

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 41, No. 23

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

July 2022

Legend Of The Golden Bear

Legacy Began At OSU For Golf Icon Nicklaus

By **MARK REA**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Managing Editor Emeritus

"There's certainly a level of greatness in every sport," said New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick, owner of eight Super Bowl championship rings. "But when you look at people like Muhammed Ali, Jim Brown and Michael Jordan, that's the very top. And that's where Jack is."

Icon and legend are words tossed around pretty easily nowadays, but if there is one man who truly epitomizes both terms, it is Jack Nicklaus. Widely considered the greatest player the game of golf has ever known, Nicklaus won a staggering 117 professional tournaments during his career, including a record 18 major championships while finishing second in 19 others.

Exhibiting a laser-focused competitive nature and combining that with impeccable course management and coolness under pressure, the man nicknamed "The Golden Bear" won two U.S. Amateur championships before his first professional victory at age of 22 when he defeated fellow legend Arnold Palmer in an 18-hole playoff at the 1962 U.S. Open.

Other career highlights include becoming the youngest golfer to win the career Grand Slam – the Masters, U.S. and British opens, and PGA Championship – and becoming the oldest golfer to win the Masters Tournament with a stirring, come-from-behind victory in 1986 at the age of 46.

Along with fellow competitors Palmer and Gardner Dickinson, Nicklaus was instrumental in founding the PGA Tour in 1968 and helped grow the stature of the Senior PGA Tour (now called the Champions Tour) where he won another eight major titles.

In addition to his much-decorated career on the course, Nicklaus has been just as successful outside the ropes. His book "Golf My Way" is considered the bible of golf instructional manuals, and the video of the same name remains the best-selling golf instructional video of all time. He heads Nicklaus Design, one of the world's largest and foremost golf course design and construction companies, founded



The Interview Issue:

- Jack Nicklaus - Cover
- Eldon Miller - Pg. 12
- Michelle Willis - Pg. 16
- Clark Kellogg - Pg. 18
- Kristin Watt - Pg. 22
- Carlos Snow - Pg. 26
- Brian Schottenstein - Pg. 28

FILE PHOTO

GREATEST OF ALL TIME — Legendary golfer Jack Nicklaus, winner of 117 professional tournaments, including a record 18 major championships, reflected on his long and storied career in an exclusive interview with Buckeye Sports Bulletin. Nicklaus spoke of his upbringing, his time and memories at Ohio State and how he became an icon of the game of golf.

and remains host of the annual Memorial Tournament held at Muirfield Village Golf Club, the course he designed in Dublin, Ohio, and either owns or endorses a number of businesses featuring a wide range of products including everything from golf equipment and clothing to wine, lemonade and ice cream.

Nicklaus is also a philanthropist and prolific fundraiser. Along with Barbara, his wife of more than 60 years, he serves as honorary chairman of the Nicklaus Children's Health Care Foundation in North Palm Beach, Fla., a foundation that provides programs and services free of charge to more than 4,000 hospitalized children and their families.

Nicklaus was the son of Helen and Charlie Nicklaus and was a precocious youngster growing up in the Columbus suburb of Upper Arlington. Also adept at football, basketball, baseball, tennis and track, the youngster inherited his athletic talents from a father who played semiprofessional football, had been a scratch golfer and won a local tennis championship during his youth.

Nicklaus took up the game of golf at age 10, and just two years later he won the first of five consecutive Ohio State Junior championships. Long before that, however,

the youngster had become a fan of Ohio State football and basketball, an interest that, at least in part, spurred his future athletic aspirations.

That served as the stepping-off point for BSB's telephone interview with Nicklaus from his office in North Palm Beach, Fla.

BSB: As a child growing up in Upper Arlington, I assume you have been an Ohio State sports fan ever since you can remember.

Nicklaus: "Absolutely. I followed football and basketball the most. I went to my first Ohio State football game when I was 6 years old, and I only

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Continued On Page 8

FAN FORUM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Omen From Earle?

The June 2022 BSB (p.3) mentions the Sept. 3 Notre Dame game, "The season opener features only the seventh meeting ever between the two college football titans..." Actually, it is only their sixth ever meeting.

Also, it will be the sixth game played on Ohio State campus for Notre Dame, according to Sports-Reference.com. ND visited three times to meet the Medics of Ohio Medical University. Games were held on University Field, later renamed Ohio Field, beside the old armory. Irish swept the series 6-0 (10/5/1901), 6-5 (11/1/1902) and 17-5 (10/22/1904).

The upcoming game is on 9/3. Coach Earle Bruce went 9-3 in all but three of nine seasons he coached the Buckeyes. Lucky omen?

Robert B. Stevenson
Columbus

(The upcoming opener will be the seventh time Ohio State and Notre Dame have faced each other on the gridiron. They have met previously in 1935, 1936, 1995, 1996 and at the Fiesta Bowl following the 2005 and 2015 seasons. Thanks, Robert, for the interesting info about the Medics of Ohio Medical University. Ed.)

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. 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.



From The Message Board

BuckeyeSports.com's Fan Forum is full of entertaining message threads connecting BSB's loyal subscribers, allowing them to share their opinion on Ohio State athletics news and other miscellaneous topics. Before the Interview Issue went to print, we asked BSB readers and staff members whom they would like to interview if given the chance. Here are some responses:

"John Wilce, Jack Tatum, Bill Willis, Bill Long and James Thurber."
– **PeyoteBuck**

"Throughout history, I'd go with William Shakespeare and Lee Harvey Oswald near the top of my list. Ohio State would be Chic Harley – before he was diagnosed with severe mental illness – and Terrelle Pryor, who I surmise is still misunderstood after Tattoogate.

"I had a fairly long conversation with Bob White, and I think he would be an excellent person to interview. Two examples: When Ohio State went to the Rose Bowl one year, Woody insisted that even the married athletes had to stay in a monastery. Bob and his wife were recently married and still joke about that being their honeymoon. The second example is I think he said he was drafted by the Houston Oilers and at \$14,000 was the second highest paid player on the team.

"More recently, I would like to see Tate Martell interviewed."

– **Terrier Buck**

"Chic Harley. Woody Hayes. Paul Brown."

– **Frank Moskowitz, BSB**

"In the Ohio State sphere, I'd love to talk with Jim Tressel. He seems like a good man that would have plenty of great stories to tell."

– **Chase Brown, BSB**

"It is funny because I have interviewed several of the people mentioned in this thread, including Woody, Jack Tatum, Bill Willis, Bill Long and Jim Tressel. I don't know that I'd want to interview him necessarily, but I'd like to tag along with Humphrey Bogart for one night – just to see if I could keep up.

"Bob White is an excellent interview. In a prior life as a cub reporter for my hometown newspaper, I interviewed him when he was the head coach at Wilmington (Ohio) High School. Extra credit if you know that Bob's real first name is Loren."

– **Mark Rea, BSB**

"There are great choices here. I would say Chic Harley – just to hear what football was like 'in the day.' Maybe Francis Schmidt. Paul Brown for college and professional football with the Browns and Bengals. Woody Hayes. Ann Hayes."

– **Mcarr**

"Ryan Day."

– **Tiffin Buckeye**

"A one-on-one with Ryan Day could be interesting. I'd love to hear him talk about life with Urban and behind the scenes with the whole Kerry Coombs staff reshuffling."

– **Poster That Harley Built**

"The members of our 1960 national championship basketball team and the 1966 national championship baseball team would be interesting interviews, especially Fred Taylor and Marty Karow. Our 1966 baseball team was the last northern team to win the championship."

– **Luckeeman**

"Brian Hartline. I would love to know how he has become the best in the country at such a young age and what makes these young Buckeye wide receivers buy into his teaching so completely!"

– **AnthonyBuckeye**

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No. 1	Sept. 11	No. 13	Dec. 18
No. 2	Sept. 18	No. 14	Jan. 15
No. 3	Sept. 25	No. 15	Jan. 29
No. 4	Oct. 2	No. 16	Feb. 12
No. 5	Oct. 9	No. 17	March 5
No. 6	Oct. 23	No. 18	March 19
No. 7	Oct. 30	No. 19	April 2
No. 8	Nov. 6	No. 20	April 16
No. 9	Nov. 13	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 20	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 27	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 4	No. 24	August

The next issue (August cover date) will be mailed on Aug. 24.

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OPINION

Is West Coast Expansion ‘Best Thing?’

The Big Ten, which usually takes months of contemplation before making a decision regarding where to have lunch, spent roughly an hour and a half before welcoming the University of Southern California and UCLA into the conference.

The announcement was made official June 30, and a majority of Ohio State fans took to social media with all the giddiness of a 10-year-old on Christmas morning. OSU athletic director Gene Smith insisted the addition of the two West Coast schools makes the Big Ten stronger, saying, “We’re just so excited about our future. It’s phenomenal.”

University president Kristina Johnson echoed her athletic director’s effusiveness.

“I think we understood how game-changing this is, so it wasn’t taken lightly,” Johnson said. “As presidents, we had a great discussion, and at the end of the day, we think this is the best thing for our student-athletes and we think this is the best thing for our conference.”

With all due respect, I quote the old Southern aphorism: Don’t pee on my leg and tell me it’s raining. I fail to see how bringing in two schools located more than 1,500 miles from the westernmost Big Ten campus is anything but just one more money grab in the world of college football that seems hell-bent on becoming a professional sport.

If your intention is to accumulate as many dollar bills as you can – and that seems to be the sole *raison d’être* in college athletics these days – I can see a justification for bringing UCLA and USC into the Big Ten. With more than 5.7 million TV households, Los Angeles is second in the country only to New York City in terms of the size of its television market. Of course, as the Big Ten learned when it annexed Rutgers with an eye toward breaking into the New York market, the competition for eyeballs is slightly more cutthroat than in Columbus, Ann Arbor or West Lafayette.

But let’s set aside the argument that UCLA playing at Maryland on a Saturday afternoon in mid-November isn’t exactly must-see TV. What in the world makes anyone believe that kind of matchup is even remotely “the best thing for our student-athletes” or “the best thing for our conference”?

It wasn’t that long ago when college football was a regional sport. The ACC took care of the East Coast, the Pac-12 patrolled the West Coast, and the Big Ten, SEC and Big 12 ruled almost everything in between. Teams in those conferences battled one another for the right to take on the best from other regions in something we used to call “bowl season,” and from that the sport determined its national champion.

The format wasn’t perfect, but the beauty of it didn’t lie in its perfection. It was clean, it was fair, and it was (mostly) uncontaminated by those who saw beauty only in the almighty dollar. Then, some guys wearing business suits and sitting in some antiseptic boardroom somewhere come up with a concept they called the Bowl Championship Series. Then came conference realignment and expansion, detonating divisional structure within the conferences, free agency (also known as the transfer portal), and the funneling of unfettered gobs of money into the pockets of 18-year-olds through the Name, Image and Likeness legislation.

And all along we are supposed to swallow the assertion that these things are not only good things but the “best” things.

The older I get, I realize that nothing stays the same. It’s that way in life, and it’s certainly that way in business. Adapt with the times or get left behind. But as college football has morphed from a regional sport into a multibillion-dollar business, I hardly recognize the sport I began watching as a boy and grew to love.

They tell me that’s just an old man talking. While pining over the gorgeous sunset of yester-

day, they say I’m missing the glorious dawn of a new day in college football.

My reply? Just because it’s a new day doesn’t mean it’s going to be a good day.

EDITOR’S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Nicklaus Musings

After nearly a half-century in this business, there isn’t much that gets my heart racing anymore – probably a good thing as I bear down on Medicare eligibility – but I’ll admit the one-on-one interview I conducted with Jack Nicklaus, the result of which kicks off BSB’s annual Interview Issue, produced a certain degree of excitement.

Nicklaus was one of a handful of sports figures I idolized while growing up, and memories of watching his spine-tingling victory at the 1986 Masters are only enhanced by the fact I watched that tournament with my late father. My dad was a steady-pulse kind of guy who never got too high or too low about much of anything, but I can still remember the broad smile on his face as Nicklaus burned up the back nine at Augusta to shoot a 7-under-par round of 65 and win his sixth green jacket as well as what would be the last of his record 18 major championships.

Until that day, I never knew my dad was as much of a Nicklaus fan as he was. As we watched the events unfold on that April Sunday some 36 years ago, he began to tell me about Jack’s first major title. That memory came flooding back during my interview with the Golden Bear.

For those of you who don’t know, the 1962 U.S. Open was played at the famed Oakmont Country Club near Pittsburgh, and it was a foregone conclusion that Arnold Palmer – who had grown up less than 40 miles from Oakmont – would be the sentimental favorite. At the time, Palmer was 32 years old, the reigning king of professional golf and in the middle of his prime. He already had won six tournaments that year, including the Masters, and one of his victories was by 12 shots over runner-up Nicklaus at the Phoenix Open Invitational. (Check out what Jack had to say about that second-place finish in the interview.)

Nicklaus, who was 22 in 1962, had his first brush with U.S. Open destiny (and Palmer) two years earlier at Cherry Hills in Denver. He shot a 72-hole score of 282, a record for lowest score by an amateur in the Open that stood for 57 years. But it wasn’t quite good enough as Palmer shot a final-round 65 to take the title by two strokes over Nicklaus.

Two years later, Nicklaus had turned pro and was looking for his first major championship. Heading into the final round, Palmer held a three-shot advantage with just 10 holes to play. However, he fought a balky putter down the stretch and Nicklaus overcame the three-shot deficit – as well as a hostile pro-Palmer crowd – to force an 18-hole playoff.

There was at least one friendly face in the gallery for Nicklaus. Ohio State football coach Woody Hayes walked all 18 holes with the youngster on Sunday.

The always-focused Nicklaus has always maintained that he never heard the crowd’s jeers. Years later, though, he admitted, “Woody would get very upset with people in the gallery. People would say something, and Woody wasn’t going to exactly back off.”

During the Monday playoff, Palmer fought his putter again and fell as many as four strokes behind Nicklaus on the front nine. But he right-

ed himself and cut the deficit to just one as the two headed to the 13th hole, a 183-yard par-3 with a narrow hourglass-shaped green. Palmer three-putted for a bogey while Nicklaus made a par. Palmer never got any closer, and Nicklaus closed him out with an even-par score of 71. Palmer shot a 74.

It not only was Nicklaus’ first major victory but his first professional title on the PGA Tour. It also signaled the beginning of a new era in golf. It was also apparently enough of a milestone for my dad, who could probably have counted on the fingers of one hand the number of times he played golf during his lifetime, that he remembered it so vividly nearly 24 years later.

Researching The Medics

On the facing page, you can read a letter from BSB subscriber Robert Stevenson containing the assertion that this fall’s visit by Notre Dame will mark the sixth time the Fighting Irish have played a football game on the Ohio State campus, citing three games they played at the old University Park (which later became Ohio Field) against Ohio Medical University in the early 1900s.

I’m a sucker for that sort of historical trivia, so I began my own archival search of the Ohio Medical football team.

Ohio Medical University was chartered in 1890 and opened two years later, offering schools of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Almost from its inception, the school developed an athletics program and began playing intercollegiate football in 1895. Although the formal nickname for OMU’s sports team was the Tigers, they were commonly referred to in most newspaper accounts as the Medics.

Unlike Ohio State, which took nearly two decades to firmly establish its football program, Ohio Medical developed its program in fairly short order. During the 1898 season, the Medics compiled a 7-1-1 record, including a 10-0 win against the Buckeyes. Ohio State played the Medics a total of eight times between 1896 and 1906, with OSU compiling a 5-2-1 record in the series.

The 1902 Ohio Medical team was considered one of the finest in the Midwest, finishing with a 9-1 mark whose only blemish was a 6-5 loss to Notre Dame. OMU defeated its other nine opponents by a 247-5 margin and recorded eight shutouts.

Coaching the Medics during that 1902 season was John B.C. Eckstorm, who was head coach at Ohio State for three seasons from 1899 to 1901. Eckstorm compiled a record of 22-4-3 with the Buckeyes, good for an .810 winning percentage that was for more than a century the best among OSU head coaches with at least three years of tenure. It still ranks fourth behind only Urban Meyer (.902), Ryan Day (.895) and Jim Tressel (.828).

Eckstorm left Ohio Medical after the 1902 campaign and spent two seasons as head coach at Kenyon College, where he went 5-11-2 including losses each year to the Buckeyes, and then returned to Ohio Medical for two more seasons. The school ended its football program after the 1906 season, but Eckstorm stayed long enough to gain his medical degree. He went on to become a practicing physician and wound up as chief medical officer at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus.

A native of Chicago who obtained his undergraduate degree from Princeton, where he was an All-America football player, Eckstorm died in 1964 at his daughter’s home in Marysville, Ohio. He was 90.

Ohio Medical University merged in 1907 with Columbus-based competitor Starling Medical College, and seven years later, the Starling-Ohio Medical College accepted an offer to establish what became the Ohio State University College of Medicine.



UCLA, USC To Join Big Ten In 2024

Like the old British Empire, the sun (almost) never sets on the Big Ten.

On June 30, the conference announced that UCLA and USC would become the 15th and 16th teams in its league in 2024, meaning the Big Ten will stretch from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean.

Big Ten presidents and chancellors, including Ohio State President Kristina M. Johnson, voted and unanimously approved UCLA and USC as the newest league members.

"I think we understood how game-changing this is, so it wasn't taken lightly," Johnson said on July 1. "As presidents, we had a great discussion, and at the end of the day, we think this is the best thing for our student-athletes, and we think this is the best thing for our conference."

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith shared the same perspective as Johnson, claiming the Buckeyes have carried the weight of the Big Ten in recent years. With the additions of USC and UCLA, according to Smith, the conference will have two

more schools who can carry their own.

"We needed to look at what's best for our 14 schools," Smith said. "Now we know we are in the top-three media markets in the country: New York, Chicago and Los Angeles."

USC President Carol L. Folt expressed her gratitude to the Big Ten's presidents, chancellors and athletic directors for their swift action. She said the Trojan administrators, coaches and students are ready to reap the benefits of the school's new partnerships within the Big Ten.

"Over the past three years, we have worked hard to ground our university decisions in what is best for our students," Folt said. "With the Big Ten, we are joining a storied conference that shares our commitment to academic excellence and athletic competitiveness. We are positioning USC and our student-athletes for long-term success and stability amidst the rapidly evolving sports media and collegiate athletics landscapes. We are delighted to begin this new chapter in 2024."

USC athletic director Mike Bohn said the Big Ten offers USC the best home for academics and athletics. Southern California is a member of the Association for American Universities, an exclusive group of public and private universities dedicated to improving lives through education. The Trojans have more than 550 student-athletes who compete in 21 sports with 250 coaches and staff in the athletic department.

UCLA Chancellor Gene D. Block wrote a letter advising the school's community of the monumental change. Like Folt and Bohn, Block focused on the academic and athletic opportunities offered in the Big

2022 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2021 Record
Sept. 3	NOTRE DAME	7:30 p.m.	ABC	11-2
Sept. 10	ARKANSAS STATE	12 p.m.	BTN	2-10 (1-7 Sun Belt)
Sept. 17	TOLEDO	7 p.m.	FOX	7-6 (5-3 MAC)
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	TBA	ABC	9-4(6-3 Big Ten)
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	3:30 p.m.	TBA	5-8 (2-7 Big Ten)
Oct. 8	at Michigan State	TBA	TBA	11-2 (7-2 Big Ten)
Oct. 22	IOWA	TBA	TBA	10-4 (7-3 Big Ten)
Oct. 29	at Penn State	TBA	TBA	7-6 (4-5 Big Ten)
Nov. 5	at Northwestern	TBA	TBA	3-9 (1-8 Big Ten)
Nov. 12	INDIANA	TBA	TBA	2-10 (0-9 Big Ten)
Nov. 19	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	7-6 (3-6 Big Ten)
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN	12 p.m.	FOX	12-2 (9-1 Big Ten)

Ten. He thanked the Pac-12 for its efforts to support the school in recent decades but also looks forward to the growth that may come within a new league.

"UCLA has deeply valued our membership in the Pac-12 for many years, and we intend to be a member of the conference for the next two years," Block said. "We have grown close to the other member schools and have tremendous respect for their commitment to the student-athlete experience. The Pac-12 has always shared our values and continues to innovate, working hard on behalf of its student-athletes and many fans."

"At the same time, each school faces its unique challenges and circumstances, and we believe this is the best move for UCLA at this time. For us, this move offers greater certainty in rapidly changing times and ensures that we remain a leader in college athletics for generations to come."

Officials from USC and UCLA recognize that big changes await the schools in the future. Those changes create uncertainty for the Pacific-based conference.

"While we are extremely surprised and disappointed by the news coming out of UCLA and USC today, we have a long and storied history in athletics, academics and leadership in supporting student-athletes that we're confident will continue to thrive and grow in the future," an official Pac-12 release stated. "We've been long known as the Conference of Champions, and we're unwavering in our commitment to extend that title. We will continue to develop new and innovative programs that directly benefit our member institutions. We look forward to partnering with current and potential members to pioneer the future of college athletics together."

Ohio State Officially Trademarks 'THE'

Ohio State officially trademarked the word "THE" on June 23 after a nearly three-year battle to clinch legal branding access to a word the university considers deeply meaningful to its identity.

According to Ohio State spokesperson Ben Johnson, the word "THE" will be used on branded products associated with the school and sold through its athletics and collegiate channels.

"THE has been a rallying cry in the Ohio State community for many years, and Buckeye fans who purchase official Ohio State gear support student scholarships, libraries and other university initiatives," Johnson said.

The university filed for a trademark of the word in 2019 shortly after fashion de-

signer Marc Jacobs had submitted an application. Last year, Ohio State and Jacobs reached an agreement that allows both parties to register "THE" branded products for use and license.

"Like other institutions, Ohio State works to protect the university's brand and trademarks because these assets benefit students and faculty and support our core academic mission of teaching and research," Johnson said.

Ohio State's trademark and licensing program generates more than \$12.5 million annually, according to a university press release. With "THE" added to that program, that average yearly revenue will increase substantially.

The university started using "the" with its name in 1986 when the institution established a new logo, hoping to move away from the "OSU" symbol it previously used. The move was intended to distinguish the Ohio school from other universities with the same initials, such as Oregon State and Oklahoma State.

OSU Football Self-Reports Eight 2020-22 Infractions

Ohio State football self-reported eight minor NCAA violations involving the football program over the last two years, according to a report from The Columbus Dispatch. The violations, all deemed Level III, meaning isolated or limited in nature, were reported between Aug. 8, 2020, and Jan. 24, 2022.

Four of the eight infractions were from impermissible text messages or tweets sent by coaching staff members. Those coaches received penalties, including rules education and temporary bans on electronic communication.

Another violation occurred in July 2020 when then-linebackers coach Al Washington led his position group through a conditioning drill. For six minutes of the workout, the linebackers pushed a blocking sled, which the NCAA considered "improper during the summer access period."

Ohio State's athletic compliance office reported that it is not permissible for a coach to incorporate contact-related drills during conditioning activities if the equipment utilized is related to the sport.

After self-reporting the violations, Ohio State football was forced to reduce the number of countable athletic-related activities (CARA) by 12 minutes – twice the amount of time of the prohibited drill. The NCAA later determined that the Buckeyes' CARA activities should instead be reduced by 30 minutes to meet the minimum penalty.

BSB Ramps Up Online Recruiting Coverage

The next Buckeye Sports Bulletin print issue, our big annual Football Preview Issue, will not be mailed until Aug. 24. The Ohio State sports action moves on, and there is no need to miss any of that action between now and then. The BSB staff covers the Buckeye scene daily on our website at BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers.

Football recruiting is a 365-day-a-year process these days, and the BSB staff has stepped up its coverage of Ohio State's quest for prep talent. Plenty can happen between now and the end of August, so be sure to check in regularly at BuckeyeSports.com. We will be covering all the latest football recruiting news, along with any other news concerning Ohio State sports. Follow all the news of the day as it happens.

Along with the daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Also, staff members man the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum, interacting with subscribers on the hot topics of the day. Staffers and readers alike have also been reacting to recruiting efforts on the Forum's "Football Recruiting Thread."

With football season coming up faster than you think, please note that recent developments with the mail service have us concerned about delivery time for BSB. We remind you the complete print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted at BuckeyeSports.com at the time the issue is mailed and is available to subscribers free of charge, as is all the other content provided at the site.

If you are not already taking advantage of BuckeyeSports.com, BSB's 24/7 website, simply email your name, address and preferred email address to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com, and we will send back easy instructions on how to access the site. Don't forget, subscriptions@buckeyesports.com is our email address, not the website. We will send you directions on how to access the site.

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As mentioned, readers who have been experiencing postal delivery problems can read the complete edition of each issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin online at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at the usual time.

If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com or your mail service, feel free to call us at the above number.

Another violation involved a commercial endorsement by an unnamed player. The player's violation came 11 months before collegiate athletes were granted the ability to profit from name, image and likeness opportunities. The player tweeted his endorsement of the company, which was redacted in the program's reporting.

The final violation was by the Ohio State compliance office, which failed to review a preapproval form before an unnamed high school prospect's official visit to the Columbus campus.

Owens Inducted Into Track Hall Of Fame

Jesse Owens is one of the most outstanding athletes in Ohio State's rich history, and although he passed away in March 1980, the late Buckeye continues to have his legacy built.

On June 7, the United States Track and Field and Cross Country Association inducted Owens into the inaugural class of the Collegiate Athlete Hall of Fame in Eugene, Ore.

Owens graduated from Ohio State and competed at the varsity level for the Buckeyes in 1935 and 1936. He was an eight-time NCAA champion – the only track athlete to accomplish such a feat – and a four-time Olympic gold medalist during his career. His eight individual NCAA titles are also still a record, and he claimed those trophies in only two years.

He held the Ohio State outdoor program record in the 100-meter (10.20 seconds) for 83 years and is currently ranked third in that category. Owens also ranked third in the outdoor long jump, a record he held for 77 years, and fifth in the indoor long jump, a record that stood for 55 years.

According to the Ohio State record book, Owens won four events in 45 minutes at the Big Ten championships, including three world records and tying a fourth. This performance was later called "The Day of Days" for Owens as he ran a 9.4-second 100-yard dash, recorded 8.13 meters on his long jump attempt and won both the 220 yards (20.3 seconds) and the 220-yard low hurdles (22.6 seconds).

Owens won his four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He won the 100-meter, 200-meter and long jump while setting a world record in the 4x10-meter relay as the leadoff runner. Only one runner since has accomplished that in the same time or better.

Armstrong And Jaques Named Ohio State Athletes Of The Year

There were many talented Ohio State student-athletes last academic year, but two Buckeyes stood out among the rest: men's swimmer Hunter Armstrong and women's ice hockey defenseman Sophie Jaques.

Ohio State named Armstrong and Jaques its winners of the Ohio State Male and Female Athlete of the Year awards, which made them eligible for Big Ten recognition for the same honor later in June. Minnesota's Gable Steveson and Wisconsin's Dana Rettke took home those awards (more on page 34).

Armstrong is the first swimmer to win the Ohio State Male Athlete of the Year award. He claimed that honor after winning five gold medals at the Big Ten champion-

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ship in the 50-meter freestyle, 100-meter freestyle, 200-meter freestyle, 400-meter freestyle and the 200-meter medley relay.

The Dover, Ohio, native earned the Buckeyes' highest finish at the 2022 NCAA championship meet, placing fifth in the 100-meter backstrokes to become a first-team All-American. He also helped the 200-meter freestyle relay to a seventh-place finish and earned honorable-mention All-American honors in the 100-meter freestyle, 200-meter and 400-meter medley relay and the 400-meter freestyle relay.

Following the NCAA season, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist returned to the international waters, swimming at the Phillips 66 Team Trials. He set the 50-meter backstroke world record with a 23.71-second swim and secured his spot on the Team USA world championship roster. He went on to break four Ohio State long-course records at the meet.

Armstrong was in Budapest, Hungary, from June 17 through July 3 to compete at the 2022 FINA World Championships for the United States national team.

Jaques was a Patty Kazmaier finalist in 2021-22 and helped Ohio State women's hockey win its first national championship in program history. She led the Buckeyes with 59 points on 21 goals and 38 assists, which were second most from a defenseman in women's college hockey and third most of all skaters.

The Toronto, Ontario, native was the Western Collegiate Hockey Association Defender of the Year after winning four of the conference's five monthly defenseman awards and eight weekly honors on the

year. A 2022 graduate of Ohio State, Jaques will return to the Buckeyes next season with her final year of eligibility while pursuing a master's degree in civil engineering.

Mosiello Hired As Next OSU Head Baseball Coach

Ohio State announced on June 16 that longtime baseball coach Bill Mosiello has been tabbed as the Buckeyes' new head coach.

Mosiello brings over 35 years of coaching experience to Ohio State and had been the associate head coach at Texas Christian for the past nine seasons. He has coached over 90 major-league players, and his teams have made 16 appearances in the NCAA tournament during stops at seven Power Five programs.

"I am incredibly excited to lead the Ohio State baseball program," Mosiello said. "I have been blessed to have had a lot of great experiences throughout my career, and the opportunity to come to such a prestigious school like Ohio State and work with tremendous student-athletes and staff is something I am truly excited about.

"I want to thank (executive associate athletic director) Shaun Richard and Gene Smith for putting their trust in me," he continued. "That all being said, a part of my heart will always be in TCU. The last nine years were truly special, and the relationships that I made with the players and staff will be part of my life forever."

Mosiello helped guide the Horned Frogs to four consecutive appearances in the College World Series from 2014-17 and seven NCAA tournament appearances. In his

nine seasons at TCU, his teams won seven Big 12 titles and he brought in three top-10 recruiting classes.

"Bill Mosiello is a Buckeye, and we could not be more excited about that," Richard said. "During this search, I spoke to countless people about the right person to lead this program, and the conversation kept coming back to Bill. His passion for student-athletes, his knowledge and experience of the game, and his proven track record of success at all levels make me extremely excited for the future of Buckeye baseball."

The search for Ohio State's next head coach began after longtime coach Greg Beals was fired following a 21-30 finish to last season. The search ultimately lasted just over three weeks before the athletics department landed on Mosiello.

"Bill is a great leader and one of the most respected coaches in collegiate baseball," Smith said. "He's passionate about the game and his players, and I look forward to him bringing his energy to Ohio State."

Beyond his work at the college level, Mosiello has extensive coaching experience at the professional level with several stints as a minor-league manager for Double-A and Single-A affiliates of the Los Angeles Angels and New York Yankees, registering nearly 400 wins during that span.

"It's a great day to be a Buckeye. I am thrilled with the hiring of Bill Mosiello," said Nick Swisher, an Ohio State alum and 17-year MLB player. "His passion for

Continued On Page 6

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

the game of baseball at the professional and collegiate level shines through. His knowledge of the game is out of control and, most of all, he loves his players. I am so excited to see the heights at which this program can soar."

Joseph Named New Track And Field, Cross Country Director

Almost 24 hours after longtime head coach and director of men's and women's track and field and cross country Karen Dennis retired, Smith announced Rosalind Joseph as the Buckeyes' newest program leader on June 14.

Joseph, an Ohio State alumna, returns to Columbus after four years as the director of track and field and cross country at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. During her tenure, the Saluki women's team captured four second-place finishes at the Missouri Valley Conference indoor and outdoor track and field champion-

ships, and the men's team finished as high as third place. Seven women and three men combined to earn the program 10 All-American honors.

"I am thrilled to introduce Rosalind Joseph as our new director of track and field and cross country," Smith said. "She has head coaching experience overseeing a dual men's and women's program at Southern Illinois, and now she is coming back home to Ohio State. She won six individual Big Ten championships as a Buckeye, graduated from Ohio State and then coached here under Karen Dennis and helped us win six Big Ten team titles."

Before coaching at Southern Illinois, Joseph spent 10 years with the Buckeyes as an assistant to Dennis. She served as an assistant coach from 2008-12 before a promotion to associate head coach in 2013. Joseph left Columbus to lead the Saluki program in 2018.

While instructing at Ohio State, Joseph coached the jumpers and multi-event athletes, producing the men's first national champion in 25 years in the long jump (Zach Bazile, 2018). The Buckeyes won six Big Ten team championships and produced several All-Americans, Big Ten individual champions and athletes of the year in Joseph's decade with the program.

Joseph graduated from Ohio State in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in human ecology. She was a two-time outdoor All-American in the triple jump with a fifth-place finish at the 2005 NCAA championships and a fourth-place finish at the 2006 NCAA championships. Joseph was a six-time Big Ten title winner in the triple jump

(2004 indoor and outdoor, 2005 indoor) and long jump (2004 indoor, 2005 indoor and outdoor). She was inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014.

Seventeen years after Joseph's career ended, her name still appears in the program record book on several lines. She holds the best mark for outdoor long jump (6.39 meters) and indoor triple jump (13.37 meters). Her outdoor triple jump record was held until Jaimie Robinson broke it at the NCAA Regional meet in the 2022 outdoor season.

"This is a dream come true," Joseph said. "It is not often one gets to return to their alma mater to lead. Ohio State is a place that has given me so much as a student-athlete and as a young professional, so to come full circle as a director is almost unbelievable."

McLaurin Signs Record Deal With Commanders

Former Ohio State wide receiver Terry McLaurin has signed a new contract worth \$71 million with the Washington Commanders, making him a top-five highest-paid receiver in the NFL. His deal includes a \$28 million signing bonus – the most ever given to a player at his position.

According to ESPN's Adam Schefter, McLaurin signed a three-year extension with the Commanders, who chose the Ohio State product with the No. 76 pick in the 2019 NFL draft. The contract ties McLaurin to Washington through the 2025 season. Buddy Baker and Tony Bonagura of Exclusive Sports Group finalized the deal on Tuesday with Washington senior vice president Rob Rogers.

In the last two offseasons, four Buckeyes have signed high-value deals with their NFL franchises, including Sam Hubbard (Bengals), Marshon Lattimore (Saints), Denzel Ward (Browns) and McLaurin.

Four Bucks Earn Walter Camp Preseason All-American Honors

The preseason football awards are starting to roll in, and according to the Walter Camp Football Foundation, four Buckeyes deserve preseason All-American mention. Still, one name is notably missing from the list.

Ohio State sophomore running back TreVeyon Henderson and junior wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba are listed on the first team, and junior offensive tackle Dawand Jones and kicker Noah Ruggles received second-team recognition.

Where is Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud? According to Walter Camp's list, Alabama quarterback Bryce Young – last year's Heisman Trophy winner – and Southern California signal-caller Caleb Williams are better suited as preseason All-Americans.

Stroud completed 317 of 441 passes for 4,435 yards and 44 touchdowns in 2021 and finished fourth in Heisman behind Young, Michigan defensive end Aidan Hutchinson and Pittsburgh quarterback Kenny Pickett. He also swept the Big Ten's offensive awards, winning the conference's Offensive Player of the Year, Quarterback of the Year and Freshman of the Year honors.

Henderson was Ohio State's leading rusher last season, recording 183 carries for 1,248 yards and 15 touchdowns.

He also added 27 catches for 312 yards and four scores, but receiving was more Smith-Njigba's department. The star wide-out caught a school-record 95 passes for 1,606 yards and nine touchdowns in a crowded wide receiver room that featured 2022 NFL draft first-round picks Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave.

Jones was a first-year starter at right tackle in 2021. He is expected to remain at right tackle this fall, with former No. 1 overall tackle recruit Paris Johnson Jr. kicking outside after a year at right guard.

Ruggles was almost automatic in his first year as Ohio State's kicker. The graduate transfer sent 20 of 21 kicks through the uprights and made 74 of his point-after attempts last season, contributing 134 points to the Buckeye offense as the team's leading scorer.

WR Wilson Praises Harrison Jr., Egbuka

Garrett Wilson is off to the NFL, taken by the New York Jets with the No. 10 overall selection in April's draft. However, he still took time recently to acknowledge his alma mater and the work being done by Ohio State's wide receivers.

"It's a great room there," Wilson said on "The Pivot Podcast," hosted by former NFL stars Channing Crowder, Fred Taylor and Ryan Clark. "It's probably the best room that you can ask for. Everyone is different."

Wilson – along with fellow draftee Chris Olave and Jaxon Smith-Njigba – dominated college football last season as one of the best receiving corps in the country. Given the combined experience among those three, it would stand to reason that they – along with wide receivers coach Brian Hartline – would help to teach the next generation of wide receivers at Ohio State.

While those lessons indeed happen, Wilson said there was an important lesson he was able to take away from one of Ohio State's newcomers this past season.

"Marvin Harrison Jr. comes in and changes the whole room," Wilson said. "He changed my whole mind-set on how I'm going to work every day, how I'm going to practice, how I'm going to spend my time out of the facility, back in the facility. He changed my whole perspective on that. You've got dudes like that coming in."

While fans might not see how Harrison spends his time daily, the work and effort put in were clear this past season. After a slow start to the year with just five games and five receptions to his name after the regular season, he exploded in Ohio State's Rose Bowl win over Utah.

The then-freshman finished with six receptions – three going for touchdowns – for 71 yards and was Ohio State's second-leading receiver on the day behind Smith-Njigba, who rewrote the record book for the Rose Bowl and Ohio State with 347 yards and three touchdowns on 15 receptions.

Wilson also praised sophomore receiver Emeka Egbuka, who will be in the top three or four of Ohio State's rotation this season and should also factor into the return game, where he threatened to return multiple kickoffs last season.

"Emeka Egbuka comes in the room and does 20 reps of the bench press the first day," Wilson said. "I couldn't even do 225 (pounds) one time."

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Tressel To Retire From Youngstown State In 2023

Youngstown State president and former Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel announced June 22 that he will step down from his post as president on Feb. 1, 2023.

Tressel returned to Youngstown State in 2014 after leading the school's football program from 1986-2000, amassing a 135-57-2 record with the Penguins and winning four NCAA Division I-AA championships.

"It has been truly a blessing and labor of love to serve Youngstown State University," Tressel said in a release. "I cannot thank my family enough for allowing my schedule, and the needs of our university, to take priority and center stage. It is now only fair to have Ellen, our wonderful children and grandchildren, extended family, friends and former students, set the schedule."

After coaching at Youngstown State, Tressel – who served as an assistant coach with the Buckeyes from 1983-85 – returned to Ohio State in 2001 to become the program's 22nd head coach. In his 10 seasons as Ohio State's head coach, he finished with a 106-22 record, winning seven conference championships and a national championship in 2002.

"It has been truly a blessing and labor of love to serve Youngstown State University in several capacities, and we will continue to do so, in whatever fashion the YSU Board of Trustees sees fit," Tressel said in a letter to YSU staff and students.

Freeman Claims He Was Misquoted In CBS Article

Notre Dame football head coach and former Ohio State linebacker Marcus Freeman appeared to criticize his alma mater's academic standards in recent weeks – comments that gained significant traction with Buckeye fans on social media.

However, Freeman claims Dennis Dodd of CBS Sports misquoted him, and he went on Columbus' 97.1 The Fan to clarify his comments.

"I want to set the record straight. I was misquoted by Dennis Dodd in this article, and keywords were missing from the quote, which upset a lot of people that I care about," Freeman said. "I'm very proud of my two degrees from Ohio State. I would never discredit the quality of education those degrees represent. I was specifically really talking about the academic rigors of Notre Dame."

Freeman's initial quote in the CBS Sports article said, "You don't go to class (at places like that)." He continued, "OK, take some online classes, show up for your appointments. At Notre Dame, you're forced every day to go to class."

But the Notre Dame lead man recalled the quotation differently. After reviewing the audio from the interview, Freeman said he wrote down what he told Dennis.

"Their study habits are formulated every day," he recalled saying. "You can't cheat academics at Notre Dame. If I didn't go to class at Ohio State, (there were) 60,000 students. Cincinnati – another big public school – there are 40,000 students. If you don't go to class, OK, take some online classes and show up at your final. At Notre Dame, you're forced every day to go to class. But it formulates this work capacity, this learning capacity."

Freeman claims the most crucial word missing from the quote is "if." According to Freeman, the word makes his statement a conditional clause.

"It wasn't meant to say that 'you don't go to class,' " Freeman said. "When you see a quote that says, 'You don't go to class at places,' and, 'Marcus Freeman says you don't go to class at places like that,' it changes the entire narrative."

He reiterated that Notre Dame's academic rigor could be more strenuous to student-athletes because of the university's small student population. With 40,000 fewer students walking the campus, he said the educational standards change drastically.

Still, Freeman said he has no intent to discredit Ohio State's academic workload. After all, he did choose to complete two separate academic endeavors at the university.

"I would never disrespect Ohio State, and I would never say (students) don't go to class (there). I went to class, and we made sure we went to class," Freeman said. "I would never say that and disrespect my alma mater."

Stroud Receives New Wheels Through NIL Deal

Stroud will show up to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center in style this fall.

The rising redshirt sophomore inked a name, image and likeness deal with Canton-based auto dealership Sarchione Auto Gallery on June 9. Initial reports indicated that Stroud would drive a preowned Bentley Bentayaga valued at \$150,000, but updates reported that Stroud actually left with a Mercedes AMG G Wagon, valued at \$200,000, and as part of the deal he will swap out different cars every 45-60 days.

In exchange for the new wheels, Stroud – who is represented by Athletes First, an athlete management firm – will promote the dealership on social media and make public appearances on behalf of Sarchione Auto Gallery.

"When you talk to people, whether it's in the community or at the game, our brand awareness is what we're building," general manager Ryan Burton told The Columbus Dispatch, "so when you have the best-of-the-best promoting your brand, it only does good things."

According to the report, the dealership has partnered with players from the Cleveland Browns, but Stroud is the first from Ohio State to sign a deal, though Burton said more Buckeyes could be on the way.

Though few numbers have been reported, it is assumed that Stroud is Ohio State's biggest earner in NIL money. The school announced in June that the univer-

sity's student-athletes have reported 900 name, image and likeness deals totaling nearly \$3.5 million since NIL's introduction last summer. According to the Ohio State athletic department, both numbers lead the country.

Lakers Hire Former Buckeye Jent As Top Assistant

Former Buckeye Chris Jent will continue his distinguished coaching career with the Los Angeles Lakers this fall, accepting a role as the top assistant to recently signed head coach Darvin Ham.

Ham, a first-time head coach who recently assisted the Milwaukee Bucks to an NBA championship in 2021, made signing Jent a priority and recruited him heavily to join the Lakers, according to ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski.

The duo coached together on the Atlanta Hawks staff in 2017-18, and Jent also has ties to Los Angeles star LeBron James, having served as an assistant with the Cleveland Cavaliers from 2006-11. Jent was James' de facto shooting coach during those seasons. The four-time MVP once tweeted that he loved working with Jent and claimed they built a significant relationship during his first stint in Northeast Ohio.

Jent's basketball résumé spans three decades. He played four seasons at Ohio State from 1988-92 and appeared in 123 games, averaging 8.2 points, 3.9 rebounds and 1.7 assists in those contests. Jent went undrafted in the 1992 NBA draft but spent 10 years at the professional level in the United States and abroad. He won an NBA championship with the Houston Rockets in 1994.

In 2003, Jent entered the coaching ranks and started his career with the Philadelphia 76ers as an assistant coach. The following season, Jent became an assistant for the Orlando Magic, eventually taking the title of interim head coach after Johnny Davis was fired.

Jent's longest coaching stint came with the Cavaliers from 2006-11, but he decided to return to Columbus as an assistant for then-program leader Thad Matta from 2011-13. Jent left for the NBA to assist the Sacramento Kings in 2013-14 and led the G League's Bakersfield Jam in 2015-16. His last two assistant coaching stops were another year at Ohio State (2016-17) and five years with the Atlanta Hawks (2017-22).

Aquila Breaks Collegiate Shot Put Record At NCAAs

On June 9, Ohio State track and field star Adelaide Aquila won the NCAA shot-put championship, defending her 2021 title and shattering the collegiate record

with a 19.64-meter toss. Aquila had the top four throws in the national competition.

As a former walk-on, Aquila turned into an Ohio State Female Athlete of the Year and multi-title winning shot-put competitor for the Buckeyes. Last summer, she represented Team USA at the Tokyo Olympics in the event, making this year's NCAA championship another chapter in her decorated story.

"It's definitely a crazy experience, even just going back thinking about it right now," Aquila told TeamUSA.org earlier this week. "It still feels so surreal. But I would honestly just say that it was a testament to my hard work, trusting the process and ultimately realizing what I'm capable of."

Aquila took advantage of Ohio State's track and field resources during her career, developing into one of the sport's most relentless competitors.

"I'm looking to make the most of it and have fun with this great competition at the NCAAs," Aquila said before the event.

Ohio State To Sell Pieces Of Old Turf From The Horseshoe

After Ohio State defeated Michigan in "The Game of the Century" in 2006, Buckeye fans stormed toward the 50-yard line and tore up chunks of grass from the playing field before leaving the stadium with a piece of history.

Before the following season, Ohio State installed FieldTurf for the 2007 football team. The Buckeyes played on that surface until 2014 when the contractors recycled the rubber pellets to create an improved version of the artificial grass.

In 2022, Ohio State will play on brand-new FieldTurf. The installation started earlier this summer, and the athletic department announced it will sell pieces of the old turf to fans. Visit the Ohio State football website to submit your name and email address to receive the latest updates on when the sale officially begins.

Chase Brown and Braden Moles contributed to this article. For the latest Ohio State news, visit BuckeyeSports.com.



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Nicklaus' Childhood Shaped Ohio State Future

Continued From Page 1

missed one home game from the time I was 6 until I was 20. That was a game in early November 1947 when the Buckeyes played Northwestern. Pandel Savic was the quarterback, and Pandel hit Jimmy Clark with a touchdown pass on the last play of the game. Northwestern blocked the extra point, but had too many men on the field, or were off-side, or something. Anyway, Ohio State got a second opportunity to kick the extra point, made that one and won the game, 7-6. What a game to miss, but it was the only one I missed during that time."

BSB: Little did you know at that time that you and Pandel Savic would become great friends and associates.

Nicklaus: "Pandel became a good friend of mine long before he became a co-founder of Muirfield Village and chairman of the Memorial Tournament. When he and his wife, Janice, were first married, they lived across the street from Barbara and me. But when I first became acquainted with Pandel was when he would come into my dad's drugstore. My aunt Nell worked behind the counter, and one day Pandel said, 'Hey, Nell, you'd better watch that little kid over there around the candy.' And she said, 'Oh, don't worry about him. That's Charlie's little boy. That's our Jack.' That was my first introduction to Pandel, and we later became great friends."

BSB: You said you missed only one Ohio State home football game between the time you were 6 and the time you were 20. Do you have a favorite game or favorite memory during that time?

Nicklaus: "There were a lot of great games and a lot of great memories. One that sticks in my mind: I was at the Blizzard Bowl in 1950. It was cold, sure, but we didn't think anything about it. I was 10 years old at the time, and I think there was only about an inch of snow on the ground when we went to the game but more than a foot by the time we got home."

"That was an amazing game. Think about the fact that Michigan won the game and never had a first down. The teams punted nearly 50 times combined, and the only touchdown was a blocked punt that Michigan recovered in the end zone. I remember the wind was whipping around so much that you could barely see the field, and somehow Vic Janowicz still made a 38-yard field goal. Truly amazing."

BSB: Who were some of your favorite Buckeyes?

Nicklaus: "I had a lot of favorites. Pandel, of course. There was Janowicz, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1950, and guys like Dan-



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK NICKLAUS

FAMILY TIES — Jack Nicklaus (left) shared a photo of him and his father, Charlie, at the 1963 Masters. The pair enjoyed a great relationship, one that Woody Hayes called "the greatest father-son relationship he had ever known," until Charlie's death in 1970.

te Lavelli, Lou Groza, Jim Houston and Dick Schafrath, guys who went on to play for the Cleveland Browns. But in addition to being a big Ohio State fan, I was also very much into high school football in Upper Arlington where I grew up. We had a running back there by the name of Doug Goodsell, who scored 199 points during his senior year. Doug went to Ohio State at the same time as Hop Cassidy and beat out Hop as first-team halfback for the first couple of games in 1952. But then Doug got injured, Hop got his chance to play, and that was that.

"Doug wound up with an eye ulcer and didn't play very much after that. He had a try-out with the Browns, but the eye ulcer came back and pretty much ended his football career. He became a teaching golf pro in Florida and later moved back to Columbus and became very successful in real estate development. Doug was a heck of an athlete."

"I was a big Hop fan, of course. I remember his senior year in 1955. I was still in high school and a bunch of us went up to Michigan, and I believe both teams were ranked in the top 10. (The Wolverines went into the game at No. 6 while the Buckeyes were No. 9.) In

that game, Hop and Don Sutherin switched their halfback positions, and it thoroughly confused Michigan. I remember Hop ran for something like 150 yards, scored once or twice, and Ohio State won the game, 17-0. By the time the game was winding down, Michigan was frustrated to the point that their star tight end Ron Kramer threw a punch at an Ohio State player and got thrown out of the game."

"Later, as my golf career got started, I went to fewer games, of course, but I still followed the team. I enjoyed watching Tom Matte and Rex Kern and Archie Griffin. I guess we would be here all day if I listed them all."

BSB: You were an excellent athlete in high school, excelling in basketball and football as well as golf. Did you ever think about trying your hand at either of those other sports once you got to college?

Nicklaus: "I was recruited to play basketball by Ohio State. I was in the same class with Jerry Lucas and John Havlicek, and Larry Siegfried was a class ahead of us. Those teams were great teams, of course, and I think I would have played some. But probably most of my time would have been spent at the end of the bench."

BSB: Did you ever entertain going anywhere else other than Ohio State?

Nicklaus: "At the time, Ohio State did not give golf scholarships, and I had about 100 schools contacting me that did have golf scholarships. But I told them all, 'Look, guys, I'm not going to Ohio State to play golf. I'm going to Ohio State because I'm a Buckeye fan and I want to go to Ohio State to be a college student. I want to join a fraternity and all the things that normal students do, and if I play some golf, too, that's fine.' So, that's what I did."

"You know, it's funny. I won the Ohio Open

when I was 16, and I won the International Jaycee Junior at the Ohio State (Scarlet) course when I was 17 after losing in a playoff the year before to (future PGA Tour golfer) Jack Rule in Fargo, N.D. I received \$1,000 scholarships for each of those wins, so I began college with a total of \$2,000. And that took me through the second quarter of my senior year. Think of that. Room, board, tuition, books — it even paid my fraternity dues. Can you imagine that? Two thousand dollars paid for all that. Today, that amount wouldn't even get you in the door. But I was grateful to have had it. I guess I didn't need a golf scholarship."

BSB: What was your relationship with Woody Hayes? Did he recruit you to play football for him?

Nicklaus: "Woody was a close friend of my father. He lived close by and was a regular customer at my dad's drugstore there on Lane Avenue. My dad had played semipro football with the old Portsmouth Spartans (who later became the NFL's Detroit Lions) under an assumed name — he never did tell me what the assumed name was — because he didn't want anybody to know who he was. He played football at Ohio State on Saturdays and then went down there on Sundays to get a little extra money. If he'd have told them who he was, that would have been the end of his playing days at Ohio State."

"When I was a freshman, the coaches were all over me to play football. They told me I could start at quarterback for the freshman team that year. But I had qualified for the U.S. Open, and I told my dad that I had to make up my mind whether I was going to play both football and golf or just concentrate on golf and that I was leaning toward playing golf."

"Well, Woody came in the drugstore one day and asked for my father. He told my dad, 'I'm here about Jack. He's a really good football player, and I hear he's thinking about giving it up for golf. I know your son is extremely gifted athletically, but I also know what kind of talent he has for the game of golf.' And then he told my dad, 'If I were you, I'd keep Jack as far away from my coaching staff as you can.' My dad never told me that story until much later."

"Even though I gave up playing football, that didn't diminish my interest in the game. I used to go over to football practice and I would kick a football around with the punters and placekickers. During my junior year, they had a placekicker who had missed a few kicks, and all my friends were saying, 'Hey, Jack, why don't you go over there and kick for them?' It would have been interesting, but I really didn't want to do that. The kicker's name was Dave Van Raaphorst, and after a sort of rough start, he made all six of his kicks against Michigan in a 50-20 blowout in 1961, so I guess he wasn't that bad after all."

BSB: Woody wrote in one of his books that All-America lineman Jim Parker used to drive you to the golf course when you were a teenager.

Nicklaus: "I honestly don't remember that, but if Woody put it in there, it must be true. I'll tell you this: If Parker was driving, there wasn't much more room in that car. They didn't call him 'Big Jim' for no reason. That guy was huge. I do remember that."

BSB: Woody had a well-chronicled distrust of journalists, yet he became one for



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FILE PHOTO

NICKLAUS VS. PALMER — The rivalry and friendship between Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer — one built on a mutual respect and love of the game until Palmer's death in 2016 — helped to revolutionize the game and put more eyes on the PGA Tour, which now has an annual purse of nearly half a billion dollars.

a short time because of you. Tell us that story.

Nicklaus: "In 1960, I had qualified for the U.S. Open at Cherry Hills (in suburban Denver) as an amateur, and the two Columbus newspapers — the Citizen-Journal and the Dispatch — had decided they would not send a reporter out there to cover the event. The reporters who would normally have covered that event — Kaye Kessler of the Citizen-Journal and Paul Hornung of the Dispatch — were also the beat writers for Ohio State football, and apparently one or both of them had told Woody about it.

"So, he took it upon himself to go to Denver, watch the tournament every day, and then write down what he saw and send it back to Columbus for the newspapers to use. I finished in second place, two shots behind Arnold Palmer, and that tournament was what you could say was the beginning of my relationship with Arnold."

BSB: Are there any other Woody stories you'd like to share?

Nicklaus: "Oh, there are lots of them. As I said, Woody was just a good friend of my dad. Well, the Christmas before my dad died of pancreatic cancer, there was a knock on the door on Christmas Day and it was Woody. He came in, had his book with him, signed it, gave it to my dad, and said the relationship my dad and I had was the greatest father-son relationship he had ever known. Woody end-

ed up spending a couple of hours with my dad that day, and it meant a lot. I had always been a big Woody fan and was even more so after that.

"When my mother-in-law died, Woody came to the funeral home. He was recovering from a stroke at the time but had decided he needed to be there. Well, the telephone rang at the funeral home and it was Woody's wife, Anne, wanting to know if he was there. Barbara got on the phone and told Anne that Woody was indeed there. She asked Barbara if he was using a walker, and Barbara said, 'No, he walked straight in.' Anne then asked, 'Is he with his driver?' Barbara answered, 'No, he's by himself.' Anne yelled, 'He's not supposed to be driving his car!' By that time, Woody had found his way into a back room and was discussing military history with my boys. That was just Woody.

"He once told me that he was making it his mission to get at least one of my kids to come to Ohio State, so he started working on Gary. He talked to Gary about it on a Wednesday, and they were supposed to talk again on Friday, but Woody died on that Thursday. But Gary went to Ohio State anyway. (The fourth of Jack and Barbara's five children, Gary became an All-American for the Buckeyes and later played on the PGA and European tours.)

"I thought Woody was one of the most principled guys I've ever known. I don't know whether this is true or not, but I was told that Woody's salary at Ohio State was \$25,000 when he took the job, and it was still \$25,000 when he left. Any kind of raise he might have gotten, he wanted put back into the program. You don't get many guys doing that."

BSB: Figuring you have shared the golf course with a number of fellow Buckeye athletes over the years, who would you say was the best of the non-golfers with whom you played?

Nicklaus: "Oh, my gosh, I played with so many Buckeyes that I couldn't begin to remember them all. I played a lot with Pandel. We won the National Pro-Am in Cincinnati in 1961. I played a lot with Bob Hoag, a great friend who played basketball at Ohio State and later became one of the founders of Muirfield Village. I played with Fred Taylor. I've been at a lot of events with Archie, but I'm not sure we ever actually played together. I would say probably Dick (LeBeau) was the best of them. I'm pretty sure he was a scratch golfer at one time.

"I remember playing several times with John Havlicek. John was a great athlete, a great basketball player for the Boston Celtics, of course, but he was no golfer. I remember a time I played with John and (Celtics teammate) Jo White at an event down in Miami, and by the time they had played 18 holes, they were so tired they could hardly walk. Here were two guys in absolute top condition, and golf wore them out. Well, they hit so many shots that day, I guess I could understand that."

BSB: It's safe to say your rivalry with Arnold Palmer helped make professional golf the popular and lucrative sport that it is today. Would you describe your relationship with Arnold, and when did you realize that relationship would not only be good for the two of you but for the game itself.

Nicklaus: "Arnold and I first met when I was 18 years old. We were invited down to Athens, Ohio, the hometown of (1958 PGA Player of the Year) Dow Finsterwald, and

we were going to play with Arnold, Dow and Howard Baker Saunders, an amateur from Gallipolis who had played at Ohio State and won a whole bunch of titles, including two Big Ten tournaments and the NCAA tournament. We all participated in a clinic, and then at the end of the clinic, we had a driving contest. It was on a short par-4, maybe 340 yards or so, slightly downhill. Well, Arnold drove it onto the green and everybody went wild. Then I got up and drove it about 40 yards over the green. So that was the day that Arnold and my rivalry started. Whether anybody knew it or not, Arnold and I did.

"As far as our relationship was concerned, there was a tournament in 1962 when we played the final round together. Arnold was going to win the tournament by a lot, and when we were walking up the 17th fairway, he put his arm on my shoulder and said, 'You can finish second here. Birdie the last hole, and you can finish second. Come on. You can do it.' He didn't have to do that, and I thought that was a pretty nice gesture. So I did birdie the last hole and finished second to Arnold by something like 12 shots. That was my first real exposure on the PGA Tour.

"Arnold just kind of took me under his wing, and the rivalry really began — at least as far as the public was concerned — at the 1962 U.S. Open at Oakmont when I managed to win against him in a playoff. But it really wasn't much of a rivalry until I won a few tournaments. Arnold was already well into his prime and had won I don't know how many times, so it wasn't really a rivalry until I proved that I could win some tournaments as well.

"But to answer the question if I knew at

the beginning that our rivalry and friendship would be good for the game of golf, I did not. But as we went on, we realized that it drew a lot of public attention and drew in a lot of fans to the PGA Tour who normally might not have been interested in the game. In the beginning, there were mostly Arnold fans, and then as time went on, I gradually got people who were interested in my game. I think it was healthy rivalry that we both enjoyed."

BSB: Do you remember the last time you visited with Arnold?

Nicklaus: "Oh, yes. I talked to Arnold a couple of weeks before he passed away in 2016. I always called Arnold on his birthday and asked, 'How are you doing, A.P.?' He said, 'I'm feeling all right. In fact, I'm feeling so good that I'm thinking about playing some golf. I'm thinking about going out and hitting some balls this afternoon.' Of course, he was lying to me. But that was his way of keeping the rivalry going, and I got a big kick out of that. He passed away a couple of weeks later, but I'll always remember that last conversation.

"Arnold and I enjoyed the competition, whether it was on the golf course, course design, clothing or whatever. We had a competition, but if there was ever a problem, I had Arnold's back and I knew he had mine. When we started the tour — the PGA Tour as it is today — Arnold and I and Gardner Dickinson were the three that started it. We fought real hard for that tour when we broke away from the PGA of America (in 1968), and we're extremely proud of what the tour has become."

BSB: How did you become involved in

Continued On Page 10

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Legendary Nicklaus Excels In Post-Golf Career

Continued From Page 9

golf course design?

Nicklaus: "Pete Dye got me involved in about 1965 or 1966. We were friends, we'd played a lot of golf together, and he was working on the architectural design at The Golf Club (in suburban Columbus) and asked me to come out and take a look at some things. I said, 'What do you want me to look at, Pete?' and he said he wanted my critique on a couple of things. I said, 'I don't know anything about golf course design,' and his reply was, 'You know a lot more than you think.'"

"So I agreed to come out, and we went through the golf course, and he asked me questions about different places and different things, and he ended up doing four or five things that I had suggested. I admitted it was kind of fun, so Pete asked if I would like to do it again on some other courses, and I told him that I'd love to."

"A few years later, (my agent) Mark McCormack at IMG (who also represented Palmer and Gary Player, among others) was contacted by some people who were looking for someone to design and put his name on a golf course at Harbour Town (in Hilton Head, S.C.). Through Mark, I told them I didn't know anything about designing golf courses, but I knew someone who did. When they asked who, and I told them about Pete, they said, 'Never heard of him.' Pete had already designed several courses, including Crooked Stick over near Indianapolis, but they want-

ed a recognizable name, so we collaborated on Harbour Town in 1969. And I had a blast doing it."

"Pete and I ended up doing about a half-dozen courses together, but we never seemed to make a dime. We just kept putting our resources back into it and it always cost us more money. Finally, I told him, 'Pete, I can't afford you anymore,' and we had a good laugh about that. I later designed about a half-dozen courses with Desmond Muirhead, including Muirfield Village, and my first solo design was in 1976 for the Glen Abbey course in Ontario, where they held the Canadian Open the following year and some 30 more times since."

"That's when we started doing golf courses, and we have more than 320 around the world and several more under development. There are even more under the Nicklaus Design umbrella, and that counts courses that others have designed – guys who I trained and were with me for years. I've had probably 25 of 26 guys who I've pushed out of the office to go out on their own, and they're all members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. We have a lot of exposure out there with golf courses, and I'm very proud of that."

BSB: How did you become involved with Children's Hospitals in Columbus and Miami?

Nicklaus: "I guess you could go back to

when my daughter Nan was 11 months old. She began to choke and we didn't know why. The doctors couldn't figure it out, so we took her down to Children's Hospital where they took X-rays and found a shadow in her windpipe, something that turned out to be a crayon she had swallowed. They went in with a bronchoscope and tried to pull it out, but it broke up, went into her lungs, and she developed pneumonia. She was in intensive care for about six days, and when she finally recovered, we felt like the doctors and nurses at Children's Hospital saved Nan's life. Barbara and I looked at each other and said if we ever have the opportunity to help others – we weren't in a position at that time – but if we ever have the opportunity, we want to help others and we would want it to be children."

"So when we began the Memorial Tournament, we wanted to give back in the form of charitable contributions to organizations that benefit needy adults and children, and we made Columbus Children's Hospital, which later became Nationwide Children's Hospital, the primary charitable beneficiary of the tournament."

"When we got to Florida and were raising five kids, the nearest children's hospital was the Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children in Orlando, and that was about 175 miles away. Soon after, Barbara and I became affiliated with Miami Children's Hospital, and in 2004, we started the Nicklaus Children's Health Care Foundation."

"Then in 2015, the people at Miami Children's came back to us and said they wanted to go from being just a regional hospital with the goal of becoming more of a global presence. They said that we had more name recognition than they did, so would we consider lending our name to the hospital? We said we needed to make a donation to do that, so our foundation did that – I think it was \$60 million or \$65 million – and the facility became known as Nicklaus Children's Hospital. It's a nonprofit facility with 289 beds, more than 600 attending physicians, and the only Level

1 pediatric trauma center in the region, one of only three in the entire state of Florida. To see what they do at the hospital and how they care for the children, it's just fantastic."

BSB: And all of that was made possible by the game of golf.

Nicklaus: "It was all made possible because I made a few four-foot putts. I'm proud of the fact that God gave me the talent to play my sport well and use my sport for better things."

BSB: The assertion that you played your sport well is perhaps something of an understatement. More than one expert has called you the greatest golfer of all time. How do you feel about that assessment?

Nicklaus: "I'm probably not the most objective person to determine how good I was. I'll let somebody else or some group determine that. I always felt like there was only one person I could control, and that was me. People always asked who was my toughest competitor, and I always said it was me. That's because I could never control anybody else. All I could do was prepare myself the best I could and try to use that to the best of my ability when I played. I never minded getting beat if I had prepared properly. If I prepared, did what I thought was my best, and somebody played better, fair enough. Shake the man's hand and say, 'Well done.'"

"Not everybody judges me as the greatest golfer who has ever played. Some would say it was Tiger (Woods), others might say it was (Ben) Hogan, others would say it was (Bobby) Jones. That's OK. All I know is I tried to do everything within my ability to perform my best – and I think I could probably have been better."

"But I also helped raise a family, had five kids and 22 grandkids, I've had successful business projects, I've enjoyed the company of a lot of friends, and there have been a lot of other things that I have enjoyed. Golf was a part of my life, but it wasn't my whole life. And that, to me, was what was important."

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Miller Enjoyed An Extensive Coaching Career

By **JEFF RAPP**

Special to Buckeye Sports Bulletin

Eldon Miller is quick to tell you he's never had a job he didn't love. That's quite a statement considering he has spent 49 years coaching basketball at the collegiate level, including 36 as a head coach – a run that spans him taking over the top job at his alma mater, Wittenberg, as a 23-year-old in 1962 to serving as a volunteer assistant coach at UNC-Pembroke as an aid to his son, Ben, until a couple of years ago.

Most noteworthy in that tenure to Buckeye fans, of course, was when the Gnadenhutten, Ohio, native was Ohio State coach from 1976-86. Those 10 seasons had their share of highs and lows, but the program welcomed some all-time greats during that time and Miller capped his OSU career with an NIT championship.

Former BSB staffer and longtime Ohio State basketball writer Jeff Rapp recently chatted with Miller, who turned 83 on Father's Day, to discuss the coach's lifelong love of roundball.

BSB: So, has your coaching career reached an end point, or might you continue?

Miller: "No, my son was in an automobile accident and he had to step aside. His spinal cord was not severed, but he's in a pretty heavy research project. There's a chance he'll be walking again. He's got about eight weeks of rehab ahead of him in Chicago at Northwestern."

BSB: Oh my. How awful.

Miller: "Well, that's not bad; it's positive. Accidents happen and he's tackling it. I figure after he's done with that eight weeks, he'll probably get somewhere on a staff this fall. So we're in good shape here. He's doing fine. And I thoroughly enjoyed the years I was his assistant."

BSB: So that closes a really lengthy and noteworthy career.

Miller: "I lived my dream. I was very, very fortunate. A lot of people would not be nearly as fortunate as I was during my career. It was a wonderful time. I still do a little bit of consulting, and I follow a lot of my former assistants who are coaching and players who are coaching."

BSB: As a volunteer assistant, I assume you really didn't have to mess with recruiting (at Pembroke). So what was it that sustained your interest in coaching in these recent years? I'm sure being around your son was neat and being around a game you love was good, but was there an aspect of basketball that you found you really enjoyed? The X's and O's? The preparation?

Miller: "Well, the most important thing that happens really is the relationships with young people. And I love the game of basketball. I love to coach it at all levels. It doesn't really matter. It's just as important to kids playing in middle school as it is to guys playing in the Big Ten. I mean, the kids are trying to win games. They're trying to figure the game out. It's a very complex game."

"What I love about it is when you become a mature player, you turn the 'm' in 'me' over. It's all about 'we' when you become a mature player. Sometimes that's a tough journey. And sometimes people can turn it over, but they're still trying to figure out how they can make a difference, because every day you've got to try to make more of a difference. The game of basketball is a very, very challenging team activity because it's about individual improvement and then it's about how that relates to team improvement."

"You have to understand that I've been at five outstanding universities in six different leagues through 49 years and loved all of it."

BSB: What started all of it for you?

Miller: "Well, I started where I played. I played at Wittenberg, which is a great program. Ray Mears was the head coach who got it going. Five of us in a row from Wittenberg went to Division I head (coaching) jobs. I was the second. You won't find that at any other small college. It's the winningest small-college basketball school in America since 1955."

"Mears was a terrific coach and had a great career at Tennessee after he left. Then, of course, I was there eight years, and then I was at Western Michigan for six. Probably one of the best four teams I ever coached was the last one there. We were 10th in the country at the end of the year. We're in the Sweet 16, and the regional is the same one with Indiana's undefeated team, along with Alabama and Marquette. We lost to Marquette by five."

BSB: Wow. So that's (former Marquette head coach) Al McGuire, (former Alabama head coach) C.M. Newton, Bobby Knight?

Miller: "Oh yeah. McGuire and I were good friends, and that's the year before he won it."

BSB: You've had, I guess, good or bad timing, however you want to look at that. During your time at Ohio State, for example, there were some up and down years, but the teams and the players you had to face in that time frame, it's astonishing. It's maybe the best era of Big Ten basketball ever when you look at '79 to '82, '83, '84 or however long you want to stretch that out.

Miller: "Yes, I think that's right. There was one year I had one of the best teams in the county (in 1979-80) and got upset by UCLA in the regional. We lost to Indiana in overtime at their place, but I still think I had the best team (in the Big Ten). I think UCLA beat us (in the tournament) by three or four. That same year neither Indiana or us got to the Final Four. Purdue and Iowa, who finished third and fourth in our league, got to the Final Four. That was a great time in basketball."

"When I started at Ohio State, it was awful. You had one of the best coaches, Fred Taylor, in the history of the game but with not enough talent."

BSB: I wanted to ask you about that. You go 25-3 in 1975-76 at Western Michigan and you're the hot, young coach. Ohio State calls you. Did you know Fred or did you have any connections to Ohio State basketball at that point?

Miller: "I didn't have any connections other than growing up a fan of Robin Freeman and



FILE PHOTO

GOING STRONG — Eldon Miller has kept busy in the years since leaving Ohio State, coaching for 12 years at Northern Iowa from 1986-98 before becoming a volunteer assistant coach under his son, Ben, at UNC-Pembroke until the last couple of years. Miller spent 10 seasons with the Buckeyes from 1976-86, leading Ohio State to four NCAA Tournament appearances.

Frank Howard, and, of course, I was playing at Wittenberg when that great team (1959-60) was playing at Ohio State."

BSB: I'm sure you followed that team since you were a student-athlete at the same time.

Miller: "Oh, anybody who cared at all about basketball would like to watch John Havlicek play – and all the rest of those guys. They were just terrific. And, of course, Coach Taylor. Coach Taylor changed basketball in the Big Ten. He brought basketball to the forefront in the Big Ten."

BSB: He didn't leave under perfect circumstances, but was he still connected to the program in any way? Was he friendly with you when you first started or anything like that?

Miller: "We weren't good friends, but I went to see him and talk with him. He was working at the university and then he ran the golf program at The Golf Club (in New Albany). I'd go out there and play once in a while and talk to him a little bit."

BSB: How were those conversations?

Miller: "Well ... (laughs) ... you have to know Coach. Coach was no-nonsense, and our conversations were kind of that way. He was upset with the way things kind of turned out there, and I just told him, 'Coach, what you mean to the game of basketball is way beyond that. Personalities don't change who you are. Whatever happened, happened. You're still the man who made it work here. We have a long way to go to try to dig out of the hole it's in now, but we're going to work at it.'"

"We were not close, but there was a lot of respect, and he certainly treated me that way."

BSB: There were pretty strong rumors at that time that Bobby Knight would maybe show interest and that Ohio State might have talked to him behind the scenes (in 1976). I've heard different stories about how that happened. Is that your understanding of it as well, that before they hired you, they flirted with bringing Coach Knight in?

Miller: "Well, I don't know. I heard the same thing. I think I was second choice at most of the jobs I got ... (laughs) ... I don't think I was the people's choice until somebody turned them down. I think the Wittenberg job, when I got it, it was offered to somebody who said he didn't want to follow Mears."

"When I went to Western Michigan, I think they had offered the job to somebody else. The guy didn't want it. It was not a good situation in Kalamazoo when I went there. It's a wonderful town and good school, and what you do is you find good people, get them together and make good things happen."

BSB: Coach, I know our readers would love it if we could hit on some of your highlights of your time at Ohio State. Your first year, I believe Kelvin Ransey is a freshman and ends up being the leading scorer. You also had Larry Bolden, but you probably needed a little more help and you end up having a losing record that year. Does anything stand out about that first season other than growing pains?

Miller: "Well, I had two wonderful assis-

tants in Chuck Machock and Gerry Sears. We were very fortunate because I had done no recruiting until the regional in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was over. And Kelvin Ransey was still available. So we were very fortunate. In fact, Kelvin very recently was inducted into the Ohio Basketball Hall of Fame (of which Miller is also a member).

"Larry Bolden was kind of the stalwart (who was) left and was kind of the leader of the program at that time. He also was a very positive, outgoing person. But we simply could not compete in the front line despite the fact we had guys who played hard. We physically were not able to compete at that level. That was a tough year."

BSB: That next year you bring in Herb Williams, Jim Smith, Carter Scott, Todd Penn, Marquis Miller, which has to be one of the greatest classes in Ohio State basketball history, not only with the depth and talent but also with the fact that you basically got a quality player at each of the five positions, which is really ideal when you're trying to load up a roster.

Miller: "Well, there's no question we were able to bring in some extremely talented people. Most of those guys were out of Columbus, and then you had Big Jim out of Cleveland. I recently spoke to him on the phone and he may come up and see me this fall, which would be great because I love him. Those were just outstanding, talented young people."

BSB: How did that class come together? Was there a key piece or a momentum-building pickup that led to getting all of those guys?

Miller: "That class performed extremely

well until Herb's senior year (1980-81), and the reason we didn't perform that year is we didn't have enough ball handling in the backcourt. We actually had only one person in the program who had any point guard experience. We tried to play Larry Huggins at the point, which was a huge mistake. He was a great kid and a great team player, but we really couldn't get the ball where we needed to get it. We just didn't have all the pieces, and you have to have all the pieces at that level.

"Herb's junior year, he was phenomenal – Big Ten Player of the Year. And Kelvin was enough of a threat that got the ball when he had to have it. But basically we just did not recruit the kind of ball handling that you have to have (in 1980-81). After that year, I made a point that I would always have three point guards in my program, and, of course, we ended up with (Troy) Taylor and (Ron) Stokes, who played a lot in the four years after that. I'm trying to decide if I want both of them early, and after that season I said, 'There's no question. We need both those kids.'"

BSB: I want to jump back to 1979-80 since you mentioned that team. You guys lost in the regional and still end up in the top 10 of the final AP poll. Clark Kellogg seemed like a perfect fit with that team playing power forward next to Herbie and you had Kelvin, Carter Scott, Jim Smith, a solid bench.

Miller: "Kelvin is like the fourth or fifth player chosen in the (NBA) draft, and I told Kelvin before the year started, I said, 'Kelvin, you're not going to score as much, but you're going to be more important to this team because we have a wide variety of weapons.' And

we did. It was a phenomenal offensive team. We had four guys who could score in a variety of ways.

"That was the best team I was ever involved with."

BSB: Clark developed pretty quickly for you.

Miller: "He was a junior when he went pro, and I wanted him to go because his legs were not great. He just did not have great underpinning and was still the best player in the league and was MVP (of the Big Ten in 1982).

"He's a guy who has understood what is going on from a team perspective since he was a young player. He came into the office one day, and I think we were 5-4 in the league his junior year when Ronnie and Troy were freshmen. And he sat down and his question was, 'Coach, what do I need to do?' He was not complaining but he was not happy being 5-4. I told him we were getting better and I think we ended up playing for the (Big Ten) championship the last game of the year at Minnesota."

BSB: You mentioned Indiana earlier. I'm just wondering if you could talk about that rivalry. It's been a great rivalry for some time, even before you and certainly after you. But, boy, those years you were there, those were just some intense games.

Miller: "It always will be. Indiana's basketball history, it goes back farther than the Fred Taylor era at Ohio State with great teams they had with (coach) Branch McCracken. I'd go talk to Knight about basketball before I even got the job and was at Western Michigan. We were fierce competitors and we got after one another, and one game he didn't like a tough foul and we exchanged words, but we had

great respect for one another.

"To be honest with you, the Ohio State people were wonderful people, but they were not promoting basketball when I went there. If you take a look at the Indiana press guide in 1975 and look at Ohio State's press guide in 1975, you get an idea of the picture. Knight has the best program in the country and we're at the bottom of the Big Ten. So when they hired me, I said, 'You know, we've got a lot of catching up to do, and when we do, when we catch up, we're still going to have to beat Indiana.' That's not changed.

"Knight and I ended up being pretty close. We always were, really. But when I got fired at Ohio State, he calls me and says, 'I'll fly anywhere and talk to people at any job you're interested in.'"

BSB: Wow.

Miller: "And we had great games. I think we were down one time against Indiana at home (in 1979-80), nine points with about three minutes to go. People were leaving and I didn't blame them. Then we tied the game up and won. That was two good teams on the floor. When they beat us at Indiana in overtime, we had just beaten Purdue at Purdue, and two nights later we've got to beat Indiana in Bloomington. So it was not an easy finish."

BSB: The other thing I remember about that season was you guys had a game at Illinois on a Thursday, you win that game, you come home and you lose a heartbreaking one-point, physical game to Wisconsin on Saturday, and then you have a made-for-TV game added in on Sunday against Ralph Sampson and Virginia, and you win that

Continued On Page 14

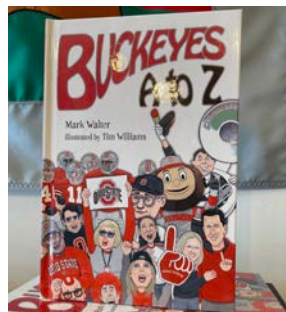
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Miller Proud Of Far-Reaching Coaching Tree

Continued From Page 13

game. There were conversations for years and years after that about what a Big Ten tournament would look like and how could you possibly play three games in a row. Well, you guys basically did that back in 1980. That was crazy.

Miller: "It was ridiculous with TV back then. Everybody wanted to be on national TV, so you did whatever they'd sign you up for because of the money.

"But there were great games, great times. My time there, I was not upset. They had to make a change, and that didn't bother me. Some people get deflated when that happens. You're trying to do a job and you've been at it for a while. If you're at Ohio State, you know what the expectations are. You know what they have to be, what they need to be.

"So you're always trying to get better. And if you're not doing that, if you're not making the changes that make a difference, you're going backwards."

BSB: Is there an aspect of your coaching that you are especially proud of?

Miller: "I had 24 assistant coaches in the 36 years I was a head coach, and 22 of them became head college coaches somewhere. That includes Bob Huggins, who's at West Virginia, and we talk all the time. I had Randy Ayers and Jim Clemons. Randy is still scouting and Jim is retired now, but you talk about great basketball people. Randy Ayers and Jim Clemons, it doesn't get any better than that.

"Some of those coaches I had at Northern Iowa. I had 12 years there. But Ohio State is the top of the mountain. I loved my time there, but I basically forced them to fire me.

"I had a really young team the year I got fired. They were trying to figure it out. We were starting and playing freshmen a lot, but at the last half of the year we were starting to come on, so I wasn't too worried. I thought we'd have a good chance to win the NIT."

BSB: Dennis Hopson and Brad Sellers had great years then, and you had Jay Bur-

Miller Shares His Take On Notable Buckeyes

Eldon Miller brought in and coached some of the most recognizable names in the history of Ohio State basketball. Below are some of his comments about a few of his notables:

▪ **Kelvin Ransey:** "He was a phenomenal talent. Extremely quick and a great passion for the game and a very positive personality. Kelvin could penetrate, he could break down the defense with the dribble as well as anybody who was playing college ball at that time and could stop on a dime and shoot it, pass it."

▪ **Carter Scott:** "Carter Scott was just a phenomenal athlete. Good scorer, worked extremely hard, was used to winning. He played on those great Barberton teams."

▪ **Herb Williams:** "The strongest athlete I've ever coached. Someone asked me once about him and said, 'Well, Herb is kind of a quiet guy, doesn't say a whole lot, and I don't know how he's going to do in the NBA.' And I said, 'Well, he's going to play as long as he wants to.' He was going to be there every day trying to do what the team

is trying to do. He was a phenomenal defensive center and rebounder."

▪ **Clark Kellogg:** "Clark was a wonderful guy to coach, of course, but also a wonderful human being with a tremendous basketball mind and intellect. And he was a great rebounder and passer. I used to accuse him of throwing to guys who couldn't shoot so he could get the rebound."

▪ **Troy Taylor and Ron Stokes:** "Those two guys were very hard to play against. They played with Larry Huggins as freshmen and then with Dave Jones. We played three little guys, and if I'm not mistaken we are playing late in the season for the league championship twice with those guys. They were fun to coach. Those are really good people."

▪ **Tony Campbell:** "Tony was a terrific talent to work with and played a long time in the NBA. It was good to see him a few years ago."

▪ **Dennis Hopson:** "A young talent who was really a flamboyant scorer. And I talk to Hop. Hop's in coaching. He has great passion for basketball and has great experience."

son, Tony White and Jerry Francis as freshmen. It was kind of a nice mix of younger and older that year. What were the circumstances that led to your firing? Can you take me through that? I know this has been dragged out before, but I'm just wondering what your version of it is.

Miller: "Winning basketball games at that level was all recruiting. You don't have to be the smartest guy to figure out what to do with Kelvin Ransey or Herb Williams or Clark Kellogg. The reason I forced them is I had 10 one-year contracts and that was becoming a factor in recruiting. As much as I loved the job, I wanted to do the job. Some people hang onto jobs. There's a lot of places where you can work that are good but unless you have absolute and total support from your administration ...

"I didn't care about the money. I mean, I liked getting paid enough that I can do what I want to do, but to be honest with you, I want-

ed a three-year rollover contract. You can't go into a recruit's home and hear them say, 'Well, I understand you have a one-year contract.' It's simple math. Nobody since I've been there has had one-year contracts."

BSB: No. That's suicide now.

Miller: "That doesn't work. Now they're paying people millions of dollars when they fire them."

BSB: Exactly.

Miller: (laughs)

BSB: It's gone to the other end of the spectrum. You're right, Coach.

Miller: "It was a different era. I'm not blaming them. I took the job under those conditions. But the job had to change – or I had to change – so I changed."

BSB: What was it like to coach with that looming?

Miller: "I was more concerned about those players, because they were good players, and it was Brad's last year. What kind of experience could these guys have? That's beyond what was going on with the coach. So that wasn't really on my mind much.

"I went in and told them what had to happen, and (athletic director) Rick Bay said, 'Well, we can't do that.' I said, 'Find another coach.'"

BSB: Did that occur before the season?

Miller: "Oh yeah. But I was never that upset with that. I eventually moved on and loved Northern Iowa. I had coached a game there before I went there. It's a wonderful school, and we had great success there. I had a wonderful young AD, Bob Bowlsby, who went everywhere – Iowa, Stanford – and became commissioner of the Big 12. He was the AD who hired me at Northern Iowa, and he understood Northern Iowa was a very good program. In fact, I'm really excited that my grandson (Charlie Miller) is going to be on their team next year."

BSB: What do you think about today's game? You've got NIL, the transfer portal. There's just a lot going on that's different. You are a person who values progress, and there's been a lot of progress in basketball. Has that been good progress in your mind?

Miller: "Well, I don't agree with it for a

variety of reasons, but it is what it is. I don't like the fact that when a player is struggling, he leaves. I think we're providing the wrong lessons. I think perseverance through times is one of the most important lessons in this world, and I think we've gone too far. You don't want to get me started in politics. We don't have enough time, because integrity – integrity – is an important word.

"So, I don't like the transfer portal. I don't care if someone transfers, but I don't think you should do that without paying a penalty, and that penalty would be sitting a year. You're not going to go right away and get what you want. It's become too much 'me' and not enough 'we' – everywhere.

"And then you have the NIL. Everything is based on the Power (Five) leagues, and I'm not opposed to that. That's fine. But you have to understand when we make rules how it impacts all the young people who attend college and play basketball across the United States of America. And it's different.

"I'm not upset when a young man has value that enables him to earn money. I don't think legally you'd have a leg to stand on if you tried to deny that, actually. But the NCAA has relinquished control of that. My concern is now recruiting.

"If I were a coach today, because of the rules or lack of rules, I would probably find the richest guys at my school who could easily give away \$2 million a year and say, 'Well, look at this guy to hire you. He likes your image and I think he'll pay you pretty well.'

"Right now, that's legal. So I think the recruiting war is now a financial war, and I don't like that in college sports.

"I love to watch pro games but I didn't want professional sports in college. But you do what it says. If I were recruiting today and I was recruiting Clark Kellogg, I'm not sure what I'd have to do. I'd be finding some good jobs for some of them. They'd have to feed my racehorses hay or something.

"It's a different world."

(Eldon Miller is now retired and lives with his family in Frankfort, Mich. Among his favorite pastimes is golfing at scenic Crystal Downs Country Club.)

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JULY 1-3

A

C

FRIDAY // 6:40

- Post-Game Fireworks Show, presented by Toyota

SATURDAY // 4:10

- "The Cowboy" Jeff Brantley Bobblehead, presented by Grippo's (while supplies last)

SUNDAY // 1:40

- Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Kids Jonathan India Wall Decal, presented by PNC Bank (while supplies last)



JULY 4-6

NY

C

presented by **Great Clips**

MONDAY // 6:40

- July 4th Fireworks Show, presented by Gravity Plus
- Military Appreciation Day, presented by CareSource reds.com/military



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TUESDAY // 6:40

- 3-2-1 Tuesdays*, presented by Budweiser and Bud Light
- *Limit 2 per person per order

WEDNESDAY // 6:40

JULY 7

P

C

THURSDAY // 2:10 & 7:10



JULY 8-10

TB

C

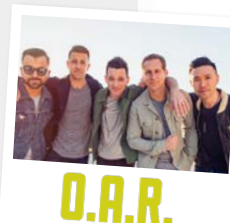
presented by **OREO**

FRIDAY // 6:40

- Post-Game Fireworks Show, presented by Tire Discounters

SATURDAY // 4:10

- Team Baseball Card Set, presented by Khan's (while supplies last)
- Ohio Lottery Post-Game Concert Featuring O.A.R. Live Concert from the field **FREE** to all fans with game ticket



SUNDAY // 1:40

- Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Joey Votto Poster, presented by Cincinnati Children's Hospital #2 in series of 3 collectible posters. (while supplies last)



JULY 22-24

STL

C

presented by **Kroger Zero Hunger Zero Waste**

FRIDAY // 6:40

- Post-game Fireworks Show, presented by Swift Meats

- Jerry Garcia Ticket Package, Featuring an **EXCLUSIVE** Jerry Garcia Cap (item only available with purchase of a ticket package)



Available at reds.com/Themes

SATURDAY // 6:40

- Vintage Mr. Redlegs Bobblehead, presented by altafiber (while supplies last)
- Post-game Fireworks Show, presented by Cincinnati Children's Hospital



SUNDAY // 1:40

- Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Kids Mr. Redlegs Wall Decal, presented by Lee's Famous Recipe (while supplies last)



JULY 25-28

M

C

MONDAY // 6:40

TUESDAY // 6:40

- 3-2-1 Tuesdays*, presented by Budweiser and Bud Light

WEDNESDAY // 6:40

- Dayton Day at the Reds! Reds.com/Dayton

THURSDAY // 12:35

JULY 29-31

O

C

presented by **Great American Insurance Group**

FRIDAY // 6:40

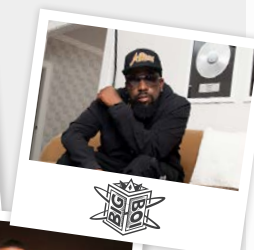
- Post-game Fireworks Show, presented by Great American Insurance Group

SATURDAY // 6:40

- Reds Fanny Pack, presented by Great American Insurance Group (while supplies last)



- Ohio Lottery Post-Game Concert Featuring Rev Run & DJ Ruckus, Big Boi and Montell Jordan Live Concert from the field **FREE** to all fans with game ticket



SUNDAY // 1:40

- Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Kids Joey Votto Wall Decal, presented by Great American Insurance Group (while supplies last)



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Willis Sparked Change In OSU Administration

By CHASE BROWN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Miechelle Willis accomplished much during her academic, athletic and administrative careers. The longtime Ohio State athletics administrator is a Buckeye at heart but wore several different hats in an almost 50-year relationship with sports in higher education.

Willis was a standout track and field athlete at Grambling State, a school where she earned an undergraduate in physical education and a master's in athletic administration. Her work continued as a track and field coach and field hockey coach at Montclair State, positions she held for nine years. With added experience as a flight medic in the United States Air Force, Willis started as an athletic administrator at Temple before finally joining the Scarlet and Gray.

A 23-year employee for Ohio State, Willis sparked significant change during her time with the Buckeyes, becoming a symbol of inclusivity for women and people of color at the university. Willis spoke with Buckeye Sports Bulletin on June 22 to share her most significant moments in sports, revealing what shaped her into one of the most prominent athletic figures in the university's modern age of athletics.

BSB: You attended Grambling University and were a standout on the track and field team. What made you decide that you wanted to be Tiger?

Willis: "When I went to Grambling, they didn't even have women's teams. I went in 1972, which is when Title IX started and the pressure for universities and colleges to start women's programs became more prevalent. I didn't go to Grambling with the idea of participating in sports. I was a three-sport athlete in high school, but I mostly went to Grambling because I wanted the traditional academic college experience.

"I arrived at Grambling, and that's when they started the women's sports, and track and field was one of them. That first year, I went out for the team and made it. Our coach was the linebackers coach for the football team. We were practicing and practicing and practicing, but the athletic director told us that we couldn't compete until we could represent Grambling in the way that he expected Grambling to be represented, so we weren't even allowed to compete during that first year.

"We went back out the next year and had some recruits come to compete with us. That was the first year we had scholarships for the team, which helped. We had a decent season that year and ended up winning the Southwestern Athletic Conference championship. It was neat to be a part of something growing and developing like that. But, again, I didn't go to Grambling to run track. When I look back, I'm glad I did, though. I was put on scholarship, and I became a three-year captain. It was a great experience."

BSB: Grambling is an Historically Black College or University and ranks as

one of the top HBCU schools in America. Do you believe HBCUs are still necessary with so much conversation surrounding inclusivity in today's society?

Willis: "I absolutely do. At Grambling, I received some of what I consider the most formulating and developing years of my life. I didn't have strong academics coming out of high school, but going to Grambling elevated my expectation to perform better and at a higher level. They offered me so much encouragement. There was accountability to achieve things that helped me develop academically, personally and as a student-athlete.

"The things that were said to me in a classroom were things that needed to be pushed on me as a Black student. An HBCU has Black and African-American students looking to be driven and competitive, knowing they wouldn't be pushed the same way at other majority schools. I probably would not have had the same academic success had I not gone to Grambling. I would have continued to feel inferior and those kinds of things that can slip into the background and never really be addressed as a young adult.

"There are Black students that can thrive in non-HBCU schools, but I was not one of them, and I needed an HBCU to mold me into who I am. Folks like me, who came out of high school and hadn't found their way yet, can use the HBCU to create a helpful environment for me to feel more secure and stronger in my beliefs of what I could do academically and as an athlete."

BSB: In the 1980s, you started your career as an athletic administrator for Temple University in Philadelphia, serving 11 women's varsity sports in compliance, personnel and student-athlete services positions. What attracted you to a career in athletic administration?

Willis: "Well, I graduated from Grambling with an undergraduate degree in physical education and started teaching. For one semester, I started pursuing teaching. I didn't land a teaching job, so I returned to graduate school at Grambling. I did substitute teaching for a while during that time, then I applied to graduate school for a master's degree in athletic administration because I wanted to stay in sports and felt I'd rather be in administration than anything else.

"I didn't want to coach, but I coached track and field hockey at Montclair State, which was called Montclair State College at the time, in New Jersey. Again, I didn't want to coach, but I stayed in that role for nine years. I was one of six full-time coaches while everybody else was part-time coaching. I was underpaid and overworked because I had a lot of hats to wear while doing compliance, drug testing and all that stuff. The blessing was that I had my hands in many things, so when it was time to apply for athletics administration at Temple, I had a background in compliance, drug education and coaching.

"I also had a sidebar working for the Air Force –"

BSB: Sorry to interrupt, but when did



PHOTO COURTESY OF OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY — Miechelle Willis (left) sits beside Ohio State women's basketball player Jacy Sheldon (right) at Ohio State's Title IX panel on June 23. The event kicked off a year-long celebration for the 50th anniversary of Title IX, legislation that ensures equal opportunity for men and women in academics and athletics.

you have time to enlist in the military?

Willis: "I took a temporary leave of absence from coaching to enroll in the Air Force, where I went through basic training and tech school as a full-time enrollee before becoming a reservist after that. I partnered my active military experience with those administrative experiences when I applied for Temple, which ended up working well for me."

BSB: One more question on your time in the military. Were you ever in active service, and what was your role?

Willis: "I was, and it was a great experience. I was in the Air Force as a flight medic. We would do medical evacuations. I flew to Germany and would pick up sick patients and bring them back to the United States. I spent 30 days in the Middle East. They were doing war games (simulations of real-life warfare) over there. Anytime someone was hurt, we would transport them back to Germany. It was something different from anything I'd experienced."

BSB: After seven years at Temple, you moved to Columbus and joined the Ohio State athletic department during Jim Jones' final year as athletic director and Andy Geiger's first year. Which person hired you, and what were your first duties?

Willis: "Andy Geiger hired me. He had been at the university all of six months, and I think I was one of his first hires. How I came to Ohio State was during that time I was doing drug education – I was actually at Montclair State at the time – attending a drug education conference associated with an NCAA seminar. Archie Griffin and John Lombardo were speakers in one of the sessions. When it was over, I walked up to Archie and told him that he played on the Bengals with a

classmate of mine, Mike St. Clair. He said he knew him, and we hung out and developed a friendship from there.

"When I was at Temple, I continued my communication with Archie and we would get together and communicate. We would usually grab dinner when he was in New York for the Heisman Trophy ceremony. Seven years into my time at Temple, he called me and told me about an open position at Ohio State. I weighed the schools, right? Ohio State against Temple. Ohio State against Temple. It was clear. I interviewed for the position and ended up winning.

"When I was hired, I worked for half the sports while Archie worked the other half. What I liked about Ohio State at the time was that sports weren't broken down by gender. He had men's and women's sports, and I had men's and women's sports. I was able to cover men's and women's basketball, and I think I was the first woman in the Big Ten to oversee men's basketball.

"It was great, but it took some learning, too. Archie and I had an agreement that I would teach him sport administration – because he really didn't know much at the time – and he would teach me Ohio State. We made a great team, and I loved working together with him. He is a great individual, a great person. He taught me a lot, and I hope I taught him a lot as well."

BSB: Many would consider Archie Griffin their favorite Ohio State athlete of all time. Who has been your favorite Buckeye athlete over the years?

Willis: "It would definitely be Archie. I've learned so much from him, and I hope the athletes at Ohio State emulate their lives after his life and who he is as a person. I've never seen him have a bad day. If he was having

a bad day, you wouldn't know it. He can't walk five feet without being stopped in Columbus. People always wanted pictures and autographs, and he never denied them. He never seemed irritated by that. Archie was always humbled by the affection and love that people have for him here. So often with high-profile athletes, it is all about them. For Archie, it was never about him.

"I never saw Archie play in person, but watching him on tape I always thought to myself, 'Man, he was fast!' I enjoy going back and seeing some of that footage of him playing, but I think his impact on me as a person makes him an easy pick for my favorite Buckeye. I have all the respect and love in the world for Archie."

BSB: Having the basketball teams move from the beloved St. John Arena to the Schottenstein Center has been a hot-button topic for Buckeye fans over the last two decades. What did you think about the decision to have those programs change buildings?

Willis: "It was really about the amenities and what we could provide to the fans. The infrastructure wasn't there for St. John Arena. If you've been inside of St. John, if it's hot outside, you're sweating bullets inside of that arena. We probably could have gutted the inside and redone the building to put in air conditioning, but then you deal with the concession lines. If you were there for a men's or women's basketball game, you would stand at the concession line for an entire half. It was time to shift our focus to the entertainment dollar. I love St. John Arena because it is loud and it is close to the floor, but the chairs are uncomfortable and the bleachers were hard, it was hot inside and the concessions were miserable."

"Yes, it provided a wonderful environment for our players because our players like loud spaces and it can be used to the home team's advantage, but I think as a spectator, attendee or fan, you are looking for the best experience possible. That product wasn't where we wanted it to be for the fans anymore at St. John. In our department, we had to provide free Wi-Fi, video boards as big as the court and food that held its value – all things that provide the fan with a good experience."

"Ultimately, the decision went down to fan experience and how so much of our job in the athletic department was vying for the entertainment dollar of Ohio State fans. Those factors led to the decision that we had outgrown a facility and needed to move to a new one."

BSB: In overseeing women's basketball, you worked with excellent coaches in Jim Foster and Kevin McGuff, but what will it take for Ohio State to make it past the Sweet 16?

Willis: "That's a question that we asked ourselves every day in the athletic department and one that I continue to ask as a fan. We have all the resources in place to do that. It becomes a coaching thing, and now the challenge with coaches – good and bad – is the transfer portal. It is hard to maintain a strong nucleus of players when kids, for whatever reason, decide they want to leave. Our coaches will be put in that situation again and again in the future."

"It's hard to develop a team nucleus and team culture when it's such a revolving door with the number of players on your team. But it all comes back to coaching and recruiting. We believed that the resources were there and will always be there for this program to

make a run. Our team should be in the Final Four and pushing for a title every season. For our coaches, our goal in the athletic department was simple: How do we support the coaches to get them there? We need the right coach and the right players to manage the dynamics and the personalities and the talent. That's also a challenge."

BSB: You also oversaw men's and women's tennis at Ohio State. What kind of relationship have you developed with Ty Tucker over the years? What have you thought of his performance as head coach of the men's team and director of both programs?

Willis: "That was the best coaching hire I ever made. I totally rolled the dice on Ty when John Daly told me that he would be retiring after 28 years. That happened in December before the spring season, and we wondered where the heck we were going to find a tennis coach. Ty was his assistant and the players flooded in saying that they wanted Ty to be the next head coach. They advocated for Ty and wanted him to lead the program."

"Ty played at Ohio State but left early to play professional tennis. After his career, Daly hired him as an assistant. Now, Ty wasn't the best of students when he was here, so John hired him under one caveat and that was Ty needed to finish his degree. John stayed on Ty until that happened and made sure that he got his degree. Ty finished his degree and kept coaching. Eventually, he became the head coach."

"He was a young, enthusiastic and quirky guy. I was concerned that Ty wanted so badly for Ohio State tennis to be in the national conversation that he might not do it the right way. I knew how much he wanted to build a national brand here and win a national championship. I talked with Andy Geiger and we decided to name him the interim head coach for the spring to get us through that season. As the season went on, I worked with him real closely to make sure his T's were crossed and keep him in check. He did a tremendous job. His players worked hard, and they enjoyed working hard. They saw themselves get better. That was the start of a great relationship between Ty and me. It's been a great one since. He's been a great coach since."

BSB: In 2005, Geiger retired after 11 years as Ohio State's athletic director. Then came Gene Smith, who still holds the position today. What do you see as the difference between the two men as athletic directors for a prominent brand like Ohio State?

Willis: "I learned a lot from both of them, and I shared great relationships with both of them. Andy was thoughtful in his approach. He was hands-on, and I remember having great conversations with him about men's basketball, women's basketball and how to run the sports I oversaw. We had honest conversations and dialogues."

"Gene had a business background before coming to Ohio State. A lot of times, back in the day, you coached and then went into athletic administration. You're an athlete, you coach and you become an administrator. Gene was an athlete, worked in business as part of a management leadership program, coached and then got into administration."

"Both of them were very humanistic. They had great people skills and worked well with athletes, coaches and their staffs. Gene brought a business background to the role, which was different from Andy's, but Andy worked well within his approach, too. They

were different, but they had the same care for Ohio State that I could always see."

BSB: You were the 2011 recipient of the Dr. Claire Van Ummersen Leadership Award, which honors those who have demonstrated leadership in promoting women and embracing diversity. What makes those topics important to you?

Willis: "I think that leadership, development and the development of young people, helping them to become leaders and integral parts of our society, will continue to move us forward in the process of equality. It is always challenging to have equitable opportunities for men and women in athletics. Still, we wanted to ensure that the resources were available to every team at Ohio State, regardless of gender. We wanted to provide student-athletes with meaningful opportunities. We wanted to expand the opportunities for women. It was important then, and I think it is still important now."

"Companies like to hire former athletes, and the reason for that is because of some of the leadership skills that they learn in sports. It is so important that we have men and women learning from these kinds of opportunities. They develop the skills necessary to go to work in places that develop them into leaders. Leadership is so integral to how we move forward as a society. I think the time to start that development comes in college, and sports do a great job of moving young people into skillful positions."

BSB: In 2017, you chose to retire after 23 years at Ohio State and 33 years in sports administration. What led to that decision?

Willis: "I was promoted to deputy athletic director in 2014 and had been in that position for three years. With that promotion, I kept receiving more and more responsibility that kept adding up. I am grateful that Gene anointed me as the deputy athletic director, but I had in mind that I wanted to retire soon. I don't know why, but the number 63 was always in mind for me as the age that I would like to retire, so I did that. The mission was to retire at that age so I could appreciate being retired and have fun."

"Athletic administration is a 24-hours-a-

day and seven-days-a-week kind of job. It is fun, but we are in the entertainment business. There is the traditional work on the weekdays, and then we have games on the weekends. I felt burnt out. I wanted to retire earlier, but I remember a colleague of mine from the University of Wisconsin at the time had told me to wait it out until the summer (of that year). 'Wait until the sun comes out,' she said. 'The days are longer. You're outdoors watching tennis matches. You'll feel better about it.' She was right. That helped me get through burnout most years."

"I eventually got to a place where I was ready. I just wanted to be in a place where I no longer had to work Saturdays and Sundays. I still go to women's basketball games because I enjoy those, and I still go to tennis matches because I enjoy those, too. But now I go for fun and not out of obligation. I go to support the coaches and the student-athletes. That's why I wanted to retire early. I wanted enough time to have fun with the sports. I wanted to get a dog – now I'm training my dog in agility for competitions – get into bird photography, do some traveling and that kind of stuff."

BSB: What's next for Miechelle Willis?

Willis: "That's a great question. Where do I go from here? I have an opportunity to pursue all the hobbies I never had time for while working, those things like dog training and bird photography. I think I want to stay out of the house as much as I can and travel as much as I can. Of course, COVID had shut things down for a few years, but I want to get back to taking trips again."

"I continue to work with some of the folks at Ohio State. I'll go in and talk with some of the departments sometimes. I'll talk with coaches and administrators, and I have some relationships with the staff. Sometimes I'll call and ask if I can come in and meet their staff. I enjoyed that part of the job, and I still do that sort of thing today. The people part of it is fun, helping people grow in their field of work. I've always enjoyed working with people. I think I'll be happy if I can continue to get with coaches and their teams within the department and do something happy like running around courses with my dog and taking bird photos."



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Kellogg's Life Built On Faith, Family And Friendships

By **CHASE BROWN**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Don't tell Clark Kellogg to sit on the sidelines. A former All-American, Big Ten Most Valuable Player and a top draft choice of the Indiana Pacers, Kellogg had a stellar basketball career that spanned several years.

Kellogg broke records at St. Joseph's High School in Cleveland – many that still stand today – and paced the Ohio State basketball program for three years. He seemed destined for much of the same in the NBA, but his body didn't allow him to pursue that dream further than three full seasons as he suffered several knee injuries.

Still, the discouragement from an abrupt end to his career didn't keep Kellogg out of the game. He only moved forward. Kellogg dove into a broadcasting career that has lasted over three decades, covering college basketball at the highest level for CBS as a color commentator and studio analyst.

Wherever Kellogg goes, he dazzles. Perhaps you know him as the high school legend who scored 51 points in a state championship game, a leading scorer and rebounder for the Buckeyes in the early '80s, "Special K" with the Indiana Pacers or a Hall of Fame level broadcaster on national television.

Regardless of how you know him, Buckeye Sports Bulletin sat down with Kellogg in an exclusive interview on June 21 to learn more about the most significant moments of his decorated basketball and broadcasting career, what kept him moving after hardship and where he's going next.

BSB: What was your experience growing up in northeast Ohio?

Kellogg: "It was great. My dad was a Cleveland police officer for over 40 years. I got my start in organized hoops through the Police Athletic League. It was police officers that typically coached sports in the neighborhoods where they worked – sports like football and basketball. It was a way for police officers to give back. It was also to hopefully positively influence kids and help steer some careers that were headed in the wrong direction back on the right path through sports.

"I grew up on the east side of Cleveland in lower-middle-income homes. A lot of love, a lot of family, extended family around. All four of my grandparents were in Cleveland, and they lived until I was 33. My siblings, younger brother and three younger sisters, aunts and uncles. It wasn't perfect, but good is how I would describe my childhood. It revolved around family and sports in many ways."

BSB: When did you start believing that you had a future in basketball (collegiate and professionally)?

Kellogg: "I fell in love with the game at 10 years old. I recall loving being out there, whether on the playground or (when) my dad put a hoop in the back yard right when I was 10 years old. It kind of became a

neighborhood gathering place for some of the older kids after school and during the summer.

"Another point I think I fell in love with the game was probably when I was a sophomore in high school. I had a chance to play some pickup games with some of the Cleveland Cavaliers like Terry Furlow, Jim Jones, Campy Russell, Mike Mitchell and Austin Carr. I'm thinking that was December of either sophomore or junior year in high school, and that's when I thought I might

have a chance to make a go of it at the highest level. I was holding my own even though those guys weren't obviously going at it like they normally would. They encouraged me and offered me positive reinforcement about my potential. At that point, I think I realized that I might have a chance to realize my dream."

BSB: In the 1979 Class AAA state championship, you faced future Buckeye teammate Granville Waiters – whom I've read that you called GVille back in the day – and Columbus East High School at St. John Arena. You scored 51 points and pulled down 24 rebounds, and Waiters finished with 15, but he and East ended up winning the title. What can you remember about that game?

Kellogg: "GVille and I ended up being roommates for three years at Ohio State, but he was my nemesis at the high school level because they took us down at that state championship game. He passed away this last year due to COVID complications, and I miss him. He never let me live that game down, and he always had that trophy. I ended up getting that individual scoring record, which still stands, but he got the title."

BSB: How did you manage to get 51 points in a high school game?

Kellogg: "I shot it enough, man. Almost every time down the court I put up a shot pretty much out of desperation. We started poorly, and we needed to catch up. That huge deficit caused us to play offense out of desperation. I started trying to do what I could to get us back in the game and ended up accumulating a bunch of points and rebounds.

"As much as it pains me that we lost, and as much as people talk about the record, I think more about how we lost the game and how many shots I missed from the field and the free-throw line. It's a record people hold in high regard, but I wish it was attached to a championship team."

BSB: Other than Ohio State, what colleges interested you? What ultimately led you to be a Buckeye?

Kellogg: "I was recruited as one of the top two or three players in the country that year. Ralph Sampson, Isiah Thomas and James Worthy. When you look back at that 1979 class, it's been documented as perhaps the best high school class ever when you look at the names and the careers guys had in high school, college and even in the pros. I was considered one of the top recruits, and I was a consensus top-five talent. In many

cases, I was a top-three player in that class.

"I got offers and interests from everywhere and ultimately zeroed in on four places. I knew I didn't really want to go far away from home, and there were some really good schools both academically and in basketball in the area. I considered Notre Dame, Kentucky, Ohio State and Michigan as my four schools, and I took some official visits to those schools. It ultimately came down to Ohio State and Michigan. The teammates that I was going to play with at Ohio State – the All-Ohio guys – made a huge impact on my decision. The potential I thought we had to be good with me joining them now because I knew I could fit right in as a starter. That was not something that any of the coaches promised to me, but I could see where my skill set and ability could possibly land me in the starting lineup at Ohio State. Kelvin Ransey, Carter Scott, Herb Williams and Jim Smith made the school intriguing.

"It came down to Ohio State and Michigan. Buckeye Nation, and I don't know if it was referred to as such back then, made a huge impact on my decision for being close to home, and being part of the state university with a bunch of others appealed to me. The Buckeyes ultimately won me over."

BSB: In your freshman season at OSU, the team went 21-8 and qualified for the NCAA Tournament as the No. 4 seed. You defeated No. 5-seeded Arizona State in the first game before falling to UCLA by four points in the West Regional semifinal. What can you tell me about that season?

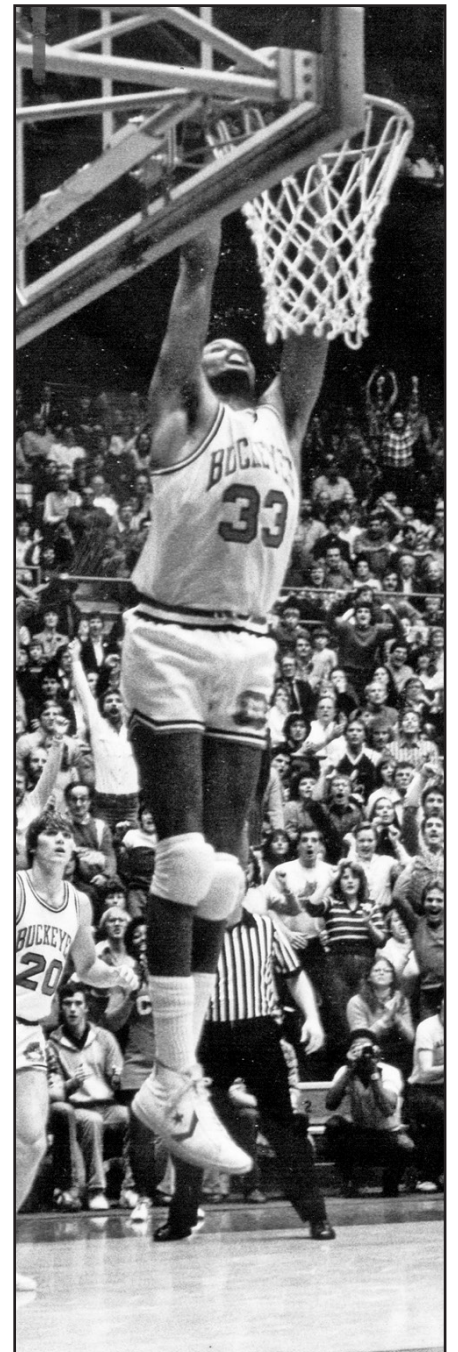
Kellogg: "That was one of the best teams in Ohio State's history from a talent standpoint. I would stand that team against any of the other outstanding teams in the history of the program. That was a talented team. We came up short in our quest for a Big Ten championship, and our season ended without a deep run in the tournament. We fell short of our goals. It's still disappointing that the 1979-80 team didn't hang a championship banner.

"I was with Herb Williams recently, and we talked about that season and how it's a bit of a void for us, individually and collectively. That was a special group during my freshman year. It was a bittersweet season. I loved the guys I played with, and it created great excitement around the program then. The conference was as good as any time in its history, regarding the number of outstanding players and teams.

"It was great to play at Ohio State in the Big Ten against the coaches and players that were part of that time. I just wish we fared better than we did. No regrets – just disappointment that we didn't max out what we had on the roster and what we were on paper."

BSB: The following year, the team struggled and finished with a 14-13 record and failed to make the NCAA and NIT Tournaments. What led to the decline after a tremendous season in 1979-80?

Kellogg: "That was a very disappointing season. We lost Kelvin to the NBA, and I think people underestimated how much Kelvin meant to our group. He was so good, and he held so much together for us. Losing him was a significant, significant loss. We



FILE PHOTO

STUDENT OF THE GAME — Clark Kellogg has seen the game from every angle. A standout at St. Joseph's High School and at Ohio State, his NBA career was cut short due to injury, and he then embarked on a successful career in broadcasting that dates back to the 1980s.

had some challenges off the court, which I won't speak on. There was some personal challenges for some of our players. We weren't as collectively focused or cohesive as we were the prior season, and that hurt us. We were just inconsistent.

"I think we had to win the last few games of our season to finish above a .500 winning percentage and to end above .500 in our league. Overall, it was a painful season. That was hard. There was just a little too much drama and chaos surrounding our group that wasn't conducive to us being at our best at all times."

BSB: In your third and final season at Ohio State, the team rebounded to a 21-10 record. Would you attribute much of that to your performance and the added

energy of then-freshmen Troy Taylor and Ron Stokes?

Kellogg: "Tony Campbell came into his own as a sophomore that year. Troy and Ronnie were a really nice injection of fire, toughness and skill. They were excellent freshman players, and they helped our team. Larry Huggins was solid, too, and so was Granville.

"I had an 'MVP of the league' kind of year. We won a lot of close games. I was consistent and productive, but we had good group chemistry. I think that's part of why we were able to win several close games and put ourselves in a position to play for a share of the Big Ten regular-season championship at the end of the year. We ended up coming short against a solid Minnesota team.

"That was a satisfying junior season because nobody expected us to do as well as we did. The fans and the media expected more of the same from the year before, so I think we surprised many people. I was able to grow as a leader of the group, and I had a productive junior season. That year laid the foundation for me to give serious thought and ultimately decide that I was ready to head to the NBA."

BSB: Before we discuss the NBA, I need to ask about Ron Stokes. You were listed at 6-7, and Stokes was listed at 5-11. Who could jump higher back in the day?

Kellogg: "Ronnie had a little more bounce than me when it came to vertical jumps, no doubt. He was extremely athletic and had the most bounce of anybody on our team when he was measured getting off the ground. I'm not sure anybody on our squad would have out-jumped him in a vertical contest."

BSB: In 1982, you decided to declare for the NBA draft. What led to that decision, and was there any thought that you might return to Ohio State for a senior season?

Kellogg: "I was so frustrated by my sophomore year. I had fallen in love with the lady that has been my wife for almost 39 years. I was ready to pursue my dream of being a pro player, and I was prepared to move on to that next chapter of my life. I was slightly reluctant about leaving a really good nucleus at Ohio State. Granville and Larry Huggins were going to be seniors while Tony was heading into his junior season. And then, of course, Troy and Ronnie would be sophomores. However, at that time, I looked a little more forward than behind.

"I was eager to get started with the next chapter. I was excited about going to the NBA and knowing I would be a relatively high draft choice. I just felt it was time for me to move on and pursue and chase that dream. And I knew I would return to school and get my degree at some point – that com-

ponent was locked away. I didn't know how long it would take me, but I was committed to finishing school.

"Ultimately, there was a combination of frustration around how things unfolded in college during my first year when we came up short of our goals despite having such a talented team. My sophomore year was a letdown, and the first-round tournament exit was a downer in my junior year. I think, even more, I was looking forward to getting married at some point and starting my professional journey as an NBA player."

BSB: What was it like to have the Indiana Pacers' front office call and tell you they had chosen you with the No. 8 pick in the 1983 NBA draft?

Kellogg: "It is one of the great memories of my life. A dream was realized that day. My mom and dad were alive at the time, and they were able to join me in New York. Some of us were invited to the draft because of our anticipated draft position, so I was there with several other players. There were thousands of people gathered at the Felt Forum inside Madison Square Garden to watch the draft. The draft has grown now, but that was a big audience for the time, so it was exciting.

"I thought I would be drafted a little higher than No. 8, but it worked out great because I reunited with Herb Williams in Indiana after he was drafted there in 1981. It was a blessing to be reunited with him and start my NBA journey with a known teammate in the Midwest, where people were familiar with me for my time in the Big Ten. It ended up being a really good spot for me to realize my dream.

"The draft is always special for me each year. I see young players have their entire lives change in an instant. I still get feelings of excitement and thanksgiving for those who are drafted every year. It still reminds me of those guys 40 years ago that were drafted with me. Forty years ago, I was that person who had his life change, and I will always be grateful for that opportunity. There were only 23 teams in the league when I played. I was in that seat waiting for my name to be called. It was so special. I felt an accomplishment, a sense of pride and thanksgiving for realizing my dream."

BSB: As an NBA rookie, you averaged 20.1 points and 10.6 rebounds per game, becoming one of a handful of players in league history to record double-digit averages in those categories as a first-year player. You also were named to the NBA All-Rookie team and finished runner-up in Rookie of the Year voting to Terry Cummings. How do you remember that first year in the association?

Kellogg: "That year was personally gratifying because when you come into the

league, you want to prove that you belong, and you want to prove yourself worthy of the draft position. I received a great opportunity because anytime you are drafted that high up, you go to a team that needs your ability, so I was able to start from the beginning. I had Herb there, which was a huge help. Not only did he help me on the court, but he helped me off the court, too. We lived in the same apartment complex. We would ride to practice together, and he would take me around the city.

"In my rookie year, I felt gratified. Back then, I had just turned 21 years old and was one of the league's two or three youngest players. We weren't very good when you considered the teams that were playoff material and looked at how they were built. But it was satisfying, and I showed that I could be a good player, and I showed that I could be part of a winning team in the future as we go and add other pieces.

"Having the numbers I did was pretty significant, particularly in that I only played for a short time because of knee trouble. So to be a 20 points and 10 rebounds kind of guy in your first year – there haven't been many guys to do that as rookies. A combination of opportunity, ability, teammates and all that plays into it, too."

BSB: After that year, you signed an endorsement deal with Converse, which distributed the Converse "Special K" sneaker. What was it like to have a shoe deal with such a reputable brand?

Kellogg: "Converse was at the top of their game then, so to be associated with them was a great honor. It allowed me to

do things with my high school, giving them equipment and gear, which was cool. The shoe deals were more or less just an association with the brand. They didn't customize anything for you as brands do for today's players. They gave me a little money and some apparel and gear, which was nice, and I could help my high school and kids back from my community. They put together a poster of me, which is fun. I still have that to this day.

"I tried not to get too caught up in the brands and deals. I kind of took the Converse thing in stride and kept playing basketball. I wanted to keep producing like a player and be engaged in the community that I was in, and be good on the court. But even beyond that, I wanted to be solid off the court. That's where my focus was most of the time."

BSB: With an NBA career in the 1980s, you competed against players many would consider some of the greatest to play the game – Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan and others. Who is the best player you played against, and what made them special?

Kellogg: "There were so many different players at the time. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was near the end of his career, and his game always stood out to me as someone with size. He stands out to me as one of the greatest of all time. Michael Jordan was just starting to emerge into his greatness. Charles Barkley was early in his career but still an extremely physical and challenging player

Continued On Page 21

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Broadcasting Keeps Kellogg Close To Basketball

Continued From Page 19

to face. Marques Johnson was with Milwaukee during the prime of his career when those teams were tough. I think of Sidney Moncrief, Junior Bridgeman, all those old veteran players still in the league.

"I look back to that time and think of the Boston Celtics. I mean, those teams were loaded. Kevin McHale, Robert Parish, Cedric Maxwell, Dennis Johnson and, of course, Larry Bird – they were so good. That was a tough team to face all the time, and so were the Philadelphia 76ers. In my rookie year, they won the NBA title with Julius 'Dr. J' Erving, Moses Malone, Bobby Jones, Andrew Toney and Mo Cheeks. There were a lot of teams that could compete back then. The Eastern Conference was strong."

BSB: Your basketball career ended prematurely because of knee injuries. How did you ultimately decide to hang up the threads once and for all?

Kellogg: "I had three knee surgeries. After the first one, I rebounded and recovered. I played an entire season after that. At the beginning of my fourth NBA season, I had my second surgery on that same knee to have it surgically repaired, but I still started it back up again. Ultimately, I had a third surgery on that knee, and that's when I began to recognize the cartilage was wearing away and wasn't coming back. That likely wasn't going to allow me to play basketball at the highest level.

"It was the winter of 1986 – sometime after my third surgery – that I began to think about how life after basketball might look. The doctors had told me that it might be the case that I wouldn't play again. I went through the surgery and the rehab, and once I got back out on the court and couldn't quite sustain playing pickup games without having issues with the knee, then that's when it started to dawn on me that the end might be near. So in August 1987, my career was over. It became a reality that my knee couldn't hold up to the rigors of NBA basketball. So at the ripe old age of 26, I was done playing. It was a dream realized but short-lived."

BSB: In 1985, you became a Christian after questioning your purpose in life. If you don't mind explaining, what was that time of self-searching like for you? How has a life with Jesus helped build your foundation and establish your identity?

Kellogg: "My identity is in Christ now. Before, my identity was tied to who I was as a basketball player and a person outside of my faith in Christ. It was a combination of things that led me to that discovery. Obviously, my injury played a significant factor. Often loss, great success or unanswered prayer – several things – cause you to look inward and think about the bigger purpose in life.

"The fact that my NBA career was over was another factor. My wife had a role to probe me about our purpose as husband and wife. The loss of my mother was part of it, too. Through a local minister who started to share the Bible with me, I came to a place where I acknowledge that God created me to reflect his image on the earth. He said sin is living outside God's design to keep you

from being all God created you to be. Still, God sent his son Jesus to die for our sinful nature. God received his death as a sacrifice for our sin so that we might acknowledge him as the son of God. You can have a new eternal life with him by faith.

"I came to that place in November of 1986. I bowed my heart and my knees to the Lord. And since then, that's been the driving force of my life, who I am in Christ. Even though I had lost what meant so much to me, I had gained an eternal future and a purpose that would be sealed and anchored on who God is and not on what I do or don't do. And so that fortified me for the following chapters. I didn't know what the future held, but I knew that my future was in God's hands.

"If I had to go through what I went through in losing basketball to gain the price of new life, I'm glad it unfolded the way it did."

BSB: In 1990, you started your broadcasting career with ESPN as a basketball analyst. What attracted you to that profession after finishing your time in the NBA?

Kellogg: "I didn't necessarily know what I was going to do once my career abruptly ended. I was a marketing major in college, and I loved business. I thought I would play in the NBA for 10 to 12 seasons and become an entrepreneur during and after my professional career. That's not how it worked out for me.

"After my basketball career was over so soon, I wanted to stay around the game and in the game, but I wasn't sure how to do that. However, the Pacers offered me an opportunity to work for their radio broadcast station in 1987. That same year, I was able to do Cleveland State games on local television in my hometown. Those jobs ultimately led to roles with the Atlantic 10 Network, ESPN and the Big East Network. From there, I went on to CBS and started doing what I've done for the last 30 years.

"But my first job was with the Indiana Pacers in 1987. I was always a student of the game, and my mom made it known to me growing up that I needed to communicate clearly, knowing that I could one day have a career in this sort of thing. So I've always made sure to take questions, communicate clearly and be ready for those opportunities."

BSB: From 1993 to now, you've worked with CBS Sports as a game analyst, color commentator and studio analyst, calling NCAA championships and partnering with well-known broadcasters such as Greg Gumble, Jim Nantz and others. Why have you stuck around with that network for the last 30 years?

Kellogg: "You always start with people. We have an excellent product at CBS covering the NCAA Tournament and college basketball. The people there are good for me. They have a lot of passion for what they do. I love being around the game – the players, coaches and colleagues. I love playing around with words and working with those people in different settings.

"I think the NCAA Tournament is one of the great sports events on the calendar. I think anybody that is a sports fan would put the event in their top five of the best sport-

ing events to watch and take part in with the brackets and everything. It is a special privilege to have such a prominent role in bringing that to the people.

"I don't know how much longer I will go, but I've certainly enjoyed the ride, and I think there are still a few more stops left on the train."

BSB: Your work at CBS allowed you to play a game of "P.O.T.U.S." against then-President Barack Obama on the White House basketball court. You lost by one letter. Did you let him win?

Kellogg: "I didn't let him win, but I let him back into the game. He won on his own."

BSB: How was your pride after losing a game of "P.O.T.U.S." to a sitting president?

Kellogg: "Well, I could have won. I did give him momentum by letting him back into the game after I jumped out to an early lead. That is true. But no, it is one of my life's great honors and experiences, and it happened because of basketball. I've had some memorable meetings and interviews, but perhaps this one sits at the top of the list."

BSB: What are some other memorable moments you've experienced as a broadcaster and media member?

Kellogg: "Another one would be having our son (Nick) make an NCAA Tournament run when he was a sophomore at Ohio University. The Bobcats made a run to the Sweet 16, and I was able to cover some of their journey. But yes, I would have to say the chance to be with the sitting president, the first Black president in United States history, and to have basketball be what connects us was remarkable. It is still mind-blowing to me, and it was surreal at the time – what an unbelievable honor and highlight of my life."

BSB: You reside in Westerville, Ohio, and your children went to DeSales High School in Columbus. What made you decide to put your roots down in central Ohio, and are you still residing here?

Kellogg: "We've been here since 1993. My wife is from Columbus and graduated from South High School, a city school. Her family is here, too. My mom and dad are deceased, but they were both from Cleveland. Central Ohio was a special place for us because of our family connection and my connection to Ohio State. Columbus has been special since I moved here in the early '90s. We've grown so comfortable in this place, and we love living here. We chose to make



FILE PHOTO

BUCKEYE GREAT – Clark Kellogg averaged 14.9 points and 10.1 rebounds per game during his Ohio State career that spanned three seasons and 86 games.

it our home, and I don't see that changing soon because we have family here, there's great proximity to the university and the city's vibrancy continues to grow."

BSB: What's next for Clark Kellogg?

Kellogg: "That's a great question. I can continue to see a role in broadcasting for a little while. I also see my influence and leadership in areas of access and equality for low-income folks in the Columbus communities. People of color matter. Their influence matters.

"I want to continue living a life that honors God and loves God and others. To do that, I want to love in practical ways, helping others by being generous and intentional with what God has given me. Those are the general parameters of what I have my eyes on. God has entrusted me with relationships, capital and influence to love him and other people. That is my epitaph, at the end of the day: to love God and people. That will be plenty enough for me."

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Watt At Home On The Court And The Headset

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

From the hardwood to the headset, Kristin Watt has seen it all. A four-year letter winner at Ohio State from 1981-85, Watt played under former Ohio State women's basketball head coach Tara VanDerveer and was named a captain in her senior season – a year the Buckeyes advanced to the program's first Elite Eight.

Though Watt did not start for Ohio State, her impact was felt as a leader for the team. During her four seasons, the Buckeyes won four Big Ten championships and made three appearances in the NCAA tournament. After completing her playing career and graduating from Ohio State, Watt returned to the university for law school and began her career in broadcasting, where she has provided color commentary for the Ohio State women's basketball team since 1987.

A fierce advocate for the university and for women's sports, Watt became the inaugural president of the Women's Varsity O in 1992 and served as chair of the Ohio State Alumni Association board of directors. She spoke with BSB on June 17 about her experience playing for Ohio State, her journey to broadcasting and the lessons she has learned throughout the years.

BSB: Going back to your early playing days, when did you become interested in basketball?

Watt: "All the kids on the street I grew up on in Huron, Ohio, the kids that were my age were boys. I started playing with the guys and they liked basketball, so I was always their fourth. It's great because you're playing with people who are really pushing you the whole time. I wanted to be as good as them, and I wanted to compete with them. When boys and girls are younger, before the boys start getting a lot stronger, you're even competitively with them. And then once they got stronger, I had to learn how to compensate for that so I could still score on them and stop them.

"I didn't even really appreciate organized sports until there was an announcement in high school over the PA system that said, 'Hey, anyone interested in coming out for the women's basketball team, we're going to have a meeting after school tomorrow.' I went home and I said, 'Hey, Mom, I'm going to stay after school for this meeting.' And I showed up to play basketball and I was a freshman, and I was probably about 120, 125 pounds and the same height I am now, almost. I started playing basketball, and I was on JV. We didn't have a freshman team. There was another girl and me – both sophomores at the time – we played JV for two games, and then the high school coach started asking us to practice with the high school team. Then we played two games where there were two quarters of JV, two quarters of varsity, and by my fifth game of my freshman year I was starting varsity.

"Because I played in driveways, I really didn't know what the rules were. I kind of knew what a foul was, and I knew what travel-

ing was, but the key? (My coach) was like, 'You have to get out of the key.' And finally, he was like, 'You don't know what the key is, do you?' and I'm like, 'No, what's the key?' He had to pull me aside and tell me what the basic rules were for organized basketball. Over and back calls, and all those things that we never knew when you played on a driveway. I didn't really watch sports. I grew up as a kid that would rather play sports than watch sports, so I would say it was a really great background because I was always in condition, and I had some good basketball skills. But I didn't know the game because I grew up playing two-on-two."

BSB: You mentioned you preferred playing sports rather than watching them while growing up. Given your background in Ohio, were you an Ohio State fan, or was that not on your radar?

Watt: "I knew that there was an Ohio State-Michigan rivalry because there was a guy who had a clothing store in Huron, Ben Lindsley, who was a tuba player for the Ohio State marching band, and he always had a big sale at the time of the game, so I knew that was a big rivalry.

"But coming to Ohio State, I didn't even know there was a difference between Michigan and Michigan State. I didn't know there were two teams. I really didn't, which horrifies me to think that now, but I truly didn't watch. I kind of watched the Browns play football because my mom liked that team, but we didn't have a lot of sports on growing up, so I really didn't watch college ball. I didn't really know that much about it, which again, is embarrassing and funny to talk about now. But it is what it is."

BSB: You had a very impressive prep career at Huron High School. What was the recruiting process like once that began, and what drew you to Ohio State?

Watt: "That's a good question. Remember, Title IX had just come out (in 1972). I didn't appreciate it at the time, but it came out and 1976 is when it really started kicking in and the first scholarships were going out there. My scholarship was in 1981. I didn't even really appreciate the (recruiting) process. We didn't have a lot of money growing up, but my dad had a boat that he sold because he didn't want me to have to take a scholarship if I didn't want to play basketball in college. He was like, 'I can pay for your first two years of school with the sale of this boat,' and I thought, 'Well, why wouldn't anyone want to continue playing? It's a fun sport and I enjoy it.' So, I didn't necessarily understand that.

"During the recruiting process, I went to some smaller schools, I got a lot of letters, but I didn't really want to go to bigger schools out of state. I looked at Ohio, and to me, it came down to Miami University and Ohio State. Miami University beat Ohio State in 1980 when the two teams played, and I thought at that time, 'Wow, Miami must be the better team.' But when I started looking at what I wanted to get my degree in, Miami University had fewer degrees available, and I ended up picking Ohio State thinking I had more options and opportunities. (Miami) still has a very strong



PHOTO COURTESY OF OHIO STATE

JACK OF ALL TRADES — Kristin Watt was a four-year letter winner at OSU from 1981-85. Since her playing career wrapped up, she has been a broadcaster for the Ohio State women's basketball team on the radio and has had a successful career as an attorney. She is currently a partner with Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP.

program, and I enjoyed my campus visit, but what I was looking at at the time was where were the best programs and where can I get a really good degree."

BSB: Throughout that process, what was your first impression of then-head coach Tara VanDerveer?

Watt: "She was really young. She was very professorial. I knew that we were never going to be out-conditioned by anyone. She was not a coach that got up in your face, and we were winning, so we all loved it. I thought she was a great coach, and obviously she's a Hall of Fame coach now, which is kind of fun to say that we were coached by the best.

"And (at) Ohio State, we never wanted for anything. We felt like we were on par with the men's team. She fought for all those equal rights for us. Our locker room was basically the same. We had the same weight facilities that the guys had. We had the same gym facilities the guys had, same training-table opportunities and tutoring opportunities. We had sports psychologists, and we had our own trainer. It was amazing how she and Phyllis Bailey fought for our program to be on par. I didn't appreciate that when I was being recruited, but by my first year I realized, 'Wow, we've got it good.' And when we traveled to other schools, we had it so much better than other schools.

"Ohio State treated our sport way differently than other universities treated their women's basketball teams at that time. A lot of that was Tara, and a lot of that was Phyllis Bailey, the director of women's athletics at the time,

who is also a legend."

BSB: With how progressive Tara was, how disappointing was it to see at the NCAA tournament a couple of years back where the women's facilities did not match up with the men's?

Watt: "Oh, it was laughable. I was like, 'You have got to be kidding me.' We've come so far and yet you still see something like that. I was stunned to learn that, and I'm so glad it came out because I think that NCAA was rightfully embarrassed. It was right in front of their eyes, and no one pointed it out to them until someone slapped them upside the head and said, 'Hey, look at this,' and they're like, 'Oh, yeah.' At Ohio State we never had any of that."

BSB: Back to your playing career, what was the transition like from high school to college basketball?

Watt: "Well, it's a longer court and it's a faster game. Players are so much stronger and so much more skilled. You had basically a full-time job with college and trying to make sure you're making progress toward a degree.

"And the weight training. We never had weight training in high school. We never really had conditioning in high school. The players were so much more skilled and better and stronger and faster, and the court was bigger, and you don't realize that until you do your first sprint, and then you're like, 'What?' Then you go back at Christmas, and you work out with your high school team for a day, and you run sprints with them, and you realize, 'Oh, I am a

Continued On Page 24



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2022 SCHEDULE

APRIL							JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2						1 @IOW 7:08	2 @IOW 7:08
3	4	5 @LHV 7:05	6 @LHV 7:05	7 @LHV 7:05	8 @LHV 7:05	9 @LHV 6:35	3 @IOW 6:08	4 NAS 6:05	5	6 NAS 7:05	7 NAS 7:05	8 NAS 7:05	9 NAS 7:05
10 @LHV 1:35	11	12 SYR 6:15	13 SYR 6:15	14 SYR 6:15	15 SYR 6:15	16 SYR 4:05	10 NAS 4:05	11	12 IND 7:05	13 IND 7:05	14 IND 12:05	15 IND 7:05	16 IND 7:05
17 SYR 1:05	18	19 @IND 6:35	20 @IND 1: 5	21 @IND 12:05	22 @IND 7:05	23 @IND 6:35	17 IND 4:05	18	19	20	21	22 @TOL 7:05	23 @TOL 7:05
24 @IND 1:35	25	26 LOU 6:15	27 LOU 6:35	28 LOU 6:15	29 LOU 6:15	30 LOU 4:05	24 @TOL 4:05	25	26 @LOU 7:05	27 @LOU 7:05	28 @LOU 7:05	29 @LOU 7:05	30 @LOU 7:05
							31 @LOU 1:05						

MAY							AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 LOU 1:05	2	3 @OMA 11:05AM	4 @OMA 6:35	5 @OMA 6:35	6 @OMA 6:35	7 @OMA 6:35		1	2 ROC 7:05	3 ROC 7:05	4 ROC 12:05	5 ROC 7:05	6 ROC 7:05
8 @OMA 2:05	9	10 STP 7:05	11 STP 7:05	12 STP 12:05	13 STP 7:05	14 STP 7:05	7 ROC 4:05	8	9 @STP 7:07	10 @STP 1:07	11 @STP 7:07	12 @STP 7:07	13 @STP 7:07
15 STP 1:05	16	17 @IOW 6:38	18 @IOW 12:08	19 @IOW 12:08	20 @IOW 7:08	21 @IOW 6:08	14 @STP 2:07	15	16 TOL 7:05	17 TOL 7:05	18 TOL 7:05	19 TOL 7:05	20 TOL 7:05
22 @IOW 1:08	23	24 BUF 7:05	25 BUF 7:05	26 BUF 7:05	27 BUF 7:05	28 BUF 7:05	21 TOL 4:05	22	23 @BUF 7:05	24 @BUF 7:05	25 @BUF 1:05	26 @BUF 7:05	27 @BUF 6:05
29 BUF 1:05	30 TOL 6:05	31					28 @BUF 1:05	29	30 IOW 6:15	31 IOW 6:15			

JUNE							SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 TOL 7:05	2 TOL 7:05	3 TOL 7:05	4 TOL 7:05					1 IOW 6:15	2 IOW 7:05	3 IOW 7:05
5 TOL 1:05	6	7 @IND 7:05	8 @IND 1:35	9 @IND 7:05	10 @IND 7:05	11 @IND 7:05	4 IOW 1:05	5	6 @LOU 6:35	7 @LOU 6:35	8 @LOU 6:35	9 @LOU 7:05	10 @LOU 7:05
12 @IND 1:35	13	14 STP 7:05	15 STP 7:05	16 STP 12:05	17 STP 7:05	18 STP 7:05	11 @LOU 1:05	12	13 OMA 6:15	14 OMA 6:35	15 OMA 6:15	16 OMA 7:05	17 OMA 7:05
19 STP 1:05	20	21 @OMA 12:05	22 @OMA 7:05	23 @OMA 7:05	24 @OMA 7:05	25 @OMA 7:05	18 OMA 1:05	19	20 @TOL 6:35	21 @TOL 12:05	22 @TOL 6:35	23 @TOL 7:05	24 @TOL 5:05
26 @OMA 2:05	27	28 @IOW 6:38	29 @IOW 12:08	30 @IOW 6:38			25 @TOL 1:05	26 IND 6:15	27 IND 6:15	28 IND 6:15	29	30	

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SAT. - "PARTY-AT-THE-PARK" - Starting May 28

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#ClipShow



Hayes' Speech Taught Watt To 'Pay Forward'

Continued From Page 22

lot stronger. I am a lot faster.'

"I didn't realize what hard work was until I got to college and conditioning and it's like, 'There's no way I can do that.' And then within two weeks you're doing that and then you're like, 'I could never be this sore again.' And two weeks later, you're (still) that sore. It was a great life lesson because you take that all through the rest of your life. It's like, 'Oh my gosh, I can't possibly do that.' But generally, you can. You just have to work."

BSB: In past BSB stories from your playing career, both you and Tara noted that you didn't appear psychologically prepared for basketball at the college level, at least until your later seasons. How did you adjust to that aspect of the game?

Watt: "It took a while. I was very naive coming in. I didn't appreciate what I was stepping into. My freshman year, I had a bad injury. That kind of held me out for a while, so I missed a lot of my freshman year and probably should have redshirted but didn't. I hurt my shooting arm, my elbow, and that put me back. By the time I got going, I was a junior.

"I'm very proud of my career, and the way I look at it is that the team is only as good as the team that they play every day in practice. I always made sure that our guys were prepared. I don't know if I have an answer for how that transition eventually happened, but again, I was young and naive and if there's any lesson that I always try to tell other people is to understand what you're stepping into better than I did. But I loved it, and I wouldn't change a thing."

BSB: In your four seasons, your teams won four Big Ten championships and made three NCAA tournament appearances, including a trip to the Elite Eight in your senior season. What was that experience like having so much team success?

Watt: "Oh, it was great. Honestly, it was an expectation. If we went into a game and we weren't up by 10 points, it was like, 'Whoa,

what's wrong?' It was drilled into us that we were going to win. I had (other) opportunities. I could have gone anywhere and played and started, but I wanted to be with this team and my teammates, and I loved winning. I'm a very competitive person, and I loved winning. I loved our program. I love how well we were treated by the university and by our coaching staff."

BSB: In 1984, Ohio State lost a first-round tournament game to Ole Miss in which your team struggled with the Rebels' physicality. Do you remember that game, and do you view it as a turning point for the team that led to the next season's Elite Eight appearance?

Watt: "God, I remember playing in that game and making a cut across the key and running into a player that was huge. She was wearing chaps on her legs, and every bone in my back cracked when I hit her. They were big. To look at them, we assumed that they were going to be slow, and they weren't. They were quick. That was kind of a turning point."

BSB: You were named a captain going into your senior season. What was the challenge in being one of the team's leaders while not seeing the court as often as others?

Watt: "I took the freshman class under my wing because they were stepping into an established team, a good team. Jodi Roth ended up being a starter, so I kind of looked at it as my role was to help the underclassmen adjust and appreciate their role on the team.

"I was living in a sorority house at the time, and they would close the sorority house over the breaks, and I went to live with a freshman over Christmas break so I could watch over them. I took that role very seriously, and in the locker room I took it seriously with respect to keeping a positive attitude and keeping people up. When you sit on the bench, you see things that others may not see on the court, and I would make sure that they knew what I was seeing."

BSB: Would you change anything about

the role you played with the team?

Watt: "No, it's the best thing that ever happened to me."

BSB: VanDerveer left Ohio State for Stanford following your senior season. Did you get the sense there were greater things in store for her?

Watt: "I didn't understand why she left at the time, but Stanford was obviously a great academic program and she had an opportunity to build it. If you listened to Tara, I interviewed her once on the radio and said, 'Why did you leave?' and she said, 'I didn't want to, but nobody asked me to stay.'

"Remember, she was rocking the boat. She was not a conformist. She made it so that I never knew women's sports didn't have what men's sports had in college because we had it. Again, I was spoiled. I didn't quite know at the time. It was easy for her to make a change when she felt that Stanford was going to give her an opportunity to be who she wanted to be."

BSB: At your commencement in 1986, Woody Hayes gave his famous "Pay Forward" speech. What was it like hearing him speak, and what stuck with you about his message?

Watt: "Several things. One, his love for the university and what it gave him. It made me appreciate what the university gave me. It made me step back and look at it. I've been a donor for the university for a long, long time. My donation amounts are well into the six figures now because someone did that for me. I didn't appreciate where scholarship money came from. It's not the state giving money. It's not the university. It's donors who don't know me, and I don't know them, giving money to the university so I could get a great education. And that started with him. You can't pay back, you can only pay forward, so I did that.

"The other thing that he talked about during that speech was that no one ever stays the same. You're either getting worse or you're getting better. I've gone back and listened to the speech, and I was kind of like, 'Oh, there's

a lot of rambling in there,' but a few things he said, I was like, 'Whoa,' and again, his emotion and how much he loved the university. It made me appreciate the university and what it does and what the donors do for the university and why it is what it is because of alumni and others."

BSB: Around that time is when you started your broadcasting career. What drew you to that, and how did you get involved?

Watt: "When Nancy Darsch came in that spring (of 1985) the end of my senior year, she called in the team and invited the seniors, and I was the only senior who showed up. She wasn't going to be my coach, but I wanted to meet her, and I knew I was going to be at the university another couple of quarters. I knew Nancy and she knew me, and I helped with recruiting because they knew how serious I was about school and how much I love the university and the program. Those were the days when I could talk to recruits and talk to recruits' parents, so she knew me a little bit.

"When the university decided to start broadcasting, I don't know if it was maybe five games the first year, Herb Howenstein, who was a sports director at WOSU at the time and was going to be the play-by-play (announcer), called Nancy Darsch and said, 'Hey, who would be good at this to be a color (commentator)?' And she said, 'Talk to Kristin.' Herb called me and asked, 'Hey, would you have any interest in doing this?' and I said, 'Well, what would it entail? What would it be like?' He said, 'Well, come on in, and let's talk.' I thought I was going in to learn about the job and what it would entail and how I could make it work with schooling and finalizing to my degree, and we shot the s**t for an hour. At the end, I was interested. He was like, 'You've got the gift of gab. The job's yours.' Boom."

BSB: What is your preparation like for a broadcast? Is there anything you were able to take away from your playing career that helps prepare you for broadcasts?

Watt: "The beginning of the season, it takes longer because you've got to learn people's ten-

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dencies and you've got to go watch a couple of practices, maybe an exhibition game. But I spend an hour to an hour and a half before every game putting down stats and reading about other teams. Usually by a few games in I know about our team and what our strengths and weaknesses are, and sometimes I'll talk to the coaching staff and listen to the scouts, so you know what the other team is going to do.

"But to see what's working, what's not working and to see the things that our coaches taught – for instance, one of my biggest pet peeves about a team is that no one seems to know how to box out consistently, and that's a frustration for me. I'll say that on air because that was something that Tara drilled into us is to find a body and box them out. I'd rather the ball bounce in front of you than you not box out.

"We drilled on certain things like that and how you are supposed to run a play, what the other teams are doing. I know how to note when someone's in a zone or what zone it is, and then what that defensive set is intended to do. I know when to pick one of the zones vs. man, so it certainly helps you understand the game of what people are doing and why they're doing it.

"You look at someone like Coach (Kevin) McGuff, he's forgotten more basketball than I may ever know. He'll do things and it's like, 'Oh, that was a great idea.' It can be frustrating because I know a lot, but you never know it all."

BSB: What are some of your more memorable moments with a headset on?

Watt: "I remember the year that Ohio State went to the finals (in 1992-93) and watching a game at home in St. John Arena, and we were playing Virginia, which was a very good, ranked team at the time. We did this fastbreak play up the side of the court three times in a row and beat Virginia to the basket, and I remember turning to Herb and both of us went on like, 'Whoa, this team is good.' And I remember that game was the coming-out game, like how good are we? It's like, 'Oh, we're really good.'

"I remember a baseline shot that Lisa Cline took at Kentucky, and Kentucky was a very good team at the time of the game (during the 1988-89 season). (Cline) was on the team with Nikita Lowry and they had a very good team – those were both Tara's recruits and this was their senior year under Darsch. Lisa hit this baseline jumper and put Ohio State up, basically winning them the game.

"I remember the lead-up to the Final Four (in 1993). Wow. How Columbus got on the bandwagon, it was great. That was Katie Smith's freshman year and obviously helped launch her career.

"Then I remember the years where the team struggled, which was hard for me because I had only had success and it was hard to see teams that weren't having success and were struggling. What do you talk about when there's not much great to talk about a team? That's hard. And to keep the broadcast positive and acknowledge the players that are on the floor that were doing the best that they could."

BSB: You mentioned Katie Smith. Getting to watch her entire career, what did you make of her as a player at the time and her impact on the program?

Watt: "This is going to be a poor analogy, but some men's basketball players come in and they have to mature and fill out and weight lift to get to their playing weight. Katie came in strong from day one. I mean, she bowled people over from day one, and that was fun to see.

The rest of the athletes had to keep up with her.

"Today, you have a ton of great athletes. Back then, you maybe had 10 or 20 that were exceptional at what they did and were gifted athletes in size and speed and drive. She was that. She had the size and the speed and the drive and the basketball knowledge that other players – most other players – didn't have. She was a great ambassador for the university."

BSB: Are there any other favorite players you've been able to cover that you remember as being a particular joy to watch?

Watt: "I think (Katie's) entire class that went to the Final Four. Again, Lisa Cline, could score at will. Nikita Lowry could pretty much score at will. I played with Tracey Hall, and then I got to call some games (of hers) afterwards, and she was a special athlete too. She was so good and so humble and never appreciated until later, her skill set and how she was.

"Jodi Roth was fun to watch because she outworked everyone. I think of players like Barb Smith, who were not necessarily great athletes but worked their way into the starting lineup because they worked so hard and understood the game so well. There were a few of those out there. Those are the ones that float to the top of my brain right away."

BSB: Earlier you had mentioned Phyllis Bailey, who helped found the Women's Varsity O organization where you served as their inaugural president. What was it about that organization that you wanted to help get it off the ground?

Watt: "You didn't tell Phyllis Bailey no. She's one of the people that helped me with OSU law school. She would pull me aside and talk to me over the years when I was in college and always seemed to take an interest in me, and I always remembered that.

"When I found out that there was an OSU Sports Hall of Fame and there were no women in it and she told me that – at that point it was easy for me because remember – I never saw the distinctions and never appreciated them because we didn't see that in our sport at the university. When I found out (I said), 'What do you mean there's a sports Hall of Fame and there's no women in it?' It was easy (to get involved) because it's that organization that helps put that program together.

"(Phyllis) called that first meeting and said, 'I want someone to volunteer to head this up,' and she'd already said, 'I'm going to ask that question, I want you to volunteer.' I raised my hand and said, 'I'll do it,' and then we put together the bylaws. There were a lot of women that were very angry that we didn't put a class in right away. We wanted to get our bylaws set and have our criteria and do it the way we wanted to do it as opposed to people telling us who our first class was going to be. It's been great to be the launchpad of that and to see now the two varsity O's as one program, men and women, because we're all varsity athletes, and that took a long time. It was more painful than it should have been to happen, but it happened.

"Phyllis Bailey – and really for that, Michelle Willis – was instrumental in making that happen, the two varsity O's coming together. But Phyllis was the one that started it. We used to have a Script O and it died, and that's when she got (Women's) Varsity O started after another three or four years of nothing. It's wonderful to be on that first board, to be the first chair of that board, and to have inducted our first few classes."

BSB: What has your relationship with Phyllis been like, and what has it meant to you to be able to have that mentor and leadership?

Watt: "First of all, she's a phenomenal person. The stories, if anyone took the time to sit down and listen to her and the stories she could tell – the stories she did tell – oh my. What she had to go through. For me, she was a trailblazer and made everything possible that happened for me at Ohio State. It was because of her and people like her. I want to be that person, and I kind of am that way. I refuse to believe that we can't make this work. That's kind of the mentality that Phyllis brought to the table. I may get a 'no' the first year or two, but I refuse to believe that we can't change this, and that was Phyllis' entire career, and I live by that."

BSB: Having played in the game and covered it for so long as a broadcaster, how have you seen the game develop in terms of on-the-court product as well as general coverage of women's basketball?

Watt: "The coverage is great. Women broadcasters are now doing men's games, and they're doing great. Most people don't even appreciate that. They're listening to a game and it's like, 'Oh, it's a woman broadcasting.' I mean, that used to be a (big) thing, and now it's a lot less that way.

"In the women's game, you have 10 or 12 players on a team that can play anywhere, as opposed to five or six. You have way more programs, so it used to be you had 10 good programs, and now it's a little deeper. It's not as deep as it can be or necessarily should be. I look at South Carolina and what Dawn Staley

has done there. She's built a program that was not a good program, and she's made it a national contender.

"Muffet McGraw did that for some years at Notre Dame. It's not always the Tennessees and the UConn's. I like that in the game that there's a little bit more parity. We can always have more. The game is a bit faster, but essentially a lot of it is unchanged."

BSB: Name, Image and Likeness has been a hot topic of late. What impact do you see it having on the women's game?

Watt: "It's a game changer. It is going to make people think entirely differently about where they pick to play. It's going to make it harder for recruiting, and I'm concerned for some of the athletes that they may not be picking the school because it's the best education for them or it's the best place for them to learn a sport the right way and to get the tutoring and the real coaching that they really need to better themselves. I think eventually it will flatten out, but we need to have rules. I don't think you can have folks popping around schools because of name, image and likeness.

"I've always thought that athletes got a fair exchange in their degree and the notoriety they get. I certainly understand the money issue, but it's going to change the sport significantly and make it really kind of semipro at some point. We're not really seeing it in the women's game yet. You may with some standout players. But you look at some of these athletes and their commercials, they're not great spokespeople. They're not doing it for that, they're doing it because someone wants to keep them here. I struggle with it. But I understand that it's a necessary evil. How do we manage it?"

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Snow's Second Act Begins Back At Ohio State

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Carlos Snow laughed – a lot – during a 25-minute chat with Buckeye Sports Bulletin.

The one-time Ohio State standout running back has reasons to joke about himself and his journey that led him, at age 53, to finally receive his diploma on May 9 in Ohio Stadium.

His candor throughout the June 24 interview contrasted with the feelings he hid inside as his life spiraled out of control, leading to homelessness, alcoholism and drug abuse, some of it related to the pain from his many football injuries.

His last name conjures images of Christmas and brightness and everything good in the world. However, his high school nickname, Blizzard, represents potential danger and devastation.

He's experienced it all, including trying to take his life, but Snow said he's been sober for more than five years and with the aid of Columbus area doctor Bernard Master, he graduated with a 3.7 GPA in sociology from Ohio State in the degree completion program nearly 35 years after first enrolling in the school to play for coach Earle Bruce.

It was a star-crossed career for Snow, who helped the now defunct Cincinnati Academy of Physical Education (CAPE) to state football titles in 1985 and 1986.

That led to a star-crossed career with Buckeyes. He scored on an electric 70-yard catch-and-run against host Michigan in his freshman season of 1987 as the Buckeyes beat the Wolverines 23-20 just days after Bruce was controversially fired.

Snow endured knee injuries and missed the 1990 season because of a benign tumor on his hip. He was also involved in a car accident that could have ended his life.

He returned for the 1991 season and ranks 11th on the all-time Ohio State rushing list with 2,999 career yards, leading the team in rushing in 1988, 1989 and 1991. He then had a brief stint in the NFL with the Denver Broncos, but a knee injury ended his career in 1992. Since then, he has had knee and hip replacements.

He's in a good place mentally and emotionally now but knows there's still work to be done. He and Dr. Masters walking across the stage accomplished the first stage, and Snow is in the second. Third is to maintain, and fourth is setting a legacy.

BSB: You have your degree, what's next for you?

Snow: "Right now, I'm working on part two of the game plan and that's to find me a job. I'm starting to update my résumé and seeing what's out there."

"I wouldn't say it's scary. It's going to be challenging, and the reason I say that is sometimes I'm not going to be able to do all that physical stuff with the knee surgeries, the back surgery, the hip replacement."

"I'm looking for a mentorship program or something like that. My degree is in sociology, social work. I'll be looking at that field. Hopefully, I can work for Ohio State. Oh man, that would be a dream come true."

BSB: What was it like being in class with kids way younger than you?

Snow: "People thought I was the TA (teacher's assistant). A couple of people came up to me in class asking for help. It was kind of funny. They'd go to me for help. I need help myself."

"It was a good experience going through it. I'm still pinching myself because the classes I took, they all were classes I ran from back in the '80s. I kind of surprised myself."

BSB: How did you get that drive to do it?

Snow: "I stayed focused on the goal. I told my mother I was going to get it, God rest her soul. I have a funny story about that too. I don't know how many commencements there usually are on Mother's Day, but I was just laughing. I said, 'Momma, you've still got your hand in it.' Of all days it was Mother's Day. I thought that was interesting."

"I wanted to do it for myself to prove that I could do it and for my mom and then everybody who supported me."

BSB: Going back to pre-college, how did you end up at CAPE, and what was that like?

Snow: "CAPE was a unique school. I think we were one of the first Cincinnati public schools that you didn't have to live in the community to go there. Anywhere from Cincinnati you could go there. We had the pickings of a good team."

"You had to be in some kind of sports to go to CAPE. It's almost like all of those schools for the performing arts. We had all sports – from archery to tennis, swimming – the stuff most public schools didn't have as far as when it came to sports. We had that at CAPE."

BSB: How much grief or ridicule did you guys get for being a "jock school?"

Snow: "It was so bad my sophomore year (that) I was going to try and transfer to another high school. We tried to say we're just another high school and it's hard to get in there, but it didn't work."



FILE PHOTO

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE – Former Ohio State running back Carlos Snow recently returned to the university to earn his degree in sociology, graduating with a 3.7 GPA more than 30 years after his playing career with the Buckeyes ended.

"But we were elite. We really were. We had a great team. Sports Illustrated started following us around. I think from that class of 1987 we had six or seven make it to the pros."

"School was hard. I always laugh. I'd tell people, 'Come on down to CAPE. We're not in the gym all day.' Actually, in gym I got an 'F' because gym was anatomy. Oh, my mother, she had a fit. She just saw gym and she saw the 'F'."

"But when I showed her the big anatomy book and said, 'Momma, this is gym. I have to learn all this anatomy stuff. It's not like we're going out there and learning how to play field hockey or something.'"

BSB: Were you and CAPE teammate Vinnie Clark a package deal to attend Ohio State?

Snow: "A lot of people thought that, but there was no package deal. People don't realize but Vinnie was about 6-2 at that time. He ran a 4.3 (40-yard dash). He was a big corner back. He was heavily recruited by Coach Bruce."

"When (Bruce) started coming around practice and seeing how (Clark) practiced and the things that he was like, 'He's the one we want.'"

"At one point he was thinking of going to Tennessee because of (defensive backs coach) Ron Zook, so I thought I might like that too, but my daddy wasn't going to let me go there. He was all for Ohio State."

"Then (Zook) ended up being one of the coaches at Ohio State (from 1988-90). Funny how it all worked out."

BSB: So you considered Tennessee but was it strictly Ohio State after that?

Snow: "It was always going to be Ohio State, but I did go down to Georgia where my grandmother lived. It was real close to Athens, Ga., where the University of Georgia is. They

pulled out all the stops. Daddy, he didn't take that trip because his mind was made up that I was going to Ohio State, so me and my mom went down there and they met us at the airport and took us in a limo and they had Herschel Walker, Vince Dooley – he was the coach at the time. It was really special. That was really the only other school I considered."

"When I got back from there, there was a party going on and Earle Bruce was there and sitting at the head of the table with my dad. My dad was like, 'Surprise, surprise, surprise,' because Earle Bruce was at the head of the table, and (Bruce) said thank you for choosing Ohio State. I said, 'OK, I guess it's official now.'"

BSB: Moving ahead to your freshman season in 1987 when Coach Bruce was fired the week of the Michigan game, you had just lost at Iowa after the Hawkeyes beat you (29-27) when they scored on a fourth-and-23 from your 28 with six seconds left. What was that week like?

Snow: "I just felt so bad for him. I felt so bad for the players. We really did admire Coach Bruce. He was like our god at that time – everything he said, everything he did when he talked about being a Buckeye. Those last few weeks when he found out he was no longer coaching, it was hard for him to talk to us without breaking down, especially the senior (tackle) day."

"We had a good group of coaches we really looked up to too. (For the Michigan game) we just needed to go out there and do what we needed to do. There was no speech at half-time. He didn't say anything because he was so emotional. So we took that and ran with it. We were really fired up."

"Earle Bruce was sharp. He believed in what he did. He really believed in that three yards and a cloud of dust. I'd get two or three

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INTERVIEW: CARLOS SNOW

yards, but first of all hold onto the ball.

"It was sad when he was let go. I never considered leaving. First, my daddy said we don't know where he is going to go but if you want to go, we'll support you. That's when I thought once a Buckeye, always a Buckeye. I stuck around, and everything turned around for the better."

BSB: What was it like to score against Michigan on that 70-yard catch-and-run?

Snow: "You hear so much about that game when you're growing up (and) I had so much emotion and, I wouldn't say hate, but dislike for that school up north. We had things up in the locker room, and you'd read them every day that week. We were ready. We were prepared. It really showed on the field. (Linebacker) Chris Spielman had one of the greatest single performances I'd ever seen. Nobody could stop that guy. We piggybacked off that, 'Let's go. Let's go.'"

BSB: The next year against Michigan you had 170 yards rushing but you lost. You seemed to have good success individually against Michigan under John Cooper.

Snow: "Yeah, but we always seemed to come up short.

"I thought the way Coach Cooper handled Michigan in the Rose Bowl (Cooper's Arizona State team defeated the Wolverines in 1987) that we would continue to have success. He had a different approach, obviously, than Coach Bruce, especially on offense. We had two totally different offensive philosophies."

BSB: Clearly, it was no longer three yards and a cloud of dust. How did that affect you?

Snow: "We had a lot of play action, quarterback options. One of the reasons I personally think I didn't do as well as I possibly could was I had four different running back coaches. I started out with Lenny Willis. Then it was Ron Hudson, Bobby Turner and (Gene Huey in 1991). They all had their way of doing things so we were relearning over and over again. It felt like I was starting over each year. We had Jim Colletto as the offensive coordinator. Coach (Elliott) Uzelac later was in charge.

"It was a learning experience all those years I was there."

BSB: Speaking of learning experiences, how did you handle all the adversity you went through – you had a knee injury, a tumor on your hip and you had a car accident at a gas station in Columbus? When was that?

Snow: "When I found the tumor on my hip I kind of overindulged. In the beginning they were telling me I would never play football again. It was tragedy, but it was wakeup call.

"The tragedy was what was I going to do without football? I was one of those guys, and I talk (about this to) a lot to high schoolers now, I was one of those guys who put all his eggs in one basket to try and make the NFL. Then when it seemed like it was taken away from me, my world, my brain, everything just crashed.

"It was a horrible, horrible wreck. I hit a pole, took the gas pump out, then the house stopped me. I had a blackout. I just took to the bottle. I didn't know what else to do. I was taking somebody home. Luckily, I got them home and I went back down to the Clarmont (lounge) before I blacked out.

"God had a plan for me. I could have or should have been six feet under after that wreck."

BSB: You survived and finished your career at Ohio State in 1991. How difficult was

that to come back?

Snow: "Well, it fell right into my hands, like 'OK, this is what you're going to do.' I was challenged. I heard it all before: 'You're too short. You didn't play anybody in high school. I'm not fast or whatever.' I've been there.

"I had a plan once the doctors said I could play. He said I would have to work harder than I probably have in my life. He was right. I did that. I got myself in great playing shape, and I was ready to go.

"It made it easy to come back to school (to finish his degree) because I had been in this situation before. I had the opportunity to prove to people I could do this. I take my hat off to everybody who supported me like Dr. Bernard Master, when he came up with a plan for me to do. I listened to him. This is the game plan and we're sticking to it.

"I'm in quarter No. 2. What I mean by that is finding a job, redoing my résumé and start putting stuff out. We'll see what happens."

BSB: What was rock bottom for you?

Snow: "Suicidal. I had several suicidal attempts."

BSB: Was God looking out for you then or did you think he was looking away from you at that point?

Snow: "I got to the point where I ... I really had no feelings. I didn't care about anything. I was isolated. I just stayed by myself. The good thing is that when you spend time with yourself you can see stuff you don't like about yourself. You can pinpoint stuff. I didn't like drinking. I didn't like self-medicating. Self-medicating is hitting rock bottom because I was really doing things to things to try to rest, ease the pain then try it again.

"I wanted to get professional help for my drinking, my pill use, my drug use. I wanted to get professional help. Remember when I got a DUI?

"I told the judge I didn't want to get out until I got professional help because if you let me out like you usually do – I'd only spend a weekend (in jail) or something like that – I'll be back out there. I pleaded with the judge to leave me in until I get professional help.

"Hamilton County did what I asked them to do. That was the last time I was there."

BSB: In talking to others and doing some mentoring, what's the key messages you want to tell people about yourself now?

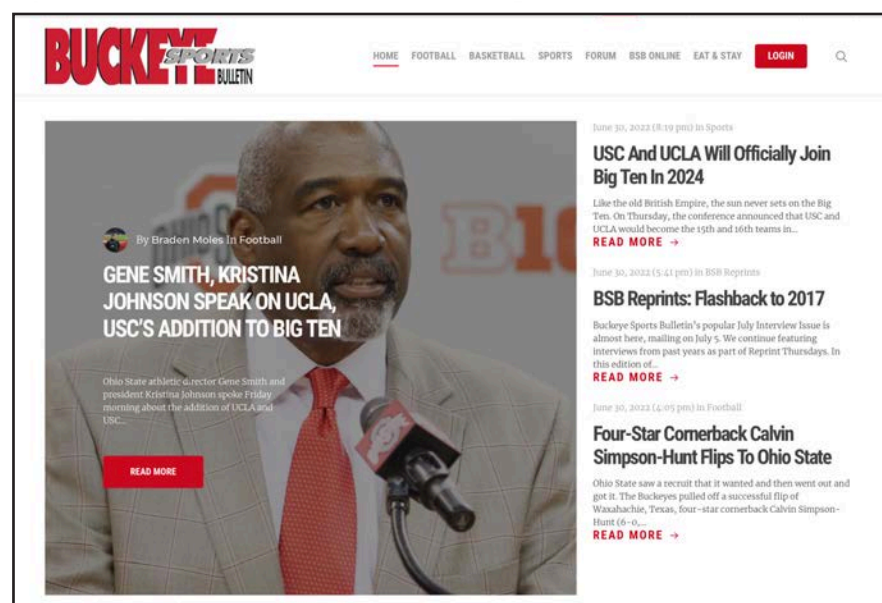
Snow: "First thing, I'm grateful. I'm blessed. Other than that, a lot of people don't like to talk about what they've been through. They're ashamed. Just open up to someone and just get help, socialize because when you start getting to the dark places I was, you're hearing voices that take you in the wrong direction. You have to open up and get professional help."

BSB: It's two different worlds but compare the feelings of accomplishment or gratification scoring a touchdown against Michigan and getting your degree? Is there the same euphoria?

Snow: "(laughing) Put it this way, I never ran away from a challenge on the football field. The same with going back for my degree. I was thinking I can't do this. I had to change my mind-set. Once I changed my mind and said I can do it and will do it and followed through with it, I'm glad I went through it.

"Getting the degree meant more. It meant more."

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Schottenstein Aiding Ohio State's NIL Efforts

By JACK EMERSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

On July 1, 2021, Ohio's name, image and likeness legislation went into effect, allowing collegiate athletes in the state to be compensated for their representation in advertisements and endorsement deals.

As NIL legislation swept across the country and was approved by the NCAA, independent endorsement facilitators, known as collectives, have appeared at the majority of Power Five institutions. Collectives are independent from the universities they represent and are largely funded through donors and local businesses to help create NIL opportunities – whether it be a meet-and-greet or an endorsement deal with a car dealership – for student-athletes.

**BRIAN
SCHOTTENSTEIN**

Enter The Foundation, an NIL collective founded by Brian Schottenstein, an Ohio State booster and president of the Schottenstein Real Estate Group, and former Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones that focuses solely on Ohio State student-athletes.

The Foundation received 501(c)(3) status in March and has built up its board as well as the student-athlete network it has worked with in recent months.

Schottenstein spoke with BSB on June 14 for an exclusive interview surrounding the creation of The Foundation, its current proceedings, what's next for the NIL collective and the impact of NIL on college athletics.

BSB: It's been well-documented that you're a lifelong Buckeye fan. When did that love for Ohio State athletics start for you?

Who were some of your favorite Buckeye athletes and Ohio State football moments?

Schottenstein: "Well, I started going to games since I was a young toddler. My father and grandfather always wanted to go together, and then I would go to games with my father. It was a good time for all of our family to bond and really enjoy some of the games that we've been to over the years and have great memories – in particular, obviously, the national championship against the (Miami) Hurricanes in 2002 and then against Oregon in 2014 and the Alabama game leading up to it.

"I've developed a lot of relationships over the years with some of the football and basketball players, even had Cardale Jones in my wedding last year, and so we've become really close and started The Foundation together."

BSB: At what point did you feel like you were going to get involved with NIL?

Schottenstein: "I got asked to testify in favor of NIL alongside Ryan Day, Gene Smith, Cardale, and I was talking on behalf of the business side of it. That was last summer, about a year ago. And I wasn't really planning on getting involved personally, and then I saw a lot of other schools were putting together collectives and different ways to raise money for the student-athletes. I decided to get involved with it and didn't want to be left behind, as far as Ohio State, with attracting the best student-athletes. That's why I started work on this last fall."

BSB: Is the belief that student-athletes should be compensated something that you developed once NIL legislation started to pick up steam? Or is that something that you kind of had always believed in?

Schottenstein: "Yeah, it's something that I always believed in. And then once it looked like it was going to become law, and also passed by the NCAA, then I wanted to get more involved with it."

BSB: How did the process of starting The Foundation begin? How did you get Cardale into the mix? And how much does it help to have that athlete perspective when looking at NIL?

Schottenstein: "Cardale, just being a good friend of mine and being a great Ohio State legend, I thought he'd be perfect. He also has his own company where he manages athletes. So I thought that would be a good fit. We got our 501(c)(3) (status) in March and have been up and running and raising money from fans and boosters, donors and alumni, businesses, and we're off to a great start. (With) the whole fan engagement aspect of it, we're going have a big event this summer with Coach Day attending, and we're excited about that as well."

BSB: What kind of feedback about The Foundation have you gotten to this point?

Schottenstein: "We've gotten great feedback because people really like giving money to our nonprofit. They get a tax deduction, and they're also helping out student-athletes directly. It's not like you're giving to a facility or something where the students don't actually get the proceeds for it. So they are really enjoying it.

"And I think they're excited about our first event. We had a lot of businesses involved with our foundation as well and raising money that way. It's been a lot of work, but a great start."

BSB: What would you say sets The Foundation apart from other NIL operations at other universities?

Schottenstein: "I think it's just our relationship with the local businesses and the fan base. I think that Ohio State has a very passionate following, and we're able to tap into that. We also have a really good board. You have Urban Meyer, D'Angelo Russell, Terry McLaurin, J.T. Barrett, to name a few, some businesspeople in the community. That's definitely separate from some of the others."

BSB: What was the process of getting that board together? How much does it help to have that mix of athletes, coaches and local businesspeople?

Schottenstein: "I think it's a very nice combination of both men and women, business, sports and politics. And I think it's a nice variety of people that all really care about helping out the student-athletes and are working hard to make that happen."

BSB: This past year, there's been a lot of changes to what is permissible in NIL. It's been likened to the Wild West. What have you learned the most about name, image and likeness over the past year and since you've gotten The Foundation up and running?

Schottenstein: "Well, in the beginning, we were hoping to be able to work with recruits, but now we're just focusing on the current student-athletes with the new NCAA regulations. That's one thing that we shifted. And then also, just making sure we do everything above-board. Whenever somebody donates money, we want most of it, if not all of it, to go directly to the student-athletes. And then they get a sponsorship as well, so they're able to get their company name on our website.

"And then there's a charitable component to their donation. The athletes will do hours giving back to the community. And I really like that aspect because we're not only giving them money, but we're also teaching them how to work with charities and volunteer and the importance of giving back. And they're really



Brian Schottenstein

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learning a lot about finances and their brand as well. So, it's a good learning experience for the athlete, too."

BSB: How does The Foundation help in terms of educating athletes to find the best opportunities for them?

Schottenstein: "We have attorneys and different third-party companies we work with in marketing that can work with the athletes and really help them understand the knowledge of a contract and different finances, how the money is handled, taxes, and all that. They can really learn a lot of financial literacy."

"But also, we have charity partners like Buckeye Cruise for Cancer, Life Town, and A Kid Again, so they get to work with kids, and they get to work with people that might be a cancer survivor or a cancer patient. It shows them the importance of not just doing well on the field, but also off the field."

BSB: Going back to the changing landscape of name, image and likeness. Where do you feel NCAA guidelines on this need to improve at this stage? And what would you change, if you could?

Schottenstein: "Honestly, I think that there just needs to be a level playing field for everybody. A lot of the other schools, like in the South and stuff, they're not really following some of the recruiting rules. And I'm all for NIL, but I think it needs to be a level playing field where everybody is following the same rules."

BSB: What schools do you feel are doing well on that front, that are doing it the right way? And do you feel like Ohio State is doing it the right way as compared to those Southern schools that you just mentioned?

Schottenstein: "Yeah, I feel that Ohio State's definitely doing it the right way. I don't really want to call out any other schools because I'm really just focused on Ohio State."

BSB: How do you feel name, image and likeness will impact college athletics in general?

Schottenstein: "Well, I think one thing that changed is the transfer portal, because you're going to get a lot of students that are transferring for money, maybe, or other reasons and they don't have to sit out a year. Every college football and basketball student is like a free agent, so they can just transfer

wherever they want. It's going to hurt a lot of the smaller schools. I think that's the biggest change."

BSB: It was recently reported that Ryan Day said Ohio State would need about \$13 million from NIL compensation to keep their roster intact. Is that figure something that you agree with, and how obtainable is it to reach that mark consistently?

Schottenstein: "I definitely agree with that. When I first started, I thought north of \$10 million a year was kind of a number that Ohio State would need to run its football program. I think it's obtainable if we get all the businesses behind this, and people can really get on board and not worry about all this news with the NCAA. That definitely hurts when there's things like that coming out. We

want businesses to be able to be comfortable in this space, and we're working with businesses and talking to them about it and getting them comfortable and they're buying into it, for sure. It's good for them, too, because they can utilize their brand and partner up with ours."

BSB: At this point, what does the day-to-day look like for The Foundation? And do you kind of expect a ramp-up of activity once the football season and other athletic seasons begin?

Schottenstein: "The day-to-day is really busy. I'm spending probably half my time on it. Right now, our main focus is raising money for our event this summer with Coach Day and some of the athletes we've already partnered with. And then after that we're going to

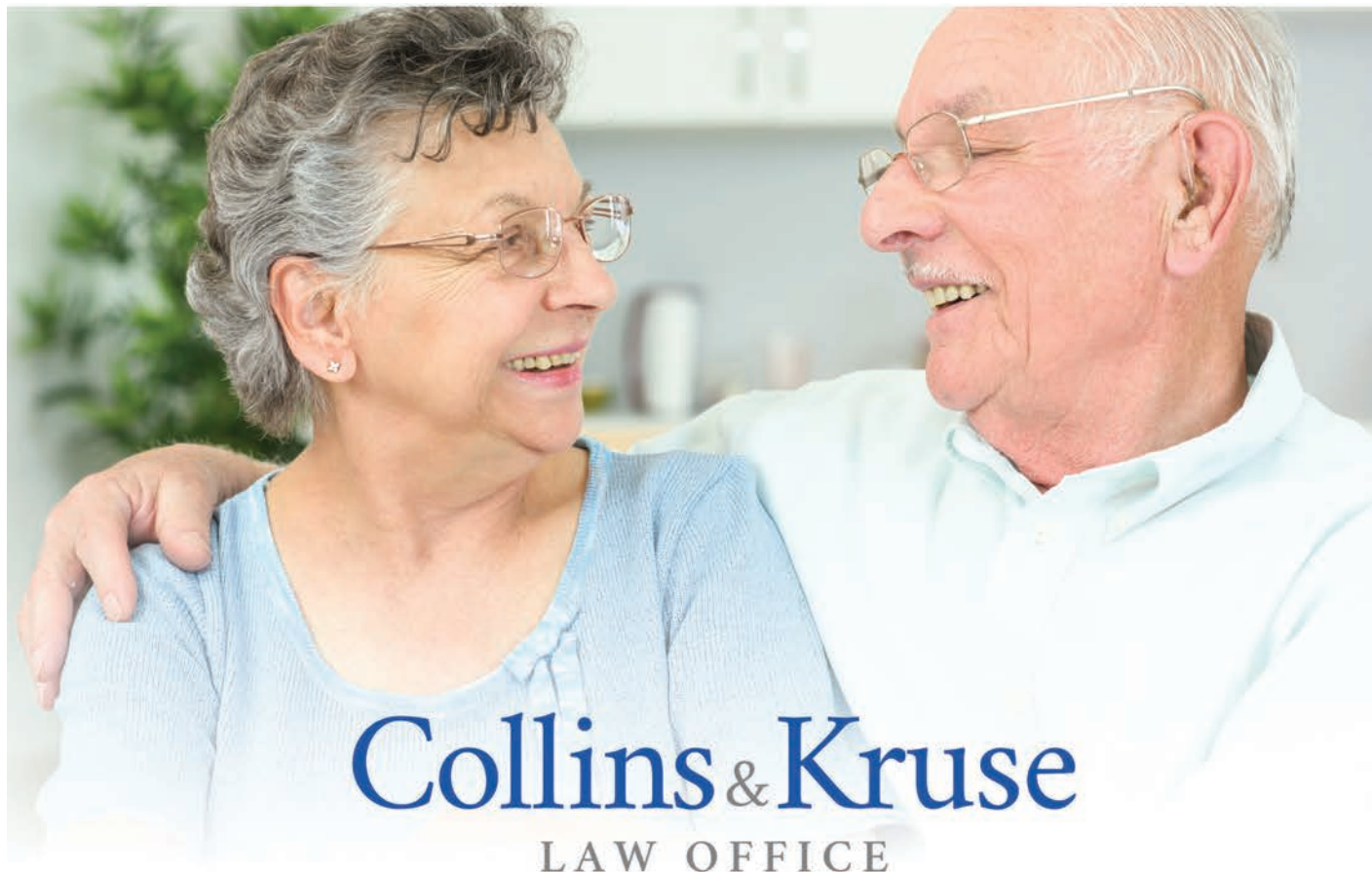
focus on the charitable side and do an event with one of our charity partners and have all the athletes that we partner with attend that charity event."

BSB: What goes into the process of getting athletes on board. Do you call them up and say, 'Hey, here's an opportunity for you?' Or is it facilitated through Ohio State?

Schottenstein: "It's our board that makes the decision with what athletes they want to partner with and how their deals are structured. So, ultimately it comes down to them."

BSB: How can Buckeye fans get involved with The Foundation?

Schottenstein: "By going on our website, the foundationohio.com, and donating or sending us an email if you're wanting to volunteer and help out."



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OSU Goes Back-To-Back-To-Back At Receiver

Beyond the quarterback, no position group has been more consistently recruited in recent years at Ohio State than wide receiver, where position coach Brian Hartline has brought in topflight talent to the Buckeyes.

Dating back to his first recruiting class in 2019 as a full-time assistant coach for Ohio State, Hartline signed a five-star receiver in

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Braden Moles

three straight classes – Garrett Wilson in 2019, Julian Fleming and Jaxon Smith-Njigba in 2020 and Emeka Egbuka in 2021. While he didn't sign a five-star in 2022, he still pulled in four four-star prospects, the lowest of whom was Kojo Antwi at No. 151 overall in the country.

That run on receivers could have been considered an all-timer for a position coach, but in retrospect, it was just a precursor to Hartline's magnum opus. Ohio State, in a matter of three days from June 20-22, earned commitments from three top-50 wide receivers, cementing Hartline's status as an elite recruiter and establishing one of the greatest four-man receiver classes in not just Ohio State history, but throughout the annals of college football.

The festivities began with Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy five-star wide receiver Carnell

Tate (6-2, 185), the No. 28 overall prospect in 2023 and the No. 3 wide receiver in 2023, who committed to the Buckeyes on June 20.

It had been a long and winding recruitment for Tate, who at one point was heavily leaning toward Ohio State but saw pressure from several schools – including Notre Dame and Tennessee – in recent months that threw his potential landing spot into question.

He camped with the Buckeyes last summer and made return trips last season, visiting for Ohio State's games against Penn State on Oct. 30 and Michigan State on Nov. 20. Following those gameday visits, he made an unofficial visit to Ohio State on April 2, eventually committing to the Buckeyes despite not taking an official visit.

"I'm picking Ohio State because I have a great relationship with the coaches that I've had since day one," he told 247Sports. "They've been recruiting me since I was a sophomore, and I was talking to them for quite a long time. I also believe in Coach Hartline and what he does. He's capable of developing me into a great receiver."

Despite overtures from the Fighting Irish and Volunteers – who were reportedly making a play for Tate by offering a considerable NIL package – his relationship with Hartline and the potential to become a top wide receiver at Ohio State won out.

"He is the type of wide receiver that always seems to be open," said 247Sports southeast recruiting analyst Andrew Ivins. "He creates plenty of separation at the line of scrimmage

OSU Football 2023 Commitments						
Players in the class of 2023 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.						
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School	
Mark Fletcher	RB	6-1	225	★★★★	Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.)	American Heritage
Malik Hartford	SAF	6-3	175	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio)	Lakota West
Cedrick Hawkins	SAF	6-0	165	★★★★	Titusville (Fla.)	Cocoa
Brandon Inniss	WR	6-0	190	★★★★★	Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.)	American Heritage
Dijon Johnson	CB	6-1	190	★★★★	Tampa (Fla.)	Wharton
Kayin Lee	CB	5-11	185	★★★★	Ellenwood (Ga.)	Cedar Grove
Ty Lockwood	TE	6-5	225	★★★★	Thompson's Stn. (Tenn.)	Independence
Jermaine Mathews	CB	6-0	175	★★★★	Cincinnati	Winton Woods
Luke Montgomery	OT	6-5	270	★★★★	Findlay, Ohio	
Joshua Padilla	OG	6-4	265	★★★★	Huber Heights (Ohio)	Wayne
Bryson Rodgers	WR	6-2	170	★★★★	Zephyrhills (Fla.)	Wiregrass Ranch
Noah Rogers	WR	6-2	180	★★★★	Rolesville, N.C.	
Austin Siereveld	OL	6-5	315	★★★★	Middletown (Ohio)	Lakota East
Calvin Simpson-Hunt	CB	6-0	175	★★★★	Waxahachie, Texas	
Will Smith Jr.	DL	6-3	260	★★★	Dublin (Ohio)	Coffman
Carnell Tate	WR	6-2	185	★★★★★	Bradenton (Fla.)	IMG Academy

and is able to beat both zone and man coverage once under way. He has superb body control and large 10-inch hands that allow him to make extremely difficult catches look relatively easy.

"He is competitive not only at the catch point, but also once the ball is in his hands as he will fight to pick up additional yardage," he continued. "He owns a rather slender build now but should eventually carry 195 pounds or more. He has experience working both inside and outside and is shifty enough in the open field to be featured as a return man, as well."

The next day, after rumors abounded throughout Twitter of a potential "boom" for Ohio State's recruiting class and the opportunity for a commitment to go back-to-back with Tate, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage five-star wideout Brandon Inniss (6-0, 190) ended any speculation by committing to the Buckeyes that afternoon.

"The coaches there," Inniss told On3 Sports of why he chose Ohio State. "I built a great relationship with them over time. I know Coach Hartline will develop me to be the best version of myself on and off the field. Also, the competition in the WR room is going to be great. I will have other top guys like me pushing me every day, and that's what I need."

Inniss is the No. 18 overall prospect and No. 2 wide receiver in 2023. He chose Ohio State over his other top schools of Alabama, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Texas A&M and USC. Though Inniss' recruitment with Ohio State dates back to his offer last February and a camping session with the Buckeyes last summer, things were put on hold when he committed to Oklahoma last August.

That lasted for just over three months, however, as he decommitted from the Sooners following Lincoln Riley's departure for USC. The Trojans were then viewed as the favorites for Inniss, but Ohio State began making plays, hosting him – as well as other members of South Florida Express, his 7-on-7 team in Florida – for an unofficial visit in April.

From there, he made his first official visit to the school the weekend of June 17, and things reportedly went well for the five-star prospect before his eventual commitment.

"He's one of the most college-ready wide receivers to come out of the high school ranks in recent years," Ivins said. "He's an elite route runner with a competitive edge that can take

over games and beat double coverage. He was initially mistaken by one Power Five assistant coach for a high school senior when he was just an eighth-grader because of his polish."

Rational minds would be forgiven for assuming that the run would end there. Two five-star receivers in as many days would satiate even the most diehard of Ohio State fans, and with the cancellation of Rolesville, N.C., four-star Noah Rogers' (6-2, 180) official visit the weekend of June 17 due to travel issues, it didn't appear that a commitment would be imminent, even if he was viewed as an eventual take for Ohio State's class.

But just like when Inniss committed, speculation began – mostly with tweets from Ohio State's commitments, namely Inniss and Tate – who were claiming that the Buckeyes would pull in not one, not two, but three top-50 wide receiver targets in as many days.

Rogers, on the afternoon of June 22, then completed the prophecy, committing to Ohio State to give the Buckeyes their third top-50 wide receiver in the 2023 class. He is the No. 50 overall prospect and No. 9 receiver in the class.

Ohio State won out over several in-state schools, including N.C. State and North Carolina, as well as Clemson and Florida State. The Wolfpack applied the most pressure, getting in early on Rogers' recruitment and hosting him for several unofficial visits dating back to last summer.

Despite the push, Rogers committed to Ohio State without making it to Columbus for his official visit, though that will certainly be on the table in the coming months now that he is in the fold. He received his offer from Ohio State on Jan. 12 and made his first – and so far only – visit to Columbus in early April.

"He's a productive big-play receiver who averaged 20.5 yards and had 22 touchdowns on 70 catches," said 247Sports national recruiting analyst Brian Dohn. "He's a smooth route runner who gets offline and into routes well. He gets out of breaks and accelerates to gain separation and adjusts well to off-target throws and shows excellent ball skills. He is sure-handed and willing to make plays in traffic."

Hartline entered that week with just one commitment – Zephyrhills (Fla.) Wiregrass Ranch four-star Bryson Rodgers (6-1, 175) – and by Wednesday afternoon had a class totaling 18 stars and an average player rating of 0.9652.

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OSU Football 2024 Commitments

Player(s) in the class of 2024 who has/have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Dylan Raiola	QB	6-3	220	★★★★★	Chandler, Ariz.

Dating back to 2000, this is just the 10th instance of a team signing two five-star wide receivers in the same class. Ohio State accomplished this feat in 2020 with Fleming and Smith-Njigba, and it has also been done by Texas A&M (2022), Oklahoma (2019), Texas (2010), LSU and USC (2004), Florida (2003), Clemson (2001) and Texas again in 2000.

Those set the baseline for some of the greatest receiver classes in modern recruiting history, and Ohio State's groups in 2020 and 2023 – assuming they all sign their letters of intent this winter – rank among the top of those schools. Only Texas in 2010 and Ohio State's 2020 and 2023 classes signed 18 stars worth of wide receivers, and both of Ohio State's receiver groupings surpassed Texas in average player rating, indicating that Hartline, pound-for-pound, may be on the verge of signing the two best receiver classes in modern recruiting history in just a four-year span.

With four commitments at wide receiver, this likely wraps up any recruiting at the position for 2023. Other Ohio State targets throughout the process who had yet to commit included Longview, Texas, five-star Jalen Hale (6-2, 175); Folsom, Calif., four-star Rico Flores (6-1, 190); and Houston Langham Creek four-star Jaquaize Pettaway (5-11, 170).

Hartline already has a head start on 2024, when the Buckeyes are in good shape with Miami Central five-star Joshisa Trader (6-2, 170) and Opa Locka (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep five-star Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 185).

Trader and Smith are the No. 3 and 12 overall prospects in the 247Sports composite rankings, respectively, and the Buckeyes are viewed as the early favorites. Both made visits to Columbus this past spring with South Florida Express, which Inniss and Tate also play for.

Ohio State Adds Trio Of Corners

After plenty of momentum on the offensive side of the ball, Ohio State went back to the defense to earn a trio of commitments. Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove four-star cornerback Kayin Lee (5-11, 185), Cincinnati Winton Woods four-star cornerback Jermaine Mathews (6-0, 175) and Waxahachie, Texas, four-star cornerback Calvin Simpson-Hunt (6-0, 175) all committed to the Buckeyes in recent weeks, adding an impressive group of cornerbacks for Ohio State's class.

Lee is the No. 145 overall prospect and No. 18 cornerback in 2023 and committed to Ohio State over Nebraska and Oregon on June 27.

He was originally a Georgia commit, pledging to the Bulldogs last September, but he decommitted in February following the departure of defensive backs coach Jahmile Addae and began taking unofficial visits to several schools throughout the spring, including Florida, Florida State, Nebraska and Ohio State.

The Buckeyes had been involved with Lee before his commitment to Georgia, offering him last summer after he camped with Ohio State, and were included among his top schools before his initial commitment to

Georgia. He made his first official visit to Ohio State the weekend of June 24 and saw enough to convince him to pull the trigger on committing to the Buckeyes.

Also helping Ohio State's cause was that Lee's former coach at Cedar Grove, Miguel Patrick, was hired as a defensive quality control coach at Ohio State earlier this year.

"He's a lunch-pail type of cornerback that is physical enough to play in the boundary but also fluid enough to get it done on the field side," Ivins said. "He made a name for himself as a sophomore picking off three passes and defending plenty more while competing in the Peach State's AAA classification.

"He is aggressive with his hands and will put his hip right on a wide receiver. He does a nice job of reading and reacting to what's going on in front of him and fights off blocks like a veteran and understands how to drop a ball carrier in the open field with sound tackling. He is not the biggest of corners as he measured in at roughly 5-11, 160 pounds the spring before his junior year, but should continue to keep filling out once lifting and eating in college."

Simpson-Hunt was the next to pop, decommitting from Texas Tech on June 30 and committing to Ohio State later that afternoon, completing the flip for one of the Buckeyes' most sought-after targets. He had been committed to the Red Raiders since November and had been head coach Joey McGuire's second highest-rated recruit in the class.

He is the No. 173 overall prospect and No. 22 cornerback in 2023. He received an offer from Ohio State in May and made it out for an official visit the weekend of June 17 that would be the turning point in his rapidly evolving recruitment.

"They showed me a lot of hospitality," Simpson-Hunt told 247Sports after his Ohio State official visit. "They showed me everything I needed to see. I went with my mom, my

D-Line Target Reed Commits To LSU

As Buckeye Sports Bulletin went to press, Ohio State defensive line target Darron Reed (6-4, 270), a four-star prospect out of Carver High School in Columbus, Ga., announced on July 4 that he was committing to LSU.

Reed is the No. 228 overall prospect and No. 34 defensive lineman in the class of 2023, as well as the No. 21 prospect out of Georgia. The Tigers won over Reed in a fierce battle with Ohio State, Reed's other top school, and he also held offers from Clemson, Miami (Fla.), Georgia, Tennessee, Texas A&M and USC.

He took official visits in June to LSU, Miami (Fla.) and Auburn before finishing at Ohio State the weekend of June 24, but it wasn't enough to sell Reed on the Buckeyes just over a week before his decision date.

Ohio State has just one commitment on the defensive line in Dublin (Ohio) Coffman three-star Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260), who committed to the Buckeyes in January.

uncle and my cousin. They liked it a lot too."

A speedy and physical corner, Simpson-Hunt made plays all over the field for Waxahachie last season – including on special teams – and earned a Texas District 11-6A first-team selection. He is also an outstanding track and field athlete who ran a 10.67 second 100-meter dash.

The Buckeyes followed it up the next day when Mathews committed to Ohio State on July 1. He is the No. 373 overall prospect and is listed as the No. 24 athlete in 2023, though his composite rating would slot him around the No. 37 cornerback in the class, which is where he is expected to play at the next level.

"He's a quick cover corner with the skills and tools to play man to man or in zone," said 247Sports national recruiting analyst Allen Trieu. "He has good change of direction and recovery/closing speed. He shows he can play the ball in the air. He has to add weight and strength still and was not a varsity starter until his junior year, so he still has learning to do, but he has improved rapidly and has the movement skills to be a high-end college corner and have a chance to play on Sundays. He fits as a player who could play both in the slot and outside."

While his spot in the rankings does not indicate elite talent, he has a considerable offer list that includes Alabama, LSU, Oklahoma and Penn State, among others. Ohio State offered Mathews after he camped with the Buckeyes in June, and he returned to Columbus a couple of weeks later for an official visit.

Ohio State won out over Cincinnati and Pitt, two schools that Mathews took official visits to, as well as Kentucky.

"Ohio State was my dream school," Mathews told On3 Sports. "I know about their history, what they are about, and what I am going into. It is a top program.

"It is a great program that produces defensive backs and they win championships. I love to win and I know I can go up there and compete and win a lot of games."

Lee, Simpson-Hunt and Mathews, respectively, became the second, third and fourth cornerbacks in Ohio State's 2023 class, joining Tampa (Fla.) Wharton four-star Dijon Johnson (6-1, 190). While work will still be done in the secondary with the safeties, this likely marks the end of any cornerback recruiting for Ohio State's class.

Safety Commit Hawkins Takes Visit To Auburn

The Florida Flip – a prospect from Florida committing to Ohio State early but eventually leaving the class before signing his letter of intent – has happened in several of Ohio State's recent classes, including Jacksonville (Fla.) Riverside five-star cornerback Jaheim Singletary in 2022, who ended up at Georgia, and Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas five-star safety Jordan Battle in 2020, who ultimately enrolled at Alabama.

Recent events may have people asking if

Continued On Page 32

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Raiola's Arm Draws Rave Reviews At Camp

Continued From Page 31

Titusville (Fla.) Cocoa four-star safety Cedrick Hawkins (6-0, 175) might be next. He committed somewhat unexpectedly to Ohio State during the Rose Bowl in January and had been firm in his commitment to the Buckeye up until the weekend of June 24, when he took an official visit to Auburn.

"It was a great visit," Hawkins told 247Sports. "Nice to meet everybody, nice to see what Auburn was like. It was great. I liked it. It was cool."

Hawkins had previously said he would not be taking any more visits, so it's unclear what caused the change of heart. Even so, he said his visit to the Tigers – who are recruiting him as a cornerback, not a safety – did not impact his commitment to Ohio State.

"I'm all (Ohio) State," he said. "Pretty much all Ohio State."

Understandably, though, the concept of an Ohio State commit taking an official visit elsewhere casts a shadow over any potential statements a recruit might make until he sign his letter of intent. The move was likely not well received by Ohio State's staff, which has spoken out in the past against this kind of conduct.

"I think when you look at the way that recruiting is across college football, the idea is

that when guys want to commit, they're done," head coach Ryan Day said in the spring. "They're going to commit to your school, they made the decision, they're not going to go visit any other school. And then they're all in and they help you recruit the class."

Raiola Throws At Recruiting Camp

For the first time since committing to Ohio State on May 9, Dylan Raiola got the opportunity to work out in front of Day and quarterbacks coach Corey Dennis on June 21.

Raiola – the five-star quarterback in 2024 from Texas who will play his junior and senior seasons at Chandler High School in Arizona – took part in a group workout with fellow quarterback, wide receiver and defensive back prospects, and he also spent time after working out privately with Day.

"I was speechless," Raiola said about his camp experience. "I learned so much from him, just taking everything like a sponge. That's my biggest thing, coming here and doing that. I want to obviously get back out here and learn as much as I can before I get here so I'm ready."

He participated in several drills throughout the afternoon that showcased his arm as well as his accuracy on Ohio State's indoor field at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, in-

cluding throwing on the run and sending deep balls down the field.

"He was as advertised. I was incredibly impressed with him," said Rivals.com Ohio State beat writer Colin Gay. "You could see how much Day liked him and appreciated what he could do solely based on the amount of attention to detail that Day was giving him. Whether it was tinkering with his throwing motion, whether it was after a specific drill or a specific throw, he would go up to Raiola and mention things that he wanted to change. It seemed like Day was talking to a quarterback that was already on his roster."

Day and Dennis were hands-on throughout the workout, offering advice and guidance to Raiola during the afternoon of work.

"Ball placement," Raiola said of what they worked on. "Really just learning how to play the game. You know, you work on your technical stuff now and then once September comes and it's your first game on a Friday night, just go play ball. That was something he said, 'Work on it now and then just go play ball.'"

Despite practicing on Ohio State's turf, Raiola won't be able to do so as a member of the team until his early signing period in late 2023. In the meantime, Day and Dennis have given him plenty to work on as he approaches his final two seasons of high school football.

"I think to perfect my game," Raiola said

of his current focus. "Just keep working hard, working out, training, making gains in the off-season, during the season and after the season."

Beyond working out, he also took the opportunity to get in some peer recruiting while on Ohio State's campus. Like C.J. Hicks in 2022 and Findlay, Ohio, four-star offensive lineman Luke Montgomery in 2023, Raiola has taken initiative as a leader for his class and is working to make his pitch to his peers for why they should come to Ohio State.

When not on the football field, Raiola can likely be found on Twitter, tweeting at prospects and encouraging them to come to Ohio State.

"Really just trying to recruit great people," Raiola said. "I always run it through the coaches to make sure we're going after that kid, so we're on constant communication and that's key right now."

That communication with the staff has led to several priority targets for Ohio State that Raiola is attempting to reel in. Ohio State had been involved with several top recruits in 2024 before Raiola committed, including IMG Academy four-star running back Stacy Gage (5-11, 200), Smith and Trader, but Raiola's commitment to the Buckeyes is only furthering their cause with his peers.

"I've got a lot of No. 1s," Raiola said. "If I

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago — 1982

Not only did Ohio State acquire a blue-chip football recruit when coach Earle Bruce landed Lancaster, Ohio's Barry Walker, but it also came away with one of the nation's premier high school shot put and discus throwers.

Walker, who had rushed for 1,130 yards out of the fullback position for the Golden Gale football team the previous fall, set a then-state meet shot put record with a throw of 67.2 FEET/YARDS/METERS??? in June.

Bruce, as was usually the case with recruits who wanted to play two sports, told Walker that he must participate in spring practice his freshman year, but after that, he would be allowed to compete in track during the spring.

"That was one of the stipulations that we made clear before I got serious about talking to anybody," said Walker. "I wanted to be able to compete in track and football. So all the schools that I was seriously considering made it clear that I would be able to do both."

35 Years Ago — 1987

Mick Shoaf was torn between two color schemes. His father, Joe, wanted his second son to choose Blue and Gold. Mick, a man in his own right at 6-5 and 290-plus pounds, took a real liking to Scarlet and Gray.

Ohio State's colors won out.

"My dad was Notre Dame all the way," said Shoaf, who would join the Ohio State football team as a freshman offensive tackle candidate that August. "It was tough sledding around here when I told him I really wanted to go to Ohio State. You ask Randy Hart about that."

Hart, the OSU assistant coach who recruited Shoaf out of Orwell (Ohio) Grand Valley, politely refused to discuss the matter of conflicting colors.

"Whatever Mick said on that is all right with me," said Hart, laughing profusely as he said it. "All I can say is that's come along tremendously since then."

30 Years Ago — 1992

There were four players who were generally regarded as the top players in Ohio this season, and all four had already been named preseason prep All-Americans by several publications, including SuperPrep magazine and national recruiting expert Tom Lemming.

Leading the pack was running back Marc Edwards (6-2, 220) of Norwood. Already acknowledged as the early favorite for "Mr. Football" in the state, Edwards had rushed for 2,350 yards as a junior, averaging 7.6 yards per carry. He also played inside linebacker and registered 161 tackles and three interceptions.

Other top Ohio prospects included wide receiver Joe Jurevicius (6-5, 210) of Mentor Lake Catholic, defensive back Dan Hack-

enbracht (6-3, 185) of Massillon and all-purpose star Mike Elston (6-4, 220) of St. Mary's Memorial.

25 Years Ago — 1997

In recent years, the Ohio State football coaching staff had succeeded in getting a handful of verbal commitments through the summer football camp.

This year, with spots in the following year's recruiting class very tight, OSU was not expected to lock up as many commitments. As the camp ended, there were reports that a pair of Ohio players – Shaker Heights cornerback Nate Clements and Euclid running back Tony Fisher – had committed to the Buckeyes.

But both players had second thoughts upon returning home, although both said OSU remained clearly their top school.

"I told Coach (John) Cooper I was very interested in coming there," Fisher told BSB. "But I think for now, it's still open. I haven't had a chance to visit any other schools yet."

20 Years Ago — 2002

The numbers were staggering, but they spoke volumes of the footprint left by the Ohio State football program.

"By the end of the camp, we had almost 3,000 kids through here," said OSU coach Jim Tressel. "That's extraordinary."

Between a 24-team passing tournament and four sessions of the summer football camp, OSU's Woody Hayes Athletic Center was a beehive of activity from June 17-27.

The camp, a key part of OSU's recruiting strategy, netted one commitment as North Canton (Ohio) Hoover defensive back Curt Lukens verbally to the Buckeyes shortly after being offered on June 27.

15 Years Ago — 2007

While no new offers were extended once camp season was completed, the month of June would likely be looked back upon as one when everything seemed to be rolling in the right direction for the OSU program.

It all began when Klein, Texas, offensive lineman J.B. Shugarts arrived in Columbus on the Monday before the camp. He spent the week at the home of Dublin (Ohio) Coffman offensive lineman Mike Adams, where the two frequently hung out with Adams' current (and future) teammate, Jake Stoneburner. All three had verbally committed to the Buckeyes.

The three were planning to room together along with Orlando (Fla.) Edgewater's Michael Brewster. Stoneburner said the commitment shown by Brewster and Shugarts to come from out of state for the one-day camp demonstrated how special this class of 2008 could become.

"To me it just shows they love it here," he said. "I know Brewster absolutely loves it here. He loves hanging out with all of us, and

they all want to get up here as soon as possible too. That's why they're all graduating early. It just shows how much these guys want to be Buckeyes."

10 Years Ago — 2012

Urban Meyer's dominance on the recruiting trail seemed to take a bit of a hiatus during spring, as Ohio State went nearly two months without picking up a verbal commitment in the 2013 class.

Meyer made up for the drought when he secured pledges from three players during the month of June in punter Johnny Townsend of Orlando (Fla.) Boone, athlete Darron Lee of New Albany, Ohio, and defensive tackle Michael Hill of Pendleton, S.C.

The most recent commitment was Hill's, as his pledge to the Buckeyes on June 27 gave the program yet another highly regarded defensive lineman to add to what had already been an impressive haul at that position during recent years.

Five Years Ago — 2017

Despite already holding a four-star ranking before playing his junior season in high school, Lexington, Ohio, defensive end Cade Stover worked out with a different position group at Ohio State's camp.

Stover, who stood at 6-5, 225 pounds, told Ohio State recruiting analyst Bill Greene that the Buckeyes worked him out at linebacker while he attended their camp in mid-June.

"It was great being at Ohio State, and I've been looking to get down there for a long time," Stover said. "Working with (linebackers coach Bill) Davis was amazing, and he really knows his stuff. I think right now Ohio State sees me as a linebacker, but I will probably be a lot heavier when I get to be a senior."

"If I do move to defensive end one day, my speed and quickness will only be even more of an asset. That's why it's very important for me to improve my footwork as much as possible."

One Year Ago — 2021

After well over a year of pursuit and months of whispers about where he might land, Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic five-star defensive lineman J.T. Tuimolalo ended the suspense on July 4 and announced his commitment to Ohio State.

Unable to visit programs during the COVID dead period, Tuimolalo took his recruitment well into extra time to get a chance to take a look at his suitors in person, waiting nearly five months after the February signing day to announce his college destination.

His wait was rewarded in June, when the dead period was finally lifted and he was able to take trips to home-state Washington on June 4, USC on June 14, Ohio State on June 17 and Oregon on June 23 before canceling the planned final visit to Alabama.

ASK AN ANALYST

With Colin Gay of Rivals.com

Ohio State held several recruiting camps throughout June. Who were some prospects who stood out on both sides of the ball?

"The first one that comes to mind is 2024 wide receiver Tyseer Denmark with Philadelphia Roman Catholic. When he was out here, he looked a step ahead of everybody else. He looked a step ahead of every single cornerback that he saw.

"I think that Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy wide receiver Winston Watkins Jr. (5-10, 172), the Texas A&M commit in 2025, looked good as well. He didn't look like a 2025 athlete at all. He was incredibly impressive. I'm not sure where Ohio State's going to stand with him being a Texas A&M commit, but I think he's a target for them moving forward.

"One more on the offensive side of the ball – I'm high on this kid, and I've been high on him for a while, but Colin Hurlley (6-0, 205), the 2025 quarterback out of Trinity Christian Academy in Jacksonville (Fla.), he was spectacular. I saw him back at the Elite 11 in Massillon (Ohio) not too long ago and he looked good there. He looked established, looked like a kid who knew how to play quarterback, but in the month or two leading up to his camp at Ohio State right next to Chandler, Ariz., five-star quarterback Dylan Raiola (6-3, 220), he looked as good if not better than Raiola. He was matching him throw

for throw and then hitting receivers in stride.

"On defense, Loganville (Ga.) Grayson defensive end Tyler Atkinson (6-3, 190). He's going into his freshman year of high school, and he's 6-3, 187 pounds and looks like Chase Young. In talking with him after his camp, he said he watched Chase Young growing up. He said he wanted to be his own player, but kind of a player in the same vein as Chase Young and he has those skills. He was matching Dublin (Ohio) Coffman defensive end Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260) snap for snap. He was matching that 2023 defensive end Jalen Thompson (6-3, 245 out of Michigan) snap for snap, and (Atkinson) is going into his freshman year, which is absolutely insane."

The Buckeyes earned commitments in three consecutive days from Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy five-star wide receiver Carnell Tate (6-2, 185), Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage five-star wide receiver Brandon Inniss (6-0, 190) and Rolesville, N.C., four-star wide receiver Noah Rogers (6-2, 180). What do you make of the run Brian Hartline and Ohio State's recruiting as a whole are on right now?

"Carnell Tate and Brandon Inniss were the two recruits that Ohio State was waiting for. That's the position where they're like, 'OK, that's how Ohio State should recruit. That's

how Ohio State expects to recruit.' Ohio State has had big ones before, but to have a stretch like they did with Tate, Inniss and Rogers in back-to-back-to-back days, I really think that solidifies Ohio State as a power that isn't riding Urban Meyer's coattails anymore but establishes Ryan Day and Brian Hartline themselves as a recruiting power.

"They've done that before, whether it was Emeka Egbuka or J.T. Tuimoloau last year, but these guys (make you realize) Ohio State can go around the country and get whoever they want. They're out-recruiting Florida and Florida State right now for Florida kids. I think that makes a statement, not only for Ohio State as a whole, but the path of Ryan Day as the head coach and the path for Brian Hartline as a wide receiver coach and maybe even pass that wherever he wants to go.

"Brandon Inniss and Carnell Tate made clear that Ohio State is worth traveling across the country to play for, and I think doing that in back-to-back-to-back days makes a statement that Ohio State – you may not be able to see the impact right now – but especially with a future with Dylan Raiola and those two wide receivers, Ohio State is creating something that is incredibly attractive for recruits to say, 'Hey, this is what you would play with. This is what you would play for.' "

named all my guys I wanted, we'd be here all day. In my class, Jeremiah Smith, JoJo Trader, (Bellflower, Calif., five-star safety) Payton Woodyard, (Buford, Ga., five-star athlete) KJ Bolden, just to name a few. Stacy Gage. The list goes on and on, so that's a few."

Recruiting ultimately comes down to the Ohio State staff, but an Ohio State commit like Raiola spreading the gospel about the Buckeyes can't hurt the case with prospects. Furthermore, Raiola views it as a responsibility.

"I take a lot of pride in having the guys around me," he said. "It really falls on me who I want to bring in, so my goal is to bring in the top class in 2024 and maybe even 2023. Get both and try to bring a championship back to Columbus."

Ohio State Issues Offers From Camps

June was a busy month at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center as Ohio State hosted six one-day recruiting camps as well as a high school 7-on-7 tournament for prospects in 2023 and beyond. The staff got the opportunity to evaluate hundreds of prospects throughout the month, and the result was several recruits being offered after working out with the Buckeyes.

Beginning in 2023, the Buckeyes offered Mathews; Dripping Springs, Texas, four-star quarterback Austin Novosad (6-3, 185), who is committed to Baylor but is being courted by Ohio State as the answer at quarterback in the class; and Detroit Cass Technical four-star defensive lineman Jalen Thompson (6-3, 245).

Ohio State also offered several prospects in 2024, including Loganville (Ga.) Grayson four-star athlete Kylan Fox (6-5, 215); New Haven, Ind., wide receiver Mylan Graham (6-0, 170); Stafford (Va.) Mountain View four-star linebacker Kristopher Jones (6-2, 205); Chandler, Ariz., four-star athlete Miles Lockhart (5-10, 185); New Palestine, Ind., four-star offensive lineman Ian Moore (6-5, 295); Cincinnati Taft four-star defensive end Elias Rudolph (6-4, 220); Springfield, Ohio, four-star cornerback Aaron Scott (6-1, 160); and Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star athlete Garrett Stover (6-2, 195).

The Buckeyes offered several intriguing

recruits in the 2025 class, including Woodstock (Ill.) Marian Central Catholic four-star tight end Christian Bentancur (6-5, 240); Jacksonville (Fla.) Mandarin wide receiver Jaime Ffrench (6-0, 165); Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy quarterback Colin Hurlley (6-0, 205); Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph running back Bo Jackson (5-11, 180); Cincinnati Moeller four-star running back Jordan Marshall (5-11, 185); Buford, Ga., linebacker Jadon Perlotte (6-4, 205); and Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy wide receiver Winston Watkins Jr. (5-10, 172), who is committed to Texas A&M.

Ohio State offered just one prospect in 2026 following the recruiting camps: Cincinnati West Clermont wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. (6-3, 170), the son of former Cincinnati Bengals receiver Chris Henry.

Potential Commits In July And August

BSB will not publish again until our annual Football Preview shortly before the season is set to begin. Stay tuned to our website, BuckeyeSports.com, for recruiting updates including the latest commitments for the Buckeyes, but in the meantime, here are some recruits who could decide before the season kicks off.

Starting off with the planned announcements, several Ohio State targets have set commitment dates in July.

Fayetteville (Ga.) Whitewater four-star linebacker Raul Aguirre (6-2, 220) will announce on July 16, Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep four-star safety Jayden Bonsu (6-2, 205) will follow on July 20, and Danvers (Mass.) St. John's Prep five-star safety Joanel Aguero (6-0, 195) will announce on July 23. Kissimmee (Fla.) Osceola four-star defensive lineman John Walker (6-3, 310) will also decide on July 28.

Aguirre is the No. 118 overall prospect and No. 8 linebacker in the class, while Aguero is No. 34 overall and the No. 2 safety. Aguirre has no crystal ball predictions, while Georgia is heavily favored to land Aguero.

Bonsu, meanwhile, is the No. 271 overall prospect and No. 24 safety in the class, and Ohio State is viewed as the leader in his recruitment. Walker is the No. 97 overall prospect and No. 11 defensive lineman, and Ohio

State leads in crystal ball predictions.

Several prospects have also indicated that they plan to decide in the coming weeks but have not set an announcement date. This includes Tampa (Fla.) Jesuit four-star linebacker Troy Bowles (6-1, 205); Many, La., four-star linebacker Tackett Curtis (6-2, 218); Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek five-star safety Caleb Downs (6-0, 185); Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha Catholic four-star defensive lineman Jason Moore (6-6, 255); Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes four-star tight end Jelani Thurman (6-5, 230); and Upper Marlboro (Md.) Charles Herbert Flowers four-star defensive end Desmond Umeozulu (6-6, 239).

Other Notes And Tidbits

• New Orleans (La.) Isidore Newman five-star quarterback Arch Manning (6-4, 215) ended his high-profile recruitment on June 23, committing to play for Texas over his other top schools of Alabama and Georgia. In somewhat of an upset, at least according to some

recruiting experts, the Longhorns secured the services of the No. 1 overall prospect in 2023 with a perfect 1.0000 composite rating.

• A pair of Ohio State defensive line targets – Atlanta (Ga.) Woodward Academy four-star AJ Hoffler (6-4, 240) and Rome, Ga., four-star Stephilyan Green (6-4, 267) – committed to Clemson on June 21 and 22, respectively. Hoffler is the No. 287 overall prospect and No. 39 defensive lineman in 2023, while Green is No. 213 overall and the No. 31 defensive lineman.

• Ohio State issued an offer on June 28 to Saint Louis (Mo.) University tight end Landon Pace (6-2, 200), a 2025 prospect who is the son of legendary Ohio State offensive tackle Orlando Pace. Landon camped with the Buckeyes this summer and holds offers from Connecticut, Missouri and West Virginia.

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers.



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Nine Big Ten Players Taken In 2022 NBA Draft

An NCAA-best nine Big Ten men's basketball players were selected at the 2022 NBA draft in Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 23. Four were taken in the first round, including two top-five picks in Iowa forward Keegan Murray and Purdue guard Jaden Ivey.

BIG TEN NOTES Chase Brown

Murray was the first Big Ten player taken at the NBA draft when the Sacramento Kings chose him with the No. 4 overall pick. He averaged 23.5 points and 8.7 rebounds per game in 2021-22 and won the Karl Malone Award, given to the best power forward in college basketball. Murray also earned first-team All-Big Ten and first-team All-America recognition for his efforts.

"Keegan is a humble and hard worker," said Jeremy Rickertsen, Murray's high school basketball coach. "He wants to win in basketball and everything he does. That includes his life and being a family person. He's just a quality individual. He will represent the city and team in a positive light in all aspects."

Ivey was taken immediately after Murray with the No. 5 overall pick to the Detroit Pistons. He averaged 17.3 points and 4.3 re-

bounds in 36 games for the Boilermakers in 2021-22. After the season, Ivey was awarded first-team All-Big Ten and second-team All-America awards.

When the Pistons chose Ivey, the former Purdue star couldn't withhold his emotions. His eyes filled with tears as NBA commissioner Adam Silver formally announced Detroit's selection. Ivey wrapped his arms around his mother, Niele, in a long embrace before heading to the stage.

"This is everything. I worked day in and day out to get to this level," Ivey said after the pick, his mom still by his side. "I know I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for (my mom). I'm just so happy. I'm just so happy."

Ivey has plenty of connections to the Motor City. Niele, the current women's basketball coach at Notre Dame, played one season with the WNBA's Detroit Shock in 2005. His father, Javin Hunter, was born in Detroit and was a star wide receiver for the Fighting Irish, while his late grandfather, James Hunter, started 77 games at defensive back for the Detroit Lions from 1976-82.

"I'm speechless," Niele said. "This is his dream come true. To be in Detroit, we have amazing roots in Detroit. For him to walk on that stage, I'm just so joyful. I'm so happy for him."

Wisconsin guard Johnny Davis, the 2022 Big Ten Player of the Year, was the next player taken from the conference when the Washington Wizards selected him with the No. 10 overall pick. He averaged 19.7 points

and 8.2 rebounds for the Badgers in 2021-22, earning first-team All-Big Ten and first-team All-America honors. Davis was also selected for the Jerry West Award, given to the best shooting guard in college basketball, and the Lute Olson Award, given to the most outstanding player in the NCAA.

The Big Ten's final first-round selection was Ohio State guard Malaki Branham, whom the San Antonio Spurs chose with the No. 20 overall pick. Forward E.J. Liddell was taken in the second round by the New Orleans Pelicans with the No. 41 overall pick. This edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin covers their draft process in Court Report on page 36.

Additionally, four other Big Ten players were selected: Michigan freshman guard Caleb Houstan (No. 32 overall, Orlando Magic), Michigan State guard Max Christie (No. 35 overall, Los Angeles Lakers), Nebraska forward Bryce McGowens (No. 40 overall, Minnesota Timberwolves) and Michigan forward Moussa Diabaté (No. 43 overall, Los Angeles Clippers).

With the four first-round selections, the Big Ten has had at least three opening-round picks in six of the last 10 drafts. The conference also extended its streak with at least one first-round selection to 47 years, dating back to the 1976 NBA draft.

Former Purdue Star Swanigan Dead At 25

Caleb Swanigan, a former Purdue stand-

out who played in the NBA, died on June 20 at the age of 25, according to the Allen County (Ind.) Coroner's Office.

Swanigan was the 2017 Big Ten Player of the Year and a consensus first-team All-American following a season in which he averaged 18.5 points, 12.5 rebounds and 3.1 assists for a Purdue team that went 27-8 and reached the Sweet 16.

The former McDonald's All-American out of Homestead High School in Indiana was the Portland Trailblazers' first-round pick in the 2017 NBA draft. The 6-9 forward spent time in the G-League – the NBA's developmental league – in 2018-19 and 2019-20 before making his way back to the pros to play 10 games with the Sacramento Kings. He finished his career with the Trailblazers.

Swanigan battled with his weight, which eventually led him to leave professional basketball. He pursued a career in rap music after that, taking on the nickname "Biggie."

"The Purdue basketball family is deeply saddened and devastated at the loss of Caleb Swanigan," Purdue coach Matt Painter said. "Caleb was a very thoughtful individual and a gentle soul who excelled both on and off the court. He made a huge difference in every one of the lives that he touched, and he will be greatly missed."

Swanigan died of natural causes, according to the coroner's office. Swanigan was open about his unstable family situation growing up that led to five separate stints in

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago — 1982

Vic Langley, a wide receiver, and Joe Apke, who had played a couple of positions on the offensive line, told The Columbus Dispatch that they were quitting the Ohio State football team and hoped to transfer to another school where they could continue their careers.

Langley, a sophomore the previous season who saw considerable action as a flanker and some as a running back, may have turned his interests to baseball, having been drafted after his senior high school season by the Philadelphia Phillies. He said he was disenchanted at his lack of playing time behind Cedric Anderson.

Apke, an All-American in high school at Cincinnati Moeller, was originally a center. After not being able to add to his 218-pound frame as a freshman, he was redshirted in 1981 and switched to tight end that spring, where he was still having problems moving up the depth chart.

35 Years Ago — 1987

Dennis Hopson breathed a big sigh of relief. The future had finally become the present.

The queasiness and uneasiness that had agonized him as the annual National Basketball Association draft approached became merely memories when it was over. The Buckeyes' leading scorer and the Big Ten's Most Valuable Player in 1986-87 had been the third player picked, going to the New Jersey Nets.

"I'm glad it's over," said Hopson, three days after becoming the fifth Buckeye to be drafted in the first round in the past eight years.

"It didn't really hit me as far as the draft goes until like Sunday night," said Hopson, who was on hand at the Felt Forum in Madison Square Garden for the draft. "It really bothered me a lot that night. Then on Monday, the day of the draft, we got there like an hour before it started and I was really scared. I was nervous."

30 Years Ago — 1992

John Cooper's assistant coaching staff at Ohio State was beginning to have a distinctly Ohio high school flavor to it.

A year previous, Cooper raided the state's prep coaching ranks to hire Dublin head coach Bill Conley as his recruiting coordinator. Earlier in 1992, he added Massillon head coach Lee Owens to his staff as tackles and tight ends coach.

Then, in the wake of Larry Marmie's resignation to become defensive coordinator at Tennessee, Cooper had installed Conley at Marmie's spot as outside linebackers coach and was expected to hire former Newark Catholic head coach J.D. Graham to replace Conley as recruiting coordinator.

"This is a good opportunity for me," Conley told BSB. "I have enjoyed being recruiting coordinator, but it's always been in the back of my mind to get back on the field. I love working with kids, and that is where I would like to be."

25 Years Ago — 1997

How was Ohio State doing in regard to gender equity? It depended on whom you talked to, whose numbers you chose to use and what year you were talking about.

However you looked at it, OSU athletic director Andy Geiger – stung by bad publicity on the subject as a co-defendant in a pair of pending sexual discrimination lawsuits filed by former OSU coaches – vowed that the university was headed in the right direction.

"We're heading toward gender equity, and equity isn't half or three quarters," Geiger said. "Equity is equity. We want gender equity in terms of compliance with Title IX and in terms of women in the workplace."

20 Years Ago — 2002

A lot had happened in the 80 years since Ohio Stadium opened for business. But the venerable Horseshoe on the Olentangy had never before welcomed a sitting president of the United States to speak at OSU's commencement exercises.

That changed on June 14 when President George W. Bush addressed the school's spring quarter graduates as well as their friends and family and OSU faculty and staff.

"Congratulations to the mighty class of 2002," Bush said. "You've earned a degree at a great American university and have every right to be proud."

15 Years Ago — 2007

Few were surprised to see Ohio State freshmen Greg Oden and Mike Conley Jr. go in the top four of the recent NBA draft. Teammate Daquan Cook's inclusion in the first round wasn't all that stunning either – at least in Cook's hometown of Dayton.

While their draft showing was landmark – Oden became the first Buckeye and college freshman ever taken No. 1 overall – while Conley going No. 4 marked the first time OSU boasted a pair of top-five picks on the same night, it's possible none of it would have happened if not for Conley's breakout performance in the NCAA Tournament. With him at the top of his game and Oden working through a recovering right wrist, OSU stormed all the way to a thrilling 35-4 season, Big Ten regular-season and postseason titles and a Final Four appearance.

Oden had been touted as a top pick for a couple of years but said he was still excited to hear his name called first overall.

"I know a lot of people talked to me about it, said that whenever you leave, you'll be No. 1," Oden said. "But I knew that I wanted to go to college and I wanted to be ready when I left."

"I think the next level is going to be really difficult, but I think as long as I improve and just keep working hard, I can play pretty well."

10 Years Ago — 2012

Arrests for minor offenses led to two Ohio State football players having their scholarships revoked for the summer.

Urban Meyer had issued suspensions of indefinite length to Jake Stoneburner and Jack Mewhort, expected starters at tight end and left tackle, respectively, but the punishment took more shape after the players' legal situations were cleared up.

The players and a third man not affiliated with the football program were arrested the morning of June 2 after being observed by police urinating in public in Shawnee Hills, a Columbus suburb that becomes a hotspot each year when the Memorial Tournament golf event is held in nearby Dublin.

Police also alleged the three ran when confronted by the authorities, and the players were suspended from team activities two days later.

Five Years Ago — 2017

Shortly after Thad Matta was relieved of his duties as the head coach of the Ohio State men's basketball team on June 5, rumors began to swirl as to who would be Matta's replacement. A name that was mentioned early and often was Chris Holtmann.

Holtmann had spent the previous three seasons coaching at Butler, posting a 70-31 (.693) record. The 2017 Big East Coach of the Year guided the Bulldogs to the NCAA Tournament all three years as well, falling to eventual national champion North Carolina in the Sweet 16 the past spring.

Holtmann officially became the 14th head coach in program history on June 9.

"I think one of the reasons you come to a place like this is because you understand that expectations come with it, and we're certainly not going to shy away from that," Holtmann said. "We understand we have some work ahead of us. I think our guys are excited about that, I'm really excited about that, but this is a proud program that is used to competing for championships. It's used to competing in the NCAA Tournament. And we're going to work diligently to make that happen."

One Year Ago — 2021

On June 28 at the Statehouse, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine – flanked by Lt. Governor Jon Husted, state Sen. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg), former Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith and Ohio State president Kristina Johnson – officially signed an executive order allowing student-athletes in the state of Ohio to profit from their name, image and likeness rights.

"We want the best talent to know that they can succeed and prosper in Ohio and that we are committed to those athletes," Husted said. "Across the country, it is emerging that there's a lot of bipartisan support for this kind of action, and as amateur sports – particularly NCAA sports – are changing, we in Ohio are going to change right along with it to make sure our universities and athletes can succeed."

homeless shelters as he fluctuated between living in Indiana and Utah, where his mother lived.

Former Purdue star Roosevelt Barnes coached Swanigan in grassroots basketball. After learning of Swanigan's home life, Barnes took him into his home and became a legal guardian. Barnes later adopted Swanigan, which led Swanigan down a path to basketball and turned him into one of the best high school prospects in the country, eventually leading to his place on the Boilermakers men's team.

Stevenson, Rettke Take Home Big Ten Honors

Minnesota wrestling heavyweight Gable Stevenson and Wisconsin volleyball standout Dana Rettke received the Big Ten Male and Female Athletes of the Year awards for 2022, the conference announced on June 29.

Stevenson became the fifth Golden Gopher student-athlete to earn the Big Ten Jesse Owens Male Athlete of the Year honors and the first since wrestler Cole Konrad claimed the trophy in 2007. Previous Minnesota winners include wrestler Damion Hahn (2004), ice hockey's Jordan Leopold (2002) and gymnastics' John Roethlisberger (1993).

After winning a gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, Stevenson posted his third consecutive undefeated season in 2021-22, capping off his historic year with his second NCAA championship and third Big Ten title. The Apple Valley, Minn., native won 18 matches, with 15 of those victories bringing his team bonus points.

Stevenson captured his second straight Dan Hodge Trophy – awarded to the most dominant collegiate wrestler – for his performances. He ended his Minnesota career on a 52-match win streak, the fourth-longest streak in program history.

Rettke earned her second Big Ten Female Athlete of the Year nod in 2022, having previously won in 2020. She became the first student-athlete in the conference's history to win the award in non-consecutive years and the first two-

time recipient since Indiana swimmer Lily King accomplished that feat in 2016-17 and 2017-2018.

A 6-8 middle blocker, Rettke's win is the fifth time a volleyball player captured the Big Ten Female Athlete of the Year prize. Along with Rettke's two honors, Penn State's Megan Hodge (2010) and Lauren Cacciamani (2000) and Ohio State's Laura Davis (1995) also won the award during their collegiate careers.

Rettke's selection represents the eighth time a Badger has won the award. Other honorees were cross country and track and field runners Kathy Butler (1997), Suzy Favor (1987, 1988 and 1990), Stephanie Herbst (1986) and Cathy Branta (1985).

In 2021, the Riverside, Ill., native ranked sixth nationally with a .430 hitting percentage and led the Badgers with 3.41 kills per set and 1.43 blocks per set, which ranked fifth in the NCAA. She was named the 2021 American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) National Player of the Year and a first-team All-American.

Rettke's career numbers include Wisconsin records for hitting percentage (.422), blocks (751) and points (2,333). She finished her five years as a Badger with five first-team All-American awards, five first-team All-Big Ten honors and a school-record 11 Big Ten Player of the Week awards.

Stevenson and Rettke were picked among a highly-talented group of finalists of one male and one female from each school in the conference. The list featured eight national champions, 28 All-Americans, 18 Big Ten champions, 15 Big Ten Player of the Year winners and eight standouts who collected at least one national Player of the Year accolade.

ACC/Big Ten Challenge Schedule Announced For 2022

The 2022 ACC/Big Ten Challenge matchups are set, with games between the 14 member schools of each conference taking place from Nov. 28-30. This year's challenge features 13 teams that qualified for the 2022 NCAA Tournament, with nine

coming from the Big Ten and four from the ACC.

According to ESPN's early preseason top-25 rankings, the 2022 challenge will feature six ranked teams, including No. 1 North Carolina, No. 9 Duke, No. 14 Indiana, No. 20 Michigan, No. 21 Virginia and No. 25 Illinois.

Last season, the Big Ten won the challenge by claiming an 8-6 record, marking the third consecutive year the conference claimed more victories in the 14-game event. However, the ACC leads the all-time series 12-8-3.

The 2022 challenge features two rematches from 2021, with Purdue traveling to Florida State and Ohio State playing at Duke. The Boilermakers stomped the Seminoles, 93-65, while the Buckeyes defeated the top-ranked Blue Devils, 71-66.

Other matchups include Minnesota at Virginia Tech, Pittsburgh at Northwestern, Syracuse at Illinois, Maryland at Louisville, Penn State at Clemson, Virginia at Michigan, Wake Forest at Wisconsin, Georgia Tech at Iowa, Rutgers at Miami, North Carolina at Indiana, Michigan State at Notre Dame and Boston College at Nebraska.

Big Ten Hosts Leadership Summit Celebrating Title IX

The Big Ten hosted its inaugural Women's Leadership Summit in Rosemont, Ill., at the conference's headquarters on June 23, inviting administrators, coaches and student-athletes from all 14 member institutions to a two-day summit commemorating the 50th anniversary of Title IX.

Title IX exists within the Education Amendments of 1972 and prohibits discrimination in any education program based on sex (gender). Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren kicked off the conference's event with an opening statement, speaking about the importance of the groundbreaking amendment for the conference.

"The Big Ten Conference Women's Leadership Summit brings together some of the most exceptional women in collegiate athletics and underscores the mission of the Big Ten to elevate women's sports,"

Warren said. "This event is a celebration of the 50th anniversary of Title IX and a reflection of our unwavering commitment to delivering transformational educational experiences and growth opportunities to our student-athletes."

The summit featured guest speakers such as former Big Ten deputy commissioner Diane Dietz, four-time Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersey, 2019 FIFA World Cup champion Tierna Davidson, ESPN broadcaster Sage Steele and Big Ten Network broadcasters Lisa Byington, Emily Ehman and Meghan McKeown.

U.S. Tennis Association CEO Katrina Adams, Chicago Bulls director of performance and mental health Wendy Boriabi, Tampa Bay Buccaneers assistant defensive line coach Lori Locust and Washington Commanders assistant running backs coach Jennifer King also spoke at the event.

Several Big Ten institutions started a year-long celebration of Title IX on June 23. One way the member schools will celebrate is through marketing campaigns for each athletic program that honors the achievements of female athletes at the universities.


Football Media Days Set For Late July

The Big Ten has announced that the conference will hold its 50th annual media days at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on July 26-27.

Coaches and players from Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota and Northwestern will conduct in-person interviews during the first day, while Illinois, Michigan State, Ohio State, Penn State, Purdue, Rutgers and Wisconsin will have their sessions on the second day.

The two-day press event was previously held in Chicago. However, the Big Ten moved the media days ahead of the 2021 season because of COVID-19 restrictions in that city.

Indianapolis has been the site of football's Big Ten Championship Game since 2011 and hosted men's basketball and women's basketball media days last fall.



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Liddell Lands With Pelicans After Draft Slide

It was an unexpectedly long draft night for E.J. Liddell.

Touted as a likely first-round pick in the 2022 NBA draft, Liddell saw himself fall out of the top 30 selections, and he was ultimately taken with the No. 41 pick to the New Orleans Pelicans in the second round on June 23.

COURT REPORT Jack Emerson

ESPN's pre-draft mock pegged him as the No. 24 selection to the Milwaukee Bucks, while The Ringer and The Athletic predicted he could go as high as No. 18 to the Chicago Bulls. Although Liddell was a standout at Ohio State, averaging a team-best 19.4 points per game as a junior and collecting All-Big Ten first-team honors in his sophomore and junior seasons, he endured arguably the most glaring slide in the draft.

Much has been made about Liddell's slide, and he said he has something to prove in his jump to the NBA.

"This is not anything new," Liddell told reporters at his draft party on June 23. "I've been proving people wrong my whole entire life, and I'm going to keep doing that until the day I'm gone."

While Liddell will get his chance to make an impact in the NBA this season, his fall was one of the major stories on draft night, which begs the question of why Liddell saw his stock fall.

Bucknuts reporter and BSB alum Steve Helwage said he was surprised to see Liddell fall into the second round but noted that there wasn't much buzz surrounding Liddell during the draft process.

"It did not make sense to me," Helwage said. "One, because he's a very solid person. There's no off-the-court issues with him. Coach (Chris) Holtmann swore by him as a guy who worked really hard and he improved every year. And he had a really good year this past year, I

thought, on the whole. If there were reasons that the NBA had some reservations about him, I would say his turnovers, at times, they were a little bit troubling, and his ball-handling. If he's going to be a three in the NBA, you have to be able to handle the ball."

One of the more prevalent theories for his fall to the second-round lies in his fit on an NBA court. Standing at 6-7 and weighing in at 243 pounds, Liddell primarily played the four and even mixed in as the small-ball five during his three-year college career. While Liddell saw increasing success each season in this role, he is still undersized compared to the average NBA power forward or center.

Although Liddell carries that undersized label heading into his pro career, shorter big men have created a niche for themselves at the professional level in recent years. The most notable example of this might be Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green, who has picked up seven NBA all-defensive team nods and the 2017 NBA Defensive Player of the Year while playing a major role in Golden State's four championships during its dynasty run.

Green's excellence has created a new mold of big men, at all levels, defined by shorter but stockier builds, seen in the Boston Celtics' Grant Williams, Miami Heat's P.J. Tucker and Utah Jazz's Eric Paschall, who have all followed that mold to successful NBA careers to this point.

Liddell is another player who fits the mold of Green, carrying the defensive ability and build to defend guards, wings and, in some cases, centers. Liddell is known to have prowess in the defensive rotation, leading the Big Ten in blocks last season with 2.5 per game.

Liddell also brings a polished offensive game to New Orleans. He can effectively score at all three levels, boasting a strong post game while also showing strides as a ball-handler and playmaker in his junior season. He displayed a heightened ability to pass out of double-teams in 2021-22, increasing his total assist output from 52 as a sophomore to 80 in his final season with the Buckeyes. During his three-year Ohio State career, Liddell posted shooting splits of 48.0 percent from the field and 34.1 percent from three-point range.

Along these lines, Liddell said he did everything he could to improve his stock ahead of the draft. After entering the 2021 NBA draft following his sophomore season while maintaining his eligibility, he returned to Ohio State with feedback from NBA scouts and executives and worked to make his game more translatable to the league. As a junior, he transitioned from primarily playing with his back to the basket to a player who could space the floor and make plays when called upon.

Despite his efforts during his junior season, Liddell will enter the league as a second-round selection, and Helwage emphasized that it will be an uphill climb for the former Buckeye to carve out playing time at the next level.

"But if he does make the team, I would think he has a chance to be maybe an eight, nine, 10-type guy in rotation and come off the bench and provide scoring and rebounding and go from there," he said. "I don't think he'll be a low-post player or anything like that, but to me, he has a chance to go in there and help them."

Another potential factor for Liddell's slide is his age and perceived ceiling at the NBA level. He will join the Pelicans at 21 years old and already more developed than a good deal of his fellow

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2023 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the 247Sports composite rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
George Washington III	SG	6-2	165	★★★★	Dayton Chaminade Julianne
Austin Parks	C	6-9	240	★★★★	Saint Mary's (Ohio) Memorial

rookies. Focusing on Liddell's age, Helwage pointed to his "consistent track record of being dependable" for the Buckeyes.

The league's tendency to draft younger prospects is not an overly new development for the NBA, and several other multi-year Big Ten stars have seen their draft stock dwindle due to their age and number of seasons played at the college level.

In last season's draft, Big Ten stars such as 2020-21 Wooden Award winner Luka Garza, who was 22 years old when he was drafted, and Illinois guard Ayo Dosunmu, who was 21 when the Bulls selected him, both fell to the second round despite their bright college careers.

With Liddell approaching the next step in his basketball career, Helwage emphasized that he believes that Liddell can make an impact on an NBA roster sooner rather than later.

"E.J., to me, is a proven commodity," Helwage said. "Is he the next all-star player in the NBA? No, I don't think so, but I think he's going to be pretty solid. I think he can be a 10 (points) and six (rebounds) or 12 (points) and seven (rebounds) type guy, and those guys make a lot of money."

As Liddell's professional career officially began on June 23, he called his disappointing draft night a humbling experience but something that will motivate him during his NBA career.

"I felt like I worked my hardest to get better this past year," Liddell said. "It's not about where you start, it's about where you finish, and I've always started from the bottom, so it's nothing new, nothing new at all."

Branham To Begin Pro Career With Spurs

Flanked by family members in the Barclays Center green room, former Ohio State guard Malaki Branham's childhood dream came true.

Branham's NBA dreams were realized when league commissioner Adam Silver called his name as the No. 20 overall selection, a pick that belonged to the San Antonio Spurs. As he walked across the stage, Branham said his focus was on soaking the experience in.

"It felt like I was just trying to take it all in, just trying to embrace the moment and have fun with it," Branham said at his introductory press conference on June 26. "My dream came true that night. And there was just a lot going on, but I was just happy and super excited."

Now a 19-year-old NBA rookie, Branham joins one of the most storied franchises in NBA history and will get the opportunity to play for five-time championship winning head coach Gregg Popovich.

The Spurs are also a special organization to one of his family members. Branham's uncle Lawrence is a San Antonio fan, and the former Buckeye guard even recalled times when his uncle would scream at the TV while the Spurs were competing with the Miami Heat for the NBA title in 2013 and 2014.

However, San Antonio is a far cry from its

contending years and is now embracing a youth movement under the legendary Popovich. The Spurs have failed to reach the postseason since the organization's NBA-record 22-year playoff appearance streak was snapped in 2020. In this draft class, the Spurs selected three 19-year-olds – Baylor's Jeremy Sochan, Notre Dame's Blake Wesley and Branham – to join a roster that held an average age of 24.1 years old at the end of the 2021-22 season.

Although Branham joins a clear rebuilding situation with the Spurs, Helwage emphasized the stability of the organization as a positive for him in his jump to the NBA.

"He's going into a stable situation," Helwage said. "For a kid who's only 19 years old, the world is his oyster right now. And he's a hardworking guy."

Branham's journey to the NBA was unconventional by recent Ohio State standards. Despite a slow start to his freshman campaign, he became the first Buckeye to go one-and-done since D'Angelo Russell in 2014. The 6-4 shooting guard averaged 6.3 points per game on 38.8 percent shooting during Ohio State's first 10 games of the season before the team's three-week long COVID-related pause during December.

During that time, Branham was a fixture at the Schottenstein Center practice gym, waking up as early as 5:00 a.m. with the commitment to turn his season around.

"I felt like my mind-set just changed," he said. "I wanted to be aggressive, wanted to help the team win. I felt like I did that the second half of the season."

His work during the break paid off immediately when Branham burned Nebraska for a career-best 35 points, lifting the Buckeyes to an 87-79 overtime win on Jan. 2. From there, Branham hit his stride, averaging 17.0 points per game on 52.8 percent shooting from the field and 43.2 percent from three during Ohio State's final 22 games of the season, eventually earning Big Ten Freshman of the Year and All-Big Ten third-team honors.

Although Ohio State was unable to escape the first weekend of the NCAA Tournament, Branham still showed his prowess. He started the weekend by scoring 14 points on 5-of-7 shooting in a 54-41 win over 10th-seeded Loyola Chicago in the first round. In the Buckeyes' season-ending loss to No. 2 Villanova, Branham led all scorers with 23 points on 10-of-19 shooting from the field.

During the draft process, Helwage said there was a significant amount of excitement surrounding Branham, who saw his draft stock rise as high as a potential lottery selection.

"There was always a lot of buzz coming out of his workout," Helwage said. "He was sticking shots and doing everything that NBA teams wanted him to do."

With his college career behind him, Branham is ready to sport the silver and black and help the Spurs return to the top of the NBA food chain.

"I'm just anxious to get on the court," he said.

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

Schedule Set For Upcoming Season

Ohio State has finalized its schedule for the upcoming season. It contains a mix of marquee matchups, buy games and a difficult conference slate.

Holtmann's squad will start its season with an exhibition game against Chaminade, a Division II school that hosts the Maui Invitational, on Nov. 1.

To kick off the regular season, Ohio State will battle Robert Morris on Nov. 7, Charleston Southern on Nov. 10 and Eastern Illinois on Nov. 16 before traveling to Hawaii for the Maui Invitational from Nov. 21-23. The Buckeyes will face a tall task in Hawaii as the invitational features a strong field this season, with programs such as Arizona, Arkansas, Creighton, San Diego State and Texas Tech – all teams that made last year's NCAA Tournament – in their way. Cincinnati and Louisville round out the field in Maui.

One week after returning to Columbus, the Buckeyes will head to Cameron Indoor Stadium to take on Duke in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge on Nov. 30. The nonconference slate closes with matchups against St. Francis on Dec. 3, the CBS Sports Classic against North Carolina on Dec. 17 in New York City, Maine on Dec. 21 and Alabama A&M on Dec. 29.

Following their nonconference run, the Buckeyes will begin their conference slate of games.

Ohio State's home-and-away opponents include Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan State, Northwestern, Purdue and Rutgers. These teams combined for a 149-88 record last season with a 78-62 clip in conference play.

The Buckeyes' home-only opponents are Minnesota, Penn State and Wisconsin, while Ohio State will go on the road to face Indiana, Michigan and Nebraska.

OSU In Good Spot With 2023, 2024 Recruits

After securing a top-10 recruiting class in 2022 and the commitments of four-stars George Washington III and Austin Parks in the class of 2023, Holtmann is looking to continue to bolster his roster in the classes of 2023 and 2024.

Ohio State is still looking to add a forward in the 2023 class and remain locked in on Wichita (Kan.) Sunrise Christian four-star small forward Scotty Middleton (6-6, 180), Columbus Africentric Early College four-star small forward Dailyn Swain (6-6, 170) and Pickerington (Ohio) Central four-star small forward Devin Royal (6-6, 210).

The Buckeyes have also set an official visit date with Indianapolis Cathedral four-star power forward Xavier Booker (6-10, 205), who told On3 Sports that he will visit Columbus on Sept. 3. Booker went on to say he has "a great relationship with the coaches" and he likes what Ohio State does in terms of play style.

Shifting gears to 2024, Ohio State has offered 10 recruits in the class to this point. However, only two of the Buckeyes' offers have been to in-state recruits: Dayton Centerville shooting guard Jonathan Powell (6-4, 170) and Cincinnati Walnut Hills four-star power forward Tyler McKinley (6-8, 210).

The Buckeyes have also placed an offer to Phoenix Hillcrest Prep five-star small forward Jason Asemota (6-7, 190). Asemota is the No. 6 small forward and No. 2 recruit out of Arizona in the class.

For more on Ohio State men's basketball recruiting, check out the full story on

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2022 FOOTBALL

Sept. 3 NOTRE DAME, 7:30 p.m.; **10** ARKANSAS STATE, noon; **17** TOLEDO, 7 p.m.; **24** WISCONSIN.

Oct. 1 RUTGERS, 3:30 p.m.; **8** at Michigan State; **22** IOWA; **29** at Penn State.

Nov. 5 at Northwestern; **12** INDIANA; **19** at Maryland; **26** MICHIGAN, noon.

MEN'S SOCCER

Aug. 12 OHIO DOMINICAN, 7 p.m.; **16** Oakland, 7 p.m.; **20** CHARLESTON, 7 p.m.; **25** SOUTH CAROLINA, 7 p.m.; **28** CAL POLY, 6 p.m.

Sept. 1 Bowling Green, 7 p.m. **5** WRIGHT STATE, 7 p.m.; **9** BUTLER, 7 p.m.; **13** Akron; **18** INDIANA, 2 p.m.; **21** Cleveland State, 7 p.m.; **25** Maryland; **30** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.

Oct. 5 NORTHERN KENTUCKY 7 p.m.; **11** Michigan; **16** NORTHWESTERN, 2 p.m.; **21** Penn State; **25** MICHIGAN STATE 7

p.m.; **30** Wisconsin.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Aug. 8 NC State (Exh.), 7 p.m.; **11** UNC Wilmington (Exh.); **18** Kansas, 8 p.m.; **21** Missouri; **26** BYU, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 1 Dayton; **4** TEXAS A&M, noon; **8** Brown; **11** KENT STATE; **18** Rutgers, 1 p.m.; **22** Michigan, 7 p.m.; **25** IOWA, noon; **29** Indiana, 7 p.m.

Oct. 2 PENN STATE, noon; **8** Nebraska; **13** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **16** Illinois; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, 7 p.m.; **23** NORTHWESTERN, noon.

WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY

Aug. 17 OHIO, 3 p.m.; **21** MICHIGAN, 1 p.m.; **26** Northeastern 3 p.m.; **28** Albany 1 p.m.

Sept. 4 LEHIGH, 1 p.m.; **11** Miami (Ohio), 1 p.m.; **16** MARYLAND, 3 p.m.; **18** WAKE FOREST, 1 p.m.; **23** Rutgers, 3 p.m.; **25** Penn State, noon; **30** MICHIGAN STATE, 4 p.m.

Oct. 2 KENT STATE 1 p.m.; **7** CENTRAL MICHIGAN, 3 p.m.; **9** Ohio, 1 p.m.; **14** IOWA, 3 p.m.; **16** NORTHWESTERN, noon; **21** Indiana, 3 p.m.; **23** Bellarmine, 1 p.m.; **28** Michigan, 6 p.m.; **30** BALL STATE, 1 p.m.

Nov. 3 Big Ten Tournament; **4** Big Ten Tournament; **6** Big Ten Tournament.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Aug. 26-27 TEXAS, 7 p.m.

Sept. 3 San Diego; **4** Louisville; **9**, BYU; **11** Georgia Tech; **17** Tennessee 5 p.m.; **18** Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.; **23** Iowa; **24** Nebraska; **28** Michigan.

Oct. 1 Indiana; **7** PENN STATE; **9** NORTHWESTERN; **12** Minnesota; **15** RUTGERS; **19** ILLINOIS; **21** IOWA; **26** MICHIGAN; **29** Penn State.

Nov. 4 Northwestern; **5** Michigan State; **11** Purdue; **13** NEBRASKA; **18** Maryland; **20** INDIANA; **25** MINNESOTA; **26** WISCONSIN.



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Stroud Carving A Path Toward Legendary Status

All of Buckeye Nation – and even many outside that perimeter – knows about C.J. Stroud and his mammoth talent, so it shouldn't be surprising for anyone to realize that he stands on the brink of something truly special.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

His rocky 2021 start has been all but forgotten, replaced by images of him firing deep downfield passes to Chris Olave and bullet crossing routes to Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba as Ohio State became an offensive juggernaut, one of the most feared attacks in all of college football.

To his credit, 2021 is in the memory books. Stroud is only focused on 2022, and those who saw him in spring drills believe that history could be ready to happen.

New defensive coordinator Jim Knowles was not only trying to see what he had on his side of the ball this spring, he was trying to come up with ways to confuse and confound Stroud. Whether it was pre-snap movement or changing from man to zone at the last second, Knowles threw the kitchen sink at the third-year sophomore. And Stroud answered every challenge.

"I remember when I was at Ole Miss with Eli Manning (in 2003)," said Knowles, who was linebackers coach for the Rebels that season. "He was the same way in that guys that are good – and C.J. is – they can diagnose."

Stroud has in one season already shown that he is one of the most talented throwers of the pigskin in Ohio State history. He led the nation in total quarterback rating and showed that no throw was beyond his ability. There's already talk of him being the first quarterback off the board in the 2023 NFL draft, so it's become quite clear that talent isn't a question.

His place in history is, however. At least at this moment.

Stroud was a finalist for last year's Heisman Trophy, which was won by Alabama's Bryce Young, and Stroud is the betting favorite to take home the award this season. That would cement him in OSU lore as an all-time great, but one thing would boost him to heights very few ever reach – a national championship.

Troy Smith was the last Buckeye Heisman winner and is still looked back upon with reverence for what he achieved in that 2006 season. Yet the affection he gets seems to pale in comparison to that felt for Cardale Jones, who piloted OSU to its last national title in the 2014 season. Jones is a legend because he helped Ohio State scale that mountain, the one where every team starts at the bottom and tries to climb. But only one can do it.

So while a Heisman would be a cool achievement for Stroud, you can bet that he and Buckeye Nation would much rather have the team kudos.

"I think he's got a much higher ceiling than you've seen," offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson said. "I think he's unbelievably good. There's a high ceiling to be a special player."

And there's a difference – albeit small – between being a special player and a legend. Whether or not Stroud makes that extra step bears watching.

"I think C.J. has been very consistent," OSU head coach Ryan Day said after the spring game. "He's very competitive, and I think one of the things that he's done a really good job of recently is taking what the defense gives you. Jim does a really good job of changing up looks, and there's just times where he's going to drop eight and say, 'You have to check the ball down.' And as a quarterback, especially somebody who's as competitive as C.J., he has to force himself to say, 'OK, I have to take what the defense gives me, take the checkdown, take 5 or 6 yards and move on.'"

"I think he's learning to do that. And I think that's been great, his leadership's been excellent. I think he's had a very, very good spring."

If Stroud can have a very, very good 2022 campaign, he could very well join that exclusive group of quarterbacks who have a national title ring.

That more than anything – even a Heisman Trophy – will cement his place in OSU lore.

Landscape Changing, And Not For The Better

Noted philosopher James Paul McCartney once wrote, "but if this ever-changing world in which we're living makes you give in and cry ... " He was talking about James Bond at the time but could easily have been prescient and noting the tumult that would come to the Big Ten, circa June 2022.

The announcement that USC and UCLA would join the conference beginning in 2024 sent shockwaves through the collegiate sports world, similar to what happened when Texas and Oklahoma made a similar play in deciding to bolt from the Big 12 for the greener pastures of the SEC. Both moves were seismic and signal the continuing decline of college football as we know and love it, having widespread ramifications not just for the new leagues housing these teams, but for their old residences as well.

When Texas and Oklahoma decided to leave, the Big 12 all but died. Sure, it's still there in name and will welcome in new members BYU, Cincinnati, Houston and UCF in 2023, but its stature as a major Power Five conference took a severe hit. At the same time, the profile of the SEC grew even larger. Everyone knows that Alabama is the king of college football, though Georgia knocked the Crimson Tide off the throne last January. It was the 12th national title since 2006 for the league, the third straight and fourth in five years, leaving no doubt about the dominance of the conference.

It made perfect sense for the SEC to take on the two newcomers – both added prestige and brand recognition, but the move also prevented another league – possibly the Big Ten – from poaching for its own gain and challenging the SEC supremacy. It was a strange move from the standpoint of the Longhorns and Sooners, though – why take on a tougher path to the College Football Playoff when you were easily the two biggest names in your league? The proverbial big fish in a small pond is now

a minnow in the SEC ocean, and it probably won't end well for either in terms of championships or relevance.

That's opposite of this Big Ten move by the West Coast brands. It is completely understandable why the school would do it – the Pac-12 was a rudderless ship, in a sort of limbo with an uncertain television deal and less than desirable start times. While I may love Pac-12 After Dark on a Friday evening, not everyone else does. So why not go where there is notoriety and visibility and passion? And most importantly, money? Because that's what this all comes down to, right? It's always about the money.

Which leads to an interesting question – if I'm Ohio State or Michigan or Penn State, why do I want to have two more teams with their fingers in my pie? The league TV deal is set to expire in 2023, and reports have the new one rumored at well above \$1 billion, and those reports were before the addition of USC and UCLA.

That means roughly \$71 million per school with the current 14 teams, but it would be just \$62.5 million with the addition of USC and UCLA. That's certainly nothing to sneeze at, but if I'm one of the flagship schools, I'm thinking long and hard before agreeing to give up that much money. It's even stranger when you consider how much extra will be needed for travel.

The distance from Gainesville, Fla. (Florida Gators, the SEC's southernmost school) to Norman, Okla. (its westernmost) is just a shade under 1,200 miles. That's the longest trip in the conference. But that's nothing compared to the journey from Picataway, N.J., to Los Angeles – over 2,700 miles. So not only is there a huge monetary aspect to the added travel, but the players will be impacted as well.

The biggest downside to this is the one that seldom gets talked about by casual fans but is front and center for diehards – this is another blow to the regional nature of college football. The sport has always been about sections of the nation and the brand of football played there. The more it has become nationalized, the worse it has become. All of the reporting by ESPN during the season is about the ending, the CFP, instead of about cherishing the week-to-week battles in towns that have been excited about their teams forever. The lead-in to the ending is the most enjoyable part of the season, with each game its own canvas. Now it will be drowned out by the blather of "national brands USC and Ohio State facing off in an October classic."

The fate of the Rose Bowl looms, as well. With the defection of USC and UCLA, does the game want to continue its allegiance with the Pac-12? The conference has become greatly diminished in profile, and it may serve the Granddaddy of 'Em All to explore other options as opponents for the Big Ten.

As stated earlier, this was done by USC and UCLA to protect their long-term interests, to gain some clarity. And to have a more stable financial future.

Which means it all circles back to money. That seems to be the basis for most of the decisions done in college sports these days, which means we may need to put Sir Paul's words away and replace them with those of noted French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr: "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

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Nicklaus, Others Provide Golden Interview Moments

Back at the end of 1999, Buckeye Sports Bulletin polled readers, Ohio State athletic department officials and members of the Ohio State press to determine the 50 greatest Ohio State athletes of the 20th century.

With that in mind, I want to say that BSB has pulled off a coup of sorts with our latest version of BSB's annual Interview Issue. Last year we spoke with Jerry Lucas, voted the third greatest Buckeye of the 20th century. This year we follow up with our cover interview of Jack Nicklaus, the second greatest Buckeye of the past century.

Short of somehow resurrecting Jesse Owens (the undisputed No. 1) for an interview, I don't think it gets any better than having Lucas and Nicklaus among our variety of interview subjects.

Managing editor emeritus Mark Rea has interviewed many of the greatest Ohio State athletes of all, but I could tell even *he* was excited about interviewing the Golden Bear, and he admitted as much in his column on page 3.

"After nearly a half-century in this business, there isn't much that gets my heart racing anymore – probably a good thing as I bear down on Medicare eligibility – but I'll admit the one-on-one interview I conducted with Jack Nicklaus, the result of which kicks off BSB's annual Interview Issue, produced a certain degree of excitement."

Special thanks to the Nicklaus organization for working with us for literally a year to make the interview happen. And special thanks to Nicklaus himself – a loyal subscriber to BSB for as long as I can remember – for being open and cordial with Mark on the interview.

And I can't resist a little trivia here. Who were the fourth- and fifth-greatest Ohio State athletes of the 20th century, as voted back in 1999? The answer to follow.

You may be wondering where our traditional cover interview with athletic director Gene Smith, which has also served as an annual "State of the Athletic Department" each July, is this year. Smith has been "under the weather," according to a department spokesman and we were unable to find a mutually compatible time for an interview.

Smith has always been extremely cooperative as far as the Interview Issue, and he is not only informative but entertaining. We look forward to having him back in his traditional place on the cover next July.

While Smith is absent, we offer an interesting array of interviews in this issue, starting with Nicklaus. A BSB back story secret. While to my recollection I have never done any of the interviews, I always insinuate myself into the process. Let's just say I "suggest" some of the questions.

I tried to stay out of Mark's way with the Nicklaus interview, but I was curious to know about the Golden Bear's relationship with Arnold Palmer and if he and Palmer were aware at the time that they were planting the seeds for the millions of dollars that pro golfers earn today.

"Arnold just kind of took me under his wing, and the rivalry really began – at least as far as the public was concerned – at the 1962 U.S. Open at Oakmont when I managed to win against him in a playoff. But it really wasn't much of a rivalry until I won a few tournaments. Arnold was already well into his prime and had won I don't know how many times, so it wasn't really a rivalry until I proved that I could win some tournaments as well.

"But to answer the question if I knew at the beginning that our rivalry and friendship would be good for the game of golf, I did not. But as we went on, we realized that it drew a lot of public attention and drew in a lot of fans

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

to the PGA Tour who normally might not have been interested in the game. In the beginning, there were mostly Arnold fans, and then as time went on, I gradually got people who were interested in my game. I think it was a healthy rivalry that we both enjoyed."

While the career of Nicklaus is probably one of the most chronicled in sports history, a guy who pretty much toiled in the background, especially since his tenure at Ohio State ended, is Eldon Miller. Miller was basketball coach at Ohio State from 1976-86, during one of the golden ages of Big Ten basketball, with great players and teams including great players and teams at Ohio State.

I've always wondered why Ohio State media members haven't shown much interest in tracking down Miller. Well, BSB tracked him down, and he had a lengthy chat with former BSB staffer Jeff Rapp.

You may recall that Miller had one of his better teams in the 1979-80 season with players like Kelvin Ransey, Herb Williams and Clark Kellogg but almost inexplicably stumbled to a 14-13 record the following season, missing out on even the NIT. When Miller talked about that disappointing season, it came back vividly to me an ongoing problem that campaign for a team that was basically missing only star guard Ransey.

"The reason we didn't perform that year (1980-81) is we didn't have enough ball handling in the backcourt," Miller said. "We actually had only one person in the program who had any point guard experience. We tried to play Larry Huggins at the point, which was a huge mistake. He was a great kid and a great team player but we really couldn't get the ball where we needed to get it. We just didn't have all the pieces, and you have to have all the pieces at that level.

"Basically, we just did not recruit the kind of ball handling that you have to have," Miller continued. "After that year, I made a point that I would always have three point guards in my program, and, of course, we ended up with (Troy) Taylor and (Ron) Stokes, who played a lot in the four years after that. I'm trying to decide if I want both of them early, and after that season I said, 'There's no question. We need both those kids.'"

BSB staff writer Chase Brown caught up with Kellogg for a sweeping interview going back to the days of Kellogg's youth and moving forward all the way to his career as a prominent college basketball broadcaster.

Kellogg seemed to have similar recollections of the on-court issues for that 1980-81 team but suggested some off-court issues as well.

"That was a very disappointing season," Kellogg remembered. "We lost Kelvin to the NBA, and I think people underestimated how much Kelvin meant to our group. He was so good, and he held so much together for us. Losing him was a significant, significant loss. We had some challenges off the court, which I won't speak on. There was some personal challenges for some of our players. We weren't as collectively focused or cohesive as we were the prior season, and that hurt us. We were just inconsistent.

"I think we had to win the last few games of our season to finish above a .500 winning percentage and to end above .500 in our league. Overall, it was a painful season. That was hard. There was just a little too much drama and chaos surrounding our group that wasn't conducive to us being at our best at all

times."

I don't recall those off-court issues, but I am certainly intrigued.

The next season Stokes and Taylor joined the team and injected some new life, and the Buckeyes returned to the NCAA Tournament in Kellogg's final season.

"Tony Campbell came into his own as a sophomore that year," Kellogg recalled. "Troy and Ronnie were a really nice injection of fire, toughness and skill. They were excellent freshman players, and they helped our team. Larry Huggins was solid, too, and so was Granville (Waiters).

"That was a satisfying junior season because nobody expected us to do as well as we did," Kellogg added. "The fans and the media expected more of the same from the year before, so I think we surprised many people."

One of the questions I "suggested" Chase ask was who could jump higher, the 6-7 Kellogg or the 5-11 Stokes.

"Ronnie had a little more bounce than me when it came to vertical jumps, no doubt," Kellogg admitted. "He was extremely athletic and had the most bounce of anybody on our team when he was measured getting off the ground. I'm not sure anybody on our squad would have outjumped him in a vertical contest."

And I loved what Miller said about Kellogg, a player I maintain was one of the best offensive rebounders I have ever seen.

"Clark was a wonderful guy to coach, of course, but also a wonderful human being with a tremendous basketball mind and intellect. And he was a great rebounder and passer. I used to accuse him of throwing to guys who couldn't shoot so he could get the rebound."

Moving over to women's basketball, Kristin Watt has pretty much seen it all when it comes to the Lady Buckeyes, having been associated with the program for more than 40 years.

It was interesting to hear Watt talk about playing for the legendary Tara VanDerveer early in her coaching career and in what was still the infancy of women's college basketball. VanDerveer pushed hard for her team to get the same amenities and opportunities as the men when she was at Ohio State, before ultimately leaving for Stanford and her Hall-of-Fame career.

"I didn't understand why she left at the time, but Stanford was obviously a great academic program and she had an opportunity to build it," Watt recalled. "If you listened to Tara, I interviewed her once on the radio and said, 'Why did you leave?' and she said, 'I didn't want to, but nobody asked me to stay.'"

"Remember, she was rocking the boat. She was not a conformist. She made it so that I never knew women's sports didn't have what men's sports had in college because we had it. Again, I was spoiled. I didn't quite know at the time. It was easy for her to make a change when she felt that Stanford was going to give her an opportunity to be who she wanted to be."

Give an assist to two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin for helping bring recently retired Ohio State athletic administrator Mieshelle Willis to Ohio State. In her interview Willis gives a description of Griffin that couldn't be more similar to my own perception of the Buckeye treasure.

"I've never seen him have a bad day," Willis said of Griffin. "If he was having a bad day,

you wouldn't know it. He can't walk five feet without being stopped in Columbus. People always wanted pictures and autographs, and he never denied them. He never seemed irritated by that. Archie was always humbled by the affection and love that people have for him here. So often with high-profile athletes, it is all about them. For Archie, it was never about him."

We also offer interviews with former Buckeye football great Carlos Snow, whose trip from fame to struggles to recovery was recently capped by his Ohio State graduation, and with NIL pioneer Brian Schottenstein.

Enjoy.

Increased Recruiting Coverage

I don't like to pass out too many compliments to the BSB staff because I expect them to produce at a high level on a consistent basis. However, I want to pass out kudos for this Interview Issue. It is not as easy as readers might think to assemble a diverse and interesting group of subjects and arrange the interviews.

I also wanted to note the good job the staff has been doing as a team to beef up our recruiting coverage, not just for print, but more importantly for our electronic BuckeyeSports.com. Recruiting is a year-round proposition these days, and Buckeye fans want all the latest on OSU's pursuit of prep talent. The guys were all over the recent football camps at Ohio State, and I encourage you to follow all of the latest recruiting news, as well as any breaking Buckeye news, at BuckeyeSports.com and the BuckeyeSports.com Forum, all free to BSB subscribers.

For information on how to access the site, see page 4 of this issue.

Trivia Answer

The five greatest Ohio State athletes of the 20th century in addition to Owens, Nicklaus and Lucas, as determined in BSB's 1999 poll, were No. 4 Griffin and No. 5 John Havlicek.

In Closing

I wanted to circle back to Jack Nicklaus. Mark Rea asked him how he felt about the notion that he was the greatest golfer of all time. I thought Nicklaus' answer said a lot about the Buckeye great but also offered some wisdom for all of us.

"I'm probably not the most objective person to determine how good I was. I'll let somebody else or some group determine that. I always felt like there was only one person I could control, and that was me. People always asked who was my toughest competitor, and I always said it was me. That's because I could never control anybody else. All I could do was prepare myself the best I could and try to use that to the best of my ability when I played. I never minded getting beat if I had prepared properly. If I prepared, did what I thought was my best, and somebody played better, fair enough. Shake the man's hand and say, 'Well done.'"

"Not everybody judges me as the greatest golfer who has ever played. Some would say it was Tiger (Woods), others might say it was (Ben) Hogan, others would say it was (Bobby) Jones. That's OK. All I know is I tried to do everything within my ability to perform my best – and I think I could probably have been better.

"But I also helped raise a family, had five kids and 22 grandkids, I've had successful business projects, I've enjoyed the company of a lot of friends, and there have been a lot of other things that I have enjoyed. Golf was a part of my life, but it wasn't my whole life. And that, to me, was what was important."

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 after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that causes your brain to rapidly move inside your skull.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

- Headache, nausea, vomiting,
- balance problems, dizziness,
- double or blurred vision,
- sensitivity to light or noise, feeling
- sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy,
- just not "feeling right" or
- "feeling down," memory
- problems, confusion, and
- trouble sleeping.

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 healthcare 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 it harder to do everyday activities, such as concentrating at school. 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 AND 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.odh.ohio.gov/concussion>

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