

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Dec. 3, 2022

## Ohio State Suffers Stunning Home Loss To Michigan

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Within seconds of the clock hitting all zeroes in No. 2 Ohio State's 45-23 loss to No. 3 Michigan on Nov. 26, a clear plan was set into motion by the Wolverines. Several players produced a sizable flag from the sideline with Michigan's "Block M" logo and carried it to midfield before firmly planting it directly in the center of Ohio State's "Block O" logo at the 50-yard line, all while gesturing to the stunned crowd of 106,787 who watched the Wolverines come into Ohio Stadium and win for the first time since 2000.

The act itself is a relatively harmless one – in fact it was done by Baker Mayfield of Oklahoma in 2017 – but the flag planting by Michigan marks a turning point in the rivalry. Not only did the Wolverines (12-0, 9-0 Big Ten) feel confident enough in a win to plan the spectacle at the game's conclusion, but they were able to follow through, coming into Ohio State's house and issuing another beatdown – the second in as many seasons – as the Buckeyes' undefeated season was brought to an end.

With the loss, Ohio State (11-1, 8-1) has not claimed victory over Michigan since 2019 – with the obvious caveat that The Game was not played at Ohio Stadium in 2020 as scheduled – and has lost two straight for the first time since the 1999 and 2000 seasons, and at least those games (38-26 in 2000 and 24-17 in 1999) were close. To find the last time Ohio State lost to Michigan by at least 15 points in back-to-back seasons, one would have to go back to 1946 (a 58-6 loss in Columbus) and 1947 (a 21-0 loss in Ann Arbor).

Furthermore, Michigan's 22-point margin of victory is the largest for the Wolverines since a 28-0 win in Ann Arbor on Nov. 20, 1993, and the largest win in Columbus since a 22-0 win on Nov. 20, 1976. It's Michigan's strongest stretch in the rivalry in over two decades and, historically speaking, one of the Wolverines' best two-game runs in series history. Additionally, a win this season helped assuage any concerns from Ann Arbor that last season's win was a fluke and on the flipside created concerns in Columbus that it was not a fluke.

With the Wolverines surging, it's anyone's guess where the rivalry could go next, and for the foreseeable future, it appears to be anyone's game.

"We'll figure out what's next," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day, who fell to 1-2 against the Wolverines. "I don't know ex-



SONNY BROCKWAY

**NOT THEIR DAY** – Ohio State suffered a second loss in as many seasons to Michigan, falling 45-23 in front of 106,787 fans at Ohio Stadium on Nov. 26. It was the first loss to the Wolverines in back-to-back seasons by the Buckeyes since 1999-2000, and with the loss, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day fell to 1-2 against Michigan.

actly what is next right now, but that's life at Ohio State. I certainly know what this game means to everybody, and so when you lose, it all comes back to me. I'm the head coach, and that's what probably hurts the most."

The hurt began at this same time last season, with the Buckeyes reeling after a 42-27 loss to the Wolverines in Ann Arbor. Ohio State was dominated in the trenches in that contest amid adverse weather conditions and a case of flu ripping through the team.

The loss sparked the direction of the program over the last season, with the coaches and players developing an

edge fueled by the embarrassment against Michigan and the team eager to exact revenge. The venue for the potential comeuppance shifted south to Columbus this year, and unlike last season's conditions, there was nary a cloud in the sky on the 50-degree day, and the team seemed locked in as The Game approached.

"This is not the outcome that we all envisioned," Day said. "I thought we had really good preparation, I thought

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## Buckeye Leaves **BSB Subscribers**

**Tiffin Buckeye:** None.

*Ohio State was unable to defend Ohio Stadium against rival Michigan as the Wolverines marched into Columbus and dominated the Buckeyes en route to a 45-23 victory. Despite the disappointing loss, there were a few players worthy of Buckeye Leaves, and we asked BSB staff writers and readers to bestow Leaves to their players of the game.*

**Andy Anders, BSB:** My Buckeye Leaf goes to Chip Trayanum, who stepped in at running back and had a solid game with an injury to TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams clearly being limited.

Trayanum picked up 83 yards on 14 carries, an average of 5.9 per tote in a losing effort. His long run of the day was 24 yards, as he gained much of his yardage in chunks. Trayanum, the fifth or possibly sixth running back on OSU's depth chart entering the season, filled in admirably.

**Jack Emerson, BSB:** On a day that not many Ohio State players were deserving of recognition, kicker Noah Ruggles was steady in the kicking game for the Buckeyes.

Ruggles drilled a trio of kicks, including a long of 47, to give Ohio State a puncher's chance against the Wolverines. His 27-yarder with 7:23 to go in the fourth quarter put the Buckeyes within one possession. However, the Wolverines scored a 75-yard rushing touchdown on the very next play from scrimmage to put the game out of reach.

Ruggles also hit on both of his extra-point attempts in the loss.

**Braden Moles, BSB:** Well, someone has to get a Buckeye Leaf. I'll go with C.J. Stroud, who even in the loss finished 31 of 48 for 349 yards and two touchdowns, with both of his interceptions going off the hands of a receiver.

It speaks to a bigger issue in the loss to the Wolverines in which Ohio State's receivers offered little in the way of help to Stroud, who was one of the few Buckeyes that showed some fight. Instead, he'll most likely leave Ohio State with two losses to Michigan.

**PeyoteBuck:** I give mine to J.J. McCarthy, who overcame the odds in a hostile environment. As for the Buckeyes, I would take some back for a seemingly endless parade of rookie mistakes and penalties. Are you listening, Gee Scott Jr.? Still, I'd give a leaf to Marvin Harrison Jr. That's about it.

**bstu9:** Chip Trayanum. That guy looks like he could be a really good RB.

**BuckeyeScott:** Nil, naught, zippo, zilch, nadda, zero, nothing, goose egg and diddly squat!

**AnthonyBuckeye:** It is hard to give any Buckeye leaves after a loss to TTUN, but the efforts of Tommy Eichenberg (speedy tackles), Zach Harrison (several batted down passes), Chip Trayanum (for effectively running when he was called upon) and Marvin Harrison Jr. (a few more unbelievable catches) are worthy of being given Buckeye leaves. Several Buckeyes who committed unsportsmanlike conduct penalties should be divested of leaves given to them in the previous games. Also, no Buckeye leaves for second-half adjustments by either the defensive or offensive coaching staffs.

**R1TBDBITL:** A leaf for Noah Ruggles for the 47-yarder that was pertinent at that time in the game. We saved a lot of paper and glue this week.

**Mcarr:** I'll be contrarian to most everyone else. I don't think it's fair to punish guys who played their hearts out by withholding leaves. On offense, I will go with Chip Trayanum. He came from out of the blue to rush for 83 yards and grab what should have been a game-swinging catch in the third period (oh those penalties). On special teams, Noah Ruggles did his job, hitting a pair of field goals, including one that tested what I believe to be his limit. Defense is a little more difficult. I'll go with Tommy Eichenberg, just because, and Zach Harrison, who knocked down a couple of passes.

## From The Message Board

**The results weren't quite what was expected among much of the Ohio State fan base. Michigan had its way with the Buckeyes in the second half and ran away with a 45-23 win at Ohio Stadium, beating Ohio State for the second time in as many seasons. For this Fan Forum, we asked readers to put themselves in the shoes of a BSB columnist and asked them what they would touch on if they wrote a column about the game. Here are some of the responses:**

"If one goes back 118 years, the results in this rivalry are often, very often, unpredictable. Unexpected wins and losses for both teams."

– Terrier Buck

"Shell shocked. An absolute embarrassment. Unprepared. Soft. Undisciplined effort. All the coaches need to take a look in the mirror."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"I remember numerous great Buckeye teams in the past that had two, even three, All-American-caliber defensive backs, corners and safeties and they couldn't beat Michigan and win the Big Ten Title or the national title. This year's team had no All-Americans at corner or safety. Sadly, it was only a matter of time before an opponent was going to expose that weakness. With that in mind, if they can win a bowl game and finish 12-1, that will be something to celebrate. Will any players opt out of the bowl game?"

– BYRON MCNUTT

"Not only do we need a defensive coordinator, but also someone on the offensive side to call plays. PATHETIC that we could not have given this team a better coaching staff. They worked so hard to then be out coached."

– Al Herstig

"Not even Ruggles and Mirco could save us this time. TTUN sniffed out our weak spots (corners) like a blue tick hound and hunted us down. They deserved the win."

– PeyoteBuck

"Our DBs were awful, torched for 69, 75, and 45-yard TDs. Each time there was a major coverage breakdown. They also committed critical pass interference penalties because they ran into the receiver rather than turn their head and find the ball. The defense appeared to quit late in the game by giving up 75 and 85-yard running TDs. Second year in a row the D was pushed around when it mattered."

– Bucks89

"Ryan Day needs to make sure that this does not become another John Cooper

era. Go through every play call and strategy of each TTUN game he lost and come up with answers on what he would have done differently in each case."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"Has this team reached its ceiling under Ryan Day? It's quite possible that they have."

– bstu9

"Those who were bored with all the wins over TTUN since the arrival of Tressel are getting a reminder of how important The Game is. Ryan Day has been the darling of Ohio State fans dating back to his stint as interim coach in 2018. Buckeye fans loved his high-flying offense and ability to bring in top-flight quarterbacks, the likes of which we don't normally see in Columbus. Two losses to our rivals and suddenly he is being lumped in with John Cooper (which is not the worst thing. He is in the College Football Hall of Fame). Would the narrative be different if we had had a chance to play TTUN in 2020? By the way, people seem to forget that Day HAS a win over Michigan, a quite convincing one in Ann Arbor."

– Poster That Harley Built

"Now that Mr. Stroud is probably out of the Heisman race, I look around to other programs and notice that most of the successful ones have a mobile quarterback. One that not only can scramble outside the pocket, but that is a constant threat to run for positive yardage. Our opponents can double cover our receivers all day long and not worry that Stroud will run. Whether this is his decision or a coaching decision I do not know, but it hurts the team not to have this threat. Yesterday I kept wishing for Braxton, J.T. or Justin to show up."

– R1TBDBITL

"Tough, tough loss, but (an) 11-1 season. Those that have competed realize that once in a while teams try too hard. You could see that yesterday. No one was enjoying the moment. This staff will jell. We can wallow for a while ... now move on and get ready for the playoffs or the bowl game."

– John Lanning

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Terrible Performance

Unacceptable performance by the coaching staff. Undisciplined team, false starts, late hits, personal fouls that have happened all year haven't been cleaned up by Ryan Day!

New DC, same terrible defense.

**Pence Roth**  
Bradenton, Fla.

### Worse Than Last Year

What happened on Nov. 26 in Columbus is way worse than what happened last year in Ann Arbor. The coaching staff should be thoroughly ashamed and embarrassed. Buckeye Nation deserves

better.

**Brian Copfer**  
Indian Hill, 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.*

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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
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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

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## Error-Prone Bucks Fall Again To Michigan

I swear every year that I will not allow my heart to overrule what I know to be real inside my head, and yet there I was again, willing to overlook all of those coverage busts committed this season by the Ohio State secondary, discounting all of those chunk plays allowed against lesser opponents, and fooling myself into believing somehow that wouldn't be a problem against the third-ranked team in the nation.

Nevertheless, Michigan gathered chunk plays by the bushel, blew the Buckeyes off their home field in the second half, and ran away (literally as well as figuratively) with a 45-23 victory.

After having their toughness (read: manhood) questioned in the wake of last year's 42-27 loss in Ann Arbor, Ohio State players and coaches spent most of the offseason scratching at scars from that game, vowing to match Michigan this year in physicality. And that was an approach that appeared to be working early. The Buckeyes took the opening kickoff and marched 81 yards for a touchdown, converting three different third-and-short situations in the process.

But after that methodical march, a 12-play drive that featured an even mix of six running plays and six passes, OSU head coach Ryan Day fell back on some questionable play-calling that has become increasingly problematic. Yardage in the running game appeared to be there for the taking, yet Day stayed true to his coaching DNA by continuing to call pass play after pass play.

During Ohio State's second offensive possession, Miyan Williams powered his way to a first-down conversion on a third-and-3 run, but the next play was a throw to Xavier Johnson in perimeter traffic that netted minimal yardage. Then after Williams was stuffed up the middle for no gain, Stroud tried to get the ball to a well-covered Emeka Egbuka in the right flat. Egbuka stumbled, the pass fell incomplete, and Ohio State was forced to settle for a field goal, although it still held a 10-3 lead at that point.

After the defense forced a three-and-out, the Buckeyes were on the march again and had a first down at the Michigan 42 when Day called for another pass play. Stroud had an eternity to throw, but with his downfield receivers covered, the QB decided to dump the ball in the right flat to tight end Cade Stover. A throw into the fifth row of the bleachers would have been more prudent since the Wolverines quickly swarmed Stover and threw him for a 3-yard loss.

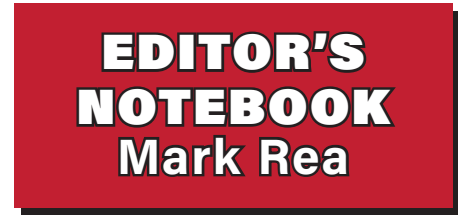
Later in the same possession, faced with a fourth-and-2, Day rolled the dice – but not with a running game which to that point had averaged 5.7 yards on 14 attempts. What better time to assert your physical authority and send a signal to Michigan that this year would indeed be different in the trenches? Instead, Stroud faked to Williams (there appeared to be a big enough hole to get the necessary first-down yardage) and tried to get a throw downfield to a well-covered Stover, who let the ball bounce through his hands.

No first down, no points – only a heavy sigh from the Ohio Stadium crowd of 106,787 that sensed whatever early momentum the Buckeyes enjoyed had been lost.

That collective sigh turned into a full-throated groan midway through the second quarter despite the fact Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy found himself facing a third-and-9 situation and staring at an OSU defense that had eight men bunched near the line of scrimmage. To that point, Ohio State had largely been the aggressor, limiting the Wolverines to only 49 total yards.

The Buckeyes dialed up a blitz, and safety

Lathan Ransom nearly got to McCarthy for a sack. But the Michigan quarterback got the ball away a split-second before Ransom arrived, and receiver Cornelius Johnson was waiting for it. Johnson made the catch at the 40-yard line, danced away from cornerback Cameron Brown and then stepped out of a shoestring tackle attempt by defensive end Jack Sawyer before completing a 69-yard touchdown play that completely flipped the game's script.



Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles had obviously devised a game plan centered upon stopping the Wolverines on the ground. Michigan entered the game with the nation's No. 4 rushing offense, and by halftime the Buckeyes had stonewalled their opponents, allowing only 10 yards on the ground to a team that had been averaging 243.8 yards per game.

But selling out to stop the run came at a heavy price. After Ohio State went back in front with a 47-yard field goal from Noah Ruggles to make it 13-10 at the 5:36 mark of the second quarter, McCarthy and Johnson struck again. Johnson got behind OSU cornerback Cam Martinez (and I mean way behind) and reeled in a McCarthy heave for a 75-yard touchdown and a 17-13 lead.

On the national telecast of the game, excitable Fox play-by-play announcer Gus Johnson gushed, "They said (McCarthy) couldn't throw the deep ball," to which color analyst Joel Klatt added, "Well, he did it there." With all due respect, the Michigan receiver was so impossibly wide open that my 64-year-old arm complete with an arthritic elbow and shoulder could have made that throw.

The Buckeyes offered an immediate answer when Marvin Harrison Jr. latched onto a 42-yard touchdown catch of his own to give Ohio State a 20-17 halftime lead. But the Buckeyes, who had been masters throughout the season when it came to making halftime adjustments, apparently made none against Michigan. As a result, the Wolverines hit OSU with big gain after big gain.

Seven plays into the third quarter, Michigan tight end Colston Loveland got behind Ransom for a 45-yard touchdown catch. It was another much-too-easy throw for McCarthy to a wide-open receiver, and it put the Wolverines in front by a 24-20 score.

Twice in the fourth quarter when the Buckeyes were still clinging to faint hopes of a comeback, they were hit with long touchdown plays again – this time on breakaway runs by Donovan Edwards. Playing in place of injured starter Blake Corum and nursing a painful hand injury that affected the way he held the football, Edwards nevertheless added 160 yards to his game-high rushing total of 216 on those two runs alone, each made possible when he broke through the line of scrimmage and Ohio State had no linebacker or safety help in the middle of the field.

In the end, while the final score might not have been wholly indicative of how close the game was played for much of the afternoon, it was a worthy representation of the way the balance of power seems to have tipped in a rivalry Ohio State dominated for so long.

The Buckeyes will continue to grab headlines by scoring boatloads of points, something seemingly as attractive on the recruiting trail

as alternate jerseys and NIL payola. But in the trenches, especially against your sworn and hated rival, reality trumps perception every single time, and until Ohio State grasps that concept, the Buckeyes are going to continue to be the nail in this series rather than the hammer.

### Beating Yourself

I have often thought one of the only teams that could beat Ohio State this year was Ohio State itself, and that certainly played out against Michigan. There isn't enough room on this page (in this entire issue of BSB, for that matter) to list every mistake the Buckeyes made, but there were a few that were more glaring than others.

Perhaps most egregious among the busted coverages and inherent pass-interference penalties that often come with them, blown assignments, false starts and missed blocks was a sequence that smothered any kind of momentum the Buckeyes were desperately trying to regain.

Midway through the third quarter with Michigan holding a 24-20 lead, Chip Trayanum turned a short pass into 24-yard gain to give the Buckeyes a first down at the U-M 24. It might have signaled a huge turning point in the game except that the play was wiped out by a holding call on left guard Donovan Jackson, a huge mistake exacerbated when Gee Scott Jr. – a veteran third-year player who should definitely know better – headbutted a Michigan player on the sideline in full view of field judge Raymond Daniel.

Not only was Trayanum's gain nullified, both penalties were assessed, costing Ohio State a total of 49 yards on one play. The Buckeyes were eventually forced to punt, and that set up a possession that ended with McCarthy's dagger of a touchdown run that made it 31-20 with 13:10 to go in the game.

During this offseason, when Ohio State players and coaches are picking at a fresh set of scars, they might want to devote a little less time to simply lifting weights and a little more to mental focus, concentration and poise under pressure.

### What's Day To Do?

Despite 45 victories in his first 50 games as head coach at Ohio State, Day is about to embark upon an offseason the likes of which he has never experienced.

The latest loss gave him a 1-2 record against Michigan, making him the first permanent OSU head coach with a losing record in the rivalry since John Cooper went into retirement with his infamous 2-10-1 mark against the Wolverines.

If you think that is an unfair comparison, I might agree. But it's also the reality of the situation. Ohio State fans demand excellence, and they have no problem airing their opinion if they don't get it. After back-to-back failures in national championship games, Buckeye Nation turned on Jim Tressel, and he won nine out of 10 times against Michigan.

Day continues to recruit at an extremely high level, and his aforementioned record is among the best in college football history after 50 games. And before we go any further, there is no way he is on the hot seat at Ohio State. He has a long-term contract, and the university has never had any appetite for eating long-term contracts.

Still, Day realizes along with everyone else that losing to Michigan in back-to-back seasons is not acceptable at Ohio State. Cooper allowed it to become a year-long obsession that ultimately worked against him.

How Day handles that obsession remains up for conjecture.



# OHIO STATE INSIDER

## Ohio State Honors 23 On Senior Day

Prior to Ohio State's 45-23 loss to Michigan on Nov. 26, the Buckeyes celebrated the efforts of 23 players – including 22 seniors and a lone redshirt junior – during their Senior Day ceremonies at Ohio Stadium.

Several players with an additional year of eligibility, stemming from the extra year provided by the NCAA during the 2020 season, were recognized. The group included wide receiver Kamryn Babb, cornerback Cameron Brown, defensive end Tyler Friday, linebacker Palaie Gaoteote IV, defensive end Zach Harrison, linebacker Javontae Jean-Baptiste, wide receiver Xavier Johnson, offensive tackle Dawand Jones, offensive lineman Matthew Jones, safety Josh Proctor, and defensive tackle Taron Vincent.

In addition to those players, defensive tackle Jerron Cage, safety Tanner McCalister, cornerback Lloyd McFarquhar, linebacker Teradja Mitchell, punter Michael O'Shaughnessy, tight end Mitch Rossi, long snapper Bradley Robinson, kicker Noah Ruggles and offensive lineman Ryan Smith – who have no eligibility remaining – were also honored.

Safety Ronnie Hickman was the only redshirt junior to be honored, but more on him later. Although quarterback C.J. Stroud, offensive tackle Paris Johnson Jr. and wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba are expected to enter the 2023 NFL draft, the trio did not partake in Senior Day activities.

A pair of medically retired players also heard their names called at Ohio Stadium

when running back Marcus Crowley and offensive lineman Harry Miller received recognition from the program.

## Hickman Entering NFL Draft After This Season

Hickman revealed on Nov. 22 that he planned to enter his name into the NFL draft following this season's conclusion and noted that the game against Michigan was his final game at Ohio Stadium.

"That's going to be my last game in the 'Shoe, so I'm going to cherish and enjoy it the best I can," Hickman said prior to the game. "Everyone's clock starts ticking at a certain point. At some point, it's going to be time for everyone to take that next step, and I think that's now."

This is Hickman's fourth season at Ohio State, and he's been a standout this year in the "Adjuster" role under defensive coordinator Jim Knowles after starting for the Buckeyes last season. The South Orange, N.J., native is fourth on the team in tackles with 51 (including 24 solo) and has an interception in addition to six pass breakups through the end of the regular season.

Hickman has two years of eligibility remaining had he decided to use them, but he will instead call it a college career once this season has concluded.

## Henderson Out, Williams Available Vs. Michigan

The carousel at running back continued to spin for Ohio State, when TreVeyon Henderson was unavailable against Michigan. However, Miyan Williams returned vs. the Wolverines after missing the Buckeyes' tilt with Maryland on Nov. 19.

While the running back situation remained in flux, Ohio State was also without Smith-Njigba for the fifth consecutive game after there were some rumblings that he would return against the Wolverines.

Starting right guard Matthew Jones was the lone game-time decision for the Buckeyes after he sustained a lower-body injury during the fourth quarter of Ohio State's 43-30 win over Maryland. Jones did not play against the Wolverines after going through

## 2022 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 3	NOTRE DAME	W, 21-10	ABC	8-4, 38-27 loss to USC
Sept. 10	ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	BTN	3-8, 48-19 loss to Troy
Sept. 17	TOLEDO	W, 77-21	FOX	7-5, 20-14 loss to Western Michigan
Sept. 24	WISCONSIN	W, 52-21	ABC	6-5, 23-16 loss to Minnesota
Oct. 1	RUTGERS	W, 49-10	BTN	4-8, 37-0 loss to Maryland
Oct. 8	at Michigan State	W, 49-20	ABC	5-7, 35-16 loss to Penn State
Oct. 22	IOWA	W, 54-10	FOX	7-5, 24-17 loss to Nebraska
Oct. 29	at Penn State	W, 44-31	FOX	10-2, 35-16 win over Michigan State
Nov. 5	at Northwestern	W, 21-7	ABC	1-11, 41-3 loss to Illinois
Nov. 12	INDIANA	W, 56-14	FOX	4-8, 30-16 loss to Purdue
Nov. 19	at Maryland	W, 43-30	ABC	7-5, 37-0 win over Rutgers
Nov. 26	MICHIGAN	L, 45-23	FOX	12-0, <b>45-23 win over Ohio State</b>

warmups, and both Enokk Vimahi and Josh Fryar competed in his place, sharing drives during the first half with Vimahi being listed as the starter, before the Buckeyes rode with Fryar the rest of the way.

Ohio State also saw a discouraging injury development to one of its rising stars at linebacker. Freshman C.J. Hicks sustained a leg injury after he collided with kick returner Xavier Johnson on the game's opening kickoff. Hicks was helped off the field by the Ohio State medical staff and did not put any weight on his right leg in the process.

## Day Now Fifth Coach To Lose Two Of First Three Vs. U-M

Although Ohio State head coach Ryan Day holds a 45-5 record at the helm of the Buckeye program through his first four seasons, his 1-2 mark against rival Michigan is all that stands out to Buckeye fans after the blowout loss at the hands of the Wolverines.

With the most recent loss, Day became just the fifth coach in Ohio State history to lose at least two of his first three meetings with the Wolverines. He joins Albert E. Herinstein, Wes Fesler and John Cooper, the most recent case of early-career struggles in The Game. Cooper lost his first three appearances from 1988-90.

However, there is some hope for Day. Legendary Ohio State coach Woody Hayes also sustained a pair of losses in his first three appearances in The Game but went on to finish his career with three national

titles and a 16-11-1 record against the Wolverines.

## Egbuka Breaks 1,000-Yard Mark Against Michigan

For the second consecutive season, Ohio State produced a pair of 1,000-yard receivers when sophomore Emeka Egbuka joined Marvin Harrison Jr. beyond the milestone on a 44-yard reception during the fourth quarter against Michigan.

This season, Egbuka has hauled in 66 receptions for 1,039 yards and nine scores to go along with Harrison's 72 catches for 1,157 yards and 12 touchdowns. The sophomore duo provided shades of Smith-Njigba and former OSU wideout Garrett Wilson, who each crossed the 1,000-yard mark in 2021. Smith-Njigba totaled 1,606 yards while Wilson added 1,058. Smith-Njigba and Wilson were the first duo in Ohio State history to surpass 1,000 receiving yards in a single season.

Egbuka became the ninth receiver in Ohio State history to reach quadruple digits in yardage, joining Cris Carter (1986, 1,127), Terry Glenn (1995, 1,411), David Boston (1998, 1,435), Michael Jenkins (2002, 1,076), Parris Campbell (2018, 1,063) Wilson, Smith-Njigba and Harrison.

## Former OSU Players Sound Off On Michigan Loss

As Ohio State folded in the second half of its blowout loss to Michigan, several former Buckeyes took to Twitter to voice their displeasure with their alma mater's performance in The Game.

Wide receiver Paris Campbell – who played for the Buckeyes from 2015-18 – called the loss "embarrassing" and "disgusting" as the second half unfolded in front of his eyes. Fellow former Buckeye receiver Johnnie Dixon was upset that Ohio State was unable to defend its home stadium.

"Can't let this happen at the shoe ..." Dixon tweeted.

Former Ohio State linebacker Darron Lee expressed displeasure toward Ohio State's revamped defense while reflecting on one of his own wins against Michigan.

"That effort was dogs-t. I do not want to hear anything about the new defense being better," Lee tweeted. "We beat a Harbaugh-coached team, by almost 30 with one defensive call, Over 4.....in their house."

In addition to his tweet, Lee also posted a picture of former OSU head coach Urban Meyer – who was at the game with FOX's "Big Noon Kickoff" show – standing on the sideline with a stern look on his face with the caption, "I know this look ..."

With the Buckeyes giving up several touchdowns on explosive touchdown

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## Last Weekly Print Issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin

The is the last print issue of our fall weekly publishing schedule. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will return with its big Bowl Preview Issue the week of Dec. 17. We will switch to our biweekly winter/spring publishing schedule after the New Year.

In the meantime, there is no reason to miss any of the Buckeye sports action. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff will be manning the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, reporting on any breaking stories, plus posting additional features between now and the next print issue.

Football recruiting's early signing period is rapidly approaching, and the BSB staff will be monitoring any late prep comings and goings. We will also have extensive coverage of the men's and women's basketball teams, the wrestling and hockey teams and all the other Olympic sports action at BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB subscribers.

Along with daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. Additionally, staff members man the 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.

Don't forget, 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.

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If you have any questions about BuckeyeSports.com feel free to call us at the above number.

passes of 69, 75 and 45 yards against the Wolverines, former defensive back Chimdi Chekwa noted his confusion with the secondary's play.

"Why do our DBs panic when the ball is in the air? I don't understand this," Chekwa said.

As Day took his second consecutive loss against Michigan, former OSU running back Maurice Claret joked that he's available to coach if needed.

"I'm going to show up to the facility every day until they put me on the staff," Claret tweeted.

### OSU-Michigan Sets FOX Viewership Record

While 106,787 fans packed Ohio Stadium to watch Ohio State and Michigan bat-

tle for Big Ten East supremacy, an average of 17 million viewers were locked into their TV sets, setting the FOX viewership record for a regular-season college football game.

The 2022 edition of The Game also served as the most-watched regular-season game on any network since 2011, when No. 1 LSU squared off with No. 2 Alabama and drew 20 million viewers on CBS. Viewership for The Game peaked at 19.6 million viewers, which marks the most-watched meeting between Ohio State and Michigan since "The Game of the Century" in 2006.

Viewership rose compared to last season's game, as the 2021 game drew 15.89 million viewers. Ohio State and Michigan also surpassed the previous most-watched game of this season by a landslide. Tennessee-Georgia on Nov. 5 drew 13.1 million

viewers on CBS.

### The Game Returns To The 'Shoe After Four-Year Hiatus

Ohio State and Michigan squared off in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 26 for the first time since 2018, after the cancellation of the 2020 game due to COVID-19 cases in the Wolverine program kept the game outside of Columbus for four years.

Prior to the contest, Day said the game carried some added significance due to its return to Columbus.

"It's the first time in four years," Day said Nov. 22. "It's been a while and being the 100th year anniversary (of Ohio Stadium), it's going to mean a lot more to a lot of people. I've learned so much over my time here at Ohio State about what this tradition

means to so many across the country. And that's why we work the game so hard and take a lot of pride and being our best here and this is our No. 1 goal every season."

Day made it clear that the Buckeyes needed the crowd behind them against the Wolverines, but the 106,787 fans who descended on Ohio Stadium could not make their impact felt.

### Harbaugh Emphasized Respect Prior To The Game

As Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh picked up his first win against the Buckeyes last year, in his seventh season at the helm of the Wolverine program, he heaped praise upon OSU before this year's matchup while noting that Ohio State has improved from last season.

"I think they're a really good team, improved team," Harbaugh said. "It's a tremendous team and we're very grateful to be in this position and to be playing in this game. The winner takes the East, the winner takes all."

"They are strong opponent. It's the kind of situation that gives you the opportunity to display how strong our team is. There's no need to hate, be grateful for the opponent."

The Wolverines unleashed a barrage of smack talk in the Buckeyes' direction following last season's win, their first since 2011. Then-offensive coordinator Josh Gattis labeled OSU a finesse team while Harbaugh made the infamous comment regarding Day in which he said Ohio State's coach was, "born on third base and thinks he hit a triple."

However, Harbaugh walked back several of those comments and made sure to note

**Continued On Page 6**

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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.

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# OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

that it wasn't him that gave the Buckeyes their finesse label. As for the "third base" quote, Harbaugh said that was in the past and all that matters is what's ahead.

"I think it's irrelevant," Harbaugh said.

As for his team's preparation prior to The Game, Harbaugh said the Wolverines took a year-long approach toward the Buckeyes while adding that OSU was the toughest test they had to face all season.

"We've been keeping track of them. There are things we do in practice to prepare for them. We know Ohio State is our toughest competition. This will be our toughest test to date."

Their year-long preparation paid off. After the Wolverines proved the Big Ten East runs through Ann Arbor for the second straight season, Harbaugh emphasized getting the win over Ohio State was the result of his team's determination.

"It feels great to sing 'The Victors' in Columbus," Harbaugh said after the game.

"Our team earned it in every way."

As for his team's approach to The Game, Harbaugh called his Wolverines heroes for their role in the win. When asked what the overall differences between the Ohio State and Michigan programs were following the win, Harbaugh unleashed a grin.

"I don't know, there seems like a lot of layers of that onion," Harbaugh answered. "I'm just happy with our team. I thought it was a great team effort."

## DL Focused On Containment Ahead Of The Game

Dual-threat quarterbacks present problems to a defense in part because they can break apart the structure of a team. Coverage schemes aren't typically able to hold up when plays are extended, and spying specific defenders on a quarterback means sacrificing in other areas. Plus, running lanes for a signal caller can be a sign of an aggressive pass rush.

Many of Maryland quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa's best plays against Ohio State on Nov. 19 involved his feet. His touchdown pass on a fourth-and-goal play that cut the Buckeyes' lead to 33-30 in the fourth quarter required him to evade several pass rushers and throw on the run going to his right. Tagovailoa scored the Terrapins' previous touchdown on a 5-yard run and gained 26 yards on a scramble in the third quarter when his receivers were well-covered.

"Ultimately it does come down to your athletes vs. their athletes," Knowles said. "You just do everything you can to put guys in the position (to make a play). But it does become, like, controlled chaos. We try to

make all these moves and chess pieces, and we think we're doing a good job of it. It's hard to control the uncontrollable."

Mobility is one of the traits Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy possesses. As such, Ohio State took precautions to keep him hemmed in the pocket when the two teams met on Nov. 26. Prior to meeting the Buckeyes, McCarthy had picked up 213 yards and five touchdowns on the ground. Harbaugh said in September that the signal caller runs a sub-4.6 40-yard dash.

"He's definitely dynamic," Zach Harrison said. "We've definitely got to keep in mind that he has the ability to pull the ball at any moment and run for a big gain. We've just got to be aware that's a possibility."

Harrison said the key is staying disciplined in one's pass rush – still attacking the pocket, but keeping a sense of your assignment in containing the quarterback.

"You've got to rush smart," Harrison said. "I feel like we've got to do that, just rush smart. Know where the escape lanes are, know where I'm going, know where the other ends are going, defensive tackles are going, linebackers fitting. Just being aware of everything that the defense has going on."

Although the Buckeyes paid significant attention to McCarthy's prowess with his legs, the Michigan signal caller still impacted the game with more than just his arm. He finished the afternoon with 27 yards on six carries, including a 3-yard touchdown run that boosted Michigan's lead to 31-20 with 13:10 remaining in regulation.

## Day Pushes Back Senior Tackle Tradition

When the calendar flips to Michigan week, there are several traditions followed within the walls of the Woody Hayes Athletic Center, including the senior tackle.

The senior tackle – an Ohio State fixture since 1913 that marks the final time the senior class hits the blocking sled – typically occurs on the last practice of the season, and with the Buckeyes slated to play in a bowl game, Day opted to push the tradition back beyond the Michigan game.

With the Buckeyes looking ahead to Michigan, Day said the team wanted to place their full attention on the Wolverines and give the team some time to spend time with their family on Thanksgiving.

"I'm actually breaking tradition a little bit this year," Day said on Nov. 21. "Thanksgiving is kind of a hectic day, and I've kind of always felt that way here. We (normally) have senior tackle that day. We want our guys to be around their families for Thanksgiving."

"We decided to talk to the leadership committee and make a little bit of a change. We're going to move the senior tackle to

bowl practice so that we allow a little bit more time, we're not as rushed, and there are not as many distractions on (Nov. 24). The focus is on this game.

"That game is crazy and we have so much riding on this game, we want to make sure the focus is on The Team Up North."

## Ohio State Slides To No. 5 In AP Poll

It was a week defined by upsets and rivalry meetings, and for the first time this season, Ohio State found itself on the wrong end of the scoreboard.

The Buckeyes sank to the No. 5 spot in the AP poll. It marks the first time Ohio State has strayed outside of the top three slots of the poll this season.

After the Buckeyes dropped outside the top four, No. 1 Georgia, No. 2 Michigan, No. 3 TCU and No. 4 USC sat at the top of the rankings. No. 6 Alabama, No. 7 Tennessee, No. 8 Penn State, No. 9 Washington and No. 10 Clemson round out the top 10.

The Big Ten had just three teams represented in the final rankings of the regular season. Big Ten West champion Purdue received 24 votes, while 8-4 Illinois picked up 10 votes.

After a stunning, come-from-behind win over then-No. 10 Oregon, Oregon State rose six spots to No. 16, marking the highest jump of any team in the rankings. Several teams fell significantly in the rankings. Ohio State and Clemson each dropped three spots, LSU and Oregon were set back five spots, and Notre Dame and North Carolina plummeted six spots in the rankings.

## Eichenberg, WR Harrison Get National Award Updates

Eichenberg and Marvin Harrison both received updates regarding their national award status.

Eichenberg has been named a finalist for the Lott IMPACT Trophy, which is given annually to a student-athlete who best exemplifies former USC cornerback and NFL Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott. The characteristics looked for include Integrity, Maturity, Performance, Academics, Community, and Tenacity, both on and off the field.

Harrison, Ohio State's top wideout, is in the running to be named the nation's best at his position. He was named one of 12 semifinalists for the Biletnikoff Award, given annually to the best receiver in college football, on Nov. 21.

Arguably Harrison's best single-game performance came at Penn State, when he caught 10 passes for 185 yards, both season highs, and he added seven catches for 120 yards in the loss to Michigan. He's caught three touchdowns in a contest twice this season against Arkansas State and

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## From The Pages Of BSB

**40 Years Ago — 1982**

Turnovers were the difference as Ohio State scored a 24-14 victory over archrival Michigan on Nov. 20 before an Ohio Stadium-record crowd of 90,252.

The Buckeyes forced Michigan to lose three fumbles and three interceptions in the win.

"We just gave them the ballgame," said Michigan head coach Bo Schembechler. "We handed it to them."

**35 Years Ago — 1987**

Earle Bruce was the first Ohio State football coach to end his Buckeye career with a win over Michigan. It was Bruce's fifth win in nine tries against the Wolverines, and he went out in style.

For the finale, a thrilling 23-20 win in front of 106,031 in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Nov. 21, Bruce wore his charcoal suit with a fedora. His players wore white headbands, with "Earle" displayed in red and black lettering, in his honor.

Despite being fired five days earlier by university president Edward H. Jennings because of "personnel matters" Bruce remained a coach to the end.

"There's no sweeter victory in the world than one over Michigan in your last game at Ohio State," said a beaming Bruce afterward.

**30 Years Ago — 1992**

Ohio State played archrival Michigan to a 13-13 tie in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 21, coming back from a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter and outgaining the sixth-ranked and Rose Bowl-bound Wolverines by a substantial margin.

But was the effort enough to allow John Cooper to remain in his position as head coach of the Buckeyes?

Despite the fact that he had signed a new four-year contract just before the season began, Cooper was the subject of an article in The Columbus Dispatch just two days before the Michigan game that quoted "highly placed university officials" as saying if the Buckeyes lost to the Wolverines, the remaining three years of his contract would be bought out.

"If you're asking does it bother me, sure it bothers me," Cooper said. "I have more concern, to be honest with you, about my assistant coaches and their families."

**25 Years Ago — 1997**

It was all there for the taking — a piece of the Big Ten championship and, likely, a Rose Bowl berth — but Ohio State could not snatch the prize.

Instead, OSU's problems with Michigan continued.

The Buckeyes played a great defensive game, holding Mich-

igan to just one offensive touchdown. But when the top-ranked Wolverines scored off a punt return and an interception, they secured a 20-14 win over the Buckeyes and took the Rose Bowl berth for themselves on Nov. 22 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

"I am tremendously disappointed for our senior football players and our defensive football team because we didn't come away with a victory today," said Cooper.

**20 Years Ago — 2002**

It was billed as the biggest game in the 81-year history of Ohio Stadium as undefeated Ohio State was favored to defeat its key rival Michigan to claim a spot in the national championship game at the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

But the Buckeyes showed you can never take anything — most especially a matchup with the Wolverines — for granted.

As it had to do on six previous occasions that season, OSU, which trailed 9-7 heading into the fourth quarter, had to rally in the second half before wrapping up a hard-fought 14-9 win over Michigan in front of a stadium-record crowd of 105,539 on Nov. 23.

"Our guys played like crazy," said OSU coach Jim Tressel. "That's the Ohio State-Michigan game — 60 minutes. I can't be any prouder of this young bunch of kids or these coaches. The crowd kept fighting. We were stunned for a second, but we bounced back up."

**15 Years Ago — 2007**

One week after being skewered by Illinois and barbecued by its own fans, the Ohio State defense came back with a vengeance, completely smothering Michigan and leading the Buckeyes to a 14-3 victory before 111,941 fans in Michigan Stadium on Nov. 17.

How stifling was the OSU defense? The Wolverines were held to just 91 yards of total offense, the first time totaling less than 100 yards since getting 97 against Purdue during a 37-0 loss in October 1962.

To go along with its paltry yardage total, Michigan had only eight first downs, including just three in the second half, two of which came on Ohio State pass-interference penalties.

On the flip side, Chris "Beanie" Wells carried 39 times for 222 yards and scored both Buckeye touchdowns.

"Our defense was not going to let them control the game with the run," said Tressel, who became the first coach in school history to beat Michigan in six of his first seven tries.

**10 Years Ago — 2012**

Players dumped a bucket of Gatorade on the back of Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer, and fans swarmed the field in jubilation as the Buckeyes capped off their undefeated season with

a 26-21 win over rival Michigan.

Everyone gathered at the south end zone to celebrate some more, first dancing to the "Buckeye Swag" song that was becoming a favorite of the band, fans and players then closing it down with the more familiar tones of the alma mater, "Carmen Ohio."

"When you look at those kids, now that I know them, I know exactly why they stayed — for the love of Ohio State," Meyer said. "We're forever indebted to them because they didn't have to do what they did. I should say that because they certainly didn't owe Urban Meyer or his coaching staff a thing. Their love of this university was very apparent that day (the postseason ban was levied)."

**Five Years Ago — 2017**

The moment was monumental. Ohio State had its season on the line. The thing is, backup quarterback Dwayne Haskins wasn't thinking about the score. He wasn't thinking about the situation. He wasn't thinking about three-time team captain J.T. Barrett, who had just left the game with an apparent right knee injury — nobody knew if Barrett would return. Haskins was thinking about making sure he clapped loud enough. That's the first thing fifth-year senior center and team captain Billy Price told him, after all.

"I forgot we were down. I was in the game," Haskins said. "First thing I get told by Bill was, 'Clap loud!' So I just forgot we were down by anything."

Haskins finished the game with six completions on seven attempts for 94 yards, and perhaps most importantly, the Buckeyes didn't turn the ball over with him in the game. After Haskins took the field, Ohio State outscored the Wolverines 17-0 en route to a 31-20 win on Nov. 25.

**One Year Ago — 2021**

Michigan used a powerful ground attack, led by five rushing touchdowns from Hassan Haskins, to defeat No. 2 Ohio State 42-27 in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Nov. 27 to end an eight-game losing streak to the Buckeyes since 2011.

The win put the No. 5 Wolverines (11-1, 8-1 Big Ten) in the conference championship game for the first time and crushed the hopes of the Buckeyes (10-2, 8-1) of playing in the College Football Playoff for a third straight year.

U-M led 14-13 at the half on a snowy 30-degree afternoon before Haskins scored from the 13 and the 1 for a 28-13 advantage that the Buckeyes could not overcome before a crowd of 111,156 in Michigan Stadium.

"When you work for this game 365 days a year and come up short, it's a failure. It hurts," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said.

Michigan State. Adding in last year's Rose Bowl, Harrison has the most three-touchdown performances in Ohio State history.

The Biletnikoff winner, along with several of college football's other major awards, will be announced at The Home Depot College Football Awards on Dec. 9 on ESPN.

**Hayden Earns Big Ten Co-Freshman Of The Week**

After a dominant second-half showing against Maryland, in relief of the injured Henderson, Dallan Hayden was named Big Ten Co-Freshman of the Week, sharing the honor with Penn State running back Kaytron Allen.

Hayden punished the Terrapins during the game's final 30 minutes, amassing 143 of his 146 rushing yards in the second half while scoring all three of his touchdowns in the last two quarters.

Hayden passed the century mark in back-to-back games, as he also dashed for 102 yards and a touchdown against Indiana on Nov. 12.

However, Hayden was hardly utilized in the Buckeyes' season finale against Michigan, despite the expectation that he would be a significant part of the offense in The Game. Hayden ran the ball twice against the Wolverines, picking up 7 yards.

He has racked up 510 rushing yards and five touchdowns on 102 carries this season. He is the only Buckeye to pick up conference Freshman of the Week honors this season.

*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](http://Buckeyesports.com) and the BSB Fan Forum, available to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.*

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# Day's Decision To Punt Was Not A Consensus

Continued From Page 1

we were building toward playing really well in this game. We were fighting there in the first half, and I felt really good going into the second half. We just didn't execute well enough in the second half."

As Day alluded to, the Buckeyes came out swinging, scoring on the game's first possession and later taking a 20-17 lead going into the half. Doubt crept in at times during the first half, though, with Michigan scoring on a pair of long touchdowns – 69- and 75-yard scores, to be exact – courtesy of quarterback J.J. McCarthy, who has not been known as a notable downfield threat this season.

Those concerns remained unalleviated as the Wolverines drove right down the field out of the locker room, taking a 24-20 lead on a 45-yard touchdown pass from McCarthy to tight end Colston Loveland, and Ohio State's vaunted offense proceeded to punt on the ensuing possession.

"I felt like we had a lot of juice coming out of the locker room, but we just didn't do it," Day said. "We're winning at halftime, and it felt like we were in a decent spot to go play. My message to the team was we've got to win the first six minutes of the third quarter right here and then go from there, and that didn't happen."

And while there was no shortage of plays on either side of the ball that helped determine the outcome of the game – be it any one of Michigan's five scores of at least 45 yards or two interceptions of quarterback C.J. Stroud in the game's final minutes – perhaps the most pivotal play was the one that wasn't called.

Ohio State got the ball with 8:03 remaining in the third quarter facing the 24-20 deficit. Following a holding penalty and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Gee Scott Jr. after the play for headbutting a Michigan player, the Buckeyes – faced with a first-and-35 – worked their way to a fourth-and-5 at Michigan's 43-yard line.

The Buckeye offense briefly stayed on the field, expecting to go for it with momentum building for the Wolverines, but Day opted to send the punt team on. Stroud took objection with the decision, going as far as attempting to wave punter Jesse Mirco back to the sideline, but it was all for naught as Day went ahead with the plan to punt.

"I've never been in a situation like that in football," Stroud said. "We fought back to get in decent field position, Coach Day felt like it wasn't smart to go for it on fourth down right there. I mean, I wanted it. I wanted to go for it really bad."

"I think that I'm still one of the best players in the country, and I think that I can make that play. In those types of moments, I want the ball. I want to do things. But I have to trust Coach Day, and I do. I will ride with him every game."

The punt – which had to be moved back an additional 5 yards after an illegal procedure penalty – traveled 48 yards into the end zone for a touchback, essentially netting just 28 yards.

"We're always going to be aggressive, but at those times I felt like the right thing to do was to punt," Day explained.

"I think in games like that, you have to play the field-position game. Fourth-and-5 and around midfield – if it was fourth-and-3, fourth-and-2, maybe you take a shot there. I didn't feel like we were desperate at that point, and so I felt like that was the right thing to do. I just feel like you're not in those situations if you're converting on third downs, and we didn't do that today."

Michigan took advantage of the decision, embarking on a backbreaking 15-play, 80-yard scoring drive that took nearly eight minutes off the clock, gave the Wolverines a 31-20 lead and was a game turning point. The demoralizing drive took much of the wind remaining out of Ohio State's sails and the Buckeyes accounted for just 130 total yards and a field goal for the remainder of the contest, while Michigan added a pair of late daggers (75 and 85 yards) courtesy



SONNY BROCKWAY

**COMPLICATED LEGACY** – If the loss to Michigan was the last game at Ohio State for quarterback C.J. Stroud, he'll finish scattered throughout the Buckeyes' record books but with no wins over Michigan and no Big Ten titles.

of running back Donovan Edwards.

One could be forgiven for thinking Edwards – who finished with 216 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 22 carries, averaging 9.8 yards per attempt – was doing his best impression of Hassan Haskins, who similarly dominated to the tune of 169 yards and five touchdowns last season in Michigan's win over Ohio State. In fact, nearly every aspect of this most recent rivalry game – from a seeming lack of urgency by Ohio State to the ceaseless penalties – likely promotes a heavy feeling of déjà vu, dredging up unwelcome memories of last year's loss in Ann Arbor and the work that had been put in since to avoid another disaster.

saster.

"It's been tough, to be honest with you," Stroud said. "Going through what I went through last year after the game, it was tough and it was a harsh pill to swallow for 365 days. It was just nonstop. But they had the right to (talk), and they have the right to again."

And if it's been a tough challenge for Ohio State over the past 365 days, it likely won't get easier over the next calendar year. Furthermore, it will be another two years before the Buckeyes can defend their honor at Ohio Stadium, and the most recent result against Michigan will have fans, coaches and players questioning what exactly

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## COVER STORY

happened until revenge is served.

"I thought we had a great week," Day said. "Emotionally, we came into this thing swinging, but we came up short. I've just got to get my mind wrapped around why that happened today and how, in the end, we didn't finish this thing the right way."

### Stroud Reflects Following Loss

Perhaps nobody took the loss harder than Stroud, who was nearly despondent at the lectern as he tried to explain what exactly happened on the field that afternoon.

"In the first half, we were shooting ourselves in the foot," he said. "We went down, scored on the first drive. Second drive, we should have probably scored again (but) kicked the field goal, and after that we just kept shooting ourselves in the foot. Honestly, that's really what was going on. Credit to The Team Up North's defense, but if we score more points in the first half, I think this game would have been a lot different."

The frustration and second-guessing were only amplified given the buildup to the game. Ohio State had been forced to hear talk from all over following last season's loss to Michigan, and with the narratives that had formed – whether it be a lack of toughness or leadership – the Buckeyes had waited anxiously to prove themselves on the field against the Wolverines.

Instead, the naysayers were proven mostly correct as Ohio State failed to rise to the occasion, but Stroud said Ohio State will move on.

"It's going to be tough again, but this program is tough. I think the coaches are tough. I think these players are tough and we'll be able to handle it," he said. "We just have to move on and lick our wounds again. Just try to be better. Hopefully we end up making the playoff again and still try to contend for a national championship. But this one game does not define this team."

And while Stroud said this game does not define the team – the jury is out on the statement, though, considering the annual stakes of The Game – it may be part of defining his legacy at Ohio State.

Assuming Stroud enters into the NFL draft following this season – and there has been no indication that he won't, even with the loss to Michigan – he becomes the first Ohio State quarterback to lose back-to-back starts against the Wolverines since Steve Bellisari lost two straight from 1999-2000, and he will leave Columbus without having won the Big Ten or competing in the Big Ten Championship Game in his two seasons as a starter.

"People are going to say I never won The Game, and I understand," Stroud said. "People are going to say I never won a Big Ten championship, and I understand. When it comes to that, I just have to eat it. That's life. Nothing is ever made easy for me. I don't expect it to be made easy."

"I want to be known as the best. I don't think that I'll have that respect from Buckeye Nation anymore. Even if I do, I appreciate it. But I wish I could have done more, wish I could have won these games. But no one can question my heart. I don't think anyone can question how hard I tried to win this game. I left everything on the table. There's no rock I didn't flip over. There's nothing I could have done more I feel, other

than play better today, but it's not like I left it to chance."

Stroud took it a step further and said that his preparation for this game – as well as this season – halted anything going on in his personal life.

"I let everything go" he said. "My mom, she'll be the one to admit, sometimes I don't pick up the phone because I'm locked in, I'm watching film. I'm doing anything I can possibly do to win this game and I hope people appreciate that from this whole staff, but I know they probably won't. It is what it is. But there's no stone I didn't turn over to try to win this game."

Even with some of the challenging losses over the last two seasons, it's clear Stroud's legacy at Ohio State won't be forgotten. He finished this regular season with 3,340 passing yards and 37 touchdowns to just six interceptions, and his name will be littered throughout Ohio State's record book as he continued to grow the quarterback position for the Buckeyes, following in the footsteps of Dwayne Haskins and Justin Fields.

The loss to Michigan was likely his last time playing at Ohio Stadium, and he took a moment – through contemplating the loss and his landing place in the annals of Ohio State history – to show appreciation for his time in Columbus as the end nears.

"I came a long way from my first game playing in the 'Shoe, being booed, everybody not saying very nice things about me. I think I've earned everybody's respect as time has gone on, and I think I've fallen in love with Columbus, Ohio and Buckeye Nation," he said. "I've enjoyed every second of it. A lot of ups, a lot of downs, but I appreciate everybody that comes and supports every game."

"I don't think one game defines us. I don't think that this game defines this team. I would take this team over any team in the country every week. I'm blessed to be a part of this fraternity and this brotherhood."

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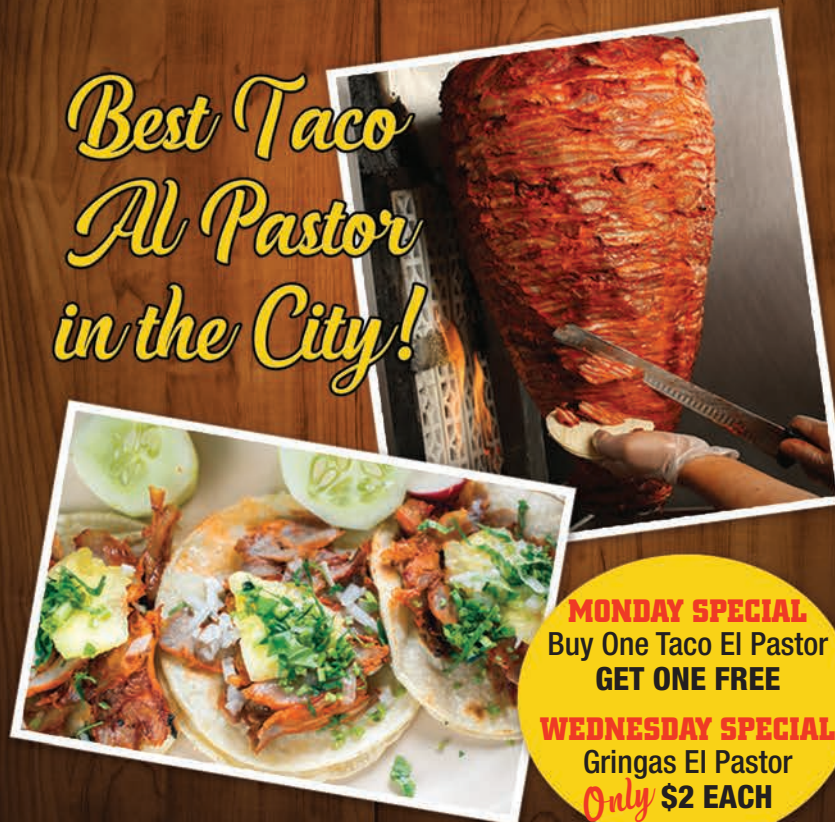
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# Knowles Takes Responsibility For Big Plays

For nearly the entire season, defensive coordinator Jim Knowles followed the notion that if the Buckeyes gave up five big plays or fewer, they'd skate by with a win.

As his defensive scheme is predicated on aggression and causing negative plays and turnovers, it also leaves room for opponents to produce several plays that go for long gains. For the most part this season, the Buckeyes were able to survive opponents breaking free for multiple explosive plays per game, but against Michigan, that notion collapsed when the Wolverines scored five of their six touchdowns on plays that went 45 or more yards.

The Ohio State defense couldn't match Michigan's explosive plays with its own, and Knowles took the blame for the Wolverines' offensive onslaught in the 45-23 Wolverine win on Nov. 26.

"You have to evaluate the explosive plays. When they go for touchdowns, they become a different story," Knowles said. "Typically, over the course of my career, you preach the explosive plays, and you have a chance to get the guy on the ground, and then you recover. But when they go for touchdowns, certainly, that's something that falls on me. I need to look at it."

Michigan's first explosive play came in the first quarter on a 33-yard completion from quarterback J.J. McCarthy to wide receiver Ronnie Bell. The play gave Michigan a first down on third-and-8 while pushing the Wolverines to the Ohio State 24-yard line. However, the Buckeye defense hardened from there, forcing the Wolverine offense off the field just three plays later and holding Michigan to a field goal.

Michigan's next explosive play wouldn't be as forgiving for the Buckeyes. Midway through the second quarter, Knowles opted to send both linebackers and a pair of safeties on a blitz to try to impact McCarthy on third-and-9 from the Michigan 31-yard line. McCarthy stood in and fired a laser to wide receiver Cornelius Johnson, who shook a tackle attempt from Cameron Brown and

## GAME NOTEBOOK Jack Emerson

raced to the end zone for a 69-yard touchdown.

"(McCarthy) had been scrambling around and we had been really holding our own at that point," Knowles said. "He'd been doing a good job of making plays on the scramble. I thought it would be a good idea to put him under some pressure, make him throw it quick, you know, off his back foot. He just made some good throws in that situation."

McCarthy's next throw had the same result when he hit Johnson for another touchdown, this time a 75-yarder, which gave the Wolverines a 17-13 lead, their first lead of the afternoon. Johnson shook safety Cameron Martinez with a perfectly run route and was several yards behind the secondary by the time McCarthy threw him the ball.

Although the Buckeyes took a 20-17 lead into the locker room at halftime and had held the Wolverine running game to just 10 yards on 11 carries, the floodgates opened from there. Michigan scored on its opening drive of the half, again thanks to an explosive touchdown pass from McCarthy. This time, he hooked up with tight end Colston Loveland for a 45-yard touchdown, sprung by another busted coverage by the OSU secondary when miscommunication between Denzel Burke and Lathan Ransom allowed Loveland to get free.

While Michigan's first three explosive touchdowns came through the air, its next two came from the legs of running back Donovan Edwards. The first of Edwards' scores was a backbreaker, as the Buckeyes had scored their first points of the half to cut the deficit to 31-23 with 7:23 to go in the game. On the first play of the Wolverines'



SONNY BROCKWAY

**BIG PLAY J.J. — Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy (9), despite completing just 50.0 percent of his passes against Ohio State, still finished with 263 passing yards and three long touchdowns in the win for the Wolverines.**

ensuing drive, Edwards slid through a hole on the right side of the line of scrimmage and raced 75 yards to stick the dagger in the hearts of the Buckeyes, raising U-M's lead to 38-23 after the extra point.

On Michigan's next drive, Edwards added insult to injury by exploding for an 85-yard score to lift the Wolverines' lead to the final score of 45-23. Knowles acknowledged that Edwards' pair of scores were tough to swallow.

"Obviously there at the end, they hit a couple big runs. That's just disheartening," Knowles said. "Obviously, I have to take the blame for that and I should. (I've) just got to do a better job. It's a story of explosive plays.

"I thought we matched well – there's nothing well in a loss like that – but we matched through the course of the game. But too many explosives. That's disheartening for not just the defense, but the team and the fans, and I have to take responsibility for that."

### McCarthy Surprises With Shining Performance

Entering The Game, much of the spotlight shone on Michigan's rushing attack and its dynamic duo of Blake Corum and Edwards. Scars remained from the Wolverines' pummeling of Ohio State's run defense last season, and for good reason, McCar-

thy's prowess as a quarterback largely flew under the radar.

McCarthy didn't do himself many favors entering the game. In the four games since Michigan's idle week, he completed just 52.4 percent of passes while throwing for less than 200 yards in three of those games. While McCarthy took care of the ball, tossing five touchdowns to zero interceptions during the stretch, he didn't necessarily strike fear into opposing secondaries.

However, he was the difference for the Wolverines against the Buckeyes. Although he completed just 50.0 percent of his passes against Ohio State, McCarthy threw for 263 yards and a trio of touchdowns. When it was over, all Knowles could do was tip his cap toward the Michigan quarterback.

"(McCarthy is) impressive," Knowles said. "He just manages things well, throws on the run, makes plays stretch out even longer, and he can run the ball when he has to. I think he just does a really good job."

As mentioned, McCarthy was able to hit on several explosive touchdown passes. In total, McCarthy's three scores accounted for 189 of his 263 yards and were a quarter of his total completions output. Not only did McCarthy hurt the Buckeyes through the air, but he also unleashed several important plays with his feet.

Prior to The Game, the Buckeyes strug-

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# Game Analysis

## What Worked Well

All things considered, Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud didn't have a bad day against Michigan. He finished 31 of 48 with 349 yards and two touchdowns, as well as a pair of interceptions that went off the hands of his receivers.

Furthermore, his numbers could have been much better if not for a few drops by those same wide receivers. Even the normally rock-solid Marvin Harrison Jr. – who had yet to drop a pass this season – dropped a potential chunk gain.

Arguably Stroud's two best throws of the day were both first-half strikes to Harrison. The first was a dart over the outstretched arms of a Michigan defender that allowed Harrison to snatch the ball and drag his toes for an 18-yard completion on a corner route with 7:02 left in the second quarter.

With 5:20 to play in the first half, Stroud connected with Harrison up the right sideline in perfect stride, and Harrison dived across the goal line for a 42-yard touchdown. It proved to be the Buckeyes' final end-zone trip of the afternoon, putting them ahead 20-17 before intermission.

## What Didn't Work

It's hard to pick any one thing that didn't work in what ended up being a 45-23 loss for Ohio State, but perhaps the most notable was on the defensive end. Defensive coordinator Jim Knowles has a mantra for his defense related to big plays. He says, "five or less," and his players say, "undefeated." Ohio State surrendered exactly five big plays against Michigan.

A big play technically qualifies as any play 20 yards or more, and as Knowles pointed out in his postgame press conference, explosives of the 20-30 yard variety are more the sentiment of that chant. The Wolverines' big plays went for 69, 75, 45, 75 and 85 yards, respectively, and all of them went for touchdowns.

In the first quarter, wide receiver Cornelius Johnson slipped

for Bell. While the ball sailed over the head of Bell and out of bounds, Ohio State safety Ronnie Hickman ran right into the Michigan receiver without turning his head, causing a pair of flags to hit the turf. The Wolverines scored a touchdown just three plays later.

Michigan also benefited from another pass-interference penalty on its next drive, when a McCarthy deep ball to Johnson fell to the turf, but Ransom had brought Johnson to the ground prior to the ball arriving. That drive was also boosted by an unsportsmanlike conduct call on tight end Cade Stover on the punt, allowing U-M to start from its own 43 rather than its 28. Fortunately for the Buckeyes, that drive ended in a missed field goal.

"Then we come out in the second half and we're just shooting ourselves in the foot again, getting penalties, holding, all types of things," Stroud said. "Sometimes you get away with it, sometimes you don't. Against a matchup team, the No. 3 team in the country, you don't get away with those types of things."

## Playoff Dreams Dashed But Not Dead

While the loss to Michigan certainly damped Ohio State's hopes of reaching the College Football Playoff, the Buckeyes still remain in a position to potentially get in. Ohio State already received some help on Nov. 26 with a Clemson loss to South Carolina, effectively eliminating the ACC from the playoff conversation, and with some help in the form of a loss by TCU or USC in

their respective conference championships, OSU could still fall into the playoff.

If the Buckeyes are able to reach the four-team playoff, Day noted he feels his team could still make some noise against the nation's elite.

"I thought we were in it and we were fighting at the end and it got out of control down the stretch, but it wasn't like we were outmatched in terms of overall play, I don't think," Day said. "As we get to those decisions, I think you've got to look at the body of work and what we've done, and we've got a lot of good pieces on this team. We came up short today, but I think if we were able to get a shot in the top four, we'd be a dangerous team."

Although the Buckeyes could still somehow find a way into the playoff, Stroud emphasized that Ohio State didn't do itself any favors with the loss to Michigan.

"I definitely think there's still an opportunity for us to make the playoff, but this is The Game, man. This is the one," Stroud said. "Whatever happens, it all has to happen over these next couple weeks. This is the one that we really wanted. This was 365 days of everybody laughing, talking. We started out strong and just laid an egg in the second half."

## Trayanum Emerges At RB Despite Loss

With Ohio State's running game decimated by injuries to TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams – Henderson was out against Michigan while Williams played

behind a busted Ohio State coverage for the 69-yard score. He did the same thing again, this time up the middle of the field rather than down the sideline, for a 75-yard strike in the second quarter.

Another coverage bust gave tight end Colston Loveland a 45-yard score to give Michigan a 24-20 lead to open the second half, but running back Donovan Edwards had the most back-breaking of the Wolverines' big plays.

A 75-yard run with less than eight minutes to play put Michigan up 38-23, and then an 85-yard dash with less than four minutes left made it 45-23 to surpass the Wolverines' margin of victory from a year ago.

## Play Of The Game

The first of Edwards' big runs served as the death knell for the Buckeyes in the fourth quarter, and it was helped by some old-fashioned numbers counting from Michigan.

Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy stood in a shotgun with Edwards to his left, setting up downhill momentum for the back to his right. Ohio State's defensive front came out with nose guard Taron Vincent head up on Michigan's center and defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau lined up on the outside shoulder of the Wolverines' right tackle. That left a three-on-three with the right side of U-M's offensive line going against Ohio State's defensive line and linebacker Steele Chambers.

The Wolverines sealed off those three players and crashing linebacker Tommy Eichenberg, and Edward burst through the gaping hole and raced past safety Lathan Ransom up the sideline for the 75-yard score.

At that point Michigan led 38-23 with 7:11 to play, just 12 seconds after Ohio State had scored its first points of the second half on a field goal. The only fans cheering from then on in Ohio Stadium wore wearing maize and blue.

— Andy Anders

gled to limit dual-threat quarterbacks all season. Ohio State saw several mobile quarterbacks – including Toledo's Dequan Finn and Maryland's Taulia Tagovailoa – give its defense fits, and McCarthy was no exception. He took six carries for 27 yards and a 3-yard touchdown which lifted Michigan's lead to 31-20 with 13:10 remaining in regulation.

While McCarthy gave the Wolverines an added boost with his legs, Knowles took the blame for McCarthy's ability to impact with the game on the ground.

"We have a hard-charging defensive line, and I think, at that point, you're not going to try to hold the guys back. So it comes down to me, continuing to try to scheme and we tried a couple things against them for that," Knowles said. "Some worked, some didn't. But ultimately, you don't want to hold the guys back. So then it's my problem. It falls on me to make those changes."

Although McCarthy's performance may have come as a surprise to much of the Ohio State fan base, defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau said that the Buckeyes knew how talented he was coming into the game.

"J.J. is a great player," Tuimoloau said. "We've just got to fix up things on our end, and we just hurt ourselves out there."

## OSU Punished By Penalties

As has been the case in several games this season, the Buckeyes once again showed signs of being an undisciplined team against Michigan.

Ohio State committed nine penalties, resulting in 91 yards for the Wolverines. While the numbers are eye-popping, the situations in which several of the penalties occurred were even more devastating for the Buckeyes.

"On offense, we had too many penalties, and that got us off schedule and we just didn't do a good job of converting on third down," OSU head coach Ryan Day said. "Combine all these things together and then it gets out of hand at the end."

As was the story of the game, the Buckeyes played a fairly clean first half in terms of limiting penalties. Ohio State drew just three flags, which resulted in 20 penalty yards. Two of those came on false starts from offensive linemen Dawand Jones and Paris Johnson Jr., while linebacker Cody Simon was called for holding on a punt that gave the Wolverines 10 free yards.

Penalties played a large part in the Buckeyes' second-half collapse, with the most egregious calls coming on Ohio State's second drive of the third quarter. Quarterback C.J. Stroud connected with running back Chip Trayanum for a 24-yard gain, but Ohio State ended up moving backward more than it moved forward on the play. A 10-yard holding call on guard Donovan Jackson compounded by a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on tight end Gee Scott Jr. – in which he headbutted a Michigan defender after the play was whistled dead – set the Buckeyes back 25 yards and forced them into a first-and-35 before an eventual punt.

Flipping over to the defensive side of the ball, Ohio State also had a pair of untimely pass-interference calls doom its efforts to slow the Michigan offense. With the Wolverines leading 24-20 early in the fourth and facing a third-and-10 from the Ohio State 13, McCarthy lofted a pass into the end zone

sparingly – the Buckeyes turned to an unlikely back to carry them in The Game.

Although much of the attention landed on freshman Dallon Hayden after his breakout performance against Maryland the week prior, Day rode with Chip Trayanum at running back for much of the contest against the Wolverines. Despite spending much of the season at linebacker, Trayanum did not disappoint against the Wolverines, toting 14 times while racking up 83 yards.

Trayanum spent the previous two seasons as a running back at Arizona State before transferring to Ohio State. Upon his arrival in Columbus, Trayanum made the move to linebacker, but he was quickly needed back on offense once injuries to Henderson, Williams and redshirt freshman Evan Pryor racked up.

Although Trayanum's first carry against the Wolverines represented just his second of the season – his first coming on a 9-yard attempt against Iowa – Day said he felt the transfer gave the Buckeyes a lift in the running game.

"We didn't have TreVeyon available, and then Miyan was coming off his ankle (injury). He gave it a shot but there were some runs in there early that he maybe wished he had back, I don't know," Day said. "But then we felt like Chip could go in there and give us a little bit of a shot even though he hadn't played. We had to play some depth, so Dallon got in there a couple times, and then Chip as well."

Hayden had two carries for 7 yards.



## BSB Quotebook: Michigan 45, Ohio State 23

**Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on whether this loss to Michigan was worse than the loss last year:** "It's hard to say right now, because this is not the outcome that we all envisioned. I thought we had really good preparation, I thought we were building toward playing really well in this game. We were fighting there in the first half and I felt really good going into the second half, and we just didn't execute well enough in the second half."

**Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh on his team's win:** "Couldn't be more proud. We came in, I knew the team was focused and determined, as they have been all season, and this is a locker room of heroes. We talked about it last night. We don't need one or two heroes – we need a whole team of them, and it was a great team win."

**Harbaugh on whether Michigan has regained control of the rivalry:** "How I feel is our team really paid the price. They really put in all the work, and that's what they did. The hard work, the sweat. You sweat every other game to get to this game and get to this opportunity, and we were thankful to be where we were – right where we wanted to be. And then came down here, players were all focused and determined to win the game."

**Day on the Buckeyes having early opportunities to extend their lead:** "It was a combination of a lot of things. We spent a lot of time trying to come up with things we think can get us into the end zone, and sometimes it's execution, sometimes it's other things. I think those were opportunities for us to jump ahead early on in the game – didn't happen."

**Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles on whether the Wolverines' offensive success stunned him:** "The players are hurting much more than me, and I'm crushed. But they're young men who put their heart and soul into it. They're the ones that I have to be able to look in the eye and talk about all those things that you said. Scheme, technique, fundamentals, everything that goes into it has to fall on my shoulders."

**Michigan running back Donovan Edwards on his first long touchdown run:** "I don't know what it felt like, but it was the offensive line first. They created such a big hole, if you watch the film, it's just really easy to see. And at that point you've got to hit it, and you've just got to outrun the third level of defenders – the safeties and (defensive backs)."

**Knowles on Edwards' two long touchdown runs:** "I think they switched up their scheme a little bit. They were really hunting for ways to run the ball and got us with a thing or two here or there. I thought we responded. The runs that got us were simple runs, and that's the hard part that I have to look at."

**Ohio State defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau on the difficulties of defending Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy:** "Going in, we knew they were a good running team. But we've got to go there and be ready for everything."



SONNY BROCKWAY

**RUNNING ALL OVER** – Michigan's rushing attack – which largely was without running back Blake Corum (2) – still ran all over Ohio State, finishing with 252 yards on 35 carries.

**Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud on his play:** "I think I definitely played with as much heart as I could. I definitely tried to do anything I possibly could to win this game. But at the end of the day, it's on me. I'm the quarterback. I take all the blame. I'll take all the credit. I feel like I made plays, I put the ball in positions where it needed to be caught. Sometimes they came up and made good plays on defense, and sometimes we just made little mistakes, like a drop or something like that. But at the end of the day I've got to do more."

make enough plays."

**Day on how team mistakes affected his play calling:** "When you feel like you're playing good defense, you feel like you're playing the ball-control game, you can go back and forth a little bit. You feel like you're giving up some ground and feel like you have to catch up quickly and try to get it back a little faster because the game's getting away from you. All those things go into your mind while you're in the game."

**Day on whether there were any curveballs from the Michigan defense:** "They're a good defense. The No. 1 defense in the country, statistically (in total defense), and they did a good job coming in with a solid game plan. It wasn't anything out there that we hadn't seen before. Again, I think in the end, we just didn't

**Michigan cornerback Mike Sainristil on planting the Michigan flag at midfield:** "Last year the only thing I was thinking about was fans rushing the field. This year I was thinking about planting the flag and just, you know, speaking it into existence."





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# Michigan Makes It Two Straight In The Game

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Sometimes it's the little things that make the difference between winning and losing.

In the case of The Game, played on a sunny 50-degree day on the banks of the Olentangy before a crowd of 106,787, it was the big plays that led to No. 3 Michigan stunning second-ranked Ohio State 45-23 on Nov. 26.

The Wolverines (12-0, 9-0) scored an astonishing four touchdowns of 69 yards or more and another went for 45 yards, and the Buckeyes (11-1, 8-1) failed to hold their 20-17 halftime lead, losing to Michigan for the second straight season.

Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy threw three long touchdown passes and ran for a short one as the Wolverines won in Ohio Stadium for the first time since 2000.

McCarthy's 45-yard strike to Colston Loveland put the Wolverines ahead 24-20 early in the third quarter. McCarthy rushed for a 3-yard score in the fourth to make it 31-20, and the Buckeyes could not recover.

He was 12 of 24 for 263 yards and also had 69- and 75-yard touchdown passes to Cornelius Johnson on back-to-back drives in the second quarter. Johnson had four catches for 160 yards, and backup running back Donovan Edwards ran for 216 yards, including late TD runs of 75 and 85 yards, to add to the rout.

## Shocking Turnaround

Ohio State took a 7-0 lead on the first drive with C.J. Stroud passing 4 yards to a crossing Emeka Egbuka on third-and-goal to complete an 81-yard, 12-play, 4:50 drive at the 10:02 mark.

The series was kept alive on third-and-1 from the OSU 28 when Miyan Williams ran for 6 yards. Xavier Johnson then ran for 18 yards to the OSU 47, and Marvin Harrison Jr.'s catch for 19 yards put the ball on the U-M 25. After that, Chip Trayanum rushed for 20 yards on three carries, and Cade Stover's catch for a yard more set up the score.

The Wolverines converted two third downs, the second a 33-yard catch by Ronnie Bell to the 24, but an intentional grounding on the next snap led to a 49-yard field goal by Jake Moody to make it 7-3 at 6:07.

Ohio State went from its 28 to the U-M 14 to extend the lead 10-3 at 1:19 of the first when Noah Ruggles kicked a 32-yard field goal.

Egbuka started the possession with a 17-yard reception, and 15 more yards were added for a face-mask infraction to the Michigan 40. Williams gained 8 yards



SONNY BROCKWAY

**YOU CAN'T DO THAT** — The officials were as much a part of The Game as Ohio State and Michigan were, with the teams combining for 121 yards in penalties, such as this face-mask infraction. The Buckeyes earned the majority of those, finishing with nine penalties for 91 yards.

on the ground, and Julian Fleming's 7-yard catch gave OSU a first down at the 25. Stroud scrambled for 5 yards, Williams ran twice for another 5 yards and another first at the 15, but the next three plays netted just a yard before Ruggles' field goal.

The Buckeyes, needing 2 yards at the U-M 34 on their next drive, turned it over on downs early in the second quarter when a pass to Stover was dropped.

The teams exchanged punts before Michigan stunned the crowd with 69-yard catch-and-run by Cornelius Johnson to tie the score 10-10 at 7:26 of the second quarter.

With Michigan facing a third-and-9 from the 31, the Buckeyes blitzed McCarthy, but he got the ball out to the left sideline for Johnson. OSU cornerback Cameron Brown missed a tackle, and Johnson eluded a late try by defensive end Jack Sawyer to race to the end zone. The 70-yard drive used three plays and 1:34.

OSU responded with a 47-yard field goal by Ruggles for a 13-10 lead at 5:36, but for the third time, the Buckeyes breeched Michigan territory without finding the end zone.

Trayanum had ripped off 24 yards to the Michigan 46 on the first play of the posses-

sion, and Harrison pulled in an 18-yarder to the 28. A 4-yard run by Trayanum was followed by a false start and two incompletions before the three points.

After the kickoff, Michigan needed just one play and 12 seconds to counter as Johnson faked an outside move on safety Cameron Martinez and was wide open for a 75-yard score to make it 17-13.

"I think we were ready," OSU defensive coordinator Jim Knowles said. "But we failed. I failed in the long run over the course of the game."

Back came the Buckeyes on Harrison's 42-yard score with 3:49 left in the half to go up 20-17. The drive was 79 yards, four plays and 1:31 off the clock. Egbuka had a 15-yard catch, Trayanum rushed for 7 yards and Fleming got the ball to the 42 with a 15-yard catch.

## Feeling Blue

Michigan received the second-half kickoff and assumed a 24-20 lead on the 45-yard Loveland catch, taking advantage of more blown coverage.

The Wolverines had converted a fourth-and-1 from their 34 with Edwards gaining 2. Two plays later, McCarthy ran for 19 yards a play prior to the TD. Michigan had the ball for seven plays and 3:04 on the 75-yard drive.

Later, Ohio State had a prime opportunity put points on the board after a 33-yard Michigan punt to the Wolverines 48. But on first down, a 24-yard pass to Trayanum was wiped out when Donovan Jackson was called for holding and Gee Scott Jr was assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for a sideline head butt, giving the Buckeyes a first-and-35 from their 27.

Trayanum ran for 3, Harrison made a catch of 13 yards and Trayanum picked up 14 on a reception. Looking at a fourth-and-

5 from the U-M 43, coach Ryan Day elected to punt. An illegal snap penalty moved the ball back to the 48, and Jesse Mirco's punt resulted in a touchback.

The Wolverines then methodically marched from the 20 and completed the drive to take a 31-20 lead on McCarthy's 3-yard run with 13:10 remaining in the game.

A critical play was third-and-1 from the OSU 38 when U-M coach Jim Harbaugh went to his bag of tricks. Linebacker Kalel Mullings took a handoff and threw a jump pass to Luke Schoonmaker for a 15-yard gain to the 23. U-M had another third-down situation from the 16, and Edwards rushed for 3 yards to end the third quarter with a first down.

On third-and-10 from the 13, McCarthy was flushed from the pocket by defensive end Zach Harrison and threw the ball to the back of the end zone for Ronnie Bell. The throw was high, but safety Ronnie Hickman was called for pass interference, placing the ball on the 2. Three plays later, McCarthy ran it in from the 3. The 80-yard drive consumed 7:51 and used 15 plays.

OSU pulled to within 31-23 with 7:23 remaining on a 27-yard field goal by Ruggles. Egbuka had a 44-yard grab on third down to get the ball to the 15.

On the first play following the kickoff, Edwards ran for a 75-yard TD for a 38-23 lead with 7:11 left.

After Stroud marched the Buckeyes 59 yards to the U-M 16, helped by passes of 11, 12 and 12 yards to Egbuka, Marvin Harrison and Fleming, respectively, he was intercepted at the 8 by Taylor Upshaw with 4:19 left to seal the win, and on the third snap of the next drive, Edwards added an 85-yard touchdown for the final margin with 3:19 left.

Stroud was picked off again by Makari Paige at the Michigan 25, and he made a return of 8 yards. From there, U-M had an Edwards run for 2 yards and two kneel-downs by McCarthy to run off the final 1:48 at the 34-yard line.

Stroud was 31 of 48 for 349 yards with two touchdowns and the two interceptions.

## Notes

Ohio State running back TreVeyon Henderson did not play for the fourth time this season because of an injury, but Miyan Williams returned after missing the last game against Maryland and gained 34 yards on eight carries. ... Trayanum, seeing his first real action at running back, rushed 14 times for 83 yards. He was a running back at Arizona State but was moved to linebacker when he transferred to Ohio State this year. He had one prior carry this season for 9 yards against Iowa. ... Michigan running back and Heisman Trophy hopeful Blake Corum was on the field for the first three snaps. He had two carries for 6 yards. ... Egbuka had 125 yards on nine catches, and Marvin Harrison totaled 120 yards on seven grabs. ... Ohio State had nine penalties for 91 yards. ...U-M totaled 530 yards (278 passing, 252 rushing) while OSU had 492 (349 passing, 143 rushing). ... With several explosive plays, the Wolverines averaged 8.8 yards per play compared to 6.4 for the Buckeyes.

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# The Numbers Game

## Michigan 45, Ohio State 23

Nov. 26, 2022 - Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	3	14	7	21	45
<b>OHIO STATE</b>	10	10	0	3	23

### First Quarter

**OSU** - Egbuka, 4-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 10:02.

**UM** - Moody, 49-yard field goal, 6:07.

**OSU** - Ruggles, 32-yard field goal, 1:19.

### Second Quarter

**UM** - Johnson, 69-yard pass from McCarthy (Moody kick), 7:26.

**OSU** - Ruggles, 47-yard field goal, 5:36.

**UM** - Johnson, 75-yard pass from McCarthy (Moody kick), 5:24.

**OSU** - Harrison Jr., 42-yard pass from Stroud (Ruggles kick), 3:49.

### Third Quarter

**UM** - Loveland, 42-yard pass from McCarthy (Moody kick), 11:56.

### Fourth Quarter

**UM** - McCarthy, 3-yard rush (Moody kick), 13:10.

**OSU** - Ruggles, 27-yard field goal, 7:23.

**UM** - Edwards, 75-yard rush (Moody kick), 7:11.

**UM** - Edwards, 85-yard rush (Moody kick), 3:19.

Att. - 106,787

Weather - Sunny 50 F

### Team Statistics

	UM	OSU
<b>First Downs</b>	16	23
<b>Rushing</b>	7	7
<b>Passing</b>	6	15
<b>Penalty</b>	3	1
<b>Rushes-Yards</b>	35-252	29-143
<b>Passing Yards</b>	278	349
<b>Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)</b>	13-25-0	31-48-2
<b>Offensive Plays</b>	60	77
<b>Total Net Yards</b>	530	492
<b>Third Down Efficiency</b>	7-16	5-16
<b>Fourth Down Efficiency</b>	1-1	0-1
<b>Punts-Avg.</b>	5-40.6	5-46.0
<b>Fumbles-Lost</b>	0-0	0-0
<b>Penalties</b>	5-30	9-91
<b>Time of Possession</b>	28:14	31:46

### Individual Statistics

**RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.)** - **UM**: Edwards 22-216; McCarthy 6-27; Corum 2-6; Stokes 2-5; Mullings 1-0; Team 2-(-2). **OSU**: Trayanum 14-83; M. Williams 8-34; X. Johnson 2-24; Hayden 2-7; Team 1-(-2); Stroud 2-(-3).

**PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD)** - **UM**: McCarthy 12-24-0-263-3; Mullings 1-1-0-15-0. **OSU**: Stroud 31-48-2-349-2.

**RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.)** - **UM**: Johnson 4-160; Bell 3-46; Edwards 2-9; Loveland 1-45; Schoonmaker 1-15; Henning 1-3; Wilson 1-0. **OSU**: Egbuka 9-125; Harrison Jr. 7-120; Fleming 5-47; Stover 4-13; X. Johnson 3-13; Scott Jr. 1-16; Trayanum 1-14; M. Williams 1-1.

**PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long)** - **UM**: Robbins 5-40.6-46. **OSU**: Mirco 5-46.0-57.

**PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** - **UM**: Henning 1-6. **OSU**: None.

**KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.)** - **UM**: None. **OSU**: X. Johnson 4-76.

**FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.)** - **UM**: None. **OSU**: None.

**INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.)** - **UM**: Paige 1-8; Upshaw 1-0. **OSU**: None.

**SACKS** - **UM**: Okie 1-8. **OSU**: Simon 1-10.

**TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.)** - **UM**: Okie 1-8; Moore 1-3; McGregor 1-1. **OSU**: Tuimoloau 2-2; Simon 1-10; Harrison 1-1; Gaoteote IV 0.5-1; Hickman 0.5-0.

**TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.)** - **UM**: Barrett 5-6-11; Johnson 7-1-8; Sainristil 6-1-7; Colson 2-5-7; Jenkins 3-2-5; Moore 3-2-5; Turner 3-1-4; Paige 2-2-4; Smith 1-3-4; Graham 0-3-3; Rolder 1-1-2; Harrell 1-1-2; Moten 1-1-2; McGregor 1-0-1; Okie 1-0-1; Hibner 0-1-1; Morris 0-1-1; Upshaw 0-1-1; Moody 0-1-1; Loveland 0-1-1; Mullings 0-1-1; Guy 0-1-1. **OSU**: Eichenberg 5-2-7; C. Brown 4-0-4; Burke 4-0-4; Harrison 4-0-4; Ransom 3-1-4; Tuimoloau 2-2-4; Hickman 2-1-3; Chambers 1-2-3; Hamilton 2-0-2; X. Johnson 2-0-2; T. Williams 1-1-2; Vincent 0-2-2; Simon 1-0-1; McCalister 1-0-1; J. Johnson 1-0-1; Egbuka 1-0-1; Hall Jr. 0-1-1; Gaoteote IV 0-1-1; Cage 0-1-1.

**PLAYERS IN THE GAME** - **UM**: Loveland, Corum, Barnhart, Oluwatimi, C. Johnson, Zinter, Lorenzetti, Hayes, Bell, Schoonmaker, McCarthy, Sainristil, Moore, Q. Johnson, Barrett, Colson, Harrell, Turner, Smith, Moten, Morris, Jenkins, Clemmons, Anthony, Moody, Wilson, Bowman, Warren, McGregory, Okie, Mullings, Gemon Green, Dunlap, Stokes, Peterson, Benny, Johnson, Henning, Rolder, German Green, Franklin, Harris, Gash, Guy, Tarr, Jones, Graham, El-Hadi, Paige, Edwards, Keegan, Grant, Persi, Moore, Dennis, Bredeson, Honigford, Hibner, Selzer, Upshaw, Robbins, Welschhof, Goode. **OSU**: Harrison Jr., Egbuka, M. Williams, Fleming, Wypler, Vimahi, Stroud, Jackson, Johnson Jr., Jones, Stover, Burke, Ransom, Hickman, McCalister, Chambers, C. Brown, Eichenberg, Tuimoloau, Hamilton, Vincent, Harrison, X. Johnson, Hicks, Martinez, Trayanum, Styles, Gaoteote IV, Mirco, Mitchell, Simon, Sawyer, Rossi, Stokes, Fielding, J. Johnson, Proctor, Hayden, Hall Jr., Friday, Michalski, Hancock, Fryar, Hinzman, Jean-Baptiste, Royer, Cage, Scott Jr., Ballard, T. Williams, Curry, Arnold, Ruggles.

## Season Statistics

2022 Game-By-Game				
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	
Sept. 3	(2) NOTRE DAME (5)	W, 21-10	106,549	
Sept. 10	(3) ARKANSAS STATE	W, 45-12	100,067	
Sept. 17	(3) TOLEDO	W, 77-21	105,398	
Sept. 24	(3) WISCONSIN	W, 52-21	105,473	
Oct. 1	(3) RUTGERS	W, 49-10	104,245	
Oct. 8	(3) at Michigan State	W, 49-20	72,809	
Oct. 22	(2) IOWA	W, 54-10	104,848	
Oct. 29	(2) at Penn State (13)	W, 44-31	108,433	
Nov. 5	(2) at Northwestern	W, 21-7	42,774	
Nov. 12	(2) INDIANA	W, 56-14	103,888	
Nov. 19	(2) at Maryland	W, 43-30	41,969	
Nov. 26	(2) MICHIGAN (3)	L, 45-23	106,787	

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

### Team Statistics

	OSU	Opp
<b>First Downs</b>	286	173
<b>Rushing</b>	108	66
<b>Passing</b>	154	87
<b>Penalty</b>	23	20
<b>Average Per Game/Rush</b>	198.5	119.9
<b>Average Per Game/Pass</b>	294.2	184.0
<b>Total Offense</b>	5912	3647
<b>Total Plays</b>	810	747
<b>Average Per Game</b>	492.7	303.9
<b>Average Per Play</b>	7.3	4.9
<b>Penalties-Yards</b>	69-600	66-545
<b>Fumbles-Lost</b>	9-4	15-7
<b>Third Down Efficiency</b>	71-154	54-177
<b>Percentage</b>	46%	31%
<b>Fourth Down Efficiency</b>	12-18	8-24
<b>Percentage</b>	67%	33%
<b>Sacks-Yards</b>	32-193	8-46
<b>Time Of Possession Avg.</b>	30:36	29:24

### Score

By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.
Ohio State	162	109	139	124	0	534	44.5
Opponents	57	71	20	83	0	231	19.3

### Individual Statistics

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Miyan Williams	125	817	6.5	13	70
T. Henderson	107	571	5.3	6	41
Dallan Hayden	102	510	5.0	5	45
Xavier Johnson	6	118	19.7	1	71
Chip Trayanum	15	92	6.1	0	24
Emeka Egbuka	9	81	9.0	2	27
C.J. Stroud	35	74	2.1	0	44
TC Caffey	10	66	6.6	1	49
M. Harrison Jr.	2	32	16.0	0	18
Jesse Mirco	1	22	22.0	0	22
Mitch Rossi	5	12	2.4	1	8
Cayden Saunders	2	6	3.0	0	5
Kyle McCord	3	4	1.3	0	3
Devin Brown	1	1	1.0	0	1
Team	11	-24	-2.2	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>2382</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>1439</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>85</b>

### Passing Comp. Att. Pct. Yds. TD-INT Effic.

C.J. Stroud	235	355	66.2	3340	37-6	176.2
Kyle McCord	16	20	80.0	190	1-0	176.3
Team	0	1	0.0	0	0-0	0.0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>66.8</b>	<b>3530</b>	<b>38-6</b>	<b>175.8</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>2208</b>	<b>16-10</b>	<b>124.9</b>

### Receiving Rec. Net Avg. TD Long

Marvin Harrison Jr.	72	1157	16.1	12	58
Emeka Egbuka	66	1039	15.7	9	69
Cade Stover	35	399	11.4	5	38
Julian Fleming	29	462	15.9	6	79
Xavier Johnson	10	108	10.8	1	34
Jayden Ballard	8	155	19.4	1	72
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	5	43	8.6	0	21
Miyan Williams	5	27	5.4	0	12
Gee Scott Jr.	5	28	5.6	1	16
T. Henderson	4	28	7.0	1	31
Dallan Hayden	4	23	5.8	0	10
Mitch Rossi	2	19	9.5	1	16
Kaleb Brown	1	5	5.0	0	5
Chip Trayanum	1	14	14.0	0	14
Reis Stocksdale	1	12	12.0	0	12
Joe Royer	1	1	1.0	0	12
Kamryn Babb	1	8	8.0	1	8
Kyion Grayes	1	2	2.0	0	2
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>3530</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>2208</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>75</b>

### Scoring TD EPK EPR EPRC FG PTS

Noah Ruggles	-	69-70	-	-	15-17	114
Miyan Williams	13	-	-	-	-	78
M. Harrison Jr.	12	-	-	-	-	72
Emeka Egbuka	11	-	-	-	-	66
T. Henderson	7	-	-	-	-	42
Julian Fleming	6	-	-	-	-	36
Cade Stover	5	-	-	-	-	30
Dallan Hayden	5	-	-	-	-	30
Mitch Rossi	2	-	-	-	-	12
Xavier Johnson	2	-	-	-	-	12
T. Eichenberg	1	-	-	-	-	6
Steele Chambers	1	-	-	-	-	6
Kamryn Babb	1	-	-	-	-	6
Gee Scott Jr.	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jayden Ballard	1	-	-	-	-	6
J.T. Tuimoloau	1	-	-	-	-	6
TC Caffey	1	-	-	-	-	6
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69-70</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15-17</b>	<b>534</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26-27</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>0-0</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>231</b>

### FG Distance 0-29 30-39 40-49 50+ Total

Noah Ruggles	4-4	5-6	6-6	0-1	15-17
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>4-4</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>6-6</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>15-17</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>2-2</b>	<b>5-5</b>	<b>4-4</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>11-12</b>

### Punting No. Yds. Avg. Bk Long

Jesse Mirco	44	2006	45.9	0	77
M. O'Shaughnessy	1	41	41.0	0	41
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2047</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>3229</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>

### Interceptions No. Yds. Avg. TD Long

Tanner McCalister	3	41	13.7	0	30
J.T. Tuimoloau	2	16	8.0	1	14
Tommy Eichenberg	1	15	15.0	1	15
Zach Harrison	1	2	2.0	0	2
Steele Chambers	1	12	12.0	0	12
Ronnie Hickman	1	8	8.0	0	8
Lathan Ransom	1	0	0.0	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>

### Punt Returns No. Yds. Avg. TD Long

Emeka Egbuka	11	75	6.8	0	18
Jayden Ballard	1	14	14.0	0	14
JK Johnson	1	0	0.0	0	0
Reis Stocksdale	2	-1	-0.5	0	0
<b>OSU Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>OPP Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>

### Kickoff Returns No. Yds. Avg. TD Long

Xavier Johnson	11	254	23.1	0	46
Chip Trayanum	3	29	9.7	0	17
Jayden Ballard	1	0</			



# Media Reacts To Ohio State's Loss To TTUN

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

For the first time since 1999 and 2000, Michigan has beaten Ohio State in The Game in back-to-back years. The Wolverines pulled away in the second half, dominating the Buckeyes 28-3 over the final 30 minutes and gashing Ohio State's defense for touchdown runs of 75 and 85 yards to seal victory.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day has said on countless occasions that the team's three goals every year are to beat Michigan, win the Big Ten and win the national championship. A loss at home to the Wolverines immediately thwarted two of those ambitions, and the Buckeyes are on the outside looking in for the College Football Playoff.

Here are the reactions of media members from across the landscape of the rivalry as to what went down in Columbus on Nov. 26:

"The beatdown in the 'Bus turns the tables on this great rivalry. Michigan is in charge now. Wolverines coach Jim Harbaugh has emphatically taken over after his finest moment yet at his alma mater. His team shrugged off injuries to key players, weathered an early storm, gained confidence and instilled doubt in Ohio State, wore down the opponent and turned a close upset into a second straight rout of the program that once tormented him. The tougher, more resilient, more focused team won.

"Now, Day is the one with the losing streak in the series, the one facing hard questions, the one whose shiny overall record (45-5) is tarnished by two ugly blue smudges: a 15-point loss last year followed by this debacle, which might have serious College Football Playoff ramifications. Coach Third Base is still stranded there, and he better keep his eyes peeled for a pickoff throw.

"Everything was in the Buckeyes' favor heading into Saturday – Ohio State was a touchdown-plus favorite playing a wounded opponent in the 'Shoe, in mild weather that was friendly to its high-octane offense. But after jumping out to an early lead and appearing capable of scoring at will, it all started to unravel for the Buckeyes.

"They left points on the field early with poor execution and questionable play calls. Then, the defense fell apart – the secondary first, and then everyone else – rendering the \$1.9 million Ohio State spent on coordinator Jim Knowles as money wasted. This was the game they hired him for, and his unit was bombarded. Day became strangely conservative. Composure exited the home sideline. Defeatist body language crept in.

"With a 1-2 record against the Wolverines, Ryan Day has to prove he is not (John) Cooper on training wheels. But this is a different era, one in which Day is not going to get anywhere near 13 years to turn this rivalry back around. The hot seat

awaits Day in 2023, while Jim Harbaugh leaves his days on the rivalry hot seat further behind."

– **Pat Forde,**  
**Sports Illustrated**

"C.J. Stroud wanted to go for it as he visibly and animatedly waved Ohio State football's punt team off the field in a situation the quarterback clearly knew was vital for a team teetering on another loss to Michigan.

"Too bad the person running the show didn't feel the same way.

"Head coach Ryan Day chose to punt and give the ball back to OSU's rival, which then drove down the field to make it a two-score game and what ended up being the ultimate nail in the coffin. From that point on, a packed Ohio Stadium's worst fears were starting to be realized.

"For the second straight season, the Buckeyes lost to Michigan, 45-23, and they only had themselves to blame. Day and Stroud had a chance to cement their Ohio State legacies by avenging a loss to Michigan, but instead, they only tarnished something already in question.

"Way too often, the Buckeyes were reluctant to (not) throw horizontal passes and run the ball instead of putting the game into the hands of a potential Heisman Trophy quarterback and a wide receiving corps that's supposed to be the best college football has to offer. The aggressive play-calling style that we'd come to expect was nowhere to be found."

– **Stephen Means,**  
**Cleveland.com**

"When Ohio State-Michigan turns, it turns. Michigan owned the rivalry for roughly a dozen years in the late '80s and '90s until Jim Tressel arrived and began 18 years of Buckeye dominance under him and Urban Meyer. Granted, two years is not 12 or 18, but Jim Harbaugh has officially taken ownership of Ryan Day's program.

"As badly as the Wolverines kicked their rivals' butts last year, 2022 was so much worse. To go to Columbus and hang a 45-23 defeat on 11-0 Ohio State; to do it without star RB Blake Corum; and the manner in which they did it – scoring touchdowns of 69, 75, 45, 75 and 85 yards – is about as thorough a repudiation as one can inflict. The longstanding perception of Ohio State as an uber-talented behemoth lording over the rest of the Big Ten is dead. I don't care what the recruiting rankings say. Michigan is quite clearly the better program right now.

"All of which would have sounded nuts two years ago when Harbaugh was still 0-5 against the Buckeyes and avoided going to 0-6 only because the 2020 game got canceled. It's well-documented how he reinvented his program, though Saturday's formula – J.J. McCarthy throwing downfield to wide-open receivers – wasn't necessarily his blueprint for most of the last two years. You could tell how much the power dynamic had turned when Ryan Day opted to punt from the Michigan 43,

down 24-20. That's not the mark of a 'more talented' team.

"Day's approval rating in Columbus undoubtedly took a beating Saturday, which speaks to just how much that one game defines the coach of Ohio State or Michigan. Day, in his fourth full season, has won 90.0 percent of his games, a higher clip than Nick Saban, Lincoln Riley or any other active coach. But these two unforgivable losses are now top of mind with the fan base. His job is not in jeopardy, but after some questionable play-calling in both the Penn State and Michigan games, perhaps he should consider handing over the reins of the offense next season and focus entirely on his role as CEO."

– **Stewart Mandel,**  
**The Athletic**

"The historical significance of Saturday's win really can't be overstated. Michigan, missing arguably its best offensive and defensive players, steamrolled an undefeated archrival in front of 106,787 opposing fans to complete its second 12-0 regular season in program history.

"You can count the number of Michigan's wins with that combination of stakes, execution and surprise on one hand. Really, you might only need one finger.

"It was an all-time win for the Wolverines. After decades of seeming to have uncharacteristic struggles in its biggest games, Michigan played its best football of the season with the pressure at its peak. It's a testament to the Wolverines' culture and mental edge, which seems night-and-day different from two years ago."

– **Zach Shaw,**  
**TheMichiganInsider (247Sports)**

"For the past 52 weeks, Ohio State's mission was to avenge last year's loss to Michigan. Everything they did throughout the past 12 games, from the coaching changes Ryan Day made after the 2021 season to workouts throughout the off-season and even the Buckeyes' constant quest for improvement during the regular season, was focused on performing better in their final game of the regular season than they did in their 42-27 loss to the Wolverines in Ann Arbor on Nov. 27, 2021.

"Instead, those 364 days of work ended with the Buckeyes suffering an even worse loss than they did one year before, as Ohio State suffered a 45-23 loss to its rivals in which it was outscored 28-3 in the second half.

"Ohio State's loss to Michigan in 2021 wasn't entirely shocking. The Buckeyes had been a flawed team all season, and bad weather in Ann Arbor, coupled with a flu outbreak within the team, didn't help Ohio State's chances of overcoming those flaws. Michigan's first win in The Game in 10 years, while still viewed as unacceptable by the Buckeyes and everyone who roots for them, could be chalked up as a one-year hiccup for the program.

"This year's loss, however, comes with no valid excuses. The weather was as good as Ohio State could have hoped in a late November game, and the Buckeyes had the home crowd on their side. Michigan didn't

even have its best player available for nearly the entire game, as star running back Blake Corum – injured one week earlier against Illinois – had just two carries for 6 yards before heading to the sideline for the rest of the day.

"Ohio State played poorly on both sides of the ball, as big plays consistently gashed its defense – allowing five plays of 45 yards or longer that all went for touchdowns – while its offense reached the end zone just twice in 14 possessions, with none in the Buckeyes' last eight possessions. Ohio State gave up more points and yards than it had all season while scoring fewer touchdowns than it had all season."

– **Dan Hope,**  
**Eleven Warriors**

"Remember when Jim Harbaugh was supposedly the most overpaid coach in America? Remember when there were calls for Michigan to fire the guy after a miserable two-win season in 2020 and five consecutive losses to the Buckeyes?

"Or maybe no one can recall any of that because of the distracting 'Let's Go Blue' chants echoing through a fast-emptying Ohio Stadium on Saturday as the Wolverines knelt out a 45-23 statement of a victory here.

"Michigan is 12-0, headed to another Big Ten title game and likely the College Football Playoff again after it. It just handled a more talented Buckeye club that spent a year swearing this time would be different.

"They even spent \$1.9 million on defensive coordinator Jim Knowles to assure it. They got torched anyway.

"Harbaugh runs this series now. He runs the Big Ten by going old school, playing bully ball and punishing a Buckeye program that doesn't seem willing to sustain the fight, let alone tackle in the open field."

– **Dan Wetzel,**  
**Yahoo Sports**

"Was it a good-bye as Ohio State fans began their fire drill march to the exits? Or a hello?

"Either way, Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy's mocking wave to a stunned Ohio Stadium crowd late in the fourth quarter of the Wolverines' 45-23 beatdown Saturday represented the end of one era and the dawn of another.

"For two decades, Ohio State had towered over the Big Ten, establishing a standard that seemed hopelessly out of reach – even for its heavyweight rival. No more.

"A year after the Wolverines ended the Ten-Year Snore with their first win over Ohio State in a decade, they proved far more than a one-hit wonder.

"In a showdown scripted in football heaven – a battle of unbeaten prodigies with stakes as prodigious as they were personal – they showed they're now THE program in the Big Ten.

"Just as Georgia has overtaken Alabama as the benchmark of the South, Michigan and Ohio State have traded places in the North."

– **Dave Briggs,**  
**The Toledo Blade**



**Jim Harbaugh**



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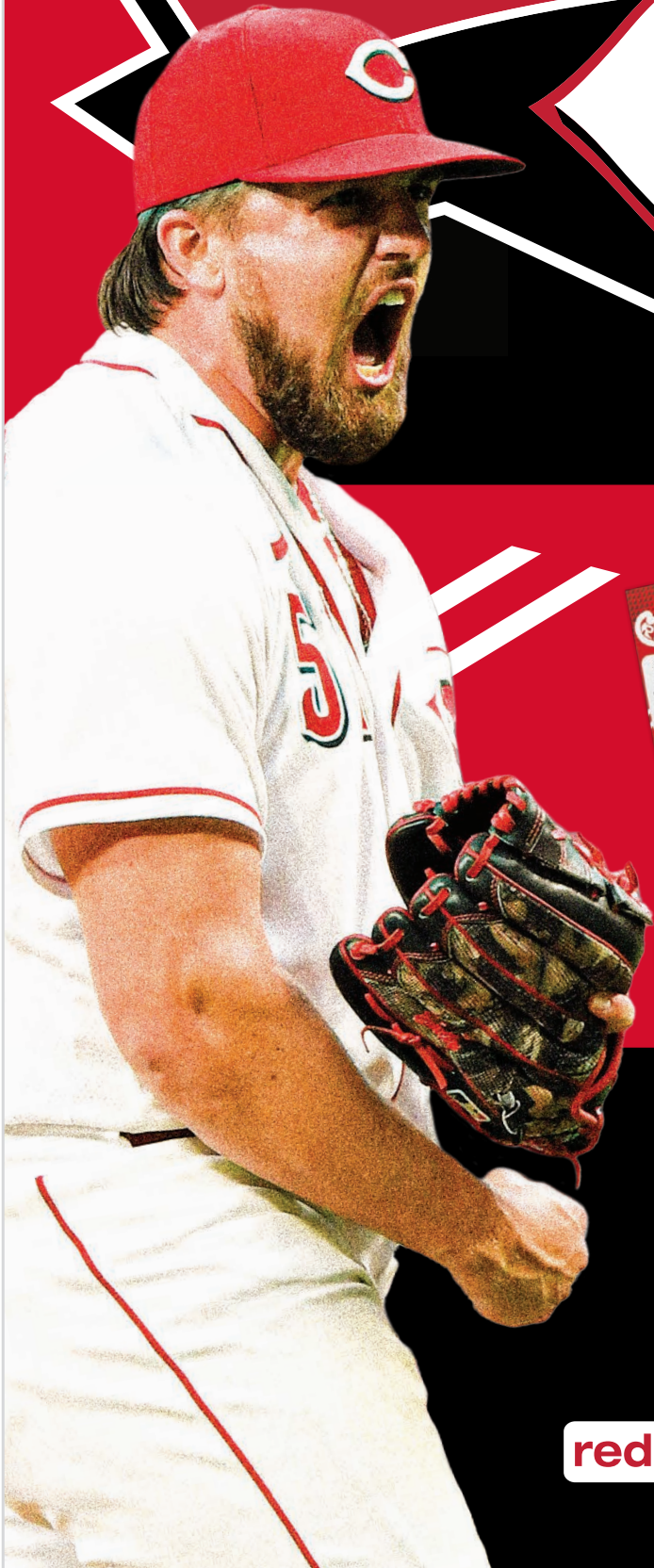


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# Eichenberg Emerges As Leader On OSU Defense

By JACK EMERSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

When the Ohio State defense underwent a distinct schematic makeover under first-year defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, the Buckeyes saw several areas of improvement on that side of the ball. The most obvious upgrade came at the linebacker position where Tommy Eichenberg, who was under-utilized for a good portion of Ohio State's campaign last year, grew into one of the most feared players at his position this season.

Fashioned as "the leader of the defense" by Knowles and several teammates, Eichenberg has emerged as the centerpiece of Ohio State's resurgent defense. He leads the Buckeyes with 112 tackles and 12 tackles for loss and has added 2½ sacks, five quarterback hurries, three pass breakups and an interception returned for a touchdown.

Eichenberg has flourished under Knowles' guidance, and the defensive coordinator said his linebacker fits in with the ideals of the Ohio State football program.

"Tommy is as tough as they come, as tough as any player I've been around," Knowles said. "He kind of epitomizes what we want to be as a defense and as a program. Nothing is going to stop him. No matter the circumstance or injury, he is going to show up."

Eichenberg's meteoric rise during his fourth season was desperately needed after the Ohio State defense was embarrassed in a 42-27 loss to Michigan on Nov. 27, 2021, in which several defensive holes were exposed. The loss – as well as the general poor defensive play throughout the season – prompted the release of then-defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs and the hiring of Knowles, who has modeled his 4-2-5 defense to allow his defenders to play fast and carefree in games.

However, Eichenberg had shown several flashes of his potential prior to Knowles' arrival in Columbus. The Cleveland native produced 64 tackles – 6½ for loss – during his junior season, which was punctuated by



SONNY BROCKWAY

**TOMMY TWO THUMBS — Despite playing with two broken hands, Ohio State linebacker Tommy Eichenberg has been a leader for the Buckeyes.**

a 17-tackle performance during Ohio State's 48-45 win over Utah in the Rose Bowl, earning him the game's defensive MVP honors.

"I think it just builds confidence," Eichenberg said after the Rose Bowl win. "It builds momentum. That's all football is – it's confidence."

The Rose Bowl certainly built momentum for the mild-mannered linebacker, who took the reins as the Buckeyes' main man in the middle ahead of this season. As Eichenberg molded into the central piece of the Knowles defense during the offseason, he was finally able to showcase his abilities in the new defense against Notre Dame in the season opener on Sept. 3, and he did just that.

Eichenberg was all over the field against the Fighting Irish, producing nine tackles – three of which went for loss – and two sacks, while leading the Buckeyes to a 21-10 season-opening win. The Buckeyes gave the first

glimpse of their new-look defense in the victory, and Eichenberg said that it set the tone for what the unit was looking to be this season.

"We had a lot to prove, and everyone played well," Eichenberg said. "We were extremely confident too, so that was a big part of it."

Eichenberg settled in during the next two weeks, amassing 10 total tackles against Arkansas State and Toledo before producing another double-digit tackling output against Wisconsin. Challenged with slowing the Badgers' high-powered rushing attack, led by running back Braelon Allen, Eichenberg answered the call, tallying 14 tackles with two coming for a loss in the 52-21 win.

In the final two weeks leading into the off week, Eichenberg continued to tear up opposing offenses. He racked up nine tackles against Rutgers before closing the first half of the season with an eight-tackle outing against Michigan State.

In Ohio State's first game back from the idle week, Eichenberg registered his first career interception, which he promptly took to the house to push Ohio State's lead over Iowa to 26-10 just before halftime. The Buckeyes went on to coast to a 54-10 win in which Eichenberg tallied seven tackles.

"I just know the defensive line was pressuring (quarterback Spencer Petras) really well, so he was unsure in the pocket," Eichenberg said of his pick-six. "The ball just came right to me."

"I didn't (expect it to be that easy), but that's just the way football goes. You've just got to stay ready."

Through the next four games, Eichenberg registered three games of double-digit tackles, producing 15 against Penn State and 13 each in wins over Northwestern and Maryland.

His showing against Maryland stood as one of the more impressive feats of his career because Eichenberg was playing with not one, but two injured hands. Although limited by the injuries, Eichenberg made it clear that he wasn't fazed by his ailments.

"It would take a lot to stop me from playing," Eichenberg said. "Especially with this team, this defense."

When pressed further about the injuries, Eichenberg said they felt good enough to play in the Buckeyes' season finale against Michigan. Despite playing with the pair of injured hands, Eichenberg still led Ohio State with seven tackles during the Buckeyes' 45-23 loss to the Wolverines.

Although the regular season ended on a sour note for Eichenberg and the defense, the linebacker has gained considerable attention this season. He picked up a pair of Lott IMPACT Player of the Week honors, stemming from his play against Iowa and Penn State, while being named a finalist for the yearly award that carries the same name.

Eichenberg's growth coincided with that of fellow linebacker Steele Chambers. Head coach Ryan Day emphasized that the unit was playing at a high level as a result of their experience and understanding of Knowles' scheme.

"I think they are just playing faster," Day said after Ohio State's 49-10 win over Rutgers. "They're diagnosing plays faster. They understand how teams are trying to attack them. I think it's twofold – one is a year under your belt of playing and figuring out how teams are attacking you and in-game adjustments and just seeing things over and over again. You think about some of the best linebackers that we've had here in the last few years, it's usually guys who have played and seen things. You can flash when you're athletic, but it's the diagnosing of plays and understanding how teams are trying to really come after you."

"But then also they feel comfortable in the scheme. They have a good relationship with Jim Knowles, who they meet with every day. He's their position coach, and so I think he gives them really good perspective on how they fit into the run, but also in the pass game. You can just see it – they're playing that way. You can just kind of feel it on the sideline."

Eichenberg and Chambers also spend time together as roommates. Chambers said Eichenberg has his quirks off the field, which differ from his stoic attitude on it.

"Tommy is an interesting cat," Chambers said. "He's an interesting guy. Whenever you've lived with him for four years, like me, you see a different side of him that a lot of people won't see."

But on the field, Eichenberg's leadership – evidenced by his captaincy for the Buckeyes – shines through in addition to his dominant play.

"You ask anyone on this team, when Tommy is talking, we're listening," safety Ronnie Hickman said. "If you ask anyone who they would take in a dark alley, they would say Tommy Eichenberg."

Now that Eichenberg has grown into a star in the Ohio State defense, defensive end Zach Harrison emphasized that his teammate's value is measured in both his on-the-field performance and his impact on the unit as a whole.

"I look back and Tommy is just like, 'Do this.' He's kind of like a quarterback out there for the defense," Harrison said. "He's a leader. He's a guy that all 11 guys say, 'Tommy's got our backs and we've got Tommy's back.'"

"Tommy's one of the best defensive players in college football, and I really believe that."

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# Harrison Making Big Plays For OSU's Defense

By **ANDY ANDERS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles has stated his defense is predicated on tackles for loss, sacks and takeaways – in essence, big plays.

On a defense littered with players who have proved capable of just that, senior defensive end Zach Harrison has been among the best. With game-altering moments against Rutgers, Iowa, Penn State and Maryland, Harrison has shown up at opportune times for the Silver Bullets.

“From the first time I got to be around Zach, I knew that, in my mind, he was an elite player,” Knowles said. “I mean, he has great speed, tremendous arm length and the ability to lock out blockers, and his pass rush, he really has some distinct moves that he uses. I did not look much at last year when I got here. I really just tried to get a feel for the guys as they were, and Zach has been performing every week on tape.”

Entering this season, some thought Harrison might be usurped at defensive end by rising stars on the Buckeye defense. Ohio State returned a pair of sophomores at the position in Jack Sawyer and J.T. Tuimoloau, who were five-star prospects in the 2021 recruiting class.

Indeed, Tuimoloau had logged 399 snaps this season entering the Michigan game – the most among Ohio State's deep rotation of defensive ends – and Sawyer had been in on 299 himself. But Harrison has proved his staying power by earning 382 snaps of his own through the team's first 11 games, right behind Tuimoloau for second among the squad's edge rushers.

In 2021, Harrison logged four sacks and added 34 tackles and eight tackles for loss to that total, picking up a second-team All-Big Ten distinction from the media, but for a player of his recruiting pedigree, there were still fans who expected more, fair or not. It comes with the territory when attending the same school that produced Nick Bosa, Joey Bosa and Chase Young within the past decade.

“I tell him all the time that every time somebody throws a brick, you're building a foundation to be better,” defensive line coach Larry Johnson said before the season. “He's starting to learn how to build a foundation with those bricks where people say he's got to be this, he's got to be that. I think he's in a good place right now. He has worked extremely hard to understand the big picture. Now he just has to go out and do it.”

His raw numbers to this point are similar to those he posted a year ago, picking up 30 tackles with 6½ for loss and three sacks. But raw numbers don't tell the story of the game-altering plays he's made.

It started against Rutgers on Oct. 1. With the Scarlet Knights trailing just 14-7 late in the first quarter, quarterback Evan Simon stepped up to try to scramble away from Ohio State's pass rush on third-and-7. Harrison shed his blocker and met Simon a yard behind the line of scrimmage, stripping out a fumble that defensive tackle Michael Hall Jr. recovered.

With less than 30 seconds remaining in the third quarter, Harrison batted a pass off the release of Simon, and linebacker Steele Chambers intercepted the tipped ball, re-



SONNY BROCKWAY

**PROVIDING A SPARK — Ohio State defensive end Zach Harrison has had a breakout season, serving up big plays on several occasions.**

turning it 12 yards to set up the Ohio State offense at the Rutgers 20-yard line, with a score coming just two plays later.

“I think he has built momentum,” Day said after the game. “We'll watch the film and see how it was, but that was a huge play. Tips and overthrows are huge, and that was a tip that turned into an interception. I think he's playing at a high level.”

Against Iowa, Harrison collected two tackles for loss and a sack, and he had a first-quarter

strip-sack of Iowa quarterback Spencer Petras that led to one of the defense's six takeaways that day. He later deflected another pass on a third-down play to get the Hawkeyes off the field on a third-and-9 from their own 3-yard line with Ohio State ahead just 16-10 in the second quarter.

The following week against Penn State, while Tuimoloau rightly got most of the defensive praise for his play, Harrison recorded an interception off a ball batted into the air by

Tuimoloau, and he also added four tackles. His most impressive performance to date, though, came against Maryland in the penultimate game of the regular season.

With the Buckeyes leading just 36-30 with under a minute remaining and Maryland holding the ball with a chance to win, Harrison recorded back-to-back sacks of Maryland quarterback Taulia Tagovailoa to seal Ohio State's win. His first sack went for a 7-yard loss, while his second saw him punch the ball out and into the arms of Chambers. Chambers took the ball into the end zone to put Ohio State up 43-30, the eventual final score.

“On film, we saw that they're a good team, they've got good players, they've got good offensive linemen and if I just kept rushing, they'd wear out as the game went on,” Harrison said after the game. “I felt like those last couple plays, I just took advantage of my technique and kept going hard.”

Harrison's likely final home game at Ohio Stadium came on Nov. 26 in the Buckeyes' 45-23 loss to Michigan. Heading into the contest, Harrison was looking to leave an impact.

“Coach Mick (Marotti) always says legends are made during this game,” Harrison said prior to The Game. “It's a big game, I don't know how else to address that. It's the biggest game of the year.”

Despite the Buckeyes' disappointing loss, Harrison again was a disruptive force, tallying two pass breakups and a quarterback hurry in addition to his four solo tackles, including one tackle for loss.

Harrison's play throughout the season matches Knowles' stated defensive philosophy. Knowles has said on multiple occasions he wants to play “offense on defense,” which is an aggressive style predicated on coming after opposing offenses. It surrenders the occasional big play the opposite way, but the hope is that the team makes enough stops and big plays to more than make up for it, and Harrison has made more than his fair share for the Buckeyes.

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# 9th Decade: Titles, Heisman, U-M Dominance

Throughout the 2022 football season, *Buckeye Sports Bulletin* is publishing stories commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ohio Stadium. This week, BSB looks at the Horseshoe's ninth decade (2002-2011) that included an improbable national championship as well as unprecedented success against archrival Michigan.

By **MARK REA**

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

Jim Tressel had made good on his "315 days" speech when Ohio State went to Ann Arbor in 2001 and came home with a 26-20 victory against Michigan that snapped a six-game losing streak at Michigan Stadium.

But it was what Tressel and his team had in store for an encore that propelled the Buckeyes to the college football mountaintop as Ohio Stadium prepared for its ninth decade along the banks of the Olentangy River.

An extensive renovation project, lasting almost four years and costing nearly \$200 million, had been completed with additions including more than 80 hospitality suites, a new press box, a state-of-the-art scoreboard and other amenities as well as an increased official seating capacity to 101,568.

Crowds during the 2001 season had pushed well past that number, including a record 104,042 who showed up in early October to watch Jonathan Wells rush for 179 yards and three touchdowns during a 38-20 win against Northwestern in the first night game at the Horseshoe featuring a Big Ten opponent.

Thanks to the expanded stadium capacity, the Buckeyes set new attendance records in 2001 as 621,192 fans filed through the turnstiles for an average of 103,532 per game. But the following year would be even better.

For the first time in its history, Ohio Stadium hosted eight games in a single season, a total that helped smash the old attendance record when 827,904 filled the Horseshoe during the fall of 2002. And although ticket prices were on the rise to help finance the stadium renovation, fans more than got their money's worth that season.

Not that Buckeye Nation was totally convinced anything special was going to happen that fall. Despite the win at Michigan in 2001, Ohio State had managed only a 7-5 finish during Tressel's first year as head coach. That gave the Buckeyes a 21-15 record over their past three seasons, and they hadn't won an outright Big Ten championship in 18 years.

The team was installed at No. 13 in the 2002 preseason poll offered by The Associated Press, but it moved up five spots after a convincing 45-21 win against Texas Tech in the season opener, a game attended by 100,037 fans on a hot August afternoon in Columbus. Perhaps the victory wasn't convincing enough because attendance dropped to 98,689 two weeks later for a 51-17 walk-over against in-state rival Kent State.

But a top-10 matchup the following week, complete with ESPN's "College GameDay" show set up in the St. John Arena parking lot across the street, brought a record 104,553 into the stadium to watch the now-No. 6 Buckeyes carve out a 25-7 win against No. 10 Washington State. Stadium attendance would never again dip below the 100,000



FILE PHOTO

**STRIKE A POSE — Former Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith (10) capped off his incredible 2006 season by receiving the Heisman Trophy. Smith threw for 2,542 yards and 30 touchdowns while leading the Buckeyes to an undefeated regular season and an appearance in the BCS National Championship game.**

mark until the pandemic-shortened 2020 season.

Tressel said he and his staff realized something special was beginning to happen after those first three home games.

"If you go back to the Texas Tech game, I thought we handled that game so well physically and conditioning-wise," the College Football Hall of Fame coach told BSB. "I thought the dominance we showed that day was a good sign. Then we had a week off, and I thought that the fact our players were ready to go right back to work during that open week was good.

"You knew that Washington State game was going to be a tough one. They wound up playing in the Rose Bowl that year if I'm not mistaken. They had a good football team. They had really good defensive players, their quarterback (Jason Gesser) was really good, and they had a bunch of guys out of their secondary that played in the NFL. They were as talented a team as we played that year maybe until Michigan and Miami. I thought that was a very good win for us."

Ohio State had defeated its first three opponents in 2002 by an average margin of more than 25 points, but that comfort level was about to change. The Buckeyes traveled to Cincinnati during week four and barely escaped with a 23-19, come-from-behind victory that wasn't secure until OSU safety Will Allen grabbed an interception in his own end zone with 26 seconds remaining.

"That was definitely a realization call for us," Tressel said. "We came to the realization that everyone was going to play us better than they were — better than we'd see them play on film — so that game against Cincinnati was beneficial for us."

It was the beginning of a roller-coaster

thrill ride of a season that had the Buckeyes win seven times by a margin of seven points or fewer. Meanwhile, a new stadium attendance record was set and reset virtually every week leading to the traditional showdown in the season finale against Michigan.

With an unblemished 11-0 record, Ohio State had risen to No. 2 in the national rankings while the two-loss Wolverines, led by eighth-year head coach Lloyd Carr, were sitting at No. 12. Carr had beaten the Buckeyes five times in his seven previous seasons, including upset wins in 1995 and 1996 when Ohio State was ranked No. 2.

This time, though, there would be no upset. Before an Ohio Stadium-record crowd of 105,539, the Buckeyes overcame a fourth-quarter deficit to squeeze out a 14-9 win and secure the Big Ten's first-ever spot in the Bowl Championship Series national title game.

Freshman tailback Maurice Claret ran for a game-best 119 yards and a touchdown, and he added a pair of pass receptions for 35 yards. It was Claret's 26-yard catch in the fourth quarter that set up the game-winning score, a 3-yard touchdown run by fellow tailback Maurice Hall to give the Buckeyes the lead at 14-9 with 4:55 remaining in the game.

After that, the Ohio State defense took over to preserve the victory. Defensive tackle Darrion Scott sacked Michigan QB John Navarre, causing a fumble at the OSU 30-yard line that was recovered by defensive end Will Smith. Then in the final minute, the Wolverines got into the OSU red zone before Allen saved the day again, grabbing an interception to end the threat. That triggered a tumultuous celebration culminating in several Buckeyes, most notably quarterback Craig Krenzel, being carried triumphantly to the locker room

on a sea of scarlet-clad fans.

The victory gave the Buckeyes a share of the Big Ten championship with Iowa, preserved their undefeated season and put them into the BCS championship game against defending national champion Miami (Fla.). Then, on Jan. 3, 2003, at the Fiesta Bowl in Tempe, Ariz., Ohio State outlasted the Hurricanes by a 31-24 final score in double overtime to capture the school's first consensus national title since 1968.

## Coming Oh-So-Close

The 2002 national championship run was a tough act to follow, but the Buckeyes nearly proved up to the challenge.

Beginning with a win under the lights against Washington, a 28-9 decision witnessed by 105,078, the largest crowd ever to jam into the Horseshoe for a season-opening game, Ohio State rattled off five straight victories to run its winning streak to 19 games.

Included during that run was a wild contest against North Carolina State in mid-September that took three overtimes to decide before the Buckeyes could claim a 44-38 win. Krenzel and Wolfpack QB Phillip Rivers combined to throw for 588 yards and eight touchdowns (four each) as a crowd of 104,890 seemingly ratcheted up the decibel level with each score.

Krenzel's 6-yard touchdown run gave the Buckeyes a seemingly comfortable 24-7 lead early in the fourth quarter, but Rivers engineered a late comeback, connecting on a touchdown pass with 21 seconds remaining to tie the game at 24-24 at the end of regulation.

The teams traded touchdowns during the first two extra sessions before Krenzel hooked up with Michael Jenkins for another



# 100 YEARS OF OHIO STADIUM

score in the third overtime. Krenzel's pass attempt on the two-point conversion failed, allowing North Carolina State one final chance for victory.

But despite having a first-and-goal at the OSU 4-yard line, the Wolfpack failed to score when Ohio State linebacker A.J. Hawk stopped N.C. State tailback T.A. McLendon just short of the goal line on fourth down.

The winning streak ended four weeks later with a 17-10 loss at Wisconsin, and the Buckeyes also lost the regular-season finale at Michigan. But they remained undefeated at home, extending their Ohio Stadium winning streak to 16 games, and the eight home games in 2003 allowed the program to set another attendance record with an average of 104,870 per game.

OSU's home winning streak eventually reached 18 games before a 24-13 loss to Wisconsin in 2004. That was the middle game of the team's first three-game losing streak in five years. In the third game of that skid, an ugly 33-7 loss at Iowa, starting quarterback Justin Zwick suffered a shoulder injury and was relieved by sophomore Troy Smith, who threw the first touchdown pass of his career in the fourth quarter. No one could have envisioned it then, but Smith was about to lead the Buckeyes on a run of success over the next three seasons that would culminate in his 2006 Heisman Trophy win.

Smith gave a little glimpse of what was in store at the end of the 2004 season when he enjoyed what was to that time the best statistical day an Ohio State quarterback ever enjoyed against Michigan, accounting for 386 yards of total offense and three touchdowns during a relatively easy 37-21 victory before a

season-high crowd of 105,456.

The Wolverines entered the Nov. 20 contest on an eight-game winning streak, boasting a 9-1 record and ranked No. 7 in the country. They were already on their way to a Rose Bowl date against Texas and installed as a 4½-point favorite to beat the unranked Buckeyes.

But Michigan had no answer for Smith. The sophomore QB rushed for 145 yards and one touchdown and threw for 241 yards and a pair of scores. The Buckeyes had never had a quarterback rush for more than 100 yards and throw for more than 200 in the same game in program history.

Smith's game overshadowed several other fine individual performances, including one from freshman sensation Ted Ginn Jr. Ginn's 82-yard punt return for a touchdown in the third quarter was his fourth of the 2004 season, tying the all-time NCAA record for the most punt returns for a touchdown in a single season and establishing new single-season and career records at Ohio State.

The 2005 season began with Smith on the bench after being suspended by the NCAA for accepting \$500 from a booster. Zwick was back under center for the opener against Miami (Ohio), and he threw for 155 yards and a touchdown during a 34-14 win in front of a crowd of 104,695.

Smith's two-game suspension had ended, but Zwick remained the starter the following week when the Buckeyes entertained second-ranked Texas in the first-ever meeting between the two college football titans. A record stadium crowd of 105,565 witnessed the back-and-forth prime-time game that went down to the final minutes.

The Longhorns drew first blood, rushing out to 10-0 lead after the first quarter, but Smith came off the bench to rally the Buckeyes to a 16-13 halftime advantage. Ohio State managed to increase its lead to 22-16 by the end of the third quarter, but Texas QB Vince Young threw a 24-yard touchdown pass with 2:37 remaining, and OSU could not answer.

The Buckeyes had their chances in the second half, but in the third quarter tight end Ryan Hamby dropped a sure touchdown pass from Zwick in the end zone, and Zwick lost a fumble at his own 30-yard line inside the final three minutes of the game. Smith was tackled in the end zone for a safety with 0:19 on the clock to set the final score at 25-22.

Texas went on to beat USC in the Rose Bowl and capture the 2005 national championship while Ohio State finished the season with a 10-2 record capped by a 25-21 win at Michigan and a 34-20 romp against Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl with the Buckeyes piling up a then school bowl-record 617 total yards against the Fighting Irish. Smith threw for 342 yards and two touchdowns and added 66 more yards on the ground, setting the stage for what was to be a magical season in 2006.

## Heisman-Winning Season

Smith began his 2006 season by throwing for touchdowns on each of Ohio State's first three possessions during a 35-12 rout of Northern Illinois before 103,896, and the quarterback kept running roughshod over his competition until a showdown with Michigan at the end of November.

Dubbed "The Game of the Century" by

some pundits and "The Clash of the Titans" by others, it marked the first time in series history the Buckeyes and Wolverines had entered as the top two ranked teams in the nation. And somehow, the game lived up to the hype.

Another record crowd, this one numbering 105,708, was barely settled in when Michigan tailback Mike Hart kicked off the scoring with a 1-yard touchdown run at the 12:32 mark of the opening quarter. Later in the period, Smith flipped a 1-yard scoring pass to Roy Hall to tie the score.

On his only carry of the first half, Chris "Beanie" Wells thundered his way to a 52-yard touchdown run early in the second quarter to give Ohio State a 14-7 advantage. Smith threw for two more touchdowns in the first half, and the Buckeyes went to the locker room with a 28-14 lead at the break.

But the Wolverines refused to go away. Hart scored again early in the third quarter, and after a Smith interception, Michigan got a 39-yard field goal from Garrett Rivas to draw within four at 28-24 midway through the period.

Then it was OSU's turn to strike back. Following the Rivas field goal, Ginn returned the kickoff to his own 20-yard line after which Michigan committed a personal foul penalty to move the ball to the 35. Two plays later, Antonio Pittman blew through a hole in the right side of the line and didn't stop until he had crossed the goal line. The 56-yard romp pushed the Buckeyes' lead back to double digits at 35-24.

Hart, who rushed for a game-high 142

**Continued On Page 22**

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# Tumultuous End To Tressel's Glorious Run

Continued From Page 21

yards, tallied his third touchdown run of the game at the 14:41 mark of the fourth quarter to make it a four-point game again at 35-31. Smith recorded his fourth TD pass of the game to give Ohio State a 42-31 cushion with 5:38 left, but Michigan responded again with a touchdown and a two-point conversion to pull within three at 42-39 with 2:16 to go.

But with no timeouts remaining, the Wolverines were forced to try an onside kick that was smothered by Ginn near midfield. The Buckeyes then ran out the clock on the three-point victory and advanced to play for the BCS National Championship.

Ohio State finished with 503 yards of total offense against the Wolverines, led by Smith and his 316 yards and four touchdowns through the air. Ginn caught eight passes for 104 yards and one of the scores, while Pittman rushed for 139 yards and one touchdown.

Smith went on to run away with the Heisman Trophy, earning a then-record 91.6 percent of the vote. But the season ended with the Buckeyes on the wrong end of a 41-14 rout in the national title game against No. 2 Florida led by second-year head coach Urban Meyer.

That wasn't the only problem incurred by Ohio State during an otherwise successful 2006 season.

That spring, the grass surface at Ohio Stadium had become seriously damaged,

forcing work crews to replace the field. But bad weather throughout the summer and early fall would not allow the new grass to take proper root, and as soon as the football season began, it started coming apart in chunks. The university was forced to re-sod the field again, spending approximately \$150,000 on another natural surface, but the new grass didn't seem to take hold, either.

In response, Ohio State decided to install FieldTurf, an artificial surface that looks and feels like real grass but requires minimal upkeep. Designed and manufactured by a French-Canadian firm in Montreal, FieldTurf features a mix of polyethylene fibers replicating blades of grass as well as layers of sand and rubber pellets. It is now used by the majority of college football programs throughout the country, including 10 of the 14 Big Ten schools.

## Marquee Opponents

The Buckeyes shook off their title-game loss to Florida, won each of their first 10 games of the 2007 regular season, and climbed back into the No. 1 spot by mid-October. But an inexplicable 28-21 home loss to unranked Illinois in front of a Senior Day crowd of 105,453 temporarily derailed a return trip to the national championship game.

But after a string of upsets around the country and a 14-3 win at a rainy and cold Michigan Stadium, Ohio State was back in the title game. Unfortunately, mistakes at inopportune times resulted in a 38-24 loss to

LSU at the Superdome in New Orleans.

The Buckeyes followed with a 10-win season in 2008 and 11 victories in 2009, but each time the team faltered against high-level competition.

In 2008, Ohio State flew to California in mid-September and laid a huge egg, coming home with a 35-3 loss against top-ranked USC. Later that season, in front of another stadium-record crowd of 105,711, the Buckeyes committed a pair of costly turnovers that meant the difference in a 13-6 prime-time loss to third-ranked Penn State.

The following year, it was another night-time game and another record crowd, but the result was essentially the same as No. 3 USC eked out an 18-15 decision in front of 106,033 fans. It was the sixth straight loss to a top-10 opponent under Tressel, a streak that finally ended with a 26-17 win against No. 7 Oregon in the Rose Bowl.

Ohio State was back in the national championship discussion in 2010 and had ascended to the No. 1 spot in the polls prior to a mid-October trip to Wisconsin. But the Badgers returned the game's opening kickoff for a touchdown and never looked back, eventually running away with a 31-18 decision.

The loss sent the Buckeyes plummeting to a No. 11 ranking and effectively ended any national title aspirations, although they closed out another 11-win season with a 37-7 pounding of Michigan in front of a season-high home crowd of 105,491, and a thrilling 31-26 victory against Arkansas in the Sugar Bowl.

Unfortunately, the bowl win was overshadowed by reports that several players – including starting quarterback Terrelle Pryor, running back Dan “Boom” Herron, wide receiver DeVier Posey and offensive tackle Mike Adams – had violated NCAA rules by improperly exchanging team memorabilia for personal items such as tattoos.

Each of the players was allowed to participate in the Sugar Bowl, but by the following spring, the Ohio State program and its head coach were embroiled in a white-hot investigation that ultimately cost Tressel his job and Pryor the remainder of his college eligibility.

Tressel's departure ended a decade of excellence at Ohio State that boasted a 106-22 record, seven conference championships and the 2002 national title. Perhaps the greatest legacy left by the coach was his nearly perfect 9-1 record against Michigan, a mark that included an unblemished 5-0 at Ohio Stadium.

Meanwhile, Pryor left school after having thrown for 6,177 yards and 57 TDs, totals that still rank among the program's top five all-time passers. Additionally, he started three times against Michigan and led the Buckeyes to victory in all three. That record included home routs in 2008 and 2010, games in which the Buckeyes outscored their rivals by a combined margin of 79-14.

Left to pick up the pieces was co-defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Luke Fickell, who was a standout defensive lineman for the Buckeyes during the mid-1990s. Fickell was named head coach on an interim basis and appeared to have things well in hand after a 42-0 rout of Akron in front of a crowd of 105,001 attending the 2011 season opener.

That was followed by a less-than-picturesque 27-22 win against Toledo, and then the bottom fell out. Ohio State lost seven of its last 11 games, including the final four in a row, to finish with a 6-7 record. It was the first losing season since 1988 and the first seven-loss campaign for the program in 114 years.

Out of those ashes, however, the Buckeyes decided to pursue one of the most successful coaches in recent college football history. All they had to do was coax him out of retirement.

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# Young Ready To Resume Career After Injury

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The long recovery from a knee injury that has kept Chase Young off the field for more than a year is nearing completion for the former standout Ohio State defensive end.

Young was added to the Washington Commanders' active roster on Nov. 21 and was listed as questionable for the Nov. 27 game against the Atlanta Falcons. He was downgraded to out for the game hours before kick-off with "knee/illness" listed as the reasons by the Commanders.

The plan by Commanders coach Ron Rivera was to take it slow with Young, mentioning to reporters the week of the Atlanta game that Young would be in for 12-16 plays upon his return with the hope of having him on the field for 30-35 plays by the end of the season.

"Sixteen plays, one of those plays can be the play of the game," Young added. "You just never know. However many snaps I have when I come back, I'll be prepared."

"We'll work him with the intent of if he's ready to play, he'll play, and if he's not, he'll wait another week," Rivera said. "We have a really good mixture of guys right now that are playing really well as a group, and I know that's the last thing that anybody wants, especially Chase, is to come in and be disruptive. So we'll have to be smart, but we'll do this the right way."

Young returned to practice on Nov. 2 for the first time this season, starting the 21-day clock to remove him from the Physically Unable to Perform list and placing him on the active roster.

Rivera announced two days later that Young would not be ready for the Minnesota game on Nov. 6 but left open the possibility he could debut against the Philadelphia Eagles on Nov. 14, exactly one year after he tore his right ACL against Tampa Bay, necessitating reconstructive surgery, including grafting a tendon from his left knee to repair the right knee.

Obviously, Young (6-5, 265) was not ready then, but his teammates are eager to have him back.

"That's a former All-Pro guy," safety Darriek Forrest said. "He's a high-energy guy, and he's a leader. That's definitely something we need back on the field."

Added cornerback Kendall Fuller, "Everyone knows the type of player Chase is. He's a guy that's always going to hunt. He's going 100 percent every single time. Anytime you can have guys like that, that can rub off on the rest of us as a group. You always love to have him on the field."

## Time To Think

Young said during a Nov. 2 press conference that his rehabilitation gave him a chance for "soul searching."

"The biggest thing that came out of it was patience and knowing that it is on God's time, not my time," he said. "You know things happen for a reason. We never know why they happen. But what I did was I tried to find out why it happened."

"I tried to think about what in my life – this happened, that happened – but at the end of the day I know it's all on God and that he's in my corner. I don't even look at it really as a setback. I just look at it as a test from God. I'm coming back stronger. I'm not worried."



FILE PHOTO

**COMMANDER CHASE – Washington Commanders defensive end Chase Young, formerly of Ohio State, has battled injury for much of his three-year NFL career. Young has yet to make his debut this season while recovering from an ACL tear sustained during the 2021 campaign.**

Young's impending return to game action lifted the spirits of his teammates.

"To have him back on the field suited up, it's going to be really exciting," quarterback Taylor Heinicke said. "Obviously, he's a great player and he brings that extra juice, so we're all excited for him."

The Commanders have been a surprise this season, in a good way, sporting a 7-5 record after a 19-13 win over Atlanta. Young admitted that, while thrilled about the way the team was playing, it was hard to be a spectator.

"I'm glad to see how my team and teammates can overcome adversity," he said.

When he's at full go, Young can be dominant, as was the case in his final season at Ohio State in 2019 when he was a finalist for the Heisman Trophy. He led the nation with a program-record 16½ sacks – 1.4 per game – and was also the nation's leader with six forced fumbles.

Washington made him the second overall pick in the 2020 NFL draft, and he did not disappoint, named the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year and a pro bowl selection. He started all 15 games he played, recording 44 tackles (32 solo) with 7½ sacks, four forced fumbles (three recovered), 10 tackles for loss and four pass breakups.

He became the first rookie and third player in NFL history to record a fumble return touchdown, forced fumble, fumble recovery, sack and two-plus passes defended in the same game (at San Francisco, Dec. 13) since 1982. In the nine games last season before his injury, he had 26 tackles (15 solo), three tackles for loss, 1½ sacks, two forced fumbles and two pass breakups.

As much faith Young had that he would make a full recovery, there were moments of frustration.

"It was tough. I'm not going to say it wasn't tough," he said. "Obviously, it's the first serious injury I had. Every day is a slow grind. Real slow, especially when you first get surgery and

I couldn't walk. Somebody had to help me do everything.

"As it progressed, I found out that there's always light at the end of the tunnel and it gets dark just so your light can shine.

"I feel like I did a lot of soul searching while I was hurt. I felt like I got close to (God)," Young said. "They said he gives his strongest test to the strongest soldiers, so I feel like one of them and I feel like nothing can break me."

Young said his other inspiration in getting through rehab and back to the field was his father, Greg.

"He always told me nuggets every couple of days just making sure that his son was good," Young said.

Unable to do physical activity that elite athletes are used to, Young had a lot of time on his hands, and he used that time for some introspection.

"When I would get back from doing rehab, I would just sit there all day and just had to find something to do," he said. "And I feel like during that period, I think it just happened naturally for me."

"I was able to start to think about certain things in my life. Every day. You know, things that I'm just grateful for now, like jogging because I couldn't jog at one point and I'm like, 'I've got to be able to jog, man.'"

Washington defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio could sense Young's eagerness when the player reported to his first practice on Nov. 2.

"He's full of energy," Del Rio said. "He is

champing at the bit. I mean, he loves football. It's a guy that – it's been a year now or close to it, a complete year – this is a guy that really loves to play the game, loves being around his teammates, so it's great to have his energy back on the field.

"I think that's certainly a part of it for anybody coming back from injuries, is to gain that confidence, the trust in yourself and what you're capable of doing again. That's part of what he's working through.

"But his energy has been terrific. I think he's a strong-minded guy and he's stayed strong throughout. He is working his way back. We're now practicing him, and when we get him in a position where we feel like he's ready to roll, we'll cut him loose and let him play."

Both Young and Rivera had similar descriptive words to describe his first practice.

"I felt good. I felt pretty springy," Young said. "Just getting back in motion, all the pre-snap reads and things like that – just feeling like a football player again, feeling good."

"He was quick, he was spry," Rivera added.

Young said he didn't think about a timetable for his return during the long recovery period.

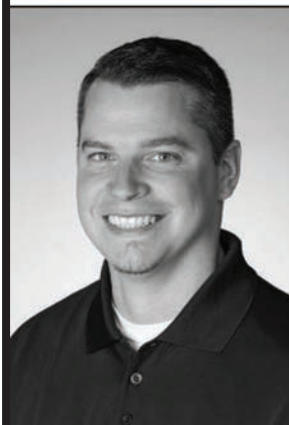
"As (Rivera) was saying, it was always the next day," he said. "It's really day to day. I mean, I wanted to play the first game (of the season)."

"It's really exciting for me just to know that I'm getting back to doing what I love to do. So I'm taking it day by day, and when that time comes, it will come."

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# The Stars Come Out For Michigan-Ohio State

The results on the field weren't what anybody at Ohio State wanted on Nov. 26, when the Buckeyes were handed a 45-23 loss by Michigan at Ohio Stadium, and the second loss to the Wolverines in as many seasons.

"I'm talking to pretty much the whole staff there," he said. "I'm still in communication with these places and appreciate them for still recruiting me and everything like that."

Ohio State had long been viewed as out for Downs unless the Buckeyes were able to get him on campus, so flipping the five-star prospect is not out of the question at this point, and it's still entirely possible that he sticks with his commitment to the Crimson Tide. But it gives Ohio State a chance to pull one of the top recruits in 2023, as Downs is ranked the No. 11 overall prospect and the top safety in the class.

"He is the type of prospect that checks off all the right boxes," said 247Sports recruiting analyst Andrew Ivins. "He always looks to be one step ahead of others. He's athletic enough to get across the field and erase a touchdown, but also physical enough to come downhill and meet a running back in the A or B gap. He's smooth and in control while in reverse as he keeps eyes in the backfield ... plants his cleats and drives towards the football better than most his age."

Ohio State has three safety commits in the class in West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Malik Hartford (6-3, 175); Cocoa, Fla., four-star Cedrick Hawkins (6-0, 175); and Jersey City (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep four-star Jayden Bonsu (6-1, 210), but any concerns about numbers at a certain position or class size are thrown out the window when it comes to a prospect like Downs.

## RECRUITING OUTLOOK Braden Moles

While things did not go great on the field, The Game was still a mostly positive development for Ohio State on the recruiting trail. The Buckeyes hosted north of 50 potential prospects, including several high-profile recruits in 2023.

The group of visitors was highlighted by Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek five-star safety Caleb Downs (6-0, 195), who turned out for his long-awaited return trip to Columbus. Downs has been committed to Alabama since July and did so after making official visits to the Buckeyes and Crimson Tide over the summer.

It became obvious in recent weeks, though, that Downs was open to something other than Alabama, after he took an unofficial visit to Georgia on Nov. 5, and his most recent trip to Ohio State confirms those suspicions. Downs told 247Sports that despite his commitment to Alabama, he's stayed in contact with Ohio State.



  
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## 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	SAF	6-1	210	★★★★	Hillside (N.J.) St. Peter's Prep
Malik Hartford	SAF	6-3	175	★★★★	West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West
Cedrick Hawkins	SAF	6-0	175	★★★★	Cocoa, Fla.
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
Kayden McDonald	DT	6-3	310	★★★★	Suwanee (Ga.) North Gwinnett
Luke Montgomery	OT	6-5	280	★★★★	Findlay, Ohio
Jason Moore	DE	6-6	255	★★★★	Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha Catholic
Joshua Padilla	OG	6-4	280	★★★★	Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne
Arvell Reese	LB	6-4	212	★★★★	Cleveland Glenville
Bryson Rodgers	WR	6-1	175	★★★★	Zephyrhills (Fla.) Wiregrass Ranch
Noah Rogers	WR	6-2	195	★★★★	Rolesville, N.C.
Austin Siereveld	OL	6-5	320	★★★★	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

Another surprise safety on campus was West Chester (Ohio) Lakota West four-star Ben Minich (5-11, 185), who has been committed to Notre Dame since August. Minich is the No. 319 overall prospect and No. 33 safety in the class, though he does not have a reported offer from Ohio State.

The Buckeyes also hosted a pair of notable defensive ends in Venice, Fla., five-star Damon Wilson (6-4, 230) and Indianapolis Lawrence Central four-star Joshua Mickens (6-5, 225), who is committed to LSU. Ohio State's recruitment of Wilson – who is still considered a lean to the Buckeyes – has been well-documented, but Mickens' interest in Ohio State has been a more rapid development.

Mickens received his offer from Ohio State on Nov. 9 and took his official visit on Nov. 26, though it wasn't his first visit to Ohio Stadium. He was also in attendance for last season's loss to Oregon. Time is now ticking on a decision for Mickens, as he has previously said he plans to sign with a team during the early signing period, which begins Dec. 21.

As for Wilson, his visit to Georgia on Nov. 5 was believed to be the last visit of his recruitment before he wound up at Ohio State on Nov. 26, another positive sign for the Buckeyes to potentially land the nation's No. 20 overall prospect and No. 2 defensive end. Like Mickens, Wilson has indicated he would like to commit to a team and sign during the early period, so it shouldn't be long before he comes to a decision.

Ohio State also welcomed some offensive playmakers, hosting Cincinnati Win-

ton Woods three-star running back Trey Cornist (5-11, 209) for an unofficial trip and Pierre (S.D.) T.F. Riggs four-star quarterback Lincoln Kienholz (6-3, 185) on an official visit. Cornist's visit is relevant given the decommitment of Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star running back Mark Fletcher (6-1, 225), and Kienholz's visit has increased importance given the flip of Memphis (Tenn.) Lausanne Collegiate School four-star quarterback Brock Glenn (6-2, 195) to Florida State, but more on him later.

One notable prospect who did not make the trip to Columbus was Brockton (Mass.) Thayer Academy five-star offensive tackle Samson Okunlola (6-5, 305). It had been reported that he was planning to take a visit, but for whatever reason – be it logistics or lack of interest – it did not come to fruition, and the Buckeyes can likely end any thoughts of Okunlola ending up at Ohio State.

Moving to 2024 prospects, Ohio State hosted several notable players.

Breaking it down by each side of the ball, offensive prospects in attendance included Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward three-star offensive linemen Deontae (6-7, 270) and Devontae (6-6, 283) Armstrong; Tampa (Fla.) Wharton four-star running back Stacy Gage (5-11, 200); New Haven, Ind., four-star wide receiver Mylan Graham (6-0, 170); Avon, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Luke Hamilton (6-5, 290); Fort Wayne (Ind.) North Side four-star wide receiver Brauntae Johnson (6-3, 170); Cincinnati Moeller four-star running back Jordan Marshall (5-11, 195); Hiram, Ga., four-star tight end Walter Matthews (6-7, 245); Olney (Md.) Good Counsel three-star wide re-

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## OSU Football 2024 Commitments

Players 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
Ian Moore	OL	6-5	295	★★★★★	New Palestine, Ind.
Dylan Raiola	QB	6-3	220	★★★★★	Chandler, Ariz.
Garrett Stover	SAF	6-2	195	★★★★★	Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut

ceiver Elijah Moore (6-4, 190); Lakewood St. Edward three-star offensive tackle Ben Roebuck (6-7, 320); Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt four-star wide receiver Rico Scott (6-0, 185); and Washington (D.C.) St. John's four-star offensive lineman Jordan Seaton (6-5, 287).

Of that grouping, Ohio State has been closely involved with Gage and Graham, with Gage taking on extra importance given the Buckeyes' current troubles at running back in 2023.

As for the defense, Ohio State hosted Buford, Ga., five-star athlete KJ Bolden (6-1, 185); Chattanooga (Tenn.) Brainerd four-star athlete Boo Carter (5-10, 184); Olney (Md.) Good Counsel four-star linebacker Aaron Chiles (6-3, 210); West Bloomfield, Mich., four-star linebacker Kari Jackson (6-1, 215); Stafford (Va.) Mountain View four-star linebacker Kristopher Jones (6-2, 220); Chandler (Ariz.) Basha four-star athlete Miles Lockhart (5-10, 185); Youngstown (Ohio) Fitch four-star defensive end Brian Robinson (6-4, 230); Cincinnati Taft four-

star defensive end Elias Rudolph (6-4, 220); Springfield, Ohio, four-star cornerback Aaron Scott (6-1, 170); Windsor (Conn.) Loomis Chaffee four-star defensive linemen Jacob (6-5, 225) and Jerod (6-3, 265) Smith; and Nashville (Tenn.) Lipscomb Academy four-star linebacker Edwin Spillman (6-1, 216).

"The atmosphere was crazy," Bolden told 247Sports. "I heard about the energy on game day when it's rivalry week against Michigan, but to experience it was on a different level. The stadium was rocking, and I really enjoyed it."

It was a smaller group for 2025, but the Buckeyes still welcomed Lynchburg (Va.) Liberty Christian Academy four-star running back Gideon Davidson (6-0, 193); Franklin (Mich.) Wylie E. Groves offensive tackle Avery Gach (6-5, 265); Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph four-star athlete Bo Jackson (6-1, 190); Findlay, Ohio, quarterback Ryan Montgomery (6-3, 200); St. Louis University athlete Landon Pace (6-2, 200); Buford, Ga., five-star linebacker Jadon Perlotte (6-3, 200); San Juan Capistrano (Calif.)

Hills four-star linebacker Weston Port (6-1, 215); Evans, Ga., five-star offensive tackle Mason Short (6-7, 280); and Calhoun, Ga., tight end Emaree Winston (6-3, 230).

Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage wide receiver Malachi Toney (6-1, 165), a 2026 prospect, was also in attendance and received an offer from the Buckeyes. He holds additional offers from Auburn, Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Penn State and Texas A&M, among others.

### 2024 SAF Stover Commits To OSU

Ohio State added a third commitment in 2024 on Nov. 21, earning a verbal pledge from Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star linebacker/safety Garrett Stover (6-2, 195).

Stover – the cousin of current Ohio State tight end Cade Stover – is the No. 168 overall prospect and No. 17 athlete in the class. He held additional offers from Cincinnati, Duke, Iowa State, Kentucky, Michigan State, Notre Dame and Pittsburgh, among others.

"It's always been a dream of mine to be a Buckeye," he told 247Sports. "It feels amazing. It's awesome that it's close to home, and it really just shows all the work I have put in has paid off. It is all around the perfect fit for me, and it just feels like home. That place is filled with amazing

people that I have built relationships with, and I have a great relationship with the staff as well. I'm excited to get developed and join the brotherhood."

Stover earned his offer after camping at Ohio State over the summer, and he's made several return visits to Ohio State this season. A versatile player, he seems a prime fit for defensive coordinator Jim Knowles' hybrid linebacker/safety position, comparable to the role safety Ronnie Hickman has played this season for the Buckeyes.

"I really like the position Ronnie was playing because it's definitely a hybrid spot," Stover said. "He was playing deep at times, coming off the edge and also playing up like a linebacker. I don't care what position I play, but that position looks really cool to me and gives me an opportunity to show that I can play both safety or linebacker. (I'm) definitely working to improve my skills at safety and in coverage and getting blockers off of me when I'm playing linebacker."

Ohio State recruiting analyst Bill Greene told BSB that he likes what Stover can add to Ohio State, though he sees Stover contributing more as a linebacker.

"I like Stover a lot," he said. "I think he's a linebacker, and I think he's an active, quick, runs-to-the-ball type. Maybe a Tommy

**Continued On Page 26**

## A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

### 35 Years Ago — 1987

National recruiting expert Tom Lemming listed defensive prospects most likely able to make an early impact on Ohio State's program, including a handful of defensive backs.

Most defensive backs in college, Lemming said, were prize running backs in high school. For example, Ohio native Buster Howe led Zanesville's running attack from the single wing (implemented into the offense just for Howe) and was also a standout safety. Howe, 5-11, 180, who ran a 4.6 40-yard dash, had 111 tackles as a junior and nine interceptions.

### 30 Years Ago — 1992

Ohio State already had lost out on the services of two of Ohio's top prepsters in quarterback Scot Loeffler of Barberton and St. Marys Memorial linebacker Mike Elston to Michigan before the OSU-Michigan game then lost another right after the contest.

Loeffler's teammate at Barberton, center Joe Ries, verbally committed to the Wolverines the day after the OSU-Michigan game.

Considered one of the top offensive line prospects in the state, Ries (6-5, 285, 4.8) eliminated all schools except Ohio State and Michigan before making his decision.

He said the unsettled status of OSU head coach John Cooper had nothing to do with his decision, saying that a chance to join Loeffler at Michigan was one of the deciding factors.

### 25 Years Ago — 1997

John Cooper and the Ohio State football staff had largely closed off Ohio's borders in his 10 years on the job.

Much of the success the Buckeyes had over the past four seasons was due largely to talented and hyped recruiting classes, including the 1996 haul that many observers thought was tops in the land. A host of players from that group shone the previous year, including Big Ten freshman of the year Andy Katzenmoyer.

BSB conducted a study looking at the hometowns and high schools of the various recruits Cooper and his staff had signed since 1988.

It shouldn't be a shock that more players – five – came from perennial powerhouse St. Ignatius in Cleveland than any other high school during the Cooper regime to that point. Columbus DeSales, which had given the Buckeyes defensive tackle Luke Fickell and offensive lineman Kurt Murphy, was second with four players, and a host of schools – including powers Cincinnati Moeller, Midletown and St. Henry – had all sent three to Columbus.

### 20 Years Ago — 2002

Ashton Youboty (6-1, 180, 4.5) of Klein, Texas, was hosted at OSU for the Ohio State-Michigan game by wide receiver Santonio Holmes.

"That was exciting," Youboty said. "That game came down to

the last second, and the fans were crazy. There was a lot of red."

Youboty had visited Penn State previously. He was set to see Tennessee Nov. 30 and was looking to visit Oklahoma as well.

"I'm pretty sure I'll end up at Penn State or Ohio State," he told Bill Kurelic of The Ohio Football Recruiting News. "Those two are pretty even. I'll make a decision after I visit Tennessee."

Youboty projected as a cornerback, but he had to fill in at safety as a senior. He had three interceptions for a 7-3 team. He attended OSU's summer camp in June.

### 15 Years Ago — 2007

Add The Washington Times to the list of major media outlets that wrote a feature on Jeannette, Pa., quarterback prospect Terrelle Pryor.

Calling the 6-6, 210-pound prospect a "true quarterback prodigy," the newspaper took a look at how the nation's top quarterback prospect broke the mold of quarterbacks to come from western Pennsylvania.

"They call him 'HD,' because Terrelle is like some kind of dazzling new technology," the paper quoted a Jeannette resident as saying. "He does things nobody's ever seen before. I once saw Terrelle vault 8 yards into the end zone over two defenders from Greensburg (Pa.) Central Catholic."

The Times also quoted an anonymous Division I college coach who was not allowed to speak directly about Pryor until after he signed a national letter of intent in February.

"In more than 30 years of coaching and recruiting, I've never seen a kid with his upside," the coach said. "He needs to work on the mechanics of his delivery, but he's got amazing tools. The Vince Young comparisons are appropriate. Both are gliders, but I think Pryor actually has more upside. Compared to where Young was coming out of high school, Pryor is just as elusive and explosive as a runner, but he has a longer frame and superior touch on shorter passes."

### 10 Years Ago — 2012

One of the most apparent positions of need on Ohio State's current roster was at linebacker, which meant Urban Meyer would try to land game-changers at the position moving forward.

And if the Buckeyes were successful in landing Hinesville (Ga.) Liberty County linebacker Raekwon McMillan – Scout's No. 2 middle linebacker in the 2014 class – that would go a long way in helping the team fill a great need.

After McMillan visited for the Michigan win, Meyer's chances of landing one of the most dynamic talents in the country seemed to increase dramatically.

"I have to say that I am a little surprised that my expectations were met this weekend because they were so high," McMillan said after his visit. "I expected a lot, and it was everything I thought it would be. It was amazing."

McMillan, a four-star recruit, asserted himself as one of the top prospects in the country after a dominant sophomore season in 2011. The 6-2, 230-pounder posted 97 tackles, including 20 for loss, forced five fumbles, recorded a sack and grabbed an interception.

### Five Years Ago — 2017

Of the 18 pledges in Ohio State's 2018 class, a handful of them were not guarantees, Scout.com recruiting analyst Bill Greene said. Franklin County, Ga., four-star dual-threat quarterback Emory Jones was at the top of the list. Scout ranked Jones (6-3, 195) the No. 88 overall prospect and fourth-best dual-threat quarterback. Only Seffner (Fla.) Armwood four-star running back Brian Snead had been committed to Ohio State longer than Jones.

Despite the long-standing commitment, Jones had kept his recruitment open, visiting Alabama on multiple occasions in the fall, including an official to Tuscaloosa on Oct. 21, and seeing the Auburn campus in an unofficial capacity twice in the month of November.

This type of activity forced Ohio State to look at such signal callers as Austin (Texas) Lake Travis three-star Matthew Baldwin, Fresno (Calif.) Clovis West four-star Adrian Martinez and Lawrenceville (Ga.) Central Gwinnett four-star Jarren Williams.

### One Year Ago — 2021

Ohio State quarterback Quinn Ewers was a coveted commitment for Ryan Day, but Ewers' reclassification from 2022 in 2021 threw a wrench into plans for the Buckeyes at quarterback, and they were suddenly looking for a signal caller in their 2022 class.

James Franklin's 10-year contract extension and sudden stability at Penn State ended any talk of Medina, Ohio, four-star Drew Allar flipping to Ohio State, but focus from Allar switched with the recent decommitment from USC of Draper (Utah) Corner Canyon four-star Devin Brown.

"I would like to thank (the USC coaches) for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to play at the next level," Brown said on Twitter. "They believed in me very early when many others didn't. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity they gave me. At this time I believe it's best for me to open my recruitment. I will be decommitting from the University of Southern California."

Brown (6-2, 196) took an official visit for Ohio State's game against Michigan State on Nov. 20, and he was hosted by Ole Miss on Oct. 8 and Texas Nov. 13.



# Ohio State Seeking New Quarterback In 2023

Continued From Page 25

Eichenberg-type. I don't know if he's going to be able to play the middle, maybe more like Steele Chambers, but I think he's a linebacker and I really like him. Love his talent, great kid. He's probably very similar in terms of character or personality and all that with Cade Stover. I really like locking that kid up now."

He is Ohio State's third commitment in 2024, joining Chandler, Ariz., five-star quarterback Dylan Raiola (6-3, 220) and New Palestine, Ind., four-star offensive lineman Ian Moore (6-5, 295).

## QB Glenn Flips To Florida State

Glenn announced on Nov. 21 that he was flipping to Florida State after being committed to Ohio State since July.

Glenn is the No. 378 overall prospect and No. 22 quarterback in the 2023 class. He threw for 1,413 yards this past season with 18 touchdowns to three interceptions, and he added 443 yards and seven touchdowns on the ground.

He took official visits to both Florida State and Ohio State over the summer shortly before his commitment to the Buckeyes, but he told 247Sports that he kept an eye on the Seminoles despite being committed to Ohio State.

"I like Coach (Mike) Norvell and the quarterback-friendly offense that he runs," Glenn told 247Sports. "He develops players every year, and he has a great staff surrounding him. I love all of the coaches on the Florida State staff from a coaching perspective, but also their personalities."

While Glenn's commitment currently

leaves the Buckeyes without a quarterback in 2023, there may be some movement on that front. As mentioned, Kienholz (6-3, 185), who is currently committed to Washington, was on an official visit for the Michigan game.

Kienholz is the No. 404 overall prospect and No. 24 quarterback in the class, and he's been committed to the Huskies since June. He threw for 3,422 yards this past season with 46 touchdowns while adding 1,436 yards and 24 touchdowns on the ground.

## 2024 WR Denmark Opts For Oregon

Ohio State received some disappointing news on Thanksgiving when Philadelphia Roman Catholic four-star wide receiver Tyseer Denmark (5-11, 180) announced he is

committing to Oregon.

Denmark had long been viewed as likely to land at Ohio State, and his services would have been appreciated as he is the No. 87 overall prospect and No. 14 wide receiver in 2024. Denmark announced a top three of Penn State, Ohio State and Oregon earlier in the week before his Nov. 24 announcement.

He was offered by Ohio State back in December and camped with the Buckeyes this past summer. Several crystal ball predictions issued on 247Sports had Denmark committing to the Buckeyes, but several of those predictions were flipped to the Ducks in recent days.

Even with the significant interest in Ohio State, Denmark had kept in close contact with Oregon and visited the school back in July.

"Growing up, that was my dream school, so seeing it in person was awesome," he told 247Sports. "I like the scheme. I think I'd be a top guy pretty early for them."

The Buckeyes have several other targets at receiver in 2024, including five-stars Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 185) and Joshisa Trader (6-2, 170) from Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep and New Haven, Indiana's Graham (6-0, 170).

## OSU Seeking Next 2024 Commitment

With Moore and Stover locked up – two prospects who had long been attached to Ohio State – and Denmark off to Oregon, it begs the question of which 2024 prospect will be the next to pop for the Buckeyes.

"They want those in-state corners," Greene said. "I think they're going to get both of them, Aaron Scott and Cleveland Glenville five-star cornerback Bryce West (5-11, 177). When you're dealing with a Glenville kid, they normally don't like to commit too early, although that may have been changing lately. I think you get Bryce West locked up, you get Aaron Scott locked

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# ASK AN ANALYST

## With Bill Greene Of Buckeye Scoop

**Philadelphia Roman Catholic four-star wide receiver Tyseer Denmark committed to Oregon over Ohio State on Nov. 24. Did that come as surprise, and what kind of player are the Buckeyes missing out on?**

"That was a shock. That was a shock, where I did not see that one coming. I thought he was coming to Ohio State 100 percent. I did not see that coming. That one was a shocker, to me. I don't know. Maybe (not to) others? I don't know how the other media looked at him, but I sure thought Ohio State was right there.

"He's really good. He fits exactly with the receivers that Ohio State has been bringing in lately. He's not the biggest guy in the world. He's shorter, but man, is he quick. He's a change-of-direction guy, speedy guy. He's good. I mean, there's a reason all these schools are after him. And truth be told, he really fits that Oregon offense, really well. Now, he would have fit the Ohio State offense well too. He probably would have been a slot receiver at Ohio State.

"He's good, but when you lose a big-time offensive lineman, it makes you wonder, and when you lose a big-time corner. But when you lose a big-time receiver, it's like (Brian) Hartline will just go get three other ones. Don't worry about it. That's really the way it's been for Ohio State. He hasn't missed many, but he's shown that when he does miss someone he wants, he'll just go get someone else. I have no worries at all that three or four years from now, Ohio State won't have one of the best wide receiver rooms in America. So if you're going to miss someone, you want to miss a wideout, because he'll go replace him with someone just as good or better. If you miss an offensive lineman, then it's time to worry."

**Memphis (Tenn.) Lausanne Collegiate School four-star quarterback Brock Glenn has flipped to Florida State. Did this take Ohio State by surprise, or was this a mutual parting of ways? And with Glenn out of the class, where does Ohio State look now for a quarterback in 2023?**

"I don't think it was a surprise at all, and I don't know if they're all that upset about it, to be honest with you. I mean, I

think they'll have him replaced in no time. They like Pierre (S.D.) T.F. Riggs four-star quarterback Lincoln Kienholz (6-3, 185). I won't be surprised if that kid committed in no time. When you're going to recruit a quarterback in this class, with Chandler (Ariz.) five-star Dylan Raiola (6-3, 220) coming and (freshman quarterback) Devin Brown, who by all accounts everybody just thinks the world of that guy, Devin Brown is just waiting right there in the wings for you. This class was going to be tough to get a big-time quarterback anyway.

"I like Brock Glenn. I think they're going to be able to flip Lincoln Kienholz and then you just traded one guy for the other guy. I think they're probably the same player. I've watched film on both, and I can't choose between the two. They're both really good players. I don't see either of them beating out Devin Brown or Dylan Raiola. That's kind of where you're at for a quarterback with this class.

"You were always looking for more of a guy that's willing to come in and battle, that knows the odds are long. He knows that Florida State can chart a pretty clear path for Brock Glenn to get to the field. Well, I don't think Ohio State legitimately could without lying to the kid. It's hard to tell the kid, 'You're going to start next year for sure,' That's like, come on. And then, 'Oh, yeah, we're bringing Dylan Raiola in, but we really like you better than him.' Come on.

"So this year's class, whether you got Brock Glenn or you've got Lincoln Kienholz, or you get Justin (Texas) Northwest three-star Jake Strong (6-2, 200), or you get Florence (S.C.) South three-star LaNorris Sellers (6-2.5, 217), I mean, you're getting who you're getting this year. You're not getting New Orleans Isadore Newman five-star Arch Manning (6-4, 215), and you're not getting Los Alamitos (Calif.) five-star Malachi Nelson (6-3, 182), not getting Downey (Calif.) Warren five-star Nicholaus l-maleava (6-5, 195). It always was going to be what it was going to be."

**There are several Ohio running back prospects that Ohio State could look at in 2023 with Cincinnati Winton Woods three-star Trey Cornist and Ironton three-star Jaquez**

**Keyes. Following Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) American Heritage four-star Mark Fletcher's decommitment, where do you see Ohio State going at running back?**

"They're definitely tracking the in-state guys. With Mark Fletcher, I think they were pretty set that they were going to only take one running back in this class. Now with Fletcher decommitting on you, you've got Jaquez Keyes in-state, and you got Trey Cornist in-state. I could see them going right now, fighting for one of those in-state kids. And you don't have to fight very hard – you're going to pluck whichever one you want. I think Keyes would decommit in a minute from Wisconsin. Cornist, I think you can get from Winton Woods, maybe take one of those guys.

"They've already offered Douglasville (Ga.) South Paulding three-star Jamarion Wilcox (5-9, 195). Maybe you fight like heck for Wilcox, and if you get him, maybe you still take one of those Ohio kids. And you go with two, instead of the one sure thing that you thought you had (with) Mark Fletcher, maybe you take two now.

"Depth is a problem right now. We saw it rear its ugly head against Michigan. TreVeyon Henderson can't play, Miyan Williams probably shouldn't have played at all, and then you're stuck with a transfer that hasn't played all year and a freshman. I could see them taking two now. I can see them just totally changing course and fighting like heck to get to Wilcox and then maybe try to flip Keyes or take Cornist.

"You'd get two different types of players if you do that. If you take Cornist, he's a bigger back, a pounder. He's a Miyan Williams-type. If you take Wilcox, he's a little shorter, shifter kind of guy. You could almost get two different styles by taking two in this class. That's probably the way I would go. I don't know how Ryan Day is going to look at it. If you're going to take a lesser quality than Mark Fletcher, I would probably go for the quantity and try to get two and develop them because the room is small. Who knows? Miyan Williams could leave here, then the room gets smaller. So I can see them taking two in this class now."

up, and then go from there."

The need to add more cornerback talent was on full display against Michigan, after the Wolverines and quarterback J.J. McCarthy threw for 263 yards and three touchdowns of at least 45 yards, including ones for 69 and 75 yards.

"We saw against Michigan, you need corners," Greene said. "You're going to play man-to-man, zero coverage, and leave everybody out on an island. Will everybody be able to cover? To get Bryce West and Aaron Scott, that's a haul. Those guys can play, they both can play. They're both pure corners, too. They're not kids that are high school safeties that you're going to try to make into a corner and teach them how to cover. No, these guys, they're ready to go. In another year, I think both of them will be ready to contribute.

"I think Scott and West will be further along than JK Johnson and Jordan Hancock were as true freshmen. So two plums there. Get those guys."

In addition to having Moore and Stover committed, having Raiola locked up in the class since May gives Ohio State a significant boost as it looks to recruit more high-profile talent on offense.

"They have their QB, which is half the battle right now," Greene said. "It's the most important position on the field. They've got that locked up. They've got a superstar for all intents and purposes.

"The receivers – the two in Florida – I think they're getting. Hollywood (Fla.)

Chaminade-Madonna Prep five-star wide receiver Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 185), I think you can almost pencil Smith into the class right now. Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep five-star wide receiver Joshisa Trader (6-1.5, 170), I think they're right there with him. It won't shock me to see them walk out of there with Trader as well."

### OSU Makes Strong Impression On Seaton

Offensive lineman Seaton, who made the trip to Columbus on Nov. 26, told On3 Sports that Ohio State is among the top programs he's considering in his recruitment.

"Ohio State, they're a front-runner right now," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised if they end up in my top schools."

Seaton is the No. 42 overall prospect and top interior offensive lineman in the 2024 class, and he holds additional offers from Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oklahoma, Penn State, Tennessee and Texas A&M, among others.

"I like Ohio State in general," Seaton said. "The workout program – when I got down there, they lift a lot. The facility is crazy. I really like to build relationships with the offensive line coach that I'm going to be with every day. For real, my relationship with Coach (Justin) Frye is very good, and I feel like, if we keep building on that, who knows?"

### Calhoun Commits To U-M After Visiting The Game

It's rare that a commitment can be boiled

down to one game, but that may have been the case for Cincinnati Winton Woods four-star cornerback Cameron Calhoun (6-0, 170), who announced following Michigan's 45-23 win over Ohio State that he was committing to play for the Wolverines.

Calhoun was in attendance for The Game and got an up-close look at the Wolverines' domination of the Buckeyes, and it was enough for him to pull the trigger just hours after the contest ended.

He is the No. 486 overall prospect and No. 48 cornerback in 2023, and while he did not hold an offer from Ohio State – Cincinnati and Kentucky were believed to be his other top schools – it still wasn't ideal for a prospect interested in Michigan attending the game at Ohio Stadium and seeing that kind of result before committing to the Wolverines.

### Other Notes And Tidbits

- Concord (N.C.) Jay M. Robinson four-star defensive lineman Daevin Hobbs (6-4, 277) announced his commitment to Tennessee on Nov. 25. Hobbs chose the Volunteers over Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina and Ohio State.

- Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco five-star defensive end Matayo Uiagalelei (6-5, 265) told 247Sports that he plans to sign with a school during the early signing period. He is considering Georgia, Ohio State, Oregon and USC.

*For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all subscribers.*

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# Wisconsin Lands On Fickell For Head Coach

After speculation that interim Wisconsin head coach Jim Leonhard would ultimately wind up with the permanent job, the Badgers have opted to go in a different direction, with the program announcing on Nov. 27 that it was hiring Cincinnati head coach Luke Fickell to fill the open position.

## BIG TEN NOTES Andy Anders

"I am incredibly excited to announce Luke Fickell as our new head football coach and to welcome his entire family to Madison," Wisconsin athletic director Chris McIntosh said. "Luke is one of the top football coaches in the country. He is a proven winner, recruiter and developer of players. Equally as important, he shares our values. Coach Fickell is focused on giving our student-athletes the best opportunities possible and is attuned to the changing landscape of college athletics."

Fickell becomes the 31st head coach in program history for the Badgers.

"My family and I are thrilled to join the Wisconsin family," he said. "This is a destination job at a program that I have admired from afar for years. I am in total alignment with Chris McIntosh's vision for this program. There is a tremendous foundation here that I can't wait to build upon. This world-class university, athletic department and passionately loyal fan base all have a strong commitment to success, and I can't wait to be a part of it."

At Cincinnati, Fickell's first permanent head coaching position, the former Ohio State defensive lineman posted a 57-18 career record. Should the Bearcats win their bowl game this season, they'll post double-digit wins for the fourth time in the last five years, the lone exception being when

the team finished 9-1 during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season.

Last season, Fickell's Bearcats became the first non-Power Five team to make the College Football Playoffs. They started the season 13-0, including a win in the American Athletic Conference Championship Game, en route to the College Football Playoff, falling in the semifinals to No. 1 Alabama, 27-6.

Fickell's only other head coaching experience prior to the Bearcats came in an interim capacity for the Buckeyes. After then-head coach Jim Tressel resigned amid scandal prior to the 2011 season, Fickell stepped in, bridging the gap between Tressel and Urban Meyer. Following a 6-7 campaign, Fickell served as Ohio State's co-defensive coordinator for five seasons before accepting the Cincinnati job.

As for Wisconsin, the Badgers terminated head coach Paul Chryst on Oct. 2 in the midst of his eighth season leading the Badgers after a 2-3 start. They went 4-3 in their final seven games under Leonhard, finishing 6-6 on the season.

## Nebraska Hires Matt Rhule As HC

Nebraska has found its replacement for former head coach Scott Frost, and it's former Carolina Panthers and Baylor head coach Matt Rhule.

Rhule makes his return to the collegiate ranks after a difficult NFL tenure, going 11-27 in three seasons with the Panthers. The organization parted ways with Rhule after a 1-4 start to their 2022 campaign, announcing the decision on Oct. 10.

Prior to his tenure at the professional level, Rhule took a scandal-plagued Baylor program and turned it around in three years, going from 1-11 in his first regular season in 2017 to 11-3 in 2019. That led to a Big 12 Championship Game appearance for the Bears and a trip to the Sugar Bowl to face Georgia, both contests the team ultimately lost, but Rhule still garnered Big 12 Coach of the Year honors before departing for the job in Carolina.

"One of the things that drew me to it is knowing that Scott had been there for the last several years," Rhule said on ESPN's "College Gameday" on Nov. 26. "Scott Frost is a coach that I truly respect and consider a friend. And so I know that program has a good culture, I know they know how to work. Now it's about just all of us picking up, moving forward."

Frost finished his five-year tenure with the Cornhuskers at 16-31, opening this season 1-2 before being let go on Sept. 11. Associate head coach Mickey Joseph stepped in as interim head coach following the firing, leading the team to a 4-8 finish.

Rhule's contract at Nebraska will reportedly be for eight years and \$72 million. Prior to his time at Baylor, Rhule spent four seasons at the helm of Temple's program from 2013-16, guiding the Owls to back-to-back 10-win campaigns in his last two seasons at the school in 2015 and 2016.

## Purdue Wins Big Ten West

Soon after Michigan secured the Big Ten

East by defeating Ohio State on Nov. 26, Purdue took the field and capitalized on an opportunity to secure the Big Ten West by beating Indiana on the road.

Iowa opened the door for the Boilermakers by falling to Nebraska at home the previous evening. The Hawkeyes held a head-to-head advantage over Purdue. Purdue's 6-3 conference record stands alone in what has been a hectic year in the west, with each of the other six teams finishing 5-4 or worse in conference play.

"It's a proud day to be a Boilermaker," Purdue head coach Jeff Brohm said after the 30-16 win. "You put in a lot of hard work, your players do, your coaches do, for dreaming about this opportunity. Obviously a lot of things had to go our way, we understand that. But our guys just competed hard all year long. We tried to learn from our mistakes."

After trailing 7-3 at halftime, Purdue utilized a 27-point second half to knock off the Hoosiers. Quarterback Aidan O'Connell finished 18 of 29 for 290 yards and two touchdowns, with a good chunk of that action going to wide receiver Charlie Jones, who racked up 143 yards on just four receptions with one score.

Purdue will take on Michigan at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Dec. 3 at 8 p.m. The two sides did not cross paths in the regular season, and it will be their first meeting since 2017, a 28-10 Wolverine win in West Lafayette, Ind. The Boilermakers haven't beaten Michigan since 2009, losing four consecutive meetings.

## Indiana Loses QB Williams II

As for a reason Purdue might have knocked off Indiana, the Hoosiers lost sophomore quarterback Dexter Williams II during the game. He was carted off the field with an apparent injury to his right leg near the end of the first quarter.

The injury was noncontact, and it occurred as he rolled out to pass against the Boilermakers, planting his foot to change direction and going down immediately before needing medical attention. An air cast was put on his leg before he was transported to Bloomington Hospital, but there has been no further update on Williams' status other than a tweet sent out by Williams that said, "Thank you to Hoosier Nation for the thoughts and prayers."

"It was just a freaky, noncontact (injury) - we all saw it," Indiana coach Tom Allen said. "I can't even put it into words. Snake-bitten is kind of how I feel, in some ways, in regards to the injuries we've had for two straight years to key guys."

Williams had previously dealt with injuries, tearing his ACL in spring practice prior to last season. He was replaced against Purdue by quarterback Connor Bazalak, who finished 24 of 42 for 201 yards, a touchdown and an interception.

In four games this season, Williams had completed 13 of 38 throws for 184 yards and two touchdowns (as well as two picks), with 40 carries for 165 yards and a score on the ground. He filled in for the previous starter, Bazalak, for two contests earlier this season before winning the starting job.,

## BIG 2022 Standings

### East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Michigan	9	0	1.000	12	0	1.000
<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.889</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.917</b>
Penn State	7	2	0.778	10	2	0.833
Maryland	4	5	0.444	7	5	0.583
Michigan State	3	6	0.333	5	7	0.417
Indiana	2	7	0.222	4	8	0.333
Rutgers	1	8	0.111	4	8	0.333

### West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Purdue	6	3	0.667	8	4	0.667
Minnesota	5	4	0.556	8	4	0.667
Illinois	5	4	0.556	8	4	0.667
Iowa	5	4	0.556	7	5	0.583
Wisconsin	4	5	0.444	6	6	0.500
Nebraska	3	6	0.333	4	8	0.333
Northwestern	1	8	0.111	1	11	0.083

### Nov. 25 Game

Nebraska 24, Iowa 17

### Nov. 26 Games

Michigan 45, **Ohio State** 23  
Maryland 37, Rutgers 0  
Illinois 41, Northwestern 3  
Minnesota 23, Wisconsin 16  
Purdue 30, Indiana 16  
Michigan State 16, Penn State 35

### Dec. 3 Game

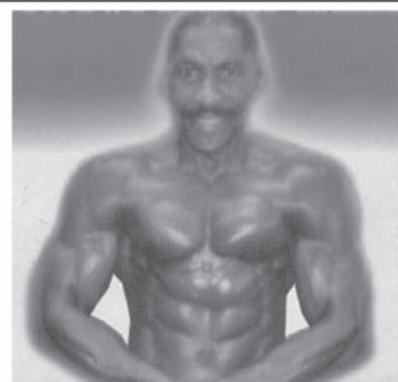
Michigan vs. Purdue; Big Ten Championship at Indianapolis, Ind.

## Berger Injured For Indiana WBB

Indiana women's basketball lost its biggest star to injury Nov. 25, when fifth-year guard Grace Berger went down holding her right knee in the opening minutes of the Hoosiers' contest against Auburn in the Las Vegas Invitational.

"I knew she was hurt because of the look on her face when I got to her," Indiana coach Teri Moren said. "And that's hard, but what I do know about Grace is she's resilient, she's tough, and we'll get her back to Indiana as quickly as we can and evaluate her. And then we'll go from there. She's our leader, and we'll rally around her. But if I know anything about Grace, whatever it is, she's going to deal with it, she will attack it the way she always attacks everything."

Berger was named to the All-Big Ten first team last season after racking up 16.2 points, 4.7 assists and 6.2 rebounds per game, leading the Hoosiers to a Sweet 16 appearance. Through six games this season, she averaged 10.3 points, 4.8 assists and 5.0 rebounds per game as the Hoosiers got off to a 6-0 start. Prior to this season, she was one of 10 players named to the watch list for the Cheryl Miller Award, given annually to the county's top small forward, and to the watch list for the Wooden Award.



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# Buckeyes Handle Adversity In Maui Invitational

For the first time this young season, Ohio State was tested. During the Maui Invitational from Nov. 21-23, the Buckeyes squared off against a pair of ranked teams

## COURT REPORT Jack Emerson

as well as an in-state foe.

While the Buckeyes rolled to a 3-0 record to begin the year, beating Robert Morris, Charleston Southern and Eastern Illinois by a total of 238-152, head coach Chris Holtmann was aware that Ohio State would be challenged to a larger extent with the slate in Maui. Prior to the beginning of the tournament, Holtmann noted that he wanted to figure out how his team handled the pressure of playing in big games against tougher opponents.

"(We can learn) how we handle adversity in the course of the game, and in stretches," Holtmann said. "I think we'll learn a lot about lineups. I think we'll learn a lot about how our defense can stand up against really good teams.

"But I think more than anything, you learn how your team handles adversity. And I think we've got a ways to go in that area, to be honest with you. I don't think we're there by any stretch yet. We're very much a work in progress in a lot of ways, but certainly when it comes to handling adversity."

In the tournament opener against No. 17 San Diego State, Ohio State faced adverse situations for much of the game. Squaring off against a veteran Aztec team, the Buckeyes' youth and lack of experience were on display through much of the contest, and Ohio State trailed by as much as 16 points during the second half. However, Ohio State didn't roll over at any point during the contest, even cutting the deficit to just 80-73 with 3:57 to play.

Although the Buckeyes ended up dropping the contest 88-77, forcing them into the losers' bracket, Holtmann said he was proud of his team's effort against the Aztecs.

"Give San Diego State credit," Holtmann said. "I thought they made a lot of shots and played really well. We obviously did not guard well enough in the second half. But I thought our guys battled back, put ourselves in position. We just couldn't get enough stops. But give them credit. They're a good team – really good team."

After taking their first defeat on the chin, the Buckeyes knew they couldn't allow losses to stack up, especially with a battle against in-state foe Cincinnati on deck. While Ohio State cruised past the Bearcats, largely thanks to forward Zed Key's 19 points and the freshman duo of Brice Sensabaugh and Bruce Thornton producing 17 points each, Key said the Buckeyes quickly put the loss to San Diego State behind them and made necessary adjustments that led to the victory over Cincinnati.

"Coach just said our defensive effort in

the first half was good and in the second half it wasn't really where it needs to be (against San Diego State)," Key said. "So it was just taking that and applying it to (the Cincinnati) game. We had some stretches where we had some lapses, but it was definitely better today. We saw the results and we came out with a 'W.' "

The Buckeyes advanced to the fifth-place game, and Ohio State saw another distinct challenge in the tournament finale. Head coach Mark Adams carried his 21st-ranked Texas Tech team into the game off a 70-38 drubbing of lowly Louisville. Similarly to San Diego State, the Red Raiders boasted a veteran and defensive-minded unit, ranking 14th in scoring defense with 54.4 points allowed entering the contest with the Buckeyes.

Despite Texas Tech's defensive acumen, Ohio State produced its most impressive offensive outing of the season. The Buckeyes knocked down 51.9 percent of shots – including an 8-of-20 mark from beyond the arc – to triumph over the Red Raiders, 80-73. The win was sparked by 33 points from forward Justice Sueing.

After the Buckeyes registered a 2-1 record and fifth-place finish in the Maui Invitational, Holtmann was especially happy with how his team moved on from each game with ease.

"Give our coaching staff a lot of credit. I thought they did a great job in a quick turnaround in preparing our team, offensively and defensively, to play this group," Holtmann said. "But players win games, and I thought it was great to see Justice (play well)."

### Sueing Produces In Home State

As a native of Hawaii, the Maui Invitational means a little more to Sueing than the average college basketball player.

"Just being able to come back here to Maui to play this – it's a great tournament," he said. "It's a challenge. That's what we said coming into this, that we were going to get three really good games, and that's what we got. I'm really proud of my guys just coming out here battling. It's a lot of the guys' first time playing here at Ohio State, so I'm just proud of them being able to pick up on things and ultimately getting a win against a really good team."

The Buckeye forward was given the opportunity to play in front of his family and friends while also giving his teammates a glimpse of the culture of his home state. Although he struggled through Ohio State's first two games of the tournament, scoring a combined 17 points while shooting just 7 for 24 from the field, he exploded for 33 points on 12-of-19 shooting to carry the Buckeyes to their win over Texas Tech.

Sueing has seen some inconsistency this season, which can likely be attributed to him shaking off some rust after missing all but two games last year with an abdominal injury.

"This past year's been really tough just dealing with injury because I've never really dealt with injuries my entire career," Sueing said. "I've been pretty healthy, so just kind of having that ... it was as much of a mental battle as it was a physical battle

getting healthy."

But all of that went out the window in Lahaina Civic Center on Nov. 23 against the Red Raiders, and Holtmann acknowledged that he couldn't have been prouder for Sueing after his breakout performance.

"I just told him I got emotional talking about him on the radio because he's been through a lot," Holtmann said. "You have a season-ending injury. You've got a lot of promise going into what we thought was going to be his last year. He's had some struggles this year too. So I'm just really happy for the kid."

### Sensabaugh, Thornton Show Out In Maui

Ohio State saw encouraging developments from a pair of its freshmen during its trip to Maui. Sensabaugh continued his early-season tear, averaging 14.7 points while shooting blistering splits of 56.0 percent from the field and 58.3 percent from three-point range during the three-game stretch.

While Sensabaugh proved his success during Ohio State's first three games was not a fluke, Thornton showed a significant improvement from the Buckeyes' sea-

son-opening homestand.

Thornton did not reach double digits in any of Ohio State's first three games but was explosive offensively for the Buckeyes in Maui. Thornton averaged 13.0 points per game while shooting 56.5 percent, including a 58.3 percent mark from beyond the arc. Not only did he impact the game through his scoring, but he also dished out 2.3 assists and swiped 1.7 steals per game.

One of Thornton's most noteworthy outings came in his breakout performance against San Diego State, in which he tallied 13 points, three rebounds and three assists along with a pair of steals. He continued to build off that game with scoring outputs of 17 and nine points in the following contests. After the loss to the Aztecs, Holtmann said Thornton gave the Buckeyes a boost despite the defeat.

"It was obviously a really solid game for Bruce. That's great to see against terrific competition," Holtmann said. "We had a number of guys I thought that gave us some good moments that will continue to get better."



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# Ohio State Finishes 2-1 In Maui Invitational

By JACK EMERSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

After cruising to three consecutive wins in buy games to open the season, Ohio State turned its attention to the difficult slate awaiting at the Maui Invitational in Hawaii.

With five of the eight teams that descended on Hawaii holding a ranking in the AP top 25, the Buckeyes saw their first significant challenges of the season, starting with a game against No. 17 San Diego State.

Throughout the three-day tournament from Nov. 21-23, Ohio State saw several encouraging developments, including the emergence of point guard Bruce Thornton, as well as a near-perfect run at the charity stripe (47 of 51) as the Buckeyes went 2-1 with a loss to the Aztecs and wins over Cincinnati and No. 21 Texas Tech.

Ohio State's tournament began with an 88-77 loss to San Diego State on Nov. 21 as the Buckeyes were unable to overcome a 16-point second-half deficit. OSU head coach Chris Holtmann said he was proud of the way his team battled while noting that the Buckeyes are still gaining cohesion at this point in the season.

"All the ways you look at it – ability to play harder, longer – you can do that when you're a little bit older," Holtmann said. "(SDSU) has strong, physical bodies. You can tell they were able to play through contact better than we were at times. I think they have a better collective feel for each other than what we do right now, which is a little bit to be expected, given where we're at. That's going to be a common theme. But I don't want to make excuses for our guys. We have to, as coaches and players, just defend better."

Ohio State (3-1) jumped out to a 5-0 lead by the first media timeout with the teams combining to shoot 1 of 15 during the game's first 4:13. However, it was mostly San Diego State for the rest of the half. The

Aztecs held OSU to 30.0 percent shooting (9 of 30) – and 1 of 11 from beyond the arc (9.0 percent) – during the first half to take a 37-26 lead at the break.

Ohio State freshman forward Brice Sensabaugh helped keep the Buckeyes afloat with nine first-half points. He finished the game with 17 points on 5-of-10 shooting and became the third Buckeye since 2000 to score 10 or more points in his first four career games, joining Greg Oden (2006) and Kosta Koufos (2007).

Transfer guard Sean McNeil gave the Buckeyes an offensive lift during the early stages of the second half, scoring 13 of OSU's first 21 second-half points, helping Ohio State cut SDSU's lead to 51-47 with 13:28 remaining in the game. McNeil finished with a game-high 22 points, 20 of which came in the second half, on 9-of-14 shooting for the contest.

"It was great to see Sean break out and play like we have seen glimpses," Holtmann said. "I loved how aggressive he was. I thought we had some really, really good stretches of play overall tonight."

Despite McNeil's efforts, San Diego State (4-0) gave the Buckeyes a gut punch in the form of an 8-0 run in under a minute to push the lead back to 12 with 12:37 to play. Thanks to another run, this time a 7-0 stretch, the Aztecs were able to increase their lead to 16 – their largest advantage of the night – with 9:58 remaining in regulation. However, the Buckeyes refused to go away, cutting the deficit to 80-73 with 3:57 to go on a Sensabaugh free throw, but the Aztecs were still able to close the game out with the 11-point win.

SDSU had four players finish in double figures, with guard Matt Bradley leading the way with 18 points. Guards Lamont Butler and Micah Parrish each added 15 points, while guard Adam Seiko tallied 14. The Aztec offense shot a solid 50.8 percent (31 of 61) from the field with a scorching 47.6 percent from deep (10 of 21).

"We're four games in, playing a lot of freshmen," McNeil said. "The one thing that I noticed this game is that we never quit. I think we went down 13, 15 points maybe. But then we battled back and cut it to seven. Just the fight that this group has, I think it's going to carry a long way."

## Buckeyes Take Battle Of Ohio

Ohio State (4-1) bounced back from its first loss of the season to secure an 81-53 win over Cincinnati on Nov. 22.

"For us, the main thing was just not quitting," Thornton said. "San Diego State is

San Diego St. 88, Ohio State 77									
Nov. 21, 2022 Lahaina Civic Center, Maui, Hawaii									
		1	2	F					
Ohio State (3-1)		26	51	77					
San Diego State (4-0)		37	51	88					
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Thornton	25	4-8	3-3	0-3	3	5	13		
McNeil	31	9-14	1-1	0-2	1	3	22		
Likekele	29	0-5	2-2	1-4	1	1	2		
Sueing	23	3-11	0-0	4-2	1	2	6		
Key	21	3-8	1-1	1-2	1	4	7		
Holden	23	1-3	2-2	0-3	1	3	4		
Gayle	11	1-5	0-0	0-0	1	1	2		
Sensabaugh	24	5-10	5-6	0-5	0	1	17		
Okpara	12	2-2	0-0	1-1	0	0	4		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>28-66</b>	<b>15-15</b>	<b>8-26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>77</b>		
<b>Percentages:</b> FG: 42.4%. FT: 93.3%. <b>Three-point field goals:</b> 7-22 (McNeil 3-7, Thornton 2-5, Sensabaugh 2-4, Likekele 0-1, Sueing 0-1, Holden 0-1, Gayle 0-3). <b>Team rebounds:</b> 5. <b>Blocked shots:</b> 4 (Sueing, Key, Sensabaugh, Okpara). <b>Turnovers:</b> 8 (Likekele 3, Thornton, McNeil, Sueing, Sensabaugh, Okpara). <b>Steals:</b> 4 (Thornton 2, Sueing, Gayle).									
SDSU	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Johnson	22	2-4	2-3	1-4	2	1	6		
Butler	31	6-12	2-2	0-2	3	2	15		
Trammell	23	1-8	4-6	0-2	4	1	6		
Bradley	18	6-11	2-2	1-0	1	5	18		
Mensah	23	1-3	0-0	2-3	0	2	2		
Seiko	21	5-6	2-2	0-5	0	1	14		
Parrish	19	6-8	0-1	0-5	1	1	15		
Ledee	21	2-6	2-2	1-4	1	2	6		
Arop	17	2-3	2-2	1-3	2	1	6		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>31-61</b>	<b>20-20</b>	<b>7-30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>88</b>		
<b>Percentages:</b> FG: 50.8%. FT: 80.0%. <b>Three-point field goals:</b> 10-21 (Bradley 4-6, Parrish 3-5, Seiko 2-3, Butler 1-3, Johnson 0-1, Trammell 0-3). <b>Team rebounds:</b> 3. <b>Blocked shots:</b> 5 (Mensah 4, Ledee). <b>Turnovers:</b> 7 (Bradley 2, Trammell, Mensah, Seiko, Ledee, Arop). <b>Steals:</b> 3 (Butler, Trammell, Arop). <b>Officials:</b> Clark, Cassell, Morrissey. <b>Attendance:</b> 2,400.									

Ohio State 81, Cincinnati 53									
Nov. 22, 2022 Lahaina Civic Center, Maui, Hawaii									
		1	2	F					
Ohio State (4-1)		38	43	81					
Cincinnati (3-3)		27	26	53					
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Thornton	26	6-9	3-3	0-0	0	2	17		
McNeil	26	2-6	0-0	0-1	0	2	5		
Likekele	28	0-6	0-0	3-4	4	2	0		
Sueing	26	4-13	3-5	2-4	1	1	11		
Key	24	8-11	3-4	4-4	1	2	19		
Holden	17	2-3	2-2	2-5	0	2	6		
Gayle	14	0-3	0-0	0-2	1	0	0		
Sensabaugh	20	5-9	4-4	1-1	0	1	17		
Etzler	2	1-1	0-0	1-0	0	0	2		
Okpara	16	2-3	0-0	2-1	0	1	4		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>30-64</b>	<b>15-18</b>	<b>19-23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>81</b>		
<b>Percentages:</b> FG: 46.9%. FT: 83.3%. <b>Three-point field goals:</b> 6-20 (Sensabaugh 3-5, Thornton 2-3, McNeil 1-4, Likekele 0-1, Sueing 0-4, Key 0-2, Gayle 0-1). <b>Team rebounds:</b> 5. <b>Blocked shots:</b> 2 (Okpara 2). <b>Turnovers:</b> 6 (Holden 2, Likekele, Key, Gayle, Okpara). <b>Steals:</b> 3 (Thornton 2, Sueing).									
Cincinnati	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Nolley	25	1-6	0-0	1-3	1	3	2		
Adams-Woods	28	3-7	2-2	1-3	1	1	9		
DeJulius	27	0-5	1-2	1-0	0	0	1		
Davenport	22	2-7	2-2	0-3	1	2	8		
Lakhin	19	6-7	0-2	2-2	0	2	12		
Skillings	19	3-7	1-3	1-2	0	3	7		
Ezikpe	8	1-3	0-0	0-0	0	1	2		
Phinisee	21	1-4	0-0	0-1	1	0	3		
Reed	16	0-2	2-2	1-2	0	0	2		
Hensley	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Oguama	13	3-4	1-2	3-0	0	4	7		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>20-52</b>	<b>9-15</b>	<b>12-17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>		
<b>Percentages:</b> FG: 38.5%. FT: 60.0%. <b>Three-point field goals:</b> 4-18 (Davenport 2-5, Adams-Woods 1-3, Phinisee 1-2, Nolley 0-3, DeJulius 0-2, Skillings 0-2, Reed 0-1). <b>Team rebounds:</b> 3. <b>Blocked shots:</b> 5 (Lakhin 2, Skillings, Ezikpe, Oguama). <b>Turnovers:</b> 14 (Skillings 3, Nolley 2, Lakhin 2, Adams-Woods, DeJulius, Ezikpe, Phinisee, Hensley). <b>Steals:</b> 3 (Phinisee 2, Skillings). <b>Officials:</b> Oglesby, Jarrett, Bonner. <b>Attendance:</b> 2,400.									

a great team with great coaches and great staff. It was our first battle. I'm just glad our team and our coaches still believed in us, even when we were down. They just said, 'Just don't quit and just find a way.' We brought it over into this game and came out with a great outcome."

The Bearcats jumped out to an 8-2 lead, scoring on their first three possessions of the game, but Ohio State forwards Zed Key and Justice Sueing helped spark an 11-2 run to push OSU to a 13-10 lead entering the first media timeout. Key had six points and Sueing five in the run.

Cincinnati battled the Buckeyes for much of the first half, trailing 26-24 with 6:07 to go in the frame. However, Ohio State caught fire from there, using a 9-0 run – including a jumper and a triple from Sensabaugh – to lift its lead to 35-24. The Florida native also drilled a three-pointer at the first-half buzzer to give Ohio State a 38-27 lead heading into the locker room.

Key, who led all players with 12 points

in the first half, kept up his offensive intensity through the early stages of the second half, scoring Ohio State's first four points of the frame, including an emphatic slam following an offensive rebound by guard Isaac Likekele to put the Buckeyes up 42-28 with 18:48 remaining in regulation. Key finished the evening with a game-high 19 points on 8-of-11 shooting and added eight rebounds. Ohio State fed off Key's energy to control the second half, outscoring the Bearcats 43-26 in the final frame.

"I just had to come out from the beginning with more juice," Key said. "That was my issue (against San Diego State). I was trying to feel out the game, and you can't do that at this level. So I made that adjustment, speaking to the coaches. It just wasn't the coaches. My teammates found me in the right spots and I was around the rim, so I was making shots."

Likekele and Tanner Holden each added seven rebounds to help led Ohio State's dominance on the glass. The Buckeyes, who had 19 offensive boards, held a 42-29 advantage in rebounds over the Bearcats.

The freshman duo of Thornton and Sensabaugh continued their strong play in Maui. Sensabaugh once again reached double figures with 17 points, with 3-of-5 shooting from beyond the arc. Thornton also added 17 points while shooting 6 of

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## OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

### Ohio State 80, Texas Tech 73

Nov. 23, 2022

Lahaina Civic Center, Maui, Hawaii

	1	2	F
Texas Tech (4-2)	37	36	73
Ohio State (5-1)	41	39	80

	Total	FG		FT		Reb.		A	PF	Pts.
		Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF			
Obanor	35	7-12	3-3	1-3	0	3	19			
Isaacs	33	3-9	2-2	0-2	5	2	8			
Batcho	34	7-10	6-7	3-3	2	4	21			
Tyson	21	4-8	0-0	5-1	0	1	10			
Harmon	33	5-11	0-0	0-3	6	3	10			
Washington	9	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0			
Jennings	7	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	2	0			
Allen	4	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	2			
Fisher	17	1-2	1-1	0-2	0	1	3			
Walton	7	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	0			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>28-55</b>	<b>12-13</b>	<b>9-16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>73</b>			

**Percentages:** FG: 50.9%. FT: 92.3%. **Three-point field goals:** 5-18 (Obanor 2-4, Tyson 2-3, Batcho 1-1, Isaacs 0-4, Harmon 0-4, Fisher 0-1, Walton 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 0. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Tyson 2). **Turnovers:** 10 (Obanor 4, Isaacs 2, Batcho 2, Tyson, TEAM). **Steals:** 6 (Obanor 2, Isaacs, Batcho, Tyson, Fisher).

	Total	FG		FT		Reb.		A	PF	Pts.
		Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF			
Thornton	39	3-6	0-0	1-3	4	0	9			
McNeil	30	3-10	5-5	0-1	0	4	13			
Likekele	31	2-3	0-0	1-1	3	3	4			
Sueing	31	12-19	8-8	4-4	5	0	33			
Key	31	2-5	5-5	2-1	2	2	9			
Holden	9	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	0	0			
Gayle	8	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	0			
Sensabaugh	12	4-6	0-0	0-0	1	2	10			
Okpara	9	1-1	0-0	0-3	0	1	2			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>27-52</b>	<b>18-18</b>	<b>9-17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>80</b>			

**Percentages:** FG: 51.9%. FT: 100%. **Three-point field goals:** 8-20 (Thornton 3-4, McNeil 2-7, Sensabaugh 2-3, Sueing 1-5, Gayle 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 2 (Key 2). **Turnovers:** 10 (McNeil 3, Thornton 2, Key 2, Sueing, Sensabaugh, Okpara). **Steals:** 6 (Likekele 2, Sueing 2, Thornton, Key). **Officials:** Szelc, Riley, Richardson. **Attendance:** 2,400.

9 from the field, including several circus shots. Sueing added 11 points.

After allowing San Diego State a strong shooting game at the Lahaina Civic Center the previous afternoon, OSU locked down Cincinnati (3-3), holding the Bearcats to 38.5 percent shooting from the field (20 of 52) and forcing them into 14 turnovers, which the Buckeyes used to score 24 points. Cincinnati forward Viktor Lakhin led the Bearcats with 12 points on 6-of-7 shooting while adding four rebounds, also a team high.

While the Buckeyes battled with an in-state adversary outside of Ohio, Key noted that the game still had some extra juice due to the proximity of the schools.

"It was a little weird," Key said. "They're in-state, an hour and a half down the road. But it's just another game. It's another team in front of us. We're just trying to get to our goal. It's another game. I was excited to play. I know the team was. It was a little weird flying out here to Hawaii and playing them. But we're excited we got to play them."

#### Sueing Shines In Win Over Texas Tech

Hawaii native Sueing dazzled his home-state crowd by producing a career-high 33 points to lead Ohio State to an 80-73 win over No. 21 Texas Tech on Nov. 23 and secure a fifth-place finish at the Maui Invitational.

"It means a lot, especially because I was able to play in front of my family," Sueing said. "The past couple of games I've been struggling a little bit just trying to get back

into the flow of things being out from injury. But my teammates continue to give me support. My staff continues to give me support and just believing in God and his path for me.

"It was a big game that we knew we had to come in and be ready for. It was a great team. I'm really proud of this team, especially being new, young. It's a great feeling."

The Buckeyes (5-1) were carried by the veteran duo of Sueing (eight) and McNeil (nine) during the contest's first seven minutes as they combined to score Ohio State's first 17 points and led the Buckeyes to a 17-7 advantage with 13:05 remaining in the half.

The Red Raiders were undeterred, closing the gap to 41-37 at the break. It was a familiar face that carried Texas Tech (4-2) through the early stages of the game. Forward Kevin Obanor – who was a key member for Oral Roberts in the Golden Eagles' stunning first-round win over the Buckeyes in the 2021 NCAA Tournament – continued to give OSU fits, producing 11 of his 19 points in the first half.

Both Ohio State (53.3) and Texas Tech (54.2) shot over 50 percent from the field in the first half, a trend that continued for the Buckeyes in the second half. During that final frame, OSU shot 50.0 percent from the field (11 of 22) and 42.9 percent from deep (3 of 7), while the Red Raiders shot 48.4 percent (15 of 31) from the field, though they were just 1 of 10 on their three-point attempts.

"I thought our offense was really good tonight when guys made plays and made shots," Holtmann said. "I thought we were

able to get them on the glass a few times. I did not love stretches of our defense, again. I just think it wanes. The numbers are not great either. So we've got to get better in that area, but I think offensively we were able to keep them at bay with that."

Ohio State led 62-52 with 9:05 remaining in regulation, but it took less than two minutes for the Red Raiders to make it 62-58 with 7:10 to go.

The Buckeyes utilized five straight points from Sueing to make it 70-61 with 4:01 to play, but the Red Raiders hounded OSU defensively and pulled back within five on numerous occasions in the final four minutes. Ohio State was able to close things out at the charity stripe, adding six free throws in the final minute and finishing a perfect 18 of 18 from the line in the win.

Sueing paced the Buckeyes during the second half, scoring 23 of his 33 points in the frame. Sueing also led Ohio State in rebounds and assists with eight and five, respectively and added a pair of steals. McNeil and Sensabaugh were the only other Buckeyes to reach double figures in the game, scoring 13 and 10 points, respectively.

While Obanor paced the Red Raiders during the first half, forward Daniel Batcho was a consistent offensive presence for Texas Tech, scoring a team-high 21 points, hitting on 7 of 10 shot attempts.

"Obviously, that was a really good win for us over a good team," Holtmann said. "(I've) got a lot of respect for Texas Tech and (coach Mark Adams) and their players. The way they coach and play – it's a fight, for sure. I have tremendous respect for just how hard it is to play against them."



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# Columbus Hosting 2027 Women's Final Four

The NCAA announced on Nov. 21 that Columbus will host the NCAA Women's Final Four in 2027, with the semifinals set to be played on April 1 and the national championship set for April 3 of that year at Nationwide Arena.

It was announced in June that Columbus was one of the finalists for 2027. Columbus hosted a previous Final Four in 2018, one of the more notable ones in recent memory,



as Notre Dame clinched the national championship after game-winning shots by guard Arike Ogunbowale in both the semifinals and the national championship game.

"We are grateful to be a hub for women's sports through our partnership with the NCAA," said Linda Logan, CEO and president of the Greater Columbus Sports Commission. "We raised the bar globally with our work on the 2018 Women's Final Four and embrace the challenge to elevate the event even higher in 2027."

The event in 2018 brought in over 39,000 fans for the three games and drew 7.6 million viewers, and the game has only continued to grow since. Last season's championship game had 4.9 million viewers, the most-watched title game since 2004.

"The Women's Final Four is the premier women's basketball event in the country, and it's exciting to see the unprecedented amount of interest from cities to host in the future," said Lisa Peterson, chair of the NCAA women's basketball committee and senior associate commissioner for sports management with the Pac-12. "The committee appreciates all the cities involved in the highly competitive bid process. When we crown a national cham-

pion in the selected cities, our student-athletes, coaches and fans will have enjoyed an amazing championship experience."

In addition to hosting the Final Four, Columbus is also looking to host the Division II and III championships, though the recipient of that bid is yet to be announced.

"Incredible things happen when we come together in the name of sports," said Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith. "These championship events will have a profound impact on our university and our community."

The NCAA also announced additional hosts, including Indianapolis (Gainbridge Fieldhouse) in 2028, San Antonio (Alamodome) in 2029, Portland, Ore. (Moda Center) in 2030 and Dallas (American Airlines Center) in 2031.

"We had it here in '18 and the city did such a great job supporting it, and our Columbus Sports Commission does an awesome job of promoting how great a city this is," Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff said, "so it's a great opportunity for us once again and I'm super excited about it."

The NCAA will be in Columbus again before that event, however, as Columbus is one of the hosts for the first and second rounds of the upcoming NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament in March.

## Sheldon, Shumate Miss Win Over Wright State

Ohio State was without the services of guards Jacy Sheldon and Emma Shumate in the 105-52 win over Wright State on Nov. 23 due to injury.

Sheldon was sporting a boot on her right foot, and guard Madison Greene started in her stead, though Sheldon did remain on the team's bench.

"It's a lower-leg injury that shouldn't – knock on wood – we don't think it's long term or anything," McGuff said. "It looks precautionary."

As for Shumate, McGuff said she remains out but it isn't believed to be anything long term. She had played in Ohio State's first four games

of the season before suffering an injury late in the win over McNeese State on Nov. 20.

Sheldon and Shumate remained out in Ohio State's win over North Alabama on Nov. 27.

## Free Throws Costing OSU

For as good as Ohio State has been on both ends of the floor this season, scoring 94.0 points per game and shooting 49.8 percent from the field while holding opponents to 59.5 points and 41.9 percent shooting, one area that hasn't come easy for the Buckeyes has been at the free-throw line.

During Ohio State's first pair of wins against Tennessee and Boston College, the Buckeyes shot just 60.0 from the charity stripe. It's a confounding issue for a team with so many solid shooters, but it's a problem that's been persistent nonetheless. Through six games, the Buckeyes were shooting just 68.0 percent from the line, with Sheldon (90.0 percent, 9 of 10) and guard Taylor Mikesell (92.3 percent, 12 of 13) as the teams' most consistent contributors from the charity stripe.

Asked how his team can turn around their performance from the free-throw line, McGuff deferred to his players.

"You can ask our players, because I've been making them run for missed free throws in practice quite extensively," he said. "It's really odd, because we're a good free-throw shooting team who's not shooting free throws well right now. I think that will take care of itself over time."

After Ohio State's win over Ohio University, a victory in which the Buckeyes shot 20 of 26 (76.9 percent) from the line, Sheldon said improving from the line had been a significant focus in practice.

"You have no idea. It was a huge emphasis," she said. "We've been shooting those not as great as we wanted to – I think tonight we shot a little better (against Ohio) – but we will continue to get in there and work on them. Just about everybody on the team has been working

on them, so it's definitely a huge emphasis for us and I'm sure it will continue to be."

In the next three games against McNeese State, Wright State and North Alabama, the Buckeyes shot 84.6 percent (11 of 13), 65.2 percent (15 of 23) and 66.7 percent (14 of 21), respectively.

## Ohio State Rises To No. 4 In AP Poll

Following a 4-0 start to the season, including a win over then-No. 5 Tennessee, Ohio State moved up to No. 4 in the AP top 25 poll released Nov. 21.

This is the program's highest ranking since reaching No. 3 in the 2009-10 season under then-head coach Jim Foster. The Buckeyes started that year ranked No. 3 and remained in that position through the poll released Nov. 30, but then they suffered a loss to Duke after starting 8-0 on the season and did not regain their standing at No. 3 for the remainder of the year.

The highest ranking in program history remains No. 2, reached during the 2004-05 and 2005-06 seasons. The Buckeyes rose to No. 2 for three weeks during the 2004-05 season, eventually finishing at No. 8. Ohio State stayed ranked in the top 10 for all of the 2005-06 season before climbing to No. 2 in the season's penultimate poll and staying there in the final rankings released before that season's NCAA tournament.

## Other Notes And Tidbits

- A pair of recruiting targets in 2023 have committed to schools other than Ohio State. Atlantic City, N.J., four-star center Quanirah Cherry-Montague (6-6) signed with Mississippi State while Haddonfield (N.J.) Paul VI five-star guard Hannah Hidalgo (5-7) announced her signing with Notre Dame on Nov. 15.

- The Buckeyes issued an offer on Nov. 21 to Orange Park, Fla., four-star guard Eris Lester (5-11), a 2024 prospect. She is rated by ESPN as the No. 36 prospect in the class.



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# Ohio State Stays Perfect In Young Season

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Associate Editor

Ohio State continued a perfect start to the season since Buckeye Sports Bulletin last went to press, staying home to take down Wright State and North Alabama to move to 6-0 on the season.

The Wright State Raiders were looking to plunder a win from Ohio State on Nov. 23, but the Buckeyes dominated from deep en route to a 105-52 win in front of 4,208 fans at Value City Arena.

Even though the Buckeyes were without the services of guard Jacy Sheldon – who was on the team's bench during the game but sported a boot on her right foot – Ohio State still got off to a hot start offensively, connecting on 6 of 8 shots to begin the game and jump out to a 15-6 lead. That stretch included a trio of triples from guard Taylor Mikesell, who finished the game 4 of 9 from deep.

Wright State (1-3) had a slightly better time handling Ohio State's press than other teams, turning the ball over just four times in the first frame, but still trailed 26-13 as the Raiders shot just 31.3 percent by the end of the opening quarter. They upped the pace early in the second, outscoring the

Buckeyes 9-7 in the first three minutes, but Ohio State then embarked on a 17-2 run to put the game out of reach and eventually led 56-28 at the half.

"Overall, it was one of our better offensive performances for 40 minutes in terms of moving the ball, executing, getting good shots and knocking them down," said Ohio State head coach Kevin McGuff. "I did not like our defensive effort, especially in the press in the first half."

Guard Madison Greene – who started her first game of the season in place of Sheldon after coming off the bench for the first four games – heated up in the third quarter, adding eight points on 3-of-3 shooting. She finished with 17 points and eight assists on 5-of-9 shooting, her highest scoring total since scoring 24 points on Maryland on Jan. 25, 2021.

"Madison's always amazing," guard Taylor Thierry said. "She brings in so much energy, and she's very consistent offensively and defensively. We know she can do whatever our team needs her to do, and she really stepped up big time today."

Freshman forward Cotie McMahon led the Buckeyes during the third quarter with 10 points (and three steals), and Thierry – who finished 7 of 7 from the field for 15

points with five assists and four rebounds – added a pair of impressive baskets, including a fastbreak score following a steal, as Ohio State entered the final quarter with an 85-41 lead. The Buckeyes broke the 100-point threshold in the fourth, adding 20 points in the frame.

Forward Rebeka Mikulášiková led the Buckeyes with 18 points on 6-of-7 shooting and added a team-high six rebounds, while guard Hevynne Bristow, Greene, McMahon, Mikesell, and Thierry all finished in double digits. Bristow was a standout for Ohio State, finishing with 11 points on 4-of-5 shooting and adding five rebounds in 23:35 on the court.

"In the last two games (McNeese State and Wright State), she's been one of our best rebounders," McGuff said. "That's something that we always are mindful of because we need to be good in that area, but I thought her energy on the floor was really good."

Wright State guard Isabelle Bolender led the Raiders with 13 points on 5-of-12 shooting, while the team as a whole shot just 37.7 percent (20 of 53) from the field. Ohio State finished 55.7 percent (39 of 70) from the floor and 46.2 percent (12 of 26) from deep.

## Mikulášiková Dominates In Win Over North Alabama

Mikulášiková matched a career high with 23 points in Ohio State's 105-67 win over North Alabama on Nov. 27 that moved the Buckeyes to 6-0 on the season.

She achieved her scoring total on 10-of-14 shooting, and with three rebounds, three assists and a steal, it resulted in one of the best performances in Mikulášiková's four seasons at Ohio State.

The visiting Lions came in looking for a fight, scoring the opening basket, and after facing a 22-15 deficit with 2:34 remaining in the first quarter, they stormed back to tie the game at 22 at the 1:14 mark. Thierry then scored on back-to-back possessions, and the Buckeyes led 28-22 after the first frame.

Any resistance put up by North Alabama (3-3) was set aside in the second quarter, however, as the Buckeyes outscored the Lions 31-15 in the frame to take a 59-37 lead into the locker room. Four Buckeyes reached double-digit scoring totals in the first half alone. Mikulášiková had 13 points, and McMahon and Mikesell contributed 12 points each while Greene hit 10 points on 4-of-4 shooting in the first 20 minutes.

Mikulášiková continued her dominance into the third quarter, scoring 10 points on 4-of-6 shooting in the frame. She and McMahon – who scored eight points in the third – combined for 18 of Ohio State's 22 points during the period. The scoring was similarly stingy for North Alabama, with guard Jade Moore contributing eight of the team's 14 points in the frame as the Buckeyes led 81-51 heading into the final 10 minutes.

With the exception of Sheldon and guard Emma Shumate, who remain out with injuries, McGuff was able to clear the bench in the fourth, ensuring playing time for every scholarship player on the team. Bristow once again stood out at this stage, adding nine points and six rebounds in the final quarter as Ohio State finished with the 38-point win in front of 3,694 fans at Value City Arena.

In addition to Mikulášiková's game high, the Buckeyes were paced by McMahon's 20-point outing on 8-of-13 shooting, as well as 15 points – and seven assists – from Greene, 14 from Mikesell and 13 from Thierry. Bristow led with eight rebounds, while the Lions had forward Skyler Gill finish with a team-high 23 points on 11-of-19 shooting, as well as Moore with 19 points. Even in the loss, North Alabama finished 45.8 percent (27 of 59) from the field, while the Buckeyes shot 58.6 percent for the game (41 of 70).

Ohio State was scheduled to return to the court on Nov. 30, traveling to take on Louisville, and will open Big Ten play in a road trip to Rutgers on Dec. 4.

### Ohio State 105, Wright State 52

Nov. 23, 2022 Value City Arena, Columbus, Ohio						
	1	2	3	4	F	
Wright State (1-3)	13	15	13	11	52	
Ohio State (5-0)	26	30	29	20	105	
Wright State	Total	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF Pts.
VanKempen	19	2-4	0-0	1-1	2	0 4
Chapman	27	1-2	0-0	1-2	1	2 2
Bolender	27	5-12	0-0	0-2	1	1 13
Nixon	19	4-8	0-0	0-1	3	4 11
Baumhower	26	3-7	0-1	0-5	1	0 6
Miller	19	0-2	0-0	0-0	2	4 0
Chappell	19	1-5	1-4	0-2	0	1 3
Johnson-Matthews	9	2-4	0-0	1-3	1	1 4
Loobie	9	1-3	2-2	1-6	0	2 5
Scott	13	0-3	1-2	0-1	1	0 1
Hocevar	5	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	1 3
Ion	7	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0 0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>20-53</b>	<b>4-9</b>	<b>5-25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16 52</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 37.7%. FT: 44.4%. **Three-point field goals:** 8-25 (Bolender 3-6, Nixon 3-6, Hocevar 1-2, Loobie 1-1, Baumhower 0-3, Chappell 0-1, Ion 0-1, Johnson-Matthews 0-1, Miller 0-1, Scott 0-1, VanKempen 0-2). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Baumhower). **Turnovers:** 23 (Chapman 6, Baumhower 3, Hocevar 3, Miller 3, Nixon 3, Scott 2, Bolender, Chappell, Team). **Steals:** 2 (Bolender, Chapman).

Ohio State	Total	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF Pts.
Mikulášiková	20	6-7	5-6	1-5	3	1 18
McMahon	18	7-13	1-2	1-1	0	1 16
Greene	32	5-9	4-4	2-1	8	0 17
Thierry	22	7-7	1-3	2-2	5	3 15
Mikesell	27	6-13	0-0	0-5	3	0 16
Harris	22	3-8	1-2	0-5	3	1 8
Bristow	24	4-5	1-2	1-4	1	3 11
Walker	17	1-1	0-2	3-2	3	1 2
Henderson	6	0-3	2-2	0-0	0	1 2
Perry	5	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	1 0
Costner	4	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	1 0
Vres	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0 0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>39-70</b>	<b>15-23</b>	<b>12-30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13 105</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 55.7%. FT: 65.2%. **Three-point field goals:** 12-26 (Mikesell 4-9, Greene 3-4, Bristow 2-2, Harris 1-4, McMahon 1-2, Mikulášiková 1-1, Henderson 0-2, Perry 0-2). **Team rebounds:** 5. **Blocked shots:** 4 (Bristow 2, Costner, Mikesell). **Turnovers:** 6 (Greene 2, McMahon 2, Harris, Walker). **Steals:** 19 (Harris 5, McMahon 5, Greene 2, Mikesell 2, Mikulášiková 2, Thierry 2, Bristow). **Officials:** Inouye, Steratore, Harris. **Attendance:** 4,208.

### Ohio State 105, North Ala. 67

Nov. 27, 2022 Value City Arena, Columbus, Ohio						
	1	2	3	4	F	
North Alabama (3-3)	22	15	14	16	67	
Ohio State (6-0)	28	31	22	24	105	
North Ala.	Total	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF Pts.
C. Jones	18	0-0	1-2	1-2	1	1 1
Gill	36	11-19	0-0	2-10	5	4 23
Moore	26	6-10	2-2	0-1	1	0 19
Collins	18	3-4	1-1	0-2	1	4 7
Suzuki	29	3-11	0-0	0-0	3	1 8
Kate Tittle	22	3-7	0-0	0-1	3	0 7
Green	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0 0
O. Jones	14	1-3	0-0	1-2	0	3 2
Clutter	14	0-1	0-2	0-0	0	0 0
Balogun	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0 0
Wohlgemuth	8	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1 0
Pegues	7	0-2	0-0	0-2	1	2 0
Flowers	3	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0 0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>27-59</b>	<b>4-7</b>	<b>6-22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16 67</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 45.8%. FT: 57.1%. **Three-point field goals:** 9-30 (Moore 5-9, Suzuki 2-7, Kate Tittle 1-2, Gill 1-5, O. Jones 0-2, Clutter 0-1, Collins 0-1, Green 0-1, Pegues 0-1, Wohlgemuth 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 3 (Gill 3). **Turnovers:** 20 (Gill 7, Collins 3, C. Jones 2, O. Jones 2, Balogun, Moore, Suzuki, Wohlgemuth). **Steals:** 2 (Flowers, O. Jones).

Ohio State	Total	FT	Reb.			
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF Pts.
Mikulášiková	20	10-14	1-1	0-3	3	3 23
McMahon	20	8-13	2-4	2-0	2	2 20
Greene	36	6-7	2-3	0-1	7	2 15
Thierry	31	6-8	0-1	3-4	2	2 13
Mikesell	27	5-9	2-2	0-1	4	0 14
Harris	20	1-6	1-2	1-3	1	1 3
Walker	17	2-3	0-0	2-2	2	1 4
Bristow	13	2-6	5-6	1-7	1	3 9
Henderson	4	1-2	0-0	0-1	0	1 3
Perry	4	0-1	1-2	0-0	0	0 1
Costner	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0 0
Vres	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0 0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>41-70</b>	<b>14-21</b>	<b>11-26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15 105</b>

**Percentages:** FG: 58.6%. FT: 66.7%. **Three-point field goals:** 9-17 (McMahon 2-3, Mikesell 2-3, Mikulášiková 2-4, Greene 1-2, Henderson 1-1, Thierry 1-2, Bristow 0-1, Harris 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 6. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Thierry). **Turnovers:** 10 (Greene 3, Walker 2, McMahon, Mikesell, Mikulášiková, Team, Vres). **Steals:** 13 (Thierry 5, Greene 2, Harris 2, Mikesell, Mikulášiková, Perry, Walker). **Officials:** McConnell, Came, Broderick. **Attendance:** 3,694.



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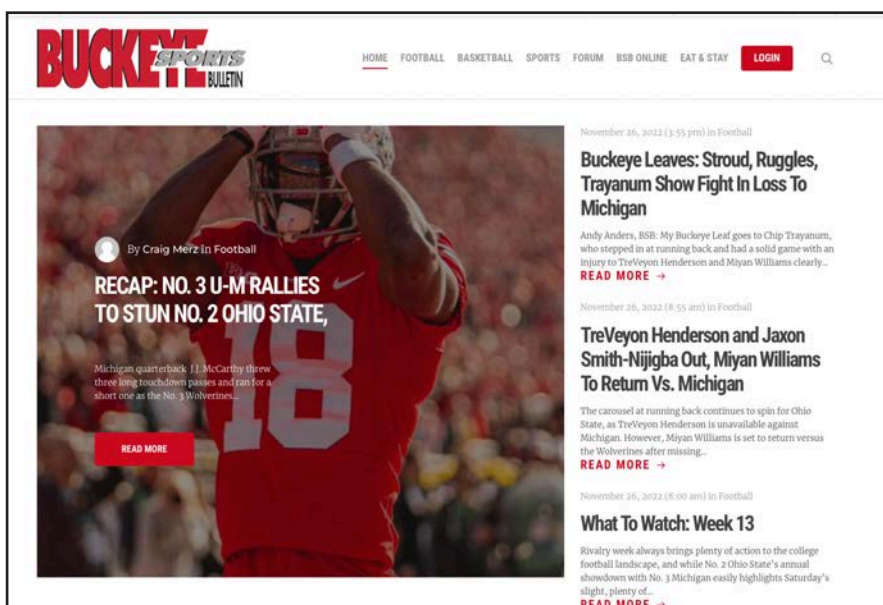
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## 2022 FOOTBALL

**Sept. 3** NOTRE DAME, W 21-10; **10** ARKANSAS STATE, W 45-12; **17** TOLEDO, W, 77-21.; **24** WISCONSIN, W 52-21.

**Oct. 1** RUTGERS, W 49-10; **8** at Michigan State, W 49-20; **22** IOWA, W 54-10; **29** at Penn State, W 44-31.

**Nov. 5** at Northwestern, W 21-7 **12** INDIANA, W 56-14 **19** at Maryland, W 43-30; **26** MICHIGAN, L 45-23.

## 2023 FOOTBALL

**Sept. 2** at Indiana; **9** YOUNGSTOWN STATE; **16** WESTERN KENTUCKY; **23** at Notre Dame.

**Oct. 7** MARYLAND; **14** at Purdue; **21** PENN STATE; **28** at Wisconsin.

**Nov. 4** at Rutgers; **11** MICHIGAN STATE; **18** MINNESOTA; **25** at Michigan.

## MEN'S BASKETBALL (5-1)

**Nov. 1** CHAMINADE (EXH.), W 101-57; **7** ROBERT MORRIS, W 91-57; **10** CHARLESTON SOUTHERN, W 82-56; **16** EASTERN ILLINOIS, W 65-43; **21** at Maui Invitational vs. San Diego State, L 88-77; **22** at Maui Invitational vs. Cincinnati, W 81-53; **23** at Maui Invitational vs. Texas Tech, W 80-73; **30** at Duke.

**Dec. 3** ST. FRANCIS; **8** RUTGERS; **17** NORTH CAROLINA; **21** MAINE; **29** ALABAMA A&M.

**Jan. 1** at Northwestern; **5** PURDUE; **8** at Maryland; **12** MINNESOTA; **15** at Rutgers; **18** at Nebraska; **21** IOWA; **24** at Illinois; **28** at Indiana.

**Feb. 2** WISCONSIN; **5** at Michigan; **9** NORTHWESTERN; **12** MICHIGAN STATE; **16** at Iowa; **19** at Purdue; **23** PENN STATE; **26** ILLINOIS.

**March 1** MARYLAND; **6** at Michigan State.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (6-0)

**Oct. 31** NOTRE DAME COLLEGE (EXH.), W 108-33.

**Nov. 8** TENNESSEE, W 87-75; **13** at Boston College, W 82-64; **17** at Ohio, W 86-56; **20** MCNEESE STATE, W 99-43; **23** WRIGHT STATE, W 105-52; **27** NORTH ALABAMA, W, 105-67; **30** at Louisville.

**Dec. 4** at Rutgers; **8** NEW HAMPSHIRE; **11** MICHIGAN STATE; **16** UALBANY; **20** at South Florida; **21** at Arkansas/Oregon; **28** at Northwestern; **31** MICHIGAN.

**Jan. 5** at Minnesota; **8** ILLINOIS; **14** at Nebraska; **19** NORTHWESTERN; **23** IOWA; **26** at Indiana; **29** PURDUE.

**Feb. 1** at Wisconsin; **5** at Maryland; **8** MINNESOTA; **13** INDIANA; **16** at Penn State; **20** at Michigan; **24** MARYLAND.

## 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. Men: 13/17; Women 5/20; **30** Lakefront Invitational at Chicago, Ill. Men 2/7; Women: 2/11.

**Oct. 15** Arturo Barrios Invitational at College Station, Texas; **28** Big Ten Championships at Ann Arbor, Mich. Men: 8/12; Women 4/14.

**Nov. 11** NCAA Regional Championships at Terre Haute, Ind. Men: 13/29; Women 2/31; **19** NCAA Championships at Stillwater, Okla. Women 17/31.

## MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (9-6-1, 4-4-0)

**Oct. 1** at Mercyhurst, W 4-2; **2** at Mercyhurst, W 4-1; **7** WISCONSIN, W 3-1; **8** WISCONSIN, W 4-3; **14-15** at UConn, T 0-0; L 1-6; **20-21** BENTLEY, W 9-2; W 3-1; **28-29** MINNESOTA, W 6-4,

L 4-2.

**Nov. 10-11** at Michigan State, L 2-4, L 3-4; **18-19** NOTRE DAME, W 5-2, L 1-0; **25-26** at Long Island University, L 3-2, W 4-1.

**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 (13-1-2, 12-1-1)

**Sept. 30** at Minnesota State, W 2-1.

**Oct. 1** at Minnesota State, W 5-4; **7** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 5-2; **8** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 6-2; **15-16** at Bemidji State, W 4-0; W 5-2; **21-22** MINNESOTA DULUTH, W 3-2 OT; W 3-2 **28-29** MINNESOTA, L 4-2, T 4-4 (SOW).

**Nov. 5** at St. Thomas, W 4-0; **6** at St. Thomas, W 6-0 **18** BEMIDJI STATE, W 5-0; **19** BEMIDJI STATE, W 7-1; **22** COLGATE, T 4-4 (OT); **23** COLGATE, W 6-2.

**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 (11-3-6, 4-2-2)

**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, T 0-0; **25** Maryland, L 1-0; **30** RUTGERS, T 2-2.

**Oct. 5** NORTHERN KENTUCKY, W 3-2; **11** Michigan, W 3-1; **16** NORTHWESTERN, W 2-1; **21** Penn State, T 1-1; **25** MICHIGAN STATE, W 2-1; **30** Wisconsin, L 3-2.;

**Nov. 4** Big Ten Tournament, Michigan State, W 1-0; **9** Big Ten Tournament at Rutgers, L 1-2; **17** NCAA Tournament, Wake Forest, W 3-0; **20** NCAA Tournament, UNC Greensboro, T 1-1, PKS L, 5-6.

## WOMEN'S SOCCER (11-5-3, 5-3-2)

**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, T 0-0; **25** IOWA, W 2-0; **29** Indiana, W 4-0.

**Oct. 2** PENN STATE, W 3-0; **8** Nebraska, T 2-2; **13** MARYLAND, W 7-0; **16** Illinois, W 6-1; **20** MICHIGAN STATE, L 0-1; **23** NORTHWESTERN, L 0-2; **30** Big Ten quarterfinals at Nebraska, L 4-0.

**Nov. 11** NCAA Tournament, Bucknell, W 1-0 (2 OT); **18** at Arkansas, L 5-2.

## WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (19-9, 15-5)

**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, W 3-0; **24** Nebraska, L 3-2; **28** Michigan, W 3-1.

**Oct. 1** Indiana, W 3-1; **7** PENN STATE, W 3-2; **9** NORTHWESTERN, W, 3-1; **12** Minnesota, W 3-0; **15** RUTGERS, W 3-0; **19** ILLINOIS, W 3-0; **21** IOWA, W 3-1; **26** MICHIGAN, W 3-0; **29** Penn State, W 3-2.

**Nov. 4** Northwestern, W 3-0; **5** Michigan State, W 3-0; **10** Purdue, W 3-1.; **13** NEBRASKA, W 3-1.; **18** Maryland, L 3-1.; **20** INDIANA, L 3-2; **25** MINNESOTA, L 3-1; **26** WISCONSIN, L 3-1.



# Upperclassmen Guiding Heralded Freshmen

Landing the No. 1 pound-for-pound wrestler recruit in the country would be a big deal for any program, and anyone in the top three would be an outstanding centerpiece for any class, regardless of the team.

## ON THE MAT Andy Anders

In Ohio State's case, it landed the No. 1, 2 and 3 pound-for-pound wrestlers in the class of 2022, landing 133-pounders Jesse Mendez and Nic Bouzakis, as well as heavyweight Nick Feldman.

Now it's up to the Buckeyes' upperclassmen to get the team's talented youngsters acclimated to the college game – not just for the future of the program, but because a few of the first-year wrestlers are already making contributions to the team.

"I feel like (the freshmen) have fit right in with the team," senior heavyweight Tate Orndorff said. "They're able to fit right in, and I don't feel like there's necessarily a mentorship role for us, because they've just fit right in with the team, which is cool to see that they're just part of the team now."

Mendez hasn't just taken over the starting spot at 133 pounds in Ohio State's lineup, but he's catapulted to No. 13 in the nation at that weight class, according to InterMat's Nov. 22 update. Boasting a 6-1 record thus far in his first collegiate campaign, his lone loss came at the hands of No. 9 Sam Latona of Virginia Tech.

Mendez's mark includes a four-match sweep to win his division at the Michigan State Open, culminating with a win over No. 6 Lucas Byrd of Illinois. Since his loss to Latona, he's beaten Colorado's Angelo Rini by major decision and North Carolina's No. 29 Joey Melendez by pin.

The Crown Point, Ind., native lost one match in his entire high school career, winning 157 of them. He won individual state championships each of his four seasons at Crown Point High School, doing it at three different weight classes (126, 132, 138).

"Jesse, he's a competitor," Ohio State assistant coach J Jagers said. "Midsummer when he's like, 'I don't need a redshirt, I want to go now.' It's a July workout and you're like, 'Oh, really? Boy is pumped up.' But he believes in himself. He believes he's going to win the nationals this year. People will call him crazy and laugh at him, but that's what he believes. And there's nothing that I don't think he can do."

Bouzakis has also made two appearances for Ohio State, one at 133 pounds and one as a starter for the team's dual meet at 141. He

won the freshman/sophomore division at the Michigan State Open at 133 before losing to Virginia Tech's Tom Crook in the dual, the No. 13 wrestler at 141.

He entered Columbus with international wrestling experience, taking a gold medal at the 2022 U20 Pan American Championships and representing Team USA at the 2022 Junior World Championships. He won five state championships in his career, with three in Florida before moving to Pennsylvania to conclude his prep career with two more.

Like Bouzakis, Feldman also won gold at the Pan-Am championships and made Team USA at the 2022 Junior Worlds. He capped his prep career on an 86-match winning streak including a 41-0 mark his senior year.

Two others in Ohio State's class ranked in the top 45 of FloWrestling's Class of 2022 Big Board. This includes 184/197-pound wrestler Seth Shumate and 184-pounder Luke Geog. Those freshmen will try to absorb the mindset of Ohio State's seniors.

"(Our seniors) are just in a really, really good spot mentally," Jagers said. "When you're young, you can almost overthink the seriousness of this. And it is serious. It's our livelihood. I love it. I eat, sleep and drink wrestling. Our team does too, but at the end of the day, it's wrestling. You've just got to go out there and have fun, be grateful for the opportunity and compete."

Still, with all the buzz around Mendez, Bouzakis, Feldman and others, Ohio State's coaching staff isn't forgetting about the mainstays of their program. The future success of the freshmen depends, in part, on their leadership.

"I think the excitement around our freshman class sometimes overshadows how much leadership we have up top," Jagers said. "We've kind of been a young team the last couple years, with the COVID rule and (the other) teams felt like they were a lot older. But we're kind of reaping the benefit of that rule with our older guys."

### OSU Dominates North Carolina

The No. 3 Buckeyes took on No. 20 North Carolina in a dual meet Nov. 20 and made the Tar Heels look stuck in a 33-9 victory. Mendez recorded a pin, as did Orndorff and senior Sammy Sasso, the No. 3 wrestler at 149 pounds according to InterMat. Sasso recorded his fall in under than two minutes.

Ethan Smith, the No. 6 wrestler at 174 pounds, had the biggest win of the night for Ohio State rankings-wise when he beat No. 5 Clay Lutt by a 2-0 decision. Smith didn't let Lutt escape from the down position for the entire two minutes of the second period.

No. 4 Kaleb Romero also picked up a ranked win at 184 pounds, beating No. 13 Gavin Kane by a 5-4 decision. Romero led 4-2 after a pair of takedowns in the first period

and held on for the victory.

A forfeit at 157 pounds gave UNC six of its nine points in the dual. The only true loss for Ohio State came at 141 pounds, where Jordan Decatur fell to No. 24 Lachlan McNeil by a 9-7 final.

Following an off week, Ohio State was slated to head to Las Vegas for the Cliff Keen Invitational Dec. 2-3. The Buckeyes finished second at the event last season and have won it outright in six previous years.

### Sasso Drops All-Star Match

While the rest of his teammates spent the week away from competition, Sasso flew to Austin, Texas, to take part in the National Wrestling Coaches Association All-Star Classic on Nov. 22. At the event, the No. 3 wrestler at 149 pounds met the man currently ranked No. 2 in Wisconsin redshirt senior Austin Gomez, and the two engaged in a war in which Gomez eked out a 10-9 victory.

That high-scoring feud becomes even more frenetic when considering that neither wrestler scored in the first period. Tied 0-0 to start the second, Sasso scored a takedown following a Gomez escape, and when Gomez escaped again, Sasso returned him to the mat to secure a 4-2 lead entering the final period.

Sasso started in the down position this time and escaped to grow his lead to 5-2, which bled into three consecutive takedowns by Gomez, all followed by Sasso escapes to set the tally at 8-8 with seconds left before Gomez scored one final takedown to take the win.

Sasso has a 5-2 mark on the season, and each of his wins has come by either pin or technical fall. He and Gomez are both chasing No. 1 Gianni Diakomihalis of Cornell atop the 149-pound division, a three-time national champion in 2018, 2019 and 2022 (his team did not wrestle in 2020 or 2021). Diakomihalis has not lost a match since Dec. 30, 2017, as a freshman, the only defeat of his collegiate wrestling career.

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# Hockey Program Under Scrutiny For Slur, Aftermath

An alleged on-ice incident between an Ohio State player and an African-American opponent for Michigan State has put the men's hockey program and the Big Ten under fire for the ensuing investigation and lack of action after the findings.

The matter is still fluid with many unanswered questions, but what is known to date is that Ohio State senior forward Kam-

## IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

il Sadlocha was accused by Spartans senior forward Jagger Joshua, the younger brother of former Ohio State player Dakota Joshua (2015-19), of directing racial slurs toward him multiple times during the Nov. 11 game in East Lansing, Mich.

Sadlocha, who is white, was issued a game misconduct penalty and ejected at 10:39 of the second period. Joshua said a referee heard a slur and issued the penalty.

"I never communicated once to the ref that something was said – the ref heard it on his own, he reported it on his own and he handled it on his own," Joshua told The State News, the Michigan State student newspaper.

The Big Ten conducted an investigation that included information from game officials, players from both teams and video footage. While the conference in a statement supported the referee's decision to issue the penalty to Sadlocha, "Due to the absence of indisputable evidence presented to the conference, the conference has not imposed further disciplinary action."

Sadlocha, who has eight points (five goals, three assists) in 14 games, played both games against Notre Dame on Nov. 18 and 19. In response to Sadlocha not being suspended, Joshua on the evening of Nov. 21 posted on Twitter his condemnation of

the lack of accountability by the Big Ten and Ohio State in not suspending the accused player.

"The inaction has left me feeling confused and pessimistic about the movement of diversity within hockey culture," he wrote.

While Joshua did not directly name Sadlocha, he did reference that the player in question was given a game misconduct penalty, and Sadlocha was the only player to be issued one in the game.

The posting created an immediate firestorm, and within hours, at the request of several news outlets, the Big Ten issued a statement explaining its conclusion. Michigan State's athletic director and hockey coach each issued statements of support, and Ohio State's athletics department released a statement saying the school "worked collaboratively with the Big Ten Conference to come to a resolution" to the allegations.

The statements by the conference and Ohio State only fanned the flames, and nearly 24 hours later, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith released an additional statement.

"I want to offer my sincere and heartfelt apology to Jagger Joshua. On behalf of Ohio State, I am so sorry.

"No student or student-athlete should experience hatred or racism, and everyone should feel welcome. I have spoken with Michigan State athletic director Alan Haller, and I'm thankful Jagger is getting the support he needs."

Smith said his department had spoken with Sadlocha and that he "is returning home and will not practice or compete at this time."

Also, Smith said he met with the men's hockey team and would meet again soon to discuss "our values," and they will complete education in "racial insensitivity, diversity, equity, inclusion and the use of respectful dialog."

A request by BSB for a statement by or interview with Ohio State hockey coach Steve Rohlik went unanswered.

## Words Matter

Joshua's original post in full on Nov. 21 said that, "Acts of racism do not belong in hockey, as they can discourage African Americans and minorities like myself from playing and loving the game. Inaction in the face of racist comments and actions allow these behaviors to continue.

"On Nov. 11 in our game against Ohio State, one of their players called me a racial slur multiple times. One of the officials heard the slur and gave the player a game misconduct penalty. There was an investigation by the Big Ten in the days after the incident, but no further public action has been taken by the Big Ten Conference or Ohio State.

"The inaction has left me feeling confused and pessimistic about the movement of diversity within hockey culture. The ignorance of racism does not belong in our game and I feel that I need to make people aware that this incident occurred, because without acknowledgement the problem gets worse.

"I would like to thank my teammates, coaches and staff at Michigan State. I am incredibly thankful for their support since this incident and as I have navigated this process."

Haller was supportive, saying, "Michigan State athletics stands with Jagger Joshua and commends him for having the courage to speak up against racial injustice. As a department, we are committed to providing opportunities for all student-athletes to compete in a space free from discrimination, racism or hate."

Spartans coach Adam Nightingale wrote, "At Michigan State, we are committed to a safe and welcoming space for our student-athletes. It is important to me that all student-athletes feel comfortable and supported in our locker room and in our program. I am proud to have Jagger Joshua on our team."

In addition to its explanation as to why the matter was closed, the Big Ten's statement read, "The Big Ten Conference is committed to providing our student-athletes inclusive environments free from acts of harassment or discrimination in any form. The safety and well-being of our campus communities remains our top priority."

In its statement, Ohio State said it is, "Focused on providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. The department is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all. Our Buckeye Inclusion committee has done an outstanding job with providing education and awareness across our department, both for students and staff. We are committed to recognizing our remarkable diversity and utilizing our core values to ensure everyone attending or participating in an athletic event feels safe and welcome."

In Rohlik's tenure at Ohio State, which began in the 2013-14 season, there had been at least one African-American player on the team from 2014-15 through the 2021-22 season. In addition to Dakota Joshua, Christian Lampasso played from 2014-18 and Quinn Preston, who played from 2018-22, was an alternate captain in his junior and senior seasons. Going further back, another African-American, Larry Marson, was a co-captain for the 1981-82 season.

Dakota Joshua, now playing in the NHL for the Vancouver Canucks, backed his

brother's comments about racism in a sport where nearly all players are white.

"There's no room for that in this game and in life in general," he told NHL.com. "It's a terrible situation to be a part of. But (Jagger's) goal is to put it out there so people can learn from it and hope it doesn't happen again.

"You would like to think we've come a long way, especially over recent years, but obviously (this) still keeps happening. So until it's nonexistent, I don't think it's surprising."

Former Michigan State and NHL player Anson Carter, a Canadian of color who is an analyst for NHL on TNT, blistered the Big Ten and Ohio State for inaction, writing on Twitter about an hour before Smith clarified Sadlocha's status, "If this is how (Big Ten hockey) and (Ohio State) handle these situations I don't know why any young player would want to play at that school or in that conference!"

USCHO.com Big Ten reporter Paula Weston, a former BSB staff writer, retweeted Carter's post, adding, "And he's right: why would any talented player of color opt for a league that doesn't appear interested in protecting players of color?"

Prominent NHL player agent Allan Walsh put the onus on the conference in a Nov. 23 tweet, writing, "Ohio State shamed into sending the player home. The persons with the Big Ten responsible for not suspending the player should be immediately terminated."

Even the Ohio State hockey student section, the Knucklebucks, opined via Twitter on Nov. 22 (prior to the Sadlocha news), "We love our Bucks but the actions of our player and inaction of our university is unacceptable, and as OSU students, we don't stand for any sort of injustice against another person. We urge and hope that OSU takes action and stands with (Jagger). This is bigger than hockey."

The Big Ten has offered no further insight to its statement of not having "indisputable" evidence despite Joshua's assertion that the referee heard a slur.

Also left unanswered are whether Sadlocha was suspended or kicked off the team, and why the school felt it was OK for him to play against Notre Dame, but three days later said he was not part of the team – for now.

## One Of Two

The No. 12 Buckeyes lost the opener at Long Island University, 3-2, on Nov. 25 before rebounding with a 4-1 victory the next night in the nonconference series in East Meadow, N.Y.

Sophomore Cam Thiesing scored a natural hat trick (three straight goals) in the middle period of the second game with senior Jake Wise assisting on all of them to overcome a 1-0 deficit. Patrick Guzzo scored in the third period for the Buckeyes (9-6-1).

The Sharks (3-9-1) in the opener trailed 2-1 before tying it in the second period and getting the winner in the third.

OSU plays at Penn State on Dec. 2 and 3.

For a recap of the Long Island University series, go to the [BuckeyeSports.com](http://BuckeyeSports.com) website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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# Dark Day For The Buckeyes In The 'Shoe

Sometimes history repeats itself, and not in a good way.

It was a year ago on the cold and snow-covered turf of the Big House that the Wolverines handed it to the Buckeyes. The weather was unusually warm and skies bright in Ohio Stadium this year. A perfect background for what was to be Ohio State's chance of getting

## COACH'S CORNER Bill Conley

revenge on TTUN. Unfortunately, someone forgot to tell Michigan they were supposed to lose, and someone forgot to tell the Buckeyes the game lasts for four quarters.

As in 2021, the second half was dominated by the Wolverines, and for the second year, the Buckeyes were shut out in the third quarter along with Michigan tallying a repeat of 28 points in the second half of play. For the second year in a row the Buckeyes have been knocked out of the Big Ten championship and have been all but eliminated from a chance at the national title. The three appropriate goals for his team, according to Ryan Day, of winning the league title, beating Michigan and winning the national championship went up in smoke Nov. 26. Only a shot at the national title remains, but the Buckeyes will need some help from other teams to make that shot happen.

The saddest part of this story, it was all due to a subpar performance against our archrivals – the team we are supposed to play our hardest and best against. The bright sunny day in Columbus ended up being eerily similar to the cold and gray-skied day in Ann Arbor just a year ago.

### Early Buckeye Momentum

The first quarter of the game was as nearly perfect for the men of the Scarlet and Gray as could be. The Buckeyes took the opening drive by going twelve plays and 81 yards for a touchdown while eating up nearly five minutes of the first quarter. The Ryan Day express offense was right on schedule on the drive with six runs and six passes ending in a C.J. Stroud to Emeka Egbuka touchdown strike. Now, the Buckeyes were ahead on their home turf and Michigan had to play from behind, a situation the Maize and Blue weren't used to. The Ohio State game plan was working, but the day was young.

Michigan would answer with a 10-play drive of its own ending in a Jake Moody 49-yard field goal. The Buckeyes would follow with another long drive of 10 plays and a Noah Ruggles chip-shot field goal for a 10-3 Ohio State lead. All good except the Buckeyes had a first-and-10 at the Michigan 15-yard line. Failure to score touchdowns in the red zone has plagued the Ohio State offense at times, especially the second half of the season.

The first quarter would end with the Buckeye defense shutting down the Wolverine offense on the next possession, forcing Michigan to punt. The Buckeyes had held Michigan to just 49 total yards in the first quarter. More impressively, the powerful

Wolverine rushing attack put up only 1 yard of rushing during the first 15 minutes of play. Sweet revenge seemed possible by this early Buckeye domination.

### Explosive Plays Keep U-M Alive

The Buckeyes' quick strike potential has been the trademark of the C.J. Stroud-led offense all year, even with the loss of talented receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba. The stable of talented Buckeye receivers have put fear in the hearts of opposing secondaries all season. But in the second quarter of play, a role reversal took place. It would be the Michigan Wolverines and their quarterback J.J. McCarthy who would turn the tables on the Buckeyes by delivering two touchdown passes of 69 and 75 yards, respectively, to wide receiver Cornelius Johnson on back-to-back possessions. The same quarterback who was not known as a downfield thrower struck pay dirt twice against a Buckeye defense that got burned in man coverage.

To help the Wolverines, the Buckeye offense left some points on the table in the second quarter. Ohio State couldn't convert on a fourth-and-2 from the Michigan 34-yard line and had to settle for another Noah Ruggles field goal of 47 yards after being first-and-10 at the Wolverine 28, another missed opportunity to score a touchdown. Even though Stroud, later in the same quarter, would hit Marvin Harrison Jr. on a pinpoint pass down the sideline for a touchdown, Michigan would go into the locker room at half trailing just 20-17.

Statistically, Ohio State was dominant the first half of play in terms of time of possession, total yards, and number of plays run. The Buckeye defense, despite giving up two big passes, had all but shut down the Michigan rushing attack. At the same time, the Wolverines had discovered the weakness of the Ohio State defense, the secondary. That weakness would be exploited by Michigan in the second half.

### Third-Quarter Demise

As in 2021, the third quarter was a complete disaster for the Buckeyes.

Michigan would take the second-half kickoff and put together a 75-yard drive capped off with another J.J. McCarthy touchdown pass, this time for 45 yards to freshman tight end Colston Loveland. Now the Michigan offense was getting in stride and would not relinquish the lead for the rest of the afternoon. As the Ohio State defense seemed unable to consistently slow down the Wolverines, the Buckeye offense did little with the football when they did get it back. Ohio State had only two possessions and eight total plays in the third quarter. The same offense, which had scored 139 points in its first eleven games in the third quarter this season, was shut out for the second year in a row by the Wolverines.

Jim Knowles did a masterful job this season with his more aggressive style of defense. Going into the Michigan game, the Buckeye defense was ranked in the top 20 in all the major defensive categories including defense against the rush and pass, total defense, and scoring defense. The Buckeyes had recorded 31 sacks for the season and 77 tackles for a loss. Knowles had made this turnaround with basically the same

players from last year, and guys like Tommy Eichenberg were playing the best football of their careers. Despite the much improved Ohio State defense, there were some glaring issues that showed up again against the Wolverines, with Ohio State recording just five TFLs and one sack.

McCarthy was able to step up in the pocket when the Buckeye edge rushers went too far upfield. When this happened, McCarthy would deliver the pass or tuck the ball and run as the rushers went way beyond quarterback depth. At other times, the contain man to the field would go inside leaving a short edge for a running quarterback like McCarthy to take advantage of. Sometimes pure athleticism allows players to make up for technical mistakes, but not against good offenses like Michigan's.

Most glaring this season has been the questionable technical skills of the Buckeye secondary in terms of man-to-man coverage. Too many times defensive backs have not been able to lock on and stay with their receiver or turn and look for the football in order to break up the pass or make the interception. Too many times, the latter has resulted in costly pass-interference calls. An aggressive defense must play man coverage at times, but it is a gamble if the coverage breaks down as it did against U-M. Too many technical mistakes in coverage along with missed tackles and no deep safety cost the Buckeyes severely again this year.

### C.J. Stroud's Legacy

Buckeye fans hope but do not expect C.J. Stroud to return next year. The lure of a huge NFL contract is at hand for the talented quarterback. If he leaves Ohio State after the season, he will go down as one of the best quarterbacks in Buckeye football history. He is a pure passer and intense competitor who has been a great leader by example during his career. His arm strength, accuracy and football intelligence are special for a college quarterback. Ohio State's success the last two seasons is largely due to the play of C.J. Stroud.

What C.J. Stroud has accomplished in his short time as the Buckeye signal caller is the envy of other quarterbacks across the nation, and when C.J. is playing his best football, there is no one better. Unfortunately, the less-than-dynamic play the second half of the season along with the ugly loss to Michigan probably cost Stroud the Heisman Trophy. At the same time, there is no doubt, when the protection is there and C.J. is clean in the pocket, he's the best there is at his trade.

Wouldn't it be great if Stroud decided to return in 2023? It certainly would inspire other Buckeyes to stay and not go out or enter the ugly transfer portal. It definitely would make his legacy even more special. It would also give C.J. Stroud the opportunity to accomplish two goals he has yet to achieve as the starting quarterback for the Buckeyes – a Big Ten championship and a pair of gold pants.

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# College Football's Landscape Is Shifting

It feels like we're witnessing the end of an era, not just in the Big Ten for Ohio State, but also for a select few teams nationally. One game can be an aberration. Two games, when the games are so big, represents a trend.

**EXNER POINT**  
Rich Exner

Ohio State was beaten soundly once again by a Michigan team that the recruiting analysts and NFL evaluators tell us was not as talented.

Ryan Day is the first Ohio State coach (excluding interim coach Luke Fickell) to have a losing record against Michigan since John Cooper departed more than 20 years ago.

And no longer is the college football world all about Alabama, Clemson and Ohio State. The dawn of the four-team playoff era in 2014 brought on a consolidation of power. It seemed it was an era that made the rich richer (or the best better). Top recruits want to be on the biggest stage, and that meant the playoffs. Alabama, Ohio State and later Georgia, replacing Clemson, seemed to get most of the best players. There was, or maybe still is in terms of talent, a big drop from the top three to the rest of the country.

But the most talented teams don't always win. They just are positioned best to win. And soon the playoff field will be expanding to 12 teams, providing more opportunities for more players at more places to play on the big stage. That will help more schools recruiting against schools like Alabama and Ohio State.

Meanwhile, Alabama, Clemson and Ohio State have stumbled. Clemson has lost seven games now in the last three sea-

sons. Alabama has lost two games in each of the last two seasons. And Ohio State has lost two straight to Michigan for the first time since 1999-2000.

Until COVID-19 hit and Michigan canceled in 2020 because of it, Ohio State beat Michigan 15 out of 16 times, losing only during the wreck of the 2011 season amid the Jim Tressel scandal that led to both his departure and probation. That 2020 cancellation, combined with losses over the next two seasons, means that any three-and-out junior at Ohio State will leave without ever beating Michigan, C.J. Stroud included if he opts for the NFL. Ohio State hadn't gone three straight seasons without at least one win against Michigan since 1995-97 – a quarter-century ago, and long before today's players were alive.

What should be most concerning for Ohio State fans is not the lack of a game in 2020 (a near sure win) or even the loss in 2021. It's how Ohio State performed – or was dominated – this season after having an entire year to concentrate on doing what was needed to avenge last year's loss. Ohio State talked about getting tougher. It was not tougher in this year's Michigan game.

The \$2 million man, defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, was brought in to fix the defense; that didn't work, as evidenced by the 45 points Michigan put on the board against the Buckeyes, including four touchdowns of at least 69 yards. (Better this season overall, but far from fixed). And Michigan both exposed Ohio State's defensive weaknesses and figured out a way to contain Ohio State's vaunted passing game.

Yes, Ohio State had to go four deep at running back thanks to nagging injuries to the top two in Miyan Williams and TreVeyon Henderson. And yes, the best receiver, Jaxon Smith-Njigba, missed nearly the entire season. But that kind of stuff didn't matter before against Michigan or some others outside the playoffs. Remember the Rose Bowl when Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson sat out?

Ohio State, for a couple of decades, was just always too good and too deep. Ohio State is probably still positioned better than Michigan going forward. I'd expect Ohio State to be favored in The Game again next year. But the gap isn't so wide. And Michigan now has big momentum on its side.

## Coaching Records

As noted, Day now has a losing record in The Game, dropping to 1-2 (Don't forget, Harbaugh is on the negative side as well, now 2-5.) This comes after Meyer was 7-0 against Michigan and Tressel was 9-1. Before then, John Cooper famously was 2-10-1 against Michigan. Earle Bruce was 5-4. And Woody Hayes was 16-11-1, including 4-5-1 in the 10-year war.

But I heard a good point made on a Buckeye Talk podcast previewing this year's game; Cooper faced tougher Michigan teams overall than Tressel and Meyer did. And now, the same could be said more so for Day. I did some quick research with my go-to source when it comes to historical football data, the Sports Reference website, to confirm things and came up with this.

Day has faced Michigan teams ranked 10th, sixth and third going into The Game. In Tressel's 10 games against Michigan, he faced only one team ranked in the top four nationally when the Wolverines were second in 2006, and three of those Michigan teams Tressel faced were unranked. Likewise, Meyer faced three unranked Michigan teams, though the 2018 team entered the game ranked fourth and the 2016 team entered third.

Yet Cooper faced Michigan teams ranked first, third, fourth and sixth, and just once did Cooper face an unranked Michigan team. Here's the complete rundown of Michigan rankings heading into the Ohio State game:

- Day era (2019-22) – 10th, sixth and third.
- Meyer era (2012-18) – 20th, unranked, unranked, 12th, third, unranked, and fourth.
- Fickell (2011) – 17th.
- Tressel era (2001-10) – 11th, 12th, fifth, seventh, 17th, second, 23rd, unranked, unranked and unranked.
- Cooper era (1988-2000) – 12th, third, 15th, fourth, sixth, unranked, 15th, 18th, 21st, first, 11th, 10th and 19th.

## Why Run?

Ohio State's running this year was better (4.9 yards a carry) than it was a year ago (2.1) against Michigan, yet it seemed perplexing how often Day stuck to the run, almost seeming like drive-killers at some points.

Tops among the questionable calls was when Ohio State, down 24-20 midway through the third quarter, faced a first-and-35 after two penalties. This was supposed to be the nation's most dangerous offense, and it was a critical point in the game, down four points. So what did Ohio State call to try to work its way toward a first down? A pitch play for 3 yards, setting up a second-and-32.

That seemed way too timid. After pass plays of 13 and 14 yards, Ohio State then had to punt. Michigan responded with a score to widen its lead to 31-20.

## Wasted Half

Ohio State controlled the game almost the entire first half, as evidenced by the difference in first downs – 16 for Ohio State to just four for Michigan in the game's first 30 minutes.

Ohio State should have had the game well under control, holding Michigan to 37 yards on 22 plays, just 1.7 yards a play in the first half. Pretty dominating stuff, if it hadn't been for three other plays in the first 30 minutes by the Wolverines.

One went for 33 yards on a wide-open pass play, setting up the first Michigan field goal. Two others went for long touchdowns of 69 and 75 yards.

Instead of controlling the game, Ohio State went to the locker room with a narrow lead of 20-17, opening the door for what occurred in the second half.

## Playoff Hopes And Top 10

Ohio State still clings to playoff hopes, but those hopes took a hit with USC's convincing 38-27 victory over Notre Dame. The USC win did two things: it drew USC closer to a one-loss Pac-12 championship and hurt OSU's résumé a bit due to the added loss by Notre Dame. That leaves OSU with only one win over a highly-ranked team, Penn State.

With that in mind, here's my swing at a top 10 this week.

1. Michigan (12-0). Owner of the most convincing top-tier win of the college football season.
2. Georgia (12-0). Better than TCU, though anything but overwhelming of late.
3. TCU (12-0). Credit goes to being undefeated this late in the season.
4. USC (11-1). More solid than Georgia coming down the stretch, but I defer to undefeated records. That's tough to do.
5. Ohio State (11-1). One slip-up is one fewer than anyone below this point.
6. Tennessee (10-2). Beat Alabama and lost to Georgia. This seems like the right spot.
7. Penn State (10-2). Has only lost to the teams ranked first and fifth above.
8. Alabama (10-2). Penn State vs. Alabama would be a nice game.
9. Clemson (10-2). I haven't been impressed with Clemson all year, but the pickings are getting slim.
10. Utah (10-2) or the field. I had a real difficult time coming up with a 10th team for the top 10.

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# This One Stings Even More Than The 2021 Loss

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

I've been doing these columns for 42 years, longer if you go back to my days at the old Buckeye Leaves, and after difficult losses, they don't get any easier.

It may not always show, but I try to play the part of the unbiased reporter. However, in this space I also try to take a fan's view – and I admit it, I am a fan. You can't live in Columbus and cover the Buckeyes for over 40 years and somehow remain emotionally detached.

For whatever reason I was quite emotionally invested in this particular edition of The Game. It started as soon as Ohio State lost to Michigan last season and has been with me pretty much every day since.

For one thing, like all of us, I had gotten used to Ohio State winning. For another, it's no secret I'm not wild about Jim Harbaugh, dating back to the "guaranteed" win back in 1986. In addition to that, I didn't think Harbaugh and his Wolverines won particularly gracefully last season. And finally, and I have repeatedly mentioned it here and out on the public speaking trail, I hated having to use the word "manhandled" in association with Ohio State and a loss to Michigan for the last 365 days.

I honestly felt like I knew how the Buckeyes felt for those same 365 days (OK, it was actually 364). I knew that it hurt them even more than it did me, and it seemed like Ryan Day (who also clearly hurt) and his staff were doing a good job of channeling that hurt and using it to properly build up to the rematch on Nov. 26.

Not only did I see a controlled approach to the revenge factor, not only was this game being played in Ohio Stadium, but I believed (and I probably still do) that Ohio State had better players, better coaches and a better quarterback than their rivals.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the Big Ten championship game and the playoffs.

Ohio State got outplayed, outcoached and outquarterbacked. That adds up to a 45-23 win for the Wolverines, piling on to the 42-27 Michigan victory last season. Point-wise this was a bigger victory for Michigan than it was in the painful loss last season.

It all started well enough.

Harbaugh won the toss and gave Ohio State the ball first, and the Buckeyes did what we had been waiting a year for them to do and what we expected them to do, marching 81 yards on 12 plays, mixing the pass and the run, to take a 7-0 lead.

After such a promising start, I keep trying to determine where the game started to go awry. In retrospect, I probably should have taken a little more note of the fact that Paris Johnson was called for a false start in the midst of that first drive.

Maybe things started to unravel as early as Ohio State's second possession. C.J. Stroud marched the Buckeyes 57 yards to the Michigan 15, with the big plays being a 17-yard pass to Emeka Egbuka and a 15-yard Wolverine face-mask penalty (the Wolverines had five penalties in the game, but for only 30 yards). Once there, however, the Buckeyes picked up only one more yard and had to settle for a Noah Ruggles field goal.

Perhaps another touchdown there might have changed the tenor of the game, putting a little more pressure on Michigan and quarterback J.J. McCarthy.

Maybe things started to go awry when Cameron Brown just missed catching Cornelius Johnson on a McCarthy pass that Johnson turned into a 69-yard touchdown in the second quarter. Perhaps a tackle there and the Buckeyes could have thwarted a scoring drive and stemmed the change in momentum, though

missed tackles were a theme during the game and, really, throughout the season.

Still, the Buckeyes managed to take a 20-17 lead into the locker room, and they hadn't been pushed around by the Wolverines like they had last season. Ohio State had converted some third-and-shorts (though they turned the ball over on downs on a fourth-and-two in the second quarter on which they elected to pass), the Buckeyes had not allowed a sack, they rushed for 124 yards on 20 carries and they had held the vaunted Michigan rushing attack to 10 yards on 11 tries.

As I look back on things though, the game really got away from Ohio State on two consecutive possessions starting midway through the third quarter. Michigan had taken a 24-20 lead, but things still seemed under control when the Buckeyes forced a three-and-out and a short Brad Robbins punt set Ohio State up in Michigan territory at the 48.

Right on cue, Stroud connected with line-backer-turned-running back Chip Trayanum for a 24-yard gain and it looked to the world – or Buckeye Nation anyway – that the Buckeyes were back on script.

But that is exactly when things started to unravel.

The play was called back for holding by Donovan Jackson, and at the end of the play, Gee Scott Jr. committed one of the most inexplicable penalties I have seen in all my time watching football – head-butting a Wolverine on the sidelines. Add it all up – or take away the gain and add the two penalties – and it was a net 49-yard loss for Ohio State. Penalties were another theme of this game and throughout the season, and I guess it was only a matter of time before it caught up with Ohio State.

Somehow, Stroud rallied the Buckeyes from a first-and-35 to fourth-and 5 at the Michigan 43, but Day elected to punt. Jesse Mirco's punt lacked its usual English and the punt team lacked its usual downfield coverage and the ball rolled into the end zone for a touchback and a net gain of just 20 yards.

That set up the second part of this game-changing drama. I should say here that I wasn't as bothered by calling for the punt as most others, including Stroud. Mirco has been a weapon all season, and I didn't feel that the game – with more than 20 minutes to play and the Buckeyes having dominated the fourth quarters of their previous big games – was particularly out of control at that juncture, with Ohio State trailing by all of four points.

But that was all about to change.

After taking over after the touchback, Michigan marched 80 yards in 15 plays. The dominance at the line of scrimmage that was the hallmark of the Wolverines' win last season had suddenly returned. Edwards carried the ball seven times on the drive for 30 yards as Michigan pounded it, and the Wolverines also converted a third-and-1 on a sweet trick play. And, of course, the Buckeyes aided the drive with a penalty, this time an interference call that allowed Michigan to convert a third-and-10 and set them up for business at the 2.

What might have happened if the Buckeyes had forced a field goal there? Instead, McCarthy carried it in from the 3.

It wasn't just the seven points that made the score 31-20, though. It was the nearly eight minutes that the Wolverines held the ball. Stroud and his troops had shown they could move the ball, in the game and all season, and they were probably denied at least

one additional possession at a time when they were still very much in the game. The extended drive seemed to wear down the defense, and just as importantly it seemed to wear down the Ohio Stadium crowd of 106,787.

One possession for each team and what had been a competitive game quickly became a painful rout.

### Michigan Musings

Two people I have touted all season are defensive coordinator Jim Knowles and tight end Cade Stover. If I am going to spend 11 weeks doling out the praise, I guess I also have to note the failures.

Knowles' failures were the most visible, with Michigan racking up a painful 45 points and 530 yards. The Wolverines got Knowles and his defense coming and going with a balanced 252 yards rushing and 278 yards passing.

As everyone knows by now, it is Knowles' philosophy to concede the occasional big play to put your defense into position to make big plays of its own. In this game there were two problems with that philosophy.

For one thing, I don't think Knowles had five touchdowns of 45 yards or more in mind when he created that give up the "occasional" big play philosophy. More importantly, his defense was utterly unable to create the big plays of its own.

The Buckeyes had but one sack, and despite whatever pressure Knowles dialed up, they were frequently just a step late on hitting paydirt. The defense did not force any turnovers.

Ohio State-Michigan games frequently revolve around turnovers and penalties, and Ohio State was woefully lacking in both departments.

Knowles took responsibility for the shortcoming, mentioning at least five times in the Game Notebook (pages 10-11) that the failings were on him. I know he is just trying to deflect the heat, but the players need to man up too.

I have a simple charge to Knowles. We get that it is "on you." Fix it.

The good news about Stover is that the offensive coaches did not abandon the tight end. Stover targeted Stover seven times, and he had four catches. It seems, though, that after 11 weeks of Ohio State utilizing the tight end, the Michigan coaches were able to figure out that he would be a factor, and Stover gained just 13 yards on his receptions.

Even so, Stover had a chance to play the hero. On Ohio State's final scoring drive of the afternoon, the Buckeyes drove to the U-M 9 and faced a third-and-4. Stroud looked to Stover in the end zone. The pass wasn't perfect and there was some Wolverine coverage, but it could have been the type of catch that Stover had been making all season and he could have joined the likes of Mike Lanese (1984) and Anthony Gonzalez (2005) with great, critical catches in the Michigan game.

Instead, the ball fell incomplete, and the Buckeyes settled for a field goal. What could have been a 31-27 score with 7:23 to play was 31-23 instead. To top off Stover's day, he also had an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on a punt.

And in my season-long watch of the tight ends, you've got to credit Scott's knucklehead penalty to the tight ends room as well. Scott had a catch for 16 yards, so he ended up with a net of 1 yard for the game. There are penalties

of aggression and penalties of stupidity. I'll let you be the judge on Scott's miscue.

• On the BuckeyeSports.com Forum leading up to the game, I mentioned that, despite the manhandling last season by the Wolverines, Stroud had a pretty good passing line in the 42-27 Wolverine victory. He was 34 of 49 for 394 yards with two touchdowns and no interceptions. Where I think he got killed in Michigan's over-powering performance was with the four sacks for 27 yards.

I predicted that Ohio State would also have problems this time around if Stroud had to throw 49 passes again. Well, he threw only 48 times, completing 31, good for 349 yards and two touchdowns. And he was sacked only once. But that many passes is not a good look for an Ohio State or Michigan quarterback, and that was the case again this season.

It kind of reminded me of Dwayne Haskins against Purdue in 2018, when he threw 73 passes in a 49-20 loss, or Tom Brady, when he threw 56 passes in a 31-16 Buckeye victory in The Game in 1998.

Was that the last we will see of C.J. Stroud in a Buckeye uniform?

### And The Winner Is . . .

By now, those of you who were entered to win two tickets to The Game in BSB's Beat Michigan contest have realized you didn't win the tickets. As it turns out, it's kind of an interesting story as to who did.

On a procedural note, in a typical Buckeye Sports Bulletin contest, BSB assistant publisher Becky Roberts gathers the entries and goes through our protocols to guarantee a fair drawing. Then one of the staff members draws the winner, whose name and phone number are given to me and I call the lucky party.

In this case I was given the name of a Mr. Freeman in Huber Heights, Ohio. I didn't give it much thought. I just made the phone call.

It turns out Mr. Freeman was Marcus Freeman's dad. I had no idea, but he has been a loyal BSB subscriber for many years and remains a loyal Buckeye fan, even though his son is now the head coach at Notre Dame.

We had a nice chat and he seems like a nice guy. He said that Notre Dame's home and away schedule was such that he was able to attend most Buckeye and Irish home games this year. In fact, Notre Dame was out on the coast to face USC when the Buckeyes, with Mr. Freeman in attendance, were hosting Michigan.

I assured him that I would only root against Freeman for two games, and Ohio State had already won one of them.

Congratulations Mr. Freeman. Sorry the Buckeyes didn't put on a better show. By the way, Marcus, who lettered at OSU in 2004 and 2006-08 after redshirting in 2005 with a knee injury, was 4-0 against Michigan.

### Last Weekly Issue

This is the last print issue of our fall weekly publishing schedule. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will return with its big Bowl Preview Issue the week of Dec. 17. We will switch to our biweekly winter/spring publishing schedule after the New Year.

The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff never rests, however, and you can follow all of the Buckeye sports news at our electronic BuckeyeSports.com website in between issues. Don't forget that the early football recruiting signing period is coming up rapidly and you don't want to miss any of the latest recruiting news. If you are not already taking advantage of this free service for BSB subscribers, see the easy sign-up instructions on page 5 of this issue.



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