

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$3.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!



Vol. 42, No. 3

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Sept. 24, 2022

Stroud, Offense's Stellar Performance Leads To Big Win Over UT Rockets

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

After a quick start to the game, Ohio State had already established a 21-7 lead over the visiting Toledo Rockets before quarterback C.J. Stroud connected with wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba in the first quarter for the wideout's first reception since the season opener against Notre Dame.

Though the Buckeyes' offense was already working like a well-oiled machine, the snag by Smith-Njigba – a 21-yarder to kick-start a drive that would end with a 5-yard touchdown reception by third-year wide receiver Julian Fleming, who was making his season debut – signaled that all was once again right with the world. It was as though Abbott and Costello had reunited watching Stroud and Smith-Njigba back on the same page, connecting downfield with ease and giving no indication that Smith-Njigba was rehabbing a leg injury that had forced him to miss the majority of the past two games.

It was a welcome sight not just for the 105,398 fans in Ohio Stadium for the late kickoff against Toledo, a 77-21 win for the Buckeyes, but for Ohio State, which welcomed back one of the country's top receivers to the offense.

"Jaxon's a huge threat," sophomore wide receiver Emeka Egbuka said. "It doesn't matter if we were playing Alabama or if we were playing tonight – attention's going to target Jaxon. You can count on him to win his one-on-one battles 24/7. Just having that on the field, sometimes C.J. can throw it, they'll triple him, it doesn't really matter. That just opens up the passing game and the run game."

Smith-Njigba's return ultimately amounted to just two receptions for 33 yards, but that was just one part of Ohio State's offense that dominated in every aspect against the Rockets. The Buckeyes finished with 77 points, the most since a 77-31 win over Oregon State in 2018, and 763 yards of offense, which is the second most in Ohio State history behind a 776-yard outing against Bowling Green in 2016.

Stroud did not earn many headlines for his play through the first two games of the season, with ink instead being spilled on Ohio State's defensive turnaround and star receivers such as sophomore Marvin Harrison Jr., Egbuka and Smith-Njigba, but it was unmistakably his moment against Toledo. The third-year quarterback finished 22 of 27 passing for 367 yards and five touchdowns, with much of that production coming in the first quarter in which he had



SONNY BROCKWAY

HEISMAN HOPEFUL – Quarterback C.J. Stroud finished with 367 passing yards and five touchdowns on 22-of-27 passing against Toledo, helping lead Ohio State to a 77-21 thrashing of the Rockets at Ohio Stadium on Sept. 17.

211 passing yards and two touchdowns on 12-of-14 passing.

He completed his first nine passes on the day and looked surgical for Ohio State's offense, making throws all over the field.

"He has very good vision," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. "C.J. had a good week of practice. I thought his attitude was excellent, and I thought his work ethic was excellent, and I thought the time he put in on his own was excellent.

"We had a tough week of practice. We did. We were physical on Tuesday, physical on Wednesday, we had a ton of reps," he continued. "We felt like we needed to do that, and he em-

braced that. That's a lot. As the quarterback, you take a lot on. But his attitude was excellent. His energy was excellent today."

Stroud not only made plays with his arm but also showed more willingness to tuck and run with the ball and even participated in what appeared to be a designed run.

He finished with just two carries for 9 yards, but it was one of the more physical performances by Stroud in his Ohio State career and just the seventh in which he finished with a positive rushing total.

Continued On Page 10

Your Mailing Label Goes Here
Call (614) 486-2202
Today To Subscribe

From The Message Board

Ohio State's offense exploded for 11 touchdowns, while the defense, once again, displayed a penchant for allowing big plays against Toledo on Sept. 17. We asked readers on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum what their impressions were from the Buckeyes' 77-21 win. Here are some of the responses:

"The big plays were mostly lucky plays. The Toledo QB (Dequan Finn) is supremely talented, so talented in fact I doubt he's at Toledo next season. They've got some stuff to clean up but they won by 56 points. It was dang near a flawless performance where everybody was getting involved in the scoring. They were on the QB all night, he just had good wheels and pocket navigation. It is what it is. We can't all play UConn, Hawaii and Colorado State."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"Ryan Day may be 37-4 as the coach at Ohio State, but I cannot recall a more impressive performance (without several starters contributing). Eleven touchdowns to three!"

– Terrier Buck

"One of the most memorable offensive outbursts in Buckeye memory lane! The play calling, the OL, the QB, the RBs, the WRs, the TE were all ALL-WORLD. Defensively the DLs were very active and disruptive. All questions from the last season such as an effective run game, linebacker play and the whole D, toughness and physicality and second-half adjustments appear to have been answered effectively."

– Anthony Buckeye

"If it wasn't for the incredible escape talent of Toledo QB Dequan Finn the final score might have been 90 to 7. The defense had Finn trapped in the backfield many times only to see him slip away for drive-extending yardage. Some Buckeye faithful questioned the staff's decision to hold so many key players out of the game but maybe that will prove to be wrong on their part as the Bucks get ready for the Wisconsin game. The

competition gets tougher now. There's still room for improvement. No place for complacency. Stay focused and maintain the Brotherhood. No team can avoid adversity. Go Bucks."

– BYRON MCNUTT

"Great game. The score says it all for the offense. I was hoping to see better containment by the defense. Some poor tackling angles led to big plays. I attribute some of the miscues to over-aggressiveness. That's a positive but it must be controlled aggressiveness. Now we start the road to the BIG championship. Wisconsin will be a good test for our offense."

– John Lanning

"The play of the offensive line stood out to me. C.J. Stroud consistently had all day to throw the ball, and man did he deliver."

– bstu9

"I guess what stood out to me is the Buckeyes still haven't played a flawless game and they won 77-21. I was most bothered by some poor tackling. What will happen when the Buckeyes put it all together and play all 85+ of their players. Will Wisconsin be the team to find out?"

– Poster That Harley Built

"Depth of the entire roster including the first-team backups and their backups! There is literally a whole other highly competitive Buckeye B1G team riding the pine! Wowzer! 84 points was in play!!!"

– BuckeyeScott

"Overall, I think the defense is improving. Great to see them cause a couple of turnovers."

– R1TBDITL

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State's offense came alive during the Buckeyes' 77-21 triumph over in-state foe Toledo. There were several key contributors who aided Ohio State in its triumph over the Rockets, and we asked the Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff writers and readers from Buckeyesports.com which players were worthy of Buckeye Leaves.

Andy Anders, BSB: One can't forget about the offensive line on a big scoring night like Sept. 17 for Ohio State. And for me, the offensive lineman who stood out the most is fourth-year tackle Dawand Jones.

There's plenty of love to go around for Ohio State's passing game against Toledo, and rightfully so. It's hard for me not to go with sophomore wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. here given his two toe-drag touchdowns. But Jones and company kept third-year quarterback C.J. Stroud clean all evening to find Harrison and the other receivers, and Toledo's defense didn't record so much as a hurry, let alone a sack.

Then on the ground, Ohio State's running backs averaged 6.5 yards per carry while the first-team offensive line was on the field. Whenever those runs went to the right side, it seemed Jones had a Toledo defender backpedaling, clearing space for Ohio State's ball carriers.

Bigger tests are coming, but the Buckeyes' offensive line – and Jones in particular – have been a force to start the season.

Jack Emerson, BSB: C.J. Stroud entered the season with lofty expectations after being a Heisman Trophy finalist in 2021, and he certainly looked like the Heisman front-runner against Toledo.

Stroud was dialed in from Ohio State's first offensive snap of the night, completing his first nine passes, including an 8-yard touchdown strike to Marvin Harrison Jr. From there, Stroud continued to decimate the Toledo defense – tossing four additional touchdowns – while completing 81.5 percent of his passes for 367 yards.

Stroud's ability to spread the field stood out, as he completed passes to five different receivers. He hit tight end Cade Stover three times for 83 yards. Overall, Stroud once again showed why he deserves to be in the conversation for the Heisman Trophy for the second consecutive season.

Braden Moles, BSB: Ohio State safety Tanner McCalister was a late scratch from the game for the Buckeyes, but third-year safety Cameron Martinez stepped in and filled the role for Ohio State.

Martinez finished with four tackles, of which several were pivotal in keeping Toledo out of the end zone and giving the ball back to Ohio State in a timely manner. It was his first career start for the Buckeyes,

but you wouldn't know it based on how seamlessly he filled in for Ohio State.

Along those same lines, safety Lathan Ransom should receive some props for filling in for Josh Proctor, who was also missing from the game. He stepped in and did the job as he did against Notre Dame.

BSB Subscribers

Terrier Buck: My favorite play of the game may have been Cade Stover holding the ball in one hand as he fell out of bounds with his feet inbounds. The oblong ball is much smaller than a basketball, so it's no biggie for him.

AnthonyBuck: The OL for keeping C.J. Stroud clean through so many TDs. All the RBs who played, especially Miyan Williams, Dallan Hayden and TC Caffey (he put such a big smile on Ryan Day's face). All-world QB C.J. Stroud and WRs Emeka Egbuka, Marvin Harrison, Julian Fleming and Jaxon Smith-Njigba for a memorable outburst. TE Cade Stover for spectacular catches in the midst of these fabulous WRs. The DLs, especially Jack Sawyer and Javontae Jean-Baptiste for so many TFLs and sacks. DLs Jaden McKenzie, Tyleik Williams and Caden Curry for the fourth-quarter shutout with energetic play. Cameron Martinez and Lathan Ransom for an excellent outing and Sonny Styles for playing like an All-American already!

John Lanning: I think Hayden had a strong game. He hit holes and has speed. Over 100 yards for third team. More depth there than I thought.

Bstu9: The offensive line gets multiple Buckeye leaves from me. It seemed like Stroud had a clean pocket every time he dropped back to pass. Absolutely no pressure on him whatsoever.

BuckeyeScott: Iron Buckeye Julian Fleming gets some Buckeye Leaves. Clearly his toughness, hard work and determination have paid off for this Buckeye receiver with his three receptions, two of which were for TDs!

PeyoteBuck: When a team is firing on all pistons like the Bucks were against Toledo, it's harder to single out players, but I want to give a thumbs up to Hayden and Stover. They hit the ground running.

BYRON MCNUTT: Tommy Eichenberg and Cade Stover are two players cut from the same cloth. They set the tone and toughness for the team. In fact, so does Steele Chambers. Freshman kicker Jayden Fielding continues to shine. He had numerous touchbacks. A few times the kicks were just to the goal line. Maybe the Bucks wanted Toledo to try a return? They didn't bite.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Against The 12-Team Playoff

I'm not in favor of the 12-team playoff proposal for several reasons. There will be too many games, unless the regular season is shortened. In any given year, there aren't 12 teams worthy of compet-

ing for a "national" championship. (And No. 13 will be angry.) If early rounds are played on campus, the weather is unreliable and inclement in the north in December. If those games are played in half-empty domes, the environment will be sterile.

Upsets are always possible in college football, and who wants to see the No. 10 seed playing the No. 12 seed for the championship?

Steven K. Brown
Mansfield, Ohio .

If you would like to express an opinion concerning Ohio State University sports,

please send your letter to BSB Letters, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, OH 43212, or email it to bsb@buckeyesports.com. Letters must be signed and include the writer's hometown and a daytime telephone number for verification. Publication priority will be given to those letters that are brief, and we reserve the right to edit letters for publication.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833.) is published 24 times a year (weekly September through November, biweekly mid-March through May and January through early March and monthly June through August and December) by:

Columbus Sports Publications
 1350 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 30
 P.O. Box 12453
 Columbus, Ohio 43212
 (614) 486-2202
 bsb@buckeyesports.com

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$99.95/year.

PUBLISHER
 Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
 Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
 Mark Rea

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
 Braden Moles

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
 Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
 Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
 Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
 Andy Anders Ryan Rios
 David Breithaupt Bob Roehm
 Bill Conley Mark Schmetzer
 Jack Emerson Steve Siegfried
 Rich Exner Jeff Svoboda
 Craig Merz Mike Wachsman

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
 Paula Serra Ron Friedman

2022-23 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 42)

No. 1	Sept. 10	No. 13	Dec. 17
No. 2	Sept. 17	No. 14	Jan. 14
No. 3	Sept. 24	No. 15	Jan. 28
No. 4	Oct. 1	No. 16	Feb. 11
No. 5	Oct. 8	No. 17	March 4
No. 6	Oct. 22	No. 18	March 18
No. 7	Oct. 29	No. 19	April 1
No. 8	Nov. 5	No. 20	April 15
No. 9	Nov. 12	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 19	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 26	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 3	No. 24	August

The next issue (Oct. 1 cover date) will be mailed on Sept. 27.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is a privately owned newspaper and is not affiliated directly or indirectly with The Ohio State University.



Is Allowing Big Plays OK For OSU Defense?

Welcome to what passes for the new normal regarding Ohio State defensive football, where giving up big plays is not only acceptable, it's to be expected.

It took until the third week of the season, but the third-ranked Buckeyes finally unleashed their stampeding beast of an offense, averaging nearly 10 yards on each of their 78 plays from scrimmage and piling up 763 total yards on the way to a 77-21 evening pleasure cruise against hopelessly-outmanned Mid-American Conference opponent Toledo.

The total yardage figure was the second-largest output in program history, just missing the 776 yards rolled up in 2016 against Bowling Green, another sacrificial MAC lamb that just happened to surrender 77 points in that game as well.

C.J. Stroud had another 300-yard passing day, extending the school record he already held for such performances to 11. True freshman tailback Dallan Hayden enjoyed the first 100-yard rushing day of his fledgling career, and Emeka Egbuka, Marvin Harrison Jr. and Jayden Ballard each cracked the century mark in receiving, combining to catch 17 passes for 331 yards and four touchdowns.

All in all, it was a muscle-flexing afternoon for a team with national championship aspirations. But while the offense was blowing the doors off the Toledo defense, the Ohio State defense continued what has officially become a trend of allowing chunk plays on what appear to be a combination of blown assignments, total brain cramps or both.

TreVeyon Henderson was still celebrating his 7-yard touchdown run to get the scoring started when Toledo quarterback Dequan Fin-enscrambled away from pressure and heaved a throw from midfield. It looked like the kind of desperation Hail Mary throw quarterbacks make at the end of games, but Finn's pass found its way into the arms of backup receiver Thomas Zsiros, a redshirt freshman who ran a simple flag route but still had a step and a half on OSU cornerback Cameron Brown.

The game-tying, 50-yard touchdown play not only capped a possession that covered 75 yards in a mere 46 seconds, it marked the fifth time already this season the Ohio State secondary had allowed a pass play in excess of 30 yards.

A sixth came early in the third quarter when Finn scrambled away from OSU defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste and floated what appeared to be another prayer downfield. The pass seemed to linger in the air forever, but it still managed to find its way into the breadbasket of leaping receiver Jerjuan Newton for a 40-yard touchdown.

By that time, the Buckeyes were already firmly in control of a game they would eventually win by eight touchdowns. But forgive me for the fact I couldn't help thinking there was something wrong. I distinctly thought I heard during the offseason that one of the standards for new defensive coordinator Jim Knowles was for his players to keep the ball in front of them. Giving up a half-dozen plays of 30 yards or more through the air over the first three games doesn't indicate to me that line of thinking is getting through.

Apparently, though, it is my line of thinking that is askew. Veteran play-by-play man Tim Brando and analyst Spencer Tillman, the former All-America running back from Oklahoma, continually opined throughout the second half of the Fox Sports telecast that giving up chunk plays was simply part of the process where a Knowles defense is concerned. To paraphrase Brando, who has called college football games for more than 25 years, "If you're going to score

77 points, you can probably afford to give up four or five explosive plays."

That seemed like an odd narrative to me until I saw similar sentiments across various social media outlets. The consensus seemed to be that allowing explosive plays aren't that worrisome because the design of a Knowles-led defense is to concentrate on making enough plays throughout the game that giving up an occasional big one doesn't matter.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

So I decided to research the last couple of national championship teams to find out how many chunk plays their defenses allowed throughout the course of the season.

Defending national champion Georgia allowed 16 pass plays of 30 yards or more during its 15-game schedule last year, and three of those came during the Bulldogs' lone loss, a 41-24 decision to Alabama in the SEC Championship Game. Four more came during the team's run in the College Football Playoff – two each against Michigan in the national semifinal and a title-game rematch with Alabama.

One year before, when Alabama won its sixth national championship under head coach Nick Saban, the Crimson Tide allowed 16 completions of 30 yards or more in 13 games. The year before that, LSU's defense gave up pass plays of 30-plus yards on 18 occasions in 15 games. When Ohio State won its most recent national title in 2014, the Buckeyes allowed opponents to complete 14 passes of 30 or more yards in 15 games.

So maybe giving up chunk plays in the passing game isn't the end of the world as long as you can keep them to an average of around one per game.

Still, I think if you are serious about contending for the national championship, it might give you pause that such opponents as Arkansas State and Toledo can hit your defense with big plays. Maybe I'm just reliving the horror of the 2021 national title game against Alabama, but I'm still left thinking that shrugging off those kind of plays now is going to come back to haunt the Buckeyes when the competition gets better.

Some Parting Shots

The point total marked the third time since 2016 that Ohio State has tallied 77 points and tied for the sixth highest single-game total in program history. The all-time top five are 128-0 against Oberlin in 1916, 85-7 vs. Drake in 1935, 83-21 against Iowa in 1950, and 80-0 victories vs. Marietta in 1892 and Miami (Ohio) in 1904.

Toledo surrendered its most points in a game since an 81-0 home loss to Miami (Ohio) in 1953. Before that, you have to go back to the program's inaugural season in 1917 to find more lopsided scores. That year, when football was little more than a club sport at Toledo, the Rockets absorbed a 90-0 loss to Ohio Northern and a 145-0 whupping at the hands of the University of Detroit (now Detroit-Mercy).

The Buckeyes ran their record to a perfect 60-0 against teams currently affiliated with the so-called Group of Five conferences – American Athletic, Conference-USA, Mid-American, Mountain West and Sun Belt – since 1994. The last time Ohio State suffered a loss to a team

currently a member of any of those conferences was the 23-11 disaster against Air Force in the 1990 Liberty Bowl.

The Falcons are currently playing in the Mountain West, but when they beat the Buckeyes, they were members of the Western Athletic Conference, a league that discontinued football as a sponsored sport after the 2012 season. Last year, the WAC welcomed four new members and reinstated football on the Football Championship Subdivision level.

- Ohio State is now 37-1 all-time against teams currently playing in the MAC. The only loss was a 12-6 decision against Akron in an 1894 game played at the Ohio State Fairgrounds. Since the Buckeyes resumed playing MAC teams with regularity in 1992, they are a perfect 28-0 against the conference.

- The victory against the Rockets marked the first time in program history the Buckeyes had ever had a 300-yard passer, 100-yard rusher and three 100-yard receivers in the same game. Stroud threw for 367 yards, Hayden rushed for 108, and Egbuka (116), Ballard (113) and Harrison (102) each cracked the century mark in receiving.

- Ohio State had never in its history had a game in which three receivers each had 100-yard performances until Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson did it last year against Oregon. Now, the Buckeyes have done it twice in the span of their last 15 games.

- Stroud passed for the most yardage ever for an Ohio State quarterback against a MAC opponent. His 367 yards eclipsed J.T. Barrett, who totaled 349 yards during the aforementioned 77-10 win against Bowling Green in 2016. Barrett completed 21 of 31 attempts vs. the Falcons and tied the program's single-game record with six touchdown passes.

- Tight end Cade Stover caught three of Stroud's passes for 83 yards, the highest single-game total for an Ohio State tight end in nearly nine years. To find a higher total, you have to go back to Nov. 2, 2013, when Jeff Heurman caught five balls for 116 yards and a touchdown during a 56-0 blowout at Purdue.

- The Buckeyes have now scored 20 or more points in 64 consecutive games, a school record and just five shy of the all-time NCAA Division I record. Oklahoma topped the 20-point mark in 69 straight games between 2016 and 2021.

- While doing some recent research, I discovered something interesting – to me anyway. When Archie Griffin finished his Ohio State career with 5,589 rushing yards, he was more than 3,000 yards ahead of Jim Otis (1967-69), who was then second on the career list with 2,542 yards. Otis is now 18th on the all-time list at OSU.

J.K. Dobbins is the only other Buckeye to eclipse 4,000 yards, finishing his three-year career with 4,459. Nine others – Ezekiel Elliott, Eddie George, Tim Spencer, Chris "Beanie" Wells, Braxton Miller, J.T. Barrett, Keith Byars, Carlos Hyde and Pepe Pearson – each totaled 3,000 or more yards during their careers.

And, according to the official Ohio State Football Media Guide, Carlos Snow finished agonizingly close to the 3,000-yard mark, falling a single yard shy at 2,999. But there seems to be some dispute about that total. Snow indeed had 610 carries and rushed for 30 touchdowns in 42 career games, as the media guide shows, but using season totals published on the OSU football website, Snow had 381 yards in 1987, 775 in 1988, 990 in 1989, and 828 in 1991. That adds up to 2,974 – still good enough for 12th place on the program's all-time rushing list.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Ohio State Consistent At No. 3 In AP Poll

Following Ohio State's 77-21 win over Toledo on Sept. 17, the Buckeyes remained at No. 3 in the AP top 25 poll released Sept. 18.

Ohio State checked in at No. 3 – with one first-place vote – behind No. 2 Alabama and No. 1 Georgia. The following four spots remained unchanged with Michigan at No. 4, Clemson at No. 5, Oklahoma at No. 6 and USC at No. 7. Kentucky, Oklahoma State and Arkansas rounded out the top 10.

Penn State jumped up eight spots to No. 14 following the Nittany Lions' 41-12 win on the road against Auburn, but that was it in terms of Big Ten teams in the AP top 25 poll. Michigan State fell out entirely following the Spartans' 39-28 loss to Washington, though Michigan State was the leading vote getter among unranked teams. Minnesota and Wisconsin also received votes.

The biggest rise in the poll belonged to No. 15 Oregon, which jumped 10 spots after defeating BYU by a 41-20 margin, and the biggest drops belonged to the Spartans, who fell

out of the poll from No. 11, and Miami (Fla.), which fell 12 spots from No. 13 after a 17-9 loss to Texas A&M.

10 Buckeyes Out Against Toledo

For the second straight week, third-year wide receivers Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming shared game-time decision distinctions, though both ultimately took the field against Toledo. Beyond the receiving duo, 10 other Buckeyes were listed as unavailable for Ohio State's clash with the Rockets on Sept. 17.

Second-year cornerback Jordan Hancock and graduate linebacker Teraadja Mitchell were held out against the Rockets, and alongside Hancock and Mitchell, the Ohio State defense was also without first-year defensive end Omari Abor, second-year safeties Jantzen Dunn and Jaylen Johnson and second-year defensive lineman Zach Prater.

On the offensive side of the football, Ohio State was without the services of graduate wide receiver Kamryn Babb and third-year tight end Joe Royer.

Third-year linebacker Mitchell Melton and second-year running back Evan Pryor remained out with season-ending injuries.

Fleming, Smith-Njigba Return For OSU

Smith-Njigba returned for Ohio State against Toledo after missing the game against Arkansas State and most of the contest against Notre Dame, while Fleming made his season debut against the Rockets.

Smith-Njigba had a muted evening, finishing with just two catches for 33, while Flem-

ing had one of the finest outings of his career, bringing in three catches for 23 yards and two scores.

Both receivers played throughout the first half but were mostly kept on ice in the second half, as Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said he was looking to slowly ramp up both players.

"Great for the room. You can see now the depth that we have, and when you're playing a full game, we're going to need all those guys," Day said. "We just are – (Julian) didn't play a full game. We just wanted to play him for about a half and then build some momentum in the next week."

Hall, Proctor, McCalister All Late Scratches

Shortly before Ohio State kicked off against Toledo, it was announced that safeties Josh Proctor and Tanner McCalister would be out for the game, a surprise considering there had been no question about their status entering the contest.

In their stead, safeties Lathan Ransom and Cameron Martinez got starts for Proctor and McCalister, respectively, combining for 10 tackles and helping hold Toledo's offense to just 183 passing yards.

Another player who did not see the field was second-year defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr., who was not listed on the availability report but did not enter the game for the Buckeyes. Hall left Ohio State's week-two contest against Arkansas State, and Day indicated that he did not believe it to be a long-term issue.

After the win over Toledo, Day clarified the status of all three players.

"They were all available," Day said. "We just felt like it was the right thing to do coming out of warmups to hold them out of the game, but we're expecting them to be available for next week as well."

Wisconsin Set For 7:30 Kickoff

Ohio State will host Wisconsin under the Ohio Stadium lights on Sept. 24, with a set kickoff time of 7:30 p.m. ET on ABC.

This will mark the third home night game for Ohio State in a four-week span to open the season. The Buckeyes dispatched then-No. 5

Notre Dame 21-10 on Sept. 3, which began at 7:30 p.m., and defeated Toledo 77-21 on Sept. 17 after a 7 p.m. kickoff.

Ohio State's contest against the Badgers will also serve as a "blackout" game for the Buckeyes, who are expected to wear their all-black uniforms during the game. The Buckeyes are 3-0 when they wear their black uniforms, picking up wins against Penn State in 2015, Nebraska in 2018 and Michigan State in 2019.

Other set kickoff times include Ohio State's Oct. 1 matchup with Rutgers, which will kick off at 3:30 p.m., and the Buckeyes' season finale against Michigan, which is set for a noon kickoff. Remaining kickoff times and broadcast information will be announced as each game approaches.

18 Freshmen See Time Against Rockets

Ohio State had the opportunity to get 18 freshmen on the field in the Buckeyes' 77-21 rout of visiting Toledo, with several making a significant impact on the game.

It was the Ohio State debut for several freshmen, including wide receivers Kojo Antwi, Kaleb Brown and Kyion Grayes. Grayes hauled in his first career catch for 2 yards and was targeted twice on the evening. Elsewhere on offense, quarterback Devin Brown, walk-on running back TC Caffey and tight end Bennett Christian all made their debuts. Brown did not throw the ball but rushed once for a 1-yard gain, while Caffey had three carries for 57 yards, including a 49-yard touchdown late in the contest.

On defense, Ohio State saw the first snaps of cornerback Ryan Turner and linebacker Gabe Powers, though neither recorded a statistic.

Other freshmen who had already appeared this season who played against Toledo included cornerback Jyaire Brown, defensive end Caden Curry, kicker Jayden Fielding, running back Dallan Hayden, linebacker C.J. Hicks, defensive ends Kenyatta Jackson and Hero Kanu, safeties Kye Stokes and Sonny Styles, and offensive lineman Tegra Tshabola.

Hayden led the way for the freshmen, finishing with a team-high 108 yards on 17 car-



Reynolds Travel "On the Road Again" for 2022 Ohio State Football Away Games

Reynolds Travel is once again offering packages to all 2022 Ohio State Away Football Games and a Bengals vs. Browns Same Day trip and hope you can join us for another great football season. Here is a listing but full details are available on our website at www.reynoldstravel.com.

OSU vs Michigan State — Oct. 7-9: Two-night motorcoach trip to East Lansing area for the Ohio State vs. Michigan State game. The package includes a roundtrip motorcoach (you can purchase land only if desired) with two nights at the Marriott Grand in Grand Rapids including breakfast daily and city tour of Grand Rapids and Gerald Ford Museum and game tickets in the Ohio State Visitor section and roundtrip transportation to East Lansing for the game and fully escorted by Reynolds Travel.

OSU vs Penn State — Oct. 28-30: Two-night motorcoach trip to State College area (you can purchase land only package) and hotel accommodations at the Omni Bedford Springs Hotel for two nights with breakfast daily, a tour of Bedford area, and game tickets in the Ohio State Visitor section and roundtrip transportation to State College for the game and fully escorted by Reynolds Travel.

OSU vs Northwestern — Nov. 3-6: Three-

night motorcoach trip to the windy city, Chicago (you can purchase land only package) and hotel accommodations for 3 nights at the Embassy Suites Magnificent Mile with breakfast included daily and Manager's party (except game day) with a tour of Wrigley Field and Northwestern University and game tickets in Ohio State visitor section and game day transportation to Evanston and fully escorted by Reynolds Travel.

OSU vs Maryland — Nov. 17-20: Three-night motorcoach trip to Alexandria, Virginia (land-only package available) at the Alexandrian Hotel in the center of Alexandria with breakfast daily, a tour of the Naval Academy with lunch at the Academy Club, and a tour of Mount Vernon and game tickets in the Ohio State Visitor Section and roundtrip transportation to College Park, Maryland for the game.

NFL Game-Bengals vs. Browns — Dec. 11: Same day motorcoach trip to Cincinnati and game tickets in Section 334 in lower rows.

Reynolds Travel — Arranging Ohio State Away, Play-off and Bowl trips since 1978!

Visit our website at www.reynoldstravel.com to see more.



8905 Commerce Loop Dr.
Columbus, OH 43240

Phone: 614-847-8008

Toll Free: 866-880-0577



GOOD FOOD + FINE DRINKS



good food
fine drinks

Both locations open for lunch & dinner daily!

<p>1505 W. 5th Ave Near Grandview Ave 614-817-1198</p> <p>Monday - Saturday: 11 AM - 10 PM</p> <p>Sunday: NOON - 10 PM</p> <p>KITCHEN UNTIL 10 PM NIGHTLY</p>	<p>741 N. High St In the Short North 614-298-1014</p> <p>Monday - Saturday: 11:30 AM - 12:30 AM</p> <p>Sunday: NOON - 12:30 AM</p> <p>KITCHEN UNTIL MIDNIGHT DAILY</p>
---	--

presscolumbus.com

2022 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 3	NOTRE DAME	W, 21-10	ABC	1-2, 24-17 win over California
Sept. 10	ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	BTN	1-2, 44-32 loss to Memphis
Sept. 17	TOLEDO	W, 77-21	FOX	2-1, 77-21 loss to Ohio State
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	7:30 p.m.	ABC	2-1, 66-7 win over New Mexico State
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	3:30 p.m.	TBA	3-0, 16-14 win over Temple
Oct. 8	at Michigan State	TBA	TBA	2-1, 39-28 loss to Washington
Oct. 22	IOWA	TBA	TBA	2-1, 27-0 win over Nevada
Oct. 29	at Penn State	TBA	TBA	3-0, 41-12 win over Auburn
Nov. 5	at Northwestern	TBA	TBA	1-2, 31-24 loss to Southern Illinois
Nov. 12	INDIANA	TBA	TBA	3-0, 33-30 win over West. Kentucky
Nov. 19	at Maryland	TBA	TBA	3-0, 34-27 win over SMU
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN	12 p.m.	FOX	3-0, 59-0 win over Connecticut

ries. On defense, Styles finished with three tackles, including one for loss, and Curry and Stokes both had two tackles. Jackson was also credited with a tackle.

Staff Expecting Rebound For Burke

It's not been the start to the season that anyone envisioned for sophomore cornerback Denzel Burke. He came on the scene as a true freshman for Ohio State last year, eventually starting all 13 games for the Buckeyes and leading the team with 12 pass breakups in addition to 36 tackles and an interception. For his effort, he was named a freshman All-American by several publications and earned third-team all-Big Ten honors.

Many expected him to keep that streak going into this year, as he was named to the pre-season watch list for the Jim Thorpe Award, given annually to the top defensive back in the country. But through the first three games of

the season, Burke has seen struggles in coverage.

The most notable miss was against Arkansas State, in which Burke allowed a 58-yard reception to Red Wolves wideout Champ Flemings, who stands just 5-6 and 155 pounds.

Burke was matched up with Flemings on the outside, and a stutter step from Flemings gave him as many as 5 yards of separation before pulling in the reception. Burke then slid off Flemings on a tackle attempt, and it was only because of a shoestring tackle by Ransom that Flemings did not find the end zone.

Early-season returns for Burke have not been positive, but the staff – including Day – believe he will turn things around.

“Denzel is very, very talented,” Day said. “And you guys see what he’s capable of. I think that he’s going to keep working to get better, and he certainly has some plays he wants back, but we’re all confident that he will and he’s ready to make those plays. But at the same

time, he’s got to identify what those things are that got him jammed up on those plays and make the adjustments from there.”

Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles was more pointed in his assessment of Burke and went to bat for his player.

“Denzel is fine,” Knowles said. “Those guys at corner, they live on an island. It’s something that 99.99 percent of the population could never do. It’s a really tough, competitive situation. Sometimes you get into a little bit of a slump. You come out, reassess. He went back in and did better. So I think he’s on track.

“When you’re in such a high-pressure position, you’re going to have some ups and downs,” Knowles continued. “And it’s really natural. And he’s got a great attitude. And we trust him.”

Even if Ohio State were looking for another option at cornerback, depth in that position was thin entering the season, and especially so after Hancock was made unavailable for the Arkansas State and Toledo games.

Ohio State has been able to get work in for freshman cornerback Jyaire Brown throughout the first three games, but the depth at cornerback is still a work in progress.

“We’d love to have Jordan back,” Knowles said prior to the Toledo game. “I think he can really add to that. It is what it is. We’re working with the guys we have, and they’re giving us everything that they have and we’re going to keep getting better.”

DE Curry Breaking Into DL Rotation

When Curry became just the second first-year player to lose his black stripe in the spring, it should have been an indication that

his arrival would be sooner rather than later.

Bigger performances will likely be in Curry’s future, but he made his first announcement in Ohio State’s win over Arkansas State, finishing with four tackles, including one which knocked Arkansas State running back Ja’Quez Cross 6 six yards for a loss.

“Caden’s flashed,” Day said after the game. “Caden plays hard, he’s productive. He’s one heck of a football player and I’m glad he’s a Buckeye.”

Ohio State has been rotating defensive linemen throughout the first three games of the season and Curry got his first shot in the fourth quarter against the Red Wolves, creating two tackles – including the 6-yard loss – that helped force a three-and-out by Arkansas State.

“The more he plays, the more he is probably going to find a role for himself,” Day said. “He’s very, very productive. He’s been productive since he’s got here. You can see that when he’s on the field. And he’s helping us on field goals. He’s helping us in some special teams areas as a backup. To see him get in the game was great. Anytime those young guys can play, they can learn a lot. It was a good start for him.”

Curry has impressed Day as well as Knowles, who said Curry has shown out since Knowles first arrived on campus.

“He’s another guy I noticed from the start when I first got here because he has a tremendous first step,” Knowles said. “He’s tough for his size (6-3, 250). He’s one of those guys that can get himself in a position to make plays. He just bounces off people, twists, turns and pitches a fit.”

Continued On Page 6

We are committed to your health and safety





Fairfield Inn & Suites Columbus / Dublin
7150 Sawmill Rd, Columbus, OH 43235 • 614-389-3036



COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT
Courtyard Grove City
1668 Buckeye Place
Grove City, OH 43123
614-782-8292



TOWNEPLACE SUITES BY MARRIOTT
TownePlace Suites Columbus / Hilliard
4079 Lyman Dr, Hilliard OH 43026 • 614-541-9309



Fairfield Inn Grove City
1722 Buckeye Place
Grove City, OH 43123
614-808-8200



Best Western Hilliard Inn & Suites
3831 Park Mill Run Dri, Hilliard, OH 43026 • 614-529-8118

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

"He showed that he can play, and he can definitely be in the mix. He's proved himself with step one getting in there and making plays, and that's earning him more opportunities."

Trayanum Trying Hand At Kick Returns

It was an unexpected sight to many to see Ohio State linebacker Chip Trayanum back on kick returns against Arkansas State.

Day said on Sept. 15 that the Buckeyes are continuing to keep Trayanum on kickoff returns, at least against Toledo, and see how it went for him in relief of Emeka Egbuka, who had handled kickoff return duties up to that point.

"We think that he's shown us enough that he's earned the right to take it back," Day said. "And I think the guys believe in him. So like anything else, we'll put him back there and then evaluate after the game and kind of see where to go next."

Are You Having Postal Service Delivery Problems?

Reports on the delivery of Buckeye Sports Bulletin's issue covering the Arkansas State game showed improvement over the previous Labor Day week, but many readers still reported struggling to get their paper in a timely fashion.

BSB subscribers can upgrade their existing subscriptions to first-class mail in an envelope through football season for just \$25 and through recruiting season for \$35. Just give us a call at (614) 486-2202 for credit card orders or send your check or money order to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Mention the "football" or "recruiting" upgrade.

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," BSB publisher Frank 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.

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

If you are a current subscriber and have been unable to access all features on the site, please give us a call at the (614) 486-2202 number and we will help you gain access.

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

Day said that the team believes in Trayanum as Ohio State's kick returner, and though he did not have the chance to bring one out against the Red Wolves, Trayanum returned one kick for 17 yards against the Rockets.

"He's carried the ball in college games," Day said. "When you look at his numbers on the GPS, he's really fast. Then also he's got some strength to him, and I think when you're

looking for somebody to return in the kickoff game, you've got to have somebody that's got some strength to them. Because that can be a situation where you've got to be strong.

"You've got to be built sort of like a running back or a bigger wide receiver, in my opinion, to do it all the time. Now you can try to hit a home run once in a while with maybe a slighter guy, but you run the risk of them getting whacked. So we think that he really has an opportunity to be a good returner for us."

Trayanum taking over on kick returns – even if just temporarily – is not an indictment of Egbuka, though, who was fully supportive of his teammate taking over. Egbuka – on 21 returns over the past two seasons – has averaged 28.8 yards per return, but he believes Trayanum could take Ohio State's special teams to the next level.

"Chip Trayanum might even be better than me," Egbuka said. "He hasn't gotten the chance to return any yet, but you guys are going to see (against Toledo), he's a very special talent. He's one of the most, if not the most athletic guy on the team. I'm excited to see him return some stuff."

After Trayanum's kick return against the Rockets, Egbuka was back at his old spot on kickoffs. Egbuka and Jayden Ballard each returned a punt, Egbuka for 10 yards and Ballard for 14.

Day, Stroud React To Upset-Filled Week

In a week in which then-No. 6 Texas A&M, then-No. 8 Notre Dame and then-No. 19 Wisconsin all fell to unranked opponents, third-ranked Ohio State made it through unscathed with a 45-12 win over Arkansas State.

Although the Buckeyes did not receive a wake-up call themselves against the Red Wolves, they recognized the importance of not overlooking an opponent regardless of record, conference or roster makeup. Stroud said it serves as a warning that Ohio State cannot take anyone lightly.

"That shows everybody that any week you can lose to anybody," Stroud said. "It doesn't matter who you play, everybody is coming to take your spot in the rankings. That's some-

thing with our team, we don't want to learn that the hard way this season. I know we did that last year, so we don't want to learn the hard way again. We've really been harping on 'It's not about anybody else, it's about us.' If we come and play Ohio State football and we play like we know we're supposed to play, then we shouldn't have any issues.

"At the same time, we respect all of our opponents. We approach each opponent the same way and just try to get better each and every week in practice."

Although Arkansas State entered the game as 44-point underdogs, the Red Wolves played the Buckeyes tough in the first half, battling to a 24-9 deficit entering the locker room. While it was still smooth sailing for Ohio State the whole way, Stroud expressed respect toward his unranked foe.

"Arkansas State was not a bad team, at all," he said. "They have a lot of good transfers. Their offense was pretty dynamic. They definitely had some good players and were well-coached."

Ohio State dispatched Toledo 77-21, but Day said going into the game that it would have been a mistake to think about how much time backups might get to play because he did not want to get caught looking past his opponent.

"Just look at what happened around the country last week," he said.

More Buckeyes Lose Black Stripes

Although Ohio State is already more than three weeks into its regular season, there are still several freshmen rising to the occasion in practice despite not seeing the field in either of the Buckeyes' first two games.

Caffey shed his black stripe on Sept. 14, while Antwi and first-year walk-on quarterback Mason Maggs joined him in the honor on Sept. 15.

With the trio of freshmen losing their black stripes – the first to do so during the regular season – Ohio State now has 12 freshmen who have shed their black stripes.

Prior to joining Ohio State, Caffey rushed for 2,638 yards – the 27th-best mark in Ohio high school football – and 37 touchdowns as

Cucos Taqueria

The Great Taste of Mexico
only at Cucos Taqueria

Order Online
Pick-up & Delivery
Drinks-to-Go

Come watch
the game on our
**BIG SCREEN
TVs!**

HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY - FRIDAY 4-7PM

2162 W. HENDERSON RD. COLUMBUS, OH 43220
(614) 538-8701 | CUCOSTAQUERIA.COM

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.

To upgrade your existing subscription to VIP status, with all the benefits that come with that designation, go to BuckeyeSports.com/vip-memberships to pay by credit card, or call us at (614) 486-2202 during regular business hours. If readers have questions about this program, they can call the same number.

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.

Elite-Plus Donors: B2, Reston, Va.; Brian Bucher, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.;

Thomas E. Farish, Port St. Lucie, Fla.; Dan LaVille, Grand Rapids, Mich; Jim Reichler, Toledo; In memory of Hugh and Dixie Rea, Washington Court House, Ohio; In memory of Lisa Rea, Greenfield, Ohio; The Russell Group United, Columbus.

Elite Donors: Robert Ankerman, Holland, Mich.; Marshall Beck, Sarasota, Fla.; Phillip Blue, Prior Lake, Minn.; Fredrick Bradshaw, Columbus; In memory of Norwin Brovitz, Oakmont, Pa.; Iris Cremean, Walbridge, Ohio; Richard Dunkelberger, Groveport, Ohio; Fred Fingerhut, Phoenix; Sander Flaum, New York; Chalk Fry DDS, Sarasota, Fla.; Laura Granich, Columbus; Paul E. Hackett, The Villages, Fla.; James Hamilton, Murrysville, Pa.; Mike Heimann, Ashland, Ohio; Curtis High, Beavercreek, Ohio; Freddie and Joe Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Carl R. Jeffery DDS, Van Wert, Ohio; Bill Judy, Dublin, Ohio; Donald Kersey, Springboro, Ohio; Kris Kersey, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Frank Klaus, Pepper Pike, Ohio; Fred Krisch, Cleveland; Paul Lappert, Columbus; Larry Larson, Ladera Ranch, Calif.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Dr. Jonathan Lucas, Portsmouth, Ohio; Allen McMillin Jr., Logan, Ohio; Mike from Marietta, Ga.; Col. George R. Nelson, New Albany, Ohio; OSU65Bob, Mishawaka, Ind.; Theodore Pegram, Eden Prairie, Minn.; Greg Place, Greenville, Ohio; James Robinson Jr., Council Bluffs, Iowa; Charlie Shaffer, Edison, Ohio; Bill Short, Sparta, Ohio; Mark Skinner, Columbus; Kyle Smith, Marietta, Ga.; James Thomas, The Villages, Fla.; Chuck Underwood, Miamisburg, Ohio; Dan van Blaricom, Dublin, Ohio; Beth Wachsman, Columbus; Bob Weber, Mishawaka, Ind.; Elliott S. Wettstein, Waverly, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Peoria, Ill.; David J. Young, Supply, N.C.; Anonymous, Columbus; Anonymous, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Anonymous, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Lancaster, Ohio; Anonymous, Lewisburg, W.Va.

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.

a senior at Hubbard High School. He made his mark in his first game after losing his black stripe, rushing three times for 57 yards, including an impressive 49-yard score late in Ohio State's win over Toledo.

Maggs, in his senior season at Dublin (Ohio) Coffman, threw for 1,786 yards and rushed for 861 yards en route to 30 total touchdowns. His father, Bob, was a four-year letter winner at Ohio State and started at center for the Buckeyes from 1985-86.

Antwi arrived in Columbus during the summer and is one of the program's four highly touted freshman receivers. He hauled in 121 receptions for 1,839 yards and 20 touchdowns during his high school career at Suwanee (Ga.) Lambert, joining the Buckeyes as a four-star recruit and the No. 133 overall player and No. 20 wide receiver in his class.

Meyer Not Contacted For Nebraska Job

After a report from CBS Sports' Dennis Dodds that Nebraska had reached out to former Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer to fill the Cornhuskers' vacant head-coaching role, a further report from ESPN's Pete Thamel said there's been no contact between Meyer and Nebraska.

Thamel added that Meyer is expected to remain at FOX and not pursue any further coaching opportunities. Meyer was immediately connected to the Nebraska job once former Cornhusker coach Scott Frost was shown the door, though there's been little evidence that Nebraska would want Meyer or that Meyer would take the job.

FOX's "Big Noon Kickoff" broadcast live from Nebraska's campus on Sept. 17 in preparation for the Cornhuskers' date with No. 6 Oklahoma, and there were unmistakable chants from the crowd that shouted, "We want

Urban!" with Meyer himself in attendance on the dais.

Meyer is back in broadcasting this season for "Big Noon Kickoff" following his brief stint with the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars last year in which he was fired after 13 games. Meyer had previously been part of "Big Noon Kickoff" from 2019-20 following his departure from Ohio State after the 2018 season.

Judge Rules Strauss Suit Can Continue

Nearly a year after a federal judge dismissed outstanding lawsuits against Ohio State University filed by victims of former Ohio State physician Dr. Richard Strauss, a federal appeals court made up of a three-judge panel ruled 2-1 on Sept. 14 that the unsettled lawsuits can continue to trial, according to a report from NBC News.

Dating back to 2020, Ohio State has paid \$59.8 million to settle lawsuits with 289 survivors of sexual abuse by Strauss, who was determined by an independent investigation to have sexually abused at least 177 former students from 1978-1998, and the investigation also determined that Ohio State – which was made aware of complaints as early as 1979 – failed to act. Strauss died by suicide in 2005.

Outstanding lawsuits that had not been settled were dismissed by a federal judge on Sept. 22, 2021, with U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson of the Southern District of Ohio stating that the victims suffered "unspeakable sexual abuse" at the hands of Strauss, but that the cases could not move forward due to Ohio's statute of limitations for criminal rape cases that is set at 20 years.

An appeal of Watson's dismissal was filed in February by attorneys representing 84 for-

Continued On Page 8

Get your sex life back!

And your youthful energy too...
With Columbus Men's Clinic!



Specializing in erectile dysfunction, premature issues, acoustic wave therapy, and testosterone replacement.

Get your first office visit, testosterone level, and PSA check for free! That's a \$300 value.

Don't wait! Call today!

614.300.7400

Walk-ins Welcome
1507 Chambers Rd, Ste 208
Columbus, OH 43212



COLUMBUS
MEN'S CLINIC

www.ColumbusMensClinic.com

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 7

mer Ohio State students and student-athletes, according to a report from The Lantern, and the three-judge panel ruled on Sept. 14 that Watson "erred" in his decision, arguing that plaintiffs were not made aware that they were abused until 2018, at which point most cases would have surpassed the statute of limitations.

"At the time of the abuse, they were teenagers and young adults and did not know what was medically appropriate," Circuit Judge Karen Nelson Moore said in her opinion. "Strauss

gave pretextual and false medical explanations for the abuse."

Moore said that students believed because Strauss' conduct was "so widely known and talked about, it could not have been abuse."

"Similarly, many believed that Ohio State would not have made Strauss the athletic team doctor unless his examinations were legitimate, and thus, that the conduct was medically appropriate even if it was uncomfortable," she continued.

Moore also noted in her opinion that the plaintiffs were not made aware of Ohio State's failure to act until 2018 and should have been given an expanded statute of limitations once they became aware of the university's involvement.

An Ohio State spokesperson told NBC News that the university is "reviewing the decision."

Players Of The Game Named For Arkansas State

An anticipated breakout star and emerging key defensive cog headlined Ohio State's players of the game against Arkansas State.

Sophomore wide receiver Marvin Harrison, Jr. took home Offensive Player of the

Week honors, while fourth-year linebacker Steele Chambers earned Defensive Player of the Week and graduate linebacker Palaie Gaoteote IV ended up as Special Teams Player of the Week.

Harrison racked up 184 yards in just seven receptions against the Red Wolves. He added three touchdowns, each from at least 30 yards away from the goal line. Combined with his three-touchdown performance against Utah in the Rose Bowl to conclude the 2021 season, he is just the second wide receiver in Ohio State history with multiple three-touchdown games.

"Marvin's route running is very mature for his age," Day said after the win over Arkansas State. "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 incompleteness – 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."

Harrison was also named Big Ten co-offensive player of the week for his efforts. Harrison shared the honor with Maryland quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa, who threw for

391 yards and four touchdowns while adding a score on the ground during the Terrapins' 56-21 win over Charlotte.

Chambers tied for the team lead with six total tackles on defense, four of them solo. He added one sack on a perfectly-timed blitz up the A-gap.

"I think it's the defensive line," Chambers said about what opens up Ohio State's interior blitzes. "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."

Gaoteote picked up two tackles in coverage, keeping contain well enough to pick up his second straight Special Teams Player of the Week honor.

Andy Anders, Jack Emerson and Braden Moles contributed to this report. For up-to-the-minute Ohio State news and discussion, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com and the BSB Fan Forum, available to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago – 1982

Football games are played over four quarters. For Ohio State, against Michigan State on Sept. 18, it was, "Thank goodness there was a fourth quarter."

The Buckeyes, seemingly slumbering through the first three quarters, exploded for 21 points in the final 15 minutes to gain a 31-10 victory in East Lansing in their 1982 Big Ten opener.

"I thought we showed a little character today, coming back in the fourth quarter," Ohio State head coach Earle Bruce said of the Buckeyes, who entered the final stanza deadlocked at 10. "I thought that our team played well. I thought that our defense played exceptionally well when it was under pressure."

35 Years Ago – 1987

The talk in the Oregon locker room after Ohio State's 24-14 victory centered on the Ducks' respect – or lack of it – for Ohio State.

The Buckeyes (2-0), who ranked fifth in the nation, simply did not impress their Pac-10 foes, who fell to 1-1. Ohio State shut out the Ducks for the first three quarters until Oregon scored a pair of touchdowns during the final stanza.

"I don't understand the rating game," Oregon running back Latin Berry said. "But from what we saw, they're beatable. I don't feel like they deserve a position that high on the ratings. Not that it matters, but I don't think they're that good of a football team."

30 Years Ago – 1992

His first collegiate touchdown was just how he pictured it, but Ohio State freshman running back Eddie George couldn't help thinking it still might have been a dream.

"It was unbelievable," George said. "Scoring in front of 95,000 people is unbelievable because that's what I've always dreamed about. It's an unbelievable experience."

The touchdown came on only the second carry of the 6-3, 225-pounder's college career. He entered the game on a third-down play after Bowling Green had stopped OSU tailback Raymont Harris on two straight bolts into the line from the 1-yard line.

On the play, the Buckeyes replaced Harris with George and also took out blocking back William Houston, replacing him with split end Brian Stablein. That suggested OSU might pass in that situation, but George got the call and he vaulted over the line and into the end zone. The score aided Ohio State in a 17-6 win over the Falcons.

25 Years Ago – 1997

The 22nd-ranked Ohio State women's volleyball team

easily won its own Buckeye Invitational Sept. 19 and 21, taking care of Seton Hall, Rice and Akron by 3-0 scores.

OSU was certainly the best team at the tournament, but a young team needs wins no matter the competition. The Buckeyes were successful on that end.

Vanessa Wouters was tabbed tournament MVP for her three-match total of 46 kills and was joined on the all-tourney team by Andrea Pankova and Jen Flynn. OSU finished the tournament 3-0, edging Akron (2-1).

"We played pretty well," OSU coach Jim Stone said. "We were the best team there. You kind of play against yourself in these circumstances to see how much better you can get."

20 Years Ago – 2002

What do you get for the true freshman who has almost 500 rushing yards in his team's first three games? Well, a nickname might be a good start.

"When I came back into the locker room, they were calling me 'The Franchise,'" OSU freshman tailback Maurice Clarett said after his latest explosion at Ohio Stadium.

Clarett battered Washington State into submission, carrying 31 times for 230 yards and two touchdowns as the sixth-ranked Buckeyes topped the 10th-ranked Cougars 25-7 on Sept. 14.

In the days leading up to the Washington State game, Clarett was quoted in an ESPN.com article as saying, "I'm playing for the guy who works 9 to 5 every day so he can pay \$50 to watch us play. I want him to get his money's worth – to leave the stadium thinking, 'That was one of the best football players I've ever seen.'"

15 Years Ago – 2007

After passing a couple of early-season quizzes without much trouble, Ohio State got its first full-blown test of the 2007 season and pretty much aced it.

The Buckeyes embarked upon their first road trip and came away with a convincing 33-14 victory over upset-minded Washington in front of 74,927 fans squeezed into picturesque Husky Stadium.

After spotting the Huskies a 7-3 halftime lead, the Buckeyes exploded in the second half for 24 unanswered points before the teams traded touchdowns in the final minute of play. Brandon Saine scored for the Buckeyes on a 37-yard run on the final play of the game, and no extra point was attempted.

10 Years Ago – 2012

Bob Knight had earned many accolades during the first 71 years of his life, but the one he received the week-end of Sept. 15 had become among his most cherished.

Knight became the first person to enter the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame in the lifetime achievement category. Best known as a three-time NCAA championship coach at Indiana and head coach of the 1984 Olympic gold medal-winning U.S. men's basketball team, Knight got his start at Ohio State. He was a reserve on the Buckeyes' 1960 national championship team under the tutelage of Fred Taylor and earned three letters before graduating from OSU in 1962.

"This is really special," Knight said prior to the induction banquet. "First of all, it was a special idea. I don't know whether any other university in the country has that same kind of category that they devised for this."

"This is as special to me as anything that's ever been done on my behalf."

Five Years Ago – 2017

Step aside, Drew Brees. J.T. Barrett became the new man to beat.

Barrett broke Brees' Big Ten record for most career touchdowns responsible for during Ohio State's 38-7 win over Army on Sept. 16, setting the record at 107. Brees had set the previous mark of 106 as Purdue's quarterback from 1997-2000.

Barrett entered the game against the Black Knights two touchdowns shy of tying Brees. The Ohio State quarterback narrowed the gap to one on the Buckeyes' opening drive with a 5-yard touchdown run. He then tied Brees' record on a 20-yard toss to Terry McLaurin with a little more than 20 minutes left in the contest.

Barrett didn't share the glory with Brees for long, though. The fifth-year senior broke the record when he hit Austin Mack in the front corner of the end zone for a 9-yard score at the 7:01 mark of the fourth quarter.

One Year Ago – 2021

The first two games of 2021 were all about the Ohio State passing attack with first-year starting quarterback C.J. Stroud slinging the ball all over the place with varying amounts of success.

For game three vs. Tulsa in Ohio Stadium on Sept. 18, head coach Ryan Day wanted to get the running game going to create a balanced attack. He got only half of his wish, but no one was complaining.

TreVeyon Henderson broke two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin's freshman single-game rushing record with 270 yards and scored three touchdowns as the No. 9 Buckeyes held off pesky Tulsa, 41-20. Master Teague added 62 yards, and Ohio State totaled 323 net yards on the ground for the game.

However, Stroud was just 15 of 25 for 185 yards with a score and a pick and was sacked twice.

CINCINNATI REDS HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

PRESENTED BY
Dinsmôre

YEAR ROUND EXCITEMENT!

NEW 2022 FEATURED EXHIBIT *¡Los Rojos!*

PRESENTED BY Dinsmôre



A CELEBRATION OF THE LATINO IMPACT ON
THE REDS AND MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

2022 COLLECTIBLE BOBBLEHEAD SERIES

PRESENTED BY Dinsmôre

FEATURING **5** REDS HALL OF FAMERS



MAY: José Rijo

JULY: Mario Soto

SEPTEMBER:

JUNE: César Gerónimo

AUGUST: Pedro Borbón

David Concepción

Available Saturdays and Sundays with regular-price paid admission

CINCINNATI REDS HALL OF FAME MEMBERSHIP KNOCKS IT OUT OF THE PARK



GREAT AMERICAN BALL PARK TOURS



KIDS EXPLORE FREE

AGES 12 & UNDER | Courtesy of the H.C.S. Foundation

PLAN YOUR VISIT TODAY!

100 JOE NUXHALL WAY
CINCINNATI, OH 45202-4109

(513) 765-7923

 REDSMUSEUM.ORG

 @REDSMUSEUM  REDS MUSEUM  @REDSMUSEUM

Passing Game Dominates In Blowout Win

Continued From Page 1

"It felt good to get hit a little bit," Stroud said. "I probably could have done a little more. It kind of caught me off guard, but I think I did the right thing by pulling the ball on that play and then had to scramble on a couple other ones. But at the same time, (Day) advised me to be smart, and one of those I threw away because I knew that he would probably be mad if I tried it. I was definitely just trying to be a team player in those aspects. If I can make a play, make one, but if not, just throw it away and be smart."

Stroud, of course, couldn't have finished with his gaudy numbers on his own. After the win, he complimented Ohio State's offensive line, which allowed no sacks on the evening, as well as his receivers, of whom he completed passes to five.

In addition to Smith-Njigba, the Buckeyes got what seem to be standard performances from Egbuka and Harrison. Egbuka finished with seven receptions for 116 yards and a score, while Harrison hauled in six catches for 102 yards and two touchdowns.

Ohio State also welcomed the return of Fleming, who had three catches for 23 yards and two touchdowns, as well as a breakout performance from second-year receiver Jayden Ballard, who had four catches for 113 yards and his first career touchdown, a 72-yard strike from Kyle McCord in relief of Stroud.

"He showed everybody what he can do in a small glimpse," Stroud said of Fleming, who now has 22 career receptions for 183 yards and three scores. "I think that people maybe forgot about him or whatever the case may be, but at the same time, he's quick to remind people. He's been working really, really hard in the offseason, so I'm super proud of him to be able to come in and impact the game that quick."

"But what a hell of a catch on the sideline and then that second touchdown where he just had crisp route running and body language," Stroud continued. "Julian has a lot more football ahead of him and he'll continue

to be great, and I'm super excited."

Along with the running backs, who combined for 281 rushing yards and five touchdowns against the Rockets, the offense was able to score on the first seven possessions of the game and ultimately found pay dirt on 11 of 12 drives, excluding Ohio State's final drive of the game, which ran out the clock.

The offense came short of breaking any records, but the dominant win over Toledo provided a final tuneup opportunity for Ohio State's offense – and the team as a whole – before conference play begins against Wisconsin on Sept. 24 in another prime-time matchup for the Buckeyes.

"It didn't come without its faults, flaws, issues, things we've got to keep growing on and building on, but I thought offensively, we got into a good rhythm running," Day said. "I thought we finished things off in the red zone well, we were physical up front, and I thought Toledo, going in, had a good front. I still think they do. It was good to get two turnovers on defense. Anytime you can do that when the offense is moving the way it does, that's how you flip the scoreboard like we did in the second half."

"Their quarterback was very athletic and made a lot of plays, and we've got to take a look at how we can contain the quarterback better than that," he continued. "There were a few things there we've got to clean up for sure going into conference play, but certainly when you look at the scoreboard, we're proud of what we did."

Injuries Cloud Dominant Win

While there was good news on the injury front with the return of Fleming and Smith-Njigba, there were other concerns with injuries reported before and during the game.

Ohio State's pre-game injury report included Fleming and Smith-Njigba as game-time decisions, though they ultimately took the field, and ruled out 10 other Buckeyes for the contest. The list included sophomore cornerback Jordan Hancock, who was also out



SONNY BROCKWAY

SUPER SOPHOMORE — After Marvin Harrison Jr.'s big game against Arkansas State, sophomore wideout Emeka Egbuka stepped up against Toledo and had a team-high seven receptions for 116 yards and a TD catch along with a rushing touchdown in the win over the Rockets.

against Arkansas State, as well as fifth-year linebacker Teradja Mitchell, sophomore safeties Jantzen Dunn and Jaylen Johnson, fifth-year wideout Kamryn Babb and third-year tight end Joe Royer.

There was more bad news prior to kickoff when safeties Tanner McCalister and Josh

Proctor – who started the first two games of the season, even if Proctor didn't see much of the field against Notre Dame – were reported to not be available for Ohio State, leaving safeties Cameron Martinez and Lathan Ransom, their respective backups, as starters at nickel and bandit.

Tickets To Events Anywhere

Concerts • Theatre • Sporting Events

MAIN • EVENT

TICKET SERVICE

"Your Ticket Solution"



(614) 488-9957 • 888-842-5877

www.ticketsohio.com

1350 W. Fifth Ave., Ste. 24

We Buy OSU Football Tickets!

OSU Football & Basketball
Cleveland Browns
Blue Jackets
Nationwide Arena
Schottenstein Arena
NFL • NBA • NHL



Cherry
BBQ Sauce

Famous Kream®
Mustard

TAILGATING'S FINEST

Upgrade your snacks!

BBQ Sauces • Mustards • Salsas
Pasta Sauces • Dressings • Fruit Spreads

Find us in select Kroger, Hills, Weiland's and other grocery/specialty stores across the region.

Can't find us? Ask your store to order us.

Crafted with pride in Athens County, Ohio

BrownwoodFarms.com • (866) 589-6456



SONNY BROCKWAY

GET BACK SOON — Running back TreVeyon Henderson exited Ohio State's win over Toledo in the first quarter, but head coach Ryan Day said he did not expect the injury to be long term.

Martinez and Ransom were more than serviceable in relief, combining for 10 total tackles and helping hold Toledo to just 183 passing yards. It was the first career start for both Martinez and Ransom, though Ransom got the majority of the snaps at bandit against the Irish after Proctor was pulled following the first series.

Martinez was solid throughout the contest

and also made one of the biggest plays in the second half. With the Rockets facing a third-and-10 from their own 2-yard line, Martinez brought down Toledo running back Peny Boone after just a 1-yard gain, forcing a punt from the Rockets' own end zone. Ohio State would be set up at Toledo's 39-yard line following the punt and found the end zone in just four plays as Stroud connected with Egbuka for a 7-yard score.

Another aspect missing from Ohio State's win over Toledo was the presence of second-year defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr., who has been one of the Buckeyes' most dominant defensive performers throughout the early stages of this season.

Hall played in the first two games and accrued seven tackles (five for loss) and two sacks, which remains tied for a team high with linebacker Tommy Eichenberg following the win over Toledo. He exited the game against Arkansas State in the third quarter, but Day said after the game he did not expect Hall to miss time.

Hall was not listed on the availability report against Toledo but did not take the field, though he participated in pregame warmups and remained on the sideline throughout the contest.

"They were all available," Day said after the game. "We just felt like it was the right thing to do coming out of warmups to hold them out of the game, but we're expecting them to be available for next week as well."

Ohio State also experienced some injury trouble during the game. Sophomore running back TreVeyon Henderson left the game following the Buckeyes' first possession in which he scored on a 7-yard tote. After exiting to the locker room, Henderson returned just minutes later but without his helmet, indicating that his night was done.

The Buckeyes' rushing attack still found significant success against the Rockets, with freshman running back Dallan Hayden leading with 108 yards on 17 carries and third-year back Miyan Williams carrying for 77 yards on 10 attempts, with the team combining for 6.4 yards per carry. Egbuka and sixth-year tight end Mitch Rossi even got involved, each scoring a short touchdown in the red zone, with

Egbuka's coming on a 3-yard end-around.

"We were setting up that play all night, and by the time they called it, I was a little antsy," Egbuka said. "I was excited for it. I knew that play was coming. I was just visualizing that play all week. I knew it had a good chance to score, especially if we got down close. So when C.J. handed me off the ball, I didn't feel like there was anything going to stop me from getting into the end zone. I barely got it by the tip of the ball on the pylon, but got it nonetheless."

So far this season, Henderson has rushed for 197 yards on 29 carries, good for 6.8 yards per attempt, but Williams has led the Buckeyes with 207 yards on 32 carries, sporting a 6.5 average himself. Hayden hasn't been any slouch either, accounting for 121 yards on 21 attempts, though he trails the other backs with 5.8 yards per carry.

Cornerback Cameron Brown also appeared to leave the game with an injury prior to halftime, though no update was provided on his status. All-in-all, significant contributors missed the big win over the Rockets, but Ohio State is hoping to have most of them back against the Badgers.

"There's a handful of those kinds of things that are going on, but we haven't seen anything that we think is going to be long term, so we'll regroup after tonight and figure out where everything's at," Day said. "This was a situation with a lot of those guys that we wanted to, out of an abundance of caution, make sure that they were 100 percent before we put them in the game."

"Same thing with Julian and Jaxon. We got them some reps and got them out of there,

so that was good. There were a few guys that were struggling with a couple things that we decided to hold (out of the game)."

Caffey Is For Closers

After the Buckeyes got the ball back with 8:43 remaining in the game while holding a 70-21 advantage, Ohio State gave the first two carries of the drive to walk-on freshman running back TC Caffey, a native of Hubbard, Ohio, who lost his black stripe earlier in the week.

Caffey's first carry went for just 1 yard, and his second carry went backward for a 5-yard loss. Facing a third-and-14 in the dwindling contest, the Buckeyes again handed it off to Caffey, who was met after just 3 yards by several Toledo defenders.

The play dragged on for several moments, though, before Caffey burst from the pile, escaping from the Toledo defense and seeing daylight ahead. He broke outside the numbers near the Toledo 40-yard line and shook off a defender without breaking stride, and then he made one more defender miss before taking the ball into the end zone for his first career touchdown, a 49-yard score, to give the game the 77-21 final.

"It was crazy," Hayden said. "I told him I thought he might mess around and make the SportsCenter top 10. That was awesome. I was happy for him."

"I remember when he was going in I asked him, 'Are you nervous?' He was like, 'A little bit,' and I just told him to run through something," Hayden continued. "He went out there and did it."



SALES | RENTAL | SERVICE | PARTS

For all your material handling needs!

Proudly Serving Central Ohio for Over 50 Years

**1181 Refugee Road
Columbus, OH 43207**

(614) 443-4651

www.harrs-forklift.com
Fax: (614) 443-4711




KOMATSU
NOBLELIFT







FOOTBALL SEASON IS HERE.

SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND HELLO TO DRINKS, APPS AND GAMES RIGHT HERE AT THE BUCKET.

JOIN US AT ONE OF OUR 10 COLUMBUS LOCATIONS OR ORDER GAME-DAY GRUB TO-GO AT MYRUSTYBUCKET.COM

WHEN IT COMES TO FOOTBALL

WE AIN'T PLAYIN'.

Defense Learns From Dual-Threat QB Finn

Ohio State's defense was put to the test against Toledo, specifically with the dual-threat ability of quarterback Dequan Finn.

Finn gave the Buckeyes fits for much of the evening, completing 52.6 percent of his 19 passes for 153 yards, two touchdowns and an interception while adding 70 yards and a touchdown with his legs.

"Honestly, I think that guy was just a freak of nature," fourth-year safety Ronnie Hickman said. "His ability to use his athleticism and scramble out of the pocket – when you're unaccounted for on defense it's kind of easy to get that 8-yard gain or 10-yard gain or whatever it is you may need on third or fourth down. But kudos to that guy. He played a great game as far as scrambling and extending plays and stuff like that."

Finn's ability was on display immediately. On Toledo's opening drive, Finn used his legs to evade the Ohio State pass rush before firing a 50-yard touchdown strike to Thomas Zsiros. A few drives later, facing third-and-6, Finn stepped up against Ohio State's five-man rush and found daylight, breaking a diving tackle from Steele Chambers before taking the ball 23 yards to the house.

Early in the third quarter, Finn dodged an unblocked Javontae Jean-Baptiste while rolling out to his left before quickly setting his feet and uncorking a bomb to wide receiver Jerjuan Newton for a 40-yard touchdown.

Second-year defensive end Jack Sawyer admitted Finn's dual-threat ability made him difficult to contain.

"The film doesn't do him justice," Sawyer said. "In person, man, he can fly. He's so quick too. You'll just peek and see him and he'll already be out of the door. Playing a guy like that is good for our defense. I don't know if we'll play another guy this whole year that is that dynamic."

I-Formation, Tight Ends And Fullbacks, Oh My!

Ohio State's reluctance to utilize the tight end in its offense has been a long-standing trend within the program. But the coaches

GAME NOTEBOOK Jack Emerson

and fourth-year tight end Cade Stover seem to be bucking that trend during the young season.

After entering the Buckeyes' week-three tilt with Toledo with five receptions and 54 receiving yards from Ohio State's first two games, Stover exploded for the best performance of his career against the Rockets. The Mansfield, Ohio, native hauled in three receptions for 83 yards, an average of 27.7 yards per reception. Stover finished the evening with five targets.

"That's just Cade," quarterback C.J. Stroud said. "He's very versatile. He had a great game, phenomenal game. He blocked his tail off and also ran great routes with great body language. It's just exciting for him to see his work pay off. He's probably the person I most look up to on the team, honestly. He always puts confidence in me, just his knack to win and want to just dominate people."

"I definitely appreciate Cade. He's a great leader, great man of God, and then of course, he works on the farm, which you can see in his work ethic, and it's starting to pay off for him, which I'm super excited for him. I definitely think he'll continue to be great."

Stover's 83 yards were the most by an Ohio State tight end since Jeff Heurman produced a 116-yard performance against Purdue in 2013.

Not only did Stover make an impact through the passing game, but he also aided an Ohio State running game that finished the night with 281 yards on the ground.

Speaking of the running game, graduate tight end Mitch Rossi produced a 1-yard rushing touchdown to lift Ohio State's lead to 49-14 with 13:08 to go in the third quarter.



SONNY BROCKWAY

DOWN ON THE FARM – Tight end Cade Stover finished with three catches for 83 yards, the most by an Ohio State tight end since Jeff Heurman had a 116-yard performance in 2013.

Although he is listed as a tight end, Rossi is also utilized as a fullback in head coach Ryan Day's offense, particularly in short-yardage situations.

Rossi's 1-yard plunge into the end zone served as his second career touchdown, his first coming against Rutgers on a 1-yard reception last season.

As Ohio Stadium is celebrating its 100th anniversary, the Buckeyes turned back the clock against the Rockets, utilizing the I-formation on numerous occasions in the red zone, including Rossi's touchdown.

"We thought with the 100th anniversary of the Horseshoe that it would be good to line up in the (I-formation) and hand the ball to

the fullback for a touchdown, so we wanted to get that done this year," Day said. "Not having Jaxon (Smith-Njigba) play in the second half of the first game and in game two, not having Julian available, has allowed us to build some depth but also look at a couple different packages, which hopefully pays off for us moving forward."

"We want to be creative the best we can do down there. When you have those types of guys with those types of skill sets, they can do a lot of things," he added. "That's a good job by the offensive staff, coming in there with different ideas on how to attack defenses. Anytime you can be multiple like that with groupings or formations, then you put the defense in stress."

As the Buckeyes have continued to further their reliance on the tight ends unit, offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson says the position's role increase has developed from a place of trust.

"It's a good group, and I think Coach Day has gotten very comfortable playing to their strengths," Wilson said. "We're getting those guys involved, and I think it helps complement with the receivers and the skill of our offense. It makes our team a little more complete when that group plays well."

Hayden Emerges After Henderson Injury

Although Rossi found pay dirt for the first time this season on his 1-yard touchdown, it would not have occurred if it weren't for the efforts of true freshman running back Dallan Hayden.

In what was his second drive of the evening, Hayden took the first handoff of the possession and exploded for a 45-yard gain, utilizing his speed to burst through the hole and blow by several Toledo defenders en route to the Rockets' 3-yard line. Although Hayden was unable to find the end zone during the drive, his next two carries netted 2 yards and



9762 Sawmill Parkway
POWELL

5637 Woerner Temple Road
DUBLIN

3140 Kingsdale Center
UPPER ARLINGTON

\$10 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$50 OR MORE
Does not include alcoholic beverages. Dine in only. Not valid with other offers. Tax not included. Expires 12/31/22



MEXICAN SEAFOOD & TAQUERIA
6211 Cleveland Ave • **COLUMBUS**



\$6 OFF
PURCHASE OF \$30 OR MORE
Does not include alcoholic beverages. Dine in only. Not valid with other offers. Tax not included. Expires 12/31/22





Game Analysis

What Worked Well

With wide receivers Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming back in the fold, Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud gave the Buckeyes their biggest in-game successes through the air.

By halftime, Stroud had already completed 18 of 20 passes for 297 yards and four touchdowns, and he exited the game by the end of the third quarter after guiding Ohio State to a blowout win.

There were plenty of beneficiaries of his throws, with sophomore wideout Marvin Harrison Jr. chief among them, continuing his recent run of success with six receptions for 102 yards and two touchdowns. Both scores came on rather impressive toe-drag plays, one near the sideline and one near the back of the end zone.

Harrison and sophomore wide receiver Emeka Egbuka have both posted back-to-back 100-yard games. Egbuka finished with a game-high seven receptions for 116 yards and picked up an easy 7-yard pitch-and-catch touchdown on third-and-goal in the third quarter. He added a 3-yard rushing touchdown.

Fourth-year tight end Cade Stover showed some presence as a downfield threat, leaking out on a wheel route in the first quarter for a 38-yard gain and later slipping behind Toledo's defense on a seam route for 34 more.

Stroud also gave Smith-Njigba and Fleming chances to ease back into live action, with the former hauling in two passes for 33 yards and the latter catching three balls for 23 yards and two scores.

Ohio State's offensive line did a good job keeping its signal caller clean as well, with Stroud taking zero sacks and never being hurried by the Rockets' defense.

What concerns might have been raised about Ohio State's aerial attack from the Notre Dame game may have been tempered, though a stingier defense, at least on paper, awaits against Wisconsin.

What Didn't Work

Dual-threat quarterbacks have generated issues for the Buckeyes in the past, and Toledo sophomore signal-caller Dequan Finn made several plays with his feet.

He finished the contest with seven runs for 70 yards and a touchdown. Much of that yardage came on scrambles, with the speedster consistently dipping in and out of Ohio State's pass rush, taking only two sacks despite being under duress throughout the contest.

Finn's athleticism also extended plays for his receivers. Toledo's first touchdown came on a 50-yard bomb to second-year wideout Thomas Zsiros in the first quarter in which Finn evaded the pass rush and rolled right to find Zsiros streaking downfield.

Several more Ohio State defenders were left on skates before Finn lofted a jump ball to sophomore pass catcher Jerjuan Newton in the third quarter. Newton shielded off Ohio State sophomore cornerback Denzel Burke to bring in the toss and waltzed into the end zone for a 40-yard scoring strike.

The Buckeyes still dominated in the 77-21 win, but their defense will look to shore up rushing lanes and limit big gains on extended passing plays as conference competition begins.

Play Of The Game

Forty-two first-half points meant plenty of big plays to choose from for Ohio State's offense, but Harrison's first scoring grab, an 8-yarder, may have been the most jaw-dropping.

Comeback routes have long been a red-zone staple of head coach Ryan Day's offense, and Harrison snapped one off toward the pylon against Toledo sophomore defensive back Quinyon Mitchell. Stroud's throw came in high and outside, but Harrison leapt up to snag the ball from the air, contorting his body backward and managing to stick two feet down before going out of bounds despite a shove from Mitchell.

That grab made it 14-7 and began a string of 21 unanswered points for the Buckeyes, icing the game before the end of the first quarter with a 28-7 lead.

Three games into the season, Harrison led all Ohio State players in receiving yardage (342) and touchdowns (five), though Egbuka led the Buckeyes with 20 receptions.

— Andy Anders

placed the Buckeyes at the 1-yard line, which allowed Rossi to plow his way through the line and extend Ohio State's lead.

That 45-yard run was the highlight of a strong second outing for Hayden, who finished the evening with a game-high 108 yards on 17 carries, compiling a yards per attempt average of 6.4. Hayden added his first career touchdown during the early stages of the fourth quarter, lifting Ohio State's lead to 63-21.

"It's crazy because you never know what can happen," Hayden said. "You just always have to stay ready, and that's what (running backs coach Tony) Alford and all of the coaches tell me. You never know when your number is going to be called, so you have to stay ready no matter what."

Not only did Hayden lead the Buckeyes in yards, but he also carried the load for Ohio State as his 17 carries were the most on the team. Miyan Williams and TreVeyon Henderson combined for 14 carries, though Henderson left the game after the contest's first drive.

After Hayden showcased his abilities, Day emphasized that the true freshman leaned on his training en route to his big performance.

"He's practiced well," Day said. "He's taking care of the football. I thought Dallan ran hard. He's done that in practice. To see for his first time out to play like this, you can see his quickness in the hole. He's got good vision, he's got power, and he's got the chance to be a really good back."

Defense Collects First Takeaways Of Season

After a two-game drought to begin the season, Ohio State's defense finally created its first takeaways of the season against Toledo.

On Toledo's opening drive of the second half, Finn tried to connect with one of his receivers in the seam, but Hickman read the play perfectly and jumped the route to force Ohio State's first takeaway of the season. Hickman said the Buckeyes saw that play numerous times on film, leading to his quick identification of the play.

"It's a play that we saw a lot in film," he said. "We talked about it a lot. We knew coming into the game that they like to do a lot of RPO-glance to the same side as the running back. I knew it was either going to come to the boundary where he was going to throw that glance, or he was going to try to run it. I was fortunate enough to get the pick."

Five drives later, Ohio State secured its second takeaway of the night, this time by way of a fumble recovery. With the Rockets facing fourth-and-2 from the Buckeyes' 44-yard line, backup quarterback Tucker Gleason was stripped by graduate defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste. As the ball rolled behind Gleason on the turf, linebacker Palaie Gaoteote corralled it with an outstretched arm.

Hickman said the unit felt a sense of relief wash over them following their pair of takeaways against the Rockets.

"Prior to this season, we drilled getting turnovers because we know it changes the game, and we weren't able to do that the first two weeks," he said. "This whole week we've been drilling it and drilling it. So I'm just glad I was able to get it started."

Buckeyes Clean Up Penalty Miscues

A defining trait of Ohio State's first two

games was undisciplined play, primarily in the form of unforced errors.

Penalties became a major issue for the Buckeyes, as they combined for 16 penalties and 160 penalty yards during their first two games against Notre Dame and Arkansas State. Ohio State's disciplinary failures caused Day to put an in-

creased focus on playing smarter during the week.

"It's like anything else, either you're accepting it or coaching it," Day said on Sept. 13. "You have to take that to heart when you're a coach. They're being addressed. We have our ways of doing that. That's not going to be accepted moving

forward."

Ohio State flipped the script against the Rockets, getting dinged for only one penalty, a false start by center Luke Wypler during the third quarter. Ohio State was called for an unsportsmanlike conduct call in the first quarter, but that penalty offset with the same call for Toledo.



TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

Flat Stomach • Weight Loss • Strength Training • Cardio Kick-Boxing • Boot Camp

614-886-9331
foreverfitswan@yahoo.com



www.HatemAutomotive.com
service@hatemautomotive.com

1407 West Fifth Avenue
Columbus, OH 43212

614-486-5277

Tom Hatem Automotive

Serving all of Columbus' automotive repair needs for over 23 years.

BMW • MERCEDES • MINI COOPER • PORSCHE

Reds

SEPTEMBER LINEUP!



SEPT. 2-4



FRIDAY // 6:40

- Post-Game Fireworks Show, presented by Staffmark

SATURDAY // 6:40

Country Music Night

- Reds Straw Trucker Hat, presented by Montgomery Inn (while supplies last)
- Ohio Lottery Post-Game Concert Featuring Cole Swindell
Live Concert from the field FREE to all fans with game ticket



SEPT. 12-14



presented by
KROGER ZERO HUNGER ZERO WASTE

MONDAY // 6:40

- Bark in the Park, presented by Trisha Yearwood Pet Collection and Kroger

Ticket packages available for dogs and their owners with pet activities in the First Star Fan Zone

Reds.com/Bark



TUESDAY // 12:35 & 6:40

- 3-2-1 Tuesdays*, presented by Budweiser and Bud Light
\$3 12oz Beer, \$2 Hot Dog and \$1 Ice Cream Cup available at select concession stands!

*Limit 2 per person

WEDNESDAY // 12:35

- Business Day Specials, presented by UnitedHealthcare

Enjoy Afternoon Baseball + \$10 in concession credits for only \$20!

SEPT. 20-21



TUESDAY // 6:40

WEDNESDAY // 6:40

SEPT. 22-25



presented by **MARS**

THURSDAY // 6:40

FRIDAY // 6:40

- Post-Game Fireworks Show, presented by Turfway Park Racing & Gaming

SATURDAY // 6:40

- Reds Team Photo, presented by Thomas More University (while supplies last)

SUNDAY // 1:40

- Fan Appreciation Day
- Kids Nick Senzel Wall Decal, presented by Laura's Lean Beef (Kids 14 & younger in attendance, while supplies last)



OCTOBER 3-5



MONDAY // 6:40

TUESDAY // 6:40

WEDNESDAY // 4:10



COLE SWINDELL

SUNDAY // 1:40

- Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery
- Kids Tyler Stephenson Wall Decal, presented by Cincinnati Children's Hospital (Kids 14 & younger in attendance, while supplies last)

Courtesy of H.C.S Foundation, Kids Explore FREE at the Reds Hall of Fame and Museum, presented by Dinsmore (Kids 12 & younger)



(513) 381-REDS (7337)



reds.com/Tickets

*Some restrictions apply. Schedule and promotions subject to change.

Holy Toledo, Buckeye Offense Unstoppable

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State defense still has some work to do, but it didn't matter because the offense performed at near perfection, scoring a touchdown on 11 of 12 possessions before running out the clock to end the game on Sept. 17.

By that time, many of the 105,398 fans in Ohio Stadium had long exited and didn't stick around for the end of the 77-21 bludgeoning No. 3 Ohio State administered to Toledo.

C.J. Stroud completed his first nine passes, and the Buckeyes (3-0) scored the first seven times they had the ball to turn what was a semi-competitive game into a rout after the Rockets (2-1) pulled to within 28-14 early in the second quarter.

Stroud was 22 of 27 for 367 yards with two touchdown passes apiece to Marvin Harrison Jr. and Julian Fleming in the first half and another in the third quarter to Emeke Egbuka for a 56-21 advantage.

Miyan Williams, picking up for the injured TreVeyon Henderson, gained 77 yards on 10 carries, but the star running back was third-string freshman Dallan Hayden, who rushed 17 times for his first career 100-yard game (108 yards).

Egbuka had seven catches for 116 yards, and Harrison added 102 yards on six catches.

Ohio State's 763 total yards were the second most in program history behind 776 yards vs. Bowling Green on Sept. 3, 2016.

The Buckeyes built a 42-14 halftime lead by piling up 441 yards, with Stroud completing 18 of 20 for 297 yards and four touchdowns.

Get The Ball Rolling

In a departure, after Ohio State won the coin toss the Buckeyes elected to receive instead of deferring to the second half. Chip Trayanum had a 17-yard return to the OSU 18-yard line.

It was a smart move because eight plays, 82 yards and 3:45 of playing time later, it was 7-0 with Henderson rushing for a 7-yard score at 11:11.

He had four carries for 19 yards, and Stroud was 4 for 4 for 63 yards, 38 of which came on a pass down the right sideline to tight end Cade Stover to the Toledo 7-yard line. On the next play, Henderson followed fullback/tight end Mitch Rossi out of the I-formation over right tackle for the score.

"That was the mind-set we're going into the game with, come out fast" Egbuka said. "We haven't had a fast start this season. We had one today, and we're glad. A fast start is something we feel we're dangerous with."

"Once we get the ball rolling, it's kind of hard to stop us, especially with all the weapons we have and the way our defense has been playing."

Henderson left the game following the opening drive with an injury and did not return.

The lead lasted 46 seconds, long enough for Toledo quarterback Dequan Finn to throw a 50-yard strike in the end zone to Thomas Sziros at the 10:25 mark. Finn was

2 of 3 for 57 yards and had an 18-yard run to set up the score, which was a rollout to the right as Sziros beat Ohio State cornerback Cameron Brown.

Harrison made a toe-tapping 8-yard catch along the left line in the end zone to make it 14-7 with 7:52 left in the quarter. He was able to get both feet in, barely, as Stroud completed his first eight throws in the game for 132 yards.

Harrison earlier had a 17-yard catch, Williams added a 10-yard rush and Stover made a grab over the middle for 34 yards to the Toledo 12-yard line. The six-play drive went 75 yards in 2:33.

After Toledo's first punt, the Buckeyes scored rapid-fire for a 21-7 lead at 4:29. Stroud made it 9 for 9 with a 42-yard play to Harrison to the Rockets' 3-yard line but on second down, Stroud overthrew Stover in the back of the end zone. On the ensuing snap, Egbuka took the handoff and scored at the right pylon to finish the 59-yard, five-play possession in 1:59.

If the offense weren't humming enough, star receiver Jaxson Smith-Njigba returned from missing the first two games with an injury to make his first catch of the season (21 yards) to ignite the next scoring drive that culminated with a 5-yard touchdown reception by Julian Fleming, who also made his first catch after being injured the previous two games.

Stroud moved out of the pocket to his right and lasered a throw to the edge of the end zone to Fleming, who kept his foot in-bounds long enough for the score to make it 28-7 with 10 seconds left in the quarter. OSU marched 71 yards in seven plays using 2:58.

Williams had runs of 19, 10 and 5 yards, and Stover made another catch for 11 yards.

Stroud in the quarter was 12 of 14 for 211 yards, and the Buckeyes rolled up 287 total yards on 26 plays.

The best way to keep Ohio State from scoring is to hold the ball. The Rockets did that for 75 yards and 4:29 worth of clock, with Finn racing in from the OSU 23-yard line on third-and-6 on the 11th play of the drive to make it 28-14 at 10:41 of the second quarter.

He had a third-down run of 23 yards to the Rockets' 46-yard line. Then, facing fourth-and-5 at the OSU 39-yard line, he found DeMeer Blankumsee for 12 yards to keep the drive alive.

Stroud to Harrison, this time for 7 yards, made it 35-14 at 7:16. Smith-Njigba caught a 12-yarder and Egbuka pulled in a 28-yard throw to the Toledo 35-yard line. Williams added runs of 12 and 9 yards before Harrison dragged his shoe in the back of the end zone as the Buckeyes traveled 75 yards in 3:25, using seven plays.

Fleming's second touchdown catch was for 11 yards with 47 seconds left before halftime for a 42-14 advantage, giving the Buckeyes a score on all six possessions in the first two quarters.

Hayden's first five carries of the game netted 36 yards, and Harrison made a catch for 21 yards in a methodical drive over nine plays, 89 yards and 4:37.

The Buckeyes had 441 total yards (297 passing, 144 rushing) in the first half.



SONNY BROCKWAY

STRONG DEBUT — Third-year wide receiver Julian Fleming made his first appearance for Ohio State this season, hauling in three catches for 23 yards and two touchdowns.

Keep Rolling

It was time for the defense to shine at the start of the second half when Ronnie Hickman intercepted Finn at the OSU 44-yard line and returned it 8 yards. It was the Buckeyes' first takeaway this season.

On the first play of the ensuing drive, Hayden ran for 45 yards. He gained 2 yards on two carries before Rossi bulled his way across the goal line to make it 49-14 at 13:08. Ohio State had the ball for 1:24 and ran four plays to go the 48 yards.

Finn responded with a brilliant 40-yard touchdown pass to Jerjuan Newton at 10:23 to pull to within 49-21 on the sixth play of the series. On third-and-10, Finn was under pressure when he ran toward the left sideline and heaved the ball toward Newton at the OSU 5-yard line, where he outmuscled Ohio State cornerback Denzel Burke to make the catch.

Ohio State punter Jesse Mirco finally got into the game midway through the third when coach Ryan Day elected to punt instead of going for it on fourth-and-3 at the Rockets' 39-yard line. Mirco planted the kick at the Toledo 2-yard line.

The defense forced a three-and-out, and the Buckeyes took over at the Toledo 39-yard line after the punt. Stroud went to Egbuka for 29 yards to the Toledo 10-yard line on the first play. A Hayden run for 3 yards and an incompleteness led to a 7-yard touchdown catch by Egbuka at 5:06, and the lead was extended to 56-21. The drive took 1:30.

Kyle McCord replaced Stroud when the Buckeyes got the ball with 3:48 remaining in the third quarter, and he directed an 11-play, 68-yard, 4:59 drive capped by Hayden's 1-yard touchdown run to make it 63-21 at 13:49 of the fourth quarter. Jayden Ballard made three catches for 41 yards to help the Buckeyes.

When McCord threw a 72-yard touchdown to Ballard with 11:45 left in the game,

it marked the first time Ohio State reached 70 points since a 73-14 win over Maryland on Nov. 9, 2019.

Ballard had four catches for 113 yards for the game in addition to his first Buckeye TD.

Freshman TC Caffey broke out of a scrum and ran 49 yards with 7:08 left to make it 77-21. The Buckeyes had started at the Toledo 45-yard line after Ohio State defensive end Javontae Jean-Baptiste strip-sacked Rockets backup quarterback Tucker Gleason for an 11-yard loss, with linebacker Palaie Gaoteote IV recovering the fumble.

OSU got the ball a final time and ran out the 3:38, ending with a Caffey 5-yard run to the Toledo 47-yard line.

"It's been a little frustrating," defensive end Jack Sawyer said. "We've been that close to putting it all together and blowing teams out, and we finally did it."

"Last couple of weeks the offense would score and we'd give up a long drive, or we'd get a three-and-out and they wouldn't score so finally putting it together is really good for us going into the Big Ten (schedule)."

Finn finished 10 of 19 for 153 yards, two touchdowns and an interception. He carried seven times for 70 yards and a touchdown.

Notes

Ohio State's 482 passing yards were third most in team history behind 573 against Utah in the Rose Bowl last season and 499 vs. Northwestern in 2018. ... Stroud and McCord each finished with at least 100 passing yards, the first time Ohio State has had two 100-yard passers in a game since Dwayne Haskins (228) and J.T. Barrett (209) did so against UNLV in 2017. ... Jean-Baptiste had a career-high two sacks. ... McCord was 5 for 7 for 115 yards and one touchdown... Freshman quarterback Devin Brown made his first appearance of the season late in the fourth quarter but did not attempt a pass. ... Toledo had 307 total yards (183 passing, 124 rushing).

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 77, Toledo 21

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on the crowd at the stadium: "Unbelievable. The walk from the Blackwell (Inn) over to Skull Session ... the Skull Session was standing room only, and then the walk over to the stadium. To see everyone in the stadium – (105,398) in this night game – was unbelievable. We wanted to make sure we played well in this game because of that. I just wanted to thank Buckeye Nation for showing up in a big way."

Day on the quality of third-year quarterback C.J. Stroud's throws: "He's very, very talented. You saw a wide variety of throws tonight. You saw some in the red zone, a couple on third down, and that's where you make your money as a quarterback, in the red zone and on third down. We've talked about staying on schedule and making sure we didn't have any three-and-outs in this game. That was important."

Stroud on targeting fourth-year tight end Cade Stover and what he brings to the offense: "He's very versatile. I'm shooting myself in the foot. I missed him in the back (of the end zone). That killed me. I just get so excited in a place like that. Those are really the hardest throws when people are wide open. I don't know why it is, but I wish I hit him. But he was all good with it. He still had a great game, phenomenal game. Blocked his tail off and also ran great routes – great body language."

Freshman running back Dallan Hayden on if he expected to lead the team in rushing against Toledo: "Actually, I did not. TreVeyon (Henderson) went out pretty early and Miyan (Williams) was carrying it a lot and doing good, getting yards. And Coach (Tony) Alford looked at me and said, 'All right, get ready to go in.' I stayed by him and he put me in. I was ready to go, I felt like."

Sophomore wide receiver Emeka Egbuka on his feeling before he runs or catches a football: "Anytime I touch the ball, (my) eyes kind of get wide. That's kind of what happened with my drop on the hitch earlier. (It's) still in the back of my mind, but you've got to let it go. But anytime the ball is in the air I get excited. I feel confident with the ball in my hands, and I want it in my hands as much as it can be. And I feel good running with it."

Third-year safety Cameron Martinez on his first start at Ohio State: "For a minute I had to kind of take a moment, just to see what was around me, just the atmosphere and the environment. I was just taking that all in as well because these moments are precious. Just being able to do that, putting in all the hard work and to see it pay off, I'm really blessed."

Sophomore wide receiver Julian Fleming on catching two touchdowns in his first game back: "It was honestly just a really crazy

experience. There's been a lot of trials and tribulations that I've had to go through to get to this point. But just to be able to go out there and play with my team and one of the best teams in the country, it was a great experience."

Toledo head coach Jason Candle on Ohio State's defense: "Give Coach (Jim) Knowles and that defense a lot of credit. They'd given up one touchdown all year long coming into this football game. They're a good defense. Coach Day has them clicking on offense and playing at a high level. Defensively, not what we wanted to do or the outcome we wanted to have there. But hats off to Ohio State for putting a very efficient plan together in the first half of that football game."

Day on defending Toledo dual-threat quarterback Dequan Finn and what to take away from that: "There was some things exposed that we've got to get cleaned up. But that's growing as a team and growing as an offense, growing as a defense. We'll get back and try to figure out what those are. I think the one good thing is in the first game we played Notre Dame and then we come back with two nonconference opponents here in Arkansas State and Toledo, so we've seen a couple different things. We've been challenged in different areas, so we have three games under our belt to try and evaluate what we need to get fixed and what we need to keep enhancing going into conference play, which is good. I think that's healthy for us."

AGONIS CLUB 2022 Person of the Year Golf Outing & Banquet



Honoring
OSU All-American and
Gold Medal Winner
Katie Smith

Monday October 10th, 2022
At the Royal American Golf Course

Please join the Agonis Club
and it's members as we
celebrate the career of
Katie Smith

at Royal American Golf Course on
Monday October 10th, 2022

Shotgun Start 1:00 PM
Social Hour: 6:00 PM
Banquet: 6:30 PM
Program: 7:30 PM

SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION

The Agonis Club is accepting sponsorships
for this event. Your support will help provide
scholarships to Central Ohio Scholar Athletes.

FOR MORE SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Jeff Norris
614-565-4634
jnorris7337@gmail.com

Register online at
www.agonisclub.org

Register on website www.agonisclub.org or send to:
Agonis Club of Columbus, PO Box 14020, Columbus, OH 43214.

Registration deadline September 30, 2022.
All registrations must be paid in advance.

The Agonis Club of Columbus, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization (EIN 31-1455952)

REDS FANS!

Follow The Reds Year-Round In Reds Report

Reds Report is must reading for every Reds fan. Each information-filled issue includes player features; historical articles; extensive minor-league coverage with features on top prospects, complete statistics and farm club updates; box scores and game summaries for every Reds game; complete team and individual statistics; a Reds memorabilia section and much more.



1 Year (12 issues) — \$45.95

Send to: Reds Report • P.O. Box 12453 • Columbus, Ohio 43212

- Please send me a one-year (12 issues) subscription to **Reds Report** for \$44.95.
 My check or money order is enclosed. Check # _____
 Charge to my: Discover MC Visa AMEX

Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

For Faster Service On Credit Card Orders Call

1-800-760-2862

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 77, Toledo 21

Sept. 17, 2022 - Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
TOLEDO	7	7	7	0	21
OHIO STATE	28	14	14	21	77

First Quarter

- OSU** - Henderson, 7-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 11:11.
- TOL** - Zsiros, 50-yard pass from Finn (Cluckey kick), 10:25.
- OSU** - Harrison Jr., 8-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 7:52.
- OSU** - Egbuka, 3-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 4:29.
- OSU** - Fleming, 5-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 0:10.

Second Quarter

- TOL** - Finn, 23-yard rush (Cluckey kick), 10:41.
- OSU** - Harrison Jr., 7-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 7:16.
- OSU** - Fleming, 11-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 0:47.

Third Quarter

- OSU** - Rossi, 1-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 13:08.
- TOL** - Newton, 40-yard pass from Finn (Cluckey kick), 10:23.
- OSU** - Egbuka, 7-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 5:06.

Fourth Quarter

- OSU** - Hayden, 1-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 13:49.
- OSU** - Ballard, 72-yard pass from McCord (Ruggles kick), 11:45.
- OSU** - Caffey, 49-yard rush (Ruggles kick), 7:08.
- Att.** - 105,398
- Weather** - Clear

Team Statistics

	TOL	OSU
First Downs	13	36
Rushing	6	12
Passing	7	22
Penalty	0	2
Rushes-Yards	33-124	44-281
Passing Yards	183	482
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	12-23-1	27-34-0
Offensive Plays	56	78
Total Net Yards	307	763
Third Down Efficiency	4-13	11-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	1-1
Punts-Avg.	7-42.1	1-37.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties	4-23	1-5
Time of Possession	24:34	35:26

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) - TOL: Finn 7-70; Boone 8-41; Kelly 8-12; Stuart 4-3; Gleason 2-0; Shaw III 4-(-2). OSU: Hayden 17-108; M. Williams 10-77; Caffey 6-57; Henderson 4-19; Stroud 2-9; Saunders 2-6; Egbuka 1-3; Rossi 1-1; D. Brown 1-1.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) - TOL: Finn 10-19-1-153-2; Gleason 2-4-0-30-0. OSU: Stroud 22-27-0-367-5; McCord 5-7-0-115-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) - TOL: Blankumsee 3-35; Newton 2-42; Beale 2-30; Maddox 2-15; Zsiros 1-50; Barkley 1-10; Boone 1-1. OSU: Egbuka 7-116; Harrison Jr. 6-102; Ballard 4-113; Stover 3-83; Fleming 3-23; Smith-Njigba 2-33; M. Williams 1-10; Grayes 1-2.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) - TOL: Batzke 7-42.1-50. OSU: Mirco 1-37.0-37.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) - TOL: None. OSU: Egbuka 1-10; Ballard 1-14.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) - TOL: None. OSU: Trayanum 1-17.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) - TOL: None. OSU: Gaoteote IV 1-0.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) - TOL: None. OSU: Hickman 1-8.

SACKS - TOL: None. OSU: Jean-Baptiste 2-13; Sawyer 1-4.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) - TOL: Alexander 1-2; Freeburg 1-5. OSU: Sawyer 2-5; Jean-Baptiste 2-13; Styles 1-2; McKenzie 1-1; Chambers 1-3; Tuimolouau 1-2; Jackson 1-1.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) - TOL: Dy. Johnson 4-6-10; Hook 7-2-9; McDonald Jr. 6-1-7; Bauer 3-2-5; Gant 2-3-5; Butler 1-4-5; Fuller 3-1-4; Alexander 2-1-3; Simon 2-1-3; Freeburg 2-1-3; De. Johnson 1-2-3; Woliver 1-2-3; Givhan 2-0-2; Turner 2-0-2; Culpepper 1-1-2; Bowers 1-1-2; Taylor 0-2-2; Delancy III 1-0-1; Hines 1-0-1; Newton 1-0-1; Smith 1-0-1; Coleman 1-0-1; Mines 1-0-1 Ford 0-1-1; Rogers 0-1-1. OSU: Ransom 2-4-6; Eichenberg 3-2-5; Sawyer 2-3-5; Martinez 3-1-4; Simon 2-2-4; Jean-Baptiste 2-1-3; Styles 2-1-3; McKenzie 1-2-3; Chambers 2-0-2; Curry 2-0-2; Stokes 2-0-2; Tuimolouau 1-1-2; Hickman 1-1-2; T. Williams 1-1-2; J. Johnson 1-0-1; Harrison 1-0-1; Jackson 1-0-1; Burke 0-1-1; K. Williams 0-1-1; Gaoteote IV 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME - TOL: Blankumsee, Newton, Kelly, Major, Ateman, Finn, Scirry, Rosi, Dumont, Maddox, Turner, De. Johnson, McDonald Jr., Gant, Dy. Johnson, Hook, Mitchell, Taylor, Bauer, Ford, Hines, Culpepper, Beale, Delancy III, Smith, Barkley, Vanderross III, Coleman, Cluckey, Fuller, Stuart, Bowers, McNeil, Simon, Mines, Turner, Shaw III, Boone, Holt, Lisk, Batzke, Gleason, Kuhl, Andrews, Barrow, Ellis, Ragin, Freeburg, Givhan, Szykowny, Butler, Rogers, Wigand, J. Stephens, Schwiebert, Zsiros, Woliver, L. Stephens, Torres, Alexander. OSU: Smith-Njigba, Harrison Jr., Egbuka, Henderson, Wypler, M. Jones, Stroud, D. Jackson, Johnson Jr., D. Jones, Stover, Ransom, Martinez, Hickman, Chambers, C. Brown, Eichenberg, Tuimolouau, Burke, Vincent, Cage, Harrison, X. Johnson, Hicks, K. Brown, Antwi, D. Brown, Grayes, J. Brown, Trayanum, K. Williams, Styles, Gaoteote IV, Saunders, Carrico, Caffey, Turner, Mirco, M. Williams, Simon, Sawyer, Rossi, Powers, Stokes, Fielding, J. Johnson, Fleming, Robinson, Gurd, Hayden, Kuwatch, Friday, Hamilton, McCord, Michalski, Vimahi, Tshabola, Fryar, James, Jean-Baptiste, Hart, Christian, Stocksdale, Scott Jr., Herbstreit, Ballard, McKenzie, T. Williams, Curry, Kanu, Ruggles, K. Jackson.

Season Statistics

2022 Game-By-Game

Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
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	W, 77-21	105,398						
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	7:30 p.m.							
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	3:30 p.m.							
Oct. 8	at Michigan State	TBA							
Oct. 22	IOWA	TBA							
Oct. 29	at Penn State (14)	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	78	43
Rushing	28	13
Passing	43	22
Penalty	7	5
Average Per Game/Rush	207.0	84.3
Average Per Game/Pass	358.3	194.3
Total Offense	1696	836
Total Plays	201	180
Average Per Game	565.3	278.7
Average Per Play	8.4	4.6
Penalties-Yards	17-165	15-147
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	3-1
Third Down Efficiency	23-37	12-46
Percentage	62%	26%
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	2-5
Percentage	100%	40%
Sacks-Yards	8-51	2-7
Time Of Possession Avg.	30:14	29:46

Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	49	24	42	28	0	143	47.7
Opponents	13	20	10	0	0	43	14.3

Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Miyan Williams	32	207	6.5	1	25
T. Henderson	29	197	6.8	3	41
Dallan Hayden	21	121	5.8	1	45
C.J. Stroud	7	9	1.3	0	5
TC Caffey	6	57	9.5	1	49
Emeka Egbuka	2	30	15.0	1	27
Cayden Saunders	2	6	3.0	0	5
Devin Brown	1	1	1.0	0	1
Mitch Rossi	1	1	1.0	1	1
OSU Totals	105	621	5.9	8	49
OPP Totals	97	253	2.6	2	23

Passing

Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
C.J. Stroud	62	85	72.9	941-11-0	208.6
Kyle McCord	8	11	72.7	134-1-0	205.1
OSU Totals	70	96	72.9	1075-12-0	206.9
OPP Totals	47	83	56.6	583-2-1	125.9

Receiving

Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long	
Emeka Egbuka	20	324	16.2	3	51
Marvin Harrison Jr.	18	342	19.0	5	45
Cade Stover	8	137	17.1	0	38
Jayden Ballard	6	127	21.2	1	72
Xavier Johnson	5	48	9.6	1	24
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	4	36	8.0	0	21
Miyan Williams	3	23	7.7	0	12
Julian Fleming	3	23	7.7	2	11
Dallan Hayden	2	13	6.5	0	10
Kyion Grayes	1	2	2.0	0	2
OSU Totals	70	1075	15.4	12	72
OPP Totals	47	583	12.4	2	58

Scoring

TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Marvin Harrison Jr.	5	-	-	-	30
Emeka Egbuka	4	-	-	-	24
Noah Ruggles	-	20-20	-	-	23
T. Henderson	3	-	-	-	18
Julian Fleming	2	-	-	-	12
Dallan Hayden	1	-	-	-	6
TC Caffey	1	-	-	-	6
Mitch Rossi	1	-	-	-	6
Jayden Ballard	1	-	-	-	6
Xavier Johnson	1	-	-	-	6
Miyan Williams	1	-	-	-	6
OSU Totals	120	20-20	-	1-2	143
OPP Totals	4	4-4	0-0	0-0	43

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	11	481	43.7	0	52
OSU Totals	11	481	43.7	0	52
OPP Totals	21	985	46.9	0	75

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Ronnie Hickman	1	8	8.0	0	8
OSU Totals	1	8	8.0	0	8
OPP Totals	0	0	0	0	0

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	3	27	9.0	0	13
Jayden Ballard	1	14	14.0	0	14
JK Johnson	1	0	0.0	0	0
OSU Totals	5	41	8.2	0	14
OPP Totals	0	0	0	0	0

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Emeka Egbuka	1	25	25.0	0	25
Chip Trayanum	1	17	17.0	0	17
OSU Totals	2	42	21.0	0	25
OPP Totals	6	110	18.3	0	30

Def. Leaders

Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks	
T. Eichenberg	13	6	19	3.0-9	2.0-8
Lathan Ransom	10	7	17	1.0-3	0-0
Steele Chambers	8	5	13	2.0-10	1.0-7
Cody Simon	6	6	12	2.0-2	0-0
Ronnie Hickman	4	5	9	0-0	0-0
Cameron Martinez	6	2	8	0-0	0-0
Jack Sawyer	3	4	7	2.5-7	1.0-4
Mike Hall Jr.	6	1	7	5.0-26	2.0-19
Caden Curry	5	1	6	1.0-6	0-0
Cameron Brown	4	1	5	0-0	0-0
Denzel Burke	3	2	5	1.0-1	0-0
Tyleik Williams	3	2	5	1.5-5	0-0
Zach Harrison	3	2	5	0-0	0-0
J. Jean-Baptiste	3	2	5	2.0-13	2.0-13
J.T. Tuimolouau	3	1	4	3.0-7	0-0
JK Johnson	4	-	4	0-0	0-0
Sonny Styles	2	1	3	1.0-2	0-0
Taron Vincent	1	2	3	0-0	0-0
Palaie Gaoteote IV	2	1	3	0-0	0-0
Jaden McKenzie	1	2	3	1.0-1	0-0
Chip Trayanum	3	-	3	0-0	0-0
Josh Proctor					

Linebackers Playing With Renewed Physicality

By JACK EMERSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Although a familiar group of contributors populates the Ohio State linebacking corps this season, the production of the group sits in stark contrast to the previous version of the unit.

While fourth-year players Tommy Eichenberg and Steele Chambers, as well as key rotational piece Cody Simon, are back in their second seasons as primary contributors to the unit, they've shown a much different style of play – one rooted in aggressiveness and playing fast. The position is headed by defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, who has overhauled the Buckeyes' defensive attack within those same elements.

The Buckeyes have seen the fruits of their labor show in Knowles' first games at the helm of the Silver Bullets, most notably within their linebacker play. Eichenberg, Chambers and Simon have led Ohio State's renaissance at the position, and head coach Ryan Day said the unit is able to play fast thanks to their knowledge of the defensive scheme.

"Tommy is solid. You can tell he's playing fast, he's productive," Day said Sept. 13. "He and Steele, both, this last week, I thought were very productive, and they're running the defense at a pretty high level right now. It's only two games in the system, so there is a long way to go. But I think that they're seeing it through the eyes of Jim, which is important."

As Ohio State's linebackers have settled into their roles in the Knowles' 4-2-5 defensive scheme, Jim Heacock – who served as Ohio State's defensive coordinator from 2005-11 – emphasized to BSB that the players' understanding of the scheme allows for the unit to play more fundamentally sound.

"They're gap sound, which is important," Heacock said. "They're zone sound. It looks like they're playing extremely fast, which shows me that they're not thinking



SONNY BROCKWAY

GETTING PHYSICAL – Linebacker Tommy Eichenberg has been one of the stars of Ohio State's revamped defense, leading the team with 19 tackles through three games.

too much. When you're thinking too much is when you slow down and you can't play fast. But I see them playing extremely fast and cutting loose, and that's a pretty good sign that they know what they're doing. They're playing with instincts and running to the football and not necessarily thinking about it."

Last year, Ohio State's linebackers carried essentially the same personnel under position coach Al Washington – now the defensive line coach at Notre Dame – with much different results.

Although Eichenberg and Chambers were options to see the field, Washington elected to begin the season with Simon and

then-seniors Dallas Gant, Teradja Mitchell and K'Vaughn Pope in rotation. The Buckeyes' early-season revolving door at the position did not work out as intended. Ohio State was gashed for a combined 472 rushing yards against Minnesota and Oregon during the season's first two weeks.

"Anytime you're in that situation, you're asking yourself, 'Is it personnel, is it scheme or is it coaching?'" Day said after the Buckeyes' 35-28 loss to Oregon last season. "If it's scheme, we need to get that fixed. If it's coaching, we need to do it better. If it's personnel, we have to make some changes."

While Ohio State batted down the hatches in the next two weeks, holding Tulsa and Akron to 73 and 76 rushing yards, respectively, the linebackers were forced to deal with the unexpected departures of Gant and Pope, with the latter leaving the team during Ohio State's 56-7 win over the Zips. Those departures, along with disappointing play from Mitchell, allowed for Eichenberg and Chambers to increase their roles in the defense and see the field more.

From there, Ohio State's run defense continued to improve with the team holding opponents to under 100 rushing yards in five of its next seven games. In hindsight, those statistical improvements served as

nothing more than a mirage prior to the unit's disastrous display during the rivalry matchup with Michigan.

In a game characterized by Michigan's pure dominance in the trenches courtesy of its Joe Moore Award-winning offensive line, the Buckeyes allowed the Wolverines to rush for 297 yards and score six touchdowns on the ground. Ohio State's linebackers found themselves out of position and unable to get off blocks for much of the afternoon while Michigan punished the Buckeyes with aggression.

Ahead of the Rose Bowl against Utah, Ohio State faced allegations from Wolverines coaches of being a "finesse team" and playing soft.

The Buckeyes, once again, struggled to slow down Utah's rushing attack, allowing the combination of quarterback Cameron Rising and running back Tavion Thomas to lead the Utes to 226 yards through the ground game. No play represented Ohio State's shortcomings against the run more than Rising's 62-yard touchdown in which he bounced off several tackles en route to the end zone late in the second quarter.

Although the Buckeyes allowed 35 first-half points against the Utes, it was Eichenberg who led the defense's swift turnaround in the game's final 30 minutes, in which it held Utah to 10 points while Ohio State completed a double-digit comeback. The Cleveland native earned Rose Bowl Defensive MVP honors behind a 17-tackle performance.

With attention to Ohio State's late-season struggles against the run, Day dismissed defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs, secondary coach Matt Barnes and Washington and opted to bring in Knowles to helm the defensive rebuild. Knowles took over Washington's spot with the linebackers and immediately began instilling his own values in the unit, placing an emphasis on form tackling and the fundamentals.

"We want to be tenacious, just for overwhelming the offense" Knowles said during his introductory press conference on Jan. 31. "For being always in the right place, when you watch it you can see we're always in the right place. We don't want to give up anything easy. Then, we want to be attacking with tackles for losses and sacks and third-down domination."

From the jump, expectations for the linebackers – and the defense as a whole – rose significantly, especially when Day made the assertion that the Buckeyes would boast a top-10 defense at Big Ten Media Days. Knowles took it one step further, declaring that his defense is striving to be in the top

2022 Buckeye Road Trips

OSU at Northwestern in Chicago featuring Bill Kurelic Dean of Ohio State Football Recruiting, Nov 4-6

OSU at Maryland and Washington DC, Nov 17-20

Looking for other 2022 travel opportunities?

- Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta - Sept
- Ohio Country Pioneers - Oct
- Hawaii 4 Island Cruise - Nov
- New York City Holiday - Nov
- Blue Christmas at Graceland - Dec

Prime
Hours

www.GoPrimeTours.com

614-766-5553

Doing Buckeye road trips since 1996!

chocolate café

FINE CHOCOLATES • COFFEES • DESSERTS • SPIRITS & PEOPLE



1855 Northwest Boulevard
(614) 485-CAFE
chocolatecafecolumbus.com



Parties • Corporate Catering
Weddings • Baby & Bridal Showers • Tailgates



SONNY BROCKWAY

BRINGING UP THE REAR — Despite playing behind linebackers Steele Chambers and Tommy Eichenberg, linebacker Cody Simon — a former starter for the Buckeyes — has still made an impact on Ohio State’s defense in relief.

five. Knowles bolstered the linebacker unit during the offseason through the transfer addition of Arizona State running back Chip Trayanum, coinciding with the arrivals of freshmen C.J. Hicks and Gabe Powers. Trayanum is the second linebacker in the unit to move to the defensive side of the ball, joining Chambers, who made the transition last season.

“An athlete is an athlete,” Heacock said. “A good linebacker is probably a good running back and vice versa. If you’re a football player, you’re a football player. I imagine, having played running back, they have a little bit of a better idea of the offensive concepts and the thought process. And maybe they just instinctively react a little bit quicker.”

Through three games, the Buckeyes might be on track to hit that top-10 mark set by Day, primarily led by the play of the defensive front. In its season opener, Ohio State held Notre Dame to just 2.5 yards per carry and 76 total yards on the ground

before holding Arkansas State to just 53 rushing yards and 1.6 yards per carry in game two. The Buckeyes took a step back against Toledo, as they struggled to contain dual-threat quarterback Dequan Finn, who aided the Rockets to 124 rushing yards and 3.8 yards per attempt.

At the center of Ohio State’s rapid defensive improvement is Eichenberg, who leads the Buckeyes with 19 tackles, three tackles for loss and two sacks. Eichenberg has also stood out to Heacock, who noted that he plays with intelligence but does not let that get in his way from playing fast.

“He’s obviously an outstanding linebacker,” Heacock said. “When I see him, the thing that I’ve noticed, this year, is that he’s playing really fast. He seems to have instincts. I think that’s something that all great linebackers have. We’ve had quite a few outstanding linebackers, and it seemed like they had great instincts, they move quick, they get to the ball and they are smart.

“He appears to be very intelligent as far as knowing the offense that they’re facing.

He’s reading plays quickly. He’s disciplined. He’s in his gap and reacting to the football. He’s good in drops. He looks like a good all-around linebacker to me.”

Chambers and Simon do not lag far behind Eichenberg, as Chambers has racked up 13 total tackles, two tackles for loss and a sack. Simon has added 12 tackles, two of which have gone for losses. As far as Simon’s third-man role, Knowles has been pleased with how he has filled in at key junctures.

“You could tell by his presence in the meeting room and the respect for him,” Knowles said. “I had hoped that he would have been able to show during fall camp to be a guy who was going to merit a lot of playing time, and he did. He has really stepped up.”

As the coaches and those outside the Woody Hayes Athletic Center have noticed the improved play out of the linebacker corps, the players within the unit have attributed their heightened level of play to the scheme.

Chambers noted during fall camp that he felt that the unit was playing with more anticipation as compared to last season.

“We played on our heels last year, plain and simple,” Chambers said. “Now, we’re just working on being more downhill and being more aggressive — as Coach Knowles says, ‘pulling our trigger.’”

For Eichenberg, the new scheme is not the only factor playing into the unit’s improved play. He emphasized a growing chemistry with Chambers from their time sharing the field last season, along with the

strides they made together during the off-season.

“It shows up everywhere, really,” Eichenberg said. “In the run game, pass game, we’re just communicating. I can tell how he’ll play some plays, and that helps me out, too.”

While the linebackers have greatly stepped up their play since last season, Heacock noted that Knowles’ defensive scheme has worked harmoniously, opening up opportunities for the linebackers to make plays. He added that Ohio State’s linebacking unit would not see the success it has had thus far without the increased play from the defensive line and secondary.

“For me, it’s hard to break down one group — like the linebackers, or the defensive line or the secondary — because I think they all rely on each other,” Heacock said. “To me, a lot of times the linebackers may appear to be playing not so good, not making a lot of plays, but that’s more because the defensive line is not doing their jobs or vice versa.”

Eichenberg echoed Heacock’s sentiment, emphasizing that he feels more confident in the system because he knows he has support from the defensive line and secondary.

“I’m confident, not only confident in myself, but my confidence comes from the defensive line and the defensive backs,” Eichenberg said. “It’s knowing that I’m going to do my job and they’re going to do their job. That’s where my confidence comes from.”

Let our family help your family.

GEICO®

LOCAL OFFICE



614-934-3131
8651 Sancus Blvd.
Kyle Haskins
Columbus Office



614-689-8140
1730 Stringtown Road
Joshua Haskins
Grove City Office

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. 2018 GEICO



Join Us!

\$100/Year 614 326-3300
buckeyeboosters.com

...as we support the Buckeyes on the road and more!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail check to:
Buckeye Boosters, 921 Chatham Ln., #301F, Columbus, OH 43221

Kick-Off Dinner

Travel to Away Football Games

Annual Celebrity Golf Outing

Meeting with Coaches, at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center

Predicting OSU's Biggest Conference Threat

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State has swept through its nonconference slate to open the season, but the true meat of the season still waits on the horizon.

Conference play opens for the Buckeyes on Sept. 24 with a matchup against Wisconsin, the first of nine consecutive regular-season conference games that Ohio State hopes will lead to a shot at a Big Ten championship Dec. 3.

Sitting atop the conference rankings-wise at No. 3 in the AP poll, the Buckeyes are viewed as the odds-on favorite to capture exactly that feat, but plenty of threats loom. With that in mind, Buckeye Sports Bulletin spoke with Eleven Warriors beat writer Dan Hope and Buckeye Huddle beat writer Kevin Noon about some of the biggest challengers to Ohio State for the Big Ten crown.

Michigan Mounting Title Defense

Last season marked the first time since 2016 that Ohio State didn't win the Big Ten. That glory belonged to archrival Michigan in 2021, and the No. 4 Wolverines could prove the Buckeyes' biggest competition in 2022.

Edge rushers Aidan Hutchinson and David Ojabo led a stout defense that carried Michigan to much of its successes in 2021, finishing eighth nationally for points allowed. Both of those players left to become first- and second-round NFL draft picks, respectively, alongside first-round safety Daxton Hill.

Through three contests – albeit against Group of Five competition – the Wolverines have allowed just 17 total points.

"While maybe we were expecting somewhat of a drop-off on the defense just due to what they were losing, including names like Hutchinson and Ojabo and Daxton Hill, at least against lesser competition they have not stumbled," Noon said. "But again, a giant caveat of, 'They have not played anybody.'"



FILE PHOTO

DEFENDING THE TITLE — After winning the Big Ten title for the first time under head coach Jim Harbaugh last season, Michigan seeks to remain at the peak of the conference in 2022.

Even if the Wolverines' defense does take a step back, its offense could be better than last season's. Sophomore quarterback J.J. McCarthy usurped incumbent starter and graduate Cade McNamara after the two alternated starts to open the season. McNamara completed 64.2 percent of his throws en route to leading Michigan to a playoff appearance in 2021, so that the former five-star McCarthy could claim the job from him speaks volumes.

McCarthy went 11 of 12 for 229 yards against Hawaii in week two, with his one incompletion coming on a dropped pass, and he followed it up with 214 passing yards against UConn in week three.

"It appears that they've settled on quarterback J.J. McCarthy, who gives them a much better passing presence, in my opinion," Noon said.

There's a stable of receivers for McCarthy to throw to. Star graduate Ronnie Bell is back after missing all but one game in 2021 due to injury and leads the team with 14 receptions through three games. He had 401 receiving yards in just six games during the COVID-shortened 2020 season.

He's joined by junior Roman Wilson and senior Cornelius Johnson to round out the squad's starting trio. Senior tight end Erick All is also back after a 400-yard receiving season last year.

"I think offensively, they've probably got the most complete offense outside of Ohio State in the conference," Hope said. "Then defensively, I kind of want to see how they look against better competition, but they've gotten off to a good start there."

Of course, it was on the ground where the Wolverines beat down the Buckeyes in the teams' meeting last year, out-rushing them 297 to 64. Michigan's starting running back from that attack left for the NFL, but junior Blake Corum is back and former top-50 recruit and sophomore Donovan Edwards joins him in the backfield rotation.

With no other Big Ten team having as much talent on paper, it's that Team Up North that may give Ohio State the biggest anxieties about regaining a conference championship.

"Right now, they do look like Ohio State's top competition in the Big Ten," Hope said.

Rushing Attack Evolving For Nittany Lions

Freshman running back Nicholas Singleton started as one of a committee for Penn State in 2022.

Three games into the year, however, he emerged as not only the best back on the Nittany Lions' roster but potentially one of the

best in the Big Ten. In just 30 carries through three games, he has picked up 334 yards for a blistering 11.1 per-carry average.

"Right now I'll say Penn State (is the second-biggest threat in the East behind Michigan) because they have found a running presence with Nick Singleton," Noon said. "I think that that gives them something that they've been lacking before."

The Nittany Lions squeaked by Purdue to open their season but most recently recorded a dominant 41-12 win at Auburn, a win for the Nittany Lions in the first-ever trip for a Big Ten team to the Tigers' Jordan-Hare Stadium.

There's also some debate between long-time starting quarterback Sean Clifford and freshman Drew Allar, with both Hope and Noon saying that Allar might give the Nittany Lions the best chance to win moving forward. Clifford has started all three games, completing 63.9 percent of his passes for 673 yards and five touchdowns with one pick.

"I agree with the fans in a sense," Hope said. "Obviously Sean Clifford's a guy that's been there a long time and has won a lot of games at Penn State. But I think Drew Allar is definitely a more gifted passer. So I do wonder if that changes at some point in the year. If Clifford has a bad game, maybe they do make that change to Allar."

A balanced offensive attack for a team that finished tied for sixth nationally in scoring defense last season could provide an additional Big Ten East divisional challenger to Ohio State.

Defensive Improvements Key For Michigan State

Michigan State could be considered the conference's biggest surprise of the 2021 season. The Spartans finished 11-2 with a win in the Peach Bowl one season after going 2-5 in 2020 to open head coach Mel Tucker's tenure.

Now, Michigan State is looking to chal-

SUMMIT
PERFORMANCE INSTITUTE

Train to be the BEST you can be!
Designing fitness programs to meet your personal needs.

Personal Training

Group Fitness Training

Sports Specific Training

Owned and Operated By:
Brent Johnson
614-570-9918
B-fit.training@hotmail.com

Located at 2378 East Main Street in Bexley, Ohio

Attention Reds Fans

Here's a chance for Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers who are also Cincinnati Reds fans to enjoy a year of Reds Report, BSB's sister publication covering the Reds, for just \$9.95, a \$36 savings over the regular \$45.95 rate. Take advantage of this special offer for BSB readers and we will also send you a voucher good for two free tickets to your choice of select Reds games this season.

This will be another interesting year for Reds Report readers as our extensive Reds minor-league system coverage becomes more critical with the team in the midst of its rebuilding project. You will also enjoy stories, columns, statistics and box scores for the major-league club.

Just send your \$9.95 to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 or call (614) 486-2202 for credit card orders. You must mention the Reds BSB Special.



FILE PHOTO

VETERAN PRESENCE — In his fourth season as the starting quarterback, Penn State's Sean Clifford is looking to make the most of his final shot at a Big Ten title this year.

lunge Ohio State, Michigan and Penn State for the Big Ten East crown.

"I look at teams that are the biggest threat to Ohio State, and I put them right there behind Michigan," Hope said before the Spartans' 39-28 loss to Washington on Sept. 17.

For all their successes last season, the Spartans had one glaring deficiency in pass defense. They finished dead last with 324.8 passing yards allowed, and Ohio State aired it out for 449 yards when the two sides met on Nov. 20, vaulting the Buckeyes to a 56-7 win. Michigan State has gone from allowing 324.8 yards through the air to 264.3 yards through three games, with Washington quarterback Michael Penix Jr. throwing for 397 yards and four scores against the defense.

Offensively, the team is without star running back Kenneth Walker III, who left to become the second ball carrier taken in the 2022 NFL draft. Third-year back Jalen Berger has taken his place and racked up 254 rushing yards in Michigan State's first three games, rattling off 5.5 yards per carry.

Fourth-year quarterback Payton Thorne remains behind center, opening the season completing 63.8 percent of his throws. Fifth-year wide receiver Jayden Reed returns after a 1,000-yard season last year, and the Spartans will welcome Ohio State to Spartan Stadium for the Buckeyes' first road game of the year on Oct. 8.

"From a passing-game standpoint, when I just think about it in the context of Ohio State's season, that's kind of a game I have circled right now," Hope said. "I feel like it's going to be the first team that has a passing offense that's really going to give Ohio State's pass defense a real test. I think passing offense-wise, they're probably going to be one of the better teams in the Big Ten."

Wisconsin Wishing For Offensive Production

The team that could be the biggest threat to Ohio State from the Big Ten West will meet the Buckeyes on Sept. 24.

Wisconsin fell out of the AP top 25 following its loss to Washington State in week two,

but Hope said he would still go with the Badgers as the biggest threat from the Big Ten's other division.

"They've got some things to work through after losing to Washington State," Hope said. "I think Wisconsin and Iowa, there's a lot of similarities between those two teams. I think they both have really good defenses, but they're both offensively challenged."

The loss to the Cougars certainly played out as such for the Badgers. Fresh off a week-one shutout of Illinois State, Wisconsin's defense surrendered just 17 points and 253 yards against Washington State's air-raid attack. Even after surpassing that mark to the tune of 401 yards of its own, Wisconsin's offense could manage only 14 points in defeat.

"For having a great running back in Braelon Allen and their No. 2 Chez Mellusi being really good, their passing game is an absolute liability," Noon said. "Their lines just aren't as good as other Wisconsin teams."

There are still a few factors that could right the ship for the Badgers. Allen rushed for 1,268 yards as a freshman in 2021 and entered this season with hype as one of the Big Ten's best. Even with the loss to Washington State, Allen already had 332 yards at an average of 6.6 yards per carry through three games.

If Wisconsin can find its footing offensively and maintain the level of success it has had on defense to this point, the Big Ten West title and a trip to Indianapolis for the Big Ten Championship Game are still very much on the table.

Backfield Digging In For Golden Gophers

Iowa could have been viewed as a pre-season threat with some of the pieces the Hawkeyes returned on defense, but a sputtering offense and early-season loss to Iowa State have tempered expectations in Iowa City.

With that in mind, the final threat to Ohio State is one that the Buckeyes would face — if at all — only in the conference championship game: Minnesota.

Opening the season with three straight 38-plus point wins over New Mexico State, Western Illinois and Colorado, Minnesota enters its conference slate ready to challenge for the Big Ten West.

"I see Minnesota as the team there (in the West)," Noon said. "Wisconsin really just has an offensive issue."

Sixth-year quarterback Tanner Morgan is in his fifth year as the Golden Gophers' starter, and he's likely to surpass 10,000 career passing yards this year. His experience running head coach P.J. Fleck's offense serves to keep Minnesota in games.

Another sixth-year joins him in the backfield fresh off a season-ending injury in 2021. Running back Mohamed Ibrahim rushed for 1,076 yards in just seven games during the COVID-shortened 2020 season and had gobbled up 163 on the ground against Ohio State last year before rupturing his Achilles tendon in the game.

"If you're just talking about a team that has a little more to offer on offense, getting Mohamed Ibrahim back, having an experienced quarterback in Tanner Morgan, they always have good offensive lines," Hope said. "I don't think they're as good defensively as Wisconsin or Iowa, some of the other teams on that side of the conference, but I think you could make a case that they could be the most complete team in the division."

Should Minnesota's defense rise to the level of its backfield, the Golden Gophers could be a legitimate threat to rise above the Big Ten West.

"If I had to pick right now, I would still

pick Wisconsin (to win the division)," Hope said. "But Minnesota may be emerging as their top competition on that side of the conference."

Ohio State Still The Favorite

Despite the praise for the five threats listed above, both analysts said that Ohio State remains the team to beat in the Big Ten.

"I definitely do (view them as the favorite)," Hope said. "I think overall, Ohio State has the most talent of any team in the Big Ten. I wouldn't be shocked at this point if Ohio State and Michigan, when they meet in the 'Shoe at the end of November, they're both undefeated, they're playing and everything's on the line for those two teams. I think that's a possible scenario."

The Buckeyes moved to 3-0 after dominating Toledo by a 77-21 margin on Sept. 17, but there's still something for them to prove going forward given how Ohio State's most impressive win over then-No. 5 Notre Dame has been diminished since the Fighting Irish lost to Marshall and struggled against Cal.

"We can sit there and say some things about we don't know what we don't know about Ohio State based on its schedule at this point," Noon said. "Notre Dame maybe was not as formidable as we thought. But with the defense that certainly looks like it's turned the corner in a lot of regards and an improving offense, especially with the return of Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming, it's really going to be hard for somebody to sit there and dethrone Ohio State."

The Ohio State University Alumni Association

GUIDE YOUR CAREER

3,200+

active employers working with Alumni Career Connection

4,500+

AlumniFire members ready to network

9,000+

The Buckeye Network reaches active members on LinkedIn

BOND WITH FELLOW BUCKEYES

121

Join one of Regional Clubs

48

Connect with one of Societies supporting your interests

168

Attend special events hosted in FY16

PAY FORWARD

More than 150

volunteer projects done by Buckeyes in 2016

TRAVEL THE WORLD

Join one of 30+

trips with Alumni Tours

GET SOCIAL

Follow along to stay up to date with The Ohio State University Alumni Association

32,515 Likes

34,300 Followers

540,000+ alumni across the globe

YOU'RE A BUCKEYE FOR LIFE

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Rebounding Badgers Kick Off Big Ten Schedule

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Heading into this season for Wisconsin, the stars had aligned for some of the Badgers' best historic qualities – a solid running back, offensive line and punishing linebackers – to be on display as they looked to win the Big Ten's West Division and return to the conference championship game for the first time since 2019.

Star sophomore running back Braelon Allen returned after putting the nation on notice last year with 1,268 rushing yards, becoming just the fourth true freshman at Wisconsin to rush for over 1,000 yards, joining Ron Dayne (1996, 2,109 yards), James White (2010, 1,052 yards) and Jonathan Taylor (2017, 1,977 yards).

The rushing attack received a boost with the return of three starters on the offensive line in left guard Tyler Beach, left tackle Jack Nelson and center Joe Tippmann, and at linebacker, the Badgers returned Nick Herbig, who was named a second-team preseason All-American by The Associated Press and led Wisconsin with nine sacks last year.

The three remaining linebacker spots are filled by sophomore Jordan Turner and juniors C.J. Goetz and Maema Njongmeta, who return a combined four starts and 49 games played for the Badgers.

With the usual spots set for Wisconsin, whether the Badgers can return to their perch atop the West Division depends on the arm of quarterback Graham Mertz.

After a solid start to his career during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season in which he completed 61.1 percent of his passes for 1,238 yards and nine touchdowns (five interceptions) in seven games – including a win at Michigan in just his second career start – the bottom fell out last year for Mertz. He completed just 59.5 percent of his passes and threw just 10 touchdowns to 11 interceptions, though the Badgers still finished the season with a 9-4 record on the back of Allen's rushing attack and one of the top defenses in the country that allowed just 16.2 points per game.

Entering his third season as the Badgers' starter, Mertz had high expectations for how he might take a jump.

"I put my everything into this," he said at Big Ten Media Days in July. "I don't feel any pressure from anybody besides myself. I said that from the start, and it's always been like that. I do this because I love it, and I don't stress about the other things people say. I don't want to play bad. When I play good, I feel great. When I don't, I'm upset."

"I know that if I just put my all into it, I'm going to have so much fun. It's going to be a fun year. I know I'm ready. I just know. I don't need anybody else to tell me. I know I am."

Through the first three games of the season, Mertz has backed up the talk. He's completed 71.0 percent of his passes (44 of 62) and thrown for six touchdowns compared to just two interceptions.

But while he's playing well, fun has been hard to come by so far in Madison. Sandwiched between wins over FCS-level Illinois State and independent New Mexico State – traditionally one of the worst Division I teams around, with just two winning seasons since the turn of the century – the Badgers dropped a home contest to unranked Washington State, falling 17-14 on Sept. 10.

Several factors combined for the loss that came despite Wisconsin out-gaining Washington State 401-253 and the teams having three turnovers apiece. The rushing attack finished with a measly 4.0 yards per carry, and despite the defense forcing four three-and-outs and allowing just 17 points (and zero in the fourth quarter), the Badgers' special teams had a letdown, missing field goals of 51 and 43 yards in the first and fourth quarters, respectively.

Mertz and Allen had Wisconsin's offense moving on what would be their final drive of the game, but after Mertz connected with tight end Clay Cundiff on a 24-yard pass to the Washington State 12-yard line, Cundiff fumbled the ball and the game away.

"A game like this, everyone owns it, starting with myself and each and every person in that locker room," said Wisconsin head coach Paul Chryst, who is in his eighth season leading the Badgers.

Wisconsin had plenty to figure out following the loss and did work out some kinks in the Badgers' 66-7 win over the Aggies, but the Badgers now face what will be the toughest test of the season when they enter Ohio Stadium for a prime-time kickoff on Sept. 24.

The Badgers' rushing attack should provide one of the first true challenges for Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, who has been tasked with reworking the Buckeyes' defense and has seemingly done a solid job so far, allowing just 14.3 points and 278.7 total yards through three games.

At just 84.3 rushing yards per game allowed, Ohio State's rushing defense is the immovable object going against Allen, the unstoppable force, who has cleared 100 rushing yards in nine of his last 12 games.

"I have always been impressed with him (and) how he approaches every day," Chryst said of Allen. "He's a worker, and that hasn't

Get To Know ... Wisconsin

- **2022 Record:** 2-1.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation - Pro-Style; Defensive Formation - 3-4; Starters Returning - Offense 5, Defense 3, Specialists 0.
- **Head Coach:** Paul Chryst, 8th year at Wisconsin, 67-24.
- **Series History:** 85th meeting; Ohio State leads 61-18-5.
- **School Facts:** Location - Madison, Wisc.; Enrollment - 32,648; Nickname - Badgers; Colors - Cardinal, White; Conference - Big Ten (West Division); Stadium - Camp Randall Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity - 80,321).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Braelon Allen	50	332	6.6	5
Chez Mellusi	35	163	4.7	1
Isaac Guerendo	17	91	5.4	3

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Graham Mertz	44-62	71.0	697	6-2

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Chimere Dike	9	172	19.1	1
Clay Cundiff	8	139	17.4	2
Skyler Bell	8	146	18.3	2

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game - 39.3
Rushing Yards Per Game - 218.3
Passing Yards Per Game - 260.3
Total Offense Avg. Per Game - 478.7

2022 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Sept. 3	ILLINOIS STATE	W, 38-0
Sept. 10	WASHINGTON STATE	L, 17-14
Sept. 17	NEW MEXICO STATE	W, 66-7
Sept. 24	at Ohio State	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 1	ILLINOIS	TBA
Oct. 8	at Northwestern	3:30/4 p.m.
Oct. 15	at Michigan State	3:30 p.m.
Oct. 22	PURDUE	3:30 p.m.
Nov. 5	MARYLAND	TBA
Nov. 12	at Iowa	TBA
Nov. 19	at Nebraska	TBA
Nov. 26	MINNESOTA	TBA
Dec. 3	Big Ten Championship	8 p.m.

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL	Yards	Sacks
Maema Njongmeta	9	10	19	1.5	4	0-0
Jordan Turner	5	8	13	2.0	2	1.0-1
John Torchio	4	8	12	1.0	6	1.0-6
Nick Herbig	7	4	11	5.0	42	4.0-40
Jake Chaney	4	5	9	1.0	1	0-0

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
Maema Njongmeta	1	6	6.0	0
John Torchio	1	100	100.0	1
Jake Chaney	1	4	4.0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed - 8.0
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed - 76.0
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed - 170.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed - 246.0

changed. What hasn't changed is that he expects a lot of himself and yet goes about it by working. What stood out, what is different, you hope it's just a better version of himself and he continues to keep growing. He is still relatively young at that position."

If Wisconsin wants to beat Ohio State for the first time since 2010 and for the first time in Columbus since 2004, the offense will likely have to flow through Allen. Mertz has been serviceable in the season's early stages, but there has been little in the way of notable pass catchers for the Badgers after the loss of starting receivers Danny Davis III and Kendrick Pryor as well as tight end Jake Ferguson, who combined for 110 receptions for 1,344 yards and eight touchdowns last year but are now off to the NFL.

This leaves receiving duties to Skyler Bell, Cundiff and Chimere Dike, who each have at least 100 receiving yards and eight receptions through the first three games.

The offense struggled against Washington State when relying primarily on Allen, who finished with 98 yards on 21 carries for 4.7 yards per attempt.

"You've got to create some rhythm," Chryst said. "I thought (there was) a little inconsistency, even on third down, when you can't start to get in flow and get going. When you do that, you're going to start running the ball well, and I just think we were all over the place in that way."

This puts a greater emphasis on Wisconsin's defense, which has still had a strong showing this season despite the blemish against the Cougars. It's a defense that lost eight starters across all three levels of the field, including three linebackers (Noah Burks, Leo Chenal, Jack Sanborn), four defensive backs (cornerbacks Falon Hicks and Caesar Williams, safeties Scott Nelson and Collin Wilder) and defensive end Matt Hen-

ningsen.

The first outing for the new-look defense was a solid one, allowing no points and just 243 yards in the Badgers' 38-0 win over Illinois State.

"First game of the year, (we) had a little jitters," Herbig said. "We're a young defense. We don't have Sanborn or Leo, Scotty, Collin. We don't have any of those older guys anymore. I think (it was) everybody just settling down, 'OK, this is it. We've got to lock in,' and I think we did a great job of that."

While the loss to Washington State dampens the Badgers' season thus far, it could still be considered a solid performance for Wisconsin's defense that allowed just 17 points, 10 first downs and the 253 total yards (4.9 yards per play) while forcing three turnovers. Through three games, the defense has allowed just 8.0 points and 246.0 total yards per game, both of which rank among the top 20 in the country.

"It just comes down to discipline and detail," senior defensive tackle Keanu Benton said. "Guys think it's just going to happen out there because we are wearing this 'W' on our chest, but it didn't."

"That's not the character of this 'W' that we wear on our chest," he continued. "In all the years I've been playing, I've never seen anything like that. At one point, it was like we'd given up."

Herbig said the Badgers have been forced to reflect on why the loss happened, adding that the team will figure it out together. Not much time is left, though, until this soul-searching squad is under the lights at Ohio Stadium.

"We're better than that," Herbig said. "It's a learning process, it's a learning experience, but I promise you it's never going to happen again."

www.theredbricktapandgrill.com

292 E. Gates St.
Columbus
(614) 444-2742

HAPPY HOUR 3-8pm Mon-Fri
Half off all 30 drafts • Half off select appetizers
Craft bottle specials all day

100 Craft Beers!

New Food & Cocktail Menu

Newly Renovated Patio with Fire Pit

Handmade Pizzas & In-House Smoked Meats



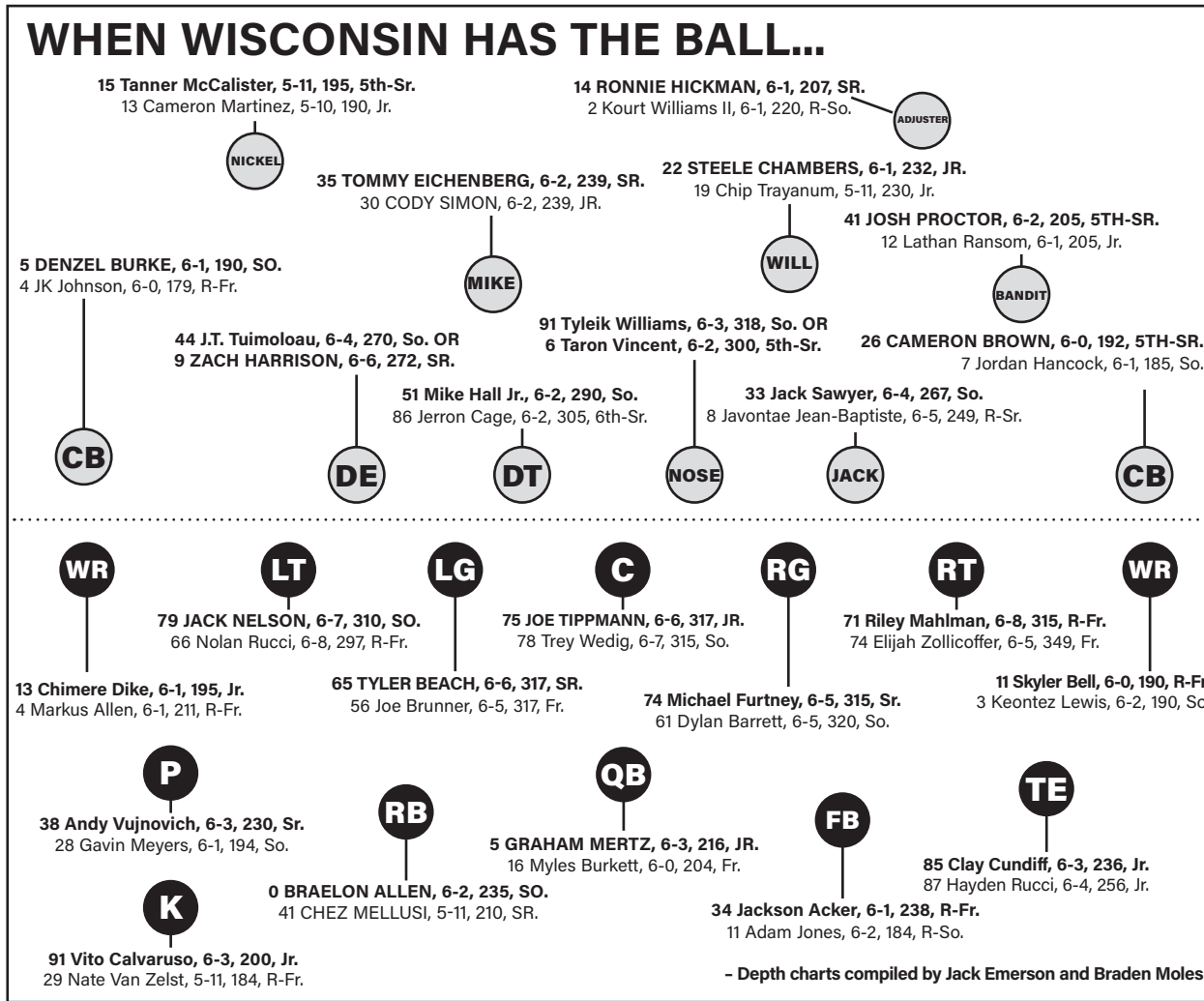
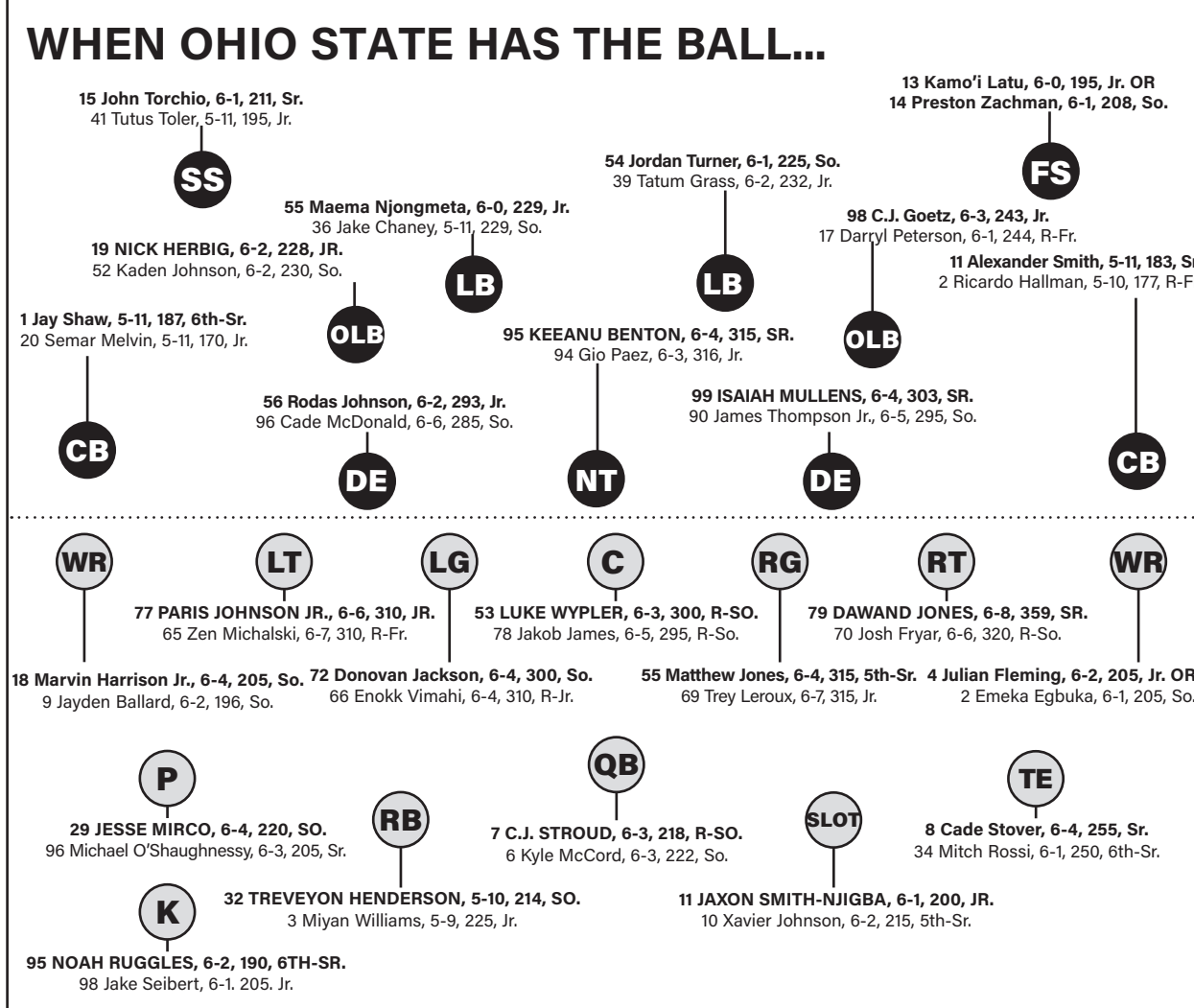



Wisconsin at Ohio State

Saturday, Sept. 24 • 7:30 pm • ABC
Ohio Stadium; Columbus, OH



Projected Depth Charts



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. WISCONSIN RUSH DEFENSE

Even with limited duty from TreVeyon Henderson due to an injury, the Buckeyes rolled up 281 yards (6.4 yards per carry) and five touchdowns on the ground to overwhelm Toledo 77-21 on Sept. 17. Freshman Dallan Hayden led the way with 108 yards, including a 45-yarder, and Miyon Williams ran for 77 yards. Walk-on TC Caffey even had a 49-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter to cap the scoring. So what does it mean? Well, Toledo isn't beefy Wisconsin. One season after leading the country in rush defense (64.8 yards per game), the Badgers allowed 118 yards (3.3 per carry) in a 66-7 pasting of New Mexico State on Sept. 17, a week after being upset at home 17-14 by Washington State. The Badgers dropped to 13th nationally with a 76.0 rushing yards allowed per game (2.7 per carry). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

WISCONSIN RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Badgers can run. Duh. The latest in a line of backs is Braelon Allen. He rushed for 248 yards and two touchdowns in the first two games, and over the previous 11 games before New Mexico State he averaged 133.2 yards per game. In his most recent outing, he wasn't called upon much in the rout but stuck around long enough to gain 86 yards on 15 carries and matched his career high with three touchdowns. In fact, he has 17 career rushing touchdowns in 15 games. The Badgers are 26th in rushing, averaging 218.3 yards per game with 5.2 yards per carry. The Buckeyes had trouble with Toledo dual-threat quarterback Dequan Finn, who gained 70 yards on seven rushes. Ohio State is 24th in rush defense (84.3, 2.6). **EDGE: WISCONSIN**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. WISCONSIN PASS DEFENSE

The receiver corps just gets better and better with the return of Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Julian Fleming against Toledo. It's a testament to the OSU's depth that both could ease their way back, with Smith-Njigba hauling in two catches for 33 yards and Fleming grabbing three for 23 and two scores. C.J. Stroud was outstanding against the Rockets (22 of 27, 367 yards, five touchdowns) and led the Buckeyes to scores on their first seven possessions. He has several other weapons, including Marvin Harrison Jr., who has five touchdowns in the past two games, and Emeka Egbuka, who gathered a game-high 116 receiving yards with a score against the Rockets. There's also tight end Cade Stover, who had three catches for 83 yards. The Buckeyes must be wary of junior outside linebacker Nick Herbig. He has four sacks over his past three games and 14 in his career. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

WISCONSIN PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

The Badgers, as strong as they are on the ground, have sought more balance and accomplished that in the first two games, totaling 446 yards passing and 395 rushing. Against New Mexico State, the Badgers rushed for 260 yards and passed for 335. Junior quarterback Graham Mertz threw for 251 yards and three touchdowns while completing 12 of 15. He surpassed the 200-yard passing mark for a third straight game. Skyler Bell caught four passes for 108 yards and two scores, including a 49-yard touchdown. Ohio State safeties Josh Proctor and Tanner McCalister and defensive tackle Mike Hall didn't play against Toledo but are expected to be available against the Badgers. Of more concern is the poor play of the cornerbacks: Denzel Burke and Cameron Brown were burned again by Toledo's Finn. Ronnie Hickman finally produced the Buckeyes' first turnover of the season in the third quarter against Toledo with an interception, but overall the pass defending has been inconsistent. **EDGE: WISCONSIN**

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Badgers' special teams are in flux. Field-goal kicker Vito Calvaruso and kickoff specialist Jack Van Dyke missed the New Mexico State game with right leg injuries, and each played in the first two games. Nate Van Zelst made a 27-yard field goal in his only attempt, and Gavin Lahm handled kickoffs in the New Mexico State game. Andy Vujnovich averaged 48.3 yards on three punts. OSU punter Jesse Mirco had just one try against Toledo and stuck a 37-yarder at the Rockets' 2-yard line. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

INTANGIBLES

Both teams are coming off lopsided wins against lower-caliber opponents. The Badgers have shown more variety in their offense but still rely on winning the battle of the trenches. The Buckeyes are ready for another prime-time showdown after a pair of cakewalks following the Notre Dame victory in the season opener. The Badgers will offer the stiffest challenge yet and have a veteran quarterback who can exploit the still-unproven defense. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

STAFF PREDICTION

The schools haven't met since 2019, and there will be noticeably more energy in Ohio Stadium than the past two games. The Badgers are looking to recoup respect after the loss to Washington State, and there's no better way to do that than to beat the Buckeyes. However, they won't be able to outscore them, so Wisconsin's best hope is ball control. **OHIO STATE 41, WISCONSIN 23**

- Depth charts compiled by Jack Emerson and Braden Moles

Crowd Sizes Fluctuate In Stadium's First Decade

Throughout the 2022 football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is publishing stories commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ohio Stadium. This week, BSB looks at memorable games through the first decade (1922-31) at the Horseshoe.

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

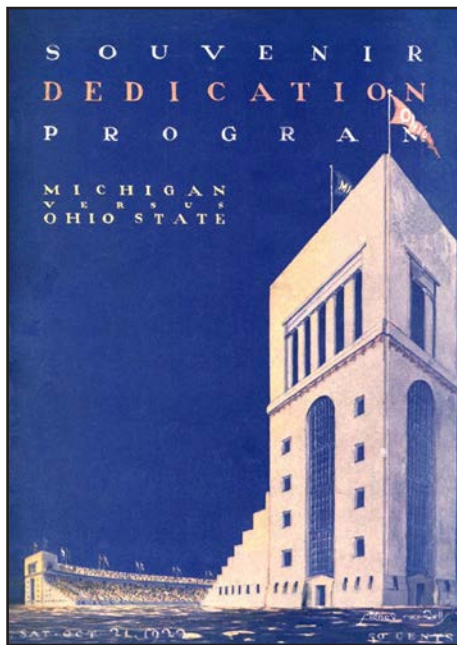
It was nicknamed "The House That Harley Built" after the exploits of three-time All-American Chic Harley led Ohio State officials to construct a huge stadium to accommodate the ever-growing fan base for the university's football program.

Critics of the project, however, had more derisive names such as "Thompson's White Elephant" or "French's Folly," claiming the spacious stadium was the product of overblown egos on the part of university president William Oxley Thompson and architect Thomas Ewing French.

Nevertheless, construction on the project was completed in time for Ohio State to christen its new concrete-and-steel Ohio Stadium on Oct. 7, 1922, with a 5-0 win over old rival Ohio Wesleyan. Construction crews hurried to complete work on the horseshoe-shaped structure and enlisted the Friday night help of university officials including Thompson and French to help clear away any remaining debris.

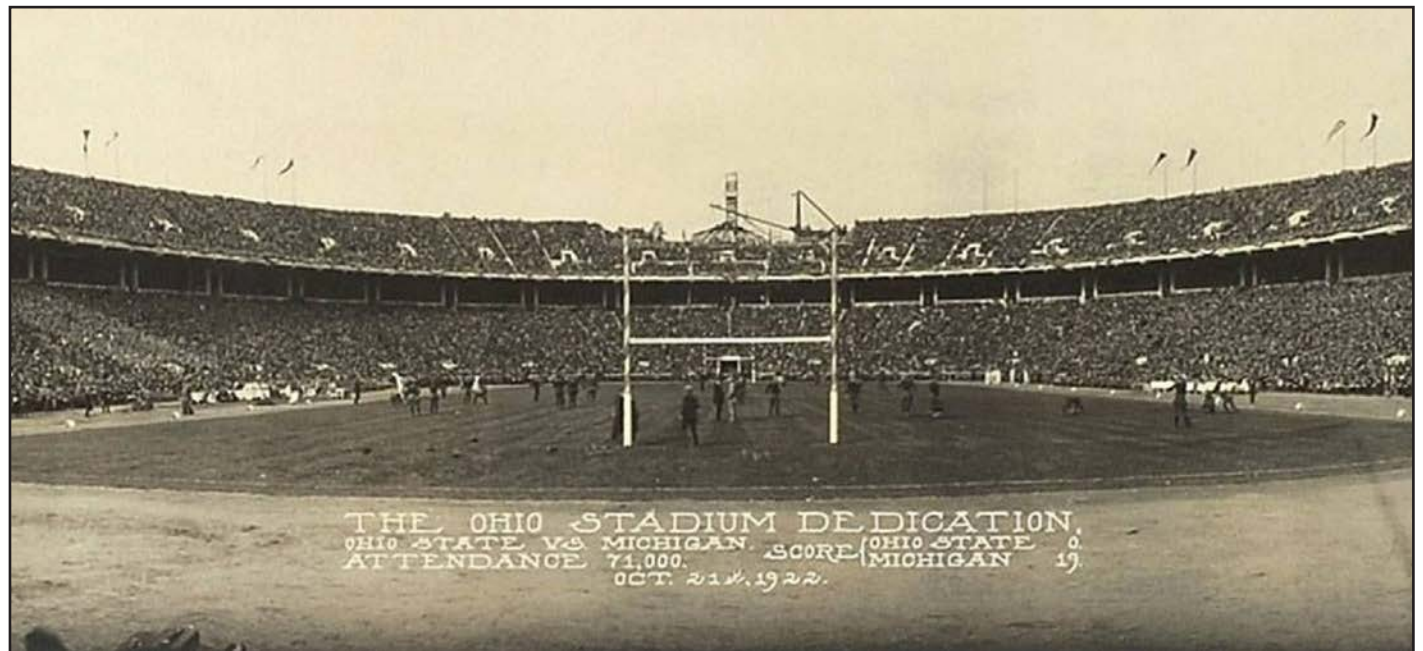
A crowd of approximately 25,000 was in attendance, somewhat disappointing since the new stadium was built to hold more than 60,000 fans. Still, the gathering was the largest crowd ever to witness a football game in the state of Ohio and served as a harbinger of things to come.

It seemed only fitting that Ohio Wesleyan served as the opposition for the first game in the new facility. The Red and Black (they wouldn't become known as the Battling Bishops until 1925) had been the first-ever oppo-



FILE PHOTO

WELCOME TO OHIO STADIUM — A program from Ohio State's famous dedication game, which drew more than 72,500 fans into Ohio Stadium for a game against Michigan on Oct. 21, 1922. The Buckeyes lost 19-0.



FILE PHOTO

BUCKEYE DEDICATION — 72,500 Buckeye fans or more were present at Ohio Stadium's dedication game against Michigan on Oct. 21, 1922. The Buckeyes lost 19-0.

nents in Ohio State program history, losing a 20-14 decision in May 1890, and had served as OSU's season-opening opponents in eight of the final nine years the Buckeyes played at Ohio Field.

With many fans still trying to navigate the stadium's massive concourses on their way to their seats, the Buckeyes won the opening coin toss and elected to defend the south goal with a slight wind at their backs. All of the scoring occurred in the first quarter as OSU tackled Ohio Wesleyan quarterback Alvin Sacksteder in the end zone for a safety, and Harry "Hoge" Workman kicked a field goal for the Buckeyes.

In addition to being the first game in the new stadium, the victory was the first Ohio State football game broadcast by radio. Play-by-play was transmitted by station WEAO (later WOSU) from the Robinson Laboratory, located on the OSU campus about one-third of a mile east of the stadium. The broadcast was handled through the direction of the university's Department of Electrical Engineering.

The five-point margin of victory against Ohio Wesleyan was considerably smaller than expected — it was Ohio State's 20th consecutive win in the series — but longtime head coach John Wilce might have been saving some of his best offensive plays for the stadium dedication game scheduled for two weeks later against Michigan.

Among those in the stands for the inaugural Ohio Stadium game were Michigan head coach Fielding Yost as well as team captain Paul Goebel and quarterback Irwin Uteritz. Such a thing would be unheard of these days since the Wolverines were also playing a game that same day, a home contest against Case. But Yost obviously knew what he was doing as his team rolled to a 48-0 win against Case at Ferry Field in Ann Arbor.

In another strange quirk, the Ohio State marching band did not perform at the stadium's first game even though the band from Ohio Wesleyan made the trip from Delaware and did perform.

The OSU band put on its first Ohio Stadium

halftime show the following week during a 14-0 win against Oberlin. Halfback Wilmer Isabel earned the distinction of tallying the stadium's first touchdown, scoring on a 1-yard plunge early in the fourth quarter. Workman scored the other TD and kicked each of the extra points to account for the final score.

Michigan assistant coach George Little was among the estimated crowd of about 17,000 to watch the Buckeyes beat the Yeomen. Yost, as well as his captain and quarterback, were in Nashville, where the Wolverines played a powerful Vanderbilt team to a scoreless tie. It would be the only blemish on either team's 1922 record. Michigan finished with a 6-0-1 mark and outscored the opposition by a 183-13 margin, while the Commodores were 8-0-1 and totaled 177 points to only 16 for their opponents.

Dedication Game Sellout

After an opening-day crowd of 25,000, a figure that dwindled by roughly one-third the following week, Ohio State officials including Thompson, French and athletic director Lynn St. John were understandably nervous as the official dedication game against Michigan drew near. After all, those men and a handful of others had pushed for construction of a large stadium to accommodate attendance of up to 65,000 spectators while project critics argued the facility would never come close to those kinds of crowds.

Thompson, French and St. John needn't have worried, however. The largest crowd ever to watch a football game in the Midwest found its way into Ohio Stadium on Oct. 21, 1922, to watch the university officially dedicate the new facility.

Attendance was announced at 72,500 although there were thousands more inside the Horseshoe. Many fans unable to secure tickets for the sold-out game simply forced their way through a fence at the south end of the stadium and watched the game from behind the end zone.

Pregame festivities included a parade, the introduction of several luminaries includ-

ing more than 30 former Ohio State team captains, and enough cannon fire to briefly shroud the playing field in bluish-gray smoke, delaying the start of the game by several minutes. Both the OSU and Michigan marching bands performed before the game and at halftime, and residents said they could hear the festivities from several miles away.

About the only disappointment came from the game itself as the Buckeyes dropped a 19-0 decision to the Wolverines, breaking their modest three-game win streak in the series.

Michigan scored in each quarter with Goebel and halfback Harry Kipke scoring all the points. In addition to scoring a touchdown, Kipke kept the Buckeyes pinned deep in their own territory most of the afternoon with his pinpoint punting. The closest Ohio State came to scoring came in the third quarter, but a 69-yard drive fizzled when the Buckeyes turned the ball over on downs at the Michigan 4.

Despite the loss, stadium proponents felt vindicated by the size of the crowd, with St. John remarking that he easily could have sold 100,000 tickets to the game.

Unfortunately, the Buckeyes would go on to lose each of their final two home games that season in front of more modest crowds. They dropped a 14-9 decision to conference rival Chicago on Nov. 11 and a week later were on the losing end of a 12-9 final score against Iowa. Neither crowd topped the 25,000 mark, and Ohio State finished its first season at Ohio Stadium with a five-game total attendance of 162,500. That computed to an average of 32,500 per game, but dropping the dedication game crowd out of the equation decreased the season average to 22,500.

Making matters worse was the fact that the team had experienced its first losing season in 24 years. It was a stark contrast to the final years at Ohio Field, where the Buckeyes had won 27 times in their last 32 games. The 1922 season was also the first in seven years that saw no OSU player earn either all-conference or All-America honors.

The cold, hard fact was that the new

100 YEARS OF OHIO STADIUM

stadium had little effect upon the fortunes of the football program. The Buckeyes seriously challenged for the Western Conference championship only once during Ohio Stadium's first decade, a period that saw the end of one coaching era and the beginning of another.

But that didn't mean there weren't other memorable games at the Horseshoe during that time.

Growing Pains

The 1924 season resulted in a third straight losing record for the Buckeyes, the first and only time that has happened in the 132-year history of the program.

That year, among the six games played at Ohio Stadium, was a Nov. 1 game against in-state rival Wooster College. It was the 300th game in program history and was expected to be an easy win for the Buckeyes. The teams hadn't played one another since 1909 when the Fighting Scots were on the receiving end of a 7-0 spanking at Ohio Field.

But Ohio State continually made mistakes that cost them scoring opportunities. Still, a second-quarter touchdown run from halfback Myles Clark looked as if it would hold up until Wooster scored late in the final period to forge a 7-7 tie. It remains the most recent game against in-state competition that the Buckeyes didn't win.

Later during that 1924 season, the university invited the members of the 1890 football team for a special halftime ceremony at the homecoming game against Michigan. Seven members of that inaugural team attended – quarterback Charles Foulk, fullback Dave Hegler, lineman Herbert Johnston,

center Jesse Lee Jones, guard Paul Lincoln, halfback Charles "Caesar" Morrey and tackle Hamilton Richardson – and each received long overdue varsity letters.

The Varsity "O" Association had been formed in 1903 and that year began awarding varsity letters as well as maintaining a list of letter winners. In 1924, the association decided to begin recognizing athletes from before 1903, and they chose to begin the commemorative process with the 1890 football team.

Somehow, though, the names of Hegler, Johnston and Jones are not listed in the official Ohio State Football Media Guide among all-time letter winners. That might be forgivable in the case of Hegler or Johnston, among the final players added to the 1890 roster. But the omission of Jones is a glaring one. Not only was he captain of the 1890 team that defeated Ohio Wesleyan in the program's inaugural game, but there has been historical data uncovered in recent years to indicate that perhaps Jones was the real head coach of that team, and not Alexander S. Lilley, who is given credit for being the first head coach in program history.

It was Jones who reportedly assembled most of the roster in the spring of 1890, and he was the one who collected the princely sum of \$6 from his teammates to make what could be considered the first official purchase by an Ohio State athletic entity – a regulation football that had to be ordered from a sports equipment manufacturer in Chicago.

Home attendance fluctuated wildly through the stadium's first decade, but important games against big-name competition still brought fans to the Horseshoe in record

numbers. 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 at the dedication game, 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.

On Oct. 20, 1928, Ohio State finally got to celebrate a victory against Michigan in the Horseshoe. The 19-7 win broke a six-game losing streak to the Wolverines and drew a season-high crowd of 72,439.

However, a few weeks later at the final home game of the 1928 season, only 10,029 showed up to watch a 39-0 rout of Muskingum College. It was the lowest attendance at a game at Ohio Stadium until fans were barred from attending games during the COVID-ravaged 2020 season. The win against Muskingum also marked the final home game for Wilce, who resigned after 16 seasons and a record of 78-33-9.

Taking over the program was Sam Willaman, who had starred at halfback, fullback and end for the Buckeyes from 1911-13. Willaman began his college coaching career at Iowa State, but Wilce lured him back to his alma mater in 1926 as his hand-picked successor.

One of Willaman's first signature wins

came during the 1930 season opener against Mount Union. The OSU head coach had spent most of the offseason implementing significant changes in his offensive attack, intent upon scrapping his triple-option attack for the wingback formation, a speed-based attack first employed by legendary coach Glenn "Pop" Warner, who won four national championships – three at Pittsburgh and one at Stanford. Willaman switched two-time All-America end Wesley Fesler to a fullback position while senior Dick Larkins moved from tackle to end and junior Stuart Holcomb went from fullback to halfback.

The result was a 59-0 victory against the Purple Raiders during which eight different players scored touchdowns and Ohio State rolled up 718 yards on the ground, a single-game program record that still stands.

Unfortunately, with the United States in full grip of the Great Depression, a crowd of only about 16,000 was on hand at Ohio Stadium to witness the game against Mount Union.

Throughout its first decade, the Horseshoe routinely averaged around 32,500 fans per contest. Those numbers would remain fairly stagnant over the following decade, leading some to wonder if Ohio Stadium was indeed larger than it needed to be. But there were marquee games to come against big-name opponents, many of which drew capacity crowds and led university officials to believe perhaps the Horseshoe still wasn't big enough.

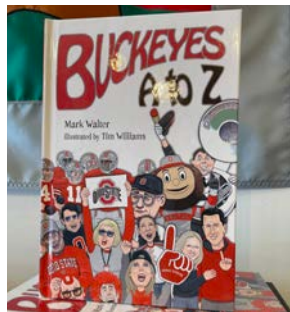
**GAME DAY
READY?
No worries...
We can get you there.**

RECEIVE **10% OFF** ALL OSU PRODUCTS.*
Mention code BuckeyePride22 at checkout.



Visit us at
**4567 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43214**
or shop online @
FLAGLADYUSA.COM

*Please note some products are in store only



Joseph Makes Nebraska History As Interim Hire

While Nebraska interim head coach Mickey Joseph stepped into an adverse situation as the temporary head of the Cornhusker football program, following Scott Frost's dismissal on Sept. 11, he did so in historic fashion.

"It's about Nebraska football, it's bigger than me," Joseph said. "I haven't really thought about that because I've been a Black football coach all of my life. I'm more concerned about the boys and getting the boys ready to play on Saturday."

Joseph's first game was a memorable one, as the Cornhuskers and Sooners reignited their fierce rivalry from the days of the Big Eight. Looking to bounce back from a difficult loss to Oklahoma last season, Nebraska fell 49-14 to their counterparts to the south.

Like Frost, Joseph was a former quarterback for the Cornhuskers during his playing days and helped Nebraska to two Big Eight titles. Joseph has coached at the college level since 1999, getting his start with Tulane as a graduate assistant. Since then, Joseph has had numerous stops at the college level, including Grambling State, Louisiana Tech and LSU.

He also has prior head coaching experience, serving at the helm of the NAIA-level

Langston University program from 2011-12, where he led the Lions to a 13-7 record.

Board of Regents Discusses UCLA's Move to Big Ten

While UCLA, along with fellow Los Angeles-based university USC, made its intention to join the Big Ten clear in June, the University of California board of regents has expressed hesitancy in regard to the landscape-changing move.

The UC board of regents holds governing power over the state's university system that includes UCLA. According to the UC board of regents meeting agenda, the board was planning to meet on Sept. 22 at 10 a.m. for a discussion titled "UCLA Big Ten Membership - Potential Legal Issues and Financial Impacts."

Since UCLA's announcement to join the Big Ten, the UC board of regents has made it clear that it has the power to block the move in order to protect the interests of the entire system, which includes the University of California, a Pac-12 member.

"For this particular matter, the regents could say, 'We want to act and therefore we do not want the (UC) president or the (campus) chancellors to act in this area,' and simply assert that," UC board of regents general counsel Charles Robinson told The (San Jose) Mercury News on Sept. 12.

This reluctance has been met matched by California governor Gavin Newsom, who demanded an explanation from UCLA following the announced move to the Big Ten.

"UCLA must clearly explain to the public how this deal will improve the experience for all its student-athletes, will honor its century-old partnership with UC Berkeley and will preserve the histories, rivalries and traditions that enrich our communities," Newsom told The Los Angeles Times on July 20.

Injuries Plague Illinois, Iowa

The Big Ten West has already seen several surprises and a pair of contenders vying for the division crown received worrying injury news over the past week.

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz announced on Sept. 13 that cornerback Jermari Harris, who missed the Hawkeyes' first two games while recovering from an undisclosed medical procedure, would miss the remainder of the campaign. Harris was a key piece of the Hawkeyes' secondary last season after being thrust into a starting role due to injury. He collected 34 tackles, eight pass breakups and four interceptions in 2021.

Illinois also had a defensive starter's season cut short due to injury. Fifth-year outside

BIG 2022 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Indiana	1	0	1.000	3	0	1.000
Penn State	1	0	1.000	3	0	1.000
Maryland	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Michigan	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Ohio State	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Rutgers	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Michigan State	0	0	1.000	2	1	.667

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Northwestern	1	0	1.000	1	2	.500
Minnesota	0	0	0.000	3	0	1.000
Iowa	0	0	0.000	2	1	.667
Wisconsin	0	0	0.000	2	1	.667
Illinois	0	1	0.000	2	1	.667
Purdue	0	1	0.000	1	2	.333
Nebraska	0	1	0.000	1	2	.333

Sept. 17 Games

Southern Illinois 31, Northwestern 24
Michigan 59, UConn 0
Syracuse 32, Purdue 29
Oklahoma 49, Nebraska 14
Indiana 33, Western Kentucky 30 (OT)
Rutgers 16, Temple 14
Wisconsin 66, New Mexico St. 7
Penn State 41, Auburn 12
Minnesota 49, Colorado 7
Ohio State 77, Toledo 21
Iowa 27, Nevada 0
Maryland 34, SMU 27
Washington 39, Michigan State 28

Sept. 22 Game

Chattanooga at Illinois, 8:30 p.m.

Sept. 24 Games

Maryland at Michigan, noon
Central Michigan at Penn State, noon
Indiana at Cincinnati, TBD
Minnesota at Michigan State, 3:30 p.m.
Iowa at Rutgers, 7 p.m.
Miami (Ohio) at Northwestern, 7:30 p.m.
Wisconsin at Ohio State, 7:30 p.m.
Florida Atlantic at Purdue, 7:30 p.m.

linebacker Ezekiel Holmes will undergo season-ending knee surgery after suffering an injury to his right knee during the Fighting Illini's 24-3 win over Virginia on Sept. 10. Holmes started in each of Illinois' first three games this season, amassing three tackles.

"The prognosis is a little bit longer but is one the doctors feel very confident about once the procedure is done and the rehab that takes place," Illini head coach Bret Bielema said. "I've reached out to Zeke every

BIG TEN NOTES Jack Emerson

Joseph became the first Black head coach of any varsity sport at the University of Nebraska upon his elevation within the Cornhusker football program. While Joseph made history in his new role, he emphasized that his goal was to prepare his players the best he could for Nebraska's marquee matchup with No. 6 Oklahoma on Sept. 17.

Ohio State Fans!



Weekly September through November
Five times from January through mid-March
Biweekly mid-March through mid-May
Monthly December, June through August

Some Ohio State sports fans need more information on the Buckeyes than they can find in their local newspaper. Buckeye Sports Bulletin is for those fans. By subscribing to Buckeye Sports Bulletin, they receive 24 issues a year featuring:



- In-depth coverage of all Ohio State sports
- The latest comments from coaches and players
- The latest in recruiting information
- Personality profiles
- Features on former Buckeye greats
- Rosters, schedules, statistics, photos
- Check us out on the Web at www.BuckeyeSports.com

- 1 Year, \$104.95
- 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$174.95
- 2 Years, \$175.95
- 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$299.95

I want to know more about Ohio State sports. I am enclosing \$ _____

Money Order Check MasterCard Visa Discover Amer. Express

Credit Card # and Exp. Date _____

Credit Card Orders Accepted 24 Hours A Day
Call (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

Mail To: **Buckeye Sports Bulletin**
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
www.BuckeyeSports.com

TOPSOIL

VERY RICH PULVERIZED
OR UNPULVERIZED
"SOIL PLUS"

BLENDED SOIL WITH SAND and ORGANIC COMPOST
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
CRUSHED LIMESTONE, WASHED SAND & GRAVEL

ANY SIZE LOAD • IMMEDIATE DELIVERY ANYWHERE

Buy Where the Professionals Do • Delivered on Time - Every Time, It Doesn't Cost Any More!
Columbus' Largest

JONES FUEL COMPANY

350 Frank Road • 443-4611 • 1-800-TOPSOIL
www.jonestopsoil.com

BIG TEN NOTES

day since then. It's one of those tough things because he was really starting to play some good football. As we all know, this sport is a violent sport. Prayers and thoughts with Zeke. I think it should be a full recovery but we probably, unfortunately, won't see him until next fall."

Hawkeyes Stick With Struggling Petras

Entering Iowa's week-three matchup with Nevada, the Hawkeye offense had accounted for only 10 total points and one touchdown. A key piece of those early struggles had been third-year starting quarterback Spencer Petras, who has gotten off to a slow start to the season.

Petras had completed just 45.1 percent of his attempts for 201 yards, two interceptions and no touchdowns. With backup Alex Padilla waiting in the wings, Ferentz has emphasized that Petras had not been supported by his offense well enough to truly evaluate his play.

"We obviously spent a lot of time looking at it, considering it, talking about it," Ferentz said on Sept. 13. "It's really tough to give an honest evaluation right now. I've talked to Alex about the same thing. No matter who's in there right now, we've got some challenges, and we've got to work through those and try to improve in those, and then we'll have a fairer way to assess."

While pressure continued to mount around Petras and Hawkeyes' offensive coordinator Brian Ferentz, Petras reaffirmed that his focus was locked in on improving offensively against Nevada.

"I know what's out there, and I don't give

a s-t," Petras said on Sept. 13. "My focus is on my own game and the game of football."

As Petras was given another week to prove that he belongs in the starting job, he completed 14 of 26 pass attempts for 175 yards and a touchdown in Iowa's 27-0 win over Nevada. The Hawkeyes' two first-quarter touchdowns against the Wolfpack doubled their previous touchdown output on the season.

Second-Ranked Nebraska WVB Picks Up First Loss

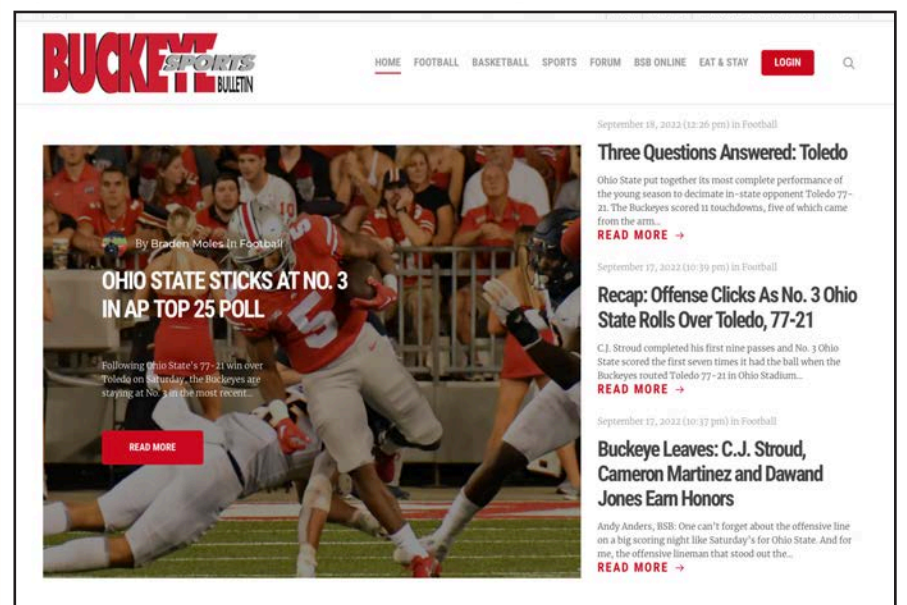
After a 7-0 start to the season, the No. 2-ranked Nebraska women's volleyball team was knocked down a peg after a 3-1 loss to No. 9 Stanford on Sept. 13.

The Cornhuskers entered the season as the No. 1 team in the country, according to the American Volleyball Coaches Association, and proved they deserved that top-ranked mark after ripping off seven-straight wins, including a five-set thriller over in-state rival No. 17 Creighton on Sept. 7. Nebraska was unable to defend its undefeated record and home court against the Cardinal, though, who quickly jumped out to a 2-0 lead after winning a pair of tight sets (27-25, 25-22).

Nebraska battled back in the third set, picking up a 25-19 victory that was aided by a 5-0 run to take a 15-13 lead. Although the Cornhuskers were able to pick up the set win, they could not parlay that into any sort of momentum as the Cardinal battled to a 27-25 win in the final set to hand Nebraska its first loss of the season.

The Cardinal were led by senior opposite hitter Kendall Kipp, who produced a game-best 15 kills on the evening.

SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING ON BUCKEYESPORTS.COM Free To Print Subscribers



Buckeye Sports Bulletin has expanded its online presence to a full-service website to complement the 24 annual print editions. Access to BuckeyeSports.com is free to all print subscribers and includes numerous great features like:

- Daily features, analysis and breaking news stories
- A fan forum where readers can interact with the BSB staff and other subscribers while catching up on the latest Buckeye news
- Rosters, scholarship charts, schedules and commit lists for the football team to keep up to date with the Buckeyes
- Electronic versions of the BSB print editions
- The BSB Quickly archive

To sign up for this free service send an email to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com and we will send you easy-to-follow instructions on how to enjoy reading Buckeye Sports Bulletin online

Shade RESTAURANTS

- NFL Ticket
- So Many HD, Flat-Screen TVs!
- Friendliest Staff
- GREAT Food

Shade on the Canal
19 S. High St.
Canal Winchester
614-837-9873

Shade on 30th St.
850 S. 30th St.
Heath
740-788-9287

Shade on State St.
994 E. State St.
Athens
740-566-1009

Top Prospects Expected Against Wisconsin

After more than 70 visitors graced Ohio Stadium for Ohio State's season opener against Notre Dame, any successive recruiting weekends for the Buckeyes feel tame in comparison. Even so, Ohio State will host a number of high-profile recruits – both committed and uncommitted – when the Buckeyes kick off against Wisconsin at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 24.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Braden Moles

Beginning with the class of 2023, Ohio State will host two uncommitted prospects: Tampa (Fla.) Berkley Prep five-star defensive end Keon Keeley (6-6, 242) and Suwanee (Fla.) North Gwinnett four-star defensive lineman Kayden McDonald (6-3, 310).

Keeley is the No. 9 overall prospect and No. 1 defensive end in the class, and he is coming off a visit to Ohio State just a few short weeks ago against Notre Dame, indicating that there is serious interest in Ohio State.

McDonald is the No. 299 overall prospect and No. 44 defensive lineman in the class, and he holds additional offers from Clemson, Florida, Michigan and Oklahoma, among others.

McDonald has already taken official visits to Florida over the summer and Michigan on Sept. 10 and will visit Ohio State and Clemson before making his college decision

on Oct. 31. The game against Wisconsin will be McDonald's first trip to Ohio State.

Committed visitors for the Buckeyes against the Badgers include Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star running back Mark Fletcher (6-1, 225); West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star safety Malik Hartford (6-3, 175); Cocoa, Fla., four-star safety Cedrick Hawkins (6-0, 175); Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage five-star wide receiver Brandon Inniss (6-0, 190); Findlay, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Luke Montgomery (6-5, 280); Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne four-star offensive lineman Joshua Padilla (6-4, 280); Zephyrhills (Fla.) Wiregrass Ranch four-star wide receiver Bryson Rodgers (6-1, 175); Dublin (Ohio) Coffman three-star defensive lineman Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260); and Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star wide receiver Carnell Tate (6-2, 185).

Moving on to the 2024 class, several priority targets will be in attendance for Ohio State. This includes New Haven, Ind., four-star wide receiver Mylan Graham (6-0, 170); New Palestine, Ind., four-star offensive lineman Ian Moore (6-5, 295); Chicago (Ill.) St. Ignatius five-star defensive lineman Justin Scott (6-5, 310); Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star athlete Garrett Stover (6-2, 195); and cornerback Bryce West (5-11, 177) and tight end Damarion Witten (6-4, 215), both four-star prospects from Cleveland Glenville.

Ohio State will also host a pair of prospects from the 2025 class in Cleveland Heights running back Marquise Davis (6-0, 190) and Elmhurst (Ill.) York quarterback Colton Gumino (6-0, 165). Davis is seeking an offer from Ohio State and has been

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

offered by Iowa State, Kentucky, Minnesota and Pittsburgh, while Gumino does not hold a Power Five offer but is being recruited by several notable schools in addition to Ohio State, including Michigan, Notre Dame, Purdue, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

More visitors could be added or removed by the time the game kicks off, so for the latest information, check BuckeyeSports.com.

OT Okunlola Considering Visit

With Montgomery, Padilla, Middletown (Ohio) Lakota East four-star offensive lineman Austin Siereveld (6-5, 320) and Greenwich (Conn.) Brunswick School three-star offensive tackle Miles Walker (6-6, 285) already in the fold in 2023, Ohio State is likely done fishing for offensive linemen in the class.

That is, unless the Buckeyes can pull in one of the biggest remaining catches in this cycle. Brockton (Mass.) Thayer Academy five-star offensive tackle Samson Okunlola is the top uncommitted tackle prospect in the 2023 class, and though Ohio State appeared to have fallen off the radar for Okunlola, he indicated recently that the Buckeyes may not be out of it.

Responding to a text from Eleven Warriors' Garrick Hodge asking if Okunlola might consider visiting Ohio State this fall, Okunlola responded, "I might."

While not necessarily a glowing affirmative that the Buckeyes will see Okunlola for an upcoming game, it doesn't entirely shut the door on Ohio State making a move for the five-star tackle. The other top schools for Okunlola are Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Miami (Fla.) and Michigan State, with the Hurricanes believed to be the leader in his recruitment.

Okunlola is the No. 15 overall prospect and No. 3 offensive tackle in the class and has yet to make a visit to Ohio State, but if the Buckeyes can get him on campus, it would give them at least a shot at getting a fifth prospect on the offensive line for this cycle.

OT Pringle Lists OSU In Top 10

One of the nation's top offensive tackles

in 2024 is considering Ohio State among his top schools. Dorchester (S.C.) Woodland four-star offensive tackle Kam Pringle (6-7, 330) listed the Buckeyes among his top 10 schools, along with Auburn, Clemson, Florida, Georgia, LSU, N.C. State, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

Pringle is the No. 58 overall prospect and No. 2 offensive tackle in the class and one of just three tackles offered by Ohio State in 2024, along with West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial four-star Guerby Lambert (6-6, 280) and Roswell (Ga.) Centennial four-star Daniel Calhoun (6-6, 350).

"With Ohio State, it really started with (Mike) Solenne, a graduate assistant. He was at Florida when they started recruiting me, and he saw me when I camped there. Coach (Justin) Frye got there, and I went up there and spent time with him and Coach (Ryan) Day," Pringle said. "I spent a couple of days around Ohio State when I visited, and I really enjoyed it. The atmosphere is good, and I really like the people."

Pringle told Eleven Warriors that Frye was one of the first coaches to reach out to him on Sept. 1, the first day that coaches were allowed to directly contact recruits.

"He told me they're really excited about the future," Pringle said.

Pair Of Visits Set For Michigan Game

The Game is more than two months away, but with a big matchup – perhaps even a top-five contest – brewing, potential visitors are already getting their ducks in a row to be in Ohio Stadium for the contest.

A pair of prospects – one each in the 2023 and 2024 classes – recently announced that they will be in attendance for the game, with Jacksonville (Fla.) Westside four-star defensive lineman Jordan Hall (6-5, 300) in 2023 and Stafford (Va.) Mountain View four-star linebacker Kristopher Jones (6-2, 220) in 2024 each locking in their visits since BSB last went to press.

Hall – the No. 123 overall prospect and No. 16 defensive lineman in the class – is one of the few targets remaining for Ohio State in this cycle, though he is likely being recruited behind the trio of five-star defen-

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL TICKETS!

We have your seats to the season's hottest action!



For Your Ticket Connection Call:

DREAM SEATS
YOUR TOTAL TICKET SOURCE
1611 W. FIFTH AVE., COLUMBUS, OH 43212
(614) 340-8989
www.dreamseats.com

Home & Away Games!

All NCAA & NFL Games in Stock!

all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events ★ all cities ★ all the time ★ all events

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.

sive ends in Keeley, Damon Wilson (6-4, 230) of Venice, Fla., and Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco's Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265).

He holds additional offers from Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Florida State and Georgia, among others, and his scouting report indicates that he would be a solid addition for Ohio State's class if the Buckeyes were to miss out on their other top three defensive linemen.

"He's a big-framed defensive lineman that has flashed some elite get off," said 247Sports recruiting analyst Andrew Ivins. "By far one of the most promising prospects to ever come out of Jacksonville Westside. He looks like a man amongst boys next to his teammates when down in a three- or four-point stance, and he shoots his way into the backfield with a quick first step.

"He does a nice job of shifting his weight as he works east to west and has shown that he can squeeze his way through gaps to make a stop. He wins more times than not on Friday nights by simply overwhelming opposing blockers with his sheer mass and power."

Hall told On3 Sports that he had planned to commit within the past several weeks but opted to hold off on his commitment and enjoy being recruited by different schools. Ohio State is not viewed as one of

the favorites to land Hall, but he has plenty of positive things to say about the Buckeyes.

"You see the guys they produce at just any position on the defensive line," Hall told On3 Sports. "Haskell Garrett, one of the good defensive linemen they produced, Nick and Joey (Bosa), Chase Young. Three studs came out of there back-to-back-to-back. Coach (Larry) Johnson is probably one of the top defensive line coaches in college football, and he knows what he's doing. He connects with his players, he's very efficient, and he's a technician."

Ohio State likely has a better shot at Jones, who camped with the Buckeyes over the summer and earned his official offer. Since receiving the offer, Jones has had more complimentary things to say about Ohio State's defense.

"Ohio State's defense is amazing," Jones said. "I watched the Notre Dame and Ohio State game, and just seeing what Coach (Jim) Knowles has done with the linebackers and the defense is really cool, and it's definitely a defense I see myself playing in."

Jones, who is ranked the No. 102 overall prospect and No. 7 linebacker in the class, displays the versatility of a player who would thrive under Knowles. A two-

Continued On Page 30



FILE PHOTO

KINGMAKER — Ohio State defensive line coach Larry Johnson has forged a reputation as a top-tier recruiter and developer of NFL-level talent.

12 WEEKS 12 WINNERS

EVERY WEEK IS A NEW CHANCE TO WIN!!!

BUCKEYE BOWL GAME GIVEAWAY

For contest rules & regulations visit www.roosterswings.com

SCAN HERE TO
REGISTER TO WIN!



*AND OTHER
WEEKLY PRIZES



Official Wing Sponsor of Ohio State Athletics

Buckeyes Pursuing Five-Star Defensive Ends

Continued From Page 29

way player at linebacker and running back for Mountain View, Jones finished with 142 tackles (26 for loss) and 10 sacks last season.

"He's an athletic, instinctual player who brings a physical element to defense," said 247Sports recruiting analyst Brian Dohn. "He takes on blocks and fills run gaps from his SAM position in Mountain View's defense and is quick to diagnose and find ball carriers in traffic. He shows the ability to run down the line of scrimmage and make plays at the numbers, and can blitz off edge."

Keeley Speaks On Ohio State

Keeley, despite being one of the top remaining uncommitted prospects in the class, has been able to keep his recruitment relatively quiet, though he was likely aided in that by being committed to Notre Dame for the majority of his time as a recruit.

Following his visit to Ohio State for the season opener against Notre Dame, he had little to say about the trip, though he's since opened up about his top three schools of Alabama, Florida and Ohio State.

"I could see myself at each of the schools," Keeley told On3 Sports. "They're all great universities, and I feel like they all have strengths in different areas and they're all great areas. Just being able to sort out those things will help me decide."

As for his trip to Ohio State, Keeley spoke highly of the experience.

"Just the gameday atmosphere and the environment and seeing how the players prepare before the game, but also how the fans really love Ohio State football," Keeley said of what impressed him. "It's amazing."

As is the case with most defensive ends being recruited to Ohio State, Johnson is leading the way, and he's been able to forge a strong relationship with Keeley.

"He lays out the plan for you and lets you know that you can succeed if you follow the process and dream big," Keeley said. "If you believe it, you could see it happen."

As mentioned Keeley is expected to be back in Columbus for Ohio State's game against Wisconsin on Sept. 24.

Johnson Key In Wilson's Recruitment

Much like Keeley, Wilson – one of the three five-star defensive ends being recruited by Ohio State – has kept his recruitment close to the vest, with interviews few and far between for one of the top remaining prospects in the 2023 class.

He did open up, however, in a recent interview with On3 Sports, where he revealed that Alabama, Georgia, Miami (Fla.) and Ohio State are his top four schools, with Texas no longer under consideration for the Venice, Fla., native. He has already made official visits to Alabama and Ohio State and is expected to take trips to Georgia and Miami.

As for his connection with Ohio State, Johnson has been at the heart of his recruitment and has made significant strides with Wilson, who said getting to spend time with Johnson and get to know him was one of the highlights of his Sept. 3 visit.

"I think I was in meetings with him for two-to-three hours," Wilson said. "I was just realizing how smart he is and then Knowles, the game plan he has for everybody. It was overall a good trip."

Wilson is also appreciative of the way Johnson goes about recruiting him.

"I do enjoy how he doesn't spam me a lot," Wilson said. "He calls me once a week, maybe. He just checks up on me. I feel like it's organic, it's real and it's not forced on."

As for a timeline, Wilson said he is taking his time with things.

"Now I'm back to taking my time with it," Wilson said. "I felt like I was rushing a little bit, but I realized I don't need to rush anything right now. I'm still taking my time, analyzing everything and just taking the whole view on everything right now."

OSU Issues New Offers

Ohio State has issued three new offers to two different classes since BSB last went to press, including Duncanville, Texas, five-star defensive end Colin Simmons (6-3, 225) and St. Louis Christian Brothers four-star wide receiver Jeremiah McClellan in 2024 and Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star linebacker Nasir Wyatt (6-2, 210)

in 2025.

Simmons is the No. 16 overall prospect and No. 2 edge rusher in the 2024 class, and he holds additional offers from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Michigan State, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Texas A&M, among others. He notched 68 tackles and 12 sacks in addition to three forced fumbles in his sophomore season.

McClellan is the No. 204 overall prospect and No. 29 wide receiver in 2024 and holds additional offers from Boston College, Indiana, Iowa, Iowa State, Michigan, Michigan State and Notre Dame, among others. Ohio State already has a built-in connection with McClellan, as Christian Brothers in St. Louis is also the home of fifth-year Ohio State receiver Kamryn Babb and defensive back Cameron Brown.

"It's one of the best schools in the country," McClellan told 247Sports.

Wyatt is further out than McClellan or Simmons, but he's shaping up to be one of the top prospects in the 2025 class. He's already ranked the No. 32 overall recruit and No. 5 defensive end for the cycle, perhaps a result of him finishing with seven tackles for loss in just five games in his freshman season.

In addition to Ohio State, he holds offers from Georgia, Michigan State, Oregon, Tennessee and USC, among others.

"I'm very excited about the offer from Ohio State – this is my dream school," Wyatt told 247Sports. "This is the offer I really

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago — 1987

When Bobby Olive sent some of his high school game films to family friend Billy Hill, Ohio State's co-head athletic trainer, Olive was just hoping Hill could get the Buckeye assistant coaches to give him an assessment of his playing ability.

Olive, a flanker, got his opinion from a "big-time coach" and an offer to join the 1987 Buckeyes as a walk-on.

"He is a pleasant surprise," said quarterbacks and wide receivers coach Tom Lichtenburg. "We saw him on film. Not much, but we liked what we saw and he decided to come to school here."

30 Years Ago — 1992

One of Ohio State's top recruiting prospects in Ohio lived a mere 20 minutes from the university campus.

In fact, Mike Malfatt of Dublin (Ohio) High School was one of the most highly sought-after kicking prospects in the country.

A consistent performer throughout his high school career, Malfatt had a superlative junior year. He connected on 29 of 32 extra-point attempts and 6 of 9 field-goal tries, including a 49-yarder, and punted for nearly a 40-yard average.

"Mike is one of the better combination punter/kickers in the Midwest," reported the Ohio Football Recruiting News. "He has excellent size and a very strong leg. He should be one of the top recruited kickers in the country this season."

25 Years Ago — 1997

Ohio State welcomed a group of about 20 prospects in for the Arizona game on Sept. 20.

Perhaps the top name on the list was Harrodsburg, Ky., defensive lineman Julius Yeast, a teammate of prep All-American Dennis Johnson, who had attended OSU's game against Bowling Green a week earlier.

Yeast (6-5, 240, 4.6) was one of the top prospects in the Southeast. Recruiting publications had him rated highly at both defensive end and tight end. He had notched 103 tackles, 15 sacks and 18 tackles for loss for Harrodsburg the previous season and also had three interceptions, including one he returned for a touchdown.

"We had a nice time up there," said Yeast's father, Larry. "Right now he is letting me do a lot of the lead work and he is concentrating on his season."

20 Years Ago — 2002

BSB's Gary Housteau spoke with St. Henry, Ohio, coach Tim Boeckman regarding the injury suffered by his son, quarterback and OSU verbal Todd Boeckman.

According to the coach, Todd Boeckman visited with OSU orthopedic consultant Dr. Chris Kaeding. Kaeding diagnosed the injury, suffered in Boeckman's Sept. 6 game, as a sprain to the medial collateral ligament in his left knee. There was, however, no tear to the ligament.

"In following Todd and watching him coming up through junior high, we really felt that he was going to be an excellent football player for us," the elder Boeckman said.

"He's now currently been a four-year starter, and he was very fortunate as a freshman to be a part of the team that went to the state finals," he continued. "Probably one of the biggest keys there was he was very well accepted by his teammates, and he had a chance to play in the state championship as a freshman."

15 Years Ago — 2007

It appeared only a matter of time before the Buckeyes landed their second commitment for their class of 2009.

On Sept. 1, the day colleges were allowed to formally offer scholarships to high school juniors, Ohio State extended two offers to prospects who were viewed as having a surefire future as Buckeyes. One of them, Louisville (Ky.) Trinity linebacker Jordan Whiting, a 6-1, 227-pound prospect, issued his verbal commitment to head coach Jim Tressel that same day.

The other offer went to linebacker/tailback Storm Klein, a 6-3, 220-pounder from Newark (Ohio) Licking Valley who had long been viewed as an OSU lean.

The pressure was then on Klein to join his friend Whiting at OSU – and that decision could have come at any time, apparently.

"I met (Whiting) at an Ohio State camp," Klein told BSB. "Ever since then, he's come over, he's stayed the night a couple of times. He's a cool kid. We've been talking."

10 Years Ago — 2012

Billy Price was a brutish defensive lineman from Austintown (Ohio) Fitch whose love affair with the weight room began long before he issued his verbal commitment to the Ohio State football program.

If that description didn't sound familiar right away, there were

plenty of people from his hometown who would quickly clear it up. Price could be the next John Simon.

Price had heard that comparison to Simon since starting for the Falcons as a sophomore. Though Price saw plenty of differences from Simon in the way he played the game, the comparison was simply too flattering to refute. And he certainly wouldn't have minded following in Simon's footsteps, even if it was at a slightly different position.

"The things he has accomplished at Ohio State is the exact way I want to continue my career," Price told BSB. "My goal is to make sure I am getting playing time my freshman year and to make sure I am right there with anybody. To do that at a prestigious university like Ohio State, that would be really special."

Five Years Ago — 2017

Jackson Carman out of Fairfield, Ohio, and Tyreke Smith from Cleveland Heights were Ohio State's top two priorities as far as in-state recruits were concerned. The two had been on the OSU campus a number of times throughout their recruitment, but OSU's game against Penn State on Oct. 28 marked the only time both would be in Columbus while taking official visits.

Roughly one week after it was announced that Smith, a four-star defensive end, had scheduled his official visit for when the Buckeyes hosted the Nittany Lions, Carman, a five-star offensive tackle, told recruiting analyst Bill Greene he would be on hand for the big game as well.

One Year Ago — 2021

Ohio State's performance in the 35-28 loss to Oregon on Sept. 11 led to questions about Ohio State's defense and defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs.

Recruiting analyst Jeremy Birmingham said that regardless of what happened with Coombs' future, simply seeing Ohio State look vulnerable on defense could have two different effects, depending on the recruit.

"I think that anytime you're struggling, recruits can see it one of two ways," Birmingham said. "They can see it as a problem that is not going away or they can see it as an opportunity to get on the field faster at a place like Ohio State, which has sort of always been recession-proof when it comes to recruiting."

ASK AN ANALYST

With Garrick Hodge of Eleven Warriors

We're a good ways into the high school football season now, and you've been around Ohio watching games. Who are some prospects - committed or uncommitted - who have stood out?

"Cincinnati Winton Woods four-star cornerback Jermaine Matthews (6-0, 175) has just looked outstanding. His team has gotten off to a very hot start. He had a punt return that I think is one of the better punt returns you'll see all year, making lots of guys miss. He really just shows off his versatility as a defender.

"Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star athlete Garrett Stover (6-2, 195), a linebacker and safety, is also showing how versatile he can be. He's starting at linebacker for Big Walnut and really showed his toughness - he actually was playing with a hurt shoulder in week two and tried to keep playing in week three but had to come out and missed last week. But he's hoping to be back this weekend (Sept. 16). That just kind of shows what a grinder he is, that he was still able to be successful and play through that, even though he had to end up missing a week because of it.

"There are a lot of Ohio prospects that have turned out really good. You've got guys like Cleveland Glenville four-star tight end Damarion Witten (6-4, 215) in the 2024 class, who just recently picked up an offer from Ohio State. He was a guy that camped at Ohio State in June and was getting a lot of looks and wasn't really sure when exactly that offer would come, but it came a few days after the Notre Dame visit. Right as he was coming out of the tunnel, I saw him interacting with Coach (Kevin) Wilson. It just kind of seemed like a moment like, 'Yeah this seems like it's going to happen sooner rather than later.' But I think that he's an advanced blocker for his age, and he keeps getting better in the passing game."

As a whole, how do you feel about the talent level in Ohio in the 2024 class after a somewhat down cycle in 2023?

"I'd say it's probably one of the deeper classes in Ohio in a while, for sure. Not just from an Ohio State-caliber talent standpoint, but I think they're going to put a lot of players at Power Five schools or even Group of Five schools. Ohio, while it may not be a Texas, Florida or California recruiting hotbed, it's always been a very strong state in terms of football talent. I think that 2024 is certainly one of Ohio's best classes.

"There could be upwards to anywhere between seven to 11 players that could be Ohio State-caliber players. Obviously, Ohio State cleans up Ohio for the most part, so when you have a talent-rich pool like that, it's always a nice trump card to have in your pocket for when you look ahead to what the 2024 class may look like."

Recruits have now gotten to see Ohio State's defense on several occasions. What impact do you think that will have on recruiting now that prospects can see the new scheme in action?

"I think it's going to have a tremendous impact. I've talked with a plethora of recruits since that Notre Dame game, and most of them are raving about how they could see themselves in (defensive coordinator) Jim Knowles' scheme and how they were so impressed with how they deploy guys and how they move them around and how there's no just one set spot for them to play. I just think a lot of them were kind of blown away by how the first couple of games have gone. I think at least five guys have said, 'Yeah, I could see myself playing in that defense. I tried to envision myself at that spot that I was being recruited at, and I definitely could see myself playing there.' First impressions aren't always everything, but I think that Jim Knowles' scheme made a great impression on the defensive recruits in person for sure."

Ohio State recently issued an offer to 2024 St. Louis Christian Brothers College wide receiver Jeremiah McClellan (6-1, 185). Who are the biggest targets at wide receiver for Ohio State in that class, and how many might they be looking to take?

"Jeremiah McClellan is another guy that I think they're casting the net out a little bit further for wide receivers. Obviously, the top one is Opa Locka (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep four-star wide receiver Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 185). I think they're in a good spot for him. But we'll have to see how that plays out. If you put a gun to my head and asked me the wide receiver most likely to commit in the nearest future to Ohio State, I would say New Haven, Ind., four-star wide receiver Mylan Graham (6-0, 170). I would say they'll probably take three guys, but if they can get two elite wide receivers - and by elite, I mean two five-star caliber guys - I think there's a possibility that they could take four again, but I would envision that they would be very content taking three."

With the trio of high-profile defensive ends who visited for the Notre Dame game with Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco five-star Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265), Venice (Fla.) four-star Damon Wilson (6-4, 230) and Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley Prep five-star Keon Keeley (6-6, 242), what might the timeline look for each of these guys in terms of making a college decision?

"All of them are pretty mum for the most part, but reading the tea leaves, it seems that Wilson will probably be the first to commit. I wouldn't be surprised if he makes a decision by the end of the month. But he could take it further, who knows? He's the hardest to predict because he talks to the fewest amount of people unless you go interview him in person. But Keon Keeley is probably going to decide before the early signing period, but I don't think it will be too much before that. And I think Matayo will more than likely be a guy that decides pretty close to that signing day."

wanted. I've always liked Ohio State. They have been my favorite school from day one.

"I just like how they develop pass rushers," he continued. "They develop so much talent there, and I love the culture behind the school. I've loved them since I was a kid, and I'm hoping to visit for one of their upcoming games. I've never been before so I'm really excited to get out there."

Day Talks NIL And Recruiting

For better or worse, Name, Image and Likeness is here to stay, and college football programs around the country have not only accepted it, but many have embraced the changes. Also embracing the changes are the players themselves and their families who are benefiting from the newfound NIL money.

Asked on Sept. 13 how relationships between coaches and recruits have changed since NIL began last summer, Day said that a lot has changed.

"I would say for our players who are doing great in NIL, for them, it's almost like a bonus because that wasn't talked about in recruiting," he said. "They weren't part of that. Now this next crew coming in, this is part of the conversation that guys are talking about is the NIL situation.

"I think that will affect things moving forward the way things are, but I also think when you're mixing the transfer portal and you mix in all these things, I think transparency is critically important because at any point they can decide not to go to your school and go somewhere else," he continued. "What you say in recruiting, you have to follow through with, and if you don't, there's going to be problems. That part is

a positive. It is just the transparency in recruiting."

Day said discussions about NIL come as much from the recruits as it does their families or those helping lead their recruitments.

"There's recruits who handle their own recruiting, there's families whose parents handle the recruiting, and there's other situations where there are mentors or uncles and they have a big part in it," he said. "Every situation is very different, but now that NIL has become part of the conversation, there seems to be a lot more people involved."

Visitor List Brief Against Toledo

Even though Ohio State didn't host more than 70 recruits as it did against Notre Dame, according to several reports, plenty of prospects still made it out for the Buckeyes' 77-21 win over the Rockets.

Montgomery and Hartford were the lone 2023 commitments in attendance, with the majority of the focus on the 2024 class and beyond.

In 2024, Ohio State welcomed Columbus KIPP three-star defensive back Cameron Frazier (5-11, 160); West Bloomfield, Mich., linebacker Kari Jackson (6-1, 215); Toledo Whitmer three-star linebacker Jasen Kelly (6-1, 192); Summerville, S.C., linebacker Jaidyn Penix (6-0, 192); Stover; and Dayton Stebbins offensive lineman Jake Wheelock (6-4, 275).

In 2025, visitors included Toledo Whitmer offensive tackle Carter Lowe (6-5, 290); Roseville, Mich., athlete Desmond Straughton (5-11, 175); and Walled Lake (Mich.) Western offensive lineman Liam

Vaughan (6-2, 280).

There was one lone visitor in 2026 in Cartersville (Ga.) Cass quarterback Brodie McWhorter (6-1, 180), who does not hold an Ohio State offer but is being recruited by several notable schools, including Clemson, Florida State, Georgia and LSU.

Other Notes And Tidbits

- Ohio State defensive lineman com-

mitment Will Smith Jr. (6-3, 260) out of Dublin (Ohio) Coffman earned a fourth star from 247Sports, though he remains a three-star prospect in the composite rankings.

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers.

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

RULES AND RATES: 20 cents per word, 10 cents for more than one insertion. Minimum order of \$5. No agency discounts. Make checks payable to Buckeye Sports Bulletin. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

All ads are uniformly set with the first two words set in boldface capital letters at no charge. However, no other words may be set in boldface. Anyone planning a larger or more distinct ad may receive our ad rate card upon request.

We reserve the right to request additional information or merchandise be submitted from advertiser prior to acceptance of an ad, and we reserve the right to refuse advertisements considered objectionable.

Deadline is one week prior to publication date. Call (614) 486-2202 or write P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 for info.

FOR SALE — OSU-MICHIGAN Game, 1975-original RADIO broadcast on CD! Woody's last great team & Archie's last UM game as Bucks go 11-0! Three-disk set runs 3½ hours! Listen

in your car! \$25 + \$3 S & H. Call 1-630-527-8890!

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia and equipment, programs, pennants, glasses, books, jerseys, helmets, ticket stubs. One item or a hundred. Will travel. Call George at (614) 506-1081.

WANTED TO buy: OSU basketball tickets/stubs from the 1960s, '70s, '80s, '90s & 2000s. Call Mike at (704) 995-0414.

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia, programs, ticket stubs, pennants, championship rings, gold pants, helmets, autographs, game-used equipment, small or large collections. Call Chris at (419) 957-6789.

BSB PUBLISHER Frank Moskowitz and other members of the BSB staff are available to speak at your business, social or alumni group meetings. Informative and fun. Call (614) 486-2202 for details.

Fields Soldiers On In Year Two With Bears

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The NFL is ruthless in chewing up and spitting out prospects who don't quickly reach their perceived potential.

Former UCLA quarterback Josh Rosen is one of the most recent examples of someone who went from savior to bust in a flash. The Arizona Cardinals selected him 10th overall in the 2018 draft, but after starting his rookie season, he was unceremoniously dumped. He was traded to the Miami Dolphins when the next big thing – quarterback Kyler Murray – was available in the next draft.

Jalen Hurst of the Philadelphia Eagles and Tua Tagovailoa, 2020 draftees, also came under scrutiny following their second seasons with critics calling for changes before the 2022 campaign. So far, each has remained a starter for his respective team.

Justin Fields has not attained that level of skepticism as he enters the early stages of year two for the Chicago Bears, but plenty of eyes will be on him to see if he can improve on his rookie season and take the Bears beyond their 6-11 record in 2021.

He started 10 of the 12 games he played last season, throwing for 1,870 yards and seven touchdowns while rushing for 420 yards and two scores – good but not great numbers for the 11th pick in the 2020 draft after a trade with the New York Giants to move up. Fields was given a grace period because the Bears weren't very good and the prognosticators weren't particularly high on this year's edition, either.

However, in a sign that management still believed in Fields, he was given some help in the form of Luke Getsy, whom the Bears lured from the Green Bay Packers and made an offensive coordinator for the first time in his NFL career.

Never heard of him? He spent the past three seasons as the quarterback coach for Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers. Prior to that, he was the Packers' wide receivers coach who helped develop star Davante Adams, now with the Las Vegas Raiders. In the week before the Packers and Bears were to play in prime time on Sept. 18, Rodgers, who is a few months older than Getsy, praised him.

"He's just a great human being, a great father, husband, phenomenal coach," Rodgers said. "He's fun in the room. I loved our constant dialogue during the week. I loved being coached by him and just kind of watching his development. The next stop for him is probably head coach."

The Fields-Getsy connection was tested on Sept. 11 in the first game of the season



FILE PHOTO

BEAR DOWN — Former Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields seeks to lead the Chicago Bears back to the postseason in his second year with the organization.

against San Francisco. Down 7-0 to the 49ers at the half on a rainy day in a quagmire at Soldier Field, the Bears didn't get past midfield until 2:17 remained in the second quarter. By halftime, Fields was 3 of 9 for 19 yards with an interception and a 2.8 passer rating.

Over the final two quarters, Fields threw a 51-yard TD to Dante Pettis and hit Equanimous St. Brown for an 18-yard score early in the fourth to put Chicago on top 13-10.

The Bears won 19-10, a win in the debut of first-year head coach Matt Eberflus. Fields was 8 of 17 for 121 yards with the two TDs and a pick. It wasn't pretty, but neither were the conditions.

"At the end of the day, I know my teammates are looking at me and I'm just trying to be that leader for them," Fields said. "Just show that I'm all right and I'm going to push them to keep going, and if we have a bad play, forget about that last play and move on."

He credited Getsy's halftime demeanor for the comeback. The former Akron quarterback looked relaxed and had a smile.

"It's confidence," Fields said. "That's one thing that I take from him, he's a very confident guy. He gives the rest of the guys confidence. I didn't ask him why (he was smiling). That's just how he is."

Getsy had a simple explanation.

"I try to be as consistent of a person every day for those guys," Getsy said. "Positive energy is important to me."

In turn, he complimented Fields for not being overwhelmed by the circumstances.

"I was really impressed by how he handled every situation," Getsy said. "Like the way we were able to talk about what happened on the field, when you're backed up and he throws an interception, and that whole time that dude was stone cold. He was ready to go. There was no 'woe is me' at all in that young man. That's what's been so cool about him."

As congenial as that may sound, Fields told the Chicago Tribune that Getsy is demanding but fair.

"He's not going to sugarcoat anything," he said. "He has a standard for us. And we're going to have to meet that standard. Two, he's the OC, but just his quarterback background with the feet. He has been around Aaron for a long time. So, feet, timing, everything – he knows what it's supposed to look like."

Second Chance

This is a critical season for not only Fields but possibly future Ohio State quarterbacks trying to make it in the NFL. He was the second Buckeye quarterback drafted in the first round in three years, following Dwayne Haskins going to Washington as the No. 15 selection in 2019.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day was Haskins' quarterbacks coach for the Buckeyes in Urban Meyer's final season in 2018 before Day took over as head coach with Fields behind center the next two seasons.

Haskins had two unsuccessful seasons with Washington before being released, and he was a third-stringer for the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2021. He died April 9 of this year when he was hit by a vehicle as he tried to cross a highway in Florida.

Last season, Fields completed 58.9 percent of his passes with 10 interceptions. He made his first start in Week 3 at Cleveland, and it didn't go well in a 26-6 loss. He was 6 for 20 for 68 yards and was sacked nine times for 67 yards.

He had one of his best games vs. the 49ers last season in a 33-22 loss to the San

Francisco 49ers as the Bears dropped to 3-5. He was 19 for 27 for 175 yards with a touchdown and an interception. He also ran for 103 yards on 10 carries with a highlight 22-yard TD run. Fields was the third rookie quarterback in NFL history to rush for 100 yards, run for a touchdown and throw for one in a game.

"He does a great job avoiding the rush," Packers outside linebacker coach Jason Rebrovich said. "He's an athletic guy who moves around extremely well in the backfield, and when he feels threatened, he has this aura around him and feels how to get out of it."

If Fields struggles this year, doubts will be raised as to how well quarterbacks in Day's system are prepared for the NFL, especially with current OSU quarterback C.J. Stroud a potential high pick in 2023. Along with Stroud, Fields and Haskins have been Heisman Trophy finalists.

For now, the Bears are willing to let Fields grow into his role. Eberflus was ebullient regarding how Fields responded to adversity in the opener.

"He was able to move all those things aside," he said. "Figuring out how he was going to grip the ball better, how he was going to operate and then figure out the game as the game went on and move the ball down the field. That's what to me is outstanding, what an outstanding thing for a young quarterback to have that mental toughness – all of those things going on and to be able to laser-like focus in and get the job done. So, to me, that was very impressive."

"I think it's the cycle of the snap. We talk about that, and that's an important piece for him and for every player on our team. You just turn the page. You only play one play at a time, and you can't play them all at once. And there's going to be six or seven plays that come in the game that make a difference, and we don't know when those are. So that's why you have to be focused in, every single play, and I think that was in his mind, and that's what he did the whole game."

As Fields continues to acclimate to a new staff, the Bears coaches are also figuring ways to best utilize his strengths. In leading the Buckeyes to a 20-2 record over two seasons, he accounted for 78 touchdowns (63 passing, 15 rushing). He threw for 5,373 yards and rushed for 867, and Getsy's plan is to use screens, allowing Fields to get out the pocket and run more play action to utilize his legs.

Green Bay inside linebackers coach Kirk Olivadotti said a team effort is the only way to contain Fields.

"That's going to be all hands on deck," he said. "He's obviously a good thrower, and he can run and get out of the pocket and make plays and create. That's something the whole defense is going to be in charge of, my guys included."

Fields wants to help the Bears any way he can.

"I use my legs as much as needed," Fields said. "When the pocket collapses, no choice but to use my legs or throw the ball away. Of course, I'm going to try to make a play, just depending on the situation and stuff like that."

"Coach (Eberflus) always says it's mental and physical stamina – who can play the longest, the hardest and just play every play."

You Can Count On These Services From

THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

1350 W. 5th Ave., Suite 14, Columbus, OH 43212
614-488-2683 • FAX 614-488-0059 • qpoh@aol.com

Offset-Printing	Digital Color Copies	Digital B&W Copies
Typesetting	Ship UPS	Rubber Stamps
NCR Forms	Fax Service	Business Cards
Laminating	Announcements	Binding
Brochures	Wedding Invitations	Labels

New Faces Populate Ohio State's Backcourt

With several departures and new additions to the roster for the Ohio State men's basketball team, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is taking stock of the Buckeyes' roster entering this season, beginning with Ohio State's backcourt.

COURT REPORT Jack Emerson

Entering last season, the Ohio State men's basketball roster contained 10 returning members from its 2020-21 roster, including star forward E.J. Liddell.

The makeup of this season's roster is in stark contrast with last year's iteration of the Buckeyes, as it boasts 10 new faces in the form of three transfers, five freshmen and two walk-ons. Forwards Justice Sueing, who missed all but two games last season with an abdominal injury, Eugene Brown III, Zed Key and Kalen Etzler – a redshirt freshman last year – are the only remnants of last season's team.

As head coach Chris Holtmann has patched holes in several areas of need – especially with the losses of Liddell and breakout freshman guard Malaki Branham to the NBA – the new-look unit had the chance to build chemistry during an international trip to the Bahamas in early August. Although the unit has gotten a chance to play a pair of exhibition games with one another, picking up a pair of wins against the Puerto Rican and Egyptian national teams, Holtmann said it will still be a feel-it-out process in getting the team acclimated to each other.

"I've botched a few names, that's for sure," Holtmann joked at an August press conference. "We'll learn a little bit through the game reps we'll get (in the Bahamas). I think we'll see some of that inexperience. As far as what that transition is fully going to look like, I'm not sure we'll fully know until we get to the November games."

With the start of the regular season less than two months away, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is taking a deeper dive into backcourt of this year's squad.

The Chris Holtmann era has been defined by undersized point guards, as the fifth-year skipper has relied on CJ Walker and Jamari Wheeler – who each stand at 6-1 – over the past two seasons. While Walker and Wheeler each had slight frames, weighing in at 195 and 170 pounds respectively, Holtmann has opted for a little more size out of his floor general in 2022.

Freshman guard Bruce Thornton may stand only one inch taller than Walker and Wheeler, but he checks in at 215 pounds, while Oklahoma State transfer Isaac Likekele, who has been dubbed "a linebacker at point guard" by ESPN's Fran Fraschilla, stands 6-5, 215-pounds. Teams in the past have schemed Walker and Wheeler out of plays by placing them in actions through on-ball screens, but the size of Thornton and Likekele could make this strategy against the Buckeyes obsolete.

While Thornton's size is a big plus on the

defensive end of the floor, he also displays a deep offensive bag that he relied on to earn Georgia's Gatorade Player of the Year honor as a high school senior. In his final season at Alpharetta (Ga.) Milton, Thornton averaged 17.2 points, 7.7 rebounds and 7.5 assists per game.

Similar to Likekele, Thornton has been likened to a football player in terms of his size and athletic ability.

"Thornton is an extremely stocky point guard who looks as if he should be the designated third-down running back recruit for the Buckeyes down the road," 247Sports recruiting analyst Brandon Jenkins said. "Nevertheless, he brings a gridiron mentality to the hardwood as he is tough, agile and heady. He is terrific with the ball in his hands and is a solid pull-up shooter. He balances his game out as a point guard in the way he never hesitates to advance the ball down the floor on the break or find the open man in the halfcourt.

"Defensively, he physically locks opponents up, and his active hands make him all the more devastating. Due to his thicker frame and phenomenal strength, he tends to over-penetrate at times, which can result in forced issues and turnovers. But more times than not, he makes great decisions with the ball and will be a tough and physical lead guard in the Big Ten."

Likekele brings a most established and veteran presence to the position. With his big frame, he gives the Buckeyes a long and versatile defender on the perimeter, but also a worthy floor general with plenty of experience. During his four-year career in Stillwater, Okla., Likekele played in 114 games and started in 110 contests, averaging 8.9 points, 5.5 rebounds, 3.9 assists and 1.4 steals per game as a Cowboy.

He crossed several notable landmarks and became the only player in Oklahoma State history to tally 1,000 points, 600 rebounds and 400 assists. During his final season with the Cowboys, Likekele cemented his

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

defensive prowess by collecting at least two steals in 14 of Oklahoma State's 30 games.

Although his time with the Buckeyes has been short, Likekele – along with fellow transfer guard Sean McNeil from West Virginia – has already impressed in a leadership role, according to Holtmann.

"They've been able to be everyday guys and exert a level of leadership that will be important for us moving forward," Holtmann said.

There are several players expected to step in at shooting guard after Branham became the first one-and-done player from Ohio State since D'Angelo Russell in 2015.

Holtmann turned to a pair of sharpshooting transfers to help fill that void, adding McNeil and Wright State's Tanner Holden through the portal to shore up depth at the position.

Holden, who may also see time at the three, emerged as one of the nation's top scorers as a junior, producing 20.1 points per game, a mark that ranked 18th in the nation a season ago. During his time with the Raiders, Holden was consistently honored for his play, garnering a Horizon League All-Freshman nod in 2019 before landing on the All-Conference first team in 2020 and 2021.

Holden burst onto the national scene after he willed Wright State to a tight 93-82 win over Bryant with a 37-point, 11-rebound performance in last season's First Four games.

"Tanner's been good," Holtmann said. "I think Tanner is going to continue to adjust to the length and speed of the game. We're excited about his continued growth."

While Holden rose to stardom at the

mid-major level, McNeil played a rotational role for Bob Huggins at West Virginia over the past three seasons. McNeil opted to go the junior college route to begin his career and joined the Mountaineers after two seasons at Sinclair Community College in Dayton.

With the Mountaineers, McNeil showcased his three-point shooting ability, connecting on 36.8 percent of his three-point attempts during his three seasons at West Virginia. He posted averages of 12.2 points, 2.5 rebounds and 1.4 assists per game during his senior season with the Mountaineers.

Another veteran at the position is Brown, who is also expected to play some forward for the Buckeyes. After playing a limited role during his freshman season, Brown saw his role increase significantly for the Buckeyes as a sophomore, playing in 26 games last season (10 starts) while posting averages of 3.5 points and 2.4 rebounds per game.

Holtmann also brought in Mount Pleasant (Utah) Wasatch Academy four-star shooting guard Roddy Gayle Jr. to provide depth at the position. Prior to playing for Wasatch, Gayle dominated New York high school basketball for Youngstown (N.Y.) Lewiston-Porter, where he averaged 25.8 points, 9.0 rebounds and 2.3 steals per game as a sophomore. While at Wasatch, Gayle sustained a groin injury that hampered his senior season.

Judging by his performance in the Bahamas, Gayle has shown that he can play a multitude of positions on the perimeter, according to Holtmann.

Help BSB Grow

Loyal *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* readers frequently ask us what they can do to help keep BSB vibrant in this increasingly electronic age. One of the things readers can do is introduce BSB to new readers who might find our Ohio State sports content interesting.

In order to help you do that, we are offering an opportunity to send four free trial issues to potential subscribers. We will then offer your potential subscriber a very special offer to get them to join the fold of loyal *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* readers.

We are also offering a special \$19.95 subscription rate for gifts for our service men and women. It's nice to send a little bit of home to those all over the world who are protecting us. Don't forget to include an APO address when applicable and remember, any subscription includes electronic access to BSB, so our Buckeyes in uniform will be able to enjoy their BSB immediately, wherever they are.

This four free trial issue offer is not good for current subscribers. This offer is to introduce readers to BSB. You can conveniently email your names and addresses to subscriptions@buckeyesports.com or mail them to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212.



Hank's

TEXAS BBQ

EST. 2020

**House-made
Pastrami Reuben
Sandwiches
THURSDAYS
while they last!**

*Clintonville's
Smokin' New Spot*

**Slow-Smoked
Southern Goodness!**

Texas style BBQ

- full menu
- full bar and service
- late night happy hour
- catering & events

**2941 N. High Street
(614) 972-6020
HanksTexasStyleBBQ.com**

Mon: Closed
Tues - Thurs: 11:30 am - 10 pm
Fri - Sat: 11:30 am - 11 pm
Sun: 11:30 am - 9 pm

BUZZER TRIVIA
Wednesdays 8PM
FREE TO PLAY! WIN PRIZES

OSU Women's Hockey Team Seeking Repeat

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Nadine Muzerall accomplished the ultimate goal for Ohio State's women's hockey program six years into her time as its head coach.

In March, the Buckeyes captured their first national championship in school history, completing the build from an outfit with a 10-25-1 record the season before Muzerall arrived. Her ambitions and that of the team don't stop at one national championship, however.

"I told the girls, 'Anyone can win one,' " Muzerall said. "Now it's really hard to not just repeat, but chase after that dream to get another one."

With a wealth of experienced veterans and most of its production returning from last year's title-winning team, Ohio State is on the hunt for a second consecutive championship entering this season that begins Sept. 30 against Minnesota State.

"The hardest part is now you're respected," Muzerall said. "Which is a good thing, but also a nerve-racking thing. Before I didn't think that we were. It's the first time in program history that we're starting the season as No. 1 in the country. There's a huge target now on your back, and you're going to get everybody's best."

As Muzerall alluded to, the Buckeyes are entering the season ranked No. 1 in the USCHO poll, garnering 17 of 20 first-place votes, and there are plenty of reasons to believe they will live up to the billing.

Seventy-two percent of the squad's points production is back from last year's campaign, and the goaltender who guided them through both the Western Collegiate Hockey Association and NCAA tournaments – junior Amanda Thiele – is back with intriguing depth options behind her. And on top of what was already in-house from last year, a dynamic transfer addition in forward Makenna Webster, a returning

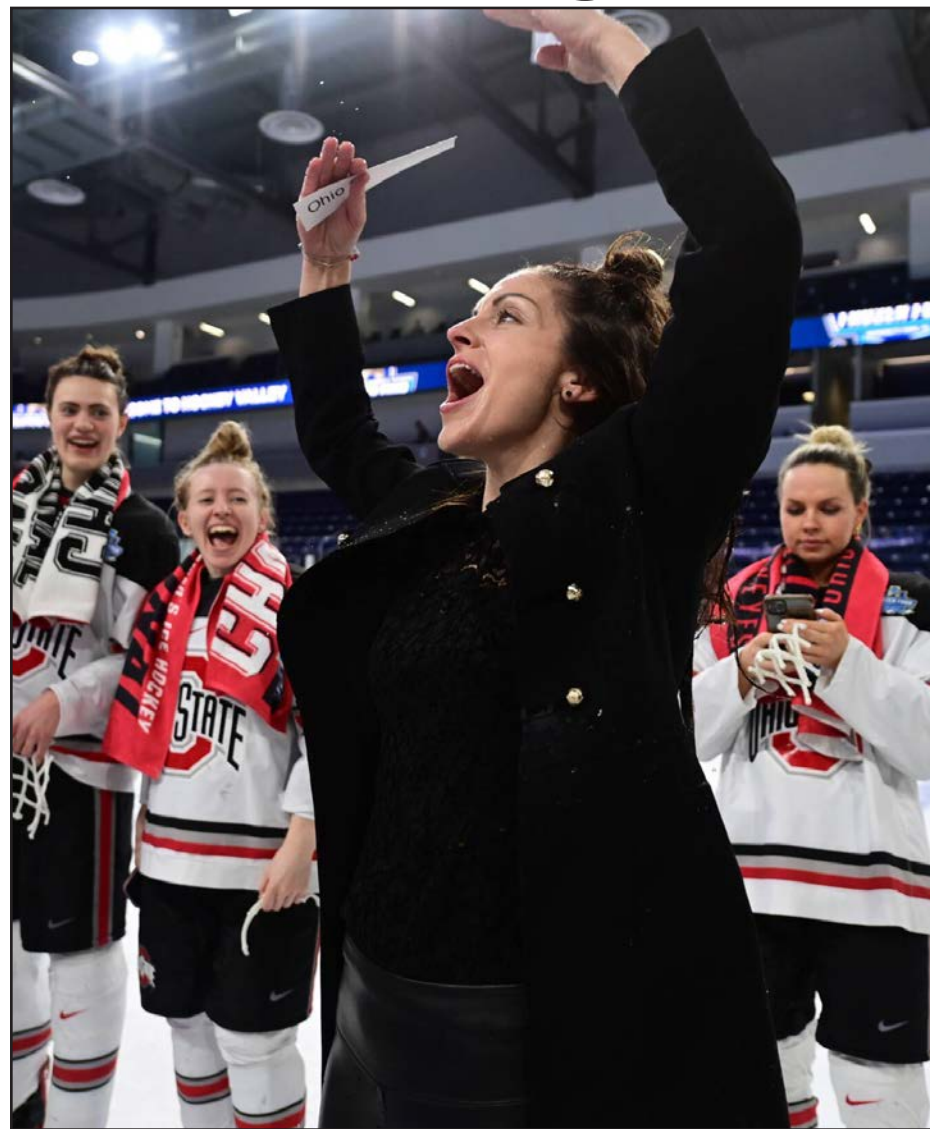
former star in graduate forward Emma Maltais and a talented freshman class round out what looks like a juggernaut on paper.

A defenseman leading a hockey team in points is exceedingly rare, but that's the exact feat graduate Sophie Jaques accomplished last year. In 38 games she collected 21 goals and a team-high 38 assists to post a total of 59 points, 11 more than any other defenseman in the country. She finished third nationally among players regardless of position.

Jaques' efforts yielded plenty of individual hardware as well. She finished as one of three finalists for the sport's most prestigious honor, the Patty Kazmaier Award, given annually to the top player in women's collegiate hockey. She was the USCHO's Player of the Year and a consensus first-team All-American, and her play and character stood out so much that she even landed the 2022 Arthur Ashe Jr. Female Sport Scholar of the Year honor.

A number of others who saw action on the blue line last season join her to fill out Ohio State's defensive pairings. Graduate Madison Bizal finished second among defensemen in points last season for the Buckeyes with 27, and senior Lauren Bernard returns after collecting 24 of her own. Seniors Hadley Hartmetz and Teagan Grant, alongside junior Riley Brengman, also saw action in at least 34 of the team's 38 games.

"Besides last year, in (my) first five years, I never felt great with how short our bench was," Muzerall said. "We were one injury away from a really big problem. The year before we won the national championship, we had our top center, Liz Schepers, break her arm. She just happens to be Wonder Woman and came back and played and didn't miss a game, but that could have cost us a loss to (Boston College) in the first round of the quarterfinal. It's also depth and holding the young athletes accountable. Don't get comfy because anybody's



FILE PHOTO

REPEAT SUCCESS — After winning the first championship in program history last season, the Ohio State women's ice hockey team — led by head coach Nadine Muzerall (above) — will look for a repeat with most of last season's squad returning.

replaceable."

Graduate Paetyn Levis broke out last year to become Ohio State's top point-gathering forward, picking up 53 points in her senior season after never recording a campaign above 12 points prior to it. That number landed her second on the team behind Jaques, and her 24 goals led the squad. Forwards Gabby Rosenthal, Jennifer Gardiner and Jenna Buglioni are all also back after 35-plus point seasons.

"Championships are often won based on culture and leadership, and Sophie along with Levis, Rosenthal, Maltais and Bizal are all back as fifth-years," Muzerall said. "That is one heck of a lineup in and of it-

self to have those strong competitors come back. And they chose to come back because they wanted to come back; they didn't have to come back. They really wanted to continue this success and defend the title."

Forwards Clair DeGeorge and Schepers, who notched the third- and fourth-most points for Ohio State last year, are the biggest departures from the 2021-22 roster.

DeGeorge left a big pair of skates to fill at center, finishing second on the team in assists with 30 and registering two points in the team's 3-2 national championship game win over Minnesota Duluth, but a proven commodity is back in the fold to fill them.

OHIO STATE WOMEN'S HOCKEY PREVIEW

Maltais set an Ohio State single-season record for points with 59 in the 2019-20 season, her last full campaign with the Buckeyes. After leading the team in assists during the COVID-shortened 2020-21 season, she received an opportunity to play for Team Canada in the 2022 Winter Olympics and departed from her collegiate team to pursue the opportunity.

After winning a gold medal, not just in Beijing but at the 2022 IIHF World Championships, she is back for one final run at Ohio State. Going back to high school, Maltais has always been a first-line player for her team, Muzerall said, so the experience of playing deep on the bench for her national team gave her a new perspective.

"She has been in the position of our fourth-liners, of our no-dressers," Muzerall said. "So now she can relate to everybody. But also when she was with Team Canada vs. here, her mouth was shut, meaning she's listening to (Marie-Philip) Poulin, she's listening to (Natalie) Spooner, some of the greatest in the world and her ears are open. I think you learn a lot more when you're not talking as much – so my husband tells me."

It also appears that Maltais has picked up where she left off in the locker room, as she was named a captain for the Buckeyes.

"It's difficult (to come back and take the captaincy) for sure," Maltais said. "I think I have a lot of learning to do and a lot of listening to do at first. With missing a year, you miss memories, inside jokes, personnel that I've never met before. Earning their respect and earning their trust is the first thing I want to do."

As if adding back an Olympic Gold Medalist to a team replacing only 28 percent of its points production weren't enough, the transfer portal yielded yet another proven commodity for the Buckeyes in Webster.

She collected 53 points in the 2021-22 season for the Badgers and led the team with 30 assists, earning third-team All-WCHA recognition for her efforts. She's a rare two-sport athlete, also competing in field hockey for the Buckeyes (more on page 36). With that season already under way, Muzerall said Webster's been splitting time between the two athletic endeavors with the latter taking priority at this time of year, and Maltais added that balancing the workload has been tough for Webster.

"But she's doing a great job coming around," Maltais said. "You probably saw her here today watching practice, she's been trying her best to do both, and we all have respect for that."

"We're excited for field hockey season to be over so she can fully be here all the time," she added.

Turning toward the goaltenders, Ohio State's outlook in net for this season is as

good as it is at any other position. The Buckeyes started out last year with experienced senior Andrea Braendli at goaltender. She picked up 10 wins to set the program's all-time record at 57. Braendli left midway through the season, however, to play with Team Switzerland in the Olympics, and in stepped then-sophomore Thiele.

Thiele posted an outstanding 1.31 goals against average and .939 save percentage last season, both of which led the WCHA and surpassed Braendli's output in both categories. When Braendli returned to the team after the conclusion of the Beijing Olympics, Muzerall stuck with the hot hand between the pipes, and Thiele delivered throughout the team's championship run.

Now a junior, Thiele enters the year with a new confidence as the unquestioned No. 1.

"I give a lot of credit to Bailey Seagraves, our volunteer goalie coach," Muzerall said. "He's taken a lot of their development and escalated it, so he deserves credit for the goaltending for sure. Now Thiele has a little bit of swag that she didn't have as a timid freshman and conservative sophomore. I think now she's coming in, she's got an ownership, she's got that weight on her shoulders. There's a sense of pride in that."

Senior Raygan Kirk allowed just five goals in four games last year to post a 4-0 record and should serve as Thiele's backup, and Muzerall said she feels Ohio State has the top two goaltenders in the country. Senior Quinn Kuntz and freshman Lexington Secreto round out the roster at goalie.

Mixing in with all that experience is a group of talented freshmen, some of whom have already played at the international level. Freshman forward Sofie Lundin made Sweden's Olympic team this year.

"I feel like I just recruited a men's junior player who's almost 22 years old," Muzerall said. "We're really excited about her experience playing at the U18s and then the Olympics. Playing at that caliber speaks volumes of the experience she'll bring."

Muzerall also stated she feels Sydney Morrow and Emma Peschel form one of the strongest freshman defensive tandems in the nation.

With a full complement of returning stars, experienced depth and talented youth, there's no question why the Buckeyes landed atop the national rankings and, as Muzerall stated, why there will be a target on their backs this year.

"When you're chasing the dream to get your first national championship, sometimes people will devalue you, and you can win some games that way because you'll just outwork them," Muzerall said. "I think the hardest part is, now everybody's best is against you."

2022-23 Ohio State Women's Hockey Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown	Last Team
1	Raygan Kirk	Goaltender	5-8	Sr.	Ste. Anne, Manitoba	Robert Morris
2	Emerson Jarvis	Forward	5-4	Fr.	Mundare, Alta.	Edmonton Pandas
4	Ramsey Parent	Forward	5-6	Sr.	Blaine, Minn.	Blaine Bengals
5	Teagan Grant	Defenseman	5-6	Sr.	New Liskeard, Ontario	Wisconsin
6	Hadley Hartmetz	Defenseman	5-5	Sr.	Phoenixville, Pa.	Boston College
7	Emma Peschel	Defenseman	5-10	Fr.	Edina, Minn.	Benilde-St. Margaret's
8	Brooke Bink	Forward	5-5	Sr.	Escanaba, Mich.	Shattuck Saint Mary's
9	Madison Bizal	Defenseman	5-4	Gr.	Elk River, Minn.	Elk River HS
10	Jenna Buglioni	Forward	5-3	Jr.	Port Moody, B.C.	Gr. Vancouver Comets
11	Kenzie Hauswirth	Forward	5-5	Sr.	Farmington, Minn.	Quinnipiac
12	Jennifer Gardiner	Forward	5-6	Sr.	Surrey, B.C.	Greater Vancouver Comets
13	Riley Brengman	Defenseman	5-5	Jr.	China, Mich.	Belle Tire
14	Alaina Giampietro	Forward	5-6	Fr.	Strongsville, Ohio	Gilmour Academy
15	Gabby Rosenthal	Forward	5-7	Gr.	Blaine, Minn.	Blaine HS
17	Emma Maltais	Forward	5-4	Gr.	Burlington, Ont.	Oakville Hornets
18	Sophie Jaques	Defenseman	5-8	Gr.	Toronto, Ont.	Toronto Aeros
19	Lauren Bernard	Defenseman	5-7	Sr.	Madison, Ohio	Clarkson
20	Makenna Webster	Forward	5-3	Jr.	St. Louis, Mo.	Wisconsin
21	Sydney Morrow	Defenseman	5-7	Fr.	Darien, Conn.	Shattuck St. Mary's
22	Sloane Matthews	Forward	5-6	Fr.	Plymouth, Minn.	Wayzata H.S.
24	Jamie Grinder	Defenseman	5-10	So.	Richmond, B.C.	Delta Hockey Academy
27	Paetyn Levis	Forward	5-5	Gr.	Rogers, Minn.	Rogers HS
28	Sofie Lundin	Forward	5-5	Fr.	Helsingborg, Sweden	Djurgarden IF
29	Gali Levy	Forward	5-3	Fr.	Newton, Mass.	No. American Hockey Acad.
30	Amanda Thiele	Goaltender	5-10	Jr.	Milford, Mich.	Belle Tire
34	Lexington Secreto	Goaltender	5-7	Fr.	New Windsor, N.Y.	CT Polar Bears
35	Quinn Kuntz	Goaltender	5-7	Sr.	Warroad, Minn.	Warroad Warrior

Head Coach — Nadine Muzerall.

Associate Head Coach — Peter Elander. **Assistant Coach** — Kelsey Cline. **Director of Operations** — Lauren Spring. **Strength & Conditioning Coach** — Chris Friend. **Athletic Trainer** — Kevin Lennon. **Academic Counselor and Student-Athlete Engagement Coordinator** — Alex Sommer.




Home of THE Largest Ohio State Retail Memorabilia Collection in the Country!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND USE CODE: **BSB10**
10% OFF ANY ONE ITEM
EXPIRES 12/31/22

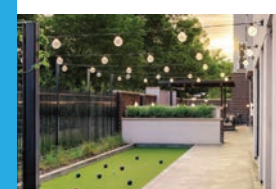


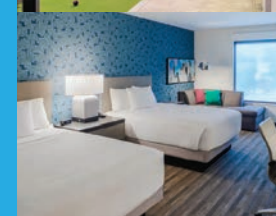






Visit www.SportsPossessions.com
The Mall at Tuttle Crossing • Dublin (614) 389-1648
Tanger Outlet • Sunbury (740) 965-4004



Columbus OSU/Short North









Features

- Complimentary full hot breakfast buffet
- Complimentary onsite parking
- Indoor Pool
- State-of-the-art Fitness Center with Rogue equipment, Peloton bikes, and a yoga room
- Onsite Bar and Restaurant
- Free Wi-Fi
- Pet Friendly with onsite dog park
- Bike Rentals Available with Direct Access to the Olentangy Trail
- Outdoor patio with firepit, bocce ball, and cornhole
- Walking Distance to Ohio Stadium!

Discounted Room Rates for Blocks of 10 or more rooms

Scan to book your reservation:



633 W 5th Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

614.298.1299

Webster To Be Two-Sport Athlete At OSU

By CHASE BROWN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

There has been an ongoing debate in athletics for years: Should a young athlete specialize in one sport or play multiple? It's a decision that many have to consider by looking at the perceived benefits of either approach.

Ohio State's Makenna Webster chose the latter growing up, and now she's continuing her dual-sport career for the Buckeyes. The third-year transfer from Wisconsin is a member of the field hockey team this fall and will join the women's ice hockey program for the winter and spring.

"I am very excited to become a Buckeye and be a part of the school's tradition of athletic and academic excellence," Webster said. "I am grateful that Coach (Jarred) Martin and Coach (Nadine) Muzerall are committed to allowing me the chance to pursue my dream of being a two-sport athlete in college. I love the culture here and the commitment to development and winning that exists at Ohio State."

The St. Louis native comes to Ohio State after two seasons at Wisconsin, where she recorded 66 points on 31 goals and 35 assists as a forward on the women's hockey team. As a freshman, she helped the Badgers to the 2021 Frozen Four championship and was named the tournament's most outstanding player. Last season, she earned third-team All-Western Collegiate Hockey Association recognition with a team-leading 30 helpers. She also contributed 23 goals for a total of 53 points.

"Makenna is a very gifted, talented, all-around hockey player and person," Muzerall said. "With her impressive collegiate experience thus far, we know that she will bring a lot of offensive power and continue to improve our defensive side of the game. She will be a full 200-foot

hockey player and will be instrumental in every aspect of the game."

Webster said she admires Muzerall as a coach and believes in the program she is building in Columbus. After the Buckeyes won their first national championship on March 20, Webster felt Muzerall and her coaching staff solidified Ohio State as one of the powerhouses in the sport for years to come. She said those factors were critical in her decision to continue playing hockey in college.

"It was always tough games against Ohio State and a great rivalry between Wisconsin and Ohio State (while I was there). They're a tough team to play," Webster said. "They're always working hard, and they're always being physical and everything, and I just love the way Coach Muzerall coached them."

Muzerall said she supported Webster's dual-sport prospects and advocated that she pursue both opportunities at Ohio State. She even reflected on her multi-sport childhood, saying she always regretted not looking into college soccer opportunities before committing to play ice hockey at the University of Minnesota.

"With the resources we have here, with our strength and conditioning, and with our nutritionist and our sport psychologists and with our academic counselors, she's going to be really supported," Muzerall said. "That's why I ended up supporting it in the end because I trust that my staff will balance that for her and keep an eye on that so she doesn't get burnt out."

However, Webster isn't fearful of burning out. In fact, she can't wait to take up both sports at Ohio State and looks forward to balancing both schedules this

year.

Webster's collegiate success on the ice mirrored her accomplishments on the turf. Despite Wisconsin not featuring a varsity field hockey program, Webster spent last summer competing for the St. Louis Gateway Field Hockey Club's U-19 team at the USA Field Hockey National Club Championships. A player for the club since second grade, she helped the team take second place in the tournament. She also helped the U-14 squad to a runner-up finish at nationals in 2016.

In high school, Webster was among the best field hockey players in the class of 2020. According to MAX Field Hockey, she ranked as a top-10 prospect for three consecutive years from 2017-19. As a result of that talent, Webster represented the United States on the U-17 Women's National Team in 2018-19, where she played under several coaches, including Ohio State's Martin.

After Martin saw Webster's on-field talent, he wanted her to play for Ohio State field hockey immediately out of high school. However, she had committed already to play ice hockey at Wisconsin, a decision Martin said Webster wasn't turning back on and was going to see through.

Three years later, Martin feels elated that Webster chose to continue her academic and athletic career in Columbus, a place he believes will maximize her talent in both sports.

"Makenna is a world-class athlete, and for her to choose Ohio State is so exciting," Martin said. "She is an amazing student-athlete but an even more impressive human who works hard and cares deeply for the people around her. She will help the field hockey and ice hockey programs do great things. Makenna will also be a great ambassador for Ohio State as she continues to shine on the international stage."

Through the first five games of the field hockey season, Webster accounted

for a goal off 15 shots on goal and two assists.

In August, Webster attended tryouts for the United States U-23 Women's National Team for ice hockey, but it wasn't her first time putting her talent on display for the American coaches. Webster has played in three International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championships during her career and won gold medals in 2018 and 2020 and a silver medal in 2019.

At the 2018 world championships, Webster led Team USA with nine points and captured all-tournament honors. She led the United States in scoring the following year with six points and was an alternate captain for the championship squad in 2020.

While all her success could have led to an inflated ego, Martin said Webster has remained levelheaded, compassionate and humble in her many years as a dual-sport athlete.

"She's a tremendous ice hockey player and a tremendous field hockey player," Martin said. "Her work ethic, competitiveness, ability to be a part of a team and desire to succeed transcend to her life outside of whatever playing surface she's on. I know that sounds cliché, but she genuinely wants to put others in the best position to succeed."

"You take that personality, and you put that on a team here at Ohio State – or any school for that matter, but especially Ohio State – that's something that programs desire. That's all we want to build is a healthy environment for our players, and she helps us with that. What she offers in leadership, development and dedication will go far beyond what she will achieve on the field for us. She takes no shortcuts, and she will earn everything she receives."

Martin hypothesized that Webster's current trajectory in both sports could lead to her becoming a trailblazer. He even went so far as to say that Webster could be an Olympian in both ice hockey and field hockey, which would be a unique accomplishment.

"If she makes Team USA's roster in field hockey and ice hockey, she has a genuine chance at becoming an Olympian in both sports," Martin said. "I told Makenna that opportunity is there for her if she works for it. She could be in the Summer Olympics and the Winter Olympics. There aren't a lot of humans in the world who can say that."

Webster wasn't ready to think that far ahead, though.

Right now, she's focused on being the best field hockey player she can be for Ohio State this fall, and once winter rolls around, she will be doing what she can to help the Buckeyes win back-to-back national titles.

"I think we're just going to take it day-by-day," Webster said. "There's just a great connection from all the staff members. It's obviously going to be tough, but at the end of the day, it's going to be a great experience, and we'll see how it goes."



Makenna Webster

WHY THE SHEETZ NOT BUTT DIAL A BURGER?

DOWNLOAD THE APP & GET GREAT OFFERZ & REWARDZ

SHEETZ

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

2022 FOOTBALL

Sept. 3 NOTRE DAME, W 21-10; **10** ARKANSAS STATE, W 45-12; **17** TOLEDO, W, 77-21.; **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 5/6; 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.

WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY (3-3)

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, L 4-2; **18** WAKE FOREST, L 1-0; **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.

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.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 12-13 Dick McGuire/Branch Law Firm at Albuquerque, N.M., 1/17; **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.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

Oct. 1-2 at Mercyhurst; **7-8** WISCONSIN; **14-15** at UConn; **20-21** BENTLEY; **28-29** MINNESOTA.

Nov. 10-11 at Michigan State; **18-19** NOTRE DAME; **25-26** at Long Island University.

Dec. 2-3 at Penn State; **16-17** at Bowling Green.

Jan. 6-7 MICHIGAN STATE; **13-14** at Michigan; **20-21** at Wisconsin.

Feb. 3-4 PENN STATE; **10-11** at Notre Dame; **16** MICHIGAN **18** at FirstEnergy Stadium, Cleveland, vs. Michigan; **24-25** at Minnesota.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY

Sept. 30 at Minnesota State.

Oct. 1 at Minnesota State; **7-8** ST. CLOUD STATE; **15-16** at Bemidji State; **21-22** MINNESOTA DULUTH; **28-29** MINNESOTA.

Nov. 5-6 at St. Thomas; **18-19** BEMIDJI STATE; **22-23** COLGATE.

Dec. 2-3 at Minnesota Duluth; **17-18** at Cornell; **30-31** at Lindenwood.

Jan. 13-14 WISCONSIN; **20-21** at St. Cloud State; **27-28** MINNESOTA STATE.

Feb. 3-4 at Minnesota; **10-11** ST. THOMAS; **17-18** at Wisconsin.

MEN'S SOCCER (5-0-2)

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, T 3-3.; **18** INDIANA, W 2-1; **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.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (5-2-1)

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, L 2-0; **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.

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 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 (4-4)

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 W 3-0; **18** Pittsburgh, L 3-0; **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.



*Best Taco
Al Pastor
in the City!*



MONDAY SPECIAL
Buy One Taco El Pastor
GET ONE FREE

WEDNESDAY SPECIAL
Gringas El Pastor
Only \$2 EACH

**MULTIPLE TV'S
TO WATCH THE GAMES**

**DUBLIN • 7370 Sawmill Rd.
614-726-9185**

Serving Alcohol with Full Bar

Sun-Thurs | 11am-12am • Fri & Sat | 11am-1am

**Columbus • 5221 Godown Rd.
614-538-0211**

Sun - Thur | 11am - 12am • Fri & Sat | 11am - 1am

**Gahanna • 1376 Cherry Bottom Rd.
614-471-4717**

Mon-Sun | 11am - 11pm

*New
Store!*

**Columbus • 1121 S. Hamilton Rd.
614-852-3000**

Mon-Sun | 11am - 11pm

Stroud Has Real Shot To Be Best Ever At OSU

Talk to Ohio State fans through different generations, and each will have a different quarterback they feel is the best to ever wear the scarlet and gray.

Some may favor Rex Kern because of his grit and leadership. Some may favor Cornelius Green for his style and quickness. Some may favor Art Schlichter because he ushered in the passing game in Columbus. Some may favor Troy Smith and the road he traversed to ultimately win the Heisman Trophy. Some may favor Justin Fields and his sheer talent and the fun he had playing football.

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsman

If things keep going the way they are, many will come off those hallowed names and start believing that C.J. Stroud might just be the best to ever sling the pigskin in a Buckeye uniform.

The more he plays, the more you can see just how good he is. Last year he just scratched the surface but was still quite raw. He threw too often into coverage, having more faith in his arm than in his progressions. He never ran out of trouble from the pocket. He wasn't consistently accurate on deep balls.

All of that has changed, and it's now become apparent that there isn't much in the bag Stroud can't do.

Throw on the move? Sure. Just watch the second touchdown pass he threw to Julian Fleming against Toledo. It was a dart, into an end zone filled with chaos, yet Stroud put it right on the money.

Throw across the field to the opposite sideline? Sure. He did that a number of times, to the point where FOX broadcaster Spencer Tillman stated just how often those throws are needed in the NFL, and the guys who can make them will make themselves a lot of money.

Throw the deep ball? Check. Watch the deep throw Stroud made to Cade Stover on a skinny post during Ohio State's second scoring drive. Stover got behind the Rockets' defense and caught a pass so effortlessly it looked as if it was handed to him instead of thrown.

The Buckeyes have a generational talent on their hands, one who will likely obliterate most of the school passing records before he's finished.

He isn't getting by on talent alone, though.

He works, and he studies, and it's made him into a player that NFL scouts covet.

"He's very, very talented," OSU coach Ryan Day said after the win over Toledo. "You saw a wide variety of throws. We saw some in the red zone, on third down, and that's where you make money as a quarterback is in the red zone and on third down. We talked a lot about staying on schedule and making sure we didn't have any three-and-outs in this game. That was important."

Stroud finished the night 22 of 27 for 367 yards and five touchdowns and has a stellar 11-0 TD-to-INT ratio through the first three games.

Offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson has been around the game for quite some time and puts Stroud into some pretty lofty company in terms of how he processes and makes decisions.

"Sam Bradford was the first guy who I thought had the quickest mind, and I would say C.J.'s rivals his," Wilson said. Bradford won the Heisman Trophy as a senior at Oklahoma and finished his career as the all-time leader in pass efficiency rating, which has since been eclipsed. "Not only the ability to have a quick mind, but the ability to see and process. I think he sees things very, very clearly. The way it works with Coach Day and Coach (Corey) Dennis, he's very much in sync with what Coach Day wants him to do, where his eyes need to be and what his looks are."

The fact that Stroud has kept an even keel in the spotlight is a huge plus for the Buckeyes. Many quarterbacks would relish the fame and do whatever possible to keep themselves in the spotlight, but Stroud just keeps his head down and does his work, and the results on the field are a byproduct of that work during the week.

"He does have very good vision, but I thought he had a good week of practice," Day said. "His attitude was excellent. His work ethic was excellent. I thought the time he put in on his own was excellent. We had a tough week of practice. We did. We were physical on Tuesday, physical on Wednesday, and got a ton of reps. We felt that we needed to do that, and he embraced that."

"And it's a lot, you know. As a quarterback, you take a lot on, but his attitude was excellent. His energy was excellent today, and he played really well. I think he fed off having Jaxon (Smith-Njigba) and Julian (Fleming) back in the lineup too. It's great."

Hot Stover League

For years there's been a joke going around BSB World Headquarters about why any self-respecting tight end would come to Ohio State. There are a number of them in

the NFL, but almost none had stats worthy of acclaim. We wonder if it's the system or the player, and usually fall back to the system.

Well, maybe things are finally changing in stuffy old C-Bus, because the Buckeyes have a bona fide pass catcher in sophomore tight end Cade Stover. Through three games Stover has eight receptions – that doesn't sound like much, but compared to predecessor Jeremy Ruckert, it's almost a season's worth.

Ruckert came to OSU as a five-star prospect out of New York and came to prominence in 2019 after catching 14 passes with four touchdowns. The following season, Ruckert had 13 catches and five touchdowns, but it should be noted that OSU played just eight games due to it being the COVID year. Ruckert grabbed 26 passes with three touchdowns last year, a hint that the Buckeyes might throw to the tight end, but it's understandable that Ohio State would ultimately go to its passel of wide receiver talent first.

But in Stover, Ohio State has someone who can get down the seam and outrun a safety, and it certainly looks like he is going to be a regular part of the passing attack.

"I think we saw what Cade can do," Day said. "We saw his versatility. Now you know how tough he is, physically on the line of scrimmage. Now you're starting to see what a weapon he is in the passing game. We actually missed him a couple of times in the end zone that were close."

Wilson has been nothing but effusive when talking about Stover, his upside, and what he brings to the Buckeye offense.

"He's a real leader because he leads by actions first," Wilson said. "His work ethic, his durability, his consistency. We GPS track those guys' yardage, and he's got a lot of yards on Tuesday and Wednesday practice, but then he's up there blocking those defensive ends who are some of the best defensive ends in the country. The wear and tear that he puts in and his ability to consistently practice earns him great respect from his teammates."

"He's a much better athlete than people give him credit for. I think he's the quintessential tight end because he's got size, toughness and he's not flashy. Our team loves him. I love him, and I think he's a special player. We are just starting, and we've got a long way to go with him, and I'm counting on a big year out of that kid."

One of Stroud's few misfires against Toledo was intended for Stover in the back corner of the end zone, but it ended up being an overthrow. So that first career score is still waiting. Given how vital he has been to the passing game, you have to think it's just a matter of time.

Run Game Humming

The Buckeyes toted the rock 44 times against Toledo, averaging 6.4 yards per carry. But it still seems that they don't run it often enough – or at least not early in games.

TreVeyon Henderson is a true weapon, and Miyan Williams is a powerful complement. Yet each averages fewer than 12 carries per game, and that lack of attention to the run game seems to make the Buckeyes easier to defend. In the opener against Notre Dame, the passing game didn't really open up until Day decided to get physical and make a commitment to the ground and pound, and

it worked.

Stroud threw the ball early and often in wins over Arkansas State and Toledo, but it would be nice to put teams back on their heels early with a nice dose of the running game. Then they are more likely to sneak a safety up into the box, which will allow Stroud and his cohorts to go deep.

The ground game was effective against the Rockets, with an unexpected star showing the way.

Freshman Dallan Hayden ended the night with 108 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries, playing most of the second half in relief of Williams, who was in for Henderson, who went out with an injury after scoring a touchdown on the first series. There was even a nice little twist in the second half when Ohio State brought out shades of Woody Hayes, lined up in the Power-I and handed the ball to fullback Mitch Rossi, who bulled over from the 1-yard line.

"We thought that with the 100-year anniversary of the 'Shoe that it would be good to lineup in the 'I' and run the fullback for a touchdown," Day said. "We wanted to get that done this year. Mitch is a weapon for us. We're trying to build those packages."

Day also praised Hayden and the fact he was ready to go as the game got out of hand, and mentioned walk-on TC Caffey as well after he finished with 57 yards and a score on just six carries.

Where there was a noticeable difference was the red zone. With the exception of Caffey's 49-yard bolt, OSU scored four of its five rushing touchdowns from inside the 10, and it wasn't by accident.

"I think the emphasis was more on trying to get the run game going because it gets really hard even though we throw the ball so well," Wilson said. "I know Coach Day, Coach (Brian) Hartline and Coach Dennis always work up the best red-zone plan to throw the ball, but those windows and spaces get tighter. So your ability to run the ball in the red zone is really when you can be a better red-zone offense."

"That was the emphasis of all offseason, to be a little bit better in the run game. We are building that way. I think as the run game goes, you stay on schedule, you get more manageable as you get play-action. That's helped the low red offense. The emphasis was more on can we run the ball better and can we run the ball in tough situations. Right now, we aren't where we need to be, but we are getting better at that, and that's good to see for our team."

Fun Stat

As league play opens, this statistic will be rendered meaningless, but I thought it was interesting that six of the seven teams in the Big Ten East enter conference play undefeated.

Ohio State, Michigan, Penn State, Maryland, Indiana and Rutgers all went 3-0, while Michigan State finished 2-1 after a bad loss to Washington. A couple (OSU and Michigan) have pretty much rolled through the competition while others (Indiana and Rutgers) have had moments where it nearly came crashing down.

In the Big Ten West, only Minnesota remains undefeated.



A West Side Tradition Since 1967

1189 N. Wilson Rd.
(614) 279-3344

& Next Door Tavern
Catch all the Ohio State action
Big Ten Network • NFL Sunday Ticket
14 TVs • OSU Memorabilia



Trying Not To Be Finn-icky About Blowout Win

What do you think when your team racks up 77 points and rolls up 763 yards in total offense? If said team is serious about challenging for a national championship, you think they shouldn't have given up 21 points.

The good news is, as one of the posters on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum put it, it was Ohio State 77, Dequan Finn 21. I doubt that many of the quarterbacks upcoming on the schedule have the same ability and skill set as Finn, who was responsible for 223 yards and all three Toledo touchdowns, nearly equaling the total yardage of Notre Dame (253) and Arkansas State (276) on his own and almost outscoring them combined. And if there is such quarterback ahead on the schedule, Jim Knowles will have the Toledo film to figure out how to stop him.

The even better news is that as good as Finn was, he was not even close to being the best quarterback on the field (though he is sure to be the best QB in many of his games to come). That honor, of course, belongs to Ohio State's own C.J. Stroud. The man's ability to find the open man and his accuracy and touch to connect with that open man were on full display against the Rockets in OSU's 77-21 victory.

I don't feel like his line of 22 completions on 27 attempts (81.5 percent) for 367 yards and five touchdown passes without a pick or a sack does him justice. He was almost magical out there. I am obviously busy on Saturdays, so I don't get to see the other quarterbacks around the nation. But I am hard-pressed to believe that there are many better.

Obviously, his numbers would have been greater if he had played longer, but head coach Ryan Day got him out of the game earlier than usual, and those who read this column know that I was thrilled when Kyle McCord took over with 3:48 to go in the third quarter. I am just not sure how much Stroud can gain at this point by getting more reps against an already battered defense, and whatever he might gain is offset, in my mind, by the risk of injury. McCord and Devin Brown can benefit far more by seeing the game action.

It's not just Stroud and his multitude of receivers who make the Buckeye offense great, however.

Ohio State's first drive of the game was a thing of beauty with the Buckeyes marching 82 yards on eight plays – four running and four passing. Stroud even hit the long-forgotten tight end – in this case Cade Stover – for a 38-yard gain. Day and his Buckeye offense put the college football world on notice that they can not only move the ball but move it in multiple ways.

And let's give credit to the offensive line.

The big guys gave Stroud enough time to pick and choose his receivers and didn't yield a sack. They also helped the ground game to 281 yards and a 6.4 yard per carry average. Through the first three games, Ohio State has suffered just two sacks and the running game has averaged 5.9 yards per attempt.

Much has been made of the improvement of the defense over last year, but the strides made by the offensive line have been equally impressive.

Even if we may have gotten a little ahead of ourselves on the improvement of the defense – and I am not sure that is the case – you have to believe that Ohio State can out-score just about anybody.

The 21 points given up by the defense may look a little worse than it really was. First and foremost, give credit to Finn. He is going to make a lot of defenses look bad before this season is over.

But once again the Ohio State defense

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

buckled down in the second half, giving up seven points and 133 yards after giving up 14 points and 174 yards in the first 30 minutes. Take away Finn's 70 rushing yards and the Buckeyes gave up just 54 yards on 26 carries for a 2.1-yard average. On the season Ohio State has yielded an average of 2.6 yards a carry.

I thought there was some sloppy tackling by the Buckeyes and missed opportunities when it came to sacks. They finished with three, but only one in the first half.

I think these are things that can be corrected, and Jim Knowles is probably the man to correct them.

We'll know a lot more about the Buckeyes, both on offense and defense, when they face Wisconsin on Sept. 24. But the nonleague portion of the slate has given Ohio State fans plenty to be excited about.

This, That And The Tight End

Could Ohio State using the tight end in the air game be more than a passing fancy (if you will pardon the expression)? The Buckeyes have occasionally looked to the tight end in the past. But then it was usually put on mothballs to bring out again somewhere down the line. Dare I say it, but in 2022 it looks like Cade Stover is every bit as much a part of the passing game as Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Emeka Egbuka or Marvin Harrison Jr.

Stover has caught at least two passes in each of the first three games, and against Toledo he was targeted five times, catching three for 83 yards and an un-tight-end-like 27.7-yard average per reception. He is third on the team behind Egbuka and Harrison with eight catches for 137 yards and a 17.1-yard average.

About the only thing left for Stover to do is score a touchdown.

I know a lot was made of the fact that one of Stroud's few "misses" against Toledo was a high throw to Stover in the end zone. Did anyone besides me think that pass was catchable for the athletic Stover? Even Stroud, as hard to believe as it might seem, is not going to be right on target every time.

"I missed him in the back (of the end zone)," Stroud said. "That killed me. I just get so excited in a place like that. Those are really the hardest throws when people are wide open. I don't know why it is, but I wish I hit him."

Championship-caliber receivers have to make the tough catch once in a while.

* Speaking of tough catches, do you wonder if Brian Hartline works on inbounds foot control with his receivers? Their ability to get one and sometimes even two feet down while heading out of bounds is remarkable.

This is especially critical when you are playing with a quarterback like Stroud, who is going to thread the needle at the sideline or the back of the end zone and count on his receiver to get the foot down and make the catch.

* We have been hearing about Sonny Styles for what seems like forever now. And it looks like the freshman was worth the wait, even if we don't know at what position he might end up.

Styles announced his presence with a crushing hit in the fourth quarter and finished the game with three tackles, one for a loss. This from a guy who should still be playing Friday nights with nearby Pickerington Central.

Styles is currently listed as a safety, but he is also listed at 6-4, 222-pounds, a frame that could ultimately land him at any number of positions. He looks like a Jim Knowles special, if ever there was one, so it should be fun to see how his career at OSU pans out.

Things Change, They Don't

We have been taking a look back 10 years to Urban Meyer's first season as coach of the Buckeyes as part of our Reprint Thursday feature at BuckeyeSports.com. On Sept. 15 we reprinted several stories covering Ohio State's 35-28 win over Cal in Ohio Stadium on Sept. 15, 2012.

Ohio State needed a 72-yard pass from Braxton Miller to Devin Smith with 3:26 remaining in the game to secure the win. The Buckeyes yielded 512 yards in the contest while gaining 412 of their own to run their record to 3-0.

I was struck by something then-managing editor Mark Rea said after that game.

"On one hand, Ohio State features one of the most electrifying players in college football (Miller)," Rea wrote in the Sept. 22, 2012, issue of BSB. "On the other, its defense displays an almost maddening penchant for giving up big plays. Offensively the team has strung together three consecutive games in which it has gained 400 total yards or more for the first time since 2010. But defensively, the Buckeyes gave up more yards to California than the unit had surrendered to any single opponent since October 2005."

What struck me about Mark's comment at the time was what a big deal it was that the Buckeyes had strung together three straight games of gaining 400 yards or more. OSU gaining 400 yards in a game has become ho-hum since Meyer took over 10 years ago.

Last year, for instance, the Buckeyes gained 400 yards or more in every game, including 612 and 458 in losses to Oregon and Michigan, respectively. In fact, the Buckeyes gained more than 500 yards in nine of 13 games and over 600 yards five times, with a high of 683 in the Rose Bowl against Utah and the low of 458 against the Wolverines.

I also thought about 512 yards yielded to the Bears being the most at the time since 2005, seven years previous. It seems that, despite all the gains (literally and figuratively) on offense the Buckeyes have made under Meyer and current coach Ryan Day, they continue to periodically struggle on defense. The defense struggled in Meyer's early years, and he had to bring in Chris Ash to straighten things out and help lead the Buckeyes to the national championship in 2014.

Ohio State's struggles on defense in 2018 were epic, and Day was forced to bring in Jeff Hafley the following year to help straighten things out, and Ohio State returned to the playoffs. And the trials and tribulations of the defense in 2020 and 2021 are quite fresh in our minds and resulted in the hiring of Jim Knowles to right the ship, so far to favorable reviews.

An intriguing thought is this: While Ash and Hafley parlayed their brief stays in Columbus into head-coaching jobs at Rutgers and Boston College, respectively, Knowles is a longtime assistant coach who, like another defensive assistant stalwart Larry Johnson, may be perfectly content to stay out of the limelight and remain an assistant, giving continuity to the Buckeye defense.

Here's something that surprised me about

that 2012 season.

Despite the presence of Meyer and his offensive guru sidekick Tom Herman, Ohio State finished 47th in the nation in total yardage (423.8) and actually ranked higher on defense, allowing 359.6 yards to finish 34th in the country.

The offense improved to seventh in the country the following year (511.9), while the defense dropped to 46th in total defense (377.4), prompting Meyer to make changes on the defensive side of the ball and bring in Ash.

Ohio State's defense improved to 19th (342.4) in 2014, good enough for the national championship when coupled with the No. 9 offense in the country (511.6). In 2015 the defense improved to ninth in the country, earning Ash the head job with the Scarlet Knights, and that season kicked off a string of three straight top-10 defensive finishes, the final two under the oft-reviled Greg Schiano.

Meanwhile, the Ohio State offense fell to 41st following the national championship season (434.1) and 31st in 2016 (459.2). Enter Day, first as quarterbacks coach and co-offensive coordinator in 2017 before becoming head coach in 2019. The Buckeyes have been in the top 10 in total offense every year since, including second in 2018 (535.6) and culminating in the top ranking last season (561.5). The Buckeyes have averaged over 500 yards a game in each of those five seasons under Day's tutelage, making Mark's three straight games of 400 yards back in 2012 seem like a quaint relic of a bygone era.

As mentioned, the defense has continued to have its ups and downs.

After the three straight top-10 finishes from 2015-17 came the disaster of 2018, with Schiano being joined by Alex Grinch as co-defensive coordinator and the Buckeyes falling to 72nd in total defense (403.4), not to mention 86th in pass defense (245.2).

Enter Hafley, who keyed one of the more remarkable defensive turnarounds ever, lifting the Buckeyes to the top of the heap, yielding only 259.7 yards per game. He was quickly off to BC, paving the way for Kerry Coombs' return to Columbus.

Give Coombs credit. His defenses were at least consistent. They both finished 59th in the country, giving up 401.6 yards in 2020 and 372.9 in 2021.

Now it's Knowles' turn. The bar he was left wasn't set very high. Whether he is able to reach the top-five finish he predicted for his defense this season remains to be seen, but so far at least, the improvement has been readily apparent.

As for the offense, after what we saw against Toledo, another top-10 finish and another season of more than 500 yards a game seems all but guaranteed.

Back On Lane Avenue

Game day does not seem the same on Lane Ave. since the closing of longtime fixture Conrads College Gifts. But fans of the iconic Buckeye gift and apparel store don't have to go far anymore to fill their Buckeye needs.

As many of you may have already discovered, Conrads has set up a mammoth tent on home game days, just steps from the old store at the O-Zone Tailgate in front of the Riverwatch Tower at 364 W. Lane Ave.

Also, watch for details on a new Conrads brick-and-mortar store coming soon. For information on the location and opening, call (614) 269-7091.

Remember, Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP subscribers get 20 percent off their purchases of non-sale items at Conrads.

CONRADS

THE BUCKEYE STATE STORE™

BLACK OUT THE BADGERS



BEAT WISCONSIN BUTTON
~~\$2~~ FREE!



ATHLETIC O BLACK POLO
\$54.95



WOMEN'S SWOOP TEE
\$44.95



BLOCK O TEE
\$19.95



WOODY ADJ HAT
\$24.95



ATHLETIC O BUCKLE HAT
\$25.95



FOOTBALL ADJ HAT
\$29.95



BLACK HELMET DECALS
\$12.95



SCAN TO SHOP THE
BLACK OUT COLLECTION

FOOTBALL SEASON HOME GAME POP-UP
OVER 1,000 SQ FT OF BUCKEYE GEAR
RIVERWATCH TOWER · 364 W LANE AVE
FREE BEAT BUTTON EACH GAME

NEW LOCATION OPENING FALL 2022
OPENING DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED
71 W SCHROCK RD · WESTERVILLE, OH
OUR LARGEST STORE EVER



614-269-7091

ALWAYS OPEN AT
CONRADSOSU.COM



SCAN TO SHOP