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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Sept. 17, 2022

"Route Man Marv" Leads Rout Of ASU Red Wolves

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Fresh off Ohio State's Rose Bowl win over Utah, a new nickname emerged for one of the Buckeyes' top playmakers: "Route Man Marv," in reference to then-freshman wideout Marvin Harrison Jr., who finished the game with 71 receiving yards on six receptions, three of which went for touchdowns. It was a breakout performance for Harrison, who at that point had accounted for just five receptions and 68 yards – no touchdowns – in his brief Ohio State career.

"Coach (Ryan) Day has the confidence in me on fourth-and-1 to go make a play," Harrison said at the time. "I'm just thankful he has the confidence in me to do that, and I had to make a play."

With future NFL draftees Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson sitting out to protect themselves, a greater emphasis was put on Ohio State's younger receivers in the Rose Bowl, though then-sophomore Jaxon Smith-Njigba received most of the attention, hauling in 15 receptions for 347 yards – both Ohio State and FBS bowl records – as well as three touchdowns. Harrison still shone, though, and showed his coaches what might be in store for him in the future.

"We've got great receivers who are going to go on to do big things in the league," Harrison said. "I had to wait my turn and, when my turn was called, be ready."

That call came again in the second game of Ohio State's current season on Sept. 10 against Arkansas State. The Buckeyes, without receivers Smith-Njigba, third-year Julian Fleming or fifth-year Kameron Babb, all out due to injury, were once again forced to turn to Harrison – as well as sophomore Emeka Egbuka and fifth-year Xavier Johnson, who had his breakout performance against Notre Dame – to help fill the void and provide targets for quarterback C.J. Stroud.

It was clear after the Rose Bowl that great things were on the horizon for Harrison, but it would have been difficult to predict that it would come just two games later. In just the 15th game of Harrison's young career, he led Ohio State against the Red Wolves with seven receptions for 184 yards and three touchdowns, all setting or tying career highs, as the Buckeyes defeated Arkansas State by a 45-12 margin in front of 100,067 fans at Ohio Stadium.

Harrison's performance, though, was just a symptom of how Ohio State has done business over the past several seasons. It's a tried-and-true



SONNY BROCKWAY

RECORD BREAKER — Second-year wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. had seven receptions for 184 yards and three touchdowns in Ohio State's 45-12 win over Arkansas State. He tied former Ohio State wideout Joey Galloway for the most games in an Ohio State uniform — two — with at least three touchdown receptions.

method at this point that has sprung the careers of Olave, Wilson and Smith-Njigba, who have all started in similar fashions with a breakout performance in their freshman seasons before taking over on the Buckeyes' offense in their sophomore years and beyond.

If this – along with the Rose Bowl performance – was Harrison's tryout to become a leader for Ohio State's offense, then his coaches and teammates believe he passed with flying colors.

"He's very mature for his age. So is Emeka, but Marvin's route running is very mature for his age," Day said. "To see somebody who's played as much as he has, the high level of route running is pretty remarkable. He had a chance to

have four touchdowns. I think, he had the one they called an incompletion, he could have finished that one off. The potential is there. You can see the couple of plays he made, he did it a bunch of different ways.

"He caught a couple of slants that got us going, and it's important that when we're starting drives out we get a couple easy completions, we get those couple first downs, and then all of a sudden we start to roll," Day continued. "That has been something that's happened to us the first couple of games – a couple of three-and-outs – we have to do a

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Buckeye Leaves

On a day that saw a pair of top-10 teams fall in stunning fashion, No. 3 Ohio State remained on track with a 45-12 win over Arkansas State at Ohio Stadium. The Buckeyes' passing attack appeared to be in midseason form while the defense kept the Red Wolves out of the end zone in the victory. Here are some choices from Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff members and readers from the Buckeyesports.com Forum for players who were worthy of winning Buckeye Leaves.

Andy Anders, BSB: Even a big day from sophomore wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. couldn't overshadow that of his fellow sophomore pass-catcher Emeka Egbuka.

Egbuka hauled in four receptions for 118 yards and a score, with the touchdown coming on a wide-open throw up the middle of Arkansas State's defense. The Washington native cruised to the house for a 51-yard strike, giving the Buckeyes a 38-9 lead in the third quarter.

Ohio State opened up the playbook a little bit for him too, handing him the ball on a jet sweep that Egbuka took 27 yards up the sideline.

Egbuka's biggest highlight of the day didn't get listed in the official box score, however. Had it not been for two penalties on the play, he may have recorded the Buckeyes' first return touchdown since 2014 on a punt he ran back 78 yards to the end zone. Instead, a personal foul granted the Red Wolves a first down on the play.

Jack Emerson, BSB: For the second consecutive week, Mike Hall will earn a Buckeye Leaf from the

BSB staff.

Although he was forced to exit the game in the third quarter, Hall was once again a disrupting presence on the Ohio State defensive front. He finished the afternoon with all of his three tackles going for a loss, including a sack of Arkansas State quarterback James Blackman late in the second quarter.

Hall's efforts aided an Ohio State defense that held Arkansas State to an average of 1.6 yards per carry and 53 total yards on the ground.

Braden Moles, BSB: Was there any individual player on the field more dominant than sophomore wideout Marvin Harrison Jr.? Harrison was everywhere for Ohio State's offense, finishing with seven receptions for 184 yards and three touchdowns.

With Harrison's three touchdown grabs, he became just the second Buckeye to have multiple games for Ohio State with three receiving touchdowns, joining Joey Galloway (1993 vs. MSU, 1994 vs. Purdue).

If Jaxon Smith-Njigba – who was a game-time decision but did not play for the Buckeyes – is forced to miss more time, Ohio State has more than an adequate replacement at lead receiver in Harrison.

BSB Subscribers

Tiffin Buckeye: Marvin Harrison Jr., what an unbelievable game!

Anthony Buckeye: Marvin Harrison and Emeka Egbuka for excellent outings (are they better than Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson at the same stage

in their careers?). C.J. Stroud for playing like C.J. (Best In America?). RBs TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams for their unstoppable and speedy play (again, BIA?). The entire offensive line for both run and pass blocking. Mike Hall Jr., Tyleik Williams and Caden Curry (what a coming out party!) for disruptive play and so many TFLs. Both LBs Tommy Eichenberg and Steele Chambers for a very good outing and the defensive speed in closing in and tackling.

bstu9: I give my Buckeye leaf to Cam Brown. On a day when Denzel Burke struggled mightily, Brown was solid at the other corner spot.

Poster That Harley Built: Stroud, the receivers and the running backs are always great, so how about a shout-out for the guys who make the skill players look good and never get the credit – the offensive line. Whoever came up with the idea of the four-tackle offense (five if you count the tight end) should lose his job. How about a negative Buckeye Leaf for Denzel Burke. This time last year, he was starting to open eyes for his exciting play. Now he is opening eyes for the opposite reason.

Mcarr: I am sure we will be able to single out the offensive skill players every week. Leaves to all of them. I'm going to go with Mike Hall Jr., even though his afternoon was shortened by injury. Where did this guy come from? And how about some props for the linebackers, the most maligned position on the team last year? Get 'em guys.

PeyoteBuck: Caden Curry, who made a Hitchcock-like cameo at the end, was impressive. I think he will have a great career.



From The Message Board

Ohio State overcame a sluggish start to run away from Arkansas State in a 45-12 win and improve to 2-0 on the season. Although the game was out of reach for much of the way, there were still plenty of interesting storylines that came out of it. We asked readers on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum what their impressions were from the early-season tuneup game. Here are some of the responses:

“To me, a reminder that this silly sport is still played by human beings. The OSU players had to know it was a mismatch and so did the opposing players; they had all the incentive to show that they were better than everyone thought.”

– Terrier Buck

“They played down to another opponent but they kicked it into gear.”

– Tiffin Buckeye

“These young men, and their coaches, have been working hard every day since the 2022 Rose Bowl to play these games and perform their best for Buckeye Nation. The fans hope they play the ‘perfect game’ every week. Their opponents work almost as hard to make sure they don’t play the perfect game. This week’s game is over and the team is 2-0 and now will prepare to play Toledo.”

– BYRON MCNUTT

“A win is a win, but the defense must clean up the sloppy penalties. Though it didn’t matter today, those free yards can really make a difference in a close game against a quality opponent.”

– bstu9

“The offense seemed to improve its performance from Week 1 to Week 2. The wide receivers, both Emeka Egbuka and Marvin Harrison, were as good as advertised. The run game was, once again very good when called upon. The OL was good in both run and pass blocking. But the defense appeared to be a little out-of-focus with too many penalties and too much movement of the ball by Arkansas State. The three young defensive linemen, Mike Hall, Tyleik Williams and Caden Curry were impressive. Cameron Brown had a very good game as well.”

– Anthony Buckeye

“Penalties, penalties, penalties. Take them away and I think it’s a completely different game, though only Buckeye fans complain about a 45-12 victory. Why do these penalties continue to be a problem? It’s almost an entirely different coaching staff on defense and yet still the penalties. I don’t get it.”

– Poster That Harley Built

“I saw a letdown this week from all the hype leading up to the Notre Dame game, resulting in more penalties and missed tackles. Hard to keep the same intensity against a lesser opponent. However, that’s what can make them dangerous.”

– R1TBDITL

“Did anyone stop to think that maybe Arkansas State was improved over last season? They do have an experienced head coach who moved up the coaching ranks before dropping down to Arkansas State. Improved or otherwise, they still lost by 33 points. I think Notre Dame, Texas A&M, etc. would gladly take that margin of victory.”

– Mcarr

“This was a good win. Offense beginning to round into shape. The defense started great, but the second quarter was tough for me to watch. Could have been trying new things. Overall, no serious injuries and good things to work on as we take the next step in the season.”

– John Lanning

“They won’t ever admit to it if they are, but I wondered if the Buckeyes were taking this game too lightly. Every team wants to knock the Bucks off their pedestal and they will try like heck to do it.”

– PeyoteBuck

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Some Good, Some Not So Much In OSU Win

"I think coming off last year, there are no big heads. This team is hungry. This team has been hungry. It's been gritty. ... There are no big heads on this team. We've got a lot to prove."

That was Ohio State head coach Ryan Day a couple of days before his team opened the 2022 season as prohibitive favorites against preseason No. 5 Notre Dame. The Buckeyes showed a little of the grit to which their coach referred during a 21-10 win against the Fighting Irish, a victory that featured what appeared to be an improved OSU defense.

Move ahead one week to a game against an outmanned and outgunned Arkansas State, and Day was forced to reassess his "hungry" and "gritty" comments. Realizing (again) that college football is a game played by young men still in their teens and early 20s, and understanding all the coaching in the world sometimes can't mask the foibles of youth, there were times Ohio State seemed to simply go through the motions on its way to a 45-12 victory against the Red Wolves, a team that finished with a 2-10 record a year ago.

There were definitely highlights for the Buckeyes, not the least of which was the official coming-out party for second-year receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. The namesake of the eight-time Pro Bowler and Pro Football Hall of Fame receiver set new career highs with seven catches for 184 yards and equaled the career-high three touchdowns that he set New Year's Day during the 48-45 Rose Bowl shootout win against Utah.

Delivering each of those scoring tosses was quarterback C.J. Stroud, who continues to rewrite the program record book for quarterbacks. Stroud completed 16 of 24 attempts for 351 yards and four touchdowns, numbers that used to raise the pulse of Buckeye Nation but now merely solicit a ho-hum.

Stroud has eclipsed the 300-yard mark in seven of his last eight games, and attempting to put that into any kind of perspective is difficult except to say that only four other quarterbacks in Ohio State history have had as many as seven 300-yard performances over their entire careers.

It's not just that Stroud accumulates yardage. He does so with a sort of effortless talent that was underscored on two of Harrison's receptions. The first came late in the first quarter, was worth 45 yards, and helped to set up OSU's second touchdown of the afternoon. The second came at the 4:24 mark of the second period and accounted for 42 yards and the team's third touchdown. Each was a high-arching thing of beauty, the kind of drop-it-in-the-bucket throw that lands perfectly in a receiver's hands despite whatever coverage the defense happens to call.

Harrison's third touchdown was another thread-the-needle throw despite excellent coverage from Arkansas State cornerback Leon Jones, who made a play on the ball before falling to the Ohio Stadium turf. Jones got to his knees, fairly sure he had broken up the play, only to look on in disbelief as officials outstretched their arms while Harrison cradled the football.

There were other high points. The Buckeyes averaged nearly 10 yards for every offensive play, TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams averaged 7.4 yards per carry between them (combining for only 18 carries), and the OSU defense surrendered no touchdowns to a team that scored 58 points in its season opener – albeit against FCS member Grambling State with former Cleveland Browns head coach Hue Jackson in his first

year at the school.

But there were times when it seemed Arkansas State did not have Ohio State's full attention. The offense seemed uninterested in the final period and failed to score after Harrison's final touchdown at the 0:04 mark of the third quarter. The Wolves managed 15 first downs and 276 total yards, more on both counts than Notre Dame managed in the opener, and for the second week in a row, the defense allowed more than its share of chunk plays. Last week, it was a 54-yard pass play by the Fighting Irish, and this time it was a 58-yard reception by ASU receiver Champ Flemings, all 5-6 and 155 pounds of him.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Flemings finished the game with 10 catches for 105 yards with 50 of those yards coming after the catch. In fact, 99 of Arkansas State's 223 receiving yards (44.4 percent) came after the catch. That follows a performance that saw Notre Dame tally 77 of its 177 receiving yards (43.5 percent) after the catch. Better tackling technique was supposed to be one of the mainstays of new defensive coordinator Jim Knowles' philosophy, but the OSU secondary seems to be falling into old habits. It's difficult to put the onus on just one individual, so I'll just say Denzel Burke did not have his best performance against the Red Wolves and leave it at that.

And penalties continue to pile up at an alarming rate. I counted at least four offside penalties on the defense that came before the snap. Couple that with a bunch of senseless personal fouls that might prove lethal against better competition, and the Buckeyes finished the game with nine penalties for 85 lost yards. One of those wiped out a 78-yard punt return for a touchdown by Emeka Egbuka.

In just two games so far this season, Ohio State has been flagged 16 times for 160 yards. Championship teams are usually disciplined teams, and disciplined teams do not commit an average of eight penalties per game.

It was enough for the head coach to shake his head in disgust despite a 33-point victory. Immediately after the game, Day was interviewed by Big Ten Network sideline reporter Michelle McMahon and termed his team's performance as "just OK. We gave them two possessions on special teams. I thought we could have finished stronger. And the penalties ... I don't want to diminish a win or take that for granted, but we're going to have to play better than this."

The coach was a little more measured when he met with media members about a half-hour later, saying, "There were certainly things in this game that I would have liked to see gone better, but there were also a lot of good things, too. What you don't want to do is take winning for granted."

In a year during which the preseason Nos. 5, 6 and 7 teams have already gone down to unranked opponents – and No. 1 Alabama barely escaped Texas with a win – no one should take any victory for granted. Still, if you consider yourself a serious contender for the national championship, the bar for excellence is set just a little higher.

Nick Saban certainly understands that, and so does Ryan Day.

This And That

- One of BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz's pet projects in recent years has been to keep track of how much (or more accurately, how little) Ohio State throws the ball to its tight ends. Not to impede too much on Frank's turf, but did you know the 35-yard reception by first-year starter Cade Stover was the longest catch by an OSU tight end in two years? It was the longest since Jeremy Ruckert had a 36-yarder during the 52-24 loss to Alabama in the 2020 College Football Playoff title game.

You'd have to go back a lot farther to find the last time an Ohio State tight end reeled in a catch in excess of 40 yards. That was Jeff Heuerman, who grabbed a 57-yard touchdown pass from Braxton Miller during a 40-35 loss to Clemson in the 2014 Orange Bowl.

- Stroud enjoyed his second career game with three touchdown passes of 42 yards or more, connecting with Harrison for a pair of 42-yard strikes and Egbuka on a 51-yard score. Stroud first achieved that feat during last year's season opener against Minnesota when he connected with Garrett Wilson for 56 yards, Henderson for 70 and Chris Olave for 61.

Before Stroud, no Ohio State quarterback had thrown three touchdown passes of 42 or more yards in a single game since Troy Smith did it during a 35-24 win against Michigan State on Oct. 15, 2005. Smith hooked up with Santonio Holmes for TD strikes of 51 and 46 yards in that contest as well as one for 57 yards to Ted Ginn Jr.

- Speaking of Harrison, he equaled a pretty unique OSU record against the Red Wolves. As previously mentioned, it was the second game of his still-young career with three touchdown passes, something accomplished only once before. Joey Galloway caught three TDs during a 28-21 win against Michigan State in 1993 and equaled that total the following year during a 48-14 blowout of Purdue.

If you're ready for some trivia, name the two quarterbacks who threw the TD passes to Galloway against the Spartans in '93 and the Boilermakers in '94. The answer comes later.

- With his 10th game of 300 or more passing yards, Stroud broke a tie with Dwayne Haskins for most career 300-yard games by an Ohio State quarterback. In program history before the 2014 season – a span of 1,220 games – Buckeye QBs enjoyed only 21 games in which they had thrown for at least 300 yards. That was an average of one 300-yard performance every 58.1 games. Since the beginning of the 2014 season, there have been 34 such performances over 106 games. That computes to an average of one every 3.1 games.

- Here is your trivia answer. Bobby Hoying threw two of the scoring passes to Galloway during the 1993 MSU game while Bret Powers threw the other. In 1994 vs. the Boilermakers, Hoying was responsible for all three of Galloway's scores, part of a five-touchdown passing day for the OSU quarterback. That equaled the program single-game record at the time, matching the five touchdown passes thrown by John Borton against Washington State in 1952.

Hoying tied that record again in 1995, but it has since been equaled or bettered an amazing 17 times with Stroud, Justin Fields, Dwayne Haskins, J.T. Barrett and Kenny Gupton now sharing the mark with six.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Bucks Hold Steady At No. 3 In AP Poll

Following Ohio State's 45-12 win over Arkansas State on Sept. 10, the Buckeyes remained at No. 3 in the AP top 25 poll released on Sept. 11. Georgia jumped Alabama to take the top spot in the poll, while the Crimson Tide fell to No. 2 after a close 20-19 win over then-unranked Texas. No. 4 Michigan and No. 5 Clemson round out the top five.

Elsewhere in the Big Ten, Michigan State moved up three spots to No. 11, and Penn State jumped into the poll at No. 22. Ohio State's opponent in week one, then-No. 5 Notre Dame, fell out of the poll following a 26-21 loss to Marshall.

The biggest rise in the poll belonged to No. 9 Kentucky, which rose 11 spots after defeating then-No. 12 Florida 26-16. Texas A&M saw the biggest drop, falling from No. 6 to No. 24 after losing at home to unranked Appalachian State.

Several Buckeyes Out Against Red Wolves

Ohio State kicked off against Arkansas State without a pair of receivers as well as depth in the secondary, as wideouts Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming were both listed as game-time decisions and did not play and cornerback Jordan Hancock was listed as unavailable for the Buckeyes.

Smith-Njigba played briefly in the Buckeyes' opener before leaving with a leg injury, and Fleming was a game-time decision for the opener but ultimately did not see the field. Hancock was a surprise on the list as he was healthy against Notre Dame – playing exclu-

sively on special teams – though he did deal with injuries throughout fall camp.

Hancock could have seen an expanded role against the Red Wolves given the number of depth players that Ohio State got on the field.

Also unavailable for the Buckeyes were wide receiver Kamryn Babb, who awaits his debut this season, and cornerback Lloyd McFarquhar, who was listed as unavailable against the Irish. Ohio State is also without linebacker Mitchell Melton and running back Evan Pryor, who have been ruled out for the season.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day indicated after the Arkansas State game that he hopes to have Fleming, Hancock and Smith-Njigba back in the lineup against Toledo.

DT Hall Not Expected Out For Long Term

One Buckeye who went out during the win over Arkansas State was second-year defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr. He exited the game in the third quarter, taking nearly a minute to get up off the turf before heading over to the Buckeyes' sideline.

He was checked out by medical personnel and had his shoulder pads removed for further observation, indicating that it could have been a shoulder injury that knocked him out of the game. Regardless of what forced him out, Day expects that Hall will return soon.

"It's not something that we expect him to miss any time for," Day said. "But we'll see once we get an evaluation on him postgame. But there was no concern coming out of it that it was going to be long term."

Through two games this season, Hall had seven tackles (five for loss) and two sacks, and he has been one of the leaders on Ohio State's defense.

"He did it again this week," Day said. "That's good. That's progress."

Proctor Returns To Starting Lineup

Ohio State fifth-year safety Josh Proctor was benched in the Buckeyes' season opener against Notre Dame after giving up a 54-yard completion on the first defensive play from scrimmage, but he returned to Ohio State's starting lineup against Arkansas State.



SONNY BROCKWAY

NEW FACES — Freshman running back Dallan Hayden was one of 11 true freshmen to see the field in Ohio State's win over Arkansas State. The Memphis, Tenn., native finished with 13 rushing yards and 13 receiving yards.

Proctor finished the contest with three solo tackles and helped the secondary limit the Red Wolves to just 223 passing yards and a 59.5 percent completion rate.

"That definitely felt good, just getting that confidence back," Proctor said. "I took today as my second shot. I didn't get it the first week, so I just came out, played with my heart. I tried not to get overwhelmed, tried to calm myself down and just play football."

Third-year safety Lathan Ransom, who played the majority of the opener in Proctor's stead, played more sparingly against Arkansas State with Proctor in the starting role but still contributed four tackles and a tackle for loss.

As Proctor returns to the starting lineup, he said he was happy to see Ransom's seven-tackle outing against Notre Dame.

"We've done that since summer, since we all got together, since Coach Perry (Eliano) got here," Proctor said. "We thrive on pushing

each other because we know we're going to need each and every piece to make it through this whole season."

It was made to appear that Ransom would start against Arkansas State – Day said so himself on Sept. 8, admitting that the plan was for Ransom to start and Proctor to come off the bench – but it now seems that Proctor will remain in the starting lineup for Ohio State. Even so, he's still going to look back at his benching as a pivotal moment.

"It's still in my head, to be honest with you. I feel like that's just kind of fuel to the fire. For the whole season," Proctor said. "Because I don't want that to happen again. It didn't feel good. But it's OK. You live and you learn."

Freshmen See Field Against Red Wolves

After defensive end Caden Curry and kicker Jayden Fielding were the only freshmen to see the field against Notre Dame, several more newcomers got an opportunity to play against Arkansas State.

Cornerback Jyaire Brown; defensive ends Omari Abor, Kenyatta Jackson and Hero Kanu; linebacker C.J. Hicks; offensive lineman Tegra Tshabola; running back Dallan Hayden; and safeties Kye Stokes and Sonny Styles all saw the field.

Most were reserved for a special teams role, but Brown had an assisted tackle and Hayden was a factor on offense, rushing for 13 yards on four carries and hauling in two passes for 13 yards.

Curry also had an impact late in the game, finishing with four tackles, including one for loss that knocked the Red Wolves back 6 yards.

Johnson, Hall, Williams Named Top Players Against Irish

Ohio State saw several unlikely heroes step up in its 21-10 win over then-No. 5 Notre Dame on Sept. 3. The Buckeyes named four Players of the Week on Sept. 4, none of whom was labeled as an established star entering the 2022 season.

Hall took home Defensive Player of the Week honors, while third-year running back

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2022 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 3	NOTRE DAME	W, 21-10	ABC	0-2, 26-21 loss to Marshall
Sept. 10	ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	BTN	1-1, 45-12 loss to Ohio State
Sept. 17	TOLEDO	7 p.m.	FOX	2-0, 55-10 win over UMass
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	TBA	ABC	1-1, 17-14 loss to Washington State
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	3:30 p.m.	TBA	2-0, 66-7 win over Wagner
Oct. 8	at Michigan State	TBA	TBA	2-0, 52-0 win over Akron
Oct. 22	IOWA	TBA	TBA	1-1, 10-7 loss to Iowa State
Oct. 29	at Penn State	TBA	TBA	2-0, 46-10 win over Ohio
Nov. 5	at Northwestern	TBA	TBA	1-1, 31-23 loss to Duke
Nov. 12	INDIANA	TBA	TBA	2-0, 35-22 win over Idaho
Nov. 19	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	2-0, 56-21 win over Charlotte
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN	12 p.m.	FOX	2-0, 56-10 win over Hawaii

Miyan Williams was named Offensive Player of the Week. Graduates linebacker Palaie Gaoteote IV and wide receiver Xavier Johnson shared Special Teams Player of the Week honors.

Hall was an instrumental part of Ohio State's second-half shutout of Notre Dame, aiding the Buckeyes' efforts to hold the Fighting Irish to just 76 rushing yards for the game. The Streetsboro, Ohio, native accounted for four tackles – two of which were for a loss – and a sack of quarterback Tyler Buchner.

"I came out there and played my hardest and gave it my all," Hall said. "I heard I was starting by Coach (Larry) Johnson a couple of

days before the game. I just took that to heart and came out and gave it my all."

Williams set the tone for the Buckeyes' rushing attack, churning out tough yards with his aggressive style of running the ball. He picked up 84 yards on 14 carries and extended Ohio State's fourth-quarter lead with a 2-yard plunge into the end zone.

Johnson earned Special Teams Player of the Week honors thanks to his huge tackle, just a play after his first-career touchdown, in which he forced Notre Dame to begin its next drive from its own 13-yard line.

"I'm not going to lie, it was crazy," Johnson

said. "I would just say, the team, and I love these guys, so with my legs empty, with all of that, none of that matters. I'm throwing that to the side. It's all for the team and for the glory of God. It's a testament to Coach Day. It's a testament to Coach (Brian) Hartline and Coach (Mickey) Marotti. They just put us in the position to succeed so that's all I was doing. I was in my position doing what I was supposed to do."

Details From Day's Contract Extension

Day reaffirmed his commitment to the Buckeyes over the offseason. Ohio State announced terms of Day's new contract extension in May, and details were finalized on Sept. 7 to keep him in scarlet and gray until the conclusion of the 2028 season.

According to a copy of Day's contract agreement obtained by Buckeye Sports Bulletin, Day saw his annual compensation rise from \$6,600,000 to \$9,500,000 from 2021 to 2022. His expected base salary, from a previously agreed-upon contract amendment, will rise from \$1,550,000 to \$2,000,000 on Feb. 1, 2023.

Day will be eligible for base salary increases at the discretion of athletic director Gene Smith and the Ohio State board of trustees.

Since its implementation in July, Day will

earn a monthly payment of \$436,666.67 in exchange for media appearances, promotions and public relations services, which will total \$5,240,000 yearly. This number is up from a previous expected total of \$315,833.33 per month – \$3,790,000 yearly – which was agreed upon in a previous extension.

Beginning on Feb. 1, 2023, Day will earn an annual \$1 million retention payment from the university.

If Day is to terminate his contract prior to Feb. 1, 2023, he will be required to pay the university \$5 million within 45 days of termination. That potential payment total decreases by \$500,000 each year that Day stays aboard at Ohio State and drops to as low as \$750,000 if he is to terminate his contract between Feb. 1, 2028, and Jan. 31, 2029.

Since taking over the Ohio State football program, Day has amassed a 36-4 record, two Big Ten championships, two College Football Playoff appearances and a Rose Bowl victory.

In the time between Day's contract being presented to the Ohio State board of trustees in May and the contract being finalized, he fell all the way from being tied for the third highest-paid coach in college football to being tied for the fifth highest-paid coach.

Day's annual compensation of \$9.5 million

Continued On Page 6

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago – 1982

At Ohio State, a fullback dive over the left tackle or a plow through the right guard had not been in the playbook over the past couple of seasons.

That was until opening day of 1982. It was on that day, under the bright sunny skies and with immense heat and humidity hovering over Ohio Stadium in Columbus that the Buckeyes returned to the days of yesteryear by turning the fullback loose.

Vaughn Broadnax, built like a tank at 6-3 and somewhere between 245 and 255 pounds, brought back memories of former OSU fullback standouts by rushing for 101 yards in 18 carries during the Buckeyes' 21-14 win over Baylor.

"There are times when you're running and you know you're going to get upended and you say 'Well, dang it, if somebody's holding on to you, you don't have to go down,'" Broadnax said after the game.

35 Years Ago – 1987

Prior to the opening kickoff in Ohio State's season opener against West Virginia, Ohio Stadium observed a moment of silence in memory of Woody Hayes, who had died on March 12.

Moments later, all Buckeye faithful rose to their feet to welcome the Cotton Bowl champions into the stadium.

30 Years Ago – 1992

Ohio State head coach John Cooper was clearly upset after hearing that some of his players regarded Louisville – whom the Buckeyes beat 20-19 – lightly. He said he would make certain they would not make the same comments following the Bowling Green game the following week.

"The way four or five of our players played Saturday, I don't see how they could overlook anybody," Cooper said. "We try to stress how you should look for daily improvement, practice hard and play hard every day.

"But if we haven't gotten that message across, I'm sure we'll get their attention when we watch the films. I guarantee that"

25 Years Ago – 1997

Imagine, if you will, following in the footsteps of three record-setting setters. Tough task. It's made even harder when you realize the heir apparent has never really done much setting in her volleyball career.

Now you know the plight of Ohio State sophomore Jen Flynn.

While not looking for sympathy or pity, the fact is Flynn had a hard act to follow. She succeeded Jen Boleyn, who

held the single-season school record for assists (16.51 per game in 1995). Boleyn followed all-time record holder and 1994 national player of the year Laura Davis.

"In the wintertime, I was kind of doubting this would work," Flynn said. "But I chose to be the setter and it's been different. It's a good thing and I'm getting used to it"

20 Years Ago – 2002

It may have just been a rout of under-manned Kent State, but the Ohio State coaching staff found it was a perfect spot to serve the team's abundant youth.

Recruiting experts praised OSU coach Jim Tressel and his staff for their first two classes. As many as 22 first- or second-year scholarship players played a meaningful role in the team's 51-17 pasting of Kent State on Sept. 7 at Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes jumped on the Golden Flashes for a 38-0 lead midway through the second quarter, allowing Tressel and his staff the chance to substitute early and often.

"There's no question as the game unfolded, one of our goals was to get as many guys experience as we possibly could," Tressel said.

15 Years Ago – 2007

For the first time in more than a year, an Ohio State men's basketball player chose to go with his heart rather than his checkbook.

After a stellar summer that saw him turn heads across the globe, incoming freshman center Kosta Koufos was faced with the same dilemma as former Buckeyes Mike Conley Jr., Daequan Cook and Greg Oden were the previous season. Namely, should he play professionally or suit up for the Buckeyes in the fall?

As he weighed his next move, Koufos came to the realization that he wanted to be a college student-athlete first.

"It was a great opportunity for me, but I felt like I needed to play college ball," Koufos told BSB. "That was one of my dreams since I was a little kid, to play for Ohio State University. I just want to maintain that dream and hopefully, God-willing, three, four, five years down the road I'll be able to play professional ball."

10 Years Ago – 2012

Two games into the season, Ohio State fans saw glimpses of what Urban Meyer's version of the spread offense could do. They also saw how it could go off track.

The results were mostly good in the season opener but decidedly more mixed a week later as the Buckeyes downed UCF 31-16.

The two contests mirrored each other in many ways,

particularly in the way Braxton Miller hurt defenses with explosive plays. Against the RedHawks, Miller threw for two TD passes and had a 65-yard TD run. Mistakes such as turnovers marred the second game, though, and that had Meyer speaking somewhat glumly in the postgame interview room.

"We have to go back to the drawing board and make some decisions on who is going to physically touch that ball, and they have to take care of it, obviously," Meyer said after Ohio State turned the ball over three times against the Golden Knights.

Five Years Ago – 2017

In Ohio State's season-opening win at Indiana on Aug. 31, the defense gave up 420 passing yards and three scoring tosses. Upon getting gashed by the Hoosiers, the OSU coaches knew they had some work to do in the week leading up to a prime-time meeting with fifth-ranked Oklahoma on Sept. 9.

But after Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield threw for 386 yards and three touchdowns in the Sooners' 31-16 win, it was back to the drawing board for the Ohio State stop troops.

"I think our problems in the secondary tonight were different than the other night, which doesn't make it better or worse," Buckeye defensive coordinator Greg Schiano said after the Oklahoma game. "Just different. It wasn't as much one-on-one coverage. It was more mistakes and we need to do a better job coaching. We didn't – when you make mistakes, it's the coach's fault. So, we need to get that fixed in a hurry."

One Year Ago – 2021

Ryan Day and Kerry Coombs apparently had a difference of opinion when it came to the Ohio State defense.

After the Buckeyes had been victimized again and again – a couple of times by the same formation, personnel and play-call – and had surrendered 505 total yards during a 35-28 home loss to Pac-12 rival Oregon, Day expressed some frustration while Coombs seemed to believe a little better execution was the answer to his defensive unit's problems.

When Day opened with the age-old excuse of having to watch the game film to determine exactly what happened, saying, "I'll give you an answer early next week," reporters pressed him further.

"It seemed like the same play to me that they hit us on and we didn't make adjustments," Day said. "That was very frustrating."

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

is tied with Michigan State's Mel Tucker and LSU's Brian Kelly but trails USC's Lincoln Riley (reportedly north of \$10 million), Georgia's Kirby Smart (\$11.3 million), Clemson's Dabo Swinney (\$11.5 million) and Alabama's Nick Saban (\$11.7 million). Of those coaches, Day, Saban, Smart and Swinney all received updated contracts within the past few months.

Henderson, Williams To Split Carries

Ohio State had a distinct strategy when it came to its running game against Notre Dame on Sept. 3: spread the wealth.

Second-year running back TreVeyon Henderson – who was expected to carry the load for the Buckeyes this season – and Williams carried the rock 15 and 14 times, respectively. Day was pleased with the results of the running game and said Ohio State intends to continue to utilize the skill sets of both running backs as the season continues.

"We'll move forward the same way," Day

Reports on Buckeye Sports Bulletin's delivery have been mixed in the early going this football season. Some readers have reported rapid delivery of their papers, even in out-of-state locales, while many, even in-state, are struggling to get their paper in a timely fashion.

"We mail a copy of the paper to ourselves for quality control purposes," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said, "and our copy of the Notre Dame wrap-up did not arrive until Saturday, even though we are right here in Columbus."

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For those unable to pay for the upgrade, the complete edition of each issue is posted at BuckeyeSports.com immediately upon completion of the paper, making the site a must for readers having continuing mail problems. There is also immediate coverage after each game, and readers can discuss the game on the Fan Forum, including "The Official Game Thread" with real-time comments from BSB staff members and readers throughout the game.

"We know that reading the paper online is not optimum, but it does allow you to read time-sensitive stories, including recruiting coverage, while waiting for your paper," Moskowitz said.

There are also additional stories throughout the week, including coverage of Ryan Day's weekly press conference, as well as news

from any other press availabilities leading up to the next game.

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. We have also upped our basketball recruiting coverage, so be sure to check in regularly at BuckeyeSports.com.

Along with daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Also, staff members man the previously mentioned 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 and basketball recruiting threads.

We remind you again, 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. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at the usual time.

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said on Sept. 6. "I thought they complemented each other well. They both really ran hard in the fourth quarter, after looking at the film. I felt it when we were on the field, but after watching the film, boy, it was pretty impressive to watch those guys run that way. And they took care of the football, and that was a huge

challenge for them. It's their No. 1 job in this offense."

Both running backs took care of business against the Irish. The pair of backs helped the Buckeyes churn out 172 yards and 11 first downs on the ground.

Henderson started the evening for Ohio State, amassing 91 yards on 15 carries for an average of 6.1 yards per attempt. While Henderson took the first snaps at running back, Williams undoubtedly had the largest impact on the game from the running backs' standpoint.

He saved much of his production for arguably Ohio State's largest drive of the evening. With a 14-10 lead with 11:57 remaining in the fourth quarter, the Buckeyes embarked on a drive with the goal to burn the clock and push the lead to double digits. Williams was the primary factor on the drive, carrying the

ball seven times while racking up 49 yards and the game-sealing 2-yard plunge into the end zone.

That split continued in a similar fashion against Arkansas State when Henderson carried the ball 10 times for 87 yards and two touchdowns, while Williams ran it eight times for 46 yards.

10.5M Tune In For First Win

Ohio State's season-opening 21-10 win over Notre Dame was the most-watched game of the young college football season, drawing 10.5 million viewers on Sept. 3.

The second-place game was Florida State at LSU, which drew just 7.5 million viewers. Oregon at Georgia had 6.2 million viewers, and Colorado State at Michigan had 3.9 million people tune in.



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Brutus Level VIPs To Be Recognized In Coming Weeks

If you have wanted to show your support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program but are unable to participate at the Scarlet, Elite or Elite-Plus level, now is the time to sign up at the Brutus level for just \$50. Brutus level VIPs are recognized in BSB twice a year, and we will be running the complete list of Brutus VIPs during football season. VIP donors help Buckeye Sports Bulletin stay alive and vibrant.

"We want to thank the many BSB readers who have stepped up and shown their support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program," BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. "It is a true vote of confidence in what we are doing now, what we have done the previous 41 years and what we plan to do in the future."

A VIP upgrade can easily pay for itself each year with special VIP discounts and perks.

VIP subscribers enjoy a 20 percent discount at Conrads College Gifts. VIP subscribers also enjoy a 5 percent discount on any Ohio State football trip booked through Reynolds Travel. And VIP subscribers receive a certificate good for \$10 off at Roosters restaurants, the "Fun, Casual Joint," as well as a card good for \$10 off your next food purchase at any Cameron Mitchell Restaurant.

As mentioned, with the \$50 Brutus VIP upgrade, Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers will have their names and cities listed in two different issues annually as supporters of BSB.

Those who add \$100 to their subscriptions will have their names and cities listed in all 24 issues each year as BSB Scarlet patrons. Those who donate \$125 will be designated as Elite patrons in each issue.

And those who donate more than \$125 will have their names listed as Elite-Plus VIPs.

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The following are our Elite Wachsman, Elite-Plus, Elite and Scarlet VIP subscribers. **Elite Wachsman Donor (in honor of late BSB assistant publisher Karen Wachsman):** Roosters Restaurants Foundation.

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Scarlet VIPs: Anthony Ananthanarayanan, Rochester, Mich.; Greg Brooks, Gahanna, Ohio; Marty Brumbaugh, Troy, Ohio; Joseph A. Cusma Sr., Massillon, Ohio; Dennis Dahm, Sandusky, Ohio; Julie Ellis, Apple Valley, Calif.; Mike Freeburn, Columbus; Tom Goila, Cincinnati; Richard G. Hannan Jr., Chillicothe, Ohio; Doug Harris, Lima, Ohio; Ed Helal, Ashland, Ohio; Phil Helal, Strongsville, Ohio; Dave Palmer, Washington, Mich.; Lawrence Romanoff, Powell, Ohio; Jim Shaw, Lake Forest, Calif.; William Torok, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Dallas; Anonymous, Norwalk, Ohio.

The 10.5 million viewers for Ohio State-Notre Dame were more than every college football game last season, with the exception of Ohio State's loss to Michigan, which attracted 15.9 million viewers. That was the most watched college football game in FOX's history and the most-watched regular-season game since LSU-Alabama in 2019.

As for Ohio State-Notre Dame, it was the most-watched regular-season game on an ESPN network since 2017.

Eichenberg Earns Player Of The Week Honors

The Football Writers Association of America voted Ohio State linebacker Tommy Eichenberg as the Nagurski National Defensive Player of the Week following his performance in the Buckeyes' win over Notre Dame.

Eichenberg finished with a team-high nine tackles (three for loss) to go along with two sacks of Buchner. He was an integral part of

Continued On Page 8

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

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OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 7

Ohio State's defense that limited the Irish to just 10 points and 253 yards of offense.

This was the first time an Ohio State player had taken home the award since defensive end Chase Young last won the honors for the week-end of Oct. 26, 2019. Young went on to win the Bronko Nagurski Trophy that season.

Other weekly winners for Ohio State include linebackers Bobby Carpenter (2005) and James Laurinaitis (2006, 2007) and cornerback Chimdi Chekwa (2010).

Haskins Honored By Steelers

The Pittsburgh Steelers will wear a helmet decal this season to honor former Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins, who died in April at the age of 24 after being struck by a dump truck in Florida. The Steelers will wear a "3" sticker on their helmets, denoting Haskins' jersey number last season in Pittsburgh.

Ohio State took steps to honor Haskins during the spring game on April 16 including a "DH" helmet decal, signage on the field and a tribute to Haskins during halftime. It is unknown yet if Ohio State plans any long-term recognition of Haskins at Ohio Stadium or on the uniforms of the Buckeyes.

Ohio State Inducts 2022 Hall Of Fame Class

Ohio State inducted 15 new members to the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame on Sept. 9 in a ceremony at the Covelli Center.

The new inductees include Billy Ray Anders (football), Greg Bice (men's lacrosse), John Bluem (men's soccer coach), Charles W. Bolen (football/men's basketball), Joel Brown

(men's track), Aaron Craft (men's basketball), Adam Crompton (men's fencing), Jenna Harris Griffin (women's track), Alayna Markwordt (women's lacrosse), Russ Nagelson (baseball), Shawn Springs (football), Logan Stieber (wrestling), Jonathan Sweet (baseball), Tom Tupa (football) and Dan Whitacre (wrestling).

The new class, after being inducted on Sept. 9, was honored on the Ohio Stadium field during Ohio State's 42-12 win over Arkansas State the following day.

The Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame was created in 1977 and now boasts 473 athletes, coaches and administrators who have been inducted through this most recent class.

Ewers Injured Against Alabama

Former Ohio State quarterback and current Texas player Quinn Ewers was forced to exit Texas' week-two loss to Alabama after suffering a sprained SC joint in his left shoulder. According to reports, Ewers is expected to miss 4-6 weeks with the injury.

He had a solid first outing with Texas in a win over Louisiana-Monroe, completing 66.7 percent of his passes (16 of 24) and throwing for 225 yards and two touchdowns, as well as a pick. Ewers looked strong to start the Longhorns' eventual loss to Alabama, throwing for 134 yards on 9-of-12 passing in the game's early stages. Replacement signal-caller Hudson Card completed 14 of 22 passes for 158 yards and no scores.

Ewers appeared in just one game for Ohio State last season, coming in for two handoffs near the end of the Buckeyes' blowout win over Michigan State. The Southlake, Texas, native eventually settled on his hometown Longhorns as his destination, and he was named the starter for Texas in the preseason.

Holtmann's Assistants Net Over \$1.1 Million

As Ohio State men's basketball coach Chris Holtmann inked a three-year extension this offseason which will keep him in his position as Ohio State's head coach until 2028, his three assistants also locked into commitments with the Buckeyes.

According to multiple reports, fourth-year

assistant Jake Diebler, who rose through the ranks to top assistant following the departure of Ryan Pedon to Illinois State, will make a base salary of \$500,000. Diebler said he was "blessed to be able to continue to serve Coach Holtmann and the Ohio State basketball program" in a statement following his signing.

While Diebler is the only returner among Holtmann's assistants, sixth-year Ohio State special assistant to the head coach Mike Netti was elevated to one of the three assistant coaching positions during the offseason. Netti is expected to rake in \$250,000 this season.

Jack Owens, the former Miami (Ohio) head coach and newcomer to the Ohio State coaching staff, will make \$375,000 in his first season as an assistant coach for the Buckeyes.

Eight Buckeyes Named Captains For NFL Teams

Eight former Ohio State players have been named captains for their respective NFL teams, joined for the first time by quarterback Justin Fields, who was named a captain for the Chicago Bears.

The Cincinnati Bengals named seven captains, of whom two are Buckeyes – safety Vonn Bell and defensive end Sam Hubbard. Quarterback Joe Burrow was also named a captain for the Bengals, but his status as an Ohio State Buckeye or LSU Tiger comes down to personal preference.

The Los Angeles Chargers also named several Buckeyes as captains, including defensive end Joey Bosa and center Corey Linsley. The San Francisco 49ers named defensive end Nick Bosa as a captain, while the Washington Commanders made wide receiver Terry McLaurin a two-time captain. Defensive end Chase Young is an alternate captain for the Commanders.

Pittsburgh Steelers defensive end Cameron Heyward was named a captain for the eighth time entering his 12th season in the NFL.

Jack Emerson and Braden Moles contributed to this report. For up-to-the-minute Ohio State sports news and discussion, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com and the *BSB Fan Forum*, available for free to all Buckeye

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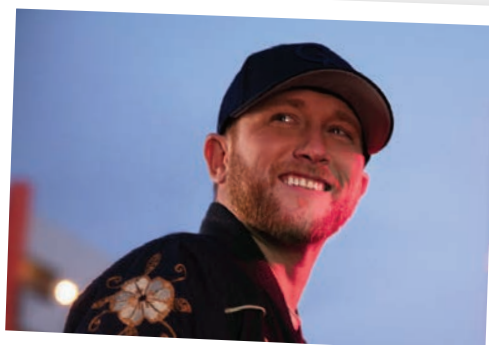
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Receiver Depth On Display Vs. Red Wolves

Continued From Page 1

better job with those, but Marvin was a big part of getting us going and certainly had the big-play capability. When you're playing a team that wants to load the box and press you at the line of scrimmage, you've got to win on the outside, and he did that today."

Harrison joined rare company with his three-touchdown performance, becoming just the second Ohio State player with multiple three-touchdown games for the Scarlet and Gray along with Joey Galloway. Galloway finished with seven receptions for 160 yards and three touchdowns in a 21-10 win over Michigan State on Oct. 16, 1993, and he had seven receptions for 95 yards and three touchdowns in a 23-17 win over Purdue on Oct. 22, 1994.

"That means a lot," Harrison said of tying the record. "Plenty of (receivers) have come through here, so to be mentioned with Joey Galloway, it means a lot. ... I've talked to Joey a couple of times. He's a Buckeye legend."

Harrison's three touchdowns showed a variety of different ways he can hurt opposing teams and were a clear indicator that he earned his "Route Man Marv" nickname bestowed on him by his teammates. On his first touchdown grab, Harrison hauled in a reception from Stroud across the middle of the field and was able to outrun two Arkansas State defenders to complete the 42-yard score on Ohio State's first drive of the game.

"Once you get the first one, it kind of gets all of the nerves and jitters out and you keep playing," Harrison said. "You're not thinking about the touchdowns as the game is going. You're trying to win the game."

The next quarter, Harrison beat his defender downfield, securing a few precious yards of separation to bring in another 42-yarder from Stroud to put the Buckeyes up 24-9 late in the first half. Finally, draped by two Arkansas State defenders, Harrison was able to go up and pull down a tight pass

from Stroud at the edge of the end zone for his third score, a 30-yarder in the third quarter.

"I have to be a complete receiver," Harrison said. "I can't just be a deep threat. I have to be able to work the short routes, the intermediates as well. I have to make it work on all three levels. It was definitely a lot. I know I had some guys catch up a little bit, so I have to work on that. It's short routes, intermediate, deep routes. I have to be able to do all three, for sure."

Stroud, who delivered an on-target throw for each of Harrison's receptions, said Harrison consistently shows what kind of athlete he is in practice.

"He works so hard during the week, on Bloody Tuesday, the Wednesday third-down and red-zone practices," Stroud said. "Between the numbers, he's one of the best route runners I've ever played with. Today was just his day to do it. I know Emeka and Xavier and all those other guys are doing it. When Jaxon gets back, they will be the same."

Watching Harrison dominate against Arkansas State, one could be forgiven for forgetting that it was just the third start for the Philadelphia native. There are still lessons to be learned for Harrison, who is looking for ways to improve his game despite his clear arrival to the rest of the country.

"I learned a lot from Garrett and Chris," Harrison said. "I was watching them last year and seeing how they prepared. You can't replicate game reps. So the more you get, the better you will be. This is my third start, so I'm still trying to learn and get better each week."

Harrison, of course, was not the only Ohio State receiver to take off against the Red Wolves. Egbuka, overshadowed by Harrison's dominant performance, finished with four catches for 118 yards and a touchdown, a 51-yarder that Egbuka was forced to contort his body to bring in, but he hauled in all the same.

Stroud was also assisted by Johnson,



SONNY BROCKWAY

SPREADING THE WEALTH — Quarterback C.J. Stroud completed 16 passes to six different receivers in Ohio State's win over Arkansas State, the longest coming on a 51-yard dish to sophomore wideout Emeka Egbuka.

who had three catches for 14 yards, and tight end Cade Stover — a blossoming passing threat for the Buckeyes — who had two

receptions for 40 yards, with the majority coming on a 35-yard completion in which Stover was sprung open by some nifty play calling courtesy of Day and offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson.

"It's been a bright spot," Day said of the involvement of the tight ends. "Cade had that nice catch down the sideline. I thought that was really good, and (we're) trying to get him more and more involved in the pass game."

More than anything, the performance of Ohio State's receivers — from Harrison all the way to Stover — showed that the Buckeyes can withstand the loss of Smith-Njigba, Fleming and Babb until they return to the field. Their absence is not something Ohio State will want to prolong, as Day indicated after the game that he hopes to have all of his injured receivers back against Toledo before Big Ten play begins against Wisconsin, but the Buckeyes' offense will be in safe hands until that moment arrives.

"I definitely think it shows everybody that we can prove ourselves with the depth that we do have," Stroud said. "Once those guys do come back — thank God, I mean, they're not crazy injuries — they'll be back either next week or the week after that."

"It's amazing just to see those young guys step up even more, like Jayden Bal-



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lard, some of the other young guys like Ky-ion Grayes even during practice, they come with us," Stroud continued. "The scouts give us a good look. We have to keep building on that. Once Julian and Jaxon come back, we'll welcome them in, and just gain more of a connection with them as well."

Penalties Remain An Issue For OSU

When Ohio State opened the preseason, Day said the Buckeyes had three goals: discipline, skill and toughness.

Based on the Buckeyes' wins over Notre Dame and Arkansas State – a grinding victory over the then-fifth-ranked Irish and a display of power against the Red Wolves – skill and toughness are no concern for the rest of the season, but work remains to be seen in regard to discipline.

Through Ohio State's first two games, the Buckeyes have committed 16 penalties worth 160 yards for the opposing teams, with several leading to scores by the competition. The penalties – luckily for the Buckeyes – did not impact the final result against Arkansas State, but they still earned nine flags that gave the Red Wolves an additional 85 yards and extended several possessions.

Ohio State had just two penalties on offense – an illegal formation and an unsportsmanlike conduct call against Johnson – that were nullified by scores later in the drives, but the same could not be said for the defensive penalties.

With the Red Wolves facing a fourth-and-4 at their own 38-yard line early in the first quarter, they opted for a punt. The boot from Arkansas State punter Ryan Hanson traveled to the Ohio State 22-yard line and was caught by Egbuka, who wove through the Red Wolves' special teams unit to re-

turn the punt 78 yards for a touchdown.

Or, rather, it would have been a touchdown had it not been for an illegal leaping penalty on fifth-year linebacker Teradja Mitchell, who took flight over Arkansas State's blockers and drew the foul, nullifying what would have been Ohio State's first punt-return TD since Jalin Marshall returned one 54 yards for a score against Indiana on Nov. 22, 2014.

It instead extended Arkansas State's drive, which was later boosted by a pass-interference penalty from sophomore cornerback Denzel Burke. He had another pass-interference penalty later in the drive that was declined because Arkansas State tight end Seydou Traore brought down the 16-yard reception despite Burke's interference, and the drive ultimately ended in a field goal for the Red Wolves.

While some penalties like false starts or offsides are inevitable throughout the course of the season – though four against Arkansas State at Ohio Stadium seems excessive – several penalties in the early stages of this season have been entirely avoidable. This includes Burke's pass-interference calls and personal fouls for Ballard, Johnson, Lathan Ransom and J.T. Tuimolotau against Notre Dame and defensive tackle Taron Vincent against the Red Wolves, one in which he got into an altercation exiting the field before halftime.

"When you look at that stat sheet you say, 'Wow,' but with the penalties, we had nine penalties. That's unacceptable," Day said. "We have to get that fixed. We have to coach it better, and we've got to put it on the field better, so that's going to be a huge emphasis point again this week and it's something we have to get done."



SONNY BROCKWAY

HEAD OVER HEELS – Fifth-year linebacker Teradja Mitchell's leaping penalty took a 78-yard punt return touchdown by sophomore wide receiver Emeka Egbuka off the board in the first quarter.

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Stroud Shines With Sophomore WR Targets

Although Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud was utilized more as a game manager in the Buckeyes' season opener against Notre Dame, head coach Ryan Day took the training wheels off the offense for his star signal-caller in Week Two.

With third-year wideouts Jaxon Smith-Njigba – Ohio State's leading receiver last season – and Julian Fleming as well as fifth-year wideout Kamryn Babb all unavailable, Stroud operated with a makeshift receiving corps against the Red Wolves on Sept. 10. Despite the injuries, Stroud returned to his 2021 form as he completed 66.7 percent of his pass attempts for 351 yards and four touchdowns during the Buckeyes' 45-12 win. Although Stroud threw the ball only 24 times, it was clear that Day was willing to utilize his quarterback's strong arm as his completions went for 21.9 yards on average.

Despite misfiring on his first attempt of the day, Stroud went on to rip off seven consecutive completions while connecting with four different receivers in that span. The stretch was headlined by a 42-yard catch-and-run by Marvin Harrison Jr. that resulted in the first score of the afternoon for Ohio State. From there, the Red Wolves greatly struggled to find an answer for the nearly unstoppable Stroud-to-Harrison connection. Stroud completed six additional passes to Harrison, two of which went for scores.

GAME NOTEBOOK Jack Emerson

When the dust settled, Harrison finished the afternoon with 184 receiving yards and three touchdowns.

"There's a lot of trust in that if you just get to your spot, he's going to make everything else work and you just have to come down with the ball," Harrison said of Stroud. "He's a great player. I'm blessed to be able to play with him."

Stroud also turned to another sophomore to help fill the voids of Smith-Njigba and Fleming, as Emeka Egbuka replicated the success he had against Notre Dame. While Egbuka turned in a nine-reception, 90-yard performance against the Fighting Irish, he broke the 100-yard mark against Arkansas State, collecting 118 yards on four receptions, including a 51-yard score in the third quarter.

While the sophomores shined, Stroud also looked to graduate Xavier Johnson – who caught Stroud's first two completions and finished with 14 yards on three receptions – and tight end Cade Stover, who hauled in both of his targets for 40 yards including a 35-yard catch-and-run late in the first quarter.

Day said the Buckeyes were just taking what Arkansas State was giving them in the passing game.

"On defense, they were packing the box, a lot of one-on-one on the outside. The middle of the field was available," Day said. "Credit them, they were aggressive and they were going to stop our run. That was the balance we were looking for. If you're going to try and stop the run, then we have to be able to throw the ball and vice versa. In two games you've seen that. There were some good things there in the passing game today."

Henderson, Williams Thrive In Rotation

While Stroud and the Buckeyes' receiver depth took center stage on Sept. 10, the running back rotation of TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams built upon their solid game against Notre Dame.

Although neither running back carried the ball more than 10 times, the pair combined for 133 yards, accounting for 79.2 percent of Ohio State's ground attack. Similar to the Notre Dame game, it was the aggressiveness that the duo ran with that stood out to their teammates.

"I've never seen a combination of backs like we have," Harrison said. "They run hard, man. One person is not going to bring them down."

Henderson accounted for 87 yards and

two touchdowns while carrying the ball 10 times, while Williams added 46 yards on eight carries. Henderson averaged 8.7 yards per carry and Williams earned 5.8 yards per attempt, and the team as a whole averaged 6.5 yards per carry.

True freshman running back Dallan Hayden saw his first action in scarlet and gray against the Red Wolves. He carried the ball four times while picking up 13 yards, and Hayden also flashed his potential as a pass-catcher out of the backfield, hauling in two receptions for an additional 13 yards.

While Arkansas State placed specific importance on stacking the box and limiting Ohio State's dynamic rushing attack, Day was pleased with what he saw from his running backs.

"There were some clean runs in there, for sure, and some other ones that could have been cleaner," Day said. "I thought they ran hard again, and we'll watch the film and make sure they hit the right holes and figure out what we can improve on, but there were some positives there."

Stroud emphasized that the rushing attack's fast start to the season is a result of the Buckeyes refining their abilities in that phase of the game.

"As a whole, our run game is much cleaner," Stroud said. "Of course, it starts up front. I think our offensive line did a great job today. Miyan and TreVeyon were great since they stepped on campus, so I don't think they're doing anything new."

"As a whole, we're working better together and getting communication down."

Offense Relies On Explosive Plays

Ohio State ran just 54 offensive plays against the Red Wolves, much to Day's chagrin, relying heavily on chunk plays to carry its offense.

Five of Ohio State's six touchdowns came from outside the red zone, four of

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

There are plenty of directions to go here, but the biggest strength for Ohio State against Arkansas State had to be its passing game.

Third-year quarterback C.J. Stroud put up similar numbers to the gaudy production he had in 2021, completing 66.7 percent of his 24 throws for 351 yards and four touchdowns.

Sophomore wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. served as the top beneficiary, picking up 137 yards on his first four receptions. Pinpoint throws on go routes secured a 42-yard touchdown and a 45-yard gain for the Pennsylvania native in the first quarter, and Stroud found him breaking over the middle of the field on second-and-2 before Harrison slashed through the opposing secondary for another 42-yard score late in the first half.

Harrison capped his day by high-pointing a throw up the left sideline in the end zone over two defenders for a 30-yard scoring grab near the end of the third quarter. His final stat line read seven receptions for 184 yards and three touchdowns.

Sophomore wide receiver Emeka Egbuka had things cooking when Harrison didn't, picking up four receptions for 118 yards including a 51-yard scoring catch.

The Buckeyes' front five had a lot to do with its success as well. Stroud had all the time he could ask for on most of his throws, and the team's passes were set up by success on the ground, where sophomore running back TreVeyon Henderson and third-year Miyan Williams averaged a combined 7.4 yards per carry on the contest.

What Didn't Work

Ohio State's defense looked out of position on several plays against the Red Wolves.

Arkansas State fifth-year quarterback James Blackman found fifth-year wide receiver Champ Flemings wide open up the sideline with the Buckeyes' coverage lacking for a 58-yard gain in the second quarter. Flemings also converted a fourth-and-1 on another drive by out-leveraging the Scarlet and Gray on an outside run for 15 yards.

Blackman also connected with third-year wide receiver Adam Jones for a 25-yard gain in the second quarter.

Even a couple of Blackman's incompletions were slightly off-target shots to receivers who had a step on their defenders deep downfield, but penalties made matters even worse. The defense got whistled for seven of the Buckeyes' nine flags, resulting in 65 yards for the Red Wolves.

That being said, Arkansas State failed to score a touchdown, and the big plays lessened in the second half, when the Red Wolves totaled just 94 yards of offense.

Play of the Game

Two yellow pieces of cloth prevented Ohio State sophomore wide receiver Emeka Egbuka from doing something no Buckeye has done in eight seasons.

In the first quarter against Arkansas State, Egbuka fielded a punt at the OSU 22-yard line, found a lane and knifed through the Red Wolves' punt-coverage team for a 78-yard return score.

The last punt or kick return touchdown for Ohio State came from former wide receiver Jalin Marshall against Indiana in 2014, but as Ohio Stadium celebrated the end of that drought, a collection of flags were spotted on the field.

Two penalties were called against the Buckeyes, one for a block in the back and one for leaping over Arkansas State's punt shield, which resulted in a first down for the Red Wolves.

Egbuka fair caught all but one of his other punt-return opportunities in the contest, on which he gained 13 yards on that one return.

Even if the end result was an extension of an opposing offense's drive, in a game where Ohio State had the clear upper hand anyway, it was a positive sign to see Egbuka be able to house one. Having a dynamic return man could come into play much more in games where field position is an important factor for the Buckeyes.

– Andy Anders

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OHIO STATE VS. ARKANSAS STATE



SONNY BROCKWAY

BEND BUT DON'T BREAK — Ohio State's defense gave up 276 yards against Arkansas State but limited the Red Wolves to just 12 points on four field-goal attempts.

which came on plays of 30 or more yards. The Buckeyes averaged nearly 10 yards per play but saw stark contrasts between their scoring drives and their non-scoring possessions.

During the first half, Ohio State completed four scoring drives — three touchdowns and a field goal — but its other two drives resulted in three-and-outs.

"The negative things get us off schedule, and we just don't quite execute at a high level and it throws you off," Day said. "Part of having only 54 plays is because we had a couple of three-and-outs. We're going to take a lot of pride in our execution and keep growing and building on it and figuring out as we go through this year where we're at, but I think you can see the potential, for sure."

That trend continued in the second half. The Buckeyes' first five drives resulted in either a touchdown or a three-and-out.

Although the Buckeyes ran just 54 plays to Arkansas State's 76, they outgained the Red Wolves 538-276.

Ohio State also appeared to find that balance that Day has been seeking for much of the last two seasons, passing the ball 28 times while rushing 26 times.

"We look for that balance, and we were probably 60-40 or more (toward) the pass last year, which is not what we want to do. We want to be able to control the game.

That's the balance that we need," Day said. "Depending on what a team is doing, sometimes they force your hand a little bit. If you want to be a good offense, you have to be able to do that. We have to be able to throw the ball, but then we have to win four-minute drills and run the ball in short-yardage and in the red zone. We're constantly working toward those things so we can get where we need to be.

"The good news is we've already played a top-five opponent, so we've proved ourselves in some areas, but the only way we're going to accomplish our goals is if we keep building and growing and getting better in all these areas."

Knowles' Defense A Mixed Bag

Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles and his unit flashed consistency against the Red Wolves but also displayed a lack of discipline in certain junctures of the game.

The Buckeyes held their opponent to under 300 total yards for the second consecutive week, keeping the Red Wolves at the 276-yard mark. Once again, it was Ohio State's run defense that was largely effective, bottling up Arkansas State to just 53 yards on the ground. But the unit shot itself in the foot repeatedly, accounting for seven

accepted penalties and 65 free yards for Arkansas State.

Arkansas State finished four scoring drives, but Ohio State did not allow the Red Wolves into the end zone and has held its opponents to just one touchdown through the first two games.

"It was kind of a bend-but-don't-break style today based on what they were doing," Day said. "I thought the way we came out in the second half was good. We came down, scored, had a three-and-out, that was good, then scored again. I thought we could have got a little bit more of that going in the second half but didn't quite finish it the way that we would have liked to have seen, quite honestly, but there was some good things there.

"If we're going to be the team we need to be, we have to keep building and keep growing, and there are certain areas that we have to improve on," he continued. "Anytime the defense holds another offense from scoring touchdowns, it's going to be a good day for the Buckeyes."

Ohio State's linebackers largely showcased their abilities with Steele Chambers and Cody Simon each accounting for six tackles, while Tommy Eichenberg added five. Chambers added a devastating third-down sack of Arkansas State quarterback James Blackman on the Red Wolves' opening drive of the second half.

The Buckeyes' defensive line also shone, yet again, and was led by Mike Hall Jr. for the second-straight week. Hall accounted for three tackles, all of which resulted in a loss of yardage, though he left the game early. Freshman Caden Curry made his in-

troduction to Buckeye Nation, collecting four tackles, including one that resulted in a 6-yard loss early in the fourth quarter.

However, Ohio State's defensive line was flagged four separate times for offsides penalties, handing Arkansas State 20 free yards.

While Ohio State's front six impressed, the back end came under the microscope on a few plays. Early-season struggles continued for second-year cornerback Denzel Burke, who was flagged for pass interference twice during the first frame. Champ Flemings, a 5-6, 155-pound transfer from Oregon State, gave Burke and company issues all afternoon. He caught all 10 of his targets for a total of 105 yards, including a 58-yard snag on a play in which he flew past Burke on a fly route down the left sideline.

Regardless of the several miscues displayed by the secondary, Arkansas State was still held to just 223 passing yards with a 59.5-percent completion rate.

Ohio State was also solid on third downs, holding the Red Wolves to just a 25-percent conversion rate (5 of 20).

Ohio State's defense has strung together two solid performances to open the season, and graduate safety Josh Proctor emphasized that the unit is playing much freer than it did last year.

"I feel that energy and excitement," Proctor said. "We want to dominate everybody in front of us and everybody we play. That's what we try to do each and every drive."

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Stroud To Harrison Proves Unstoppable

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

If Ohio State had a letdown against Arkansas State on Sept. 10 – and it appeared that way for much of the first half – after defeating then-No. 5 Notre Dame in the season opener, the Buckeyes woke from their slumber in a 10-minute stretch spanning the end of the second quarter to early in the third.

An eight-point game soon became a 29-point lead, and victory was assured as C.J. Stroud threw for 351 yards – including 184 yards and three of his four touchdowns to Marvin Harrison Jr. – when No. 3 Ohio State rolled past the Red Wolves 45-12 at Ohio Stadium on a sunny, 75-degree day.

Harrison, who had tied a Rose Bowl record on Jan. 1 with three touchdowns catches, joined Joey Galloway as the only OSU players to have three TD catches in a game twice.

“They just couldn’t contain him today,” Stroud said. “Every day in practice, he just shows how great an athlete he is. And he works so hard.”

Stroud was 16 of 24. Harrison made seven catches for 184 yards, and Emeka Egbuka gained 118 yards on four catches, while TreVeyon Henderson rushed for 87 yards on 10 carries with two scores.

The Buckeyes (2-0) were without stand-out receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who sustained a leg injury in the season opener against Notre Dame, although it didn’t matter as the Buckeyes pulled away from ASU (1-1), a four-point underdog, before a crowd of 100,067.

Marvin-lous

The Buckeyes began their first series at their own 4-yard line following a 68-yard punt by Ryan Hanson.

It took eight plays and 3:30 for OSU to travel the 96 yards to pay dirt when Stroud connected with Harrison for a 42-yard touchdown and a 7-0 lead at 10:04.

Henderson got the Buckeyes rolling on the second snap with a 41-yard run to their 48, but later Stroud faced a third-and-10 from the Red Wolves 42-yard line when Harrison cut across the middle, grabbed the pass at the 27-yard line and sprinted to the left pylon.

Ohio State penalties enabled Arkansas State to make it 7-3 at the 5:56 mark on a 29-yard field goal by Dominic Zvada.

It began with a personal foul at the end of the OSU touchdown that was tacked onto the kickoff, allowing the Red Wolves a return to their 32-yard line. Then, Egbuka had a 78-yard punt return nullified by a penalty on Teradja Mitchell for leaping over the punt blockers that gave the ball back to the Red Wolves at the OSU 47-yard line.

Three plays later, Denzel Burke was called for pass interference to the 33-yard line. Burke was flagged for another pass interference, but Arkansas State declined when Seydou Traore made a 16-yard catch to the 17-yard line. Nonetheless, the drive soon died, resulting in Zvada’s 29-yarder.

Ohio State responded with a four-play, 75-yard, 1:33 series culminating in a Henderson 8-yard run up the gut for a 14-3 lead at 4:23. Henderson ran for 7 yards to the 32-yard line, and after Harrison had a 45-yard catch to the ASU 23-yard line, Egbuka had a 15-yard catch on the ensuing play before the Henderson score.

Noah Ruggles made a 24-yard field goal on the first play of the second quarter to put OSU ahead 17-3. Tight end Cade Stover ignited the drive with a 35-yard reception to the Red Wolves 29-yard line. Pass interference on a throw to Harrison put the ball on the 14-yard line. A late hit on Miyan Williams pushed the ball to the 8-yard line, but a false start hindered progress, and Harrison on third down was popped after trying to make a catch at the goal line and the Buckeyes settled for three points.

Zvada nailed a field goal from the 38-yard line to close the deficit to 17-6 at 13:33 before the half. Champ Flemings had the



SONNY BROCKWAY

PASS THE ROCK — Sophomore running back TreVeyon Henderson rushed the ball 10 times for 87 yards and two touchdowns against the Red Wolves, leading Ohio State’s ground attack that averaged 6.5 yards per carry.

key play, a 58-yard catch to the 12-yard line, but the Red Wolves had two incompletions, a 3-yard loss on a run and a false start to snuff a chance for a TD.

Arkansas State would not go away. On their next possession, the Red Wolves held the ball for 6:53 and ran off 14 plays, reaching the OSU 13-yard line before the defense stiffened, and Zvada made it 17-9 with a 34-yard field goal with 5:22 left in the half.

Flemings did the heavy lifting with a 5-yard catch on third-and-1 from the Arkansas 34 and added an 11-yard catch with the next snap. Later, on a fourth-and-1 from the OSU 30-yard line, his end-around gained 15 yards, but the Red Wolves could not take advantage of their field position.

It cost them when Harrison’s 42-yard TD catch only 58 seconds later made it 24-9. Williams opened the possession with a 25-yard run, and Egbuka made a catch for 8 yards to set up the scoring play.

In the final minute of the second quarter, Arkansas State went to the line needing a yard from the OSU 40-yard line on fourth down when Mike Hall Jr. had an 8-yard sack of James Blackman.

The Buckeyes wasted little time increasing the lead to 31-9 to open the third quarter, using 1:20 to rip off 75 yards in just three plays. The first was a 44-yard catch-and-run by Egbuka to the ASU 31-yard line. The second was 8 yards on the ground for Henderson, then finally, he ran for the touchdown from the 23-yard line at 13:40.

It was more of the same after Arkansas State punted. Starting from the OSU 41-yard line, Harrison moved the ball 8 yards with a catch before Egbuka hauled in a 51-yard throw to make it 38-9 at 10:30.

“When you give up big plays for touchdowns, those are catastrophic plays,” said Arkansas State coach Butch Jones.

Zvada made his fourth field goal from 45 yards out with 2:49 left in the third quarter to make it 38-12. The Red Wolves held the ball 10 plays and used 4:46 of the

clock. Johnnie Lang ran for 12, Reagan Ely had a 13-yard catch and Flemings added a 12-yarder helping set up the score.

Harrison upped the lead to 45-12 on a 30-yarder from Stroud with four seconds remaining in the third quarter. The drive started with a 27-yard run by Egbuka to the ASU 48-yard line. Harrison had a 9-yard catch three plays prior to his TD. The Buckeyes held the ball for 2:45 and seven plays to go 75 yards.

Kyle McCord replaced Stroud with 8:24 left in the fourth quarter. Freshman Dallan Hayden had four runs for 13 yards and two catches for 13 during the drive.

Later, after a muffed punt at the OSU 44-yard line by JK Johnson, Arkansas State drove to the OSU 6-yard line where the game ended after a catch by Omari Walker.

Arkansas State’s Blackman was 20 of 34 for 188 yards with Flemings getting 10 catches for 105 yards. Flemings also added 20 rushing yards.

Zvada made all four field-goal attempts for Arkansas State, but the Red Wolves scored just nine points from four trips to the red zone.

“When you play a team like Ohio State, every mistake you make is magnified,” Jones said. “So you have to do a great job and not beat yourself.”

Notes

Williams ran eight times for 46 yards. ... McCord was 3 of 4 for 19 yards. ... Xavier Johnson made three grabs for 14 yards, and Stover caught two for 40. ... The Buckeyes had a sack apiece from Hall and Steele Chambers. ... Chambers and Cody Simon each had six tackles (four solo) to lead the Buckeyes. ... OSU had 538 total yards (370 passing, 168 rushing); Arkansas State had 53 rushing and 223 passing yards for a total of 276 yards. ... Galloway’s pair of three-TD games were against Michigan State in 1993 and Purdue in 1994.

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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 45, Arkansas State 12

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on Ohio State's passing game: "On defense they were packing the box, a lot of one-on-one on the outside. The middle of the field was available. Credit them, they were aggressive and they were going to stop our run. That was the balance we were looking for. If you're going to try and stop the run, then we have to be able to throw the ball and vice versa. In two games you've seen that."

Day on Ohio State's nine penalties for 85 yards: "When you look at that stat sheet, you say, 'Wow,' but with the penalties, we had nine penalties. That's unacceptable. We have to get that fixed. We have to coach it better and we've got to put it on the field better, so that's going to be a huge emphasis point again this week, and it's something we have to get done."

Day on Marvin Harrison Jr. and Ohio State's wide receivers: "He's very mature for his age – so is Emeka (Egbuka) – but Marvin's route running is very mature for his age. To see somebody who's played as much as he has, the high level of route running is pretty remarkable. He had a chance to have four touchdowns, I think. He had the one they called an incomple- tion, he could have finished that one off. The potential is there. You can see the couple of plays he made, he did it a bunch of different ways."

Ohio State graduate safety Josh Proctor on keeping his head in the game after being benched against Notre Dame: "I'm just thinking back to the fact that I am a leader, one of the older guys of the defense. (The younger guys) seeing me down or seeing me out of it, I feel like it wouldn't look the right way. I just have to keep my composure and keep them up and handle my business."



Josh Proctor

Ohio State third-year quarterback C.J. Stroud on his receiving options: "I definitely think it shows everybody that we can prove ourselves with the depth

that we do have. Once (Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming) do come back – thank God, I mean, they're not crazy injuries – they'll be back either next week or the week after that. It's amazing just to see those young guys step up even more, like Jayden Ballard, some of the other young guys, Kyion Grayes even, during practice they come with us."

Stroud on his last touchdown pass to Harrison: "I tried to hold him with my eyes a little bit and put it in a spot where only Marvin could get it. I tried to let Marvin work a little more. He did a good job to release – we got a lot of holding today but we got by – and he caught it."

Harrison on his first touchdown, a 42-yard reception early in the first quarter: "That play, I'm kind of the last progression. I know I had to run a great route. If I get the ball, I have to make something happen with it. Other than that, I just see the ball come my way."

Ohio State sophomore running back TreVeyon Henderson on splitting carries with third-year back Miyan Williams: "I'm comfortable with what I'm getting right now. I'm taking advantage of every carry I get."

Ohio State fourth-year linebacker Steele Chambers on the play of the defense: "I feel like we did a pretty good job. There were still some things that we need to clean up, but I mean, overall I think we did a decently good job."

Chambers on how he and fourth-year linebacker Tommy Eichenberg have been able to run free on blitzes up the middle: "I think it's the defensive line. The offensive line, running backs, whoever's blocking, just having them put all their attention on those front four, then us being able to just fit wherever we need to fit, that's really nice for us."

Day on the sustained success of sophomore defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr. and his injury: "He did it again this week and that's good. That's progress. (The injury) is not something that we



SONNY BROCKWAY

COMING-OUT PARTY — Freshman defensive end Caden Curry (82) made a big impact late in Ohio State's win over the Red Wolves, coming unblocked off the edge and bringing down Arkansas State running back Ja'Quez Cross for a 6-yard loss.

expect him to miss any time for, but we'll see once we get an evaluation postgame. But there was no concern coming out of it that it was going to be long-term."

Day on the defensive line rotation and freshman defensive end Caden Curry: "I might have (played every defensive lineman). It seemed like there were a lot of guys out there. But Caden's flashed. Caden plays hard, he's productive, he's one heck of a football player. I'm glad he's a Buckeye and looking forward to see if he grades out a champion."

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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 45, Arkansas State 12

Sept. 10, 2022 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
ARKANSAS STATE	3	6	3	0	12
OHIO STATE	14	10	21	0	45

First Quarter

OSU – Harrison Jr., 42-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 10:04.

ASU – Zvada, 29-yard field goal, 5:56.

OSU – Henderson, 2-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 4:23.

Second Quarter

OSU – Ruggles, 24-yard field goal, 14:56.

ASU – Zvada, 38-yard field goal, 13:33.

ASU – Zvada, 34-yard field goal, 5:22.

OSU – Harrison Jr., 42-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 4:24.

Third Quarter

OSU – Henderson, 23-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 13:40.

OSU – Egbuka, 51-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 10:30.

ASU – Zvada, 45-yard field goal, 2:49.

OSU – Harrison Jr., 30-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 0:04.

Att. – 100,067

Weather – Cloudy.

Team Statistics		
	ASU	OSU
First Downs	15	20
Rushing	4	5
Passing	9	12
Penalty	2	3
Rushes-Yards	34-53	26-186
Passing Yards	223	370
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	25-42-0	19-28-0
Offensive Plays	76	54
Total Net Yards	276	538
Third Down Efficiency	5-20	5-11
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	0-0
Punts-Avg.	7-51.6	5-43.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-1
Penalties	6-63	9-85
Time of Possession	37:44	22:16

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **ASU:** Flemings 2-20; Lang 12-19; Murray 7-13; Mayer 4-12; Sharpe II 2-4; Team 1-(-1); Cross 2-(-4); Blackman 4-(-10). **OSU:** Henderson 10-87; M. Williams 8-46; Egbuka 1-27; Hayden 4-13; Stroud 2-(-1); Team 1-(-4).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **ASU:** Blackman 20-34-0-188-0; Mayer 5-8-0-35-0. **OSU:** Stroud 16-24-0-351-4; McCord 3-4-0-19-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **ASU:** Flemings 10-105; Stevenson 3-16; Jones 2-31; Traore 2-17; Wailker 2-11; Murray 2-6; Milliner 1-18; Ealy 1-13; McCrumby 1-9; Cross 1-(-3). **OSU:** Harrison Jr. 7-184; Egbuka 4-118; X. Johnson 3-14; Stover 2-40; Hayden 2-13; Williams 1-1.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **ASU:** Hanson 7-51.6-68. **OSU:** Mirco 5-43.8-52.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **ASU:** None. **OSU:** Egbuka 1-13; J. Johnson 1-0.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **ASU:** Lang 4-88. **OSU:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – **ASU:** Bullard 1-0. **OSU:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **ASU:** None. **OSU:** None.

SACKS – **ASU:** Harris 0.5-1; Geather 0.5-1. **OSU:** Chambers 1.0-7; Hall Jr. 1.0-8.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **ASU:** Harris 1-2; Straker 1-4; Bennett 1-1; Harris 1.5-5; Geathers 0.5-1; Hassler 1-2. **OSU:** Chambers 1-7; Simon 2-2; Curry 1-6; Ransom 1-3; Burke 1-1; Hall Jr. 3-13; T. Williams 1.5-5; Saywer 0.5-2; Tuimoloau 1-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **ASU:** Smith 4-2-6; Doss 1-5-6; Harris 5-0-5; Thomas 3-2-5; Straker 1-4-5; Bennett 3-1-4; Jones 2-1-3; Parks 2-1-3; Harris 1-2-3; Geathers 1-2-3; Willekes 0-3-3; Carmouche 1-0-1; Hassler 1-0-1; Hardiman 0-1-1. **OSU:** Chambers 4-2-6; Simon 4-2-6; C. Brown 4-1-5; Eichenberg 4-1-5; Martinez 3-1-4; Curry 3-1-4; Ransom 2-2-4; Proctor 3-0-3; Burke 3-0-3; J. Johnson 3-0-3; Hall Jr. 3-0-3; T. Williams 2-1-3; Hickman 1-2-3; Gaoteote IV 2-0-2; Trayanum 2-0-2; Sawyer 1-1-2; Harrison 0-2-2; Tuimoloau 1-0-1; Friday 1-0-1; McCalister 1-0-1; Hamilton 1-0-1; Jackson 1-0-1; Vincent 0-1-1; X. Johnson 0-1-1; Jean-Baptiste 0-1-1; Cage 0-1-1; K. Williams 0-1-1; J. Brown 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **ASU:** Blackman, Stevenson, Foreman, Traore, Lang, Holmes, Miner, Flemings, Butler, Thomas, Rhodes, Mincey, Johnson, Carmouche, Harris, Flowers, Straker, Harris, Ayers, Bennett, Smith, Thomas, Jones, Mccrumby, Reed III, Toll, Mayer, Jones, Sharpe II, Milliner, Cage, Ealy, Parks, Hassler, Zvada, Jeffery, Murray, Temple, Willekes, Bullard, Doss, Shelton, Mattson, Hanson, Cross, Woods, Britton, Hoz, Harden, Smith, Sugick, Ramirez, Waleed, Wailker, Richardson, Hardiman, Geathers. **OSU:** Harrison Jr., Egbuka, Henderson, Rossi, Wypler, M. Jones, Stroud, Jackson, Johnson Jr., D. Jones, Stover, Hickman, McCalister, Chambers, C. Brown, Eichenberg, Proctor, Tuimoloau, Burke, Hall Jr., Vincent, Harrison, K. Williams, X. Johnson, Hicks, Ransom, Martinez, J. Brown, Trayanum, Styles, Gaoteote IV, Abor, Dunn, Mirco, M. Williams, Mitchell, Simon, Sawyer, Stokes, Fielding, J. Johnson, Robinson, Hayden, Friday, Hamilton, McCord, Michalski, Vimahi, Tshabola, Fryar, James, Jean-Baptiste, Royer, Cage, Scott Jr., Ballard, McKenzie, T. Williams, Curry, Kanu, Ruggles, Jackson.

Season Statistics

2022 Game-By-Game			
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd
Sept. 3	(2) NOTRE DAME (5)	W, 21-10	106,549
Sept. 10	(3) ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	100,067
Sept. 17	(3) TOLEDO	7 p.m.	
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	TBA	
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	3:30 p.m.	
Oct. 8	at Michigan State (11)	TBA	
Oct. 22	IOWA	TBA	
Oct. 29	at Penn State (22)	TBA	
Nov. 5	at Northwestern	TBA	
Nov. 12	INDIANA	TBA	
Nov. 19	at Maryland	TBA	
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN (4)	Noon	
Dec. 3	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.	

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

Team Statistics		
	OSU	Opp
First Downs	42	27
Rushing	16	7
Passing	21	15
Penalty	5	5
Average Per Game/Rush	170.0	64.5
Average Per Game/Pass	296.5	200.0
Total Offense	933	529
Total Plays	123	124
Average Per Game	466.5	264.5
Average Per Play	7.6	4.3
Penalties-Yards	16-160	11-124
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	2-0
Third Down Efficiency	12-24	8-33
Percentage	50%	24%
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	1-3
Percentage	0%	33%
Sacks-Yards	5-34	2-7
Time Of Possession Avg.	27:38	32:22

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	21	10	28	7	0	66	33.0	
Opponents	6	13	3	0	0	22	11.0	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
T. Henderson	25	178	7.1	2	41
Miyan Williams	22	130	5.9	1	25
C.J. Stroud	5	0	0.0	0	3
Dallan Hayden	4	13	3.3	0	9
Emeka Egbuka	1	27	27.0	0	27
OSU Totals	61	340	5.6	3	41
OPP Totals	64	129	2.0	1	15

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
C.J. Stroud	40	58	69.0	574	6-0	186.2
Kyle McCord	3	4	75.0	19	0-0	114.9
OSU Totals	43	62	69.4	593	6-0	150.55
OPP Totals	35	60	58.3	400	0-0	113.5

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	13	208	16.0	2	51
Marvin Harrison Jr.	12	240	18.5	3	45
Cade Stover	5	54	10.8	0	35
Xavier Johnson	5	48	9.6	1	24
Jayden Ballard	2	14	7.0	0	10
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	2	3	1.5	0	4
Miyan Williams	2	13	6.5	0	12
Dallan Hayden	2	13	6.5	0	10
OSU Totals	43	593	13.8	6	51
OPP Totals	35	400	11.4	0	58

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Marvin Harrison Jr.	3	-	-	-	-	18
Emeka Egbuka	2	-	-	-	-	12
T. Henderson	2	-	-	-	-	12
Xavier Johnson	1	-	-	-	-	6
Miyan Williams	1	-	-	-	-	6
Noah Ruggles	-	9-9	-	-	1-2	3
OSU Totals	9	9-9	-	-	1-2	57
OPP Totals	1	1-1	0-0	0-0	5-5	22

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Noah Ruggles	1-1	0-1	0-0	0-0	1-2
OSU Totals	1-1	0-1	0-0	0-0	1-2
OPP Totals	1-1	3-3	1-1	0-0	5-5

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Jesse Mirco	10	444	44.4	0	52
OSU Totals	10	444	44.4	0	52
OPP Totals	14	690	49.3	0	75

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
OSU Totals	0	0	0	0	0
OPP Totals	0	0	0	0	0

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	2	17	8.5	0	13
JK Johnson	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	3	17	5.7	0	13
OPP Totals	0	0	0	0	0

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	1	25	25.0	0	25
OSU Totals	1	25	25.0	0	25
OPP Totals	6	110	18.3	0	30

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
T. Eichenberg	10	4	14	3.0-9	2.0-8
Lathan Ransom	8	3	11	1.0-3	0-0
Steele Chambers	6	5	11	1.0-7	1.0-7
Cody Simon	4	4	8	2.0-2	0-0
Ronnie Hickman	3	4	7	0-0	0-0
Mike Hall Jr.	6	1	7	5.0-26	2.0-19
Cameron Brown	4	1	5	0-0	0-0
Cameron Martinez	3	1	4	0-0	0-0
Denzel Burke	3	1	4	1.0-1	0-0
Zach Harrison	2	2	4	0-0	0-0
Caden Curry	3	1	4	1.0-6	0-0
Chip Trayanum	3	-	3	0-0	0-0
Taron Vincent	1	2	3	0-0	0-0
Tyleik Williams	2	1	3	1.5-5	0-0
JK Johnson	3	-	3	0-0	0-0
Josh Proctor	3	-	3	0-0	0-0
Palaie Gaoteote IV	2	-	2	0-0	0-0
Jack Sawyer	1	1	2	0.5-2	0-0
Xavier Johnson	1	1	2	0-0	0-0
Tanner McCalister	2	-	2	0-0	0-0
Tyler Friday	2	-	2	0-0	0-0
J.T. Tuimoloau	2	-	2	2.0-5	0-0
J. Jean-Baptiste	1	1	2	0-0	0-0
Ty Hamilton	2	-	2	0-0	0-0
Jyaire Brown	-	1	1	0-0	0-0
Kourt Williams	-	1	1	0-0	0-0
Jerron Cage	-	1	1	0-0	0-0
Kenyatta Jackson	1	-	1	0-0	0-0

OSU Totals	78	36	114	18.0-66	5.0-34
OPP Totals	61	54	115	8.0-21	2.0-7
Fumbles Forced: 0.					
Fumbles Recovered: 0.					

Johnson Makes Turn From Walk-On To Star

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

With the game on the line, who might Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud look to with the ball in his hands? It could be Jaxon Smith-Njigba, the Buckeyes' star receiver who broke nearly every program receiving record last season. It could be Emeka Egbuka or Marvin Harrison Jr., two rising sophomores who have already shown they're capable of big things. It could be second-year Jayden Ballard, fifth-year Kam Babb or third-year Julian Fleming, who are awaiting the opportunity to flash in Ohio State's offense and have the skills to contribute.

Any one of these receivers could be a solid option – and most have been, at points – for Ohio State's passing offense. After all, they're all former top-100 prospects out of high school. In fact, eight of Ohio State's 11 scholarship receivers were among the top 100 recruits in their respective classes.

The three who found themselves outside of that parameter are freshmen Kojo Antwi and Caleb Burton as well as the man of the hour against Notre Dame: fifth-year wide receiver Xavier Johnson. He pulled in his first career receptions in Ohio State's 21-10 win over the Irish on Sept. 3, including the go-ahead, 24-yard touchdown catch on third-and-1 late in the third quarter.

"I'm not going to lie, it was crazy," Johnson said. "It's all for the team and for the glory of God. It's a testament to Coach (Ryan) Day. It's testament to Coach (Brian) Hartline, Coach (Mickey) Marotti. They just put us in the positions to succeed so that's all I was doing. I was in my position doing what I was supposed to do."

It looked natural for Johnson, but it wasn't ever a given that he would make an impact like that for Ohio State. The former three-star recruit out of Summit Country Day School in Cincinnati – ranked the No. 1,138 overall prospect in the 2018 recruiting class – committed to the Buckeyes as a



SONNY BROCKWAY

A STAR IS BORN — Fifth-year wideout Xavier Johnson had a breakout performance against Notre Dame, bringing in the go-ahead touchdown reception for the Buckeyes in their 21-10 win.

preferred walk-on despite holding scholarship offers from Akron, Bowling Green and even Cincinnati.

Johnson did not see the field in 2018 and appeared in 10 games in 2019, all on special teams. He continued his special teams work in 2020 while adding some additional duties at running back, where he carried the ball four times for 17 yards while playing in 12 games.

He returned exclusively to special teams last season, finishing with six tackles and also returning three kickoffs for the Buckeyes. His valuable work on special teams resulted in Johnson being put on scholarship prior to Ohio State's game against Oregon last season, though he kept that information under wraps until recently.

"I am on scholarship," Johnson said during fall camp. "I got put on scholarship against Oregon last year. But it was one of those things where my main focus was going out and keeping the focus on the game. So it wasn't a big parade. It wasn't one of those big things where the team huddles up and there's a big celebration. My main focus was going to get that win. We came up a little short, but I just wanted to keep everything on the team."

It was an easy decision to add Johnson to the group of 85 scholarship players. He put in his time on special teams, doing whatever was asked of him, and his score against Notre Dame rewarded the staff for showing confidence in the former walk-on.

"Xavier Johnson practices every day," Day said after the victory over the Irish. "Xavier Johnson really cut his teeth on special teams. He's kind of a throwback player. For him to come in and play in that moment and this game right here, I just couldn't be happier for him because it goes to show you that good things happen to good people who work hard, and that's exactly who Xavier Johnson is."

"He was a walk-on, he earned his scholarship, and he's grown into a really good football player," Day continued. "We trusted putting him in the game, and look what

happened. I'm very happy for him. Well deserved."

Johnson has been part of the running backs and wide receivers rooms during his time at Ohio State, but his current position coach, Hartline, saw big things in store for Johnson prior to this season.

"I was really impressed with Xavier Johnson," Hartline said in May. "He did a really good job. He really has embodied all the roles he's done and the hats he's worn, and I just really think he did a great job in every opportunity he got."

Johnson has also made a strong impression on his teammates. Stroud, who delivered Johnson's first receptions against Notre Dame, said Johnson is "a dog" for the Buckeyes.

"He's a man of God, he's one of the people that keeps me honest in my faith with Christ," Stroud said. "That just shows you how hard of a worker he is. He was one of the first people to take me under his wing when I first got to school. He's always been a hard worker. He's kind of crazy in the weight room, and he works hard. If you saw him, you would all think that he was an animal. He's a hell of a ballplayer."

Egbuka, who is roommates with Johnson, said he's seen him turn it to another gear this season.

"It's been hard for him, just moving position rooms all the time, but he finally got comfortable at receiver," Egbuka said. "You all saw what he was able to do (Sept. 3). He had a great game."

It's been a long time coming for Johnson to see that big moment on the field. Since the day he arrived at Ohio State, Johnson expected he would shock the world.

"I came in and I was confident in myself," he said. "Coming in I was expecting to shock the world as a freshman, everybody does. They come in and they have all these high hopes and expectations. I would say that – part of my testimony – that the Lord kind of took football away from me for a second and he gave it back in a way that I can glorify him."

"There were countless nights where I was thinking about throwing in the towel. There were nights where I felt like I had a foot out the door. But I always relied on my faith and prayer to see where exactly I was supposed to be. I had never felt the Lord lead me to leave, so just seeing how it came full circle is just to his faithfulness."

"In that moment (the touchdown catch), all I could think about was just how great the Lord really is. That's it. I was overcome with emotion, but it was emotion from the standpoint of, 'I'm glorifying the Lord right now and I'm in the right position.'"

All of the experiences over the past year – earning a scholarship, breaking into the rotation and finally seeing the field on offense – have left Johnson thankful for the position he's in, but work remains ahead of him.

"If anything, it made me hungrier," Johnson said. "It kind of put me in a position where I am getting some playing time or opportunity for some playing time this year. And just with that knowledge and that expectation, it just has kind of made me more hungry."

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McCalister Brings Dependability To Secondary

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

It's fitting that Tanner McCalister slots in as the extra defensive back in Ohio State's 4-2-5 defense, because it's easy to overlook the nickel safety at times.

He entered this season without the same productive 2021 as fourth-year safety Ronnie Hickman and without the same hard-hitting hype of fifth-year safety Josh Proctor, both of whom start in more playmaking roles as deep safeties. He didn't burst on the scene like junior safety Lathan Ransom, who poached Proctor's place against Notre Dame in the first series and didn't relinquish it en route to a seven-tackle night facing the nation's No. 5 team on Sept. 3.

That doesn't make him any less important to Ohio State's defense.

"Tanner's just an all-around pro," Hickman said. "The way he takes care of business, the way he watches film and stuff like that – his IQ is off the charts."

McCalister's dependability, unique experience in the scheme of defensive coordinator Jim Knowles and versatility make him a meaningful chess piece for the renovated Silver Bullets.

"Going into college football, (my) fifth year, I kind of understand what it takes to prepare my body, prepare my mind going into a season, going into fall camp," McCalister said Aug. 23. "I'm taking this process pretty seriously because it's my last year. I want to make the most of it, and there's guys counting on me."

All told, McCalister collected just one tackle with no other ticks in the box score against the Fighting Irish. That's not necessarily a bad thing for a defensive back who took the field for all but one play, however. It can serve as a sign of good coverage that one's matchups aren't getting the ball.

Notre Dame sophomore quarterback Tyler Buchner threw for just 177 yards with no touchdowns against the Buckeye defense. The team added just 76 rushing yards.

"You saw a great focus, and that's a big deal, and you saw guys playing fast too," Knowles said. "The fits were really good. Notre Dame does a lot with the pulling tight ends and things that create different gaps, and I think you saw guys fitting things all night, for the most part, really well."

Ohio State sophomore wideout Emeka Egbuka, the team's top receiver in every major category against the Fighting Irish, worked against McCalister throughout the offseason. Egbuka rotates in at slot receiver in practice to line up directly across from the Rockwall, Texas, native, and he's glad to have McCalister on his side on game days.

"T-Mac's a great competitor," Egbuka said. "Especially when I played in the slot a lot, he does really well on the field. He's a great leader off the field, and I'm really glad that he transferred here."

Of course, going up against receivers with five-star recruiting pedigrees such as Egbuka in practice has only served to up McCalister's game.

"It's good fun going back and forth with those guys, and those are some of the best guys in the country," McCalister said. "So when I cover those guys, it makes me feel way more confident going against somebody that I may see. I think it's just back-and-forth, getting each other better, and it's going to pay off during the season."

McCalister spent four seasons at Oklahoma State from 2018-21, the same four seasons that Knowles was there. His two most productive years with the Cowboys were his third and fourth, in which he picked up 41 and 42 tackles, respectively. His first career interception came Oct. 16, 2021, at Texas.

The Cowboys started as the No. 112 total defense in the country in Knowles' first year and embarked on a steady climb each season until arriving at No. 5 in 2021. That acclimation process happened much quicker in Columbus, McCalister said.

"Everybody picked it up pretty fast, and it was surprising," McCalister said. "I remember when Coach Knowles came to Oklahoma State, we didn't pick it up there (that) fast."

Part of that fast pickup had something to do with McCalister too, Hickman said.

"He was in the system with Coach Knowles for some time," Hickman explained. "To know that he has experience in it, he's been in it when plays work and also when plays don't. Having that on the field is just a huge bonus."

That was the type of impact that Knowles was looking for when he approached McCalister following his entry into the transfer portal in December.

"He was already a coach on the field, and he'll be more so here at Ohio State," Knowles said. "He's been with me. We've been through the wars together. He understands me. He can talk to other guys, if I get loud or – you know, I can be aggressive when I coach – he can talk to other guys."

"He can talk about my style to them. But he can also explain the defense to them in a way that coaches can't, or someone my age can't."

For McCalister's part, it was as much the environment at Ohio State as it was the presence of Knowles that led to him committing to the Buckeyes, and he didn't feel pushed by his defensive coordinator.



SONNY BROCKWAY

COACHING FROM THE FIELD — Graduate transfer safety Tanner McCalister spent four seasons with Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles at Oklahoma State and has served as an on-the-field guide to Knowles' scheme for the Buckeyes.

"He wants what's best for me, so if I didn't want to come, he wasn't going to push it," McCalister said. "So he was like, 'Man, if you want to come here, I want you to be here. I think we can win a national championship.'"

For as much as he is helping Ohio State learn the defense off the field, McCalister's presence and dependability as both a nickel

safety and leader shouldn't be overshadowed.

"Tanner's done an excellent job since he stepped foot on campus," safeties coach Perry Eliano said. "He's a very, very mature young man, very smart, and he's embraced our culture from day one. So to have him on the football field is awesome. He does a great job in practice; he does a great job in meetings."



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Rising Rockets Wrap Nonconference Schedule

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

After decisive wins over then-No. 5 Notre Dame and Arkansas State, Ohio State's non-conference schedule will wrap with a home contest against an intriguing in-state opponent: Toledo.

The Rockets, led by seventh-year head coach Jason Candle, finished 7-6 last season (third in the MAC's West Division) and even came close to knocking off Notre Dame on the road, taking the lead with under two minutes to go before the Irish engineered a three-play, 75-yard drive – assisted by several Toledo penalties – to eke out the win.

Five of the Rockets' six losses were within a touchdown. The exception was a 22-6 loss to Colorado State early in the season. Last season's finish was the best for Toledo since a 7-6 mark in 2018.

It was an impressive enough performance that Candle was courted by other programs during the offseason, including an offer to become the defensive coordinator at Miami (Fla.) under first-year head coach Mario Cristobal. The three-year deal would have netted Candle between \$1.5-1.8 million per season, according to a report from The (Toledo) Blade, but Candle opted to stick with the Rockets.

"It shows the confidence that he has in his team," said Toledo athletic director Mike O'Brien. "The university brand and Rocket athletics is really strong, not just in north-west Ohio but nationally. And Jason wanted to continue to be a part of that. He has a great deal of faith in his ability, and his team's ability, and his staff's ability to have a really good season."

Now in it for the long haul, Candle said that despite last season's success, nothing carries over heading into the new year.

"You start fresh and you try to see what type of character that your team has as you go through winter workouts, through spring football and the summer," he said. "I think

this is a very close-knit team with solid leadership and a bit of a chip on its shoulder, and is a little hungry after last season."

Much of Toledo's success can be attributed to fourth-year quarterback Dequan Finn, who got his first starting action for the Rockets last season. He took over near the midway point of Toledo's season and finished with 2,067 yards and 18 touchdowns (just two interceptions), though he completed only 57.6 percent of his passes. He also rushed for 509 yards and nine touchdowns on 111 carries, averaging 4.6 yards per attempt.

"He made great decisions last year," Candle said. "He didn't turn the football over, accounted for 27 touchdowns last year and only turned it over three times. I think he's a guy that learns from his mistakes. He owns them. I think that the only way to learn from them is to own them and then go to work to fix them. I think I've seen a lot of growth in him as a human being. It's fun to watch him lead that group."

"It's a different feeling, too, when you understand coming into a season (and know) that you're the quarterback," he continued. "You're not fighting for your rear end every day in practice like somebody's constantly looking over your shoulder for every mistake you make. We have a lot of confidence in him. Our team has a lot of confidence in him. We have to do a great job of putting the plan around him each and every week to help him be successful."

More pressure is being put on Finn with some injuries to Toledo's offensive line, which lost two starters – tackle Mitchell Berg and center Tyler Long – shortly before the season began. Left tackle Kelvin Ateman, left guard Vinny Sciury and right guard Nick Rosi will help anchor the remainder of the line that will block for running backs Micah Kelly and Jacquez Stuart, who are vying for playing time after the loss of first-team All-MAC selection Bryant Koback to the NFL.

Finn and the Toledo offense will have several receiving options in junior wideout Devin Maddox (41 receptions, 567 yards, four TDs) and starting tight end Jamal Turner, who caught just eight passes last season but could see an extended role this year.

"I've seen him grow a lot from the start of fall camp to now," Finn said of Turner. "He's really improved his route running and pass catching. I thought he played well last year, but now he's taken his game up another level."

The Rockets will be looking for another

Get To Know ... Toledo

- **2022 Record:** 2-0.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation — Spread; Defensive Formation — 4-2-5; Starters Returning - Offense 7, Defense 8, Specialists 1.
- **Head Coach:** Jason Candle, 7th year at Toledo, 47-27.
- **Series History:** 4th meeting; Ohio State leads 3-0.
- **School Facts:** Location — Toledo, Ohio; Enrollment — 13,185; Nickname — Rockets; Colors — Midnight Blue, Gold; Conference — MAC (West Division); Stadium — Glass Bowl (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity — 26,248).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Dequan Finn	19	138	7.3	3
Peny Boone	19	73	3.8	2
Jacquez Stuart	14	98	7.0	1

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Dequan Finn	35-54	61.1	393	3-1

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
DeMeer Blankumsee	13	88	6.8	0
Jerjuan Newton	8	160	20.0	1
Jamal Turner	3	87	29.0	1

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game — 46.0
 Rushing Yards Per Game — 230.0
 Passing Yards Per Game — 196.5
 Total Offense Avg. Per Game — 426.5

2022 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Sept. 1	LONG ISLAND	W, 37-0
Sept. 10	MASSACHUSETTS	W, 55-10
Sept. 17	at Ohio State	7 p.m.
Sept. 24	at San Diego State	TBA
Oct. 1	CENTRAL MICH.	3:30 p.m.
Oct. 8	at Northern Illinois	3:30 p.m.
Oct. 15	KENT STATE	TBA
Oct. 22	at Buffalo	TBA
Oct. 29	at Eastern Michigan	TBA
Nov. 8	BALL STATE	7/7:30 p.m.
Nov. 15	BOWLING GREEN	7 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Western Michigan	12 p.m.
Dec. 3	MAC Championship	12 p.m.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yards	Sacks
Dallas Gant	4	15	19	0.5-1	0-0
Desjuan Johnson	4	9	13	4.5-14	0.5-3
Jamal Hines	3	10	13	2.0-2	0-0
Dyontae Johnson	2	9	11	1.5-6	0-0
Rourke Freeburg	2	9	11	0-0	0-0
Maxen Hook	2	6	8	0-0	0-0
Avery Smith	4	4	8	2.0-9	0-0
Judge Culpepper	1	7	8	0.5-0	0-0

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD
Zachary Ford	1	11	11.0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed — 5.0
 Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed — 125.0
 Passing Yards Per Game Allowed — 58.0
 Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed — 183.0

er strong performance from their defense, which led the MAC last season in most defensive metrics including points allowed (21.8), yards per game (349.7) and passing yards allowed (198.2), all of which ranked in the top 40 nationally. Through the first two games of this year – dominant wins over Long Island, 37-0, and UMass, 55-10 – Toledo has shown a repeat performance could be in the works.

On the defensive line, Toledo will feature defensive tackle Desjuan Johnson, who had 4½ sacks and 12½ tackles for loss last season, and defensive end Terrance Taylor, who had three sacks and six tackles for loss before missing the latter half of last season. Defensive tackles Judge Culpepper and Caven Butler will also be a factor for the Rockets.

"(The offense is) tired of blocking them in practice, to be honest with you," Candle said. "If I've got to watch (Taylor) run by (my offensive line) one more time, standing behind the quarterback and yelling 'sack' in my face, I'm going to lose my mind. All in good fun, obviously, but they're tough to deal with. They're

hard to block. They're explosive, agile guys that are not little dudes. They're big guys that can move, and they create a lot of havoc."

At linebacker, the Rockets will play returning starters Dyontae Johnson and Jamal Hines – a three-time All-MAC honoree – and will feature a new yet familiar face in Dallas Gant, who transferred to Toledo from Ohio State this offseason. Gant, who hails from St. John's Jesuit in Toledo, has several connections to his new college. His father played at Toledo in the early '90s, and his mother was a cheerleader for the Rockets.

Gant appeared in 36 games for Ohio State from 2018-21, accruing 54 tackles (3½ for loss) and 1½ sacks in his time with the Buckeyes. He saw little utilization for Ohio State last season, appearing in the first three games of the season with 10 total tackles before entering the transfer portal. In his first game with the Rockets against Long Island, he finished with a career-high 11 tackles and forced a fumble.

"It felt great to be back out there and to be back home," he said. "I couldn't have chosen a better place to be or better teammates. Everyone has been supportive since day one."

Any team will face a significant challenge against Ohio State's passing attack, but Toledo could put up a fight with a secondary that returns five former starters, including cornerbacks Quinyon Mitchell and Chris McDonald as well as star safety Maxen Hook, who finished with 95 tackles (37 solo) last season.

"The talent on this defense is incredible," Gant said after the win over Long Island. "I can't say enough good things about the players we have on our defense. We started off the year the right way with a shutout, and I'm excited to see what we can do the rest of the season."



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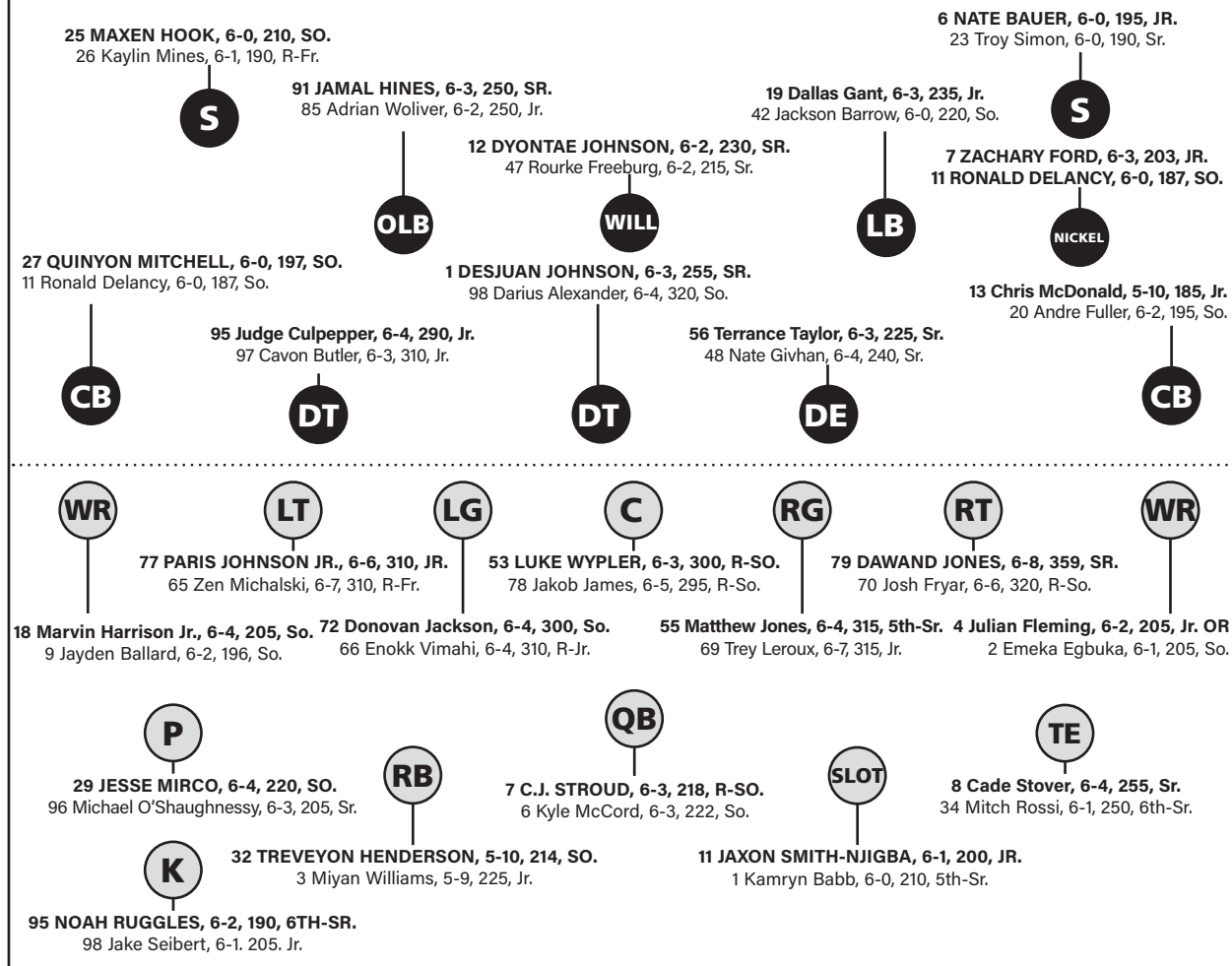
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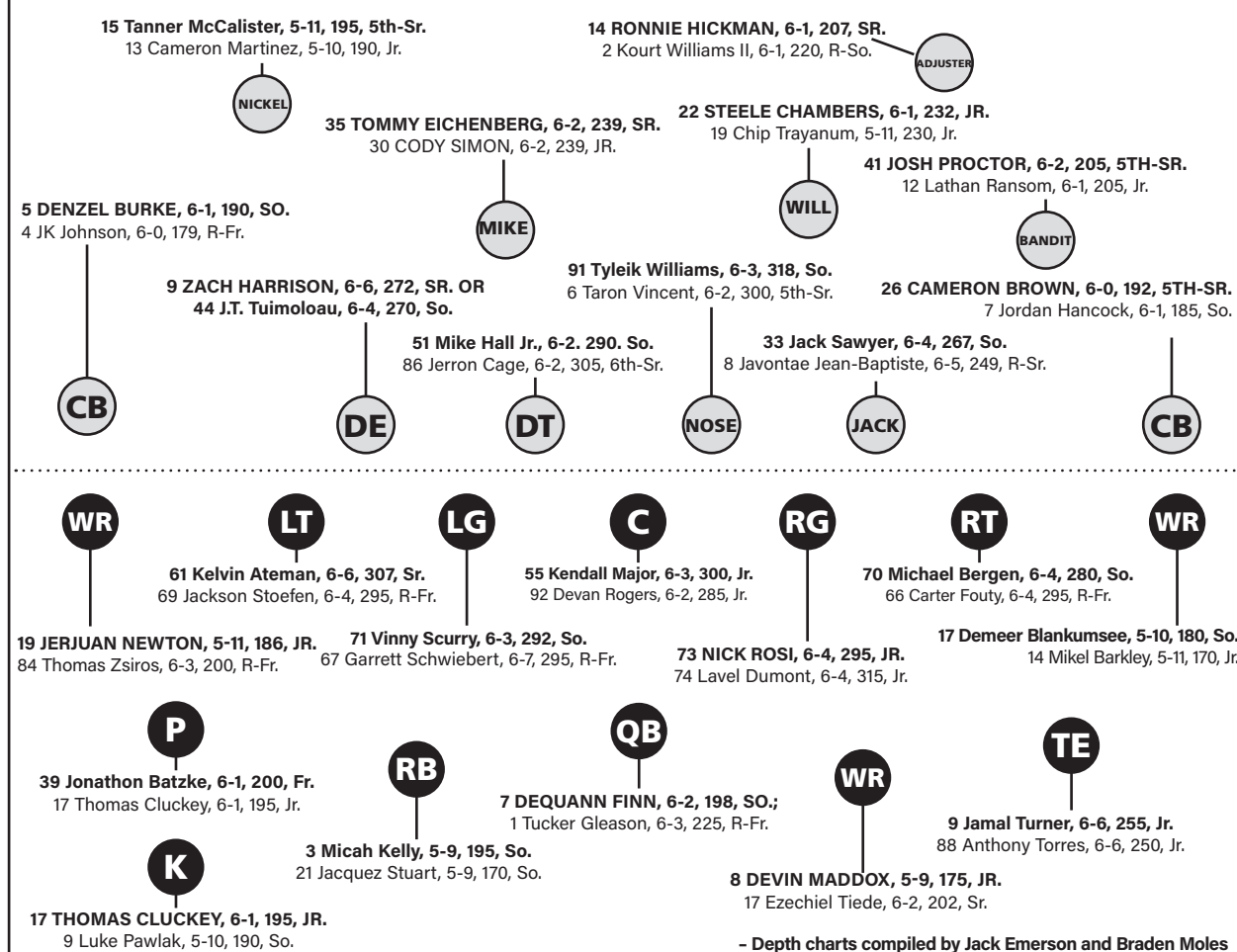


Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN TOLEDO HAS THE BALL...



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs.
TOLEDO RUSH DEFENSE

Ohio State during the 45-12 win over Arkansas State collected 168 yards on a 6.5 average. TreVeyon Henderson carried 10 times for 87 yards and two touchdowns. Miyan Williams went for 46 yards on eight tries. Even freshman Dallan Hayden got some mop-up duty by going for 13 yards on four rushes. Most encouraging for the Buckeyes and distressing for opposition game planners is that speedy receiver Emeka Egbuka raced 27 yards on his lone carry. For the season, Ohio State has rushed for 340 yards (5.6 per carry). If there is a concern, it would be the number of yards lost. Henderson was tackled for losses totaling eight yards and Williams lost three against Arkansas State after the two were tagged with no negative yardage against Notre Dame. Toledo opened its season with a 37-0 win against Long Island University and allowed 45 rushing yards for a 1.3 average but allowed 205 yards (3.8 per carry) in its second game against Massachusetts, a 55-10 victory. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

TOLEDO RUSH OFFENSE vs.
OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Buckeyes held Arkansas State to a paltry 53 rushing yards on 34 attempts for a 1.6 average. In two games, the defense has conceded 129 net yards (2.0 per carry), including 62 yards for losses. That means there is a lot of penetration of the offensive line and a bevy of players with quick pursuit capabilities. It's a wicked combination for Toledo to handle. That being said, the Rockets punished UMass to the tune of 234 rushing yards (6.3 per carry). Dual-threat quarterback Dequan Finn led the way with 74 yards on seven carries (10.6 per carry) with two touchdowns. Willie Shaw III gained 47 yards (5.9 per carry) and Jacquez Stuart finished with 45 yards (7.5 per carry). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs.
TOLEDO PASS DEFENSE

Who needs Jaxon Smith-Njigba? Apparently not the Buckeyes, although they would prefer to have their star receiver return from injury as soon as possible. Without him, C.J. Stroud was still nasty against Arkansas State, throwing for 351 yards and four TDs. Three went to Marvin Harrison Jr., who had seven catches for 184 yards. If it wasn't Harrison flustering the secondary, then it was Emeka Egbuka hauling in four balls for 118 yards and a score with an impressive 80 yards after catch. And don't forget that tight end Cade Stover had two receptions for 40 yards, including a 35-yarder. Toledo surrendered only 48 passing yards against UMass as two Minutemen quarterbacks combined to go 7 for 17. OSU pass protection must be wary of linebacker Dallas Gant, who is nearing the one-year anniversary (Sept. 22) of his entering the transfer portal after being disappointed with his playing time with the Buckeyes. He had nine tackles vs. UMass and leads the Rockets through two games with 20 total tackles. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

TOLEDO PASS OFFENSE vs.
OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Finn was 12 of 26 for 177 yards and a touchdown against UMass. The Rockets had 14 plays of at least 15 yards – seven rushing and seven passing. Those 14 plays resulted in 289 yards. Jerjuan Newton had four catches for 106 yards with a long of 39. OSU gave up 223 yards through the air to Arkansas State and had trouble handling Champ Flemings, who had a 58-yard reception among his 10 catches for 105 yards. A secondary that looked solid vs. Notre Dame was less so against the Red Wolves. The Buckeyes did manage two sacks and have five for the season but no interceptions. Definitely a work in progress. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Toledo's Thomas Cluckey has made all five field-goal attempts with a pair for 43 yards. Second-year freshman punter Jonathon Batzke averaged 43.0 per boot in his first game and 39.5 in his second. For OSU, Noah Ruggles has made 1 of 2 field goals, and Jesse Mirco is averaging 44.4 yards on his 10 punts. Egbuka had a 78-yard punt return nullified by a penalty. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

Maybe playing at night again will give the Buckeyes the energy they need to show they really are a good team. Both teams are 2-0, but the level of competition has been vastly different and reality should hit the Rockets squarely in the numbers. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

STAFF PREDICTION

How the Buckeyes win should matter. So far, they've gotten away with undisciplined play as evidenced by 16 penalties for 160 yards in two games. Somewhere down the road – not this week, though – that could cost them dearly. Fans got spoiled by those 50-plus point outbursts last season and are waiting for the offense to really click. Defensively, allowing one TD in two games is good, but Arkansas State was able to move the ball at will until hitting the red zone. **OHIO STATE 45, TOLEDO 13**

OSU Embarks Upon Ambitious Stadium Project

Throughout the 2022 football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is publishing stories commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ohio Stadium. This week, BSB looks back at the birth of the Horseshoe.

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

The year was 1919 and Ohio State football was bursting at the seams – figuratively and literally.

All-America halfback Chic Harley led the Buckeyes to undefeated records and Western Conference championships in 1916 and 1917, and after a year away while serving in the military during World War I, he looked to be on his way to accomplishing those feats a third time in 1919.

Harley had already engineered the program's first-ever win over Michigan, a 13-3 decision in Ann Arbor, and had become a matinee idol of epic proportions in Columbus. Residents who had never paid any attention to football until then suddenly began to call themselves Buckeye fans. As the team's 1919 season finale – a showdown with powerful Illinois – drew near, the evidence was clear that the Buckeyes had outgrown their home stadium.

The contest at Ohio Field against Illinois, Harley's final game as a Buckeye, produced an unprecedented ticket demand. The game had been sold out for weeks, and Ohio State athletic director Lynn St. John estimated the

university could have sold 60,000 tickets for the contest.

On Nov. 22, 1919, nearly 20,000 jammed into a facility that had been built to hold only about one-quarter of that crowd. Fans filled the wooden bleachers long before game time and stood 15 to 20 deep in both end zones. Others stood in windows of buildings across the street while several more climbed trees to catch a glimpse of the game. The Ohio State Monthly reported that when the Buckeyes took the field, residents as far as a mile away could hear the roar.

Although Harley and his team came up short that day, losing 9-7 when Illinois scored a field goal with just eight seconds remaining in the game, university officials couldn't help taking note of how the football team had grown in popularity. The day after the OSU-Illinois game, St. John and other Ohio State officials gathered to discuss plans for a new, modern stadium.

"Ohio Field had simply outlived its usefulness, so they really had no choice," OSU football historian Jack Park told BSB. "It had been added to several times and actually had a capacity up to about 14,000, but there was only so much room they had to work with. Then, because of Harley and the success of Ohio State's early football games in the Big Ten, Ohio Field became hopelessly inadequate to handle the fans.

"Because of the tremendous following that Harley developed during his years at Ohio State, the need for a new stadium be-



FILE PHOTO

HARLEY'S HOUSE — The success of former Ohio State great Chic Harley led the university to construct a larger and more modern stadium on campus, which would later become known as Ohio Stadium.

came very, very evident. And that's why many people – old-timers, at least, of which there aren't very many anymore – would be the first to say that Ohio Stadium was literally 'The House That Harley Built.' In my opinion, and I think in the opinion of many others, Ohio Stadium doesn't get built – at least the Ohio Stadium as we know it – if not for Chic Harley and his athletic endeavors."

Overcoming Hurdles

Those at the first meeting to discuss construction of a new stadium were somewhat surprised to learn plans for the facility were already well under way. Engineering department head and OSU athletic board president Thomas Ewing French was credited with fathering the idea of a new stadium as early as 1915.

French, whose brother Edward was co-captain of the 1896 football team, was a proponent of all athletic endeavors. He had previously chaired the committee that guided the expansion of Ohio Field from 6,000 to 10,000 in 1909, and he predicted six years later that a larger stadium – this one to be constructed of concrete – was needed for the burgeoning program. Later that year, during an address to the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, French said he believed Ohio State football crowds would one day number as many as 50,000. His speech was received with a huge amount of skepticism.

"The idea met with all kinds of opposition," longtime OSU sports information director Marv Homan said in 2001. "Many people felt that such an idea was an unreachable goal and something that would never be needed. It was looked upon as an extravagance, a needless expense, and there was just no need to pursue it along the lines that French envisioned."

Nevertheless, when the Buckeyes captured the Western Conference championship in 1916, French pressed ahead with his idea for a new stadium. He asked university

engineer Clyde Morris to prepare sketches for a new stadium, and Morris designed an oval-shaped facility that would seat approximately 40,000. The new stadium would be located in what was then a wooded area north of the Oval and west of Ohio Field.

French submitted the plans to the OSU board of trustees, which somewhat surprisingly approved them. However, university president William Oxley Thompson had reservations about the plans.

Thompson, an ordained Presbyterian minister who spent 26 years as president of the university, was often lauded as a forward thinker – someone whose focus for the school was on the long term rather than an immediate need. During his tenure, enrollment grew from approximately 1,000 to more than 14,000 students, and several new facilities were constructed, including the school library that still bears Thompson's name.

But because plans for the new stadium called for it to be 10 feet taller than any other campus structure, Thompson believed it would give the impression that athletics took precedent over academics. As a result, he asked that new plans be drawn, and university architect Joseph Bradford took over the project.

Bradford came up with the horseshoe-shaped innovation, in part so that the facility could also hold field events of track and field meets in the open end of the stadium. He also decided the new facility should be moved to a much larger tract of land, along the Olentangy River.

These new plans, which called for a capacity of around 50,000, were much more to Thompson's liking and they were quickly approved by the board of trustees. However, plans for the new stadium were put on hold as the country was thrust into World War I.

In the summer of 1918, as the war was winding down, French brought renowned architect Howard Dwight Smith on board

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with the project. Smith was a 1907 Ohio State graduate and faculty member in the School of Architecture, and he was asked to refine Bradford's drawings.

Smith, who had spent time in Europe studying ancient Roman and Greek architecture, employed many of the characteristics of those works into his plans. For example, instead of employing numerous columns like those at Harvard Stadium, Smith designed double columns that allow for more space between columns. He added arches in the style of the ancient Roman Colosseum, and the rotunda at the north end of the stadium, which is now adorned with stained glass murals, was designed to look like the dome at the Pantheon in Rome.

Smith, who would later design other facilities on campus including St. John Arena and French Fieldhouse, also employed a number of revolutionary techniques during the building of the stadium. Since the stadium sits on a flood plain, Smith designed a slurry wall at the base to keep out the waters from the Olentangy River. Additionally, rather than building a large, bowl-like structure like the previously constructed Yale Bowl, Ohio Stadium was designed to have an upper deck that would hang over part of the lower deck, giving the facility its familiar "A," "B," and "C" decks.

The design was so unique and so innovative that it won for Smith a gold medal from the American Institute of Architects.

Smith completed his plans in the summer of 1920, and in October, a public campaign to fund the stadium began and quickly raised over \$1 million in pledges by the following January.

Still, there was opposition to the stadium project. Many university officials disagreed with building such a large and expensive facility for the football team. The stadium's original capacity was designed to be 66,210, and several faculty members feared the facility would never come close to being filled to capacity. Others maintained the total \$1.5 million cost of construction was astronomical for a facility that would be used only five or six games each year.

The chief contrarian was Thomas C. Mendenhall, an original member of the university's board of trustees. The strong-willed Mendenhall wanted seating capacity of the new stadium limited to 45,000 and also wanted it built of brick and stone rather than concrete.

He lost on both counts by votes of 5-1, and the project began Aug. 3, 1921, with an official groundbreaking ceremony. Ohio Gov. Harry L. Davis turned the first shovel of dirt, and an ambitious 13-month construction schedule began. Approximately 300 workers were on site each day with structural steel installation lasting well into the winter before some 85,000 tons of concrete began being poured the following spring.

By the first week of October 1922, most of the stadium construction was complete. The first game in the stadium was played Oct. 7, 1922, and the Buckeyes celebrated with a 5-0 win against in-state rival Ohio Wesleyan. Workers and university officials, including Thompson, worked all day Friday and well into the night to clear the stands of any leftover debris so the stadium would be ready.

Unfortunately, only about 25,000 fans were on hand to witness history, and the

How Did Maize And Blue Come To Adorn Horseshoe Rotunda?

Did you ever notice the distinctive rosettes that adorn the rotunda at the north end of Ohio Stadium? Did you notice the colors of those adornments? There are 45 decorative yellow flowers each set against a blue background. Yes, that's right. The rotunda at the famous Horseshoe, the facility that greets well in excess of 100,000 mostly scarlet-and-gray-clad fans to each game features a maize-and-blue motif.

How in the world did that happen?

Down through the years, popular belief was that officials from Ohio State and the University of Michigan placed a friendly wager on the outcome of the 1922 Ohio Stadium dedication game. The losing team would have to somehow incorporate the opponent's school colors into the design of their stadium.

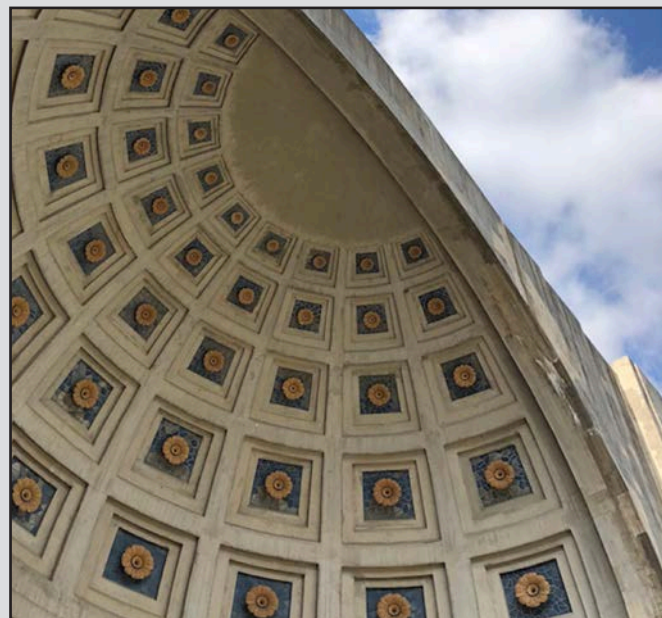
Skepticism of the existence of any such bet would include the fact that construction of Ohio Stadium was already completed, although Michigan Stadium was still on an architect's drafting table somewhere and would not officially open until October 1927.

Nevertheless, the story about the bet has persisted as one of college football's most enduring legends. It just doesn't happen to be true.

Specifications for the construction of Ohio Stadium were approved by the university's board of trustees on May 25, 1921, nearly 17 months before the dedication game. Contained in those design specifications were "tile in the dome panels shall be light blue, and the rosettes in the dome panels buff (yellow), all subject to approval of sample."

Designed by architect Howard Dwight Smith to resemble the Pantheon in Rome, the dome panels in the Ohio Stadium rotunda and that of the Pantheon strongly resemble one another with one major difference. The Pantheon panels have a plain background – no rosettes of any kind or color.

So, why did Smith decide upon blue backgrounds and buff rosettes for the stadium rotunda panels? There is no record the much-decorated architect was ever asked about his reasoning,



and since Smith died in 1958, the answer has been lost to time.

The legend of the bet between the two schools really doesn't hold water since Ohio State defeated Michigan three straight years beginning in 1919. That included a 14-0 win in Ann Arbor on Oct. 22, 1921, nearly three months after the official groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of Ohio Stadium. Therefore, if either team had bragging rights in the years leading up to stadium construction, it would have been the Buckeyes.

Still, you can walk among the crowd during any football Saturday and listen while some veteran fan regales his grandchildren with stories about the old Horseshoe, including the one about how it came to be that the colors of "That School Up North" adorn the stadium rotunda.

To paraphrase the old saying, "When the legend becomes fact, go with the legend."

— Mark Rea

half-empty facility brought a new round of criticism for university officials, especially Thompson, French and St. John. But those critics were silenced two weeks later when Ohio State hosted archrival Michigan in the stadium's official dedication game.

The official crowd was announced at 72,000, but no one is really sure how many people made it into the stadium. The number could have been closer to 80,000 as many fans who were unable to buy tickets forced their way in through a fence at the south end of the stadium.

Another attendance mark was set Nov. 13, 1926, when 90,411 showed up to watch the Buckeyes play Michigan. As was the case four years earlier, the attendance figure was probably low since an estimated 10,000 fans who were outside the stadium before the game stormed the gates and surged inside. It marked the last time standing room only tickets were ever sold for an Ohio State game at Ohio Stadium.

The overflow home crowd was treated to a nail-biter with the Wolverines eventually prevailing in a 17-16 victory only after the Buckeyes missed an extra point inside the final two minutes. It was the lone blemish on Ohio State's record in 1926.

Even with the large crowds that turned out for Michigan games, the stadium did not regularly sell out until after World War II. One notable exception was the 1935 contest with Notre Dame with more than 81,000 in attendance. Again, the scarlet and gray faithful went home disappointed after the Fighting Irish squeezed out an 18-15 decision, the only loss on that season's ledger for the Buckeyes.

Seating Capacity Grows

In March 1974, Ohio Stadium received what could be considered its greatest accolade when it was added to the National Register of Historic Places, a list of buildings, structures and objects the federal government deems worthy of preservation for their historical significance or artistic value.

Its place in history secure, the facility has been renovated several times over the years. During a two-year period beginning in 1999 when the press box was replaced and expanded, additional seating was installed above the existing upper deck and 81 luxury suites and 2,500 club seats were added. In addition, the cinder track ringing the football field was removed, and the field of play was lowered some 14½ feet to add additional seating closer to the field. Also, the temporary bleachers in the south end zone were replaced with permanent seating. However, the south end of the stadium remained partially open, allowing the stadium to maintain its unique Horseshoe configuration.

The result of that \$194 million renovation project was a capacity that rose to 101,568.

By the 2007 season, capacity had grown to 102,329, and seven years later, it had increased again, this time to 104,944. Record attendance for the Horseshoe came in 2016 when 110,045 squeezed into the stadium to watch the No. 2-ranked Buckeyes defeat third-ranked Michigan, 30-27, in a double-overtime thriller.

The stadium also holds the distinction of

hosting the largest crowd in NCAA history for a spring football game. That also happened in 2016 when 100,189 showed up to watch the Buckeyes scrimmage against themselves.

Another renovation project begun in 2017 actually lowered official capacity to 102,329 although the stadium regularly plays to crowds in excess of that number. For example, the official attendance figure was 106,594 for this season's opening game against Notre Dame.

Since its inaugural contest in 1922, Ohio Stadium has played host to nearly 600 Ohio State games, and more than 450 of those have resulted in wins for the Buckeyes. Because of its fans making their regular pilgrimages to the Horseshoe, Ohio State has been among the top four NCAA schools in attendance for most of the last 75 years.

In recent years, the stadium has served as the home for other sports teams, including the short-lived Ohio Glory of the World League of American Football (which later became NFL Europe). Major League Soccer's Columbus Crew also played its home games at Ohio Stadium during the first three years of its existence.

The Horseshoe has even become a major concert venue, hosting diverse acts from Genesis, Metallica, George Strait and Taylor Swift to Billy Joel, Elton John, Beyoncé and the Rolling Stones. More than 90,000 fans attended the two-day Buckeye Country Superfest in 2015, while the largest single-day crowd to witness a concert in the stadium came in 1994 when Pink Floyd entertained 75,250 fans.

Healthy Campbell Ready For Breakout Season

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

After redshirting in 2014, Parris Campbell played four seasons for Ohio State, the last of which earned him first-team All-Big Ten honors after setting a school record for receptions.

He parlayed that success into being a second-round pick by the Indianapolis Colts in the 2019 NFL draft. Now, after three injury-plagued seasons, Campbell hopes that his fourth season for the Colts can produce magic as well.

"My career thus far hasn't been what I've wanted it to be," Campbell told The Athletic's Bob Kravitz. "That's about to change – in the past, I don't want to say I took things for granted or didn't appreciate it, but now, I appreciate it and the abilities I've been blessed with that much more. I had the game taken away from me three straight years. I had to sit at home. Going through all of this has changed my mind-set. I've been blessed to rehab from some serious injuries that some guys don't come back from. The opportunity I have now, it's everything. It's everything."

Not only is Campbell healthy, but he also has a new quarterback who believes in him. Former Atlanta standout Matt Ryan signed with the Colts after spending his first 14 seasons – 222 games dating back to 2008 – with the Atlanta Falcons. He's had only a few months to work with Campbell but likes what he's seen.

Prior to the preseason opener at the Buffalo Bills, as the Colts were jogging onto the field for warmups, Ryan turned to Campbell and said, "You ready?"

"Yes sir," Campbell responded.

"Good," said Ryan, "because this is going to be the best year of your career."

Campbell, 25, deserves a break – figuratively, not literally. He's had enough injuries to last a career for many NFL

players, having played just 15 games in three NFL seasons. In just his senior year at Ohio State, he appeared in 14 games.

He sustained three injuries as a rookie that required surgeries for an abdominal strain, a hand fracture and a foot fracture. Campbell played in seven games catching 18 passes for 127 yards and a touchdown.

In his second season – following an offseason that included a concussion from a car accident – he tore the medial collateral and posterior collateral ligaments in his knee and was done after two regular-season games with six catches for 71 yards.

Last season, he hurt his foot in the sixth game against the Houston Texans and was done for the year after reeling in 10 passes for 162 yards and a score. In all, he's started eight NFL games heading into this season with 34 receptions for 360 yards.

Campbell mentally bottomed out after the injuries in year two, telling The Athletic he was considering retirement. One day he called for a meeting with medical and rehabilitation staff of the Colts.

"I walked in there, they were waiting for me, and I said, 'I genuinely feel like we've done all we can do. We've literally tried everything. It's been three months and I still can't bend my knee beyond 90 degrees.' Every day was so painful, just push on it and push on it, and it wouldn't move. I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Where was the light? It's human nature, I'm wondering if I'll ever get back to where I was. It's three months after surgery and I still can't bend my leg. I mean, what are we doing here?"

"In that moment, I was OK with (retiring). I had accepted this might be over for me because that's realistic. I had to look within myself. I wasn't quitting, because I don't quit at anything I do, but that was my breaking point. 'I'm going to accept reality.'"

With the support of the Colts personnel and his family, he was able to step back from what seemed a dire situation to refocus and recommit.

"It took me a couple of days away to clear my head and think and come back with a different mentality," Campbell said. "The knee was still stiff, still sore, still painful, but I got back home, thought some more and looked myself in the mirror and said, 'I've got to do this, not only for myself but for my family, my teammates, coaches, the staff who brought me here.' After that conversation, I came back with even more motivation."

All he wanted to do was show the Colts the type of receiver he was in 2018 when he and Dwayne Haskins played catch all season for the Buckeyes.

Campbell set the school season record with 90 receptions (since broken by Jaxon Smith-Njigba last season with 95), including 12 touchdowns, and he became the fifth OSU player to surpass 1,000 receiving yards in a season, finishing with 1,063 on the year.

He had a memorable 78-yard touchdown against Michigan among his 192 yards in The Game. Campbell capped his OSU stay with a career-high 11 catches against Washington in the Rose Bowl.

In 48 games (38 starts), he totaled 143 receptions for 1,768 yards to rank eighth and 18th, respectively, in school history, and his 15 TD catches are tied for 20th.

Heading into this season, Campbell – a four-star recruit from Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary – is in good form.

"It just feels good to be healthy and not have to worry about anything injury wise," he said on Sept. 1. "To be able to go out there and step on the field to feel healthy, feel good is something I haven't had in a long time. I'm blessed to be able to go through what I went through and still be standing. I'm excited for myself. I'm excited for this team."

Offensive coordinator Marcus Brady likes what he's seen so far from Campbell.

"This is what we've been waiting for," he said. "This is his year for him to show out, and we're ready for that. You can feel his speed out on the field, so we're excited about that."

First-year receivers coach Reggie Wayne echoed those comments.

"He's rolling," he said to The Athletic. "He had a good offseason. It's happening; it's happening. He's getting that confidence, and that's the biggest thing. And that's the one thing that I'm here to do. I'm trying to build that confidence up, even if you feel like it's down a little bit. I'm his biggest cheerleader."

Campbell said his goal is simple: play in all 17 games. In the season opener at Houston on Sept. 11, he had three receptions for 37 yards, with a long of 20.

His confidence is at its peak thanks to the arrival of Ryan, who is the fifth opening-game quarterback in five years for the Colts.

During a preseason workout, he and Campbell connected on a crossing pattern for a big gain. But that wasn't good enough for the veteran quarterback. He pulled his receiver aside and told him to



FILE PHOTO

HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH — Former Ohio State wide receiver Parris Campbell hopes for a full season of health with the Indianapolis Colts after his first three NFL campaigns were shortened by injury.

stop slowing down to catch the football.

"So, I'm thinking the execution is good, it was a big chunk play, and Matt's like, 'Your catch window should be ahead of you,' " Campbell said. "He told me, 'Just run, just run, just run, and I'll hit you in stride. Trust me.' He's particular on everything. Literally, every little thing matters."

"Shoot, not only my role, but I think everyone's role kind of expands. Matt likes to throw the ball around a lot. As a Colts offense, that's what we like to do in general. I think Matt coming in is going to take that to the next level."

Colts head coach Frank Reich has noticed the harmony between Ryan and Campbell.

"Matt just has a lot of confidence throwing the ball over the middle," Reich said. "He's done that his whole career, and Parris feels comfortable in there too. A lot of his college stuff was inside there."

"I think those two have a good chemistry. I think Matt's working hard with all the receivers, but Parris has certainly been shining a little bit."

Too often in his time with the Colts there has been darkness, but Campbell has proved to be resilient.

"My career thus far hasn't been what I've wanted it to be," he said. "Every time I take that field, I never take it for granted, because I know how fast it can be taken away."



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Nebraska HC Frost Fired Three Games Into Season

After a shaky five-year run as Nebraska head coach, Scott Frost was dismissed from his duties on Sept. 11 following a stunning 45-42 loss to Georgia Southern at home the day prior.

BIG TEN NOTES Jack Emerson

Although the loss to Georgia Southern served as the straw that broke the camel's back, Frost was not expected to remain in his role for the entire 2022 season as his \$15 million buy-out was slated to split in half on Oct. 1. However, Nebraska decided that it could wait no longer to make the switch at head coach and opted to pay Frost the full \$15 million.

"Earlier today, I met with Coach Frost and informed him we were making a change in the leadership of our football program, effective immediately," Nebraska athletic director Trev Alberts said in a statement. "Scott has poured his heart and soul into the Nebraska football program both as a quarterback and head coach, and I appreciate his work and dedication."

"After the disappointing start to our season, I decided the best path forward for our program was to make a change in our head coaching position."

During his five seasons in Lincoln, Frost amassed a 16-31 record while at the helm of the Nebraska football program. His inability to win his team to victory in close games became the defining trait of his stint with the Cornhuskers, as he was 5-22 in one-score games.

The Cornhuskers got off to a 1-2 start this season, with a loss to Northwestern in Dublin, Ireland, and the aforementioned defensive disaster against Georgia Southern.

Associate head coach, wide receivers coach and passing game coordinator Mickey Joseph will serve as interim head coach for the rest of the season. He will call his first game in the role against No. 6 Oklahoma on Sept. 17.

McCarthy Named Starter, McNamara Surprised By Battle

As Michigan head football coach Jim Harbaugh allowed the team's quarterback competition to bleed into the regular season, the incumbent starter Cade McNamara said he "was not expecting" to battle with sophomore J.J. McCarthy beyond fall camp after leading the Wolverines to a season-opening win over Colorado State.

"I definitely would say that it's pretty unusual," McNamara said. "It was kind of a thing that I wasn't expecting by the end of camp. I thought I had my best camp. I thought I put myself in a good position. That was just a decision that Coach Harbaugh went with."

McNamara completed 9 of 18 attempts for 136 yards and a touchdown against the Rams, while McCarthy also saw reasonable playing time, connecting on all four of his pass attempts for 30 yards while adding 50 yards and a touchdown on just three rushes.

McCarthy got the first start of his career on Sept. 10 against Hawaii after Harbaugh cited

a "biblical process" regarding the program's handling of the quarterback contest. McCarthy said he was feeling confident about his abilities heading into the game.

"Being around guys like we have here and being around coaches like we have here, they just fill you with uber confidence," McCarthy said. "I've always been a guy to have extreme confidence in myself and just being around guys and coaches like that just amplify it even more."

Against Hawaii, McCarthy completed 11 of 12 passes, three of which went for touchdowns, for 229 yards. McNamara also tossed six pass attempts, completing four for 26 yards and an interception.

Following the Wolverines' 56-10 win over the Rainbow Warriors, Harbaugh landed on McCarthy to lead Michigan this season.

"He had a near-flawless performance," Harbaugh said. "He was 11 for 12, and then one was dropped. I mean, that's tough to do. That's tough to do any day of the week in practice. I thought he had a great game. He's playing really well. We'll start J.J. next week."

Iowa HC Ferentz Defends Sluggish Hawkeye Offense

After the 2021 season in which the Iowa offense held the Hawkeyes back after raising expectations as a result of a 6-0 start, the unit's performance in the first game of the 2022 season did little to quell the growing concern in Iowa City.

Against FCS-level South Dakota State, Iowa's offense, helmed by third-year starting quarterback Spencer Petras, could muster only a field goal en route to a 7-3 win over the Jackrabbits. The Hawkeye offense was outscored by its defense, which added four points by way of a pair of safeties. In his sixth season as the offensive coordinator, Brian Ferentz, son of head coach Kirk Ferentz, has never led an offense that finished higher than 87th in total yardage.

"I'm frankly surprised and disappointed by our performance (on Sept. 3)," Brian Ferentz said. "I didn't feel that was reflective of the preparation we had leading up to the game or the practices dating back to April. Certainly, it's a little frustrating and disheartening to go out and perform that way."

Despite the struggles, Kirk Ferentz has remained a steadfast supporter of Petras and Iowa's slow-moving offensive attack despite external pressure from Hawkeye fans.

"It's more multiple than one player. Spencer has practiced well, he was doing a good job, but we couldn't support him enough," Kirk Ferentz said.

The Hawkeyes followed up their opening-game futility with a similarly down performance against rival Iowa State en route to a 10-7 defeat, the first time the Hawkeyes have lost to the Cyclones since 2014. Petras finished the afternoon completing 12 of 26 passes for 92 yards and an interception.

MSU Loses Pair Of Starters To Injuries

Michigan State opened its season with a mixed result against Western Michigan as the Spartans downed the Broncos 35-13 but lost two key defensive contributors to long-term injuries.

Spartans head coach Mel Tucker said junior linebacker Darius Snow will miss the

rest of the season after sustaining a right leg injury which occurred when a teammate fell on his leg while trying to make a tackle. Snow started in all 13 games for Michigan State last season, accounting for 87 tackles and an interception.

Senior safety Xavier Henderson was also forced out of Michigan State's season-opener early. While pursuing Western Michigan quarterback Jack Salopek, Henderson sustained a right leg injury and did not return to the game. After halftime, he was present on the sideline with a brace on his leg and was using crutches to walk. Tucker said Henderson "will be ready when he's ready" and that he is going through treatment with the intent of returning to the field this season.

Henderson is a three-year captain for Michigan State and accounted for 96 tackles – 10 of which were for loss – three sacks and an interception for the Peach Bowl-winning Spartans last season.

Indiana's Bedford To Miss Remainder Of Season

Indiana offensive tackle Matthew Bedford is expected to miss the season after suffering a torn ACL during the Hoosiers' season-opening win over Illinois on Sept. 2.

Bedford is a three-year starter on the Hoosier offensive front and a veteran of 29 games since arriving in Bloomington in 2019. He is known for his versatility on the line, picking up eight starts each at right guard, right tackle and left tackle while also starting three times at left guard during his collegiate career.

"He has an unbelievable attitude about it, and in talking with him, he's going to have a great recovery and come back and play his final season a year from now," Indiana head coach Tom Allen said on Sept. 5.

The Hoosiers will now turn to Parker Hanna, who transferred into the program after playing four seasons at Division II-level West Texas A&M.

Big Ten Well Represented In AVCA Top 25

It has been two weeks since the NCAA women's volleyball season began, and the Big Ten is continuing to show its dominance in the sport.

Although the No. 1 slot belongs to Texas, teams from the Big Ten make up half of the top 10 in the most recent American Volleyball Coaches Association Top 25. Nebraska leads the pack with the No. 2 ranking – after narrowly surviving an upset bid from No. 17 Creighton – followed by No. 3 Minnesota, No. 6 Wisconsin, No. 8 Ohio State and No. 9 Purdue. The Cornhuskers entered the season as the preseason No. 1 team in the nation, but

BIG 2022 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Indiana	1	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Penn State	1	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Ohio State	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Maryland	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Michigan	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Michigan State	0	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Rutgers	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Northwestern	1	0	1.000	1	1	.500
Minnesota	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Iowa	0	0	0.000	1	1	.500
Wisconsin	0	0	0.000	1	1	.500
Illinois	0	1	0.000	2	1	.667
Purdue	0	1	0.000	1	1	.500
Nebraska	0	1	0.000	1	2	.333

Sept. 10 Games

Ohio State 45, Arkansas St. 12
Duke 31, Northwestern 23
Minnesota 62, Western Illinois 10
Penn State 46, Ohio 10
Washington St. 17, Wisconsin 14
Maryland 56, Charlotte 21
Illinois 24, Virginia 3
Michigan St. 52, Akron 3
Purdue 56, Indiana St. 0
Rutgers 66, Wagner 7
Iowa St. 10, Iowa 7
Georgia Southern 45, Nebraska 42
Michigan 56, Hawaii 10
Indiana 35, Idaho 22

Sept. 17 Games

Southern Illinois at Northwestern, noon
UConn at Michigan, noon
Syracuse at Purdue, noon
Oklahoma at Nebraska, noon
Western Kentucky at Indiana, noon
Rutgers at Temple, 2 p.m.
New Mexico St. at Wisconsin, 3:30 p.m.
Penn State at Auburn, 3:30 p.m.
Colorado at Minnesota, 3:30 p.m.
Toledo at **Ohio State, 7 p.m.**
Nevada at Iowa, 7:30 p.m.
SMU at Maryland, 7:30 p.m.
Michigan State at Washington, 7:30 p.m.

Texas quickly snatched the top ranking after defeating Ohio State twice during the opening weekend.

Outside of the top 10, Penn State and Illinois check in at No. 20 and No. 25, respectively. The Big Ten has the most teams in the top 25 by a wide margin with seven programs checking in. The Big 12, ACC and WCC followed suit with three teams each.

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Reassessing Needs As 2023 Cycle Winds Down

The college football world is still over three months away from the early signing period, but the top recruits are starting to settle down and find their homes. At time of press, just 22 of the top 100 prospects in 247Sports' composite rankings remain uncommitted.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Braden Moles

Ohio State is not done in the class, either. The Buckeyes have 20 commitments in the class and could be looking to take as many as 24 or 25 prospects in this cycle, and just a handful of positions remain a need for Ohio State.

The chief concern for Ohio State's recruiting efforts is on the defensive line, where the Buckeyes have made significant strides with several targets in recent weeks. Ohio State welcomed a trio of five-star defensive ends in Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley Prep's Keon Keeley (6-6, 242), Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco's Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265) and Damon Wilson (6-4, 230) out of Venice, Fla., to the Buckeyes' win over Notre Dame, and the Buckeyes are in solid position to land at least one or two of them.

Beyond the defensive line, Ohio State

could take another look at linebacker, where just one is currently committed in Cleveland Glenville four-star Arvell Reese (6-4, 212). The Buckeyes currently have just one offer out to an uncommitted linebacker in Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star Jayvant Brown (6-0, 220).

"Linebacker, I have no clue where they're headed there," Buckeye Scoop recruiting analyst Bill Greene told BSB. "I don't think Arvell Reese is a linebacker. I could be wrong, but I think he's a defensive lineman. You need two linebackers in this class, and I can't tell you who's on the radar for that."

The Buckeyes could take a second look in their own back yard at Clayton (Ohio) Northmont four-star linebacker Nigel Glover (6-3, 210), who is committed to Northwestern, or Ironton, Ohio, three-star linebacker Trevor Carter (6-1, 205), who is committed to Cincinnati, but Ohio State could also wait into the fall for more targets to emerge.

In the secondary, Ohio State could be looking for another defensive back with Tampa (Fla.) Wharton four-star cornerback Dijon Johnson's (6-1, 190) decommitment and the loss of Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek five-star safety Caleb Downs (6-0, 185), who committed to Alabama in July.

"I think they would take another defensive back, if they could get into that," Greene said. "I think they would prefer a

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
Jayden Bonsu	S	6-1	210	★★★★	Hillside (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep
Mark Fletcher	RB	6-1	225	★★★★	Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage
Brock Glenn	QB	6-2	195	★★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Lausanne Collegiate
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
Kayin Lee	CB	5-11	185	★★★★	Ellenwood (Ga.) Cedar Grove
Jermaine Mathews	CB	6-0	175	★★★★	Cincinnati Winton Woods
Luke Montgomery	OT	6-5	270	★★★★	Findlay, Ohio
Jason Moore	DE	6-6	255	★★★★	Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha Catholic
Joshua Padilla	OG	6-4	265	★★★★	Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne
Arvell Reese	LB	6-4	212	★★★★	Cleveland Glenville
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
Jelani Thurman	TE	6-5	230	★★★★	Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes
Miles Walker	OT	6-6	285	★★★	Greenwich (Conn.) Brunswick School

cornerback. You keep hearing rumblings that they would maybe take another safety. If they can get back in with Caleb Downs, they would take that kid in a minute, I don't care how many defensive backs they have committed.

"Realistically, if they could get back into the game with Downs, they would take him no questions asked," he continued. "Then if there was a corner that they really, really liked, as much as they like Dijon Johnson, I think, I think they would take another corner."

As far as any potential takes on the offense, the only other additions would be a second running back to join Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star Mark Fletcher (6-1, 225) or a fifth offensive lineman, of which that space would likely only be reserved for Brockton (Mass.) Thayer Academy five-star offensive tackle Samson Okunlola (6-5, 305). Some have speculated that Ohio

State could take a second tight end in addition to four-star Jelani Thurman (6-6, 230), out of Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes, but at this point it could be considered more of a luxury than a need for the Buckeyes.

"There are some openings here," Greene said. "But the bulk of this class, offensively, they're basically done. And then defensively, you're really pointing to that defensive end group to get one or two of those. That's the focal point right now."

Reactions Roll In From ND Game

With a visit weekend as big as Ohio State's during the Notre Dame game, it inevitably took some time for things to cool down after hosting more than 70 prospects. Since those visits wrapped, more reactions have continued to roll in from top recruits who were on hand at Ohio

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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.

Stadium for the Buckeyes' 21-10 win over the Fighting Irish.

Keeley visited with his mother, Janické, who said the visit was "awesome in every way possible."

The visit was equally impressive for Keeley, who said that he is speaking with his coaches and family in regard to reaching a decision on his college.

"It could be within any time period," he told 247Sports. "Before signing day, on signing day. It could be any time period. I wouldn't say I take a crazy amount of time, but I am definitely going to focus on this season with my teammates, whether I find a team in the middle or after."

Keeley also touched on what he was looking for in a school. Since decommitting from Notre Dame, he is looking at Alabama, Florida and Ohio State.

"A place I can fit in and where I can be taken in and have them teach me the things I need to learn," he said. "Just a great school with good football and great academics and will help me be the best man I can be."

As for Uiagalelei, this wasn't his first visit to Ohio State, but it was the first gameday visit for the five-star defensive end.

"I wanted to see a real game at Ohio State," Uiagalelei told 247Sports. "It was my first time to do that. I think it went well. I wanted to see the atmosphere and the fans and all."

The defense – which allowed just 10 points and 253 total yards of offense from Notre Dame – was particularly impressive to Uiagalelei.

"They definitely fly around to the ball," he said. "It was fun to watch. I could see myself playing in that defense. I just love the coaches and the culture they've built there."

Uiagalelei said his decision will come later in the process, and he's considering Ohio State along with Alabama, Oregon and USC. Wilson, the other top defensive end in attendance, brought his father, also named Damon, who said it was an unbelievable atmosphere.

"We had a really good time," the elder Wilson told 247Sports. "Even with all the stuff that we did, the biggest takeaway for me and my family was Coach (Larry) Johnson. You're probably sitting with 'The Godfather' of defensive ends and so just anytime you get to be with him is just a blessing."

"We had some time to spend with him one on one and break some bread both in the meeting room and dinner, being able for little Damon to talk to him and break down his film and show him some things he can do better and does well. That was a really, really good experience on top of the other great things that were happening."

Wilson does not have a timetable for his decision. He has also taken an official visit to Alabama and has made visits to Miami (Fla.) and Oregon.

Ohio State was able to impress re-

cruits in the current cycle as well as those in the upcoming classes. Lynchburg (Va.) Liberty Christian Academy four-star running back Gideon Davidson (6-0, 193), a 2025 prospect, said the atmosphere was unlike anything he has ever seen.

"The atmosphere is hard to put into words," he told 247Sports. "So amazing. So much fun to be a part of. A few of my highlights were spending time with Coach (Tony) Alford, getting to meet Coach (Ryan) Day for the first time, watching and learning some of the plays before the game, meeting TreVeyon Henderson and all the other running backs, and getting to see a ton of different celebrities like (Justin) Fields, (Ezekiel) Elliott and (Chase) Young."

Another top 2025 running back, Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star Jordon Davison (5-11, 210), noticed the hard-fought victory for Ohio State.

"The run game in the second half was the difference for me," he said. "Not everyone can wear down the opponent. The atmosphere was crazy. What other school in the country can have LeBron James, Jayson Tatum come to your game, not to mention all the NFL alumni that were there too? Just a crazy experience for me. I love their running game (and) the tempo. Coach Alford knows what he's doing – just look at running back alumni. They're definitely one of my top schools."

Raiola Takes Lead In Peer Recruiting

Of Ohio State's commitments in attendance against Notre Dame, perhaps the most high profile was Chandler, Ariz., five-star quarterback Dylan Raiola (6-3, 220), the Buckeyes' signal-caller of the future in the 2024 class.

Ever since Raiola committed to Ohio State in May, he's taken a lead role in trying to recruit other prospects to the Buckeyes, and he was everywhere prior to the game against the Irish, communicating with committed and uncommitted prospects.

"He's really good," Greene said. "When one kid kind of takes the lead in terms of being a 'recruiter' for the class, it's always good if that's a quarterback. It is the high-profile position. I love Findlay (Ohio) four-star offensive tackle Luke Montgomery (6-5, 280), he's a great kid. He's a great player, great person, but Luke Montgomery as an offensive tackle, as your lead recruiter, it just doesn't work."

"Mike Brewster kind of led the way back in the day with the Brew Crew, but truth be told it's just kind of hard for an offensive lineman to pave the way as a recruiter. With Dylan Raiola, the No. 1 player in the country at quarterback, I see that a lot better."

While Raiola can have an impact for Ohio State as a recruiter – he's heavily involved with the Buckeyes' 2024 targets, including Opa Locka (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep five-star wide receiver Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 185) and Tampa

(Fla.) Wharton four-star running back Stacy Gage, among others – Greene acknowledged that the class will come down to the relationships between the recruits and Ohio State's coaches.

"At the end of the day, it has to be the relationship between the position coach and the player. Ryan Day has done a great job in his role as a recruiter, but it's really the position coach that is going to be dealing with that player on a day-to-day basis and is going to be the one responsible for getting that kid into the NFL. Now at quarterback, yes, that's Ryan Day. A linebacker is going to have so much contact with Jim Knowles and so little contact with Ryan Day. It's got to be the position coach."

"That's why I've already said for years about the comfort and relationship thing, it is the most important factor in recruiting. That's where it comes down to, that relationship between the position coach and the player. If Dylan Raiola can out-recruit an assistant coach on another team, then maybe they should hire Dylan Raiola as a recruiter. The position coaches do the bulk of the heavy lifting."

Beyond Raiola, Ohio State put another important recruiting tactic on display against the Irish with the celebrities who filled into Ohio Stadium. Chief among them was NBA superstar LeBron James, who was in attendance along with his son Bronny, who is being recruited by Ohio State's men's basketball team.

"The other night, Ohio State's got all those guys in for visits, and they bust

out LeBron James," Greene said. "Now, is anyone going to commit to Ohio State because LeBron James took a picture with them the other night? No. But does it help? Heck yes. Alabama doesn't have LeBron James. Georgia doesn't have LeBron James."

"You use everything you can use to your advantage. You use all these small points, you add them all up. But at the end of the day, man, it's the comfort and relationship factor between the position coach and the player that's going to rule the day."

RB Robinson Dishes On OSU Recruitment

Ohio State's 2020 recruiting class – one that finished fifth in the country – took just one running back in three-star Miyan Williams out of Cincinnati Winton Woods, though taking just one running back was out of necessity and not preference.

The Buckeyes and Alford were recruiting a pair of top running backs in Deerfield Beach, Fla., four-star Jaylan Knighton (5-9, 194) and Tucson (Ariz.) Salpointe Catholic five-star Bijan Robinson (6-0, 200), and at one point it was rumored that both Robinson and Knighton had silently committed to Ohio State.

It ended up being a worst-case scenario, though, as Knighton ended up at Miami (Fla.) and Robinson ultimately committed to Texas, where both are entering

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2024 Targets Come Into View For Ohio State

Continued From Page 27

their third seasons with their respective programs. Robinson, in a recent appearance on "The Pivot Podcast," broke down how close he was to landing at Ohio State.

"I was sold on Ohio State," he said. "A week and a half before I committed (to Texas), I called the Ohio State coach and said, 'I'm committed here. I'm going to shut down the recruiting,' all that stuff. And it was coach Tony Alford, the running backs coach. He recruited me really, really hard. He took out all the running backs and he's like, 'You're my guy.' I committed there, and I had C.J. Stroud, I had Jaxon Smith-Njigba, I had so many dudes. It looked great. It looked dope.

"And then a week started going by and I had an ill feeling about it. I started praying a lot like, 'God help me, please clear this up for me,' because it just didn't feel right. I knew that Texas was the place for me the whole time, but I had a lot of people in my ear saying Ohio State is it and I bought into it."

Robinson said he prayed throughout the week and then had to make a difficult phone call to Alford, one that Robinson called "the first grown-up conversation I had with somebody depending on me to do something."

"I called him and was like, 'Man, I just can't do this. I'm sorry I told y'all I'm com-

ing here – I can't come here. I know Texas is the place I need to go to.' That call was hard, that call was difficult, even telling the Texas coaches that I'm not coming there and then I'm coming there, it was a weird week for me but I learned a lot. I called the Texas coaches and I felt like a liar. Last week, this wasn't the place. This week, it is the place."

At the end of the day, it seems to have worked out for both programs. Ohio State is certainly pleased with sophomore running back TreVeyon Henderson, and the Longhorns saw Robinson rush for 1,127 yards and 11 touchdowns on 195 attempts (5.8 yards per carry) last season in addition to hauling in 26 receptions for 295 yards and four touchdowns. Williams, who was viewed by many as the compensatory running back for Alford and company in the 2020 class, was pivotal in Ohio State's season-opening win over the Irish.

OSU Offers Glenville Tight End Witten

Ohio State has shifted focus back to Glenville of late and is continuing that push with one of the Buckeyes' recent offers. Cleveland Glenville four-star tight end Damarion Witten (6-4, 215) announced on Sept. 6 that he had received an offer from Ohio State.

Witten is the No. 240 overall prospect in 2024 and is listed as the No. 31 athlete,

though he is being recruited as a tight end by Ohio State. His .9126 composite ranking would slot him in as the No. 12 tight end in the class.

His other offers include Akron, Iowa State, Kentucky, Michigan, Michigan State and Pittsburgh. Witten was in attendance for Ohio State's win over Notre Dame and is expected to be back for the Buckeyes' game against Wisconsin on Sept. 24.

"It was a great experience," Witten told 247Sports. "Great atmosphere, excellent fans, great team."

Ohio State Takes Early Lead For '24 OL Moore

Another 2024 prospect whom Ohio State is making strides with is New Palestine, Ind., four-star offensive lineman Ian Moore (6-5, 295), who was on site for the Notre Dame game.

"The environment was great," Moore told 247Sports. "I might be deaf now but I love that. The highlights for me was the crowd no matter who it was, how young or old they were all yelling. The offensive line was extremely physical and dominant, and I just see myself fitting into the system perfectly."

Moore is the No. 99 overall prospect and No. 4 interior lineman in 2024, and it's shaping up to be another classic Midwest battle for Moore's services between Ohio State and Wisconsin.

"I've been mostly pursued by Ohio State and Wisconsin. We're talking pretty much four to five times a week, and they're heavily into me," he said.

OSU Issues 2024 Offers

Ohio State has issued a pair of offers in the 2024 class since Buckeye Sports Bulletin last went to press.

First up is Chicago (Ill.) St. Ignatius five-star defensive lineman Justin Scott (6-5, 310). Scott is the No. 31 overall prospect and No. 4 defensive lineman in the class, and he holds offers from Cincinnati, Iowa, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas A&M, among others.

The other offer went to Washington (D.C.) St. John's four-star offensive lineman Jordan Seaton (6-6, 295). Seaton is the No. 128 overall prospect and No. 8 interior lineman in the class. He holds offers from Clemson, Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, Oklahoma, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee and Texas A&M, among others.

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ASK AN ANALYST

With Bill Greene of Buckeye Scoop

Ohio State hosted Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley Prep five-star defensive end Keon Keely (6-6, 242), Venice (Fla.) four-star defensive end Damon Wilson (6-4, 230) and Bellflower, Calif., St. John's Bosco five-star defensive end Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265) for the Notre Dame game. Coming out of those visits, how do you view Ohio State standing with those prospects?

"When it comes to the whole official visit experience, Ohio State does it as well as anyone in America, including Georgia and Notre Dame, Alabama, USC, whatever you want to say, they're so good. They've got it down to a science. They can hit the academic point of it, they've got a great gameday atmosphere, they put guys in the NFL, (and) they go to the playoff. They can wrap that whole thing in 48 hours, and they can do it as well as anyone. They don't take a backseat to anybody in terms of the visit experience.

"With Keon Keeley, he is a Florida kid, so Alabama is going to be closer to home than Ohio State, but he was committed to Notre Dame for the longest time so he must be somewhat attracted to the Midwest. I think Alabama is going to be really hard to beat for Keon Keeley even though he was obviously impressed with Ohio State. I think they're in that one, but I don't think they're the favorite. I think Alabama is the favorite there, and I think they should be the favorite there. So we'll see what happens with him. I wouldn't say there's no chance for Ohio State, at all.

"Then when you got Matayo Uiagalelei, he's not going to decide until late. I wouldn't be surprised if he's a second signing day kid, but he's probably going to be a first signing day kid. You've got months to go with him, and the worry there is that the whole visit experience wears off. I think if he was choosing a college today, I think it would be Ohio State.

"You've got Oregon in the mix there. Oregon is going to sell

him on early playing time – 'You're going to be our next Kayvon Thibodeaux or Justin Flowe.' At Ohio State, you might have to wait awhile for you to get on the field. You have (Nike's) Phil Knight at Oregon and that whole NIL ballgame that they play, it's going to be very attractive.

"I still worry about USC for Matayo. They're probably running third for him, according to what everybody else would say. But I think this kid has a real, genuine interest in the music industry. It's probably something he's looking at after football or maybe in conjunction with his football career. But I've been told that that interest in music is real and USC is going to call out all the heavy hitters in the music industry to kind of lay out for Matayo what the next 30 or 40 years of his life could be as a big-time player at USC, then onto the NFL, and then life after the NFL and what can happen for him in the music business. I'm not going to discount USC, and the fact that he can stay close to home as well.

"But I think if the relationship with Larry Johnson is totally there, it's a huge part of this. Matayo's dad, Big Dave, has forged a little relationship with Larry too. I think Dave is going to trust Larry Johnson. I don't think that same trust is there right now with Dabo Swinney, and I think that's why Matayo never really looked at Clemson. Larry Johnson being older and wiser really appeals to Big Dave, so they're definitely in that one.

"Then you have Damon Wilson, and he would be the one that I would rate probably the highest that I think their chances would be the best with. I just think they've done everything they need to do with Damon Wilson. I think last weekend could end up being the cherry on the sundae for him. I think he's going to be deciding fairly soon. That Ohio State visit and everything that's left in his mind could end up being the selling point there. I think the family had a great visit as well as the player. I think Ohio

State's going to get Damon Wilson, I really do.

"They're the team to beat for Damon Wilson. I would rank them Wilson, Matayo and then Keeley in the order of what percentage I think Ohio State has to land each kid."

A pair of Ohio State commitments in 2023, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star running back Mark Fletcher (6-1, 225) and Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes four-star tight end Jelani Thurman, were both in attendance for the Notre Dame game. Are those guys solidified in their commitments, or is there still a level of concern that they might flip down the road?

"With Thurman, I don't know there. I don't have much information. With Mark Fletcher, Miami (Fla.) wants him and they want him bad. Their NIL program is off the charts. That one, I think Ohio State is going to be concerned about until they get the signature. That one is concerning to me. I know Mark is saying all the right things. He was in attendance for the Notre Dame game.

"But, at some point, does Miami pretty much promise him, 'You're going to be the starter next year, you're going to be a three-and-out guy. We've got an NIL specialist in John Ruiz.' Miami hasn't been able to get the top four- and five-star kids for the past 10 years, and all of a sudden they're landing all of them right now. They've embraced NIL to their advantage, and props to them for using NIL to the fullest. As long as you don't cross that line with the NCAA, then I think pushing the boundary on NIL is fine. They're definitely pushing the boundary there.

"So you are always going to worry about Mark Fletcher and Miami. With Thurman, I really don't have anything to make me think that he's close to flipping."

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago – 1982

Pressure can do funny things to people, especially in sports. It tends to separate the stars from the also-rans.

Freshman placekicker Rich Spangler was faced with a hypothetical situation: fourth-and-2 at the Michigan 30-yard line, a minute left in the game and Ohio State down by two, do you want Coach Earle Bruce to go for ... "Kick," was the answer before the question was finished.

But Spangler was well aware that a hypothetical situation is one thing and a stadium filled with people and more watching on television is another.

"The difference is in the stands with 90,000 people here," he said. "When you consider about 5,000 people were at home games where I went to school in Geneva (Ohio), that will be a big difference."

35 Years Ago – 1987

In an era of college football in which the emphasis always seems to be on the negative, it's ironic that a regulation designed for good, namely Proposition 48, should raise questions of fairness. But such is the case.

The rule, then in its second year of enforcement, was instituted to re-emphasize academics over athletics.

Proposition 48 required an incoming freshman student-athlete to score a minimum of 15 on the ACT or 700 on the SAT college entrance exams to be eligible athletically for that year.

To regain eligibility, the student-athlete had to pass a number of core courses and hold a minimum grade-point average of 2.0 at the end of his/her freshman year.

"If you think a kid, because he doesn't test well, isn't going to be able to make it, you're crazy because there are other factors," said Bruce, who lost four freshmen to Proposition 48 that year. "If every 4.0 student who left here was a success, I'd eat your hat. How about the kid who doesn't test well, but when he gets into the classroom he's a competitor and a hard worker? You can't measure that."

30 Years Ago – 1992

One of the most highly-touted recruits in Ohio was doing his best to take it all in stride.

Marc Edwards, a 6-1, 215-pound senior who ran for 2,350 yards as a junior at Norwood High School, claimed, "I'm just another one of the guys."

The schools that topped his list were five of the most traditional Midwestern powers – Ohio State, Notre Dame, Penn State, Michigan State and Michigan.

"Personally, I want to do better than last year, help take my

team further along than last year, and be a better all-around player," Edwards said. "I know that I have to work hard to do that, and that's what I'm going to do."

25 Years Ago – 1997

Ohio State lost starting defensive end John Day for the season when he blew his knee out in the season opener against Wyoming.

Amazing as it sounds, one of the guys who could have had a chance to replace Day that season was sitting in the stands at Ohio Stadium that night.

Avon (Conn.) Old Farms lineman David Jorgensen was making his official visit to OSU for the Wyoming game. The unique thing about Jorgensen – other than the fact he was rated the nation's No. 5 offensive lineman prospect by SuperPrep – was the fact he was considered a high school graduate and could have been eligible to play college football that season.

In fact, Jorgensen (6-6, 275, 4.65) said he nearly enrolled at OSU the week after the game, but he did not when he learned it would take two to three weeks to get his paperwork through the NCAA clearinghouse.

20 Years Ago – 2002

Donte Whitner (5-11, 175) was ranked Ohio's No. 2 prospect by Rivals.com and No. 3 by OFS (Ohio's Future Stars).

He had experience at cornerback, safety, tailback and wide receiver. Most schools were looking at him as a corner.

"Donte is a guy who has to win all the time – in the classroom and on the field," said Cleveland Glenville Coach Ted Ginn. "He is just a special guy. He knows what he wants to do and who he wants to be and how he wants to live."

15 Years Ago – 2007

Ohio State was after many of the nation's top prospects in the cycle, but arguably none was bigger than Jeannette, Pa., quarterback Terrelle Pryor. He was a 6-6, 210-pound athlete ranked by Scout.com as the nation's top quarterback and the No. 2 prospect regardless of position, and Ohio State had been rumored to be the team to beat for his services for much of the recruiting process.

Those thoughts were not likely to go away anytime soon. After his team's 52-12 victory over Washington, Pa., Pryor said he had narrowed his list down to 11 schools but had scheduled just one official visit so far to Ohio State.

"The process is real hard," Pryor said. "You have to look into so many different things. You've just got to stay with your family. I'm just staying with my dad, talking to my dad and talking to people and trying to get info."

10 Years Ago – 2012

Arguably one of the top prospects remaining on Ohio State's recruiting board, Tyquan Lewis of Tarboro, N.C., wouldn't leave the Buckeyes' coaching staff waiting for a decision much longer.

Rated by Scout.com as the No. 34 defensive end in the 2013 recruiting class, Lewis said he would announce his college decision before the end of September. The three-star prospect was scheduled to select between Ohio State, LSU and North Carolina.

Lewis had already made his decision but was waiting to announce it to the public. The 6-4, 230-pound prospect said there were multiple reasons the program that eventually won out was the program he selected.

"It was just the school overall," Lewis said about the school that won his services. "Just the coaches, the competition and me being able to play, it's just a great place."

Five Years Ago – 2017

Micah Parsons (6-3, 235) was arguably the most prominent uncommitted prospect in attendance at Ohio State's game against Oklahoma. Rated by Scout.com as the No. 5 overall player in the 2018 class and the top-ranked weakside defensive end, Parsons visited Ohio State in an official capacity despite his grades recently being in question.

While in Columbus, Parsons was seen conversing with the ESPN's "College GameDay" crew before the game and meeting former Ohio State running back and Heisman winner Eddie George.

One Year Ago – 2021

For the first time since a game against Penn State on Nov. 23, 2019, Ohio State hosted a full crowd for a home football game in Ohio Stadium.

That also meant that the Buckeyes would be hosting recruits for the first time in nearly two years, and it made for a busy day both on and off the field. But head coach Ryan Day was hoping to find a balance between having a mass quantity and still being able to give each recruit his own individual experience.

"There's a balance (to planning out the number of visitors)" Day said. "The more people you bring on campus, the less attention you can spend with each person. But there's also something about being here on game day and seeing this type of environment. I wish we could invite everybody in the country and take everyone on, but there's a limitation on all of that. We just want to make sure that we're doing a good job with the people on campus."

Washington III Decommits From Ohio State

Dayton Chaminade Julianne four-star shooting guard George Washington III, the first member of Ohio State's 2023 class, de-committed from his pledge to the Buckeyes on Sept. 5.

Washington, who stands 6-2 and weighs 165 pounds, had initially committed to Ohio State on Nov. 3, 2021, kicking off Chris Holtmann's 2023 recruiting class. Prior to committing to Ohio State, Washington had received offers from Auburn, Liberty, Louisville and Tennessee.

COURT REPORT Jack Emerson

"I would like to thank Coach Holtmann and the entire coaching staff for believing in me," Washington said in a statement. "I would also like to thank Buckeye Nation and the entire OSU family for welcoming me into the community. However, at this time, after much thought, prayer and deep discussion with my family, I would like to announce that I will be decommitting from The Ohio State University and reopening my recruitment.

"Thank you OSU for the opportunity and understanding – I will always love Buckeye Nation. I am excited to see what the future holds."

Washington's decommitment comes on the heels of an official visit to Ohio State on Sept. 3 for the Ohio State-Notre Dame football game. He visited the university alongside the rest of the 2023 class and several Buckeye targets, including Minneapolis Totino-Grace four-star combo guard Taison Chatman (6-4, 170) and Los Angeles Sierra Canyon four-star combo guard Bronny James (6-3, 190), whom Ohio State could have been prioritizing over Washington.

The Buckeyes now likely turn their attention to garnering a commitment from either

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
Scotty Middleton	SF	6-6	180	★★★★	Wichita (Kan.) Sunrise Christian
Austin Parks	C	6-9	240	★★★★	Saint Mary's (Ohio) Memorial
Devin Royal	SF	6-7	210	★★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) Central

Chatman or James. Ohio State's 2023 class currently includes Pickerington (Ohio) Central four-star small forward Devin Royal; Wichita, Kan., four-star small forward Scotty Middleton; and St. Marys (Ohio) Memorial three-star center Austin Parks. The Buckeyes now hold the No. 9 class in 2023, according to 247Sports, down from the fifth-best ranking before Washington's decommitment.

James Receives Official Ohio State Offer

After strolling on the sidelines of the Ohio State-Notre Dame football game with his NBA superstar father, LeBron James, Bronny James received an official offer from Holtmann and the Buckeyes, according to On3's Joe Tipton.

As James' recruitment has largely been kept under wraps, Tipton noted that the Cleveland native has "long held a 'standing offer' " from the Buckeyes, but it was made official during his visit. Bronny James is the No. 10 combo guard and No. 41 overall recruit in the 2023 class, according to 247Sports' composite score. He also holds public offers from USC, Memphis, North Carolina A&T and North Carolina Central while also garnering interest from Oregon and Michigan.

Unlike his father, Bronny James primarily plays in the backcourt rather than the wing, where he has shown his prowess as a passer and in transition as well as a willingness to defend on-the-ball with aggression.

"Bronny James is a sturdy guard, with a strong frame, long arms, and broad shoulders," On3 national recruiting analyst Jamie Shaw said. "He is a noted defender at the point of attack. He moves his feet well laterally and plays with a chip on his shoulder. Offensively he does not really show blow-by burst in the half-court. But he attacks closeouts well, and he is strong in the paint. James is good in transition, has a little bit of wiggle there, and can get on the rim. He is explosive in straight lines. James needs to tighten his handle in space.

"One of his biggest areas of improvement is from three, where he has cleaned up his mechanics – especially the release – and gathered his balance. James made 13 threes in six Peach Jam games at a 35.0 percent clip. He will need to finish better at the rim, especially in traffic. When playing as the primary initiator, he takes care of the ball with a better than 2.5:1 assists to turnover ratio at Peach Jam."

During the Peach Jam Nike EYBL tournament this summer, James produced well for his father's EYBL team, Strive For Greatness, for which he averaged 15.8 points, 5.8 assists and 1.3 steals. His most noteworthy performance of the circuit came against Team Takeover, in which he scored 28 points, with six assists and three rebounds while shooting 50.0 percent from the field and hitting on 5 of 11 three-point attempts.

Not only is James expected to bolster the

roster of his choosing on the court, but he also brings a valuable presence off it as well. According to On3's NIL Valuation rankings – which ranks high school and college athletes based on NIL value – James ranks as the No. 1 athlete with a potential NIL valuation of \$7.2 million. For reference, Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud ranks No. 6 with a valuation of \$1.9 million. Bronny James' presence on a college roster also gives that program a high-level booster in his father.

The Buckeyes are also targeting Chatman, who is the No. 31 player in the class and No. 8 combo guard.

Ohio State's Big Ten Slate Announced

The Big Ten announced the conference schedule for all 14 men's basketball teams, including Ohio State, on Sept. 8. The Buckeyes' conference slate is highlighted by home-and-away contests with Michigan State and Purdue and a road bout with rival Michigan in February.

Ohio State opens conference play on Dec. 1 when it hosts Rutgers at the Schottenstein Center. The Buckeyes will then close their nonconference slate with a neutral-site contest against North Carolina, which will be played at Madison Square Garden on Dec. 17, and home games against St. Francis (Pa.), Maine and Alabama A&M. Following those four games, Ohio State will begin its conference schedule in earnest, with its next 19 games coming against Big Ten opponents.

The Buckeyes will ring in the new year in Evanston, Ill., where they will play against Northwestern on Jan. 1, 2023. Ohio State will then return home to host Purdue on Jan. 5 before heading back out on the road to play Maryland on Jan. 8.

The following week, Ohio State hosts Minnesota on Jan. 12 and then closes out its home-and-away with Rutgers with a trip to the RAC on Jan. 15. The Buckeyes make the long trip to Lincoln, Neb., on Jan. 18 for a date with the Cornhuskers before returning home to play Iowa. Ohio State will close the month on a road trip, playing Illinois in Champaign, Ill., on Jan. 24 before heading to Assembly Hall to do battle with Indiana on Jan. 28.

Ohio State will play three of its next four games at home – hosting Wisconsin on Feb. 2, Northwestern on Feb. 9 and Michigan State on Feb. 12 – with the lone exception coming against Michigan on Feb. 5. Ohio State then plays back-to-back road games against Iowa on Feb. 16 and Purdue on Feb. 19.

Ohio State closes the season with three straight home games followed by a road trip to East Lansing, Mich. The Buckeyes host Penn State on Feb. 23, Illinois on Feb. 26 and Maryland on March 1, before traveling to play the Spartans to close the regular season on March 4.

Prior to its first conference game on Dec. 1, Ohio State will host a trio of games against

2022-23 OSU Men's Basketball Schedule

Date	Opponent
Nov. 1	Chaminade (Exh.)
Nov. 7	Robert Morris
Nov. 10	Charleston Southern
Nov. 16	Eastern Illinois
Nov. 21	at San Diego State ^
Nov. 22	at Cincinnati/Arizona ^
Nov. 23	TBA ^
Nov. 30	at Duke*
Dec. 3	St. Francis
Dec. 8	Rutgers
Dec. 17	at North Carolina \$
Dec. 21	Maine
Dec. 29	Alabama A&M
Jan. 1	at Northwestern
Jan. 5	Purdue
Jan. 8	at Maryland
Jan. 12	Minnesota
Jan. 15	at Rutgers
Jan. 18	at Nebraska
Jan. 21	Iowa
Jan. 24	at Illinois
Jan. 28	at Indiana
Feb. 2	Wisconsin
Feb. 5	at Michigan
Feb. 9	Northwestern
Feb. 12	Michigan State
Feb. 16	at Iowa
Feb. 19	at Purdue
Feb. 23	Penn State
Feb. 26	Illinois
March 1	Maryland
March 4	at Michigan State

^ – Maui Invitational

* – Big Ten/ACC Challenge

\$ – CBSSports Classic at New York, N.Y.

Robert Morris, Charleston Southern and Eastern Illinois before traveling to Hawaii for the Maui Invitational against San Diego State on Nov. 21. The Buckeyes will also play at Duke on Nov. 30 as part of the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

Craft Named To OSU Hall Of Fame

Former Ohio State guard and Buckeye fan favorite Aaron Craft was inducted into the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame on Sept. 9.

Craft helped define the later stages of Thad Matta's run as head coach in Columbus, displaying a hard-nosed mentality on the defensive end of the court and earning two Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year awards during his four-year career. As an ultimate glue-guy for the Buckeyes, Craft aided Ohio State to four consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances, including a trip to the Final Four in 2012. The Buckeyes earned a Big Ten regular-season title and two Big Ten tournament championships during Craft's career.

Although he was known for his defensive prowess, Craft was also the all-time program leader in assists, dishing out 4.7 assists per game throughout his career. He finished with career averages of 8.9 points and 3.3 rebounds while shooting 45.9 percent from the field and 33.3 percent from three.

Craft is the Big Ten's all-time leader in steals by a wide margin, swiping his opponents 337 times in his career. Former Wisconsin guard Mike Kelley is the next closest player with 275.

Craft is now enrolled in Ohio State's medical school with the goal of becoming a doctor.



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Towns Dismantled Normality During Career

By **JACK EMERSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Seth Towns' basketball career began and ended in his hometown of Columbus after he announced on Sept. 4 that he would be stepping away from the sport due to his injury history. But for him, life extends far beyond the sport of basketball.

Although his collegiate basketball career was marred by injury, Towns proved his worth on the court for two seasons with Harvard and one season with Ohio State while becoming an outspoken advocate for change within his community.

"Buckeye Nation, it has been a great honor to represent you and the Ohio State University for two years. It comes with sadness and faith that I must announce that I am stepping away from Ohio State and Team 124, and that I will not be playing this season," Towns said in a statement. "After a few setbacks this summer and some tough conversations with my coaches and medical personnel, it has become clear that my body is not in a position to endure a full Big Ten season."

Towns burst onto the scene as a high school basketball phenom at Northland High School, but from the beginning, it was clear that Towns' most noteworthy contributions would come off the court rather than on it. Although he would quickly rise through the ranks to be one of the nation's best small forwards in the 2016 class, Towns' college decision did not come down to which program would best suit his basketball needs, but rather where could he thrive the most off the court as well.

In a 2015 interview with Bleacher Report's Damon Sayles, Towns declared that his goal was to "go pro with a Harvard degree," calling it the perfect scenario for his professional pursuits. Towns put that goal into motion when he committed to the Crimson over his hometown university in Ohio State and the University of Michigan prior to his senior season at Northland.

Towns pointed to a quote from American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson to describe his recruitment decision: "Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path."

"Dismantling normality is what I stand for," Towns told Bleacher Report in 2015. "I'm attempting to dismantle normality, personally, by going to Harvard."

On the court, Towns instantly became a feature player for the Crimson. He scored in double figures in 18 of his 28 appearances as a freshman and finished second in scoring on the team, tallying 12.3 points per game. At the time, the Ivy League did not have a freshman or rookie of the year award, but Towns would have undoubtedly been a candidate for that honor.

While Towns certainly flashed his abilities as a freshman, he stamped himself as the best player in the Ivy League as a sophomore, earning Ivy League Player of the Year and unanimous All-Ivy League first-team honors. He led the Crimson to a share of the regular-season conference championship while producing 16.0 points, 5.7 rebounds and 1.8 assists per game. His scoring output rose to 18.6 points per game when Harvard played conference opponents.



FILE PHOTO

MORE THAN AN ATHLETE — Former Ohio State forward Seth Towns served as a leader on the court and in his community during his time with the Buckeyes. He announced his retirement from basketball on Sept. 4.

Although he saw significant highs during his sophomore season, the Ivy League Tournament served as a low point for Towns. With 8:20 remaining in the second half of the tournament's championship game against co-regular-season champion Penn, Towns suffered a major knee injury that forced him out of the game and held him sidelined for the rest of his Harvard career.

"They told me I'd be back in September, then it was November, December. It never felt better," Towns told The Washington Post in 2020. "It was beyond gut-wrenching. It's one thing to rehab and feel like you're getting better and progressing towards playing again. It's another thing when the pain is exactly the same. I can't even explain the frustration."

As Towns' knee was not responding to rehabilitation, he underwent a multitude of surgeries while trying to get back onto the court. Although he was unable to make an impact for the Crimson through his play, he was still a central part of the team in his final two years in the program.

In his last season in Cambridge, Towns served as one of Harvard's team captains, a role that he said came with an adjustment period. However, his head coach at the time, Tommy Amaker, emphasized that Towns remained on the right track despite his injury history.

"I wish he didn't have to go through what he's gone through the last two years, but he'll be fine, better than fine," Amaker told the Post. "He'll create a path and leave a trail."

After a second surgery to repair the cartilage his knee, Towns was ready to make his triumphant return to the court — this time in a new uniform. Although Duke emerged as an early favorite to land the coveted gradu-

ate transfer, Towns decided to return home and play for Chris Holtmann and the Buckeyes.

"Having the opportunity to play for the school that you've always dreamed of playing for since I was a little kid, that opportunity to fight for the city that raised me is so invaluable," Towns said in an appearance on ESPN's "SportsCenter" on March 21, 2020. "It gives me a ton of pride."

Before Towns could put on a Buckeye jersey, though, he stepped into what he believed was an important role within his city. Less than 24 hours after attending his virtual graduation from Harvard, Towns found himself detained by Columbus police officers on May 30, 2020, while protesting police brutality following the death of George Floyd earlier that month.

Once released, Towns said he was equally proud of his Harvard graduation and his detainment while pledging to continue to use his voice, as an Ohio State basketball player, to fight for change in his community.

"I, with so many others, met in downtown Columbus, Ohio, to peacefully protest the murder of George Floyd and a long list of others who were failed by this country," Towns said in a statement. "True voice is not found in words spoken, but in steps taken. These hurtful times call for us to come together and unite our voices to be true and fearless in our expression of compassion and take steps to create the change we seek, the change we need."

Towns' message was met with support from Holtmann and the Ohio State basketball community.

"We fully support our player's right to peacefully protest," Holtmann said in a statement. "In the time I've gotten to know Seth, it's clear that he has a heart for social

justice."

His focus on social justice issues led him to create the Better Booklist — which is a book club composed of books regarding societal issues that plague the United States — in order to create a dialogue regarding racial injustices in the country.

During his first season with the Buckeyes, Towns was personally affected by police brutality when Casey Goodson Jr., someone he had grown up with in Columbus and called "the most kindhearted person" he had ever known, was shot and killed by a Franklin County sheriff's deputy in December 2020. Following that moment, Towns kneeled for the national anthem at all of Ohio State's road games for the remainder of his career. The Buckeyes do not come out of the locker room for the national anthem at home games.

Just days later and amidst heartbreak, Towns made his return to college basketball, playing two minutes against UCLA during the CBS Sports Classic in Cleveland. For the season, Towns appeared in 25 games for the Buckeyes while collecting an average of 3.8 points on 42.1 percent shooting from the field.

His most noteworthy performance for the Scarlet and Gray came during a back-and-forth slugfest against Purdue during the Big Ten tournament in 2021 in which he provided the Buckeyes with a much-needed 12 points off the bench in an 87-78 overtime win.

While Towns saw reasonable health during the 2020-21 season, he went under the knife again during the summer leading up to the 2021-22 season. This time, it was his back that was the subject of his procedure, and while hopes were high that he would be able to return for the season, he ultimately did not make it back to playing shape by year's end.

Towns' resilience showed, yet again, prior to the 2022-23 season as he gave one last attempt to return to collegiate action. But despite his best efforts, Towns suffered another injury setback, effectively ending his time with the Buckeyes.

Although he was unable to play out his collegiate career to the fullest, Towns expressed gratitude for the journey that he took over the last six years while also holding out hope for the future ahead of him.

"I share with many of you the frustration of not having been able to compete at the level I am capable of, or at least something close to it," Towns said in a statement. "Yet, it is the immense gratitude I feel for having the chance to play at all that has carried me through for so long. I have been remarkably blessed and would be living in vain to let anything overshadow that."

"To my teammates, thank you for giving me the chance to fight alongside you. Whether I was playing or sidelined by injury, our success mattered to me all the same because I was bought into you all and the culture we built together," he added. "As for my immediate future, I'll be taking some time to figure out what my next chapter looks like. But I am excited to find what is next for me and rest in my faith that I will be placed — as I always have been — exactly where I am intended to be."

Breaking Down Ohio State's Schedule

The Big Ten announced the full conference schedule for the women's basketball season on Sept. 7, so the Buckeyes now know where they will be spending their time over the next few months.

Ohio State's nonconference schedule to begin the season had already been announced. After an exhibition game against Notre Dame College on Oct. 31, the season will open at home against Tennessee on Nov. 8. The Buckeyes will then travel to face Boston College on Nov. 13 and Ohio on Nov. 17. Ohio State will enjoy the next few games at home, facing McNeese State on Nov. 20, Wright State on Nov. 23 and North Alabama on Nov. 27 before traveling to Louisville on Nov. 30 as part of the ACC/B1G Challenge.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Braden Moles

The Cardinals finished last season with a 29-5 record and 16-2 mark in the ACC before falling to South Carolina in the national championship game, providing likely the toughest nonconference matchup for Ohio State since a 73-62 loss to UConn in the 2019-20 season.

Ohio State will then begin Big Ten play at Rutgers on Dec. 4. While the Scarlet Knights gave the Buckeyes fits at one point or another last season, that's likely not the case this year considering that, at time of press, Rutgers has just eight players listed on its roster.

After another nonconference matchup against New Hampshire on Dec. 8, the Buckeyes will host Michigan State on Dec. 11. The nonconference schedule will then wrap with Albany on Dec. 16, and in the San Diego Invitational, where the Buckeyes will face South Florida on Dec. 20 and either Arkansas or Oregon on Dec. 21.

The Buckeyes have a combined 20-5 record over the last three nonconference schedules, but this year's slate presents a more

formidable challenge. Ohio State's nonconference opponents (not including Arkansas or Oregon) had a combined record of 174-131, not the usual hallmark of a tuneup start to the season, and could present some issues for the Buckeyes early in the year.

The Big Ten slate will begin in full at Northwestern on Dec. 28. Ohio State will then host Michigan on Dec. 31 for a New Year's Eve matchup. The new year will begin at Minnesota on Jan. 5 before the Buckeyes return home to face Illinois on Jan. 8.

Ohio State will then take on Nebraska on the road on Jan. 14 and Northwestern at home on Jan. 19 before one of the toughest stretches of the season. The Buckeyes will host Iowa on Jan. 23 and, just three days later, will travel to face Indiana.

The Buckeyes finished tied atop the Big Ten with Iowa last season for a share of the conference title, and Indiana was not far behind. Had it not been for a midseason injury to forward Mackenzie Holmes – who is back this season for the Hoosiers – Ohio State might not have had any hardware to lift up last season. The teams combined for a 48-15 record last season and a 2-1 clip against the Buckeyes, and they are likely Ohio State's biggest obstacle in repeating as Big Ten champions.

Ohio State will then host Purdue on Jan. 29 before a pair of road games at Wisconsin on Feb. 1 and at Maryland on Feb. 5. In turn, the Buckeyes will play two home games, hosting Minnesota on Feb. 8 and Indiana on Feb. 13. The regular season will wrap with road games at Penn State on Feb. 16 and Michigan on Feb. 20 before a final home game against Maryland on Feb. 25.

Along with Indiana, Iowa and Ohio State, the Terrapins are viewed as one of the potential favorites to win the conference this season. Maryland finished near the top of the standings last year, and the final regular-season contest between the Buckeyes and Terrapins could decide the Big Ten based on how things shake out.

Following the conclusion of the regular season, the Big Ten Women's Basketball

OSU Women's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2023 who have verbally committed to play basketball at Ohio State. (Star ratings are from the ESPN rankings.)

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Faith Carson	C	6-4	NA	Buchanan, Mich.

Tournament will be played at the Target Center in Minneapolis from March 1-5. Times and broadcast information have yet to be announced but will be revealed closer to the start of the season.

Columbus A Contender For Women's Final Four

Columbus – or more specifically, Nationwide Arena – could soon play host again to the NCAA Women's Final Four. The city was named one of seven finalists that could host the annual event from 2027 through 2031.

The Greater Columbus Sports Commission hosted committee members from the NCAA Women's Final Four at Nationwide Arena on Aug. 30.

"We are very proud of the tournament that was here in 2018," said Linda Logan, CEO of the Greater Columbus Sports Commission. "When you think about things we couldn't control, there were three amazing games and some great weather, but we all know that we can never rest on our laurels."

The 2018 event – attended by more than 39,000 people – was notable for several exciting games. Both semifinal contests went to overtime, and the national championship contest between Notre Dame and Mississippi State ended on a game-winning three-pointer from the Irish's Arike Ogunbowale to secure the championship for Notre Dame and then-head coach Muffet McGraw, who said the event was, "just an incredible job by Columbus and the local community."

Several recent NCAA events have been held in Columbus, including the 2021 NCAA Women's Volleyball Final Four and the most recent NCAA Women's Bowling Champion-

2022-23 OSU Women's Basketball Schedule

Date	Opponent
Oct. 31	Notre Dame College (Exh.)
Nov. 8	Tennessee
Nov. 13	at Boston College
Nov. 17	at Ohio
Nov. 20	McNeese State
Nov. 23	Wright State
Nov. 27	North Alabama
Nov. 30	at Louisville *
Dec. 4	at Rutgers
Dec. 8	New Hampshire
Dec. 11	Michigan State
Dec. 16	Albany
Dec. 20	at South Florida ^
Dec. 21	at Arkansas or Oregon ^
Dec. 28	at Northwestern
Dec. 31	Michigan
Jan. 5	at Minnesota
Jan. 8	Illinois
Jan. 14	at Nebraska
Jan. 19	Northwestern
Jan. 23	Iowa
Jan. 26	at Indiana
Jan. 29	Purdue
Feb. 1	at Wisconsin
Feb. 5	at Maryland
Feb. 8	Minnesota
Feb. 13	Indiana
Feb. 16	at Penn State
Feb. 20	at Michigan
Feb. 25	Maryland

* - Big Ten/ACC Challenge

^ - San Diego Invitational

ship. If Columbus were to win a bid, it would also host the NCAA Division II and III Women's Championships.

Columbus also has an extensive history of hosting NCAA tournament games, including men's first- and second-round games in 2005, 2007, 2015 and 2019 and women's first- and second-round games in 2005, 2011 and 2013 in addition to the Women's Final Four in '18. Columbus will also host men's first- and second round games in 2023.

If Columbus were to win the bid, scheduling would need to be done around games for the Columbus Blue Jackets, who call Nationwide Arena home. The venue is looking forward, though, to the possibility of hosting these games.

"(The Blue Jackets) know how important this event is to the city and are supportive of women's sports in general," said Mike Gatto, general manager of Nationwide Arena.

Other cities under consideration include Dallas (American Airlines Center); Indianapolis (Gainbridge Fieldhouse); Portland, Ore. (Moda Center); Sacramento, Calif. (Golden 1 Center); San Antonio (Alamodome); and Tampa, Fla. (Amalie Arena). Site visits are being conducted throughout September, and finalists will make presentations in mid-November with an announcement expected shortly after.

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BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2022 FOOTBALL

Sept. 3 NOTRE DAME, W 21-10; **10** ARKANSAS STATE, W 45-12; **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.

2023 FOOTBALL

Sept. 9 SAN JOSE STATE; **16** WESTERN KENTUCKY; **23** at Notre Dame.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 2 Mike Baumer Cross Country Classic at Dayton, OH Men: 1/15; Women: 1/13; **9** Big Ten Preview at Michigan, Men 56; Women 2/6; **23** Roy Griak Invitational at Minneapolis, Minn. **30** Lakefront Invitational at Chicago, Ill.

Oct. 15 Arturo Barrios Invitational at College Station, Texas; **28** Big Ten Championships at Ann Arbor, Mich.

Nov. 11 NCAA Regional Championships at Terre Haute, Ind.; **18** NCAA Championships at Stillwater, Okla.

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 7 Frederica Cup at St. Simons Island, Ga., 6/8; **8** Frederica Cup at St. Simons Island, Ga., 7/8; **26-27** Inverness Intercollegiate at Toledo, Ohio.

Oct. 3-4 Hamptons Invitational at East Hamptons, N.Y.; **31** Cal Poly Collegiate at Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif.

Nov. 1 Cal Poly Collegiate at Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif.

MEN'S SOCCER (4-0-1)

Aug. 25 SOUTH CAROLINA, T 1-1; **28** CAL POLY, W 3-0.

Sept. 1 Bowling Green, W 1-0. **5** WRIGHT STATE, W 2-0; **9** BUTLER, W 2-0; **13** Akron, 7 p.m.; **18** INDIANA, 2 p.m.; **21** Cleveland State, 7 p.m.; **25** Maryland, 1 p.m.; **30** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.

Oct. 5 NORTHERN KENTUCKY 7 p.m.; **11** Michigan, 7 p.m.; **16** NORTHWESTERN, 2 p.m.; **21** Penn State, 7 p.m.; **25** MICHIGAN STATE 6 p.m.; **30** Wisconsin, 2 p.m.

MEN'S TENNIS

Sept. 19 Columbus Challenger at Columbus, Ohio.

Oct. 1 ITA All-American Championship at Tulsa, Okla.; **20** ITA Midwest Regional Championship at Champaign, Ill.; **24** Las Vegas Challenger at Las Vegas, Nev.; **31** Ithaca Challenger at Ithaca, N.Y.; **31** Charlottesville Challenger at Charlottesville, Va.

Nov. 2 Big Ten Singles & Doubles Championship; **2** ITA Fall Championship at San Diego, Calif.

WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY (3-1)

Aug. 26 Northeastern, W 4-0; **28** Albany W 3-0.

Sept. 4 LEHIGH, W 4-0; **11** Miami (Ohio), L 1-0; **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 GOLF

Sept. 12-13 Dick McGuire/Branch Law Firm at Albuquerque, N.M.; **23-24** Mason Rudolph at Nashville, Tenn.

Oct. 3-4 Barbara Nicklaus Cup at Dublin, Ohio; **23-24** Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (5-1-1)

Aug. 18 Kansas, W 1-0; **21** Missouri, W 2-1; **26** BYU, L 2-0.

Sept. 1 Dayton, W 4-0; **4** TEXAS A&M, T 0-0; **8** Brown, W 3-2; **11** KENT STATE, W 2-1; **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, 2:05 p.m.; **13** MARYLAND, 7 p.m.; **16** Illinois, 2 p.m.; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, 7 p.m.; **23** NORTHWESTERN, noon.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sept. 16 Debbie Southern Furman Fall Classic at Greenville, S.C.; **22** Fall Spotlight at Raleigh, N.C.

Oct. 1 ITA All-Americans at Cary, N.C.; **14** Buckeye Invite at Columbus, Ohio; **20** ITA Midwest Regionals at Ann Arbor, Mich.

Nov. 2 ITA Fall Championships at San Diego, Calif.; **4** ASU Thunderbolt Invitational at San Diego, Calif.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (3-3)

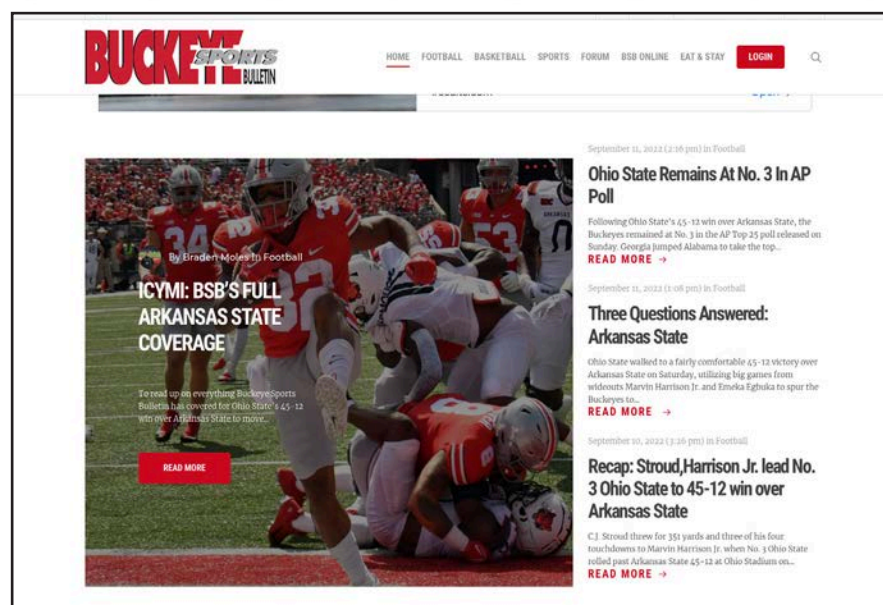
Aug. 26 TEXAS, L 3-0; **27** L 3-1.

Sept. 3 San Diego, L 3-0; **4** Louisville, W 3-1; **9**, BYU, W, 3-0; **11** Georgia Tech, W 3-1; **17** Tennessee 5 p.m.; **18** Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.; **23** Iowa; **24** Nebraska; **28** Michigan, 7 p.m.

Oct. 1 Indiana; **7** PENN STATE, 6:30 p.m.; **9** NORTHWESTERN, 1 p.m.; **12** Minnesota, 8 p.m.; **15** RUTGERS, 5 p.m.; **19** ILLINOIS, 6 p.m.; **21** IOWA, 7 p.m.; **26** MICHIGAN, 7 p.m.; **29** Penn State.

Nov. 4 Northwestern; **5** Michigan State; **11** Purdue, 7 p.m.; **13** NEBRASKA, 4:30 p.m.; **18** Maryland.; **20** INDIANA, 1 p.m.; **25** MINNESOTA, 6 p.m; **26** WISCONSIN, 7 p.m.

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Handing Out Way-Too-Early Season Awards

What can we really say about the walk-in-the-park win over Arkansas State? A 44-point favorite wins by 33. Yawn. Be honest, loyal Buckeye fan. Did you really watch it from start to finish, live? No DVR. Or, if you were there, were you in the stands until the end?

I'm guessing no.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

These mismatches are one of the bad things about college football. But that doesn't mean we can't draw some insight from the young season, as well as a better idea of what to expect ahead. With that in mind, plus the play in the real game against Notre Dame to consider, here's a swing at some way-too-early season awards.

Most Outstanding Newcomer (Player)

Defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr., hands down. We didn't see much of Hall last year, his first in the program, as Hall had limited duty in just four games before sitting out to take a redshirt year. His stat line from a year ago reads one solo tackle and one assisted tackle.

He exploded on the scene as a dominating

force against Notre Dame in a debut that was more impressive than his stat line (four tackles, two for a loss, one sack and one quarterback hurry) showed. He impacted plays even when he wasn't a finisher. His work up front made the play of the linebackers easier.

And he came back with a strong effort in Week 2. He leads the Buckeyes with five tackles for loss and is tied for the lead with two sacks. He's the real deal.

Most Outstanding Newcomer (Coach)

Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles. It's early, but the improvement of the defense over a year ago has been so dramatic that it should be taken seriously.

Remember that a year ago Ohio State gave up an average of 22.8 points a game, ranking just 38th out of 130 FBS schools. That included yielding 45 points to Utah, 42 to Michigan, 35 to Oregon, 31 to Minnesota and 31 to Purdue.

Notre Dame is a solid football team – not great as shown by its Week 2 loss to Marshall, and ND does not have an explosive offense – but last year's Buckeyes likely would not have held Notre Dame to 10 points, 12 first downs, 76 rushing yards (2.5 per carry) and 177 passing yards.

Yes. There were some shaky moments for the defense against Arkansas State. But Arkansas State was limited to just 12 points, 53 yards rushing and 276 yards of total offense.

Only Michigan State, Indiana and Akron were held under 13 points last year over a 13-game season. Knowles has the Buckeyes two for two in that category this year.

Still Glad We Have Him Award

Once again, we're reminded how fortunate Buckeye fans are that Ryan Day was on the ready and already in house when Urban Meyer decided to call it quits. This good fortune has turned out to be right up there with the availability of Meyer when Jim Tressel left in scandal. And, for that matter, the fortune that fell on the Buckeyes with the choice of small-college YSU coach Tressel when the hunt was on for John Cooper's replacement. Tressel returned OSU to the top tier of college football.

To be sure, Ohio State is a financial and brand powerhouse now, something that stands to significantly help any coach the Buckeyes would have. A lot of coaches would probably have done just fine following Meyer.

But there can be flops. Day is no flop, and he's certainly been pretty darn good, now 36-4 (including three wins while filling in for Meyer in 2018).

The win over Arkansas State pushed Day's winning percentage to exactly 90 percent. You know what Meyer's winning percentage was at OSU? 90.2 (83-9). Tressel? 82.8 percent with his 106-22 record. Cooper won 71.5 percent of the time (111-43-4) with OSU. Earle Bruce wound up at 75.5 percent (81-26-1). And Woody Hayes won 76.1 percent (205-61-10).

Good As Advertised Award

Sophomore wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. was sensational against Arkansas State.

Officially, he caught three touchdown passes. The way I see it, he really had four, with one taken away after being ruled a drop which was a bad call. He caught the ball, turned toward the goal, tucked the ball in and reached the end zone before the ball flew out.

It's easy to think of the son of the Pro Football Hall of Famer simply as a big target (6-4, 205 pounds) with great hands and precision skills in running his patterns. But he reminded us against Arkansas State that he is also really fast, outrunning several defenders for his first 42-yard TD.

Counting last season's Rose Bowl, in the last three games, Harrison has 18 catches for 311 yards and six touchdowns.

The Good Move Award

Steele Chambers, who averaged 7.9 yards a carry in rushing for 221 yards as an OSU running back before making the switch to defense last year, can now be thought of as a linebacker first.

Chambers was serviceable last year in his first year at the position. Now he's looking like a linebacker, not a former running back learning the position.

Chambers has had two solid games this year. He is tied for second on the team with 11 tackles, and he has a sack to his credit. His running-back speed is a key part of the OSU defense.

Too Bad Ewers Didn't Stick Around

I tuned into the Texas-Alabama game spe-

cifically to check in on the briefly-Buckeye Quinn Ewers. I came away totally blown away.

The show was short, as the Texas quarterback was knocked out of the game with a left (non-throwing arm) shoulder injury in the first quarter. But I saw enough to think I was watching college football's most talented quarterback in years.

Touch passes. Long passes. Command of the offense. It was almost like I was watching a fifth-year Heisman winner Joe Burrow at the end of his OSU-LSU career in the playoffs for LSU.

But this was a 19-year-old kid in his first big-game action who took just two snaps at OSU last year after leaving high school a year early. He completed 9 of 12 passes for 134 yards against Alabama before being knocked out of the game on a hit that drew a roughing the passer penalty.

It's too bad the timing wasn't such that Ewers would have stuck around OSU to have a chance to become a starter in Columbus one day. But it's tough to argue with his choice. He became the center of attention of Texas football immediately upon his arrival in Austin.

The postgame report was a sprained shoulder that could keep him out one to eight weeks. More tests were needed. Here's hoping the recovery will be quick. He's a treat to watch.

My Early-Season Rankings

I'm fine with Georgia being ranked No. 1 in the country. The Bulldogs bulldozed then-No. 11 Oregon, 49-3, on Labor Day weekend. But as for No. 2, I believe OSU deserves the nod over Alabama.

This is based on watching and comparing OSU's win over Notre Dame and Alabama's last-minute victory over a previously unranked Texas team playing with a second-team QB most of the game.

Texas had ample opportunities to put more points on the board earlier in the game, and Alabama was lucky to stay close enough to win, 20-19.

The good thing is that none of this matters at this point. And it won't matter if both Alabama and Ohio State go on to win their conference titles. The playoffs would determine who is better. It may matter down the line if there ends up being a debate between OSU and Alabama for a playoff spot if neither is an undefeated conference champion.

Playoffs Of The Future

Speaking of the playoffs, I'm fully on board with the expansion to a 12-team format recently approved, starting as early as 2024 and no later than 2026.

I especially like that six spots will be reserved for conference champions and that only conference champions will receive byes. That takes the off-the-field debate out of things.

As for the six at-large spots, there will be debate. But that should rarely involve leaving Ohio State out of the mix. Play top-10 football and you're pretty much guaranteed of getting in.

Starting with the first playoff in 2014, here is how Ohio State has been ranked by the committee on selection day: fourth, seventh, third, fifth, sixth, second, third and sixth last season.

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OSU Win Wasn't Pretty But It Was Enough

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

In the end, Ohio State scored a 45-12 win over Arkansas State to move to 2-0 on the season. So why was I so uneasy throughout the game and feeling unsatisfied at the final gun?

It was the penalties for one thing. Add nine more to the seven called on the Buckeyes against Notre Dame.

It was the 11- and 14-play drives given up by the improved defense (or I thought it was) in the first half. How about the 15-yard run by Champ Flemings on fourth-and-1 that set up a field goal to make it 17-9?

I'm not sure why I had any concerns about the offense. It scored the first three times it had the ball on drives of 96, 75 and 71 yards. I just didn't feel good about the Buckeyes in the first half, and it carried over throughout the game.

I think Arkansas State's 2-10 record last season had a lot to do with it. I was really expecting more of a blowout, even though 45-12 would have to go down as something akin to a blowout.

Then I got to thinking about it, and I calmed down a little bit.

Ohio State was coming off a highly anticipated, hard-fought win over Notre Dame. There was bound to be some sort of letdown against a Sun Belt Conference foe that posted that lowly record last season. Coaches can try to prevent the letdowns, but it isn't always easy with 18- to 22-year-olds.

The defense? It never did allow a touchdown. And in the second half the Buckeyes gave up only 94 yards and just three points. No lengthy drives for the Red Wolves in the final 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, the offense racked up 538 yards, striking by land and by air.

C.J. Stroud looked like the Stroud of last season, completing 16 of 24 passes for 351 yards and four scores without an interception, all the while making Marvin Harrison Jr. and Emeka Egbuka look like the new Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson (and we haven't really seen Jaxon Smith-Njigba yet). The running back tandem of TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams averaged 7.4 yards per carry with Egbuka adding a 27-yard carry of his own.

Then you start looking at the points the Buckeyes lost – Egbuka's negated punt return for a score and what appeared to be a touchdown catch by Harrison that was ruled an incomplete pass at the goal-line – and the score could have easily been 56-9 if you take away the field goal that Arkansas State connected on after retaining possession following Egbuka's apparent return.

That score would have been more in line with the Vegas lines, and I would have surely felt better about the game.

Either way, when you look at the results from games like those of Notre Dame and Texas A&M, you have to be satisfied with another Buckeye victory.

Room for improvement? Yes. But I'm satisfied.

This, That And The Other

I know. I am obsessed with the tight end – or at least Ohio State's reluctance to throw to said position.

But for the second week in a row I am left asking if the Buckeye coaches are finally going to recognize that the tight end is a potential weapon. And for the second week in a row, it is Cade Stover who leaves me asking that question. This time, the 6-4, 255-pounder made an athletic catch on a well-conceived play for 35 yards late in the first quarter to the Arkansas State 29. Sadly, the catch set up just a field goal when the play that appeared

to be a touchdown by Harrison at the goal line was ruled an incomplete pass. I thought, as I am sure you did, once the ball crossed the plane, it was a TD.

But getting back to Stover, he finished the game with a pair of receptions for 40 yards and now has five catches on the season. Make opposing defenses start to have to worry about the tight end, and the Buckeyes' passing to the wideouts and the running game become that much more effective.

"It's been a bright spot," head coach Ryan Day said of the involvement of the tight end. "Cade had that nice catch down the sideline. I thought that was really good, and (we're) trying to get him more and more involved in the pass game."

Music to my ears, Coach, and one more pain in the neck for opposing defensive coordinators. Kind of makes you wonder what Ohio State might have done with Jeremy Ruckert, doesn't it?

I have very few complaints against Ryan Day and the way he runs the program and calls the offense (especially now that he might be using the tight end). But I have always felt that he leaves his starting quarterback in too long in games that turn into blowouts.

When Ohio State took only a 24-9 lead into the locker room against ASU at the break, I knew that Day would keep C.J. Stroud in longer than I would wish, but I didn't think Stroud would still be in during the fourth quarter and with the Buckeyes holding a 45-12 lead.

I know that Day wants to get his star quarterback game reps, but that's just it. Stroud is the star quarterback. To have earned that status would indicate that he had already seen plenty of game reps. And with all due respect to teams on the schedule, Stroud is getting reps in practice against a defense that is tougher than many defenses he will see in the games ahead.

You have to weigh the experience Stroud would gain by playing more against the impact on a potential championship season if he were hurt in a game that was already in hand.

And speaking of game reps, what about reps for the backups?

Kyle McCord got in for one series, a conservatively called series at that. And Devin Brown (whom I was eager to see and expecting to see) got no work at all. If Stroud did get hurt, the championship fate of the Buckeyes might be left in their (inexperienced) hands.

Speaking of Stroud, he does a really good job of seeing his open receivers, and if they are open, he rarely misses them. I think his greatest skill is his incredible touch. He can both hit an open receiver in full stride and he can also squeeze a pass into the smallest of windows.

So far this season he has thrown for six touchdowns with, perhaps more importantly, no interceptions.

Stroud's play and that of the running game have been aided by what I believe to be the improved play over last year of the offensive line. Not only has the line been giving Stroud enough time to find those open receivers, but it has allowed only one sack in each of the first two games.

The big guys have helped the tandem of TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams average 6.6 yards a carry in the first two games. You are going to win a lot of games with that

kind of rushing average.

"As a whole, our run game is much cleaner," Stroud said after the Arkansas State game. "Of course, it starts up front. I think our offensive line did a great job today."

So far, Henderson has carried 25 times and Williams 22.

I must confess, I am a huge Miyan Williams fan. But Henderson is the bigger threat to go all the way, and with the type of holes the offense has been opening, it is only a matter of time before he breaks one. I don't mind a rotation, but at some point you have to choose your lead back. Running backs get into a rhythm for themselves and with their offensive line, and when they do you need to stick with them.

For the last couple of seasons, Buckeye fans have been looking for the next Bosa or Young along the defensive line. The defensive end spot usually produces the marquee player in Larry Johnson's group, but one wonders if the next great one in the trenches is Mike Hall Jr., an interior lineman.

Hall followed up his coming-out party against the Irish with a three-tackle performance against the Red Wolves. Three tackles? What's the big deal? All three of them were for losses, including a sack. That's the big deal.

Admit it. You held your breath when he went down in the second half. Posters on our BuckeyeSports.com game thread (including me) were posting, "Get up, Mike!"

After last season, when the linebackers looked out of position and bewildered much of the time, I have been very satisfied with that unit. Tommy Eichenberg and Steele Chambers have been at or near the top of the tackles list in each of the first two games, and Eichenberg has three TFLs and a pair of sacks, while Chambers has a sack and a pass breakup. Most importantly, they do not look bewildered or out of position. Credit new defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, sure. But credit Eichenberg and Chambers as well. There was no guarantee that they would or could buy what Knowles was selling.

Safety Tanner McCalister, who played under Knowles at Oklahoma State, had an interesting take on learning the coach's system. "Everybody picked it up pretty fast, and it was surprising," McCalister said of the Buckeyes. "I remember when Coach Knowles came to Oklahoma State, we didn't pick it up there (that) fast."

With all due respect to the Cowboys, I am sure Knowles is dealing with a higher caliber of athlete at Ohio State than he was at the other OSU.

The biggest disappointment on the defense so far would easily be Denzel Burke, arguably the best player on that side of the ball last season. After a subpar game against Notre Dame, Burke didn't show much improvement vs. the Red Wolves.

On Arkansas State's extended drive to their first field goal, Burke was flagged twice for pass interference, though only one of those infractions was accepted. Early in the second quarter he was badly beaten by Champ Flemings. Though he allowed the reception, Burke still had a chance to tackle Flemings but whiffed, allowing a 58-yard gain that set up Arkansas State's second field goal.

Burke's stat line did not look as bad as the eye test. He was credited with three solo tackles, including one for loss, and two pass

breakups. Given how well the defense has played without Burke at his best, think how much better it could be if he even reaches last year's level, let alone improves on it.

The Ohio State defense seems to be at its best when it matters most. In the first two games, the Buckeyes have given up just three points in the second half, including none in the fourth quarter. Notre Dame and Arkansas State have averaged just 83.0 total yards in the final 30 minutes.

The Irish and Red Wolves carried the ball a combined 64 times against the Buckeyes, gaining 129 net yards for a paltry 2.0-yard average. The Buckeyes are 11th in the nation in rushing defense and 24th in total defense (264.5). That still leaves them a long way to go to get in the top five, as promised by Knowles.

If you were wondering, they are tied for 100th in average number of penalties (8.0) and are 117th of 131 in average penalty yards (80.0).

With all the great receivers who have played for Ohio State, was anyone besides me surprised that only two of them – Joey Galloway and now Harrison – have caught three touchdown passes twice in a game? If he ever gets back on the field, Smith-Njigba, who had three touchdown receptions against Utah in the Rose Bowl following last season, should join that select group soon.

Galloway led the Buckeyes in receptions in 1993 (47) and 1994 (44) and is ranked 18th all-time at Ohio State in career receptions with 108 and 13th in career reception yardage with 1,894.

Somewhere Jim Tressel was cringing while watching the Arkansas State game.

Not only was Egbuka's 78-yard punt return negated by a penalty, but the Buckeyes lost a possession in the fourth quarter on a muffed punt reception.

And we all laughed when he first said the punt was the most important play in football.

Luckily, Buckeye punter Jesse Mirco was his usual reliable self, averaging 43.8 yards on five punts, with two landing inside the 20.

See Your Name In Print

I want to thank the BSB readers who regularly contribute to the Fan Forum, found on page 2 of each issue. These loyal readers offer their suggestions of players deserving of Buckeye Leaves and give interesting answers to the question of the week.

You, too, can join in on the fun. We are eager to hear what you have to say. Simply go to BuckeyeSports.com and click the Forum tab and you are in. Not only can you possibly have your posts about Buckeye Leaves or the question of the week in print, but you can put your two cents' worth in on the many other threads. Right now, selling the naming rights for the field in Ohio Stadium, delivery issues with BSB, details of the death of Dwayne Haskins and the battle at safety between Josh Proctor and Lathan Ransom are hot topics.

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Don't forget that we continue to call for letters to the editor as well. What do you think of the Jim Knowles defense, Big Ten expansion, playoff expansion, NIL or the rising price of football tickets?

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