getting used to, forcing Ohio State to alter its philosophy.

"I want to return everything, but it sucks," Dixon said Oct. 11. "I want to return everything, but right now – sometimes it's like, if you back up a little bit, you just have to fair catch it. Last week (Oct. 6 against Indiana), I kind of backed up a little bit but I still took it. One week C.J. came to stop me because I acted like I didn't hear him. But that rule is crazy. It's kind of helpful, I guess, at times (with safety)."

Dixon explained the coaching staff's message to kick returners. Dixon and Saunders set up with their feet on the 3-yard line, but if the kickoff goes deep enough where it forces them to take a step back, they are cautioned to either take a fair catch or take a knee.

Still, Dixon managed to lead the team with five attempts for 118 yards (23.6 average) through six games. McCall flashed with two tries for 52 yards and a long of 31, but Saunders remains the second option for OSU despite a long of only 14 after tallying 24 yards on two returns.

As for punt return, the revolving door started with McCall and Saunders before junior receiver K.J. Hill claimed the role since the Penn State game. Each player registered a return of 15 yards or more in the first half of the year, but Hill's hands appear to have edged either of the others' game-breaking ability.

McCall managed three attempts for 32 yards, highlighted by a long of 26, while Saunders took eight tries for 50 yards and a long of 20, but early muffs from both eventually led Meyer to make the switch to Hill when Ohio State went to Happy Valley.

"That's competition every week," Meyer said Sept. 18. "We've decided it's just until someone takes it, that's where it is. It's still an open competition."

Hill had attempted four returns for 18 yards, taking a long of 17 yards, since resuming the role he held throughout his sophomore campaign in 2017. The overall aspect of the return game has been underwhelming, but neither of the three Buckeyes back to return have hindered OSU from winning with game-altering mistakes.

Combined with kickoff return, punt return's bottom line leads to a grade slightly above average.

BSB Midterm Grade: C+

Rating The Specialists

Here is where the OSU specialists ranked among the Big Ten and nationally (statistics through the Indiana game).

Category	Stats	NCAA	Big Ten
Net Punting	43.75	3rd	1st
Punt Return Avg.	6.67	91st	10th
KO Return Avg.	21.56	59th	8th
Punt Return Def.	2.50	T-15th	3rd
KO Return Def.	15.58	9th	2nd

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Milum A Fast Riser In 2021 Recruiting Class

By GARRETT STEPIEN
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As the head coach at Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley, where Timberwolves four-star offensive guard Doug Nester has been committed to Ohio State's recruiting class of 2019 since August 2017, Brad Dingess knows an Ohio State prospect when he sees one.

So when Dingess decided before Spring Valley's 2018 season to slide sophomore Wyatt Milum from tight end to right tackle next to Nester (6-6½, 314) at right guard, he quickly saw his pupil's potential on the offensive line.

Initially done to patch up the Timberwolves' hole on the right side of the trenches without 2019 three-star offensive tackle and Louisville commitment Zach Williamson – the 6-6, 275-pound senior broke his leg as a junior starter at right tackle in 2017 – Milum gained exposure after Dingess simply sent film from one scrimmage to Marshall offensive line coach Greg Adkins.

The offer from the Thundering Herd, whose campus is located seven miles across town, sparked an idea for Dingess, who then forwarded the highlight tape along to other schools. Soon enough, the 6-7 Milum's offer list started to expand.

"He's probably a hair taller than Doug," Dingess told BSB of Milum. "He's not as wide, but he's longer. His pad level that he plays with is just unbelievable. He gets under people. He's great, athletic and moves well. He's not that big – probably 255 right now

– but he's 15 years old. But as far as being physical and athletic and moving, he played tight end last year.

"Because of Williamson not being back yet, we were short a lineman. So the first scrimmage game, we went to him and said, 'Listen, Wyatt – Zach's out. We might need you to move down and play tackle.' We put No. 64 on him and after his first game he had offers from Louisville, West Virginia, Virginia Tech, Penn State and Marshall. After one week, it was like, 'Oh, my God.'"

OSU offensive line coach Greg Studrawa, who has been heavily involved in the recruitment of Nester, was one of the first college mentors Dingess forwarded Milum's clips to.

Before Ohio State's season opener Sept. 1 against Oregon State at Ohio Stadium, Nester had already planned to have Milum tag along. With the prospect visiting, Studrawa and the staff saw the potential for another offer out to Spring Valley after reviewing his film. As Ohio State did with Nester in the spring of 2017 between his March 9 offer and April 15 unofficial visit, it entered the early race for Milum when he arrived on campus.

"The first thing I did after (the Marshall offer) was I took that film (to other schools) and I texted Stud and I said, 'Take a look at this kid,'" Dingess said of Milum. "Doug had already said he was going to take Wyatt up with him. I said, 'He's going to be up there the first game. Let me know what you think.' He said, 'Looks great. Can't wait to meet him.'"

"A lot of times with a young kid, they like to get him in camp or some other stuff like that. But I'm telling you, you watch the film

on him and those first couple of games we've got, it's kind of a no-brainer, really, because he's long. He's a really long kid and he runs well for a kid like that and he's still growing into his body. He might get another inch or two. His dad's a big man, and he's got the genetics."

Milum is the seventh offer among the Buckeyes' handful of targets on the offensive line for the 2021 recruiting class. OSU previously offered Clarkston, Mich., tackle Garrett Dellinger (6-6, 250); Kingsland (Ga.) Camden County tackle Micah Morris (6-3½, 286); Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal tackle Donovan Jackson (6-3½, 305); Richmond (Texas) Foster tackle Reuben Fatheree (6-7, 285); Belleville, Mich., guard Damon Payne (6-4, 255); and Olney (Md.) Good Counsel tackle Landon Tengwall (6-6, 300).

Milum stands out to Dingess because of his athletic ability and a physical frame with length to fill out and plenty of room to still grow.

"Wyatt plays (right tackle in the first game Aug. 24 for Spring Valley's 49-8 win over Wayne, W.Va.) and he goes up with Doug to Ohio State and gets an offer up there, and we look like geniuses," Dingess said with a laugh. "But we're idiots because we started him at tight end to begin. But that's just because he's got great hands. He's got some Division-I offers for baseball, too, because he's left-handed and throws mid-80s. So he is an athlete. But you know how college baseball is vs. college football. Plus, when his rear end

gets bigger, there's not a whole lot of 290-pound pitchers."

In fact, Dingess sees Milum ahead of where Nester was when comparing the two offensive linemen as sophomores.

"Doug played left tackle his freshman year," Dingess said. "In some things, I see that Wyatt's ahead of him as far as more of his pass-setting stuff. Doug's more of a road grader. But as far as his pass setting and all that, Wyatt's taller and longer than Doug was at that age and he does a lot better at that age than Doug does as far as his pass setting and all that stuff. We don't do it a lot, but the thing about Wyatt, as a skill kid, he's played in space a lot more than what Doug had at that point."

As the season progresses, Nester is gearing up for an early graduation and spring enrollment. Before his path takes him across the state border from Huntington to Columbus, he is helping to mold Milum in high school with the possibility of them being reunited as teammates at the next level.

"They're together all the time now," Dingess said of Nester and Milum. "I know Wyatt's not even old enough to drive yet, which is crazy, but he's always in the truck with Doug. Doug played right tackle for us last year, so he's giving him a lot of advice, talking to him about situations. They're always working with combo blocks together and all that stuff, so they've got a really good relationship. They're very similar with just how they are. As a person and the work ethic, they're really good friends."

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2020 5-Star Duo Headlines Huge Visitor Slate

On the surface, Ohio State's midseason matchup with Minnesota on Oct. 13 didn't necessarily expect to draw top targets from all corners of the country. However, priority prospects – particularly in the 2020 recruiting class – flocked to Columbus for the Buckeyes' 30-14 Big Ten win over the Golden Gophers at Ohio Stadium.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

From several commitments in OSU's 2019 class to a pair of five-star targets for 2020, plus other underclassmen in 2021 as well as 2022, a noon kickoff against a middle-of-the-pack conference opponent quickly developed into an enormous recruiting weekend with first-time arrivals and return visitors.

Ohio State still sits on 14 pledges for the current group, which ranks 15th in the country and third in the Big Ten behind Penn State (No. 13 overall, No. 2 conference) and Michigan (No. 8 overall, No. 1 conference), according to the 247Sports composite team rankings. As for the next cycle, the Buckeyes remain near the top with their No. 3 spot as they boast six commits.

To stay in the know on OSU recruiting as the latest unfolds, head to BSB's 24/7, full-service



TIM MOODY

ON CAMPUS – Kelee Ringo, a five-star cornerback prospect in the 2020 class, was one of the top visitors at Ohio State for the Buckeyes' 30-14 win over Minnesota.

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler

Ohio State has an opening at running back in its 2019 recruiting class after Avon, Ind., four-star Sampson James (6-1, 211) flipped to Indiana. How do the Buckeyes approach replacing one of their higher-rated commitments with the available prospects out there?

"That definitely caught a lot of people over there off guard. He was at the game Saturday. Didn't say a word to anybody, apparently, that he was thinking about doing this. All of a sudden, on Sunday, he's gone.

"With the IMG kids, and I almost want to say it's the IMG kid, I think (five-star) Trey Sanders (6-0, 214) is such a long shot. Even if they're able to convince him to take an official visit, I just think that's a massive long shot. (Four-star Noah) Cain's really the guy I think they could get some traction with. They never stopped recruiting him, so I think they can kind of continue business as usual there. Certainly, now, there's going to be a little more urgency there. I think there was a chance they were going to try to fit him in the class anyway. But now, it's like it went from a luxury to a necessity as far as getting another running back. So there's some urgency there. He's going to visit for the Michigan game, so we'll see.

"I compared this to Dwayne Haskins a little bit. A few years ago, it looked like Ohio State was kind of like an early dream school for Haskins. It's more of a dream

school for Cain, but they were kind of a team that was never looked at as maybe a team to beat. And then things just kind of drifted apart and they got involved with some other quarterbacks. And then at the end of the day, it all sort of worked out and it came back to that point. I don't know if we're there yet with Noah Cain (5-10, 212), but he told me (recently) that things have never been better relationship-wise there with Ohio State and now there's an opening. So that's going to be very interesting, I think.

"I think they like this kid from Texas, (Katy four-star) Deondrick Glass (5-11, 200). They've liked him for a while. There's a chance of him possibly visiting late as well. That's the one I think you'll really see urgency pick up on. I think they were like, 'OK, well do we go all in on this kid or not?' I think now the decision is kind of made for them. So I think you're going to see things really pick up there. He's going to visit, he told me, Nov. 3 for the Nebraska game. So that's getting ironed out as we speak.

"And they've reached backed out to Kenny McIntosh (6-0½, 218), the (Fort Lauderdale) Florida University School (four-star running back). So we'll see where that goes. I think, had they been pushing this whole time for him, that was a guy that they would get. They've got a lot of work to do on that one. But communication-wise, they're back open there. That's kind of the rundown."

Is there any chance Ohio State still tries to add a second tight end in the 2019 recruiting class?

"Definitely possible to take two. I don't know that it's a definite. I think that's one of those things that they're going to look at as some other factors, some numbers at other positions. I think – and it's kind of been hinted at to me – that the tight ends and wide receivers numbers can kind of get jumbled together to the point where, if they take an extra receiver, that can take away from taking a second tight end. But if they just decide to go three receivers or something like that, then they would maybe take an extra tight end. So there's some moving parts here that can impact what they do there. But they're definitely looking. They're definitely trying to find someone they really like."

Ohio State offered Toledo Whitmer three-star offensive lineman Caven Butler (6-2½, 285), who committed Aug. 3 to Kentucky, on his unofficial visit Oct. 6 for the Indiana game. What does he do that stands out?

"I have seen him. He's strong. He's got a really good first step. He fits kind of what (defensive line coach) Larry Johnson wants those interior guys to be. I think the No. 1 thing he looks for is that first step, that explosive first step, and they'll figure out the size. He can be a little undersized, a little short. But if you've got that quick get-off, that seems to be what stands out. I think Caven has that."

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Demas, Ringo Headline Visitors

Able to get five-star recruits in 2020 on both sides of the ball to Columbus, Ohio State made serious strides with two targets

from the Southwest when Houston North Forest wide receiver Demond Demas and Scottsdale (Ariz.) Saguaro cornerback Kelee Ringo took unofficial visits to campus over the weekend.

From the same area as two of the six commitments – Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral's four-star duo of quarterback Jack Miller and running back Darvon Hubbard – for the Buckeyes' 2020 class, Ringo's trip to Ohio was his first. He received an offer April 18 from OSU, largely staying local between the flurry of scholarship offers elsewhere throughout the subsequent months. Ringo unofficially visited Arizona State (March 23, Sept. 8) and Arizona (July 28) with an Alabama camp (June 18) in the middle.

After communicating with co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch over the summer, Ringo took to Twitter on Oct. 9 and announced the planned trip to Ohio State for the Minnesota game. After his Oct. 12 arrival to campus, he came back for game day Oct. 13 at the Horseshoe with the Buckeyes' top pledge for 2020 – Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7, 285), walking from the south-east tunnel together and out onto the field in the south end zone to watch OSU go through pregame warmups.

The 6-2, 192-pounder already boasts an offer list with well over 30 options. On top of in-state schools such as Arizona and Arizona State in the mix, Clemson, Florida State, Michigan, Notre Dame, Oregon, Southern California and Washington highlight some of the others involved early on.

Ringo is the 247Sports composite's No. 11 overall prospect, No. 2 cornerback and No. 1 player in Arizona. Current commits Miller (6-4, 210) and Hubbard (6-0, 200) are the state's fourth- and sixth-ranked players, respectively, for 2020.

Committed to Texas A&M since Sept. 8, Demas remained in contact with Ohio State and ultimately made the scheduled trip to see the Buckeyes beat the Golden Gophers. Unlike Ringo, Demas arrived the morning of Oct. 13, flying in from Houston to Columbus with Texas trainer Rischad Whitfield, also known as the "Footwork King."

OSU originally landed in Demas' final five July 30 with the Aggies, Alabama, Georgia, Oklahoma and Texas. He picked Texas

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

30 Years Ago – 1988

One of the most recruited players in Ohio ended up on the home-state school's radar when Franklin quarterback Lance Harp and Ohio State came in contact. The 6-5, 195-pounder had been hearing from the Buckeyes, Miami (Fla.) and South Carolina.

"I'm still very open on my choices," he said. "I just haven't decided yet. I've always been interested in Ohio State, and I like the passing games of South Carolina and Miami. Obviously, I want to go to a school that passes a lot."

OSU had five quarterbacks on the roster – all underclassmen – including sophomores Greg Frey and John Wagoner, which Harp had noted.

"I've thought about that obviously," Harp said, "but it doesn't really bother me. I guess it just doesn't matter that much. I have enough confidence in my ability that I think I could give them a challenge if I went to Ohio State."

25 Years Ago – 1993

Ohio State and Michigan State on Oct. 16 featured the seventh-largest crowd (93,989) in Ohio Stadium history, and three top recruits took in the Buckeyes' 28-21 triumph against the Spartans.

The most prominent guest happened to be Sandusky, Ohio, offensive tackle Orlando Pace (6-8, 300), who made his first trip back to Columbus after he unofficially visited OSU in August. He had Ohio State involved with Michigan, Southern California, Notre Dame and Miami (Fla.) with official visits planned to each.

The other priority prospects in attendance included the wide receiver duo of Springfield (Ohio) South's Dee Miller (6-2, 200) and Lorain (Ohio) Clearview's Duane Todd (6-4, 215). Miller was being compared to Ohio State receivers Joey Galloway and Cris Carter. Among his official visits in mind, Miller had a return trip to Columbus expected while Michigan, Michigan State, Penn State and Notre Dame were also in the mix.

Todd, who was likely to return Oct. 30 when the Buckeyes hosted Penn State, had

been heavily considering OSU, Kentucky and the Nittany Lions.

20 Years Ago – 1998

Rantoul, Ill., offensive lineman Sean Bubin (6-7, 305) headlined Memorial Stadium's visitors Oct. 10 when Ohio State went to Champaign, Ill., and defeated Illinois 41-0.

Bubin was also on the Buckeyes' radar, not yet with an offer, while the Fighting Illini as well as Purdue and Iowa highlighted the other Big Ten programs among his favorites.

"I'm getting letters from Ohio State right now, but I haven't talked to them," Bubin said. "They looked really good in person. I feel I could help a team like that."

15 Years Ago – 2003

Despite an idle Oct. 4 away from the field, Ohio State stayed active on the trail, focusing on Detroit Cass Tech defensive end Vernon Gholston (6-3, 240), the No. 39 strongside defensive end in the country, among others in the recruiting class of 2004. Defensive backs coach Mel Tucker took the trip up north to see Gholston in action, and the priority prospect came away with a visit in mind.

"I'm going to try to get down to the (Oct. 18) Ohio State-Iowa game," Gholston said. "I'll probably make an official visit there."

Gholston was considering the Buckeyes with Michigan, Michigan State, Iowa, Wisconsin and Indiana among his Big Ten crop of favorites.

10 Years Ago – 2008

On hand Oct. 11 for Ohio State's 16-3 win over Purdue, Memphis (Tenn.) Harding Academy five-star wide receiver Marlon Brown (6-5, 205) and Minneapolis Washburn three-star tight end Ra'Shede Hageman (6-6, 255) marked the first official visitors of the season.

Scout.com ranked Brown (No. 4 wide receiver) and Hageman (No. 14 tight end) among the best prospects in the nation for the 2009 recruiting class.

Coldwater, Ohio, linebacker/fullback commit Adam Homan (6-2, 232) also attended

the game at Ohio Stadium and told BSB of what it was like being around the two official visitors.

"Both of those guys are obviously great athletes, but they seemed really down-to-earth and easy to talk to," Homan said. "It would be great if they would be able to come to Ohio State."

Five Years Ago – 2013

Ohio State already had four wide receivers committed in its 2014 recruiting class, but the Buckeyes were keeping another one of their targets warm when they welcomed West Palm Beach (Fla.) Newman's Travis Rudolph for a 31-24 win over Wisconsin on Sept. 28.

Rudolph was considering Ohio State with Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, Louisville, Miami (Fla.), Oregon and Tennessee.

Hosted by Buckeye sophomore wide receiver Michael Thomas, the 6-1, 175-pound Rudolph raved about his experience when he caught up with BSB in the following weeks.

"They made a good impression," Rudolph said of OSU. "I feel like I'm just taking it all in right now. I'm not about to say they're my No. 1 right now because I still have other visits to take."

One Year Ago – 2017

Two weeks before Ohio State battled Penn State on Oct. 28 at Ohio Stadium, the Buckeyes were compiling a strong list of official visitors for what was building up to be the biggest game of the season at the time for both teams.

The growing list included St. Louis Christian Brothers College four-star wide receiver target Kamrynn Babb (6-1, 189); Orlando (Fla.) Jones four-star cornerback commit Sevin Banks (6-1, 180); Fairfield, Ohio, five-star offensive tackle target Jackson Carman (6-6, 330); Cincinnati Winton Woods four-star outside linebacker prospect Chris Oats (6-4, 215); Atlanta Pace Academy five-star offensive guard target Jamaree Salyer (6-4, 342); Cleveland Heights four-star defensive end target Tyreke Smith (6-3, 260); and Seffner (Fla.) Armwood four-star running back commit Brian Snead (5-11, 200).

Continued On Page 28

Indiana Freshman QB Among Visitors To OSU

Continued From Page 27

A&M about six weeks later, but his recruitment continued.

In the subsequent month in the Lone Star State, Demas unofficially visited Austin on Sept. 15 for the Longhorns' 37-14 win over USC and returned to College Station on Oct. 8. He then made the journey north to Ohio State, meeting former Buckeye wide receiver and current New Orleans Saints standout Michael Thomas, among others.

OSU's connection to Demas involves Whitfield, who knows interim wide receivers coach Brian Hartline well. Before junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield came to Ohio State, Whitfield, who owns the Houston-based Blitz Football Camp, had trained the Missouri City, Texas, native through the years.

Demas is the 247Sports composite's No. 20 overall prospect, No. 3 wide receiver and No. 3 player in Texas. He plans to take his official visit to see the Buckeyes at some point in the future, according to Bill Kurelic of 247Sports.

2019 Commits Return To Campus

Uncommitted targets and prospects normally highlight gameday visitors, but OSU welcomed back two 2019 commitments, each making the trip as they saw their future team in action against Minnesota.

Memphis (Tenn.) Whitehaven three-star tight end Cormontae Hamilton's visit marked his first since he came away from Ohio State on June 22 at Friday Night Lights inside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center with an offer. The 6-2, 263-pounder pledged July 27 to the Buckeyes but had not been back to Columbus since the camp performance.

On the trip, Hamilton reconnected with the tight ends room. He spent time with sophomore Luke Farrell, junior Rashod Berry, freshman Jeremy Ruckert and sophomore Jake Hausmann as well as offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson.

Hamilton is the 247Sports composite's No. 639 overall prospect, No. 28 tight end and No. 23 player in Tennessee. He is OSU's only commit at the position after Parkersburg, W.Va., four-star target Brenton Strange (6-5, 210) chose Penn State on Oct. 1.

Lexington, Ohio, four-star outside linebacker Cade Stover made the drive down Interstate 71 to Ohio State for the first time since Sept. 8 when he attended the Buckeyes' 52-3 win over Rutgers on his most recent unofficial visit. The 6-5, 235-pounder officially visited OSU the weekend of April 20-22 and committed April 29.

Stover made the return trip with three of his high school teammates. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 122 overall prospect, No. 5 outside linebacker and No. 3 player in Ohio.

Notable Underclassmen Back At Ohio State

Commits in 2019 and targets for 2020 led the way among Ohio State's visitors for the Minnesota game, which included an abundance of other prospects from the junior, sophomore and even freshman classes.

Recruits in attendance, confirmed by BSB, included the following from Ohio: Dover 2019 kicking prospect Jack Deneher, Dublin Coffman 2020 four-star all-purpose back target Michael Drennen, Geneva SPIRE Academy 2020 four-star athlete prospect Terry Lockett, Dublin Coffman



TIM MOODY

EARLY VISIT – Brady Allen (right), a pro-style quarterback from Fort Branch (Ind.) Gibson Southern in the 2022 class, spent time with assistant quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis (left) ahead of Ohio State's game against Minnesota.

2021 safety prospect A.J. Kirk, Pickerington North 2021 defensive end target Jack Sawyer, Columbus Bishop Hartley 2020 athlete prospect Miles Fleming, Toledo St. John's Jesuit 2021 quarterback prospect Braydon Lichtenberg, Columbus, Walnut Ridge 2020 wide receiver prospect Qian Magwood and Ironton 2019 outside linebacker prospect Tanner Wilson.

Among those, Deneher (6-4, 195) marks the Buckeyes' developing option if they choose to take a kicker in their 2019 class. With fifth-year senior Sean Nuernberger set to graduate, the move would make sense – sophomore Blake Haubeil is the only other scholarship kicker on the roster. Special teams coordinator/cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson invited Dencher to OSU's game against the Gophers. Rated by Kohl's Kicking as the No. 24 kicker in the country for his cycle, he holds a Division-II offer from Colorado School of Mines in addition to a preferred walk-on opportunity at Iowa State.

As for 2020, top local target Drennen made the short drive from Dublin to Columbus for an Ohio State visit. Offered by the Buckeyes on June 22, Drennen returned for the first time since then. He previously took an unofficial visit Sept. 22 to Michigan, where he holds an offer, for the Wolverines' 56-10 win over Nebraska. Drennen (5-11, 190) is the 247Sports composite's No. 180 overall prospect, No. 3 all-purpose back and No. 3 player in Ohio.

OSU continues to get Sawyer on campus on a regular basis. A priority for 2021, Sawyer has now attended two of Ohio State's past three home games between unofficial visits Sept. 22 vs. Tulane and Oct. 13 vs. Minnesota. The 6-5, 220-pounder took a trip east to Penn State on Sept. 29 for the Nittany Lions' clash with the Buckeyes – a 27-26 triumph for the visitors. Among his early contenders, he holds offers from PSU and Michigan in addition to OSU.

When Ohio State played the Green Wave in head coach Urban Meyer's first game back on the sideline, the Buckeyes hosted a local pair of 2022 quarterbacks in Dayton Centerville's Chase Harrison and Columbus Franklin Heights' Jeffery Beverly. When OSU battled Minnesota, it welcomed another freshman already on the recruiting radar in Fort Branch (Ind.) Gibson Southern's Brady Allen. The 6-5, 180-pounder spent time during pregame warmups with offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Ryan Day and assistant quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis. Prior to OSU, Allen took unofficial visits Oct. 6 to Cincinnati for the Bearcats' 37-21 win over Tulane and Sept. 22 to Indiana for the Hoosiers' 35-21 loss to Michigan State.

OSU Offers 2020 Duo On Visit

On top of the names above, two other prospects for 2020 came away from

Columbus with Ohio State offers in Fairfield, Ohio, all-purpose back JuTahn McClain and Louisville (Ky.) Christian Academy four-star offensive tackle John Young.

The Buckeyes make for McClain's sixth Big Ten offer since May 1. The 5-10, 175-pounder possesses scholarship offers from Minnesota (Sept. 1), Purdue (Aug. 27), Maryland (Aug. 25), Michigan (Aug. 25), Louisville (May 7), Rutgers (May 1) and Kentucky (Jan. 30).

"I was speechless," McClain told 247Sports of OSU's offer. "I covered my face and hugged my mom. I thanked him (Meyer) after. A very exciting atmosphere."

Also at Ohio Stadium for Ohio State's win over Minnesota, Young continues to build on an offer list that includes ACC, Big Ten and SEC schools. The 6-6, 280-pounder boasts scholarship offers from Virginia (Oct. 12), Duke (Oct. 6) and Indiana (Oct. 4) in the previous 10 days. He also holds offers from Missouri (Sept. 4) and Tennessee (April 26), among others. Young is the 247Sports composite's No. 320 overall prospect, No. 33 offensive tackle and No. 3 player in Kentucky for 2020.

"Coach Meyer said he's been watching my film and that he loves the way that I play," Young told Steve Wiltfong of 247Sports. "He said they had been wanting to get me on campus so they could offer in person. My recruitment is still completely open right

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

OSU Football Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Jordan Battle	S	6-1	187	★★★★	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas
Steele Chambers	ATH	6-2	215	★★★★	Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic
Cormontae Hamilton	TE	6-2	263	★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Whitehaven
Ronnie Hickman	ATH	6-1	200	★★★★	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic
Ryan Jacoby	OT	6-5	270	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Dwan Mathis	QB	6-4	197	★★★★	Oak Park, Mich.
Harry Miller	C	6-4	310	★★★★★	Buford, Ga.
Doug Nester	OG	6-5½	295	★★★★	Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley
Noah Potter	DE	6-5	250	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Bryson Shaw	S	6-2	175	★★★	Potomac (Md.) Bullis School
Cade Stover	OLB	6-5	235	★★★★	Lexington, Ohio
Jameson Williams	WR	6-1½	169	★★★★	St. Louis Cardinal Ritter
Garrett Wilson	WR	6-0½	181	★★★★★	Austin (Texas) Lake Travis
Craig Young	ATH	6-4	200	★★★	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne

Players in the class of 2020 who has issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Lejond Cavazos	S	6-0	186	★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy
Darvon Hubbard	RB	6-0	200	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Paris Johnson	OT	6-7	285	★★★★★	Cincinnati St. Xavier
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Jake Wray	OT	6-5	290	★★★★	Marietta, Ga.
Luke Wypler	OL	6-3½	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional

Recruiting Updates

Those Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers who follow football recruiting closely should not only monitor the regular stories on our BuckeyeSports.com website daily but also check out the site's Forum, where recruiting tidbits are frequently found. Readers should also monitor the Official Game Thread on the Forum each Saturday game day. BSB staffers are on the sidelines before the game, especially home games, watching for recruits and any recruiting activity. The Game Thread goes on to offer insight from the staff and BSB readers throughout the game.

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now, but OSU is definitely towards the top of my list."

Ohio State Offers 'Canes Commit

In light of Avon, Ind., four-star running back Sampson James' flip Oct. 7 from Ohio State to Indiana, the Buckeyes are evidently leaving no stone unturned at the position as they look to fill their new void in the 2019 recruiting class.

On Oct. 11, OSU offered Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy three-star Marcus Crowley, who has been committed to Miami (Fla.) since Dec. 6, 2017.

The 6-1, 200-pounder comes from the same high school as a pair of OSU players in freshman cornerback Tyreke Johnson and redshirt freshman defensive back Shaun Wade.

Also at Trinity Christian Academy are a pair of 2020 cornerbacks offered by Ohio State in five-star Fred Davis (6-1½, 177) and four-star Miles Brooks (6-2, 171).

Crowley remains committed to the Hurricanes, but he has since set the first of his five official visits, electing to spend

the weekend of Nov. 3 in Columbus when the Buckeyes host Nebraska at Ohio Stadium.

Crowley is the 247Sports composite's No. 569 overall prospect, No. 35 running back and No. 77 player in Florida.

He becomes the latest potential option as OSU aims to replace James. Ohio State's other offers to uncommitted running backs include the duo of Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy five-star Trey Sanders (6-0, 214) and four-star Noah Cain (5-10, 212).

The Buckeyes have also reached out to previously offered Katy, Texas, four-star Deondrick Glass (5-11, 200), who scheduled an official visit for the weekend of Nov. 3 when the Cornhuskers come to Columbus.

2020 Commit's Injury Ends Season

When Lejond Cavazos went down Sept. 29 in IMG Academy's game against Miami Northwestern, the four-star defensive back committed to Ohio State was taken off on a stretcher and transported to a local hospital with an apparent hip injury.

"I appreciate everyone's concern, calls and texts," Cavazos said Sept. 29. "I find out more information tomorrow and will keep y'all updated. I truly appreciate all the prayers. Thank you."

While the initial diagnosis did not reveal any broken bones, Cavazos' father, CJ, told Kurelic that a trip to an orthopedic specialist the following Monday, Oct. 1, revealed a lower-body injury requiring between two and three months to heal.

Cavazos took to Twitter on Oct. 11 to share the unfortunate news, which will hold the future Buckeye out for the rest of IMG Academy's season. The Ascenders, who are 5-1 on the fall, are slated to play three more games with the regular-season schedule ending Nov. 2.

"It's been a great season but I will not be finishing this season due to an injury," Cavazos' tweet read. "I will be alongside my brothers for the rest of the ride and blessed to be apart of this great team."

Cavazos (6-0, 186) committed June 27 to Ohio State. He is the 247Sports composite's No. 184 overall prospect, No. 9 safety and No. 30 player in Florida for 2020.

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily. For simple sign-up information, see page 5.

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Nebraska Continues To Deal With Transfers

Nebraska had three players transfer to Oregon State before the month of October, and before the Cornhuskers traveled to play Northwestern, they had to deal with another departure.

BIG TEN NOTES

James Grega

Running back Greg Bell, who was the No. 2 junior college running back in the 2018 class, elected to leave Lincoln, Neb., the school confirmed Oct. 5. Bell had appeared in all five games for the Huskers prior to his transfer, rushing 35 times for 173 yards, ranking him third on the team in both categories.

Bell, however, was blocked from transferring to Oregon State, the destination for which three of his former Nebraska teammates had left Lincoln. He was also blocked from transferring to another Big Ten school or any school on Nebraska's schedule for the next three seasons.

Head coach Scott Frost said Oct. 11 that the reason for blocking Bell came in part because he believes Oregon State was tampering with players on his current roster.

"There's no doubt in my mind that those kids were probably in touch with some people that they formerly knew that were here," Frost said of transfers Tristan Gebbia (quarter-

back), Tyjon Lindsey (wide receiver) and Avery Roberts (linebacker).

Former Nebraska head coach Mike Riley, who is also the former head coach at Oregon State (1997-98, 2003-14) currently serves as an offensive analyst for the Beavers under first-year head coach Johnathan Smith.

It wasn't all bad news for Nebraska when it came to transfers, though, as quarterback Noah Vedral, a former signal caller of Frost's at Central Florida, was ruled eligible to play immediately at Nebraska. Vedral dressed but did not play in Nebraska's 34-31 overtime loss to Northwestern on Oct. 13.

Vedral completed 22 of 29 passes for 276 yards as the backup quarterback at UCF last season and followed Frost to Nebraska after Frost left for Lincoln.

Ellison Suspended From IU

Former Ohio State recruit, Ohio native and Hoosier running back Morgan Ellison has been suspended by Indiana University for 2½ years amid allegations that he sexually assaulted a female victim in August, it was announced on Oct. 10.

Ellison, a Pickerington Central product, was never charged in the incident but was suspended indefinitely following the allegations prior to the start of the season. A university panel investigated the incident independently and ruled that Ellison is not to set foot on Indiana's campus for the next 2½ years. Ellison, who had recently returned to practice with the team, did not play in a game this season.

"He's been allowed to be with our team recently, and we still have no answer yet for his game opportunities," head coach Tom Allen had said Oct. 2. "But he's been allowed to be around us on a consistent basis now, which has helped. But we still don't know the long-term future yet, taking it day by day."

Ellison was Indiana's leading rusher last season as a freshman, carrying 143 times for 704 yards and six touchdowns in 11 games played.

This season, the Hoosiers have leaned on freshman Stevie Scott in the run game. Through seven games, Scott has rushed 115 times for 557 yards and four scores while Indiana has compiled a 4-3 record.

Taliaferro Dead at 91

Former Indiana football star George Taliaferro died Oct. 8 in Mason, Ohio, at the age of 91.

Taliaferro, who led the Hoosiers to their only undefeated season in school history in 1945, is best known for being the first African-American to be drafted into the NFL in 1949. He was also the first African-American to lead the Big Ten in rushing when he tallied 719 yards in 1945.

Taliaferro missed the 1946 season while serving in the Army but returned in 1947 and 1948. In his final season, he led the Hoosiers in passing, rushing and punting on three occasions, and he was drafted in the 13th round of the 1949 NFL draft by the Chicago Bears but never suited up for them.

Instead, he signed a contract with the Los Angeles Dons of the All-America Football Conference, a league that had fully integrated football since 1946, the year before Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier.

Taliaferro played seven professional seasons, also playing for the New York Yanks, Dallas Texans, Baltimore Colts and Philadelphia Eagles. He was a Pro Bowl selection from 1951-53 with the Yanks, Texans and Colts and scored 21 total touchdowns in his career.

In 1981, he was inducted in the College Football Hall of Fame, and he was a career educator, teaching at the University of Maryland as well as serving as the Morgan State University Dean of Students during his career, among other stops.

BIG 2018 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Ohio State	4	0	1.000	7	0	1.000
Michigan	4	0	1.000	6	1	.857
Maryland	2	1	.667	4	2	.667
Michigan State	2	1	.667	4	2	.667
Penn State	1	2	.333	4	2	.667
Indiana	1	3	.250	4	3	.571
Rutgers	0	4	.000	1	6	.143

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Northwestern	3	1	.750	3	3	.500
Iowa	2	1	.667	5	1	.833
Wisconsin	2	1	.667	4	2	.667
Purdue	2	1	.667	3	3	.500
Illinois	1	2	.333	3	3	.500
Minnesota	0	3	.000	3	3	.500
Nebraska	0	4	.000	0	6	.000

Oct. 13 Scores

Iowa 42, Indiana 16
Ohio State 30, Minnesota 14
 Northwestern 34, Nebraska 31 (OT)
 Maryland 34, Rutgers 7
 Michigan State 21, Penn State 17
 Purdue 46, Illinois 7
 Michigan 38, Wisconsin 13

Oct. 20 Games

Illinois at Wisconsin, Noon (FS1)
 Maryland at Iowa, Noon (ESPN2)
 Northwestern at Rutgers, Noon (BTN)
 Michigan at Michigan State, Noon (FOX)
 Minnesota at Nebraska, 3:30 p.m. (BTN)
 Penn St. at Indiana, 3:30 p.m. (ABC/ESPN)
Ohio State at Purdue, 7:30 p.m. (ABC)

WR Cephus Sues Wisconsin

Wisconsin wide receiver Quintez Cephus is suing the university, saying a disciplinary probe the university is conducting violates his rights as he continues to defend himself in a criminal sexual assault case.

Cephus was suspended indefinitely from the football program after allegations arose that he sexually assaulted two women in April at his apartment. The women claimed that they were both too drunk to give consent, while Cephus maintains that is not the case.

According to the Wisconsin State Journal, Cephus filed a federal lawsuit against the university Oct. 9 claiming that an investigation launched against him is "unfair because he can't participate in it without potentially harming his criminal defense."

The same report says that Cephus is seeking "unspecified damages for emotional and psychological harm and past and future economic losses, claiming Cephus is a likely high NFL draft pick."

Cephus, who has pleaded not guilty in the case, was Wisconsin's second-leading receiver in 2017 despite playing just nine games. He caught 30 passes for 501 yards and a team-high six touchdowns before missing the final five games of the season due to injury.

B1G Players Of The Week

Iowa quarterback Nate Stanley led the Hawkeyes to an impressive 42-16 win over Indiana on the road Oct. 13, throwing six touchdown passes to just one interception.

Stanley connected with five different receivers for scores while nine different receivers caught at least one pass from the second-year starter. The six touchdown passes marked a career high for Stanley, surpassing his previous record of five, which he set in a 55-24 win over Ohio State a year ago.

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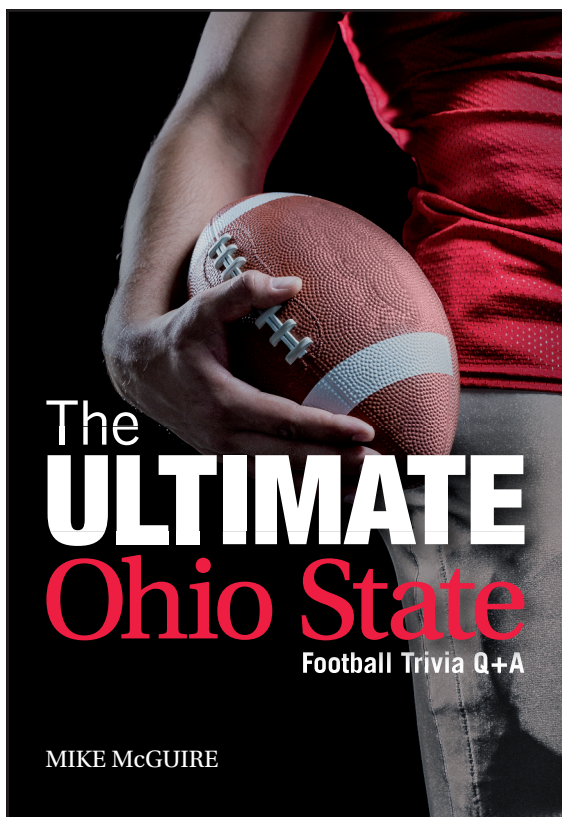
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 Publications

From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago – 1983

Down to third-string freshman quarterback Jim Karsatos, Ohio State dropped a 17-13 result at Illinois – its second loss of the season – falling to 4-2 on Oct. 15.

The Buckeyes led 13-10 with 1:47 left in the fourth quarter before Karsatos, playing for concussed starter Mike Tomczak and ineffective backup Brent Offenbecher, failed to convert a naked bootleg left on fourth-and-4 from the Illinois 19 after head coach Earle Bruce elected to go for the first down rather than take a chip-shot field goal. Thirty-seven seconds later, the Illini scored the go-ahead touchdown to take the game.

"I would have liked to have one play over like everyone else," Bruce said.

30 Years Ago – 1988

At halftime of the Ohio State-Purdue game Oct. 15, the Buckeyes honored their 1968 national championship football team, marking the 20th anniversary of the school's last national title.

On top of the reunion, members of the championship-winning team announced their formation of the Woody Hayes National Championship Scholarship Fund. They had committed more than \$1.2 million to the OSU athletic department's scholarship fund in honor of the 1968 team's head coach and his widow.

The endowment by a single football team was believed to be the largest in the history of college athletics. The players said it was made in the spirit of Hayes' belief that "you can't pay back but you can pay forward."

25 Years Ago – 1993

With a 28-21 victory against Michigan State on Oct. 16, Ohio State's 6-0 start was its best since 1979 when the Buckeyes won all 11 regular-season games before losing a 17-16 battle against Southern California in the Rose Bowl.

Additionally, OSU's 3-0 start in Big Ten play served as its best since 1986 when it won its first seven conference games before finishing 7-1 in league play and tying Michigan for the co-championship.

At the time, Ohio State had won five Big Ten games in each

of its previous campaigns (5-2-1 in 1990, 5-3 in 1991 and 5-2-1 in 1992).

20 Years Ago – 1998

Speaking with the media the week after Ohio State's 28-9 win over Penn State, quarterbacks coach Tim Salem explained an incident with broken glass in the press box right before the game went to halftime.

As it turned out, after Joe Germaine hit Michael Wiley for a 20-yard touchdown pass with 22 seconds left in the second quarter of the Buckeyes' eventual victory against the Nittany Lions at Ohio Stadium, Salem's excitement led to an accidental incident, slapping the glass and getting 10 stitches – two on a finger and eight on his wrist.

"I looked down and my right wrist was gashed," Salem said. "I grabbed a towel and put pressure on it, then went down the elevator and around the stadium to the trainer's room. I got stitched up and was ready to go for the second half."

15 Years Ago – 2003

For the first time in 21 months, Ohio State lost, falling 17-10 at Wisconsin on Oct. 11 and snapping the second-longest winning streak in program history at 19 games.

Then ranked third, the Buckeyes fell to 5-1 while the Badgers improved to 6-1. UW broke a 10-10 tie in the fourth quarter on backup quarterback Matt Schabert's 79-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Lee Evans.

Plenty of Buckeyes were down, from defensive coordinator Mark Dantonio's repeated use of the word "disappointed" to senior defensive tackle Tim Anderson's speechlessness, but junior wide receiver Michael Jenkins kept a positive perspective.

"I think everyone would look at an 11-1 record and say that it was a pretty good year," Jenkins said. "Sure, it's great to win every game, and we got used to that feeling. There's no reason to think we can't go out next week and get used to that feeling again."

10 Years Ago – 2008

Despite getting outgained in total yards, 298-222, Ohio

State took care of business Oct. 11 at Ohio Stadium in a 16-3 win over Purdue.

Between stifling defense and timely special teams, the lack of offense was offset as the Buckeyes improved to 6-1 while the Boilermakers fell to 2-4.

The game's only touchdown was a blocked punt returned by freshman Etienne Sabino for 20 yards.

"These games make you really humble because even if you played bad, you're still good enough to win the game," said frustrated tight end Jake Ballard, "but we should be scoring at will."

Five Years Ago – 2013

Midway through the campaign, Ohio State appeared to have made decisions on several freshman redshirts as the Buckeyes rolled into the Oct. 14 off weekend.

Among those, most notably, was Jalin Marshall. Out of the 13 players from the 24-member recruiting class of 2013 to have not seen the field, the former five-star recruit from Middletown, Ohio, had been expected to make an immediate impact before falling behind due to a concussion in training camp.

"There are some guys that could be fine players down the road that I just didn't want to burn a year to get them five or 10 plays," said head coach Urban Meyer, "so that's the decision we made."

One Year Ago – 2017

Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star recruit and Ohio State freshman wide receiver Trevon Grimes did not attend the Buckeyes' 62-14 win over Maryland on Oct. 7. Four days later, Meyer revealed why.

"Trevon is dealing with family health issues," said Meyer, who didn't provide any further details out of respect for the family. "I saw him and he's doing great."

Meyer added that the 6-4, 212-pounder was still a member of the team. Grimes had been an impressive first-year player as he made strides in fall camp and recorded his three receptions for 20 yards between victories against Army (Sept. 16) and UNLV (Sept. 23) in two of the previous three weeks.

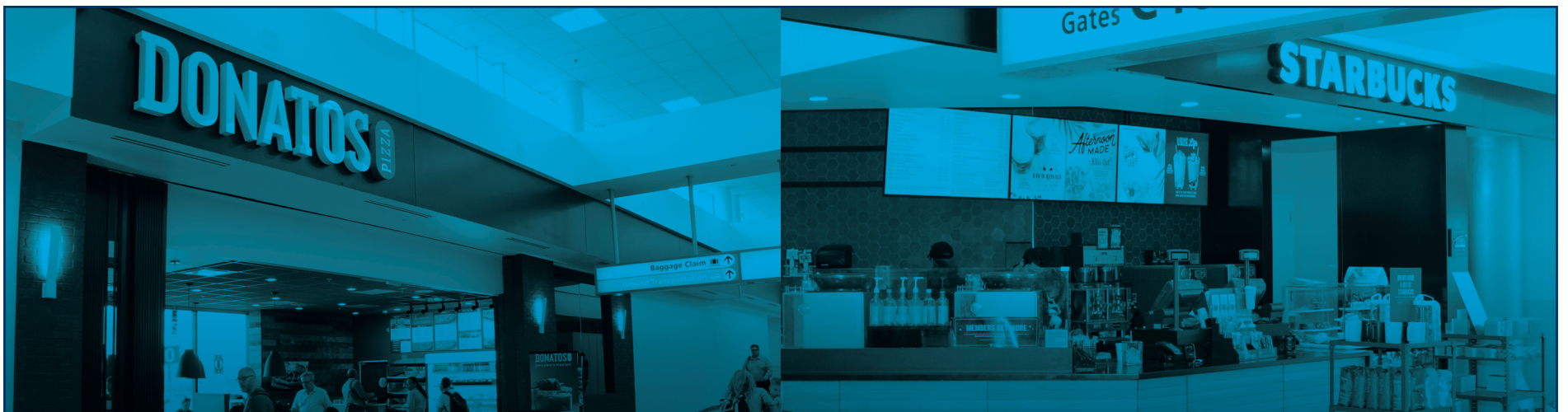
Two of Iowa's tight ends went over 100 yards receiving in the win, as T.J. Hockenson and Noah Fant each caught four passes for 107 and

101 yards, respectively, with Hockenson finding the end zone twice and Fant once.

The runner-up honor goes to Northwestern

wide receiver Flynn Nagel, who caught 12 passes for 220 yards and a pair of scores in a 34-31 overtime win over Nebraska. On the year,

Nagel has caught 48 passes for 622 yards and two touchdowns. He leads the Big Ten in receptions and yards.



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Buckeyes Ranked 8th In B1G Preseason Poll

Big Ten basketball took to the Windy City on Oct. 11 for Big Ten Media Day, as head coach Chris Holtmann, point guard C.J. Jackson and forward Andre Wesson represented Ohio State.

COURT REPORT

James Grega

The Big Ten tournament is returning to Chicago in 2018-19 after a two-year hiatus in which the league held its media day and tournaments in Washington, D.C., and New York City, respectively. The tournament also returns to its usual week (March 13-17) in 2019 after playing a week early last season in order to play at Madison Square Garden in the Big Apple.

Holtmann said he is happy that the tournament is returning to its normal slot, adding that it should provide the league with more quality basketball in the postseason.

"I think the rest will help," Holtmann said. "Lord knows, I can use all the help possible when it comes to the Big Ten tournament, conference tournaments for that matter. But I do like the week of rest. I do think the schedule, as it is now, sets up better for a more quality tournament and hopefully for postseason play."

"I don't know that it limited any of us last year, the added rest going into the NCAA Tournament. But I certainly like this setup better."

Holtmann, who is entering his second year as Ohio State's head coach, said he believes the Big Ten is littered with talent, especially at Indiana where the Hoosiers are gearing up for what figures to be a breakthrough season in year two of the Archie Miller era.

"I think Romeo Langford is one of the very first (players) that comes to mind. Many people are aware of his talent, his ability, certainly what he's going to mean for Indiana," Holtmann said. "I think he is a part of a very gifted and talented Indiana team."

The Buckeyes defeated the Hoosiers in both meetings last season but needed a last-second three-pointer from Jackson in



KEVIN DYE

ROUND TWO – Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann led his team to a second-place finish in the Big Ten in his first season in Columbus, but the Buckeyes are projected to finish eighth in 2018-19.

double overtime to get the best of Indiana on the road in the regular-season finale.

As for the Buckeyes' place in the conference, Ohio State was picked by the media

as the No. 8 team in the league with the full unofficial preseason rankings as follows:

1. Michigan State
2. Michigan
3. Indiana
4. Nebraska
5. Purdue
6. Wisconsin
7. Maryland
8. Ohio State
9. Minnesota
10. Iowa
11. Penn State
12. Northwestern
13. Illinois
14. Rutgers

Despite finishing second in the league a year ago, Holtmann said he knows that the Buckeyes will have to prove themselves to the Big Ten and the country once again as they lost a great deal of their production from a season ago to the professional ranks and graduation.

"I think the nature of our business is you're being evaluated on pretty much a game-to-game basis," Holtmann said. "I don't know that the scrutiny is any greater now than what it has been in the past. I think people are curious about how we're going to transition from four really good seniors,

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OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
DJ Carton	PG	6-1	189	★★★★★	Bettendorf, Iowa
Alonzo Gaffney	SF	6-9	190	★★★★	Wolfeboro (N.H.) Brewster Academy
EJ Liddell	PF	6-7	220	★★★★	Belleville (Ill.) West

important players, in particular Keita Bates-Diop and Jae'Sean Tate. I do think people are curious about that, curious about how to implement six new players. So I'm anxious to see, as our fans are, how we're going to manage that."

Holtmann Inducted Into Taylor University HOF

Shortly after his trip to Chicago for media day, Holtmann returned to campus at his alma mater, Taylor University in Upland, Ind., to be inducted into the school's Athletics Hall of Fame.

A former basketball standout at Taylor, Holtmann was a two-time NAIA All-American and led the Trojans to a No. 1 overall ranking, a 25-9 overall record and an NAIA Elite Eight appearance during his senior season of 1993-94.

Throughout his career, he accumulated 936 career points and 229 assists. He holds the program's record for three-point field-goal percentage, hitting at a 47.8 percent clip. Holtmann spent four years as an assistant at Taylor (1999-2003) before becoming an assistant at Gardner-Webb in 2003.

Holtmann has won the conference coach of the year award in each conference he has coached in, winning the Big South Coach of the Year award in 2013 as the head coach at Gardner-Webb and the Big East Coach of the Year while at Butler in 2017. Last season, after leading Ohio State to a 25-9 record and a second-place finish in the conference, Holtmann was named Big Ten Coach of the Year in his first year with the Buckeyes.

Buckeyes Shut Out In Preseason Honors

For the second straight season, Ohio State was held out of the preseason honors released by the Big Ten conference.

Purdue's Carsen Edwards was named the preseason Big Ten Player of the Year after a

2018-17 campaign in which he averaged 18.5 points and 3.8 rebounds per game from his guard position.

The full 2018-19 preseason All-Big Ten team is as follows: Romeo Langford, Fr., G, Indiana; Juwan Morgan, Sr., F, Indiana; Anthony Cowan Jr., G, Maryland; Charles Matthews, Sr., G, Michigan; Nick Ward, Jr., F, Michigan State; Cassius Winston, Jr., G, Michigan State; Jordan Murphy, Sr., F, Minnesota; James Palmer Jr., Sr., F, Nebraska; Edwards, Jr., G, Purdue; Ethan Happ, Sr., F, Wisconsin.

Edwards and Happ were the only two unanimous selections. Happ, who was a preseason All-Big Ten selection last

year as well, averaged 17.9 points and 8.0 rebounds per game for the Badgers in 2017-18.

Last season, three Buckeyes earned post-season All-Big Ten honors as Keita Bates-Diop was named a unanimous first-team All-Big Ten selection and the conference's Player of the Year. Jae'Sean Tate was a second-team All-Big Ten selection by the coaches, and center Kaleb Wesson was named to the All-Big Ten freshman team. Of those three, only Wesson is back for the Buckeyes in 2018-19.

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Ohio State Freshmen Eager To Make Early Impact

As head coach Kevin McGuff continues to sort through the potential rotations and tinker with the ideal starting lineups for the Ohio State women's basketball team, there's still some uncertainty for the Buckeyes.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

The five graduate transfers – Ball State's Carmen Grande, Cleveland State's Ashanti Abshaw, Bowling Green's Carly Santoro, LaSalle's Adreana Miller and Pacific's Najah Queenland – headline OSU's new wave of players brought to Columbus to make an immediate impact.

The potential key contributors also include three freshmen – Janai Crooms, Aaliyah Patty and Dorka Juhasz. Based on roster numbers alone with 12 team members, they figured to factor into the Buckeyes' blueprint in the early going, but McGuff confirmed his plans for the first-year trio after he saw flashes through the first few weeks of practice.

"Janai, Aaliyah and Dorka have all done a great job," McGuff said Oct. 10. "I think they all have promising futures here. I just really like them. They can all play the game. They're

versatile. They're great team players. They make other people better. I just really like the way they're fitting in right now. I absolutely think they'll have big roles and they'll be impactful this season."

Crooms comes to Columbus as a 5-10 guard from Barrington (R.I.) St. Andrew's, where she posted double-double numbers as a senior in 2017-18 with averages of 12.3 points and 10.2 rebounds. She earned her second honor as American Family Insurance All-USA Rhode Island Girls Basketball Team Player of the Year, carrying momentum into her collegiate career.

"I think I'm adjusting pretty well," she said. "I think the people that have been here and the coaches, they're helping me adjust better, getting in shape and telling me what I can do to be the better player and how I can adjust better. So it's really helpful."



Janai Crooms

All five of Ohio State's fifth-year newcomers are guards, so it remains to be seen how many minutes Crooms gets when rotations unfold. But early on, McGuff made note of the versatility she has flashed in her first few practices.

"I think she can play the one or the two," he said of Crooms. "We've had her both

at the one and two, and she's looked good at both spots. I think she's just the type of player that, the more we have her on the floor, good things are going to happen. She really makes her teammates better. She's got a great feel for the game. She's an excellent passer. She doesn't care if she scores – she can score, but she doesn't care if she does. She just wants the team to do well."

Crooms echoed those sentiments as she detailed her pass-first mentality. With the offense under construction, Crooms stays open to wherever her creative skill set is needed.



Aaliyah Patty

"I'm really comfortable playing with whatever, but I wouldn't mind playing the one sometimes and going to the two," she said. "But me being on the wing, I feel like I can find the open players and getting them open, getting them open shots more."

Juhasz, Patty Embrace Expected Post Roles

Patty started the class Oct. 2, 2017, Crooms committed Nov. 2 and Juhasz finished it March 5. While the exact amount of minutes for Crooms has to be sorted out among the guards, Patty and Juhasz have huge roles expected from the outset at the post.

Patty (6-3) and Juhasz (6-4) edge fifth-year senior forward Makayla Waterman (6-2) and junior guard Jensen Caretti (6-1) as OSU's tallest players. It further heightens the importance of the freshman duo's first few weeks getting up to speed in practices.

"It's faster than in high school," Patty said. "You're not the star of the team anymore. Just coming in and trying to find your role is one of the biggest things. I'm still trying to find my role as of now, so that's what I'm working on the most."

Patty posted per-game averages of 15.9 points, 9.5 rebounds and 2.4 assists in 2017-18 as a senior at Lombard (Ill.) Montini Catholic, leading to first-team all-state honors from the Chicago Tribune. Since she arrived in Columbus, Patty's focus has been on translating those numbers and adding another element to her game at the next level.

"I'm working on my shot a lot because I feel like if I have both then there's no way

to guard me," Patty said. "Getting to the basket is something I improved a lot on my senior year. That's pretty much all I was doing my senior year. They have me at post now, which is fine, but I just hope to get out more and develop my game."

Juhasz, meanwhile, arrives to the United States from Hungary with impressive versatility despite being Ohio State's biggest body. She has played multiple positions since 2015 for various Hungarian national teams – she notably averaged 11.7 points and 9.4 rebounds in seven games at the 2017 FIBA U19 Women's Basketball World Cup in Italy – bringing her shooting range to the Buckeyes while also embracing a new role down low.

"For the past years, I played outside as a three and as a forward," Juhasz said. "Now that I'm the tallest on the team, I need to go to the post. I feel like I will play as a four and a five, but I'm not like a normal center. I love to go outside and play inside, so I think that could be an advantage to be versatile and to attack or just go to the rim and play as a center."

Most importantly, Juhasz's health is 100 percent after she tore her right ACL in September 2017 and had surgery. Full go for OSU's preseason, Juhasz has embraced her chance to gain critical minutes and a potential starting spot as she progresses through each practice.

"I had the ACL injury, so I had the surgery last September and missed the whole season," Juhasz said. "It was a pretty hard year. I worked the rehab and now I've come to the point where I feel healthy and confident, and I'm ready to play."

"Now that we started the official practices, I feel like I'm 100 percent and I feel pretty confident after my injury. I don't have any limitations that I'm scared to do this or do that, so I feel like I'm ready for the season and I can't wait to start up."

Recruiting Momentum Continues

Exactly one week after McGuff received a commitment from a Westerville (Ohio) South prospect for the 2020 recruiting class Oct. 1, the Buckeyes went back to the Columbus-area suburban high school Oct. 8 with their second pledge for the cycle.

After guard Anyssa Jones decided to stay home at OSU, teammate Gabby Hutcherson, a three-star forward



Dorka Juhasz

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OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

OSU Women's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect ESPN.com rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Kierstan Bell	G	6-1	★★★★★	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
Rikki Harris	PG	5-9	★★★★★	Indianapolis North Central
Jacy Sheldon	G	5-10	★★★★★	Dublin (Ohio) Coffman

Players in the class of 2020 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings reflect ESPN.com rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Gabby Hutcherson	F	6-2	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South
Anysa Jones	G	5-9	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South

in ESPN's 2020 HoopGurlz Recruiting Rankings, followed suit seven days later when she took to Twitter and announced her decision.

"First off I would like to thank all my family and friends who have loved and supported me through this process," Hutcherson's statement read. "I would also like to thank all my coaches and teammates that I have had the pleasure of playing with and for, for helping me become the player I am today. Lastly I would like to thank all the coaches who believed in me and recruited me and recruited me these last few years. With all this being said, I am blessed to say that I will be furthering my academic and athletic career at THE Ohio State University."

She chose Ohio State over a long list of offers that included Florida, Florida State, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisville, Maryland, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, North Carolina and Tennessee.

According to Collegiate Girls Basketball Report's Dan Olson, the

Buckeyes are getting a big boost in the post with Hutcherson (6-2).

"Athletic stretch-4 rebounds, handles in transition; pulls the defense to the arc; mismatch creator, drives and delivers in key; plays taller than advertised, continues to add to face up game; versatile defender," Olson wrote in a scouting report.

OSU has seized early momentum for the next cycle, grabbing Jones and Hutcherson from Westerville South as a cornerstone duo to its 2020 recruiting class. Their commitments come in addition to pledges from the guard trio of Dublin (Ohio) Coffman's Jacy Sheldon, Indianapolis North Central's Rikki Harris and Canton (Ohio) McKinley's Kierstan Bell for the 2019 recruiting class to give Ohio State five commitments total for the two hauls.

"It's really important," McGuff said of the Buckeyes' efforts thus far on the trail. "I really like where we are, the people we're involved with and I think that it's really coming together the way that I wanted it to."

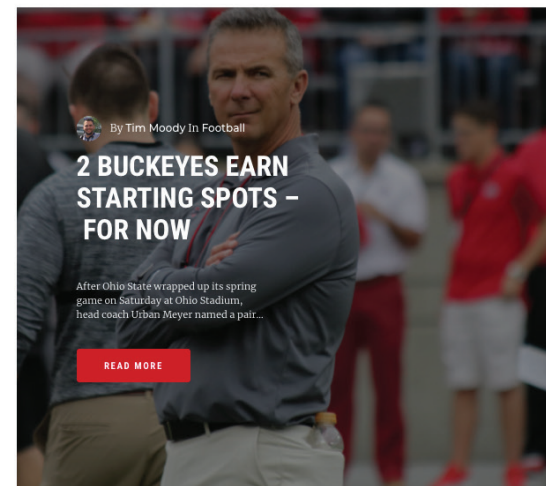
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Jobst Starts Fast After Passing On Pros To Return

With a favorable class schedule and expansive facilities at his disposal, Ohio State men's hockey senior Mason Jobst is living the life of a pro without the monetary benefits. That could eventually change if one of the top forwards in the country has another big season for the newly-minted top-ranked Buckeyes.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

Jobst is not only one of the oldest players in college hockey – he'll be 25 on Feb. 17 – but the top returning scorer in Division I with 131 career points (53 goals, 78 assists) after collecting a goal and two assists in the season-opening sweep at Arizona State on Oct. 12-13.

The Speedway, Ind., native has been a second-team All-American (2017), a two-time All-Big Ten honoree (first team 2017, second team 2018) and will likely soon become the all-time leading scorer in the conference.

Yet he decided not to pursue a profes-

sional contract last spring to play one more season in Columbus.

"It was a risk I was willing to take," he told BSB. "I believe that going in like this at an older age I'm more mature and more confident when I get to that level. There's really never been a rush. I played juniors until I aged out. I was comfortable where I was.

"When I'm ready to take the step, I'll take the step."

His decision was not made in haste. Waiting another year before turning pro at his age might scare some teams that would rather develop younger players. Also, his size (5-8, 180) would seem to be detrimental, but in an era when speed and mobility supersede physical play, that becomes less of an issue.

Ohio State coach Steve Rohlik said Jobst is on a mission to further prove himself.

"Every day you see the drive," he said. "As coaches we've got to get better every day, and we've got to keep pushing ourselves. It's inspiring to see that in Mase. Every day you see him in the shooting room.

Every guy who puts that sweater on has the dream of playing in the NHL. He's gotten himself closer in his time here.

"Certainly, there's a 'when is it going to happen?' element. I'm sure there's the anxiety of whether I'm going or not (to the pros).

But making the decision to stay is going to give him the opportunity to do what he wants and move on and chase his dream."

It would have been easier for Jobst (pronounced Yawbst) to leave OSU if the team were struggling. It's not, and last season the Buckeyes reached the Frozen Four for the second time in program history.

"The success we had last year definitely was a huge factor in my decision," he said.

Jobst has had a taste of the pro game, having attended the summer development camps for the Pittsburgh Penguins and Boston Bruins in 2017 and the Minnesota Wild this year.

"I have very high expectations for myself," he said. "Being one of the oldest guys in college hockey plays in my hands. As a senior I have over 100 games, so my confidence is high right now."

Now, about that class schedule. He worked hard on getting ahead in school and is nearing a degree in real estate business. After this semester he'll need six credits to graduate.

He has an hour-long class at 5 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday and takes some online courses.

"My weekend starts on Wednesday," he said. "I've worked very hard in the past. I've got to give credit to my academic counselors for pushing me and making me do 18 credits as a freshman. I hated it but it's really good for me right now. I'm so happy I worked that hard so early. Also, we do so much summer school, 10 credits, to get where I am now."

After he finishes practice at noon, he'll spend a lot of time in the RapidShot room, hockey's version of the batting cage, or the weight and training center in Value City Arena.

"I spend a lot of time in the shooting room," Jobst said. "I have to give a ton of credit to the school for having the resources like this to give us the ability to work on our craft. I'm a firm believer in shooting in there."



Mason Jobst

Top Of The Charts

The question must be raised: How good can the Buckeyes be if they don't play any games?

Apparently good enough to be ranked No. 1 in the USCHO.com and USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine polls for the week of Oct. 8 without even trying.

Ohio State was ranked third in both preseason polls, but after the first weekend of play Oct. 5-6, No. 1 Minnesota Duluth – the defending NCAA champion – was 0-1-1 while second-ranked Notre Dame and the Buckeyes didn't play.

That didn't stop voters from making OSU No. 1 over the Fighting Irish and dropping Duluth to third.

It's the first time OSU has been atop either poll and the first No. 1 ranking since November 1983 when Ohio State was chosen as the top team three times that month in the WMPL Radio poll. The USA Today/USA Hockey Magazine rankings began in 1995-96. The USCHO.com poll started in the 1997-98 season.

"We've worked hard to get to where we are, so it's kind of nice to get that recognition and to be considered one of the top dogs out of the gate," said senior forward Freddy Gerard. "As long as we continue to carry that mentality, have that swagger about us, I think it can be good for us."

Rohlik doesn't mind that his program is in the spotlight for a change.

"You want expectations on your program," he said. "It means your guys are doing something right. It also means you've got to prove yourself."

OSU was one of two schools with their men's and women's programs ranked in the top five of the USCHO.com poll. The Ohio State women were fifth. In addition to the Duluth men, its women's team was fourth.

Devils Delight

The Buckeyes began their season at fourth-year program Arizona State, prevailing 3-2 in the opener and 3-0 in the rematch at the quaint Oceanside Ice Arena in Tempe, Ariz.

Jobst had two assists in the first game and a penalty shot in the second that put the Buckeyes (2-0-0) ahead 2-0 in the third period before an overflow crowd of 925.

Carson Meyer had a goal and an assist in the opener as the junior transfer from Miami (Ohio) – a Columbus Blue Jackets prospect – had a smashing debut for the Buckeyes.

Gerard gave OSU a 1-0 lead in the first period of the season. After the Sun Devils (2-2-0) tied it early in the second period, senior Dakota Joshua (2:23) and Meyer (4:38) scored power-play goals for a 3-1 lead before Johnny Walker scored his second of the game with two seconds left in the stanza to make it 3-2.

Junior Ronnie Hein scored twice the following game, the first putting the Buckeyes ahead at 18:56 of the middle period. After the Jobst penalty shot at 13:26 of the third, Hein scored into an empty net with 20 seconds left to disappoint the crowd of 922.

The goaltending was stellar again. Senior Sean Romeo made 24 saves in the opener, and sophomore Tommy Nappier stopped all 27 the second game for his second career shutout to improve his record to 5-0-0.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's season-opening series with Arizona State, go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

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Sophomore Duo Leading OSU Women's Skaters

By JOE DEMPSEY
Special To Buckeye Sports Bulletin

The Ohio State women's hockey team made its first NCAA tournament in program history and won a program-best 24 games last season. The Buckeyes defeated Boston College 2-0 to advance to the Frozen Four, where they fell to the eventual champion, Clarkson, 1-0 in a heart-breaking overtime loss.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the Ohio State's historic season is the fact that its two leaders in points were both freshmen. Emma Maltais led the team with 40 points coming on 16 goals and 24 assists, while Tatum Skaggs totaled 37 points on 23 goals and 14 helpers.

Head coach Nadine Muzerall said the young forwards have already taken on leadership roles, which is essential with seven incoming freshmen this season. The 2018 WCHA Coach of the Year also recognized the challenges presented by many Olympians returning to their respective universities.

"It's hopeful for the future," Muzerall said. "I think they'll be tested a little bit more now that it's not an Olympic year and Wisconsin and Minnesota will be stronger, as well as Duluth with its Olympic gold-medal goalie (Team USA's Maddie Rooney).

"So it will test their abilities to a different level than there was last year, and so I'm excited to see how our girls rally around that. They're great leaders in the locker room and away from the locker room."

Maltais, who is actually closer in age to many of the freshmen than sophomores, has the demeanor of a veteran player.

"She's very competitive, highly competitive," Muzerall said of Maltais. "Which I think makes her very elite. She's an elite athlete, hungry to be better and wants to wear her country's colors at the Olympics, so she does all the little things away from the rink to make sure that she has that opportunity. And she's well-liked among her team, she's well-respected in the locker room, even when she was a freshman."

Maltais was the WCHA Rookie of the Year and earned All-WCHA first-team honors, as well as making the USCHO All-Rookie Team and WCHA All-Rookie Team. Even with all of the accolades, Muzerall said the standout forward has worked diligently on becoming a more complete player.

Her coach said she will be relied on for not only power plays but also penalty kills.

"She's more of a mature player in how she sees the ice," Muzerall said. "She's a little more patient. She's been more comfortable now with the speed of the game compared to when she first got in. I think it was a little bit of an adjustment. But now she's more comfortable, more poised, making better decisions. But she's also more of a 200-foot player."



Emma Maltais

The Burlington, Ontario, native was one of the top recruits in her class and committed to Ohio State as a ninth-grader – before Muzerall had taken the job and before the program's drastic turnaround.

"That was always my dream to help a team become a force, to make a Frozen Four," Maltais said.

"And I didn't really think that it would happen to be honest with you. And if I thought it did, I didn't think it would be so quickly, and I think that it's truly an honor to be in this position that we're in right now."

Maltais committed to the Buckeyes around the same time as Skaggs. The dynamic duo said they're best friends off the ice and had been looking forward to playing together since committing as freshmen in high school.

"Playing with Tatum – it's always easy because she always puts the puck in the net," Maltais said.

"Obviously playing with Emma is super fun," Skaggs said. "She's such a great player overall. I think her strengths and weaknesses match up with mine, so I just think we compensate each other pretty well. But we're really excited to see what more we can do this season granted the opportunity to play together. We're really going to try to put up some more points and hopefully make a better, more impactful season this year."

The forward tandem picked up where they

left off, enjoying a solid start to the 2018 campaign for the No. 5 Buckeyes. Maltais had two goals and eight assists as of Oct. 14, while Skaggs had four goals through six games for the 5-1-0 Ohio State women's hockey team.

Skaggs earned All-WCHA third-team honors after leading the conference in goals as a freshman, which she said she is grateful for while acknowledging there's room for improvement.

"Tatum has a little fire under her butt as she was on the WCHA third team last year," Muzerall said. "And I think that irked her a little bit as she feels like she should have been higher ranked. And I think she's trying to make it a statement and prove herself."

Skaggs, a Hartland, Wis., native, does not concern herself with individual accomplishments, saying that her offensive output is more of a product of teamwork than anything.

"I have a team-first mentality," Skaggs said. "Points to me are irrelevant if we win the game. I just think that as much as I can contribute with putting points on the board, I still think that comes back to how our team plays – and how we're mentally focused and winning the game."

Skaggs' team-first mentality is infectious within the squad, and her personality has had an effect beyond just the players. Muzerall's young daughter, Isabella, has grown quite fond of the high-scoring forward.

"My 4-year-old is obsessed with Tatum," Muzerall said. "Tatum is just very magnetic, and

I know she loves to win. She's always smiling, she always sees the good in everything – very competitive, but she's so well-liked because she's always positive.

"I have to say, 'You have to brush your teeth or you have to eat your vegetables, Tatum does.'"

Muzerall, who was a top recruit herself, chose to help build a program as a part of Minnesota's inaugural team, and became a two-time All-American and two-time national champion as a forward for the Golden Gophers. She admires her players' desire to help transform an undistinguished program to a prominent one.

"They don't just want to be another number," Muzerall said. "They want to leave a legacy. And so I think that speaks about their personality. Rather than going with what's easy, I think in life they'll be able to overcome more obstacles because they like that challenge."

"I really compliment those type of people that want to help build something rather than be lost in the shuffle and forgotten, because that team last year will be forever remembered. So I think that speaks volumes of their character."



Tatum Skaggs

In order to better introduce BSB readers to Ohio State's Olympic sports teams and athletes, we have shifted to more feature-oriented coverage of the various squads. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will provide a roundup of all the games, matches and meets involving OSU's teams each Monday on our BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all print subscribers.

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49-6; **29** at (9) Penn State, W 27-26.

Oct. 6 INDIANA (Homecoming), W 49-26; **13** MINNESOTA, W 30-14; **20** at Purdue, 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 3 NEBRASKA, TBA; **10** at Michigan State, TBA; **17** at Maryland, TBA; **24** MICHIGAN, Noon.

Dec. 1 Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis, 8 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Nov. 1 UNC PEMBROKE, 7 p.m.; **7** at Cincinnati, 6 p.m.; **11** PURDUE FORT WAYNE, 4 p.m.; **15** at Creighton, 7 p.m.; **18** SOUTH CAROLINA STATE, 2 p.m.; **20** SAMFORD, 7 p.m.; **23** CLEVELAND STATE at St. John Arena, 8 p.m.; **28** SYRACUSE, 7 p.m.

Dec. 2 MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **5** vs. Illinois at Chicago, 7 p.m.; **15** BUCKNELL, Noon; **18** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, 7 p.m.; **22** vs. UCLA at Chicago, 3 p.m.; **29** HIGH POINT, TBA.

Jan. 5 MICHIGAN STATE, Noon; **9** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **12** at Iowa, 2:30 p.m.; **18** MARYLAND, 6:30 p.m.; **23** PURDUE, 7 p.m.; **26** at Nebraska, Noon; **29** at Michigan, 9 p.m.

Feb. 2 RUTGERS, Noon; **7** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** at Indiana, 1 p.m.; **14** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **17** at Michigan State, 1 p.m.; **20** NORTHWESTERN, 8:30 p.m.; **23** at Maryland, 2 p.m.; **26** IOWA, 7 p.m.

March 2 at Purdue, 2 p.m.; **6** at Northwestern, 9 p.m.; **10** WISCONSIN, 4:30 p.m.; **13-17** Big Ten Tournament at Chicago.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Oct. 28 IUP (Exhibition), 2 p.m.

Nov. 6 USF, 7 p.m.; **9** DETROIT MERCY, 7 p.m.; **11** at UConn, Noon; **16** at Sacramento State, 11:30 p.m.; **18** at Stanford, 4 p.m.; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, 7 p.m.

Dec. 2 CINCINNATI, 2 p.m.; **5** at Washington, 11 p.m.; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena; **20** vs. Virginia Tech at West Palm Beach, Fla., 12:15 p.m.; **21** vs. Butler at West Palm Beach, Fla., 12:15 p.m.; **28** at Purdue, 4 p.m.; **31** NEBRASKA, 1 p.m.

Jan. 5 at Maryland, 4 p.m.; **10** INDIANA, 6 p.m.; **14** MICHIGAN STATE, 7 p.m.; **17** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; **20** at Michigan, 3 p.m.; **24** MARYLAND, 8 p.m.; **28** at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.; **31** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.

Feb. 3 at Northwestern, 4:30 p.m.; **6** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** IOWA, 4 p.m.; **14** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **17** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **21** at Michigan State, 6 p.m.; **28** at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.

March 3 RUTGERS, TBA; **6-10** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 1 Queen City Invitational at Highland Heights, Ky., Men: 6th/10; Women: 1st/10; **8** (Men) Golden Eagle Invitational at Cookeville, Tenn., 1st/4; **15** Commodore Classic at Nashville, Tenn., Men: 8th/14; Women: 1st/19; **29** Loyola Lakefront Invitational at Chicago, Men: 9th/26 (248); Women: 3rd/33 (85).

Oct. 13 Pre-Nationals at Madison, Wis., Men: 31st/34 (814); Women: 13th/35 (389); **28** Big Ten Championships at Lincoln, Neb.

Nov. 9 NCAA Regionals at Terre Haute, Ind.; **17** NCAA Championships at Madison, Wis.

FIELD HOCKEY (10-6, 3-3 BIG TEN)

Aug. 24 (9) DELAWARE, L 3-2; **26** at (8) Louisville, W 3-2 (OT).

Sept. 1 vs. (25) Maine at Boston, L 2-1 (OT); **3** at (19) Boston University, W 4-2; **7** BALL STATE, W 6-0; **9** LEHIGH, W 5-0; **14** (6) PENN STATE, L 3-2; **16** MIAMI (OHIO), L 2-1; **21** at (3) Maryland, L 1-0; **23** at (17) Rutgers, W 4-3; **28** INDIANA, W 1-0; **30** IOWA, L 2-1.

Oct. 5 at Northwestern, W 2-1; **7** OHIO, W 5-2; **12** JAMES MADISON, W 5-0; **14** at Kent State, W 4-0; **19** MICHIGAN STATE, 3 p.m.; **21** MICHIGAN, Noon.

MEN'S GOLF (FALL)

Sept. 15-16 Northern Intercollegiate at Sugar Grove, Ill., 4th/14 (881); **24-25** Bearcat Invitational at Cincinnati, Cancelled; Inverness Intercollegiate at Toledo, NTS; **30-Oct. 2** Nike Collegiate Invitational at Fort Worth, Texas, 10th/15.

Oct. 8-9 JACK NICKLAUS INVITATIONAL at Dublin, Ohio, vs. Clemson, T 2½-2½; vs. Florida State, L 3½-2½; **22-23** Muskies Classic at Cincinnati.

WOMEN'S GOLF (FALL)

Sept. 16 East & West Match Play at Ann Arbor, Mich., Stroke Play: 4th/8 (585); **17** East & West Match Play at Ann Arbor, Mich., vs. UC Davis, L 3-2; **18** East & West Match Play at Ann Arbor, Mich., vs. Oregon State, W 3-2.

Oct. 1-2 Windy City Collegiate at Chicago, 7th/14; **12-14** Tar Heel Invitational at Chapel Hill, N.C., 16th/18 (915); **28-29** Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas.

MEN'S SOCCER (1-10-2, 0-4-1 BIG TEN)

Aug. 24 WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. FURMAN, L 2-0; **26** WOLSTEIN CLASSIC vs. HOFSTRA, W 1-0; **31** Dayton Classic vs. Marshall, L 1-0.

Sept. 2 Dayton Classic vs. Milwaukee, L 1-0; **7** USF, L 1-0; **11** BOWLING GREEN, T 1-1 (2OT); **16** at Penn State, L 3-1; **21** NORTHWESTERN, T 0-0 (2OT); **25** at Michigan, L 3-1; **30** RUTGERS, L 3-2.

Oct. 5 CLEVELAND STATE, L 2-0; **8** at Syracuse, L 3-0; **12** MICHIGAN STATE, L 2-1; **16** KENTUCKY, 7 p.m.; **19** at Maryland, 7 p.m.; **24** INDIANA, 7 p.m.; **28** at Wisconsin, 4 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (7-5-3, 4-2-3 BIG TEN)

Aug. 16 at (3) Duke, L 2-0; **19** at (6) North Carolina, L 2-0; **24** at Florida, W 1-0; **26** DUQUESNE, Cancelled; **30** MOREHEAD STATE, W 8-0.

Sept. 2 at Notre Dame, W 1-0; **7** FLORIDA GULF COAST, L 1-0; **14** at Penn State, L 4-0; **20** at Illinois, W 2-0; **23** at Northwestern, W 1-0 (OT); **27** IOWA, W 2-0; **30** NEBRASKA, T 1-1 (2OT).

Oct. 5 at Michigan, L 1-0; **7** at Michigan State, W 1-0; **12** RUTGERS, T 0-0; **14** MARYLAND, T 1-1 (2OT); **18** at Purdue, 6 p.m.; **21** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (2-0-0)

Oct. 12-13 at Arizona State, W 3-2; W 3-0; **19-20** MASSACHUSETTS, 7 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **26** BOWLING GREEN, 7 p.m.; **27** at Bowling Green, 7:07 p.m.

Nov. 2-3 at Notre Dame, 7:30 p.m.; 7:30 p.m.; **9-10** at Colgate, 7 p.m.; 4 p.m.; **16-17** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **23-24** PENN STATE, 5 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **30-Dec. 1** at Minnesota, 8 p.m.; 5 p.m.

Dec. 28-29 MERCYHURST, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m..

Jan. 4-5 at Michigan State, TBA; 8 p.m.; **11-12** MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.; 7 p.m.; **18-19** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; 7 p.m.

Feb. 1-2 NOTRE DAME, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **8-9** at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **15-16** MINNESOTA, TBA; 6 p.m.; **22-23** at Michigan, 6:30 p.m.; 6 p.m.

March 1-2 MICHIGAN STATE, 6:30 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **8-10** Big Ten Tournament First Round; **16** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals; **23** Big Ten Tournament Finals; **29-31** NCAA Regionals.

April 11/13 NCAA Frozen Four at Buffalo, N.Y.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (5-1-0, 2-0-0 WCHA)

Sept. 28-29 at Quinnipiac, W 3-2; W 3-2.

Oct. 5-6 COLGATE, W 4-3; L 5-2; **12-13** MINNESOTA STATE, W 4-0; W 2-1 (OT); **19-20** at Minnesota, 8:07 p.m.; 5:07 p.m.; **26-27** at St. Lawrence, 6 p.m.; 3 p.m.

Nov. 2-3 ST. CLOUD STATE, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **9-10** at Bemidji State, 4:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.; **16-17** MINNESOTA DULUTH, 6:07 p.m.; 1:07 p.m.

Dec. 1-2 at Minnesota State, 7:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **15-16** MERCYHURST, 3:07 p.m.; 1:07 p.m.

Jan. 5-6 MINNESOTA WHITECAPS, 3:07 p.m.; 12:07 p.m.; **11-12** WISCONSIN, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **18-19** at Minnesota Duluth, 8:07 p.m.; 5:07 p.m.; **25-26** at Minnesota, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.

Feb. 1-2 at St. Cloud State, 4:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.; **8-9** BEMIDJI STATE, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **22-23** at Wisconsin, 8:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.

March 1-3 WCHA Quarterfinals; **9-10** WCHA Final Faceoff at Minneapolis; **16** NCAA Quarterfinals; **22/24** NCAA Frozen Four at Hamden, Conn.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (12-8, 3-5 BIG TEN)

Aug. 24 ALBANY, W 3-1; **25** OHIO, W 3-0; TEXAS A&M, W 3-0; **31** vs. Southern Miss at Oxford, Miss., W 3-2; at Ole Miss, L 3-2.

Sept. 1 vs. Samford at Oxford, Miss., W 3-0; **7** vs. Princeton at Towson, Md., W 3-0; **8** vs. Missouri at Towson, Md., W 3-1; at Towson, W 3-0; **14** vs. Evansville at Dayton, W 3-1; **15** vs. Tennessee at Dayton, L 3-1; at Dayton, L 3-2; **19** at (6) Wisconsin, L 3-0; **22** (4) PENN STATE, W 3-1; **26** INDIANA, L 3-1; **29** at Maryland, L 3-2.

Oct. 5 at Rutgers, W 3-2; **6** at (9) Penn State, L 3-0; **12** MICHIGAN, L 3-2; **14** MICHIGAN STATE, W 3-0; **19** at Indiana, 7 p.m.; **20** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **24** NEBRASKA, 7 p.m.; **28** at Northwestern, 2 p.m.

Nov. 2 ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **4** NORTHWESTERN, 1 p.m.; **7** at Michigan State, 7 p.m.; **10** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **16** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.; **17** MINNESOTA, 7 p.m.; **23** at Nebraska, 8 p.m.; **24** at Iowa, 8 p.m.



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OCT 13 - MINNESOTA
OCT 20 - AT PURDUE
OCT 27 - BYE WEEK
NOV 3 - NEBRASKA
NOV 10 - AT MICHIGAN STATE
NOV 17 - AT MARYLAND
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'Super Sophs' Have Special Place In OSU History

The national championship team of 1968 was honored Oct. 13 in Ohio Stadium – the squad that many sportswriters, coaches and loyal fans have often called the greatest Buckeye team ever. It was also heralded as one of the top college football teams in NCAA history.

COACH'S CORNER With Bill Conley

Both of those assumptions are debatable, but this is for certain: The talent on that team was exceptional. Eleven members of that squad went on to be All-Americans, and six were first-round NFL draft picks.

There was some heat on head coach Woody Hayes going into the 1968 season. Even though he had already won three national championships since being named the head coach in 1951, his 1966 team had a losing record and also lost to Michigan in Columbus by 14 points. Hayes rebounded in 1967 with a 6-3 record, beat Michigan in Ann Arbor by a score of 24-14 and ended the season with four straight wins. Still, the local media was unmerciful on Hayes, and some called for his firing.

Super Sophs

The NCAA established no limits on scholarships until 1973, so many schools could offer as many as they deemed they could afford.

Some Division I programs offered up to 150, and Ohio State was somewhere around the 125 mark.

The coaching staff brought in an outstanding group of athletes in the 1967 recruiting class, and right away they established themselves as being very special on the practice field. Freshmen were ineligible to play at that time, so everyone knew they had to wait a year to see this talented group play in varsity competition. It was also apparent that many of those players would be able to compete for starting jobs they would have the opportunity to earn during the upcoming spring practices of 1968.

I came to Ohio State as a freshman linebacker in 1968 and immediately realized how good the talent was on that team. As a scout-team linebacker, I was immediately introduced to, or should I say initiated to, such powerful and athletic running backs as fullback Jim Otis and halfback John Brockington. Going against those types of players made all of us freshmen better, as long as we survived.

1968 Season

By the time August camp was completed, as many as 20 of those "Super Sophs" had worked their way into the two-deep. Those players along with some very good and established returners allowed Hayes to put a team on the field that was as skilled, athletic, powerful and competitive as any other school in the nation.

The first two victories came over SMU and Oregon, and then came the home contest against No. 1 Purdue. The Boilermakers had a

strong offense led by quarterback Mike Phipps and running back Leroy Keyes. The game was scoreless going into the third quarter when junior defensive back Ted Provost picked off a Phipps pass and took it the distance for a touchdown. Our next score came with 3:55 left in the game when third-team quarterback Bill Long scrambled in from 14 yards to seal the deal and a 13-0 victory. Long had come in for the two sophomore quarterbacks, Rex Kern and Ron Maciejowski, who both had been injured.

The 1968 team went on and had close wins over Illinois, Iowa and Michigan State. They also had resounding victories over Northwestern and Wisconsin, and by the time the showdown came against Michigan in Columbus, the Buckeyes were ranked No. 1 or 2 in the nation, according to various polls. That was a great motivator for the team, and the Wolverines had no chance in Ohio Stadium that day as they took a 50-14 thumping. This made us Big Ten champions and gave us the opportunity to play in the Rose Bowl against the University of Southern California.

USC came into the Rose Bowl undefeated but with one blemish, a 21-21 tie against Notre Dame in its last regular-season game.

A No. 1 Ohio State now faced No. 2 USC for the national championship. We had the "Super Sophs" and they had the Heisman Trophy winner, O.J. Simpson. The Trojans jumped off to a 10-0 lead in the second quarter after a Simpson 80-yard run, but the Buckeyes fought back to tie the game by halftime. In the second half it was all Ohio State as Kern threw two touchdown passes and Jim Roman kicked a field goal for a 27-16 victory and a national championship.

The Players

The 1968 team accomplished the nearly impossible task of winning that title with names that are legendary in Ohio State and in all of college football. Great senior leadership by players like our two All-American offensive tackles Rufus Mayes and Dave Foley, linebackers Dirk Worden and Mark Stier, and center John Muhlbach, who was 5-9, weighed just 190 pounds and was a major key to the success of that team.

Talented juniors like offensive guards Alan Jack and Tom Backhaus, running backs Ray Gillian and Otis, defensive linemen Brad Nielsen and Dave Whitfield, and defensive backs Provost and Mike Polaski were also standouts on the squad.

Buckeye fans would have the pleasure to watch all of those very special sophomores for two more seasons. The names of Kern, Maciejowski, Stillwagon, Tatum, Sensibaugh, Brockington, White, Jankowski, Hayden, Zelina, Strickland, Adams, Cheney and Donovan are just some of those players who made the nickname "Super Sophs" part of Buckeye lore.

The Coaches

It was Hayes' team and he ran a tight ship, but he had a group of assistant coaches that were absolutely outstanding as recruiters, teachers of the fundamentals, and innovators.

Earle Bruce was the guard and centers coach who would go on to be the head coach at the University of Tampa and Iowa State and then return to Columbus to replace Hayes as head coach of the Buckeyes.

The secondary coach was a quick-witted young man named Lou Holtz. Holtz went on to serve as the head coach of multiple universities including Arkansas and Notre Dame as well as the New York Jets in the NFL. Bill Mallory made his mark as a head coach at Indiana and Colorado. Running backs coach Rudy Hubbard led Florida A&M to multiple winning seasons for the 12 years he ran the Rattlers football program.

The quarterbacks coach, George Chaump, the guy who talked Hayes into running the "I formation" along with Woody's beloved "T formation" he called Robust, would also become both a collegiate head coach and an NFL assistant. Assistant coach Hugh Hindman and defensive coordinator Lou McCullough would end up as collegiate administrators. Ironically, it would be Hindman who would fire Hayes after the Clemson debacle.

No one was more important to Hayes than Esco Sarkkinen, a former All-American as a player at Ohio State and a 32-year assistant defensive ends coach for the Buckeyes. Glen "Tiger" Ellison, the head freshman coach, was known as one of the great football innovators of the times. Tiger had developed the "run and shoot offense" at Middletown High School prior to coming to Ohio State. The "run and shoot" was the forerunner of today's spread offenses.

A Tradition Started

It was 1968 that the first Buckeye leaves were given for outstanding performances on the field. These helmet stickers were given out by Coach Hayes the Monday after Saturday games.

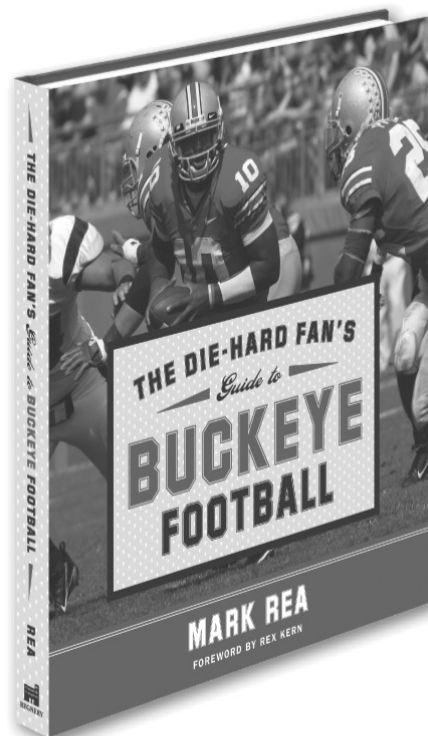
Hayes would place every Buckeye leaf on each player's helmet himself. The stickers were hard to get, and a great play would earn only a partial leaf. It might take several outstanding plays before you could actually receive the entire leaf to go on your helmet. This small reward for achievement ended up being a major motivator for everyone on the team.

The year of 1968 was special in so many ways in terms of team accomplishments, legendary players and coaches, traditions, and most importantly, great memories.

Known as one of the top recruiters in college football, Bill Conley is a national championship-winning coach and player at Ohio State who suited up for Woody Hayes and spent 17 years on the staffs of Earle Bruce, John Cooper and Jim Tressel.

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Bucks Are In Good Spot, But There Are Concerns

Appreciate the success. Take note of the concerns.

Advice for sizing up the Buckeyes' success to date while acknowledging that the status quo is not good enough to make a run at the national championship.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

Issues with the running game, problems in allowing too many big plays, and an injury list blotted with names of key contributors are all concerns. More about that later.

But first, recognition of just how hard it is to have a perfect record through mid-October and the leg up it provides on the competition. Bottom line, Ohio State is 7-0, making the Buckeyes one of the odds-on favorites for the College Football Playoff. Win out and they are in.

That still can be said for just four other teams out of 130 playing big-time college football – Alabama, Clemson, Notre Dame and long shot but undefeated North Carolina State.

This year, undefeated is an especially select October group.

At the same time in 2017, nine schools from the Power 5 conferences remained unbeaten.

Playoff Considerations

Why is this so important?

Here's the premise. An undefeated champion from any of the five major conferences, or Notre Dame, is guaranteed a spot in the playoffs unless there are more than four. There cannot be more than four this season.

Illustrating how tough it is to stay perfect, 60 of the 64 teams from these conferences have already lost. Ohio State is the only undefeated team left in the Big Ten. Alabama is the last unbeaten in the SEC. The ACC has two – Clemson and North Carolina State – but of course only one can finish the season undefeated. The fifth unbeaten in the playoff mix is independent Notre Dame.

Already, every school in the Big 12 and the Pac-12 has at least one loss each.

Not Out Of It Yet

Based on playoff history, albeit a brief four seasons, there are other clues for how the playoff pairings will shake out: (a) Only the major-conference teams are seriously considered (sorry, undefeated UCF, Cincinnati and South Florida). (b) And two-loss teams don't make the playoffs.

So with that in mind, a dozen remaining one-loss teams from the major conferences should still be considered in the mix – provided they win out.

For the Big Ten, that's only Michigan and Iowa. If either wins the conference with just one loss, they will have serious cases to make for the playoffs. The problem for Iowa is that the Hawkeyes both have to win out and get help with another Wisconsin loss to make the résumé-building Big Ten title game.

Getting To The End Undefeated

As rare as it is to be undefeated after seven games, it's tougher to remain that way into early December. The playoff field had just one undefeated team on selection day in 2014, 2015 and 2016, and none in 2017.

To remain undefeated, Ohio State will have to be better than it is now.

Michigan is getting better. Michigan State, as evidenced by its win Penn State, still should be considered dangerous. And there are people who think the trip to Purdue is a danger game (not sure I'm in that camp).

The Running Game

It would be too simple to look at Ohio State's low run output (92 yards against Minnesota) as a product of Dwayne Haskins' school record-breaking passing pace.

Rushing totals are down because the Buckeyes have done a poor job running the football – not because they have failed to try.

Ohio State is running the ball an average of 41.4 times per game so far this season. That's down only slightly from 42 attempts per game last year. During Urban Meyer's six previous seasons at Ohio State, the Buckeyes have averaged no more than 46.6 attempts a season (in 2012).

The difference this year is the yards per carry. Maybe it's poor line blocking. Perhaps play calling is at least partly to blame. Adjusting to not having a running quarterback likely is a contributing factor.

Whatever the case, and it's probably a combination, the running game must become more effective if Ohio State is going to become a serious contender for the national championship.

Ohio State is averaging 4.5 yards per carry this season. In Meyer's previous seasons, OSU averaged 5.8 yards per carry in 2017, 5.5 in 2016, 5.6 in 2015, 5.7 in 2014, 6.8 in 2013 and 5.2 in 2012.

Passing Defense

Ohio State ranks 42nd nationally in pass efficiency defense. That's one step below 3-4 Ball State, and just ahead of 4-3 Northern Illinois and 2-3 Akron.

It doesn't take being in the top 10 or 20 in every key category to be a national contender, but 42nd is too low in such an important category if that sticks through the season.

Among those ranking higher in this regard are Michigan (fifth), Alabama (10th), Notre Dame (13th), LSU (14th) and Georgia (15th). Clemson, like Ohio State, is too low, at 32nd.

Points Allowed

Big plays allowed by a secondary that seems too slow, or out of position, at times is one reason Ohio State ranks so low in passing defense. The same problem is a source for Ohio State ranking outside the top 20 in points allowed.

The Buckeyes are 24th in the country after seven games, averaging 19.1 points allowed per game. Among the key contenders for the playoffs, Clemson is sixth, Alabama is seventh, Michigan is ninth, Georgia is 12th and LSU is 17th.

Notre Dame, like Ohio State, is outside the top 20. The Fighting Irish rank 22nd for points allowed.

Healing Time

Ohio State enjoys a luxury to which few teams can relate. The Buckeyes are so deep at so many positions, the injuries don't normally have a huge impact. But a healthy Ohio State team is a better Ohio State team.

In addition to possibly getting Nick Bosa back in November for the stretch run, there is reason to be optimistic that Ohio State could enter the late season in better health.

Linebacker Malik Harrison and defensive end Jonathon Cooper missed the Minnesota game because of concussions. Those aren't expected to be long-term problems.

Dre'Mont Jones, second behind only Bosa for talent on OSU's defensive line, has been banged up a bit since Bosa went down. But rest is on the horizon for him and others.

After Purdue on Oct. 20, OSU has a time-off week before playing winless Nebraska at home on Nov. 3. Both the off week and the Nebraska game provide potential

breaks for the ailing Buckeyes just in time for the final stretch against Michigan State, Maryland, Michigan and a possible Big Ten title game.

My Top 10

1. Alabama (7-0) – No quality wins yet, but no reason to believe 'Bama should be ranked anywhere but No. 1.

2. Ohio State (7-0) – Not impressive against Minnesota, but the body of work is better than any other team in the country.

3. Notre Dame (7-0) – Suddenly, that win over Michigan is looking better on ND's résumé.

4. LSU (6-1) – Despite a loss, LSU's wins over Miami (Fla.), Auburn and Georgia are very, very impressive.

5. Clemson (6-0) – No quality wins yet and a couple of close calls.

6. Texas (6-1) – I'm not sure how high a team should be ranked that lost to Maryland, but Texas does appear to be on a roll now after that opener.

7. Michigan (6-1) – Michigan is looking good lately; we'll know a lot more after its next two games, against Michigan State and Penn State.

8-10. Oregon (5-1), Oklahoma (5-1) and West Virginia (5-1) – hard to separate these three right now, other than to say they are clearly separated from the top seven.

Eventually breaking into my top 10 would be the American Conference champion, if undefeated. The three remaining unbeaten there are Central Florida (6-0), Cincinnati (6-0) and South Florida (6-0).

Personal Note

Never does an OSU trip to Purdue go by without me thinking back to 1981. It was on the evening of Oct. 30, 1981, when Buckeye Sports Bulletin publisher Frank Moskowitz asked me to tag along with him to Purdue the next day to take some pictures of the OSU-Purdue game. I ended up getting to write stories, too, based on some postgame interviews that day. And it was an OSU win.

That was the first year of BSB. Here we are, 37 years later, and I'm still writing for the Bulletin and Moskowitz is still the publisher.

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There's Plenty Of Good, Bad And Ugly For OSU

Through seven games, there has been a lot of good, a helping or two of bad and a splash of ugly for the Ohio State football team. On the positive side for the Buckeye faithful, Urban Meyer's team is 7-0 and ranked second in the nation. The Buckeyes have complete control of their destiny and a Heisman candidate at quarterback.

MOODY MUSINGS Tim Moody, Editor

Trust me, things could be a lot worse.

That said, it hasn't all been smooth sailing by any means, so let's break down what the Buckeyes have done this year, starting with the worst aspects of their game.

The Ugly

I genuinely can't remember the last time the Ohio State running game was this bad, and I refuse to blame that on the lack of a running quarterback. The Buckeyes were able to effectively run the ball when Todd Boeckman was the signal caller, so don't try to convince me you need to have Braxton Miller, J.T. Barrett or even Tate Martell back there to run the ball. That's nonsense.

Ohio State in 2018 has two future NFL running backs who have been playing well, in all honesty. They've done pretty much as much as they possibly could with what they've been given. So don't blame J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber – the running game would be even worse without them.

No, it all starts up front with the offensive line, and the Buckeyes simply haven't dominated at the point of attack. For years under Meyer, Ohio State's offensive lines have paved the way for a string of talented backs – Carlos Hyde, Ezekiel Elliott, Weber and Dobbins – while sometimes struggling in pass protection (yes, we all remember the 2016 Penn State game).

This year, though, the five up front have been generally strong in pass protection and almost nonexistent when it comes to run blocking. The running game has

gotten worse pretty much every week, highlighted by the 92 yards gained on 32 attempts against Minnesota on Oct. 13.

That performance marked the first time since a 31-0 loss to Clemson in the 2016 College Football Playoff that an Ohio State team failed to rush for at least 100 yards. It was the first time since a 35-21 loss to Virginia Tech in 2014 that the Buckeyes averaged less than 3 yards per carry (2.9). Even if you take away quarterback Dwayne Haskins' nine carries for 6 yards (thanks to three sacks), the numbers are brutal. Weber led the way with 13 carries for 51 yards (3.9-yard average) while Dobbins had 10 totes for just 35 yards (3.5).

For two of the best running backs in the nation, that's unacceptable production. And they should be frustrated, because it's simply not their fault.

As offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson pointed out after the game, the physical dominance at the point of attack has been lacking, and Ohio State simply hasn't found an identity in the ground game just yet.

Part of that is on the offensive line performing at a lower level – especially at guard – and part of that is on the coaching staff for not making the necessary adjustments.

They say it's not time for a personnel change just yet, but it also looks like the Buckeyes are rushing junior Branden Bowen back after he underwent another surgery on his broken leg earlier this fall. If Bowen can get back in the lineup, Ohio State would have a huge boost.

If he can't, then the Buckeyes need to figure something else out because at some point this season, they're going to need to run the ball. And right now, they can't.

The Bad

The Ohio State defense is going to catch a lot of headlines, but it's honestly hard for me to figure out exactly how good or bad the unit is, and it's tough to pinpoint exactly what the issues are.

Overall, I don't think Ohio State is running a defensive scheme that fits its linebackers and defensive backs.

The Buckeyes are pretty much middle-of-the-pack nationally on defense, allowing 369.6 total yards per game (5.6 per play),

including 221.6 passing yards and 148.0 rushing yards. Those are pretty "meh" numbers, but they aren't a total disaster, either. And Ohio State is giving up just 19.1 points per game – again, kind of "meh," but the Buckeyes average 46.3. They'll win every game if the defense holds the opponent under 20.

Other than the linebackers – who are always blamed, no matter what, even when it's not deserved – the safeties have been the whipping boys for the Ohio State defense. To some extent, that makes sense – the safety play outside of Jordan Fuller earlier in the year was pretty abysmal.

But sophomore Isaiah Pryor, who has taken a firm hold on a starting spot, has quietly improved week by week, and in a rotation with Shaun Wade at times, that spot could be a strength by the end of the season. But there's a lot of work to do – and that work can certainly get done.

"We all just need to go out there and just do our job, and if we all do that then it's usually a minimal gain or a punt," Pryor told me after the Minnesota game. "So as long as we keep doing that, we're going to get better every week. So we just need to keep getting better and focus on the game plan."

The game plan. To me, that might be the only big issue for this Ohio State defense right now. I think the Buckeyes have the talent to be a great defense, but I'm not sure that the talent fits what they're trying to do.

Here's one example: Ohio State against Minnesota would often line up a linebacker over the slot receiver. He would be starting about 15 yards from the quarterback, but he'd often show blitz and rush as soon as the ball was snapped. From the slot. On passing downs, those linebackers never got close to the quarterback, and it forced the safety – often Pryor or Wade – to move way up after starting well behind the line of scrimmage. They were being asked to step up, cut on a dime with the wide receiver and defend quick slant routes throughout the game.

Those routes were never covered properly against the Golden Gophers – not until the fourth quarter at least – and quite frankly the safeties shouldn't have been

put in those spots. If you're Malik Hooker, maybe you make that play every time. But for actual mortals, it's almost impossible.

Ohio State needs to recognize its personnel and draw up a scheme that works.

Oh, and the Buckeyes have been decimated by injuries on defense. At different points, Nick Bosa (who is still out), Dre'Mont Jones, Robert Landers, Jonathon Cooper, Malik Harrison, Damon Arnette and Tuf Borland have been limited for health reasons. If all those guys can get healthy, this might look like a different Ohio State defense and the flip of a switch.

The Good

I won't spend a ton of time on the good, because we all know what it is. Ohio State's passing game has been performing at a ridiculous level, and Haskins sure looks like a guy who is going to be invited to New York in December.

In fact, as things stand as I write this Oct. 14, I believe Haskins will be the 2018 Heisman Trophy winner.

Through the first seven starts of his career, Haskins has completed 175 of 242 passes (72.3 percent) for 2,331 yards, 28 touchdowns and just four interceptions. He has two straight 400-yard passing games (there had previously been only one in program history for an individual) and his arm talent is the best we've ever seen in Columbus.

Haskins is third in the nation in pass yards, first in passing touchdowns, third in completion percentage and third in QB rating (188.1). Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa is having a great season as well and is the popular pick for the Heisman, but Haskins has the numbers and the big-time wins to give him the award this year, and I don't see him slowing down anytime soon.

Of course, Ohio State's wide receivers deserve credit, too, especially slot receivers Parris Campbell (43 catches, 557 yards, seven touchdowns) and K.J. Hill (40, 551, four). Assuming Ohio State plays 14 games (12 regular season, Big Ten title game, bowl game), or even 15, they're both on pace for more than 1,000 yards receiving. Ohio State hasn't had a 1,000-yard receiver since Michael Jenkins caught 61 passes for 1,076 yards and six scores in 2002 – a national championship season.

This group of wide receivers is simply special.

My Apologies

A couple of weeks back, I included a note in my column about fifth-year senior kicker Sean Nuernberger's pursuit of the Ohio State points record. At the time, our publisher, Frank Moskowitz, joked that I might have jinxed Nuernberger.

And, of course, two weeks later, Nuernberger missed the Minnesota game with what was called a minor strain.

It shouldn't be a big deal, and he might end up breaking the record anyway, but I'll play it safe and avoid updating the pursuit going forward. If he reaches the mark, I'll let you know.

Oh, and by the way, how good did Blake Haubeil look in Nuernberger's place? He was 3 of 3 on field goals and 3 of 3 on extra points against the Golden Gophers after not handling placekicking duties in a game since high school. That included a 47-yarder that, quite frankly, Ohio State hasn't been able to make very often in recent seasons.

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Beyond Pass Offense, Bucks Have Much To Prove

Can a team pass its way to a national championship? Buckeye fans may find out.

The air attack, led by Dwayne Haskins, is the only facet of the Ohio State football team that has been consistent from the first snap against Oregon State this season, and that's troubling, though Haskins and his fleet group of receivers continue to find ways to help Ohio State win while other parts of the team's game falter.

They always say that defense wins championships. That could be a strike against Ohio State in 2018. While it's true the stop troops have stiffened when they have had to, have they shown improvement over the first seven games of the season? Maybe Greg Schiano and Co. see it, but I haven't. At some point the Buckeyes may find themselves in such a hole that better play by the defense after intermission and stellar play by Haskins may not be enough to dig out.

And championship teams usually have a solid running game. When people look back to Ohio State's run to the championship in 2014, they remember the remarkable play of next-man-up quarterback Cardale Jones and his shotgun arm. Some forget that Jones' efforts were aided by the amazing championship run of Ezekiel Elliott, who averaged an incredible 232.0 yards per contest in the games against Wisconsin (220), Alabama (230) and Oregon (246).

I keep hearing people float the idea that the Buckeyes are struggling running the ball because they don't have the threat of a running quarterback. That's nonsense. If you have a quarterback posting the dizzying numbers that Haskins is, that should be more than enough to loosen things up for a pair of quality backs such as J.K. Dobbins and Mike Weber.

In fact, look at the flip side. Think of the numbers that Haskins could put up if opposing defenses had to better account for Dobbins and Weber.

I also hear that the problem is that the offensive linemen are falling into the pattern of pass blocking and losing their edge on the run. Hey, you were recruited to play at Ohio State which means you should be "elite," to use Meyer's new favorite word. Come ready to do both or take a seat.

I suppose if there is any quarterback who could pass the Buckeyes to the promised land without the full support of the defense and running game, it's Haskins. But it doesn't leave much room for him to have the off day that every athlete has.

"It's discouraging a little bit, but once again, 7-0, and we're throwing for 412," Meyer said after the Minnesota game. "It is what it is. I just know the game of football. I've been around. At some point, you've got to line up and do what you do."

I assume he means run the football.

Some quick positive notes on the game with the Gophers.

It was great to see the tight ends nearly double their reception output for the season against Minnesota. Luke Farrell and Rashod Berry combined for four receptions in the game, including a sweet 24-yard catch-and-run by Farrell to help key a fourth-quarter Buckeye scoring drive. And it was good to see Berry, who has been having problems reeling in the football, grab a pair.

The tight ends had entered the game with a combined five receptions. Now opposing defenses have another thing to think about in Haskins' arsenal.

And did you see Blake Haubeil just drill that 47-yard field goal to give Ohio State a 20-14 lead in the third quarter? Sean Nuernberger has already etched his name into Buckeye lore with his robotic point-after kicking. But I would be awfully nervous if he were called on to win a game with a field goal. Is Haubeil the answer?

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

And on a down note, we haven't heard tackle Isaiah Prince's name called since 2016 – a good thing. But it was called plenty as he struggled against Minnesota. His improvement over his career has been impressive, and Buckeye fans should keep an eye on his play down the stretch as it may be critical – positive or negative.

Brohm's Faced OSU Before

Oct. 20 may mark the first time Jeff Brohm has faced Ohio State as coach at Purdue, but it is not the first time he has faced the Buckeyes.

Brohm led his Louisville Cardinals into Ohio Stadium as the team's quarterback on Sept. 5, 1992, and almost engineered the upset. He drove his team 67 yards in 2:29 for a touchdown to bring his team to within a point at 20-19 with 33 seconds remaining. Legendary coach Howard Schnellenberger elected to go for the two-point conversion and the win.

Brohm's pass to running back Ralph Dawkins, who had just scored the TD on a 2-yard run, was just out of reach.

Brohm threw the conversion pass under duress from freshman defensive tackle "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson.

"I saw Ralph, but I couldn't quite get squared around," Brohm said after the game. "As soon as I had taken the snap, there was a guy in my face. I guess it was Wilkinson. I was running backwards, and I tried to give the pass some air."

While Schnellenberger didn't hesitate to go for the win, he felt his team never should have been in the position of having to make that decision.

"There were so many things we could have done where we wouldn't even have been going for two," the coach said. "That's the tragedy. Our extra-point and field-goal kicking was not good."

Brohm had driven the Cardinals 68 yards on the game's opening possession to the Buckeye 8, but Ken Harnden missed a 25-yard field-goal attempt. Then, just before halftime, Brohm used a 58-yard pass to help set up a 3-yard scoring toss to his brother, Greg, to make the score 10-6, OSU. However, Steve Tovar blocked the PAT. If Harnden had connected on either of those kicks Louisville would not have had to try for two.

"I think we dodged a bullet," fifth-year Buckeye head coach John Cooper said. "I don't think there's any question we dodged a bullet. Anytime the team is going for two points to win the game with 30 seconds left to go, sure you have to say you dodged a bullet. But we dodged it, came out with a win, and we're happy."

Brohm was 22 of 30 for 230 yards and the score without an interception. His Buckeye counterpart, Kirk Herbstreit, completed 80 percent of his passes, going 16 for 20, but threw two interceptions without a score. The Buckeyes were sparked by a 50-yard touchdown run on a reverse by flanker Joey Galloway in the second quarter.

Dawkins had a big day for Louisville, rushing for 125 yards on 19 carries and adding six receptions for 35 yards to go along with two TDs.

"Ohio State is a good team, and I predict they will do well this year," Brohm said. "But we're a good team, too, and our best football is still ahead of us. It felt good to compete against a traditional power like Ohio State, but we all know we belong on the field with them."

Despite Brohm's confidence, Louisville,

playing as an independent, finished the season 5-6. The Buckeyes finished the 1992 season with an 8-3-1 record, 5-2-1 in the Big Ten, good for second in the conference.

Brohm was 155 of 297 for 2,008 yards and nine touchdowns against 12 interceptions in '92. He closed out strong his senior year, completing 185 of 304 passes for 2,626 yards and 20 scores vs. just nine interceptions.

We will run reprints of Buckeye Sports Bulletin stories covering the 1992 game with Louisville on our BuckeyeSports.com website as part of Reprint Thursday on Oct. 18. If you miss them on that day, no problem. All reprints are archived under the "BSB Online" tab on the home page.

Schlichter's 458-Yard Record

Speaking of Reprint Thursday, we ran stories from the game in which Art Schlichter threw for 458 yards, a record that Haskins nearly matched against Indiana, as part of Reprint Thursday on Oct. 11. While Schlichter's big day has gotten a lot of play of late, it is not always mentioned that the Buckeyes lost that game to Florida State, 36-27. He threw an unheard-of 52 passes in the game (John Borton held the previous record with 44 in 1952), completing 31 with a 53-yard score to Gary Williams and an 18-yard scoring strike to Cedric Anderson.

Schlichter's record number of attempts still stands, with Steve Bellisari coming the closest to matching it with 47 against Michigan in a 38-26 loss in 2000, Cooper's last year. By the way, while Haskins followed up his 455-yard game against the Hoosiers with another 400-plus yard effort against Minnesota, Schlichter followed his record-setting day with just 151 yards against Wisconsin. He completed 18 of 33 passes without a touchdown and threw three interceptions in a 24-21 loss.

One story from that Oct. 10, 1981, issue of BSB that we did not run told of Florida State's schedule that season. Another legendary coach, Bobby Bowden, was obviously trying to raise the profile of the FSU program, then playing as an independent. The Seminoles played No. 17 Nebraska, No. 7 Ohio State, Notre Dame, No. 3 Pitt and LSU – *in a row, all on the road!* The 'Noles not only defeated the Buckeyes but also knocked off Notre Dame, 19-13, and LSU, 38-14. For good measure, Florida State played in-state rivals Miami and Florida later in the season, falling to both to finish 6-5. Can you imagine a team, especially a team that considers itself a playoff contender, playing a schedule like that today?

The Seminoles would return to Ohio Stadium the following year and again beat the Buckeyes, this time 34-17. Bowden's efforts to build the program paid off, as he made Florida State one of college football's true powers during his tenure.

Boilers Make Me Nervous

Ohio State has been installed as a 14-point favorite over improving Purdue for their Oct. 20 matchup. But strange things frequently happen when Ohio State plays the Boilermakers so this game makes me nervous, especially given the way the Buckeyes have been playing.

Some of the games between the two teams that stand out to me start all the way back in 1984. In that game the No. 2 ranked Buckeyes were making a last-gasp attempt to overcome

a 28-23 deficit in the final seconds at Purdue, when senior quarterback Mike Tomczak lost track of downs and threw the ball out of bounds on fourth down in an attempt to stop the clock.

In the Boilers' 31-26 win in 1988, Purdue's 17-year-old quarterback, Brian Fox, hit senior fullback Ernie Schramayr, who previously had only five catches in his career, 13 times for 106 yards and two scores in Ohio Stadium. So help me, if the game had gone on another 60 minutes Fox and Schramayr would have connected another 13 times. The Buckeyes just weren't going to stop that play.

How about 2000? With the No. 12 Buckeyes trailing the No. 16 Boilers, 24-20, late in the fourth quarter, Mike Doss intercepted a Drew Brees pass and returned it to the Purdue 2. Three plays later Jerry Westbrook ran for the score to give the Buckeyes a 27-24 lead with just 2:16 to play. Moments later, Doss found himself in no-man's land as Brees hit a wide-open former walk-on Seth Morales for a 64-yard touchdown and a 31-27 win.

Jump ahead to 2009. After a hard-fought, 18-15, early-season loss to visiting USC, the Buckeyes and Terrelle Pryor were rolling, having won four games in a row by an average score of 33-7. They traveled to Purdue to face the 1-5 Boilermakers, winless in their first two Big Ten games.

No. 7 Ohio State sleepwalked through the 26-18 loss. The Buckeyes committed five turnovers and were held to a season-low 66 yards rushing (sounds too much like 2018 on the rushing front for my taste). Pryor passed for 221 yards and a touchdown to DeVier Posey but threw two picks and was sacked five times. He was the Buckeyes' leading rusher with 34 net yards on 21 carries for a 1.6-yard average.

And even in a Buckeye win, Purdue can cause problems. Think back to Urban Meyer's first season at OSU in 2012. The Buckeyes were off to a 7-0 start and were hosting the 2-4 Boilers. Braxton Miller struggled, completing just 9 of 20 passes for 113 yards without a score and throwing an interception. He had just 47 net yards on 12 carries, 37 coming on one run, with a score. He also lost a fumble and Purdue led, 20-14 in the third quarter.

Shortly before the end of that period, Miller was knocked out of the game and Kenny Guiton took over with the Buckeyes still trailing 20-14. Buckeye tight end Jeff Heuerman was flagged for a block in the back in the end zone resulting in safety and a 22-14 Boilermaker lead. That forced Guiton to march his team 61 yards in the game's final 47 seconds for a scoring pass to Chris Fields and a two-point toss to Heuerman to force overtime, where the Buckeyes secured the victory.

So you can see why I'll feel a lot better when the Buckeyes put this year's game in the books as a W. Then I'll start worrying about how Michigan State, under former Buckeye assistant Mark Dantonio, has played Ohio State tough during the Meyer era.

It's Been 50 Years?

Special thanks to BSB columnist and former Ohio State player and coach Bill Conley for sharing his thoughts on the fabled 1968 Buckeye national championship team which celebrated its 50th anniversary over the Minnesota weekend, a team on which Conley was a freshman. We did not make as big a deal about that milestone as perhaps we should have because through the years, we have chronicled that great team more than any other in the pages of BSB.

In fact, I can't believe it's been 25 years since BSB helped organize the team's huge 25th anniversary banquet, "One Moment In Time."

FOR ATHLETES

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Double or Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

REPORT IT. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.

GET CHECKED OUT. If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a health care provider can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

GIVE YOUR BRAIN TIME TO HEAL. A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

WHY SHOULD I TELL MY COACH & PARENTS ABOUT MY SYMPTOMS?

Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.

While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain and can even be fatal.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON

<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/concussion>



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention