

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$3.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!



Vol. 43, No. 2

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Sept. 16, 2023

McCord, Harrison Display Connection In Rout Of YSU

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

It looked as natural as any connection in college football when Ohio State quarterback Kyle McCord hit wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. for a 71-yard touchdown early in the Buckeyes' 35-7 win over Youngstown State on Sept. 9, and it was only the first of what will likely be many, many scores between the duo this season.

But the path for both McCord and Harrison to succeed at Ohio State – alongside each other, no less – was forged long before either arrived in Columbus. McCord and Harrison were both members of Ohio State's 2021 recruiting class – a group that is quickly becoming the cornerstone of this current batch of Buckeyes – and came from the same high school, cutting their teeth at St. Joseph's Preparatory School in Philadelphia.

It was there that McCord set Philadelphia Catholic League records with 6,887 passing yards and 88 touchdowns in three seasons as the starter, with a good chunk of that production going to Harrison, who had 144 receptions along with his own Philadelphia Catholic League records of 2,625 receiving yards and 37 touchdowns.

"We first started playing with each other my sophomore year of high school," McCord said this spring. "It's something that we always talked about. It's crazy the way everything works itself out, us both being here. I'm definitely excited to be able to play with him. I mean, I didn't get a lot of reps with him last year because he was going with the ones with C.J. (Stroud). But the chemistry is definitely still there."

"I throw with him a bunch. He's my best friend. I tell him if I was athletic enough to play defensive back, I'd be able to lock him down because I know all of his moves, which he laughs at. It's always fun to play



Buckeye Bond

SONNY BROCKWAY

FROM THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE — Ohio State quarterback Kyle McCord and wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. got their start playing together at St. Joseph's Preparatory School in Philadelphia, where they forged a strong connection.

with a guy like that, his caliber, as well as your best friend."

Harrison echoed that sentiment in the spring, adding that the pair definitely have a connection after playing together so much in high school, and Harrison has seen McCord only continue to grow since they first

started playing together.

"I think he can make every throw, no matter where I'm at on the field. I could be on the opposite side, he could be on the far hash, he can still get the ball there," Harrison said. "Whether I'm in the boundary, he can throw the deep ball, intermediate, his timing is very precise, so that's probably the best thing I like about him. The arm talent is still there. It was always there, just more so the mental aspect of the game. He spends a lot of time watching film and just trying to anticipate throws. That's probably where he's grown the most."

McCord has seen similar growth from Harrison, with the receiver making leaps both on and off the field that have allowed him to dominate over the last two seasons.

"It's funny looking back," McCord said.

"I remember we watched, I think it was his sophomore year high school tape, and he was obviously a great receiver then. But (he) just got bigger, stronger, faster, quicker."

"I think his football IQ is at the next level now. It's funny, talking to him, I think he sees the field like a quarterback, which is something that not a lot of guys that I've played with have had. And after a play, going back and talking to him, he knows what I'm seeing. I think that helps with him getting open, and I think that has really allowed him to take his game to the next level, and then, obviously, on top of his work ethic."

The powerful connection between the pair in high school – and continuing to their Ohio State careers, even if it was mostly in

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

Continued On Page 10

FAN FORUM

Buckeye Leaves

After a shaky start to the season against Indiana, Ohio State responded with a comfortable 35-7 win over Youngstown State on Sept. 9 in the Buckeyes' home opener. Here are some choices from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff members and readers from the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum for players who were worthy of receiving Buckeye Leaves after the win:

Patrick Engels, BSB: I'm handing my Buckeye Leaf to quarterback Kyle McCord, who put forth his best overall performance to date. McCord has faced an abundance of scrutiny since being named Week 1 starter in August, mainly for his inability to get on the same page with top wideouts Marvin Harrison Jr. and Emeka Egbuka, but YSU was a completely different story.

McCord, who completed an efficient 14 of his 20 passes for 258 yards and three touchdowns, found his two favorite targets a combined 12 times for 254 yards and three touchdowns, a stark contrast from the ineffectiveness seen in Bloomington, Ind., the previous weekend. He also spread the ball around, with eight different receivers recording a catch.

If McCord can continue this production into the rest of the month, he can begin to further separate himself from redshirt freshman Devin Brown, which can bode well for his confidence moving forward.

Braden Moles, BSB: Cornerback Denzel Burke did what has not been done by an Ohio State cornerback since 2021 against Youngstown State – intercepting a pass.

Yes, somehow that is the first interception by an Ohio State cornerback in nearly two years, but Burke was happy to finally break that streak after Ohio State emphasized its cornerbacks getting more hands on balls this season.

In addition to the pick, Burke finished with one tackle, but he didn't need to make many as the ball rarely came his way against the Penguins.

Greg Wilson, BSB: The offense looked

the part for most of the game against the Penguins, and Marvin Harrison Jr. was at the center of it.

After a season opener with only two catches for 18 yards, the Buckeyes made a point to target Harrison early and often. The first drive of the game finished with a 71-yard touchdown down the sideline, a career-long reception. He would also add on another touchdown that was 39 yards, both from McCord.

He finished with seven receptions for 160 yards and two touchdowns. It was to be expected against an FCS team, but it's also a good thing to see for Harrison after the dud against Indiana.

BSB Subscribers

Tiffin Buckeye: Marvin Harrison Jr., played great and glad he rebounded.

AnthonyBuckeye: TreVeyon Henderson and Harrison for playing like we expect them to, McCord for an efficient outing, Tommy Eichenberg and Mike Hall Jr. for tackles and sacks, Sonny Styles for his powerful knock down and speedy play, Burke for a couple of outings with good coverage and his interception, Jordan Hancock for being around the ball always and his tackles, C.J. Hicks or flashing his potential and the entire defense for adjustments after a Youngstown State fast start.

PeyoteBuck: Brown for beginning to find his groove. He's going to grow into a fine QB.

BuckeyeScott: Eichenberg, Steele Chambers, Burke, and Tyleik Williams get my Buckeye Leaves!

Poster That Harley Built: Let's start the guy down the right path with a Buckeye Leaf. I give mine to McCord, who had a solid outing against YSU. Each quarter he plays, he seems to become more confident and I become more confident. I don't watch the film with Ryan Day, but I hope he is becoming more confident, too. It's time to get past this quarterback battle.



From The Message Board

Coming out of Ohio State's 35-7 win over Youngstown State, the Buckeyes have one more tune-up game against Western Kentucky before traveling to Notre Dame on Sept. 23. Following the comfortable win over YSU, we asked our readers on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum what they've seen as the team's biggest strengths through two games, as well as their biggest concerns. Here are some of the responses:

"Strengths are RB and WR depth. Concerns are run blocking by the OL."

– Terrier Buck

"On strengths, I'd say running backs. The weakness has to be the inconsistency of the offensive line. On defense I would like to see more big plays, though that seemed to improve a little bit against Youngstown State."

– Mcarr

"Strengths are running back depth and WR talent. Weaknesses: Defensive ends (who through two games have zero sacks) and the OL is less than to be desired."

– Tiffin Buckeye

"Strengths include the growing chemistry between Kyle McCord and Marvin Harrison Jr. Devin Brown is growing more comfortable in the game. Weaknesses are simply mistakes from being green. Experience will take care of this."

– Peyote Buck

"Strengths: Elite talent at RB and WR. Experienced LBs lead an improved defense.

"Weaknesses: Entirety of the offensive line, mid-level QB play, mid-level offensive coaching, D-line can be pushed backwards, outside of (Sonny) Styles' big hit, the safety play is weak. Outside of Burke, who was amazing today, YSU looked to have the better secondary, and once again, we look like a physically weak team."

– Otis Johnson

"I think the linebacker play has been solid and it's clear we have great depth at running back. Our receivers are extraordinary in getting open, blocking and pass catching! I'm still not happy with our kickoff and punt return teams,

and short-yardage blocking for the running backs."

– BuckeyeScott

"The biggest strength seems to be the skill players on offense like Chip Trayanum, TreVeyon Henderson, Miyan Williams, Harrison, Emeka Egbuka and Julian Fleming. They show the ability to blow any games open. The biggest weakness appears to be the run defense, as the Buckeyes could not stop the Penguins on third-and-short several times."

– AnthonyBuckeye

"The lack of domination in both lines against a I-AA team is very concerning. It just feels like this team is soft. They need to find a nasty side before they start to play real teams."

– bstu9

"Now that I have had a little time to think about it, I'm not quite as impressed with the defense as I might have been when the final gun went off. I am not unimpressed. I just think the defense could have done a little better against a I-AA team. Where are our defensive ends? Jack Sawyer can't hide behind the excuse of he is playing the Jack, whatever that is. They better mount a pass rush against the pass-happy Hilltoppers or it could be a long afternoon."

– Poster That Harley Built

"Strength – I see improvement in some areas between games one and two. Weakness – inability to convert third downs. This game would have been much closer if Youngstown State hadn't committed a plethora of stupid penalties."

– R1TBDBITL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Print In An Electronic Age

I want to echo the sentiments in Jim Breithaupt's letter in the Sept. 9 issue of BSB. I haven't known Frank as a personal friend for as many years, but I have spoken to him on the phone and find myself agreeing with 95-99 percent of the opinions he writes in "The View From 15th & High." I also admire his success in keeping BSB as a print medium when everything is going electronic. (I do believe I was one of the earliest subscribers.)

As much as I like BSB printed on dead trees, I wonder if more people would subscribe to an only electronic version at a lower price?

Thanks for the great work, Frank.
Steven Brown
Sunbury, Ohio

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

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

Columbus Sports Publications
1200 Chambers Road, Suite 206
P.O. Box 12453
Columbus, Ohio 43212
(614) 486-2202
bsb@buckeyesports.com

Periodical class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Buckeye Sports Bulletin, P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio 43212. Subscription rates: \$119.95/year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

EDITOR
Braden Moles

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsman 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
David Breithaupt Mark Schmetzer
Bill Conley Steve Siegfried
Patrick Engels Jeff Svoboda
Rich Exner Mike Wachsman
Craig Merz Greg Wilson
Bob Roehm

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Paula Serra Ron Friedman

2023-24 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 43)

No. 1	Sept. 9	No. 13	Dec. 16
No. 2	Sept. 16	No. 14	Jan. 13
No. 3	Sept. 23	No. 15	Jan. 27
No. 4	Oct. 7	No. 16	Feb. 10
No. 5	Oct. 14	No. 17	March 2
No. 6	Oct. 21	No. 18	March 16
No. 7	Oct. 28	No. 19	April 1
No. 8	Nov. 4	No. 20	April 15
No. 9	Nov. 11	No. 21	May
No. 10	Nov. 18	No. 22	June
No. 11	Nov. 25	No. 23	July
No. 12	Dec. 2	No. 24	August

The next issue (Sept. 23 cover date) will be mailed on Sept. 19.

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

Wachsman Elite Donor:



OPINION

Quarterback Choice Seems Fairly Clear

I couldn't help thinking while watching Ohio State go through the motions in what ultimately was a nondescript 35-7 victory against Youngstown State that Ryan Day is wasting time on the quarterback situation.

Despite the fact that, to most observers after two games, the choice seems fairly clear, Day's reluctance to name Kyle McCord or Devin Brown his starter has created a rather unpleasant byproduct. With one more tune-up before what should be a tough assignment at Notre Dame, it appears the Buckeyes don't yet know what kind of offense they want to be.

McCord seems comfortable running a college-style offense – the one I thought Day preferred – and that was evidenced by an efficient 14-for-20 performance for 258 yards and three touchdowns against the Penguins.

On the flip side, Brown seems more than capable of running a high school-style offense, the one that thousands of prep coaches throughout the country build around their quarterback, who is usually the best player on their team. Brown has a strong, if sometimes erratic, arm, and that showed in a 7-for-13 afternoon that netted 101 yards. He also ran the ball six times and gained 16 yards. But a pair of sacks cut his net total to just 9 yards.

It seems that if Day wanted to utilize Brown's talents to their fullest, he would put something more at the second-year QB's disposal than simple quarterback draws that don't seem to be fooling anyone. Brown would likely benefit from some deception whether that's culling the read-option out of J.T. Barrett's playbook, running some misdirection off one of those handful of jet sweeps we see every week, or – dare we say it? – a little old-fashioned option out on the wing to take advantage of all that four- and five-star athleticism the Buckeyes have stockpiled the last couple of years.

I realize all of that is a tough ask for an offensive line that is nowhere near where it needs to be yet. Two games are in the books, and no Ohio State running back has topped the 100-yard mark. Heck, none has yet topped 60 yards. Short-yardage situations continue to be of particular concern, a problem that can no longer be ignored.

Therefore, with the talented stable of running backs Ohio State can feature at any juncture in the game, one must only suppose at this time that the offensive line is more comfortable in pass protection. Aiding that supposition is the fact McCord – supposedly the less talented runner of the two quarterbacks – has attempted 53 passes in two games and has yet to be sacked.

So let's talk about McCord for a minute. Flashy? Certainly not, but you can leave the yap-flapping to the J.J. McCarthys and Coach Primes of the world. Give me efficiency any time, and McCord has that. Would it interest you to know that his current career completion percentage of 67.6 (75 for 111) ranks as fourth best in Ohio State program history?

Against the Penguins, he completed nine of his first 11 attempts and engineered a second-quarter drive the likes of which I believe his head coach is looking for every time the Buckeyes have the ball. Starting at his own 10-yard line, McCord presided over an 11-play, 90-yard march that used just over 4½ minutes of clock.

The possession didn't exactly show promise at the beginning after Miyan Williams was dropped by former OSU and current YSU safety Marcus Hooker after a first-down gain of just 1 yard. McCord followed by failing to get enough air under a pass to Julian Fleming down the middle of the field – into double coverage, no less – that luckily bounced away incomplete.

But faced with a third-and-9 situation, McCord followed his misfire by sticking his foot in the ground and firing a frozen rope to favorite receiver Marvin Harrison Jr., who had drawn pretty tight coverage over the middle from Penguins linebacker D'Marco Augustin. No matter the coverage, though, Harrison vs. a linebacker is always going to be a mismatch, and the OSU receiver grabbed the pass for a leaping 21-yard gain.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

On the next play, McCord went to Harrison again, this time on a sideline cross good for a 9-yard gain. On the stat sheet, it was a seemingly innocuous play except that Harrison was able to easily shake Penguins cornerback Jaylen Castleberry on the route, and McCord threw another laser beam from the right hash mark to the left sideline. The gain might have been 9 yards, but the ball easily traveled some 40 yards on a line from quarterback to receiver.

Later in the drive, McCord flipped a short pass in the left flat that Emeka Egbuka turned into a 17-yard reception. Then four plays later – after Youngstown State stuffed Chip Trayanum after a gain of just 1 yard on third-and-3 – it was another pitch-and-catch to Egbuka that the speedy receiver – thanks to blocks from Fleming and tight end Cade Stover that eliminated three defenders and a juke move that left YSU free safety Tyjon Jones grasping at air along the sideline – turned into a 28-yard touchdown.

It was an efficient scoring drive after which the Buckeyes held a 28-7 lead with 3:06 remaining in the first half.

The remainder of the game was mostly glorified mop-up duty against a game but severely undermanned opponent – with the exception of something interesting that occurred late in the third quarter. With Brown at the controls, Day decided to give him a few chances with the McCord playbook, and the second-year man from Arizona responded with a couple of nice completions, including one to freshman Carnell Tate worth 20 yards on which Brown stood in against pressure and delivered a strike between three defenders.

But it was the play immediately after the throw to Tate that got my attention.

On first down at the YSU 30-yard line, as Brown took the shotgun snap, right tackle Josh Fryar and right guard Matthew Jones immediately came out of their stances and began pulling to the left. As they did, Youngstown State linebackers sensed a sweep and began to move in that direction.

Except that it wasn't a sweep to the left. As most of the Penguins defense went one way, Brown handed the ball to TreVeyon Henderson, who scooted off to his right, picked up key blocks from tight end Gee Scott Jr., Egbuka and Tate, and then jetted to the end zone for a beautifully-executed 30-yard touchdown.

It was the kind of play that made me think that instead of wasting his time musing over his two quarterbacks, perhaps Day is thinking about picking spots when best to use Brown. And if that kind of thing makes me wonder, maybe opposing defensive coordinators are wondering about it, too.

Still Not Convinced

The raw numbers tell you the Ohio State defense is getting it done so far this season. Only 10 points allowed and an average of just 193.5

total yards against two opponents place the Buckeyes among the nation's top five defenses during the early going.

Still, one must consider not only the competition but the mistakes the OSU defense continues to make. Those were on full display early in the first quarter against Youngstown State when the Penguins put together their only scoring drive of the game.

On third-and-3 from his own 44, YSU quarterback Mitch Davidson lofted a pass downfield that seemed to stay in the air forever. Still, it wasn't enough time for veteran Ohio State cornerback Cam Martinez to make enough of an adjustment before Penguins receiver Max Tomczak came down with a 36-yard reception. All those who thought (or at least hoped) those kinds of busted coverages leading to chunk plays were a thing of the past were obviously mistaken.

Three plays later, on a third-and-4 play at the OSU 14, veteran safety Lathan Ransom was slow in coverage on YSU receiver Bryce Oliver, and Oliver grabbed a 12-yard reception to give his team a first-and-goal at the 2.

Later, on yet another third-down play, Davidson made the Buckeyes look foolish when he scored a 1-yard touchdown on a read-option made easy by the fact there was no defender on the edge and no defender assigned to the quarterback.

To its credit, the Ohio State defense played much better after that first series, keeping the Penguins to an average of just 3.3 yards on its 48 offensive plays the rest of the game. Still, the performance during that first Youngstown State possession could generously be described as a disappointment – with one notable exception.

On the play immediately after Oliver beat Ransom, Davidson went back to Oliver on a fade route in the end zone. Only this time, cornerback Denzel Burke was there to bat the ball away.

The Penguins tested Burke again early in the third quarter when backup QB Beau Brungard tried to get the ball to Oliver in the end zone only to see Burke make an acrobatic interception to end the scoring threat. Believe it or not, that was only the second interception of Burke's career and his first since returning one 23 yards for a touchdown during the opening period of a 52-13 win at Rutgers in 2021.

Did You Know?

- Did you know that former Ohio State quarterback Mike Tomczak is a volunteer assistant coach at Youngstown State? Tomczak, who threw for 5,569 and 32 touchdowns for the Buckeyes from 1981-84, is in his fourth year serving in a voluntary capacity for the Penguins. His official title is advisor to head coach Doug Phillips, who has his own ties to Ohio State. Phillips spent the 2006 season in charge of defensive quality control on Jim Tressel's OSU staff.

- Speaking of Tomczak, that was his nephew Max who caught three passes for a team-best 53 yards for YSU against the Buckeyes. Max is the son of Mike's brother Steve and Steve's wife, Beth.

- You might have won some money in a trivia contest if you knew the names of the two previous Ohio State quarterbacks before McCord to throw touchdown passes against Youngstown State. Todd Boeckman threw a pair of touchdowns in each of the Buckeyes' victories against the Penguins in 2007 and 2008. The other? Antonio Henton, who tossed a 37-yard score to Taurian Washington during OSU's 38-6 win in 2007.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Buckeyes Fall To No. 6 In AP Poll

Ohio State's up-and-down journey through the AP top 25 continues. The Buckeyes – who checked in at No. 5 in the Sept. 4 poll – fell to No. 6 in the AP top 25 released on Sept. 10.

The Buckeyes fell in the poll after No. 5 USC and No. 4 Texas – which knocked off then-No. 4 Alabama, which has since fallen to No. 10 – both jumped Ohio State, with the rest of the top five rounded out by No. 1 Georgia, No. 2 Michigan and No. 3 Florida State.

Sixth is Ohio State's lowest ranking in the AP top 25 since finishing there in the final poll of the 2021 season, though the Buckeyes did fall as low as No. 11 during that season. Ohio State is followed by No. 7 Penn State, No. 8 Washington, No. 9 Notre Dame and Alabama.

The Big Ten is also represented in the poll by No. 25 Iowa, with Wisconsin – which fell out following a 31-22 loss to Washington State – Minnesota and Mary-

land receiving votes.

Proctor Tabbed As Starting Adjuster

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day and defensive coordinator Jim Knowles indicated on Sept. 5 that graduate safety Josh Proctor would serve as the team's starting adjuster/free safety moving forward, citing his experience and quality play as key factors behind the decision, though Proctor did not play against Youngstown State.

"Josh, right now, has earned the right on the field to be the starter," Day said.

"He has some plays underneath him, so we went with him," Knowles added. "And I thought he played well (against Indiana). He showed up."

Proctor was battling for the position throughout fall camp with freshman Malik Hartford and Syracuse transfer Ja'Had Carter, but he manned the starting role during the first half of the Buckeyes' season-opening 23-3 victory against Indiana, recording four total tackles and a tackle for loss, as well as breaking up a pass. The sixth-year defender's presence was felt mostly against the run, where he delivered a pair of bruising hits against the Hoosiers' triple-option attack, including one in the first quarter that resulted in a 3-yard loss.

Proctor's impact would dissipate in the second half when he was replaced at the position by Hartford, but Day said his veteran presence and the dependability he showed both during the game and at fall camp earned him the starting role.

"He's been consistent," Day said. "And

2023 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Sept. 2	at Indiana	W, 23-3	CBS	1-1, 41-7 win over Indiana State
Sept. 9	YOUNGSTOWN STATE	W, 35-7	BTN	1-1, 35-7 loss to Ohio State
Sept. 16	WESTERN KENTUCKY	4 p.m.	FOX	2-0, 52-22 win over Houston Christian
Sept. 23	at Notre Dame	7:30 p.m.	NBC	3-0, 45-24 win over NC State
Oct. 7	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	2-0, 38-20 win over Charlotte
Oct. 14	at Purdue	TBA	TBA	1-1, 24-17 win over Virginia Tech
Oct. 21	PENN STATE	TBA	TBA	2-0, 63-7 win over Delaware
Oct. 28	at Wisconsin	TBA	TBA	1-1, 31-22 loss to Washington State
Nov. 4	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	2-0, 36-7 win over Temple
Nov. 11	MICHIGAN STATE	7:30 p.m.	NBC	2-0, 45-14 win over Richmond
Nov. 18	MINNESOTA	TBA	TBA	2-0, 25-6 win over Eastern Michigan
Nov. 25	at Michigan	12 p.m.	FOX	2-0, 35-7 win over UNLV

that's something that's always been a focus for Josh is his consistency. No one ever really questioned his effort. And so he needs to be a major contributor for us. He needs to be consistent. Somebody who's been in the program as long as he has, that's what he needs to bring."

Knowles, who admitted it was tough to make a decision on whether to start Proctor, Hartford or Carter at the adjuster, said Proctor separated himself from the others toward the end of fall camp with his steady approach. This, along with his rich collegiate experience, allowed the defensive coordinator to extend the veteran first-team reps against Indiana.

"We have always had high hopes for him," Knowles said. "He's talented. We're looking for that consistency, like (Day) talked about. And he showed that towards the end of our preseason work."

"You just evaluate all the plays, all the reps," Knowles added. "I thought it was close between Josh and Malik, but Josh has some plays underneath him. So for our first game, we thought it'd be better to go that way but still get Malik in the game. It's hard to play these guys in a tightly-contested game."

Despite being named the starter, Proctor was sidelined against Youngstown State due to an undisclosed injury. Hartford would fill in at the adjuster for only one series before being replaced by Carter, who would assume the position for the rest of the game, logging two tackles on the day.

LB Reese Exits YSU Game In First Quarter

Ohio State freshman linebacker Arvell Reese suffered an unknown injury early in the first quarter of the Buckeyes' 35-7 victory over Youngstown State, an ailment that would keep him out of the rest of the game.

Reese suffered the injury at the 13:34 mark of the first quarter while manning kickoff coverage after Marvin Harrison Jr.'s 71-yard touchdown. The Cleveland na-

tive went down after colliding with several Youngstown State players, and he stayed on the ground for a few minutes until he was eventually helped up by members of Ohio State's training staff.

Reese walked off the field under his own power, walked to the medical tent and was held out for the rest of the game. His status moving forward is unknown.

A four-star prospect out of Cleveland Glenville High School, he has been used primarily on special teams this season, where he made his collegiate debut in the season opener against Indiana on Sept. 2. Listed as a linebacker on the roster, Reese worked in with the defensive ends during fall practices made available to the media, a showing of versatility that enabled Day to proclaim that he had earned an opportunity to see the field.

"I was really impressed with Arvell Reese's physicality," Day said Sept. 7. "He came down and really did a nice job. He has a chance to be a special player."

Five Other Buckeyes Out Against Penguins

In addition to Proctor being listed as questionable, five other Buckeyes were listed as unavailable against Youngstown State, including redshirt freshman wide receiver Kyion Grayes and freshman defensive lineman Will Smith Jr., who was on crutches prior to the game.

The Buckeyes were also without a handful of players dealing with long-term ailments, including sophomore tight end Zak Herbstreit, sophomore wide receiver Reis Stocksdales and junior linebacker Kourt Williams II.

Players who were unavailable against Indiana but available for Youngstown State included freshman safety Jayden Bonsu, redshirt freshman running back T.C. Caffey and sophomore wide receiver Joop Mitchell.

One Buckeye who made an unexpected appearance against Youngstown State was

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL TICKETS!

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



For Your Ticket Connection Call:

DREAM SEATS
YOUR TOTAL TICKET SOURCE

1611 W. FIFTH AVE. COLUMBUS, OH 43212

(614) 340-8989

www.dreamseats.com

Home & Away Games!

All NCAA & NFL Games in Stock!

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

TOPSOIL

VERY RICH PULVERIZED
OR UNPULVERIZED
"SOIL PLUS"



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

ANY SIZE LOAD • IMMEDIATE DELIVERY ANYWHERE

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

JONES FUEL COMPANY

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



SONNY BROCKWAY

GET WELL SOON — Ohio State freshman linebacker Arvell Reese was helped off the field after suffering an undisclosed injury in the first quarter of the Buckeyes' 35-7 win over Youngstown State on Sept. 9.

redshirt freshman defensive end Omari Abor, who Day had said during fall camp would miss "at least a couple of months" with an undisclosed injury.

But those couple of months turned into just a few short weeks when Abor took the field in the second half against the Penguins, though he did not record a statistic.

Tressel Wears Split Buckeyes, Penguins Vest

Former Ohio State and Youngstown State head coach (as well as former YSU president) Jim Tressel was in attendance for the Week 2 matchup at Ohio Stadium, where he made his allegiances to both universities felt through his choice of clothing.

The 70-year-old Tressel was seen sporting a half-Ohio State, half-Youngstown State red sweater vest during Ohio State's Skull Session at St. John Arena and on the sidelines during pregame warmups, with both program's logos printed on the front.

Tressel, who was accompanied by his wife, Ellen, throughout the day, also offered his support for the two programs on social media, proclaiming "GO PENGUINS AND BUCKEYES" before the game on Twitter.

Tressel had success with both programs during his legendary coaching career. From 2001-2010, he led Ohio State to eight seasons of 10 or more wins along with a 106-22 overall record. He also guided the Buckeyes to three national championship game appearances and earned a national title in 2002.

The Ohioan spearheaded the Penguins' football program from 1986-2000, amassing a 135-57-2 overall record and four Division I-AA national championships. He also served as Youngstown State's university president from 2014-2023, retiring from the role on Feb. 1.

Bosa, Burrow Sign Record-Breaking Deals

A pair of former Buckeyes agreed to record-breaking contract extensions with their respective NFL teams.

The first of the two deals came by way of San Francisco 49ers defensive end Nick Bosa, who signed a five-year, \$170 million contract extension to stay with the franchise on Sept 6, a historic deal that made him the highest-paid defensive player in NFL history. The contract also

includes \$122.5 million guaranteed.

Bosa's extension comes after the two sides were unable to strike an agreement on a deal during the offseason, a stalemate that stretched into the summer and led the reigning AP NFL Defensive Player of the Year to sit out all of training camp. The deal now gives Bosa an annual salary of \$34 million per year, \$2.3 million more than Los Angeles Rams' defensive tackle Aaron Donald, who will make \$31.7 million this season. His extension also exceeds the five-year, \$135 million deal his brother, Joey, currently has with the Los Angeles Chargers

Bosa, who registered 77 tackles, 29 tackles for loss and 17½ sacks in three seasons for Ohio State (2016-2018) is coming off his most prolific NFL season. He earned first-team All-Pro and Pro Bowl honors in 2022 after posting a league-high 18½ sacks along with 51 tackles, two forced fumbles and 48 quarterback hits. He also took home the AP Defensive Rookie of the Year award in 2019 after recording nine sacks and 47 tackles.

Bosa's deal was upstaged by former Ohio State and current Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow, who inked a five-year, \$275 million extension with the franchise on Sept. 7 that includes \$219.01 million guaranteed. The lucrative contract, which will earn him \$55 million a year, makes him the highest-paid player in NFL history.

Burrow's extension was signed at the end of an NFL offseason that saw multiple franchise quarterbacks receive expensive contracts with their respective teams, including the Los Angeles Chargers' Justin Herbert and the Philadelphia Eagles' Jalen Hurts, who agreed to five-year, \$262.5 million and five-year, \$255 million extensions, respectively.

Now fully recovered from a calf injury which he suffered in late July, the 26-year-old Burrow will look to build upon his already successful NFL career. Through his first three seasons, the former College Football Playoff national champion and

Heisman Trophy winner has thrown for a combined 11,774 passing yards and 82 touchdowns, while also leading the Bengals to their first Super Bowl appearance in 33 years in the 2021 season.

Stover, Tuimoloau, Styles Jr. Earn Player Of The Game

Tight end Cade Stover, defensive end J.T. Tuimoloau and cornerback Lorenzo Styles Jr. earned player of the week honors for their respective performances in Ohio State's 23-3 season-opening win against Indiana.

Stover started his 2023 campaign in style, hauling in five receptions for a team-high 98 yards. He averaged 19.6 yards per catch and helped turn the momentum in the Buckeyes' favor midway through the third quarter when he took in a pass from quarterback Kyle McCord and rumbled down the middle of the field for a key 49-yard completion – Ohio State's longest play of the game.

Tuimoloau helped spearhead a stout defensive performance which relinquished just 71 rushing yards. He recorded four total tackles on the day, which tied for third on the team, along with half a tackle for loss.

While Styles' name may not have been seen in the final stat book, the junior cornerback made his presence felt on special teams. The Pickerington (Ohio) Central product and brother of safety Sonny Styles is expected to make his biggest impact on punt and kick coverage for the rest of the season as he becomes more comfortable playing cornerback, a position he switched to from wide receiver after arriving at Ohio State.

Officials Say Harrison's TD Should Have Counted

With 3:25 left in the third quarter against Indiana, McCord threw a 24-yard touchdown pass to Harrison down the sideline. He flexed in the face of Indiana defense.

Continued On Page 6



Join Us!

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

Kick-Off Dinner

Travel to Away Football Games

Annual Celebrity Golf Outing

Meeting with Coaches, at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center



Both locations open for lunch & dinner daily!



1505 W. 5th Ave
Near Grandview Ave
614-817-1198

Monday - Saturday:
11 AM - 10 PM

Sunday:
NOON - 10 PM

KITCHEN UNTIL 10 PM NIGHTLY

741 N. High St
In the Short North
614-298-1014

Monday - Saturday:
11:30 AM - 12:30 AM

Sunday:
NOON - 12:30 AM

KITCHEN UNTIL MIDNIGHT DAILY

presscolumbus.com

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

sive back Noah Pierre to celebrate. It was called back, however, because Harrison stepped out of bounds on his route before coming back in to catch the pass – or so it seemed.

Day said on Sept. 7 that after the game, he was told by Big Ten officials that the touchdown should have counted since Harrison was forced out by the cornerback.

“Kyle hit Marvin – which I was told should have been a touchdown,” Day said. “That shouldn’t have been called because he was forced out by the defender. They thought he ran out on his own. That didn’t happen. So that was missed, and they let us know that.”

This would have given the Buckeyes a 19-3 lead before the extra point, and McCord would have a touchdown pass in the box score. McCord finished the game 20 for 33 with 239 yards and an interception.

The drive still ended in a touchdown when Miyan Williams got into the end zone for his second touchdown of the day, a 3-yard score, so the incorrect penalty call didn’t change the outcome of the game, but it would have made for a better day for both McCord and Harrison, who had just two

catches for 18 yards, without a score.

OSU Defense Adjusts To IU Triple Option

Ohio State’s defense showed flashes of the Silver Bullets against Indiana, allowing only three points on a second-quarter field goal on a drive started by an interception thrown by McCord.

Knowles was happy with how the defense performed, especially since they didn’t prepare for the triple-option look Indiana ran all game.

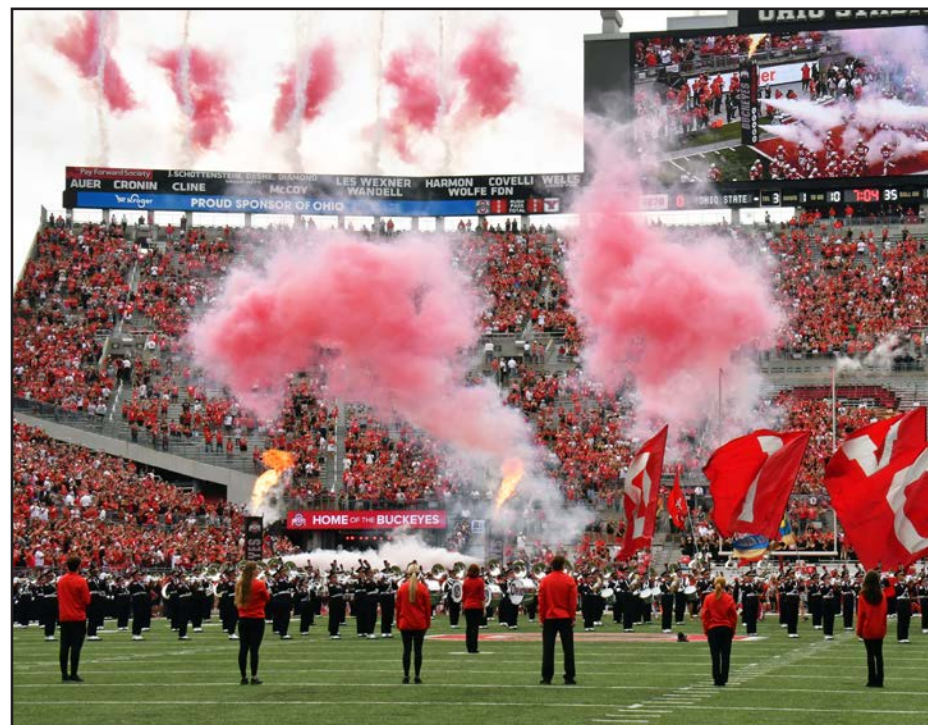
“I think we practiced it five plays or less,” he said on Sept. 5. “And that’s stretching it.”

When Knowles saw the formation from the box, he worked quickly to adjust the game plan and said it was good to see his players adjust to something they weren’t ready for.

“When you’re sitting up there in the box and you see that, you’re like, ‘OK, I know what to do, but I haven’t made a legal tackle since 1986. I know what to do, but do the players know what to do?’ ” Knowles said. “It’s an indicator that we can handle the controlled chaos that happens during a game.”

“I was pleased we were able to make the adjustments quickly and the communication was good. Guys were really locked in and helping each other and talking it out, and they understand the system. When I said something, they got it and I was happy with the way it went.”

It was encouraging to him that the defense was able to adjust to something new, but he added that the Buckeyes weren’t able to fully figure out how their defense is going to perform against other offenses they are going to see this season, with more things Knowles wanted to see in his



SONNY BROCKWAY

WELCOME HOME — Ohio State fans showed up to the tune of 102,897 for the Buckeyes’ home opener against Youngstown State and were treated to the OSU marching band’s annual alumni band day.

defense that he didn’t get the chance to.

“That first game was really kind of an anomaly because they came out with triple option,” he said. “I think we still have to perform against conventional offenses. Rushing the passer – we didn’t get much of a chance to do that – compete and contest against regular drop-back passes. We just need to grow more against a conventional offensive system.”

There are some things Knowles said they would like to improve on after a strong overall performance. In several of the third-down situations where the Hoosiers were able to move the sticks, he would have liked to see a few more stops.

“There were a couple third downs where we gave up a completion or they start doing all the triple-option stuff and spinning the backs and they start combin-

ing it with an inside run power play,” he said. “You get slightly off the A gap, and I think one slipped through where we should have been and could have stopped.”

Ohio State Unveils New NIL Collective Policy

Ohio State announced on Sept. 7 that the three name, image and likeness collectives that support the university – including The 1870 Society, Cohesion Foundation and The Foundation – are streamlining the sports to which they cater.

The 1870 Society will be the “premier collective support of Ohio State football,” while The Foundation will “transition to focusing on Ohio State men’s and women’s basketball programs” beginning on Jan. 1, 2024, including becoming a presenting sponsor of a 50/50 raffle during basketball

Buckeye Sports BulletinBoard

RULES AND RATES: 20 cents per word, 10 cents for more than one insertion. Minimum order of \$5. No agency discounts. Make checks payable to Buckeye Sports Bulletin. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

All ads are uniformly set with the first two words set in boldface capital letters at no charge. However, no other words may be set in boldface. Anyone planning a larger or more distinct ad may receive our ad rate card upon request.

We reserve the right to request additional information or merchandise be submitted from advertiser prior to acceptance of an ad, and we reserve the right to refuse advertisements considered objectionable.

Deadline is one week prior to publication date. Call (614) 486-2202 or write P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212 for info.

LOGE SUBLEASE: Desire to sublease a loge for Ohio State football vs. Western Kentucky Sept. 16 and/or Michigan State Nov. 11. If you’re willing to sublease your loge, please contact Mike Herbert at (419) 937-7374.

BUCKEYE GAMEDAY Memories: A new book of short stories about humorous gameday experiences in the 1960s through the 2010s by Tim Sullivan. Available on Amazon.com.

FOR SALE — OSU-MICHIGAN

Game, 1975 - original RADIO broadcast on CD! Woody’s last great team & Archie’s last UM game as Bucks go 11-0! Three-disk set runs 3½ hours! Listen in your car! \$25 + \$3 S & H. Call 1-630-527-8890!

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia and equipment, programs, pennants, glasses, books, jerseys, helmets, ticket stubs. One item or a hundred. Will travel. Call George at (614) 506-1081.

WANTED TO buy: OSU basketball tickets/stubs from the 1960s, ’70s, ’80s, ’90s & 2000s. Call Mike at (704) 995-0414.

WANTED TO buy: OSU football memorabilia, programs, ticket stubs, pennants, championship rings, gold pants, helmets, autographs, game-used equipment, small or large collections. Call Chris at (419) 957-6789.

BSB PUBLISHER Frank Moskowitz and other members of the BSB staff are available to speak at your business, social or alumni group meetings. Informative and fun. Call (614) 486-2202 for details.

EL VAQUERO
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

3230 Olentangy River Road
Columbus, Ohio, 43202
(614) 261-0900
www.ElVaqueroRestaurants.com

**EVERYDAY
HAPPY HOUR**
4 pm-8 pm

\$5.00 OFF
your total bill of \$25 or more
Coupon valid only Sunday – Thursday. Excludes tax and alcohol. Dine-in and carry-out. One coupon per table. Not valid with any other offers. Valid at all locations with coupon. Expires 12/31/23

\$6.00 OFF
your total bill of \$30 or more
Coupon valid only Sunday – Thursday. Excludes tax and alcohol. Dine-in and carry-out. One coupon per table. Not valid with any other offers. Valid at all locations with coupon. Expires 12/31/23

games.

Cohesion Foundation, meanwhile, will “ensure Ohio State student-athletes across all sports can use purpose-driven NIL commitments to positively impact the community,” opening an additional avenue for student-athletes in sports beyond football and basketball. Previously, all of Ohio State’s collectives supported student-athletes in several different sports.

“Our collectives have done a tremendous job in the Columbus community and with our student-athletes,” said Carey Hoyt, executive associate athletic director. “While we understand NIL can be confusing because it is still new and evolving in college sports, I would encourage everyone to visit the websites (of the collectives) to learn more about how to get involved. ... We want to make it as simple as possible for people who want to contribute to a collective or work with a student-athlete on a marketing campaign.”

Four Women Dot The “I” For OSU Band

Ohio State’s marching band made history during halftime of the team’s home opener against YSU, as all four “i” dotters – with the marching band and Ohio State alumni band performing quadruple Script Ohios – were women for the first time in the band’s history.

To honor the 50th anniversary of women being part of the Ohio State marching band, the program brought back three former female members to take part in the tradition along with a member of this year’s band.

Jay Duga, a 1980 Ohio State graduate who was the first female band member to dot the “i” in 1979, performed the tradition on the north end of Ohio Stadium. Fellow

alumnae Wendy Bauer Reeves (1989-93) and Cathryn MacQueen Skedel (1989-90) manned the west and east ends of the stadium, while current sousaphone player and fifth-year industrial and systems engineering student Isabel Slaven occupied the

south end. Slaven became the 29th female band member to dot the “i,” an honor that she does not take for granted.

“I’m really honored to be able to not only dot at this game, but also represent so many women in the past, present and future,” Slaven told The Lantern before the

game. “It’s going to be so special.”

B1G On CBS Finds Success In Week 1

The Big Ten on CBS put forth a strong

Continued On Page 8

Post Labor Day Postal Problems

As has proven typical throughout the years, Buckeye Sports Bulletin appears to have experienced sluggish mail service after a postal holiday on a Monday – in this case Labor Day and the Sept. 9 issue of BSB. While some readers reported acceptable delivery, others were not so lucky. We expect service to return to a more normal schedule with this issue.

However, with BSB returning to its weekly publishing schedule for football season, we want to remind readers that the complete edition of each issue is posted at BuckeyeSports.com, immediately upon completion of the paper, making the site a must for readers having continuing mail problems. There is also immediate coverage after each game, and readers can discuss the game on the Fan Forum, including “The Official Game Thread” with real-time comments from BSB staff members and readers throughout the game. BuckeyeSports.com is free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

Those readers not inclined to take advantage of BSB’s immediate electronic posting may also upgrade their existing print subscriptions to first-class mail in an envelope through football season for \$25 and through the traditional recruiting season in February for \$35. Just call us at (614) 486-2202 for credit card orders or send your credit card number or check to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Mention either the “Football” upgrade or the “Recruiting” upgrade.

Football season also means the return of our popular staff predictions at the BuckeyeSports.com website. It appears that the staff predictors have still not factored in the new clock rules, with the trio of Patrick Engels, Braden Moles and Greg Wilson seeing an average offensive output of 58 points for Ohio State against Youngstown State. Engels predicted 59-6, Moles 52-7 and Wilson saw 63-3.

Predictions will continue throughout the season on the Friday before each game.

There are also additional stories throughout the week, including coverage of Ryan Day’s weekly press conference, as well as news from any other press availabilities leading up to the next game.

Football recruiting is a 365-day-a-year process these days, and the BSB staff has stepped up its coverage of Ohio State’s quest for prep talent, so be sure to check in regularly at BuckeyeSports.com.

Along with daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. This season we will be featuring a look back at the 1998 Ohio State football team on its 25th anniversary. Also, staff members man the previously mentioned Fan Forum, interacting with subscribers on the hot topics of the day.

Please note that recent developments with the mail service have us concerned about delivery time for BSB, even on non-holiday weeks. We remind you again, the complete print edition of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted at BuckeyeSports.com at the time the issue is mailed and is available to subscribers free of charge, as is all the other content provided at the site. Your copy of the paper will still arrive in your mailbox at the usual time.

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

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

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

Brutus Level VIPs To Be Recognized

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

“We want to thank the many BSB readers who have stepped up and shown their support for Buckeye Sports Bulletin through the VIP program,” BSB publisher Frank Moskowitz said. “It is a true vote of confidence in what we are doing now, what we have done the previous 42 years and what we plan to do in the future.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Elite-Plus Donors: B2, Reston, Va.; Brian Bucher, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; Thomas E. Farish, Port St. Lucie, Fla.; Terry T. Farmer, Lancaster, Ohio; Sander Flaum, New

York; Mike Heimann, Ashland, Ohio; Freddie and Joe Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Don Kersey, Springboro, Ohio; Kris Kersey, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Fred Krisch, Cleveland; Larry Larson, Ladera Ranch, Calif.; Dan LaVille, Grand Rapids, Mich.; W. Lee Mackewiz, Bear, Del.; Allen McMillin Jr., Logan, Ohio; In memory of Hugh and Dixie Rea, Washington Court House, Ohio; In memory of Lisa Rea, Greenfield, Ohio; Jim Reichler, Toledo; The Russell Group United, Columbus; John Thomas, Kentfield, Calif.; Bob Weber, Mishawaka, Ind.

Elite Donors: Robert Ankerman, Holland, Mich.; Marshall Beck, Sarasota, Fla.; Phillip Blue, Prior Lake, Minn.; Fredrick Bradshaw, Columbus; In memory of Norwin Brovitz, Oakmont, Pa.; Iris Cremean, Walbridge, Ohio; Richard Dunkelberger, Groveport, Ohio; Fred Fingerhut, Phoenix; Chalk Fry DDS, Sarasota, Fla.; Laura Granich, Columbus; Paul E. Hackett, The Villages, Fla.; James Hamilton, Murrysville, Pa.; Joe Helmer, Westerville, Ohio; Curtis High, Beavercreek, Ohio; Carl R. Jeffery DDS, Van Wert, Ohio; Frank Klaus, Pepper Pike, Ohio; Paul Lappert, Columbus; Tom Leggett, Dublin, Ohio; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Dr. Jonathan Lucas, Portsmouth, Ohio; Mike from Marietta, Ga.; Col. George R. Nelson, New Albany, Ohio; Theodore Pegram, Eden Prairie, Minn.; Greg Place, Greenville, Ohio; James Robinson Jr., Council Bluffs, Iowa; Charlie Shaffer, Edison, Ohio; Bill Short, Sparta, Ohio; Mark Skinner, Columbus; Kyle Smith, Marietta, Ga.; James Thomas, The Villages, Fla.; Chuck Underwood, Miamisburg, Ohio; Dan van Blaricom, Dublin, Ohio; Beth Wachsmen, Columbus; Elliott S. Wettstein, Waverly, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Peoria, Ill.; David J. Young, Supply, N.C.; Anonymous, Columbus; Anonymous, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Anonymous, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Lancaster, Ohio; Anonymous, Lewisburg, W.Va.

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

Continued From Page 7

debut in the ratings department, racking up historic numbers for the network's 3:30 p.m. EST matchup between Ohio State and Indiana.

In what was the inaugural game in the seven-year partnership between the 96-year-old television network and the 14-team (soon to be 18-team) athletic conference, the Buckeyes and Hoosiers reportedly averaged 4.6 million viewers, a 39 percent increase from last season's Week 11 clash between the two schools which aired on FOX and drew approximately 3.3 million viewers.

The broadcast, which was anchored by play-by-play analyst Brad Nessler, color analyst Gary Danielson and sideline reporter Jenny Dell, peaked at a viewership of 5.7 million. These statistics made the game the network's most-watched Week 1 contest in 25 years.

The Big Ten will be featured on CBS five more times this season in what is the first year of a seven-year, \$7 billion partnership between the two sides – as well as FOX and NBC – with Iowa and Penn State set to match up at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 23, Iowa and Nebraska facing off on Nov. 24 along with two other games on Oct. 28 and

Nov. 4 whose matchups have yet to be determined. The conference, which is set to replace the SEC in the 3:30 p.m. slot, will get their full season of marquee coverage on the network in 2024.

Stroud Named Texans Captain

Former Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud has been selected as one of four team captains for the Houston Texans, as voted by his fellow teammates, head coach DeMeco Ryans announced on Sept. 4. He will join fellow first-draft selections Bryce Young of the Carolina Panthers and Anthony Richardson of the Indianapolis Colts as the only rookie NFL quarterbacks to earn captaincy this season.

"Even though he's a young guy, I told our guys, 'You can be a leader,'" Ryans said. "Leadership doesn't go to the oldest guy in the room. It's about who is the man that can get others to play better, and that's what C.J. can do. That's what he provides for our team."

**C.J. Stroud**

"I think from day one, I've been a vocal leader," Stroud said after being named captain. "I think I've led by example, as well. I'm taking strides every day, just trying to fix problems when they're there, trying to help the coaches while being a coach on the field. It was a huge honor and a blessing being able to be a rookie and be able to be a captain."

Stroud received the honor one week after the Texans tabbed him as their starting quarterback for his rookie season after their final preseason game against the New Orleans Saints on Aug. 27. The former Buckeye was battling with second-year quarterback Davis Mills for the position throughout the offseason but earned the nod after showing his potential as an accurate and consistent thrower in training camp and completing 11 of his 20 passes for 89 yards, one touchdown and an interception in three preseason games.

"It was definitely a blessing," Stroud said. "Something that I think I worked for and definitely earned. But at the same time, nothing else really changes. I'm still going to work like the way I'm working even more now. I'm blessed enough to be able to be a starter so young in this league, which isn't the easiest thing to do. But I know my coaches have trust and faith in me, and I'm

going to go out there and try to do my best."

Stroud, a two-time Heisman Trophy finalist at Ohio State who amassed 8,123 passing yards and 85 touchdowns in two seasons as starter, made his NFL debut on Sept. 10 against the Baltimore Ravens, completing 28 of 44 passes for 242 yards while being sacked five times in a 25-9 loss.

Dobbins Suffers Torn Achilles In Opener

Baltimore Ravens head coach John Harbaugh said Sept. 10 that former Ohio State and current Ravens running back J.K. Dobbins is out for the season after suffering a torn Achilles.

Dobbins' injury happened during the Ravens' season-opening win over the Texans, in which Dobbins rushed for 22 yards and a touchdown on eight carries before suffering the injury. A second-round draft pick in 2020, he missed all of the 2021 season with a torn ACL and played in just eight games last season while dealing with knee injuries.

He also missed all of Baltimore's preseason camp and was just recently activated off the physically unable to perform list ahead of the season opener.

From The Pages Of BSB**40 Years Ago — 1983**

Some football teams think of their offensive line as a security blanket. At Ohio State, the 1983 Buckeye line better resembled a security tarp.

Standing tall – and huge – for the first time in the middle of the Buckeye line was Joe Dooley, a 21-year-old senior from Cincinnati Oak Hills High School. Dooley, however, who measured 6-6 and tipped the scales at 268 pounds, was nearly the smallest of Ohio State's massive offensive line.

"We should have a pretty good offensive line," Dooley said. "We just hope we can fill the reputation that's building up."

Also on the line were left tackle Bill Roberts, left guard Jim Lachey, right guard Scott Zalenski and right tackle Jim Carson.

35 Years Ago — 1988

What a difference one week makes. In the season opener, the Ohio State football team played extremely well in an error-free 26-9 win over Syracuse on Sept. 10. No fumbles, no interceptions and no penalties meant the initials "OSU" might have been changed to stand for "Oh So Unbelievable."

After the second week's error-filled 42-10 loss against Pittsburgh on Sept. 17 featuring seven penalties, one interception and four fumbles, those initials might change again. This time they should have stood for "Oh So Ugly."

First-year head coach John Cooper shrugged and stated the obvious outside the Buckeyes' locker room after the contest. "They kicked us up one side and down the other," he said. "Everything they tried worked and everything we tried didn't work. It was pretty simple, really. They wanted it much more than we did."

30 Years Ago — 1993

Approximately 36 hours after the team's 21-12 win over Washington on Sept. 11, Cooper reiterated the same feeling he expressed immediately following the game.

"We are not going to suffer a letdown. It will not happen," said the OSU head coach. "Our coaches will not let it happen. Our players will not let it happen."

Cooper said the main reason he believed his team would not suffer a letdown similar to one it had the previous year after a victory over Syracuse is that this year's team was more focused.

"This team is very much focused on its goals," he said. "One of our team goals – and we have this one right up there on the wall over at the practice facility – is constant improvement. We want to improve from Monday to Tuesday, from Tuesday to Wednesday, each day of the week, and we want to improve each week."

25 Years Ago — 1998

The present for Ohio State football looked pretty good as the Buckeyes held a commanding lead on the top spot in both major polls.

But if OSU's 49-0 win over Toledo on Sept. 12 was any indication, the program's future could be pretty bright as well. Sure, the old standbys like Joe Germaine, David Boston and Dee Miller all got to have their fun in the sun against the Rockets.

But so did a whole new breed of Buckeyes with names like Reggie Germany, Tim Cheatwood, Jonathan Wells, and another guy named Steve Bellisari, who saw action both at quarterback and on defense.

"Games like this are real fun, especially for the younger guys," said OSU tailback Michael Wiley, who blistered Toledo himself for 151 yards and a touchdown. "They get to have some playing time for their families."

20 Years Ago — 2003

Though nothing had been officially announced, former OSU coach Earle Bruce was expected to be named head coach of the Columbus Destroyers, an Arena Football League franchise which planned to relocate from Buffalo, N.Y., to Columbus for the upcoming season.

Bruce previously coached in the Arena League from 1994-96, the first two seasons in Cleveland and then in St. Louis. Among the other candidates who interviewed for the coaching position were former OSU and NFL standout linebacker Chris Spielman and former Ohio State and NFL safety Doug Plank.

The Destroyers were expected to play in Nationwide Arena, with the season kicking off in early February.

15 Years Ago — 2008

Ohio State's 26-14 win over Ohio University on Sept. 6 was not just another nail-biter against a plucky underdog. The victory was No. 800 for the football program, which had begun in 1890.

Head coach Jim Tressel was not in much of a mood to talk milestones after his third-ranked Buckeyes squeaked by the Bobcats but did call being on the field for such an event "quite a privilege." Earlier in the week, he was a bit more eloquent on the topic.

"To think that you're at a place that's had 799 college football wins, and there's only four others that have done that, you're at a special place and you better understand the privilege," he said. "It's not like this place changed when any of those (predecessors) showed up. This place has been extraordinary for many, many years."

10 Years Ago — 2013

Ever since the 2012 season came to its conclusion, the Ohio State coaches had proclaimed Kenny Guiton to be America's best backup quarterback. On Sept. 7, Guiton got his chance to prove them right.

Sure, the Houston native helped preserve the Buckeyes' undefeated campaign a year ago with a comeback effort in Ohio State's overtime win over Purdue, but never in his college career had Guiton been called upon to put together a four-quarter performance. That changed in the second game of his senior season when starting quarterback Braxton Miller suffered a knee sprain on the third-ranked Buckeyes' opening drive in their matchup with San Diego State.

With 235 yards of total offense and three touchdowns to his credit in the Buckeyes' 42-7 win over the Aztecs, Guiton succeeded in an effort that could replace his heroics against the Boiler-

makers as the defining moment of his Ohio State career.

"The old righthander steps in and does a nice job," head coach Urban Meyer said, referring to the 6-3, 208-pound Guiton. "He's too slow. Not a strong enough arm. But all he does is lead, manage and distribute, and he has an incredible knowledge of the game."

Five Years Ago — 2018

James Laurinaitis is one of the most decorated linebackers in Ohio State football history, which earned him induction into the Varsity "O" Hall of Fame in 2018.

The former Buckeye linebacker was a three-time All-American and retired from an eight-year NFL career following the 2016 season. A radio broadcaster for 97.1 The Fan in Columbus and a color analyst for FOX covering college football, Laurinaitis had already built a successful post-football career for himself. However, the Minnesota native said he had thought about returning to the gridiron as a football coach.

Laurinaitis said prior to his Hall of Fame induction ceremony Sept. 7 that he had strongly considered coaching now that his playing career was over and almost joined Luke Fickell's staff at Cincinnati the previous season. Ultimately, he felt he couldn't commit to a full season because he wasn't "all in" and he didn't want to do a disservice to Fickell by not giving him his best. When asked if he would consider coaching at Ohio State if Urban Meyer offered him a position on staff, though, Laurinaitis said it would be something he would have to consider.

"Hypothetically? It would be a long, long thought process on that one for sure," he said. "It would be hard to say no."

One Year Ago — 2022

It was clear after the 2022 Rose Bowl that great things were on the horizon for Marvin Harrison Jr., but it was difficult to predict that it would come just two games later. In just the 15th game of Harrison's young career, he led Ohio State against the Arkansas State Red Wolves with seven receptions for 184 yards and three touchdowns, all setting or tying career highs, as the Buckeyes won by a 45-12 margin in front of 100,067 fans at Ohio Stadium.

Harrison's performance, though, was just an example of how Ohio State had done business over the past several seasons. It was a tried-and-true method at that point that had sprung the careers of Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who all had started in similar fashions with a breakout performance in their freshman seasons before taking over on the Buckeyes' offense in their sophomore years and beyond.

"He's very mature for his age," head coach Ryan Day said. "So is Emeka (Egbuka), but Marvin's route running is very mature for his age. To see somebody who's played as much as he has, the high level of route running is pretty remarkable. He had a chance to have four touchdowns. I think, he had the one they called an incompleteness, he could have finished that one off. The potential is there. You can see the couple of plays he made, he did it a bunch of different ways."

McCord-Harrison Connection Ices Penguins

By **CRAIG MERZ**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Capitalizing on their high school connection, Kyle McCord threw two of his three touchdown passes to Marvin Harrison Jr. when the offense showed signs of life for No. 5 Ohio State in a 35-7 victory over Youngstown State on Sept. 9 in Ohio Stadium.

McCord threw for all but five of his 258 yards in the first half, and Harrison, his teammate at Philadelphia's St. Joseph's Prep, had seven catches for 160 yards, all in the first two quarters for the Buckeyes (2-0). McCord, who earned the start over Devin Brown, was 14 of 20 a week after going 20 for 33 for 239 yards with an interception and no touchdowns in a lackluster 23-3 win at Indiana.

Harrison, who had just two catches for 18 yards in that game, gave the Buckeyes a 14-7 first-quarter lead on scoring receptions of 71 (a career long) and 39 yards against the Penguins (1-1). The Buckeyes added a 13-yard run by TreVeyon Henderson and a 28-yard catch by Emeka Egbuka for a 28-7 halftime lead in front of 102,897 fans under cloudy, 74-degree conditions.

Henderson added a second score, from 30 yards, in the third quarter for the final margin.

Marvelous Half

Harrison gave Ohio State the 7-0 lead at 13:34 on the game's first series.

The Buckeyes won the toss, elected to receive because of the NCAA's clock rules that head coach Ryan Day said are limiting the number of possessions, and started from the 24-yard line after a 20-yard return by Xavier Johnson.

Henderson ran for 9 yards, but on second down, center Carson Hinzman – starting just his second career game – was called for holding, setting the ball back to the 23-yard line. Johnson got 6 yards on a catch before McCord spotted Harrison open at the YSU 49-yard line for the easy score. The drive went 76 yards in three plays and 1:20.

The Penguins responded with an impressive 75-yard, 11-play, 5:52 possession that resulted in a 7-7 score on a 1-yard stroll by quarterback Mitch Davidson at 7:42.

Youngstown State faced third-and-3 from its 44-yard line when Max Tomczak, nephew of former Buckeye quarterback Mike Tomczak (an advisor on the Penguins' staff) made a 36-yard reception down the right sideline to the 20-yard line. On third-and-4, Davidson connected with Bryce Oli-



SONNY BROCKWAY

BOUNCING BACK — After a quiet performance against Indiana in Week 1 (just three catches for 16 yards), wideout Emeka Egbuka (2) responded with five catches for 94 yards and a touchdown against Youngstown State.

ver for 12 yards to the 2-yard line, and at the 1-yard line on third down, Davidson faked a handoff and went unscathed to his left for the score.

Harrison's 39-yarder then made it 14-7 with 1:20 left in the quarter on the Buckeyes' third series. It began with Egbuka losing 3 yards on a 58-yard punt, but an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on YSU moved the marker 15 yards to the 22-yard line.

Chip Trayanum ran for 7 yards, Harrison gained 8 yards on a catch and Egbuka's 24-yard grab put the ball at the YSU 39-yard line. On the next play, McCord underthrew Harrison, who waited for the ball in the right corner of the end zone to cap the drive in just 1:22.

Brown replaced McCord for the series beginning at 13:58 of the second quarter.

After a bit of wackiness, Henderson extended the lead to 21-7 at the 9:07 mark with a 13-yard run up the gut. He fumbled at the goal line and Youngstown State recovered it in the end zone, but the call was overturned upon video review because Henderson had broken the plane.

Brown was 2 of 6 for 21 yards and rushed three times for 13 yards in his first extended drive as a Buckeye. He had a 12-yard play to Julian Fleming early followed by a controversial no-call for pass interference on a deep throw to Harrison.

Later, Henderson had a 17-yard touchdown wiped off the boards because of a personal foul (hands-to-the-face) against left tackle Josh Simmons. On third-and-25 from the 32, Brown scrambled for 6 yards, but YSU's Greg Benton was penalized half

the distance for a late hit, and Henderson scored on the ensuing play. The drive encompassed 13 plays to go 60 yards in 4:51.

After a YSU punt to the 10-yard line, McCord returned, and his third touchdown went to Egbuka for 28 yards on fourth down to make it 28-7 with 3:06 left in the half. Harrison made three catches for 38 yards, including a 21-yarder, while Egbuka added a reception of 17 yards. The Buckeyes went the 90 yards in 4:37 on 11 snaps.

The Buckeyes had 339 yards in the first half (274 passing, 65 rushing) compared to 380 for the entire game against the Hoosiers.

Not Much Happening

The Penguins drove to the Ohio State 32-yard line to start the third quarter before cornerback Denzel Burke intercepted a pass in the end zone by backup Beau Brungard.

"It feels good. It's a blessing," Burke said. "Hopefully they keep throwing my way so I can get some more."

Davidson got hurt five plays prior when sacked by linebacker Tommy Eichenberg. Brungard finished the game at quarterback with 37 yards and the pick on 5-of-8 passing.

Brown was at the helm when the Buckeyes jumped to a 35-7 advantage at 1:40 of the third quarter on Henderson's 30-yard run. It was set up by passes of 8 yards to Fleming and 20 yards to Carnell Tate.

The Buckeyes turned the ball over on downs at the YSU 10 late in the game after Miyan Williams' 4-yard touchdown was called back due to a holding penalty on Trayanum. Brown was tackled for a 5-yard loss on fourth-and-goal from the 5-yard line with 5:27 to play.

That was the only full series – which lasted 7:05 – of the quarter for the Buckeyes. They got the ball back with 25 seconds left at the YSU 49-yard line, and Williams rushed for 4 yards to end the game.

Notes

Egbuka's five catches totaled 94 yards. ... Henderson rushed for 56 yards on five carries. ... Brown was 7 of 13 for 101 yards and added 9 yards on six rushes. ... Eichenberg led the Buckeyes with six tackles (three solo) and added a sack. ... OSU had 482 yards (359 passing, 123 rushing) while YSU had 234 (135 passing, 99 rushing). ... Ohio State had 60 plays, one more than the Penguins, and had only 10 possessions, including the abbreviated final one.

You Can Count On These Services From

THE QUICKPRINT CENTRE

3535 Fishinger Blvd. Suite 100, Hilliard, OH 43026
614-488-2683 • FAX 614-488-0059 • qpoh@aol.com

Offset-Printing	Digital Color Copies	Digital B&W Copies
Typesetting	Ship UPS	Rubber Stamps
NCR Forms	Fax Service	Business Cards
Laminating	Announcements	Binding
Brochures	Wedding Invitations	Labels

Cherry BBQ Sauce

Famous Kream® Mustard

TAILGATING'S FINEST

Upgrade your snacks!

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

Find us in select Kroger, Hills, Weiland's and other grocery/specialty stores across the region.
Can't find us? Ask your store to order us.
Crafted with pride in Athens County, Ohio

BrownwoodFarms.com • (866) 589-6456

Offense Finds Rhythm Against YSU Penguins

Continued From Page 1

practice during their first two years on campus – drew rave reviews, even from those who have played the game at the highest level.

“Kyle’s a very competitive guy,” said NFL Hall of Fame receiver Marvin Harrison Sr., father of the Ohio State receiver, in March. “I’ve been around him for about four, five years now. I’m looking forward to him. He’s been very patient. I’m sure he’s learned a lot over the last two or three years here, so his day is going to come sooner or later and we’re all going to be impressed with him.”

For the first time since they arrived at Ohio State, McCord and Harrison were able to take their performance public – this time in front of 102,897 fans at Ohio Stadium – with the pair helping to lead the Buckeyes over the Penguins to move to 2-0 on the season. In the win, McCord completed 14 of 20 passes for 258 yards and three touchdowns, with seven of those completions, 160 yards and two of those scores landing in the hands of Harrison.

It was the third-most receiving yards in Harrison’s career (behind 184 yards vs. Arkansas State and 185 yards vs. Penn State, both last season) and the sixth multi-touchdown performance in his three seasons with the Buckeyes, not to mention his seventh game with at least seven receptions.

Additionally, his first score of the game – the 71-yarder on Ohio State’s first drive – also set a new mark for his longest career reception.

While McCord and Harrison have connected for plenty of touchdowns between the high school ranks and through practice the last couple of seasons, that early first-quarter touchdown was their first at the collegiate level, and it was a big moment for both.

“It was cool,” McCord said. “I think that was my first touchdown to Marvin in college, so it was cool to finally see it come all the way from when we first started playing with each other our sophomore year of high school to now – it’s been a long time coming. Just continue to use that momentum and continue to use that experience and grow and we create more of those.”

Harrison added that part of the reason they were able to excel against Youngstown State was that they have been able to take snaps in an actual game together of late, compared to just working in practice as they have for so long.

“It takes a lot of reps, game reps too, especially for quarterbacks (to build chemistry),” he said. “You can practice as much as you want, but until you get out there and get to know the team and get those game reps in, then you can start to build that connection.”

“At the end of the day, we’re both talent-



SONNY BROCKWAY

LONG BALL — Ohio State wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. hauled in a career-long 71-yard touchdown reception against Youngstown State on Sept. 9 en route to seven catches for 160 yards and two scores.

ed football players. We understand that we can make things work, but like I said, the game reps, it’s hard to simulate. Over time, throughout the season, we’ll continue to get better.”

As for Harrison, after being targeted just six times in Week 1 against Indiana with just two receptions for 18 yards, head coach Ryan Day said it was great to see Harrison come out of the gate strong.

“To see him get those two big plays early, that was a deep breath. But we targeted him a bunch, targeted Emeka (Egbuka) a bunch, and then sometimes it just works out that way based on the play. Good to get his touches and his targets. We tried last week. It’s just sometimes they take it away and the ball has to go somewhere else.”

The win over Youngstown State helped McCord further develop his timing and rhythm with Harrison, but it also served as a significant step for his development. Day said that McCord looked poised against the Penguins after a shaky start to the season against Indiana, and he helped the offense get off to a fast start this time around.

“I like how we came out of the gates playing well,” Day said. “They’re fresh, they’re playing their best football in that first quarter, and you want to see us playing good football, and he made some nice throws early on and that was good. He got himself into a rhythm and showed that he can make some of those throws, and that’s important.”

McCord said the biggest adjustment he felt was more trust – in his reads, his arm and even his teammates, and this helped the offense flourish against the Penguins for 482 total yards.

“I think we showed flashes of that last week, for sure,” he said. “But we’re spotty and I feel like in the first half today we came out strong and got things going. Got the ball in the receivers’ hands and they did some really good things after the catch. We aired it out a little bit, so I think it was a good mixture. And as long as we can continue to build, then I think we’ll be in a really good spot offensively.”

Day did decline, however, to name McCord as Ohio State’s permanent starter, explaining that he and the staff would










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

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

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

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

need to watch film from the game before making any declarations. But an average day for redshirt freshman Devin Brown in his first significant snaps – just 7 of 13 passing for 101 yards – combined with a better showing for McCord in his second time out likely puts to rest any talk of a quarterback competition as McCord becomes more comfortable under center and, in turn, Day becomes more comfortable with McCord.

“I think as we start to get more games under our belt you’ll start to see us more and more open up (on offense),” Day said. “He looked more comfortable, for sure, in this game. ... But I don’t think Kyle really missed any throws, maybe a read or two. Maybe there were a couple, but I thought he was much more efficient in this game. I think he was more comfortable back there, at least it looked that way to me.”

Asked if he has earned the starting job, McCord deferred back to his coach but said that he is making the most of every opportunity he has on the field.

“That’s not up to me,” he said. “That’s a question for Coach Day. The only thing I’m worried about is whenever I’m on the field, just making the most out of my opportunities. If that’s every single drive, that’s great. If it’s every other drive, that’s great. If it’s one drive, it’s great. Whatever opportunities I get, I’m going to try and make the most out of it.”

Penguins Can Fly

This was the third all-time contest between Ohio State and Youngstown State, with the Buckeyes previously picking up a

43-0 win on Aug. 30, 2008, and a 38-6 win on Sept. 1, 2007. But it took just one drive for the Penguins to make history in this series.

On Youngstown State’s first drive of the game, the Penguins embarked on an 11-play, 75-yard drive – featuring two third-down conversions, the first of which via a 36-yard pass from quarterback Mitch Davidson to wide receiver Max Tomczak, the nephew of former Ohio State quarterback Mike Tomczak – that ended in a 1-yard rushing score by Davidson.

The touchdown tied the game up at 7-all, and it set a new scoring mark for the Penguins against Ohio State, with their first touchdown in the series and surpassing their combined scoring total in their last two contests against the Buckeyes.

“It was awesome,” Davidson said of his rushing touchdown. “I feel like those boys up front, those five, held up great in protection today, all day long. That got our offense moving, and we’ve got to have more plays as an offense like that. We call them explosives. That just turns into more positive plays.”

That touchdown wound up as the Penguins’ only points in the loss, but it still set the mark for the most points given up to a non-FBS program since a 13-6 loss at Great Lakes Navy on Oct. 9, 1943. Along with Ohio State’s three games against Youngstown State over the last 17 seasons, the Buckeyes also played FCS opponent Florida A&M on Sept. 21, 2013, in a 76-0 win but have largely avoided the FCS ranks in scheduling of late.



SONNY BROCKWAY

PENGUIN PROUD — Despite the 35-7 loss to Ohio State, Youngstown State head coach Doug Phillips said he was proud of how his team played against the Buckeyes. His squad scored the Penguins’ first touchdown ever in the series.

New Exhibit

Dinsm^{ore}

Now Open!

*Women
in
Baseball*



presented by *Rosie Reds*



REDSMUSEUM.ORG



Brown Plays First Significant Snaps For OSU

Perhaps the biggest mystery of Ohio State's still-young season has been the play – or lack thereof – of redshirt freshman quarterback Devin Brown.

Head coach Ryan Day proclaimed on Aug. 29 that Brown had earned the privilege to see considerable playing time against Indiana, but after he saw the field for just two drives in Bloomington, Ind., completing a single pass for minus-2 yards, the team's plan at quarterback – particularly with Brown – grew murky.

While questions still remain on how Day and his staff will utilize their former four-star prospect this season, Buckeye fans gained a glimpse of what the young quarterback is capable of during their Week 2 matchup against Youngstown State.

Entering the game under center with 13:58 left in the second quarter, Brown led his offense on a deliberate 13-play, 60-yard touchdown drive, headlined by the sophomore gunslinger's key fourth-and-7 completion where he bought time in the pocket, scrambled to his right and delivered a strike to tight end Gee Scott Jr. for the first down.

Unlike the season opener, Brown would see more time on the field for Ohio State, leading the Buckeyes on another touchdown drive late in the third quarter and then closing out the game with his final full offensive possession in the fourth.

Brown, who finished the day 7 of 13 passing for 101 yards with an additional six rushing attempts for 9 yards, did not play his best game, delivering some inaccurate throws that sailed over the heads of receivers. But the challenges he faced could serve as a major steppingstone in the young quarterback's development.

"I missed some throws that I would definitely like to have back, but I think that I didn't have any reads I felt were wrong or anything like that," he said after the game. "No mental mistakes, other than physical mistakes with a couple throws – but overall, it was pretty good."

GAME NOTEBOOK Patrick Engels

Brown, who opted to give himself a "C" for his performance, said he enjoyed being able to see considerable action for the first time in his career. Although Day noted that his quarterback was "a little anxious" as he entered the game in the second quarter, Brown added that he felt comfortable while leading his offense down the field.

"It felt good," he said. "It definitely was a lot slower than I expected the game to be like – so fast and having to be crazy, move and everything like that. But when I went out there, I felt calm. I didn't feel nervous or anything like that. And just having fun playing football again."

Despite the feeling of comfort on the field, Brown still sees room for improvement. To him, this performance is a first step toward what he hopes is a successful Buckeye career.

"There's going to be a lot of things that I see that I wish I would have had back or wish I would have done differently," he said. "But that's just football. You're going to learn and grow every week. This weekend will be a good time to get this game off my back and then learn from what I did and what I could have done better and then hit Western Kentucky next."

Burke, Corners Inching Closer To BIA Status

Throughout fall camp, Ohio State's secondary group expressed lofty desires to retain their BIA – Best In America – status, emphasizing the need for more aggressive and ball-hawking play to reach those aspirations.

In the Buckeyes' Week 2 victory against Youngstown State, the unit took a significant step toward achieving that goal. With 7:24 remaining in the third quarter, cornerback Denzel Burke leaped into the air to haul in a Beau Brungard deep ball intended for Bryce Oliver in the end zone, giving Burke – along with the entire group of Buckeye cornerbacks – their first interception since the 2021 season.

"Shoot, (I was thinking) 'Go get it, it's mine,'" Burke said when describing the interception. "That was the only thing that was going through my head. Just come down with it."

Burke's forced turnover was not the first display of aggressiveness from the cornerback this season. In Ohio State's Sept. 2 season opener against Indiana, he recorded a team-high two pass breakups while leading the defense that allowed just 82 passing yards. With Burke now getting his hands on the football in back-to-back games, he has established himself as the bona fide leader of this cornerback room, something he is embracing on and off the field.

"I'm taking advantage of every single day," Burke said. "I'm not leaving the field without getting extra work in. Being the first guy in the building, and the last guy to leave the field, and bringing other people with me,



SONNY BROCKWAY

FIRST TIME OUT – Ohio State quarterback Devin Brown got his first significant snaps in the Buckeyes' win over Youngstown State, finishing 7 of 13 passing for 101 yards.

being a leader for BIA, and being a leader with my actions."

With Burke setting the standard, Ohio State has also received consistent production from Ole Miss transfer Davison Igbinosun, who has thrust himself into a larger role in the secondary to begin this season with his physical play. Through his first two games – both starts – the sophomore cornerback has emerged as a bruising and versatile defender, recording a combined nine tackles and one pass breakup in the team's wins against Indiana and Youngstown State.

His commitment to tackling was evident in Week 2, where he wrapped up a number of wideouts in open space, curbing their chances of releasing for an explosive run after the catch.

While Ohio State's defense is anchored by a duo of talented cornerbacks who have relentlessly pursued the football, they still are not satisfied with their performance. According to Burke, BIA status can only be attained if they strive for perfection and execute as an entire unit.

"We want to be top three, we want to be No. 1, all those things," Burke said. "And we have to do the little things right, and we have to be able to take care of the little details and just do our job as a whole."

Trouble In The Trenches

When asked after the game if his new-look offensive line was still a work in progress, Day responded with a blunt "Yes" and declined to expand on why he felt that was the case.

His short-but-sweet statement may have been directed toward the lack of continuity seen throughout the unit since the season opener, an issue that plagued the Buckeyes once again against Youngstown State.

The front five – from left to right – of Josh Simmons, Donovan Jackson, Carson Hinzman, Matthew Jones and Josh Fryar relinquished two Penguin sacks along with four tackles for loss, but the struggles did not stop there. The group also collected three penalties for 35 yards on the day

Help BSB Grow

Loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers frequently ask us what they can do to help keep BSB vibrant in this increasingly electronic age. One of the things readers can do is introduce BSB to new readers who might find our Ohio State sports content interesting.

In order to help you do that, we are offering an opportunity to send four free trial issues to potential subscribers. We will then offer your potential subscriber a very special offer to get them to join the fold of loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers.

We are also offering a special \$19.95 subscription rate for gifts for our service men and women. It's nice to send a little bit of home to those all over the world who are protecting us. Don't forget to include an APO address when applicable and remember, any subscription includes electronic access to BSB, so our Buckeyes in uniform will be able to enjoy their BSB immediately, wherever they are.

This four free trial issue offer is not good for current subscribers. This offer is to introduce readers to BSB. You can conveniently email your names and addresses to subscriptions@buckeye-sports.com or mail them to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212.

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

After a sluggish performance against Indiana on Sept. 2, Ohio State's passing offense was much more productive this time around against Youngstown State on Sept. 9, and that can be attributed to Kyle McCord's ability to spread the ball around to his playmakers. McCord – who completed 14 of his 20 pass attempts for 258 yards and three touchdowns – found unique ways to get Marvin Harrison Jr. and Emeka Egbuka their fair share of targets, finding the two standout wideouts on a number of quick routes where they could attack the defense in open space. This approach gave Harrison and Egbuka a combined 12 catches on 21 targets, 254 yards and three touchdowns on the day, blowing last weekend's stat lines out of the water. Aside from Harrison and Egbuka, the Buckeyes' passing game also looked to utilize running backs TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams on short yardage plays, with McCord finding Henderson on a second-quarter screen pass that went for 13 yards, while Williams slipped toward the sidelines on a fourth-quarter wheel route from Brown for a 27-yard gain. If Ohio State can continue to find unique ways to find their offensive weapons this season, they will emerge as a matchup nightmare for opposing defenses.

What Didn't Work

The Buckeyes' new-look offensive line has faced significant scrutiny since Week 1, and they did not do much to quiet those qualms following a penalty-ridden performance against the Penguins. The five-man front played a clean game against Indiana, but that took a turn early in

the Week 2 matchup when the unit was called for two key holds in the first quarter. The first holding penalty came on the inaugural drive of the game by way of center Carson Hinzman, which quickly negated a Henderson 9-yard run on second-and-1, backing the Buckeyes up to the 23-yard line. The penalty bug then bit left tackle Josh Simmons on the next drive. He was issued a flag on a third-down rush by Henderson, placing the offense in a tough third-and-11 hole that ultimately forced them to punt. Simmons would also be called for hands to the face early in the second quarter. Luckily for Ohio State, these miscues did not come back to bite them against the Penguins. But in more competitive games this season, they simply cannot happen.

Play Of The Game

This is an easy choice here, as Harrison's 71-yard touchdown reception was the unquestioned play of the game. Following an uncharacteristically quiet performance against Indiana, Harrison made sure his presence was felt early. On the fourth play of the opening drive, the star wideout found himself wide open towards the sidelines as he stutter-stepped and blew past Penguins defensive back Troy Jakubec. McCord found him downfield as he sprinted toward the 50-yard line, leading Harrison to go untouched until he reached the end zone for his first score of the season. This connection put another feather in Harrison's already-full cap, as it marked the longest touchdown reception of his Ohio State career.

— Patrick Engels

– two holding calls on Hinzman and Simmons, and another hands to the face call on Simmons. Those mistakes did not impact the lopsided result of the game, but they do reflect an overall lack of development for the unit, something Day said they must quickly change.

“We have urgency,” Day said. “We want it now. We’re not going to wait around and say, ‘Well, we’ll get it next week.’ We have to get it fixed now. There were some good things today, for sure, but to use (a reporter’s) term about linear improvement, it’s consistency.”

Day declined to describe where these issues stem from, but he did say that his group of linemen are capable of turning it around. With the team's first true road challenge against No. 9 Notre Dame quickly approaching, the Buckeye leader is hoping that his players can maximize their abilities and straighten out their kinks with aggression and effort.

“We can do it,” Day said. “I know we have the talent. Our guys are very, very talented, so we have to look at what we’re doing schematically and make sure it’s not too complex, make sure it’s simple. All we’ve asked them to do is play really, really hard and execute. Effort and execution were the two things we focused on all week, so we’ll watch the film and see if the effort was there.”

Healthy Henderson Flashes Against The Penguins

Despite having just five rush attempts in Week 2, junior running back TreVeyon Henderson showed glimpses of returning to his previously explosive form.

While he flirted with some big plays in

the season opener against Indiana, Henderson let loose against the Penguins, recording two touchdown scores of 10 or more yards – a 13-yard scamper in the second quarter and then a 30-yard sprint down the

right sideline late in the third period. Henderson's 11.2 yards per carry – the third highest of his career (11.6 vs. Akron, 11.7 vs. Tulsa, both in 2021) – was an encouraging sign for his coaches and teammates, who have seen him regain the speed and agility that allowed him to thrive in his freshman season.

“He was running downhill today when he had an opportunity, and that was a great step,” Day said. “I was very impressed with that, so that was good. But he’s going to have to be in games where he runs the ball more, for sure.”

“Tre had a great fall camp,” quarterback Kyle McCord added. “He looked really good and had that explosive step that maybe he didn’t have last year because he was hurt a little bit. But a healthy TreVeyon Henderson is scary, and he’s shown flashes of it. Last year and this year with him starting to get healthy again and getting his feet under him, you see how electric he is.”

Henderson has impressed his teammates and coaches with his burst this season, but, according to Day, they still have a ways to go before they can fully tap into the running back's potential. Day said his offense can attain that by finding more avenues to give the now-healthy running back the ball in open space, specifically through the passing game. Henderson did log two catches for 18 yards against Youngstown State.

“I really wanted to try to get TreVeyon the ball,” Day said. “I think there were two runs he had that were holds. He did have two catches, he had the two screens. We’ve got to keep trying ways to get him the ball.”

To McCord, having a healthy and versatile Henderson in the backfield can open up the realm of possibilities for his offense, providing an extra element to the unit that has been missing for over a year.

“Any way that we can get the ball in Tre’s hands, it’s a win for the Buckeyes,” he said.

More Movement For Safeties

Ohio State's season opener against Indiana featured a carousel of players manning the adjuster/free safety position, and the revolving door of defensive backs continued in Week 2.

The Buckeyes' safety shuffle began before kickoff when sixth-year Josh Proctor was deemed questionable to play with an undisclosed injury. Proctor entered the week as the presumed starter at adjuster/free safety after Day and defensive coordinator Jim Knowles announced on Sept. 5 that he had earned the role, mostly due to his experience and consistency.

But with the veteran forced to watch from the sidelines, Knowles and his staff turned to true freshman Malik Hartford to start. He had previously assumed the position from Proctor in Week 1 after halftime.

Hartford would appear for only one series before he was replaced by Syracuse transfer Ja'Had Carter, who did not log a snap in Bloomington, Ind. Carter would assume the role for the rest of the game, logging two tackles on the day.

The adjuster/free safety was not the only position that experienced some in-game movement. Knowles also assigned a trio of Buckeyes to man the nickel safety role, one that is normally occupied by the versatile Sonny Styles.

Styles assumed most of the reps at nickel, recording four tackles, but he also split time with senior Cameron Martinez and junior Jordan Hancock. Martinez entered the game in the first quarter, earning one tackle and relinquishing a 36-yard pass to Penguins wide receiver Max Tomczak, the longest play of the day for Youngstown State.

While Martinez saw little action past the first quarter, Hancock earned some playing time at the nickel in the second half in addition to his cornerback duties, recording four total tackles.



SONNY BROCKWAY

BACK TO FORM — Ohio State running back TreVeyon Henderson continues to show flashes of his freshman form, carrying the ball five times for 56 yards and two touchdowns against Youngstown State.

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 35, Youngstown State 7

Ohio State quarterback Kyle McCord on what he liked and didn't like about his performance: "I think the one thing that I did a good job of today is just getting the ball out on time to the playmakers, getting it to them in open space and allowing them to work, and good things happened with that for sure. One thing I wish I had back was probably that pass in the third quarter on that first drive. I missed it to Marvin (Harrison Jr.), and I just have to sit on that a little bit more, let him get open and let him work. There was definitely some good, some bad, kind of the same as last week. Take the good and build from it and then take the negatives and realize what you need to work on and continue to grow."

Harrison on the Ohio State quarterbacks McCord and Devin Brown: "I think they played great. They're definitely improving. There's always a lot to improve on, for me, personally, and I would say for the quarterbacks as well. It's a process, though. You can't expect things to be perfect right now as much as you want it to be. We just have to get ready for those bigger games coming up."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on Youngstown State running the clock down with new game clock rules: "I didn't know they would huddle and milk it all the way down to inside of 10 seconds and try to run it on third down just to keep the clock going, but they did and that's smart on their end. Maybe some teams are going to do that more and more, and it does create a level of anxiety because we're used to getting about 15 possessions per game and scoring 60 or 70 points, but we had nine possessions (and a tenth at the end of the game). We're not used to having nine possessions and 60 plays. There's a lot of guys that we're trying to get on the field and get touches to and play, and boy, when you only have 60 plays, every single rep, you've got to be on point."

Brown on how playing in only three drives in a half affects his play: "I just have to stay locked in the whole time, that was it for me. I'm on the sideline getting the play calls, going through the reads like I'm in the game the whole time. So, really for me, mentally I was playing the game the whole time."

Ohio State wide receiver Emeka Egbuka on if the new clock rule puts more pressure on receivers: "We're always called to execute. That's what we're here to do at Ohio State. But an emphasis this week was execution and effort, and we also had a big emphasis on tempo and getting plays out there quickly because we know the rules of the clock now, but that's part of the reason why we took the ball (after winning the coin toss). We wanted to get off to a hot start, and that's one of my favorite things when we take the ball when we win the toss because I



SONNY BROCKWAY

LONG TIME COMING — Ohio State cornerback Denzel Burke's (10) interception against Youngstown State was the first for an Ohio State cornerback since the 2021 season.

want to get out there on the field, score, give our defense a little juice to rally behind."

Egbuka on what he saw from the offense: "We'd have to watch the film to know for sure, but I felt like we played harder, and I felt like we executed better than we did last week (against Indiana). Last week, I didn't feel like the offense was really hitting on any cylinders. This week — we still have a long way to go — but I feel like we're definitely taking steps in the right direction. As Ohio State, 35 points is good but our ceiling is way higher than that, so we've got to get on the film and we've got to check out where we can execute better."

Harrison on how drops impact his performance: "Well, it's not a great performance then (if I dropped the ball). It wasn't a very great performance. Like I said, there's a lot of things to work on. I kind of understand where the drop was coming from myself. I'll leave you guys to speculate what could have happened there, but I'm not going to beat myself up about it, one play. Continue to move on, that's all."

McCord on the offensive line's performance: "Obviously, I don't think we are where we want to be yet, but looking back on last week and how we played this week, it's definitely a step in the right direction. We have five really talented guys across the board — five guys who are really tough, too. As an offense in general, it's just about tak-

ing that next step."

Ohio State cornerback Denzel Burke on Youngstown State's opening touchdown drive: "It was difficult. The Silver Bullets have a standard. We're not trying to give up points. But we have to get back in the field, clean up some things. We have to go look and see how the touchdown happened, but we're going to see tomorrow."

Burke on Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles' defensive system: "That second year in the system, we're a lot more comfortable in the system, a lot more comfortable with the play calls. We have a better idea of what Coach Knowles is going to call. And you have an idea of where we need to be at the right time."

Ohio State defensive tackle Tyleik Williams on what was said after the Penguins' early touchdown: "Just keep playing. We know who we are. We know what we can do. We played down to their level, kind of. Just do your job and let everything fall into place."

Youngstown State head coach Doug Phillips on the loss to the Buckeyes: "For us, we came in as the underdog, but we prepared to win a football game. And we'll go back and adjust that plan, but I'm proud (of our guys)."

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 35, Youngstown State 7

Sept. 9, 2023 – Ohio Stadium, Columbus, Ohio.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
YOUNGSTOWN STATE	7	0	0	0	7
OHIO STATE	14	14	7	0	35

First Quarter

OSU – Harrison Jr., 71-yard pass from McCord (Fielding kick), 13:34.

YSU – Davidson, 1-yard rush (Lastovka kick), 7:42.

OSU – Harrison Jr., 39-yard pass from McCord (Fielding kick), 1:30.

Second Quarter

OSU – Henderson, 13-yard rush (Fielding kick), 9:07.

OSU – Egbuka, 28-yard pass from McCord (Fielding kick), 3:06.

Third Quarter

OSU – Henderson, 30-yard rush (Fielding kick), 1:40.

Att. – 102,897

Weather – Cloudy, 74 F

Team Statistics

	YSU	OSU
First Downs	12	23
Rushing	4	6
Passing	7	14
Penalty	1	3
Rushes-Yards	33-99	27-123
Passing Yards	135	359
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	17-26-1	21-33-0
Offensive Plays	59	60
Total Net Yards	234	482
Third Down Efficiency	7-15	5-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	2-3
Punts-Avg.	6-45.0	3-45.3
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties	9-76	6-65
Time of Possession	34:00	26:00

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **YSU:** King 12-66; Rushton 0-22; Whatley 3-7; Brungard 2-3; Harris III 1-3; Davidson 6-(-2). **OSU:** Henderson 5-56; M. Williams 6-25; Trayanum 6-20; Johnson 3-12; Brown 6-9; McCord 1-1.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **YSU:** Davidson 12-18-0-98-0; Brungard 5-8-1-37-0. **OSU:** McCord 14-20-0-258-3; Brown 7-13-0-101-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **YSU:** Oliver 6-37; Tomczak 3-53; Fordham 3-23; Bowling 1-18; Charleston 1-7; Whatley 1-2; Benio 1-0; Rushton 1-(-5). **OSU:** Harrison Jr. 7-160; Egbuka 5-94; Fleming 3-25; Henderson 2-18; M. Williams 1-27; Tate 1-20; Scott Jr. 1-9; Johnson 1-6.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **YSU:** Kilpatrick 6-45.0-58. **OSU:** Mirco 3-45.3-51.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **YSU:** Curtis 2-(-9). **OSU:** Egbuka 2-3.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **YSU:** Fordham 3-41. **OSU:** Johnson 2-40.

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

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **YSU:** None. **OSU:** Burke 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **YSU:** Howard 1-5; Fitzgerald 1-2. **OSU:** Hall Jr. 1-10; Eichenberg 1-7.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **YSU:** Howard 1-5; Fitzgerald 1-2; Johnson 1-2; Jones 1-1. **OSU:** Hall Jr. 1-10; Eichenberg 1-7; T. Williams 1-5.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **YSU:** Hooker 5-1-6; Jones 2-3-5; Howard 5-0-5; Trowers 4-0-4; Benton Jr. 2-2-4; Augustin 3-0-3; Blake 3-0-3; Bowling 2-1-3; Fitzgerald 2-1-3; Wudke 1-2-3; Johnson 2-0-2; Martin 0-2-2; Pasco 1-0-1; Robinson 1-0-1; Jakubec 1-0-1; Johnson 1-0-1; Dukes 1-0-1; Allen 0-1-1; Diggs 0-1-1; Crider 0-1-1. **OSU:** Eichenberg 3-3-6; Igbinosun 5-0-5; Chambers 2-3-5; T. Williams 2-3-5; Styles 3-1-4; Hancock 2-2-4; Hamilton 2-2-4; Simon 2-2-4; Sawyer 2-1-3; Ransom 2-1-3; McKenzie 2-0-2; Powers 1-1-2; Carter 1-1-2; Hall Jr. 1-1-2; Kanu 1-1-2; Tuimoloau 0-2-2; Martinez 1-0-1; Fleming 1-0-1; Burke 1-0-1; Hicks 1-0-1; Malone 1-0-1; Hartford 0-1-1; Mathews Jr. 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **YSU:** Oliver, Rushton, Davidson, Charleston, Tomczak, Williams, Parker, Johnson, Metzler, Leigh, Benio, Wudke, Lehrmann, Johnson, Jakubec, Hooker, Howard, Jones, Benton Jr., Augustin, Robinson, Fitzgerald, Merryman, King, Trowers, Brungard, Bowling, Serrano, Walker, Castleberry, Rudolph, Lastovka, Curtis, Harris III, Centofanti, Whatley, Fordham, Medvec, Dominguez, Zandier, Pasco, Kilpatrick, Wells, Voitus, Dukes, D. Johnson, E. Johnson, Sferra, Hensley, Blake, Farthing, Schrest, Martin, Diggs, Allen, Crider, Lee. **OSU:** Harrison Jr., Egbuka, Henderson, Fleming, Jones, McCord, Fryar, Simmons, Jackson, Hinzman, Stover, Igbinosun, Burke, Chambers, Hartford, Sawyer, Eichenberg, Tuimoloau, Hall Jr., Hamilton, Styles, Ransom, Johnson, Hicks, Carter, Tate, J. Brown, Trayanum, Reese, Abor, Mathews Jr., Carrico, Mirco, M. Williams, Martinez, Simon, D. Brown, Powers, Fielding, Ferlmann, Michalski, Hancock, Tshabola, James, Royers, Scott Jr., Ballard, McKenzie, T. Williams, Curry, Kanu, Malone, Jackson Jr.

Season Statistics

2023 Game-By-Game				
Date	Opponent	Result/Time	Crowd	
Sept. 2	(3) at Indiana	W, 23-3	50,050	
Sept. 9	(5) YOUNGSTOWN STATE	W, 35-7	102,897	
Sept. 16	(6) WESTERN KENTUCKY	4 p.m.		
Sept. 23	at Notre Dame (9)	7:30 p.m.		
Oct. 7	MARYLAND	TBA		
Oct. 14	at Purdue	TBA		
Oct. 21	PENN STATE (7)	TBA		
Oct. 28	at Wisconsin	TBA		
Nov. 4	at Rutgers	TBA		
Nov. 11	MICHIGAN STATE	7:30 p.m.		
Nov. 18	MINNESOTA	TBA		
Nov. 25	at Michigan (2)	12 p.m.		

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

Team Statistics		
	OSU	Opp
First Downs	45	22
Rushing	14	7
Passing	26	12
Penalty	5	3
Average Per Game/Rush	133.0	85.0
Average Per Game/Pass	298.0	108.5
Total Offense	862	387
Total Plays	127	113
Average Per Game	431.0	193.5
Average Per Play	6.8	3.4
Penalties-Yards	11-106	17-151
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-0
Third Down Efficiency	7-23	12-30
Percentage	30%	40%
Fourth Down Efficiency	4-6	1-4
Percentage	67%	25%
Sacks-Yards	3-22	2-7
Time Of Possession Avg.	28:58	31:02

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	21	17	17	3	0	58	29.0	
Opponents	7	3	0	0	0	10	5.0	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
T. Henderson	17	103	6.1	2	30
Chip Trayanum	14	77	5.5	0	17
Miyan Williams	13	50	3.8	2	7
Xavier Johnson	3	12	4.0	0	8
Kyle McCord	3	9	3.0	0	8
Emeka Egbuka	1	9	9.0	0	9
Devin Brown	7	6	0.9	0	6
OSU Totals	58	266	4.6	4	30
OPP Totals	66	170	2.6	1	12

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Kyle McCord	34	53	64.2	497	3-1	157.8
Devin Brown	8	16	50.0	99	0-0	102.0
OSU Totals	42	69	60.9	596	3-1	144.9
OPP Totals	26	47	55.3	217	0-1	89.8

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Marvin Harrison Jr.	9	178	19.8	2	71
Julian Fleming	9	83	9.2	0	27
Emeka Egbuka	8	110	13.8	1	28
Cade Stover	5	98	19.6	0	49
Miyan Williams	2	39	19.5	0	27
Gee Scott Jr.	2	19	9.5	0	10
T. Henderson	2	18	9.0	0	13
Carnell Tate	2	35	17.5	0	20
Xavier Johnson	1	6	6.0	0	6
Chip Trayanum	1	12	12.0	0	12
Dallan Hayden	1	-2	-2.0	0	0
OSU Totals	42	596	14.2	3	71
OPP Totals	26	217	8.3	0	36

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Jayden Fielding	-	7-7	-	-	3-3	16
Miyan Williams	2	-	-	-	-	12
Marvin Harrison Jr.	2	-	-	-	-	12
T. Henderson	2	-	-	-	-	12
Emeka Egbuka	1	-	-	-	-	6
OSU Totals	7	7-7	-	-	3-3	58
OPP Totals	1	1-1	-	-	1-1	10

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Jayden Fielding	2-2	0-0	1-1	0-0	3-3
OSU Totals	2-2	0-0	1-1	0-0	3-3
OPP Totals	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	1-1

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Jesse Mirco	6	268	44.7	0	56

OSU Totals	6	268	44.7	0	56
OPP Totals	12	595	49.6	0	60

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
---------------	-----	------	------	----	------

Denzel Burke	1	0	0.0	0	0
--------------	---	---	-----	---	---

OSU Totals	1	0	0.0	0	0
------------	---	---	-----	---	---

OPP Totals	1	11	11.0	0	11
------------	---	----	------	---	----

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

Emeka Egbuka	4	17	4.3	0	8
--------------	---	----	-----	---	---

OSU Totals	4	17	4.3	0	8
------------	---	----	-----	---	---

OPP Totals	4	42	10.5	0	29
------------	---	----	------	---	----

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

Xavier Johnson	3	63	21.0	0	23
----------------	---	----	------	---	----

OSU Totals	3	63	21.0	0	23
------------	---	----	------	---	----

OPP Totals	6	79	13.2	0	18
------------	---	----	------	---	----

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
--------------	------	------	------	----------	-------

Steele Chambers	6	5	11	0-0	0-0
-----------------	---	---	----	-----	-----

Tommy Eichenberg	6	4	10	1.0-7	1.0-7
------------------	---	---	----	-------	-------

Tyleik Williams	3	7	10	1.0-5	0-0
-----------------	---	---	----	-------	-----

Davison Igbinosun	8	1	9	0-0	0-0
-------------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Sonny Styles	6	2	8	1.5-3	0-0
--------------	---	---	---	-------	-----

Ty Hamilton	4	3	7	0-0	0-0
-------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Jack Sawyer	3	4	7	0-0	0-0
-------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Jordan Hancock	3	3	6	0-0	0-0
----------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

J.T. Tuimoloau	3	3	6	0.5-1	0-0
----------------	---	---	---	-------	-----

Lathan Ransom	3	2	5	0-0	0-0
---------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Cody Simon	2	3	5	0.5-1	0-0
------------	---	---	---	-------	-----

Caden Curry	2	2	4	1.0-3	0-0
-------------	---	---	---	-------	-----

Hero Kanu	3	1	4	1.0-5	1.0-5
-----------	---	---	---	-------	-------

Josh Proctor	2	2	4	1.0-1	0-0
--------------	---	---	---	-------	-----

Jaden McKenzie	3	1	4	0.5-3	0-0
----------------	---	---	---	-------	-----

Mike Hall Jr.	2	1	3	1.0-10	1.0-10
---------------	---	---	---	--------	--------

Ja'Had Carter	1	1	2	0-0	0-0
---------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Malik Hartford	1	1	2	0-0	0-0
----------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Gabe Powers	1	1	2	0-0	0-0
-------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Denzel Burke	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
--------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Cameron Martinez	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
------------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

John Ferlmann	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
---------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Jesse Mirco	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
-------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

J. Mathews Jr.	-	1	1	0-0	0-0
----------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Tyhone Malone	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
---------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Donovan Jackson	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
-----------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

C.J. Hicks	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

Julian Fleming	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
----------------	---	---	---	-----	-----

OSU Totals	70	48	118	9.0-39	3.0-22
------------	----	----	-----	--------	--------

OPP Totals	77	36	113	9.0-23	2.0-7
------------	----	----	-----	--------	-------

Fumbles Forced: None.

Fumbles Recovered: None.

Offensive Line Sees Room For Improvement

By **PATRICK ENGELS**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Following Ohio State's 23-3 season-opening road victory against Indiana, a hoarse Ryan Day described his team's performance as "clunky" and a "mixed bag." Day directed most, if not all, of his concern to the offense, particularly the Buckeyes' new-look offensive line, which entered the Hoosiers' Memorial Stadium with a trio of fresh faces – redshirt freshman Carson Hinzman at center, junior San Diego State transfer Josh Simmons at left tackle and senior Josh Fryar at right tackle – who had combined to start just a single game for the Scarlet and Gray before the Sept. 2 opener.

With a glaring lack of experience across the Buckeyes' front five to start the season, the unit often looked disjointed against the Hoosiers, missing key assignments that allowed Indiana rushers, mostly standout linebacker Aaron Casey, to go untouched in the backfield, a series of miscues that led Matt Guerrieri's defense to record five tackles for loss on the day and the Buckeyes to fail to convert on 10 of their 12 third-down tries.

"We have to finish in short yardage, and we have to finish on third down," Day said after the Indiana game. "If we can do that, then certainly we'll do better. We need to run the football."

"I felt like they needed to play better," Day added on Sept. 5. "In the run game, I think we were only 50 percent efficient overall on first and second down, so that's not good enough. They certainly did give us some things that maybe we weren't expecting, but even when they did, I didn't think we handled it as well as we could have."

These struggles would continue in Ohio State's Week 2 bout with Youngstown State, where the Buckeyes' front five allowed an inferior Penguins defense to impose their will in the trenches, generating two sacks and four tackles for loss. They were also whistled for three penalties – a 10-yard holding call on Hinzman and another 10-yard hold and 15-yard hands-to-the-face foul on Simmons.

The offensive line's subpar play has put the unit under a critical microscope through the first two weeks of the season, with Buckeye fans passionately voicing their concern with the group and its recent performance on social media. Despite the heavy scrutiny, the players themselves have opted to ignore the outside noise and focus on what they can control – a common approach for an often-neglected position group.

"I saw a clip where Kirk Herbstreit said that Ohio State fans can be psychotic," Fryar said on Sept. 6. "I love Ohio State fans. I love Buckeye fans. But I think the scrutiny that we're under right now, I mean, it doesn't affect us, because we're trying to win. I mean, yeah, the offense line didn't play very well. Look around the country, and other offensive lines didn't play very well."

"You can go on Twitter and search up 'offensive line play.' I don't think they say one good thing about an offensive lineman until you win a game. Everybody's going to forget about it in a month, two months from now."

One thing that Fryar and his four linemates can control is the unit's level of

communication, a critical aspect of an offensive line's success that was sometimes disregarded during the season opener. He mentioned that his group could have talked more throughout the game to avoid any confusion on the field, a key mistake made on the road that may have led to the significant number of busted plays on the offense.

"I think it's more of a communication issue than anything," Fryar said. "I mean, going on the road the first week, at a Big Ten (opponent). And don't get me wrong, you can call my word for this. I think Indiana is going to a bowl game this year, easily, and I think they're going to be a good team – a really good team actually, with that defense. But I think everything was correctable. It's just little slight communication errors on us that we have to fix."

Fryar believes these missteps are on the veteran and more experienced offensive linemen – mainly him and returning starters Donovan Jackson and Matthew Jones – to fix, as they must be more transparent with their younger teammates when calling out formations and adjustments during the game. Fryar noticed that glaring issue rear its ugly head during the jumbo packages in which true freshman Luke Montgomery saw the field for the first time in his career as an extra lineman, one of those plays being a crucial second-quarter Kyle McCord interception on a fourth-and-2 play-action attempt.

"I think it was just a little bit of miscommunication," Fryar said. "I mean, I would say some of that was my fault to Luke, I take ownership of that. He's a new guy, he's a freshman. So I should communicate when we're in the personnel that we're in with him. I think it's my fault, because I've got to tell him, 'Hey, you got this guy, or this guy. If this guy comes, you take him,' in a matter of four or five seconds. So I put that on me."

For most offensive line units, this emphasis on communication and transparency starts during practice. According to Bill Landis with Rivals and The Podcast, who has been on the Buckeye football beat since 2014, these efforts are of little importance when a more inexperienced group of starters is forced to take the field on game day.

"They (communicate) during practice, and they do it against the scout team to try to get a good idea of what opposing defenses are going to do," Landis told BSB. "But I think most weeks, you just go out there and see something you've never seen before. And that's probably especially true when you have a center who did not play at all prior to (Sept. 2), a right tackle who has one start, and a left tackle who has played, but not quite at this level."

"They're pointing out defenders (in practice), they're trying to make sure they're all going to the right guys in the run game. They are trying to diagnose where pressure could be coming from and watch the rotation of safeties and movement of linebackers and all that stuff. There's a lot for them to kind of wrap their minds around."

"They definitely practice it, and that helps, obviously, but it's just a different animal once you get out there, once you read a defense that is not your teammates and they're trying to throw something different at you."



SONNY BROCKWAY

UNDER FIRE — Ohio State's offensive line has received plenty of criticism this season, and the room — including right guard Matthew Jones (left) and center Carson Hinzman (right) — is looking to improve its play as the campaign progresses.

Landis compared this year's early-season offensive line miscues to that of a similar Buckeye unit that was put in place in 2014. That year, head coach Urban Meyer and his Ohio State staff were forced to replace four of their five offensive line starters from the previous season, a departing group headlined by 2014 NFL draft selections Corey Linsley (center), Jack Mewhort (left tackle) and Andrew Norwell (left guard). To make up for the losses, the Buckeyes turned to first-year starters Pat Elflein, Jacoby Boren, Billy Price and Darryl Baldwin to man the ship at left guard, center, right guard and right tackle, respectively, while Taylor Decker shifted from right to left tackle, causing some concern for the unit.

These concerns only heightened in the Buckeyes' lone loss of their championship-winning 2014 campaign against Virginia Tech on Sept. 2, 2014, when the restructured line relinquished seven sacks and the rushing attack went for just 2.7 yards per carry.

"I'm reminded of my first year on the beat in 2014. I think they had four new starters on that line, and the fifth starter (Decker) was switching positions," Landis said. "And that's a group that took probably a month, at least, until they kind of all got on the same page. They ended up losing a game because of that. The Virginia Tech loss was a by-product of just not being quite ready for that kind of defense."

"So it's not out of the ordinary, I don't think. And I do think it's exacerbated a little bit by where the new guys are because a lot of the communication on an offensive line lands on the shoulders of the center and the offensive tackles, and obviously all three of those spots are new for Ohio State. So I think it makes sense. That's not to excuse it, and it has to get better, but I don't think

it's ultimately terribly surprising that they're going to need a few games to get their feet underneath them."

If history does tend to repeat itself, there is room to grow for Ohio State's still-new offensive line. The Buckeyes' unit has another two full weeks of practice and a home game against Western Kentucky to gain continuity on the line before they travel north to Notre Dame Stadium on Sept. 23 for a prime-time matchup with Marcus Freeman's 10th-ranked Fighting Irish – a clash that will likely carry significant College Football Playoff implications.

Day believes the issues that plagued the front five through its first two games can be patched up before the team departs on its first true road challenge, as his still-inexperienced group is fully equipped – and highly motivated – to make the necessary adjustments.

"I don't see anything on the film that isn't correctable," Day said on Sept. 5, "like guys just getting flat-out beat, who are not good enough. So that is the most encouraging thing. I think they are things that can get corrected. I would have loved to see better execution. But the things that we've seen there are all correctable."

"We can do it," Day said after the Youngstown State game. "I know we have the talent. Our guys are very, very talented, so we have to look at what we're doing schematically and make sure it's not too complex, make sure it's simple."

Fryar echoed that sentiment and said the unit feels motivated to correct some of these early-season mistakes moving forward.

"If the hunger is not there, then we're in trouble," Fryar said. "I think the hunger is there. I think it's just getting on the same page and having communication."

Trayanum Taking On New Role In New Season

By **GREG WILSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

At eight years old, DeaMonte Trayanum was given the nickname “Blue Chip” – a name normally reserved for four- and five-star high school football recruits – which over the years has naturally shortened to Chip, which he goes by now.

It was a name he rolled with and took to heart, keeping a chip on his shoulder his whole life and still to this day – every play, every snap, every game. That mentality has gotten him to the point where he has split time between offense and defense while playing for two Division I football teams, starting at Arizona State in 2020 and making his way to Ohio State before last season.

He came out of Akron Hoban as a four-star running back in 2020 (and also played at linebacker, where he was originally offered by Ohio State), and he was the fifth-best prospect in Ohio. In two seasons at Arizona State, he carried the ball 127 times for 692 yards and 10 touchdowns, averaging 5.4 yards per attempt.

After transferring to Ohio State – initially as a linebacker – to be closer to home, he has forced his way into a significant role for the Buckeyes. Last season, he ran the ball just 15 times but picked up 92 yards for an average of 6.1 per carry. He also added one catch for 14 yards and made an impact on special teams, totaling 13 tackles for the year, but he never took a defensive snap for the Buckeyes last season.

While the plan was for him to transition to a full-time linebacker in Columbus, those plans changed when the running backs room was decimated by injuries last season. Evan Pryor went down for the year with a knee injury, and TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams both were in and out of the lineup with injury troubles, leading head coach Ryan Day and running backs coach Tony Alford to call on Trayanum to tote the ball.

“Chip came to us a couple of weeks ago and said, ‘If you need anything on offense, I’m here for you,’ which is just the way he is,” Day said last season. “(He’s) really an unbelievable person. We just felt like the time was right.”

Ohio State’s season finale against Michigan was when Trayanum (5-11, 233) was thrust into the role of lead running back, carrying the ball 14 times – the fourth most in his career – for 83 yards with Henderson out and Williams limited to just eight carries.

“When you train all year for that game, and we do everything we do for that game, and when you get a role to be the guy in that game at that position, then you take that with a chip on your shoulder,” Trayanum said. “And that’s what I tried to do last year, and I’m just carrying it with me into this season.”

Entering this season, Ohio State had a healthy running backs room with Henderson, Pryor and Williams all healthy, not to mention sophomore Dallan Hayden after a successful freshman campaign, and Trayanum has continued to add to his role with the Buckeyes. In the season-opening 23-3 win over Indiana on Sept. 2, Trayanum ran

the ball eight times for 57 yards, an average of 7.1 per rush, while Henderson carried 12 times for 47 yards and Williams took seven carries for 25 yards and two scores.

In addition to being Ohio State’s leading rusher, Trayanum also rotated in at fullback, most notably as the lead blocker for Williams when he ran in for his first touchdown of the day.

“(My role is) whatever the team needs,” Trayanum said. “As long as we get the win, that’s all that matters at the end of the day. I just like being on the field, and I’m competitive. Whatever role I can compete and maximize on the field, that’s what I’m going to do.”

Trayanum – who followed it up with six carries for 20 yards against Youngstown State – said he has been working on his new hybrid role in the offense since the summer and through fall camp. He said he was able to earn the coaches’ trust and confidence then and is working every day to keep it, and Day is enjoying Trayanum’s versatility in the backfield for the Buckeyes.

“You look at his versatility, he can do everything,” Day said. “He can catch the ball out of the backfield. He’s big and strong, and he can block. You saw him as a fullback – and I say fullback, but he’s not a fullback – he’s just a big running back, and there’s a lot of things you can do with that. And then you saw him just run the ball from the backfield. When you can do a lot of those things, then you can really create stress on the defense.”

Trayanum said that the transition to the hybrid role of running back and lead blocker was an easy one for him to make since as a running back, he already knows where everyone is supposed to be blocking for a play. He just has to switch his role and be the blocker. His vision has helped him know where the gaps are going to be and where defenders are going to be, which is something he didn’t need any work with despite never playing at fullback before.

“Vision isn’t something you really work on,” he said. “Vision is just something that’s given to you – it’s inherited – and as a running back that’s a big thing. It’s really just slowing the game down, knowing where your blocks are going to be, knowing where people are going to be before the play starts.”

Over the offseason, Trayanum said that he has also worked with the tight ends and the receivers so he could work on certain routes, blocking techniques or other small things to feel more comfortable working in so many different roles. Day also asked Trayanum to put on more weight over the offseason so he could be a change of pace from the other running backs on the team, a shift that would allow him more playing time in different roles.

“I just know that I worked hard, kept my head down and just stayed ready,” Trayanum said. “I’m the type of player that I’m going to maximize whatever role that’s given to me.”

He wasn’t sure this offseason what his role was going to be, but he was working hard trying to make sure there was going to be one for him and trying to be a good teammate at the same time – which Day believes he is. He also acknowledged his



SONNY BROCKWAY

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK – Ohio State running back Chip Trayanum has filled a variety of roles for the Buckeyes to begin the season, operating as a traditional tailback as well as fullback for the offense.

unique athletic ability.

“The first thing with Chip is he’s a team player,” Day said. “He’s got a great work ethic, he’s tough and he had a really good offseason. But skill-set wise, he’s got high-end speed. When you look at his numbers on the GPS, he’s way north of 20 miles an hour. He can really go.”

Linebacker Steele Chambers – who has a shared experience in playing at both running back and linebacker – said it has not been surprising to see Trayanum’s success in his new role.

“It’s Chip. If you see him, he’s probably walking around here with a shirt off. He just looks shredded. The dude’s just an athlete. A hell of a guy. And I mean, wherever you put him on the field, he’s going to be amazing.”

Along with his speed, Trayanum takes pride in being what the Ohio State coaches call a “fixer,” boasting the ability to fix a play if it gets blown up either before or after the snap. He said playing so many different positions – on both sides of the ball – and working in so many different rooms has helped him prepare for that responsibility.

“I understand a lot,” he said. “I can pick up a lot and I see a lot on the field as the play is happening. You have your assignment, but if another assignment shows up, are you going to fix the play and keep the play going?”

Day has indicated that he would like Ohio State’s running back rotation to continue with multiple players seeing the field due to the versatility it gives the run game. With that game plan, Trayanum – whether

as the leading rusher or lead blocker – will be able to get more playing time using his size and strength to slot in at any position he’s needed.

He has found success in every new spot he has tried out thus far, and it seems as if his mentality of having a chip on his shoulder has paid off.

SUMMIT
PERFORMANCE SPT INSTITUTE

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

Personal Training

Group Fitness Training

Sports Specific Training

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

Located at 2378 East Main Street in Bexley, Ohio

Fielding Hits The Mark As First-Time Starter

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Given that Ohio State was favored to defeat Indiana by more than 30 points in the season opener on Sept. 2, it was a bit of a surprise to see how much the Buckeyes ended up relying on the kicking game against the Hoosiers. And perhaps more concerning, at least heading into the contest, was the lack of experience at the position.

Sophomore Jayden Fielding won an off-season competition to become Ohio State's starting kicker over junior Parker Lewis, who transferred to Columbus before last season, but the competition was one held almost entirely behind closed doors as, entering this season, neither had attempted a field goal for the Buckeyes in an actual game.

Not to mention, whoever won that contest had large shoes to fill, taking over kicking responsibilities from the reliable Noah Ruggles. While Ruggles is unfortunately likely to be remembered for his missed kick against Georgia in the College Football Playoff, he was an extremely dependable kicker for the Buckeyes, connecting on 37 of 41 attempts over the past two seasons and setting the program record for best field-goal percentage (90.2).

But Fielding, despite not having attempted a field goal for the Buckeyes entering this season, looked more than up to the challenge against the Hoosiers. In fact, it's one he had been looking forward to for a long time.

"It was a dream come true," Fielding said. "I've always wanted to play big-time college football, and there's no place to do it like Ohio State. It's the best in the country, best players in the country, best coaches, just the best environment, too."

Fielding connected on all three of his field goals in his first time handling those duties for Ohio State, connecting from 40 yards out as well as a pair of 22-yarders in the 23-3 win. He said there were some nerves going out to attempt his first field goal for the Buckeyes, but his preseason preparation helped him work through the jitters.

"I think there's always going to be a little bit of nerves, but me and (punter Jesse Mirco) and (long snapper John Ferlmann) have gotten thousands of reps in practice this spring and all through the summer and fall camp," he said. "I felt ready for it. The guys have all instilled confidence in me, and just having that extra boost from the guys really helped."

That calm, cool and collected nature is what led to Fielding winning the job in the first place, a competition that, as late as the final week of fall camp, was still being determined. But head coach Ryan Day announced on Aug. 29 that Fielding – entering just his second season with the Buckeyes after walking on last year – would take over as the starter.

"It's just overall consistency," Day said. "Again, we chart everything. And (Jayden's) done a really good job in the spring. He did a nice job kicking off for us last year. And his overall consistency has allowed him to be the starter."

"We just really go off the chart (and) how many kicks have you made in (different areas). We've had live situations, what have those been like? We look at it with the stadium, we look at it at practice, chart everything and do the best we can. He's won that job."

After Day and special teams coordinator Parker Fleming arrived at a decision, they gave the news to Fielding, and he said it was "a dream come true." But achieving those dreams did not come without plenty of hard work for Fielding.

He arrived at Ohio State as a walk-on out of IMG Academy in Florida, where he connected on every one of his field-goal attempts during his senior season. He elected to join the Buckeyes without a scholarship despite receiving interest from other programs.

But just like walking on at Ohio State, it was a big decision to join IMG Academy – one of the premier high school athletic programs in the country – after beginning his high school career at Clear Creek High School in League City, Texas.

"I've always bet on myself," he said. "Even in high school, moving from my home high school to IMG (Academy), I was betting on myself to go in and be the guy and prove to everybody around the country that I could kick at this level. So I feel like, why not take that opportunity in college?"

Fielding also received interest from schools such as Baylor, Florida State, Miami (Fla.) and Rutgers, but despite the prospect of not starting out with a scholarship at Ohio State, he felt a strong pull to the Buckeyes during his recruitment.

"Debating between schools, that's never an easy decision, especially for a kicker where there's one guy that does the job," he continued. "There's one football. There's one guy to kick it. So having to go through and select a place was definitely hard. But I felt like Ohio State was home."



SONNY BROCKWAY

ON POINT — Kicker Jayden Fielding has been consistent for Ohio State through the first two weeks of the season, making all three of his field-goal attempts and all seven extra-point tries.

His persistence has paid off, as not only has Fielding become Ohio State's starting kicker – with the opportunity to do so for the next two seasons as well, considering he is in just his second season – but Day said Sept. 7 that Fielding has since been put on scholarship for the Buckeyes. It's a familiar path for Fielding, as he said he looks up to wide receiver and team captain Xavier Johnson, who also started as a walk-on before being put on scholarship.

"I feel like I wasn't given every opportunity that most guys were out of high school, so I feel like by coming here as a walk-on – I don't want to compare myself to X, but I feel like X is a great story, so I want to be like X," Fielding said. "I want to be the guy like X. Being a walk-on, you always feel doubted, but proving yourself and proving to everybody else you can do it, it's just what I like to do."

He built on a solid start against Indiana by knocking through all five PATs against Youngstown State, although he wasn't called upon to kick a field goal. The Hoosiers offered a bit of a tighter contest, but Fielding said he isn't thinking about the score when he goes out to attempt a kick.

"In the game, you really don't think about it," he said after the Indiana game. "You're just thinking about doing your job and helping the guys win. I wanted to help Kyle (McCord) and the offense, and I wanted to help the defense, too. We all played really well."

His performance against Youngstown

State also offered Fielding's first chance to kick in front of the home crowd, with 102,897 fans taking in the home opener.

"I just feel more pressure kicking in front of the home crowd," he said. "You know, there's always a high expectation when you play at Ohio State. But the swirling winds, all that sort of stuff – I feel like it's the same as practice. I'm just going out there and doing what I've been doing since I was in sixth grade."

Through two games, Fielding is 3 of 3 on field-goal attempts and has connected on all seven of his extra-point attempts. He has also averaged 62.4 yards on 12 kickoffs, including four that have gone for touchbacks.

His longest field goal has been 40 yards, though Fielding said he made one as long as 55 yards in high school and feels comfortable from within 60 yards. Day's assessment after the Indiana game – claiming that the 29-yard line would be on the outside edge of Fielding's range – indicates that a 45- or 46-yarder might be more his speed.

That in-game experience has paled, however, to practice – which Fielding said is "harder than the game" – but he has inspired confidence in his teammates thus far that he will continue to step up this season for the Buckeyes.

"It definitely builds some confidence that he's going to make the kicks whenever they matter," linebacker Steele Chambers said. "Him going out there and making three kicks in the first game, that's huge."

chocolate café

FINE CHOCOLATES • COFFEES • DESSERTS • SPIRITS & PEOPLE



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

We can cater your tailgate party!

Parties • Corporate Catering

Weddings • Baby & Bridal Showers • Tailgates!



College Football's New Clock Rule Not Popular

By **BRADEN MOLES**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Over the offseason, the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel made, at least what appeared to be at the time, a fairly innocuous rule change. The game clock, which had traditionally stopped after every first down, would instead keep running after a first down unless the game was within the final two minutes of the second or fourth quarter.

"Even if you're out of timeouts in the last two minutes, if you can get a first down and we stop the clock, you get an opportunity to score on a drive – and we are keeping that," said Steve Shaw, NCAA national supervisor of officials. "The idea here is to keep the game moving. If nothing else changes, this will probably eliminate seven or eight plays per game. You may not even notice that seven or eight plays. But if you look at a 12-game season and eight plays per game, that's 96 student-athlete exposures that we would reduce over the course of the season."

But through the first couple of weeks of the college football season, it's become apparent that this rule change is more than most bargained for, with coaches across the sport feeling the impact of a racing game clock that is limiting the number of plays, possessions and overall snaps that each team is receiving.

"It means we have to be more efficient," said Ohio State head coach Ryan Day. "You might get fewer possessions in that first half, so they've got to count. Then when we get into halftime, we can't panic. We have to know that we have one less possession, especially if we defer. Then we've got to play really well in the second half."

"If you're executing well and converting on third down and doing well in the red zone, it's not an issue," he continued. "If you're not executing well, then it is."

Ohio State averaged 67.4 plays per game last season on offense, while the opposition had 62.1 plays per game, leading to an average of 129.5 total plays during the Buckeyes' contests last year, not including special teams. In Ohio State's 23-3 win over Indiana to begin the season, the Buckeyes totaled 67 plays on offense but just 54 plays on defense, for a total of 121 plays, also not including special teams.

While the total plays were similar on offense, it came at the expense of fewer possessions. Ohio State held the ball 10 times against Indiana in the opener, but in last season's game against the Hoosiers, the Buckeyes had 15 offensive possessions, including eight in the first half compared to just five in the first half of this season's opener.

It leaves Ohio State – as well as teams across the country – with a thinner margin of error, with every drive meaning more if there are at least five fewer possessions per game.

"More and more, you have to be on top of your execution, because I feel like even five years ago, you were getting 12 or 13 possessions," Day said. "You missed one here or there, 'OK, we're going to get the ball back and have another opportunity.' Not the case right now."

It also impacted Ohio State's ability to



SONNY BROCKWAY

UP-TEMPO — Ohio State head coach Ryan Day is not a fan of the NCAA's new clock rule that allows for a running clock after first downs, claiming that it is limiting the Buckeyes' number of plays and possessions this season.

rotate as many players in, with defensive coordinator Jim Knowles adding that he did not get to play as many players as he hoped. Sophomore defensive tackle Tywone Malone, who had an impressive fall camp, played just five snaps, while much-hyped sophomore linebacker C.J. Hicks took a single snap on defense.

"It wasn't so much a surprise (about the limited number of possessions)," Knowles said. "I thought it would be that way, but it was magnified by the kind of offense that we went against. It made it even more difficult to play as many guys as I would have liked."

The impact was not as noticeable against Indiana – especially considering Ohio State had nearly as many offensive plays as it averaged last season, and the game was naturally sped up given Indiana's triple-option attack – but fewer snaps will add up by the end of the season.

Looking at last year's average of 129.5 plays per game compared to 121 plays against Indiana, if those fewer plays per game were to hold for an entire 13-game season, that would translate to 111 lost snaps over the course of the year, nearly an

entire game's worth of experience. Coaches and players will take issue with fewer plays during the season, but it was the NCAA's goal in implementing this new rule.

"No. 1 is to keep the game moving, the pace of play," Shaw said. "No. 2 is to modestly take out plays in the game. In FBS, we averaged 178 plays per game last year (including special teams). If you look at the NFL, they averaged 151 plays per game – so, that's a pretty significant difference. There is not a target goal but just the idea that we wanted to modestly reduce the number of plays per game. The commissioners support that as well. And finally, we want our clock mechanics to be exactly the same between every official."

The flip side of the argument is that it keeps players – specifically those on the defensive side of the ball who are more likely to rotate in and out – fresher throughout the course of the season, but just like the reduction in total possessions, it puts an increased emphasis on each player to maximize his time in the game.

"With this new running clock, you don't get many snaps for defense when we've got

an offense that's going on eight-, nine-minute drives," said Michigan defensive end Braiden McGregor. "That definitely keeps you fresh, and it's going to help in the long run for the season."

"It's going to take a little bit of getting used to. But with our offense, it's kind of nice because you go out there and give it your all, come out, get a break, but sometimes you're itching to get back in. The biggest thing for us that we keep telling each other is to make every snap count because we're only going to get so many."

While the games themselves have fewer plays and less time is being spent in play, the actual length of games – from kickoff to the clock hitting all zeroes – has not yet been impacted by these new rules, with the time saved from a running clock seemingly being used to allow more time for commercials and TV stoppages, which – despite a pledge to improve the pacing of games – has instead led to a lot of standing around on the sidelines waiting for the networks to come back from a commercial break.

"It is different," Day said. "I certainly felt like we were on the sideline a little bit more (against Indiana), just felt like the game moved slower for whatever reason. It is what it is. We all have to deal with it."

UCLA head coach Chip Kelly did not mince words when pushed on the topic. After completing a halftime interview with ESPN on Sept. 2 with his Bruins up just 14-7 over Coastal Carolina, Kelly took the new rule to task.

"This new rule, that's crazy. We had four drives in the first half," he said. "This game goes fast. Hope you guys are selling a lot of commercials."

The impact is felt not only for those watching on TV, but for those experiencing the games in person. Ohio State's season-opening win over Indiana was listed as a three-hour and 15 minute game, which would have been tied for the shortest game of last season (along with Notre Dame), but it still came with relentless stoppages in play, sometimes with multiple commercials spanning from a touchdown until the next kickoff.

Fans at home can at least change the channel during commercials, but for those attending the games – not to mention those wanting to get into the contest – there's less action on the field combined with more downtime.

"I just don't understand it," Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin said. "People pay to see, they sit down with their family to watch a game, they pay for tickets to go to a game and we're going to shorten it? It's not like it was broken. There's a lot of problems that need to be fixed in the world around college football, and running the clock so the game's quicker? I don't get it."

"You go to a country concert and want to have them sing two (fewer) songs when you pay for a concert? No. So why do you want a game to be shorter? That just does not really show much awareness about what should be getting worked on and fixed around college football, in my opinion."

WKU Brings High-Scoring Offense To OSU

By **BRADEN MOLES**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Western Kentucky’s claim to fame over the last few seasons has been the program’s offensive output, with the Hilltoppers boasting a top-15 offense in each of the past two years, including the country’s second-ranked scoring offense in 2021.

That offense was led largely by quarterback Bailey Zappe, who completed 69.1 percent of his passes while throwing for an unbelievable 5,967 yards (426.2 per game) and 62 touchdowns. Zappe and offensive coordinator Zach Kittley both left the program after that season, with Zappe off to the NFL and Kittley becoming offensive coordinator at Texas Tech, but the influence is still apparent throughout the program even with a new quarterback (Austin Reed) and offensive coordinator (Drew Hollingshead) in place.

“I thought our offensive line did a good job,” head coach Tyson Helton said following WKU’s 41-24 win over South Florida on Sept. 2 to begin this season. “(USF) was big, physical up front. I thought they did a good job with the pass protection and gave Bailey good time. Bailey did a good job with getting the ball out. He didn’t hold onto it. ... I said Bailey. (It’s) Austin. Bailey’s still on my mind. But Austin did a great job getting the ball out.”

Even with Zappe and Kittley both gone from the program, the Hilltoppers have continued to excel on the offensive side of the ball. In his first season as a starter last year, Reed – now entering his fifth season of college football, and his second at Western Kentucky after transferring from Division II West Florida – threw for 4,744 yards, 40 touchdowns and 11 interceptions while completing 64.5 percent of his passes.

It wasn’t quite at the level of Bailey, but it still allowed Western Kentucky to average 36.4 points and 497.3 yards per game, and the coaching staff has high expectations for Reed with a year under his belt with the Hilltoppers. He continued strong play against South Florida, throwing for 336 yards and a pair of touchdowns while completing 58.0 percent of his passes.

“I think him understanding what we want to do, what we want to accomplish is important,” Hollingshead said. “He has free rein to check plays at the line of scrimmage and get us out of bad looks if we have them and get us into good looks. The guy’s played a lot of college football, and that’s hard to buy some of that experience.”

Western Kentucky also has a talented group of wide receivers, though it was largely without Malachi Corley, last year’s leading receiver with 101 receptions for 1,295 yards and 11 touchdowns, in the win over South Florida with a bruised chest. Helton said that Corley was not expected to be out long term, but he ultimately did not play in Western Kentucky’s 52-22 win over Houston Christian

on Sept. 9, so it’s unknown whether Ohio State will see him.

While Corley missed time – not to mention the loss of Michael Mathison, who had 52 receptions, 615 yards and three scores last season but suffered a strained hip in the preseason and is expected to be out for a few weeks – several receivers stepped up in their place, with four receivers (K.D. Hutchinson, Easton Messer, former Buckeye Blue Smith and Dalvin Smith) each bringing in at least two receptions against the Bulls.

“(I’m) very proud of our receiving corps,” Helton said. “A lot of men stepped up in that game when Malachi went down. You saw a lot of new faces out there that you hadn’t seen, and I thought they performed pretty well.”

The Hilltoppers return four starting offensive linemen, including left tackle Mark Goode, left guard Quantavious Leslie, center Vincent Murphy and right tackle Wes Dorsey, a group that will look to block for three returning running backs, including Davion Ervin-Poindexter, L.T. Sanders and Markese Stepp. The trio of returning backs combined for 983 yards on 188 carries (5.2 yards per attempt) and four touchdowns last season, and Ervin-Poindexter led the way against South Florida with 10 carries for 45 yards.

“I think we have four really good backs,” Hollingshead said. “It’s tough because what we do offensively, we try to maximize the amount of touches we get from guys. ... When we can spread the football around, that makes us even more dangerous.

“We’ve got four really good backs that change the pace with who they are. Markuise is a big, bruising guy. You’ve got L.T. Sanders, you’ve got (Ervin-Poindexter), who is a really steady guy, really good in pass protection, really good with the ball in his hands, and then you’ve got Elijah Young, who’s explosive and can break one at any moment.”

Western Kentucky has significantly more questions on defense, where the Hilltoppers have just a handful of returning starters, though the unit tied for the national lead in forced turnovers last season with 32 – 19 interceptions and 13 recovered fumbles. It was not a particularly strong first outing for the defense against South Florida, however, giving up 540 total yards and 374 rushing yards, though the unit did force three turnovers.

“We’ve got to do better from a statistical standpoint in stopping the run,” defensive coordinator Tyson Summers said.

The Hilltoppers are led on the interior defensive line by tackles Kenyonte Davis and Hosea Wheeler with Jayden Loving and Terrion Thompson rotating in. Outside of the tackles, however, WKU’s defense sees a lot of players in a lot of different spots. Look no further than junior defensive end/linebacker JaQues “Donut” Evans, the team’s returning defensive leader with 106 tackles (13½ for loss) with 8½ sacks, five pass breakups, eight quarterback hits and a blocked kick last season, who steps in wherever he’s needed for the Hilltoppers.

Get To Know ... Western Kentucky

- **2023 Record:** 2-0.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation - Spread; Defensive Formation - 4-2-5; Starters Returning - Offense 8, Defense 4.
- **Head Coach:** Tyson Helton, 5th year at Western Kentucky, 34-21.
- **Series History:** 1st meeting.
- **School Facts:** Location - Bowling Green, Ky.; Enrollment - 16,750; Nickname - Hilltoppers; Colors - Red, White; Conference - Conference USA; Stadium - Houchens-Smith Stadium (Surface, FieldTurf; Capacity - 22,113).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
D. Ervin-Poindexter	15	78	5.2	0
Markese Stepp	13	69	5.3	1
Austin Reed	7	41	5.9	2

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Austin Reed	56-83	67.5	589	6-0

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Easton Messer	11	134	12.2	1
Dalvin Smith	9	107	11.9	1
Blue Smith	8	88	11.0	1

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game — 46.5
Rushing Yards Per Game — 122.0
Passing Yards Per Game — 327.0
Total Offense Avg. Per Game — 449.0

2023 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Sept. 2	SOUTH FLORIDA	W, 41-24
Sept. 9	HOUSTON CHRISTIAN	W, 52-22
Sept. 16	at Ohio State	4:00 p.m.
Sept. 23	at Troy	7 p.m.
Sept. 28	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 5	at Louisiana Tech	8 p.m.
Oct. 17	at Jacksonville State	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 24	LIBERTY	7:30 p.m.
Nov. 4	at UTEP	9 p.m.
Nov. 11	NEW MEXICO STATE	3:30 p.m.
Nov. 18	SAM HOUSTON	3:30 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Florida International	3 p.m.
Dec. 1	C-USA Championship	TBA

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yards	Sacks
Talique Allen	5	7	12	0.5-0	0-0
JaQues Evans	8	3	11	1.0-10	1.0-10
Kendrick Simpkins	8	2	10	3.5-19	2.5-14

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD
Upton Stout	1	53	53.0	1
Desmyn Baker	1	8	8.0	0
Aaron Key	1	0	0.0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed — 23.0
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed - 264.5
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed - 189.5
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed - 454.0

“He played really, really well (against South Florida),” Summers said of Evans, who had seven tackles, a pass breakup and a fumble recovery. “I am extremely proud of Donut. We ask Donut to do a lot, and what I meant by that – in most teams where you’re a 4-3 defense, the defensive end puts his hand in the ground and rushes the passer. In the 3-4 defense, Donut’s position stands up and he rushes the passer some, he drops some.

“We play a lot of different defenses, and one play he’s the defensive end, one play he is an inside linebacker, another play he’s an outside linebacker. Sometimes he’s standing up in the A gap, sometimes he’s in the B gap. He played as good in coverage the other night as anybody could, but what you see is great players making great plays at great times.”

Fifth-year senior linebacker Niko Cooper also does a little bit of everything, listed as a linebacker on Western Kentucky’s roster but getting the start at defensive end against South Florida. Cooper finished with just 12 tackles last season but had seven tackles and a tackle for loss against the Bulls.

They are joined on the edge by Sebastian Benjamin and Kylan Guidry, and along with linebackers Desmyn Baker, Anthony Brackenridge and Aaron Key, Western Kentucky’s defense totaled six tackles for loss and five sacks against South Florida.

“Coach Summers does a great job, and they did exactly what I thought they would,” Helton said. “They got after the quarterback. They hit him a ton. They got the turnovers when they needed them. We’ve got to continue to get better in the run defense piece of it.”

That run defense – which improved

slightly against Houston Christian, allowing 155 yards – will face a significant challenge with Ohio State’s quintet of talented running backs that have averaged 133.0 yards per game through the first two contests of the season.

In the secondary, the Hilltoppers have three returning starters in safeties Talique Allen and Kendrick Simpkins Jr., as well as cornerback Upton Stout. Rome Weber is also starting at safety, while Virgil Marshall and T.J. Springer have both seen extensive snaps. Stout is joined at cornerback by fellow starter Anthony Johnson Jr., and Davion Williams was the only other corner to take the field against South Florida.

“We want to play as many people as we can (in the secondary),” Summers. “We are a little bit different than most defenses. Defensive lines across the country are going to rotate, but we really try to rotate as many linebackers and defensive backs as we can.”

Helton was proud of the way his team performed against South Florida – and likely enjoyed plenty from the Hilltoppers’ win over Houston Christian – but he sees plenty that the team needs to improve upon before visiting Ohio Stadium on Sept. 16 to close out Ohio State’s home nonconference schedule.

“Looking back on the game from last week and playing South Florida and seeing the film, (I’m) really proud of our football team, how they battled, how they overcame adversity,” he said. “There are lots of things we’ve got to correct, though. We can get a lot better. We have a lot of tough games ahead of us – including this one coming up (against Houston Christian) – and we need to get a lot better as a football team.”



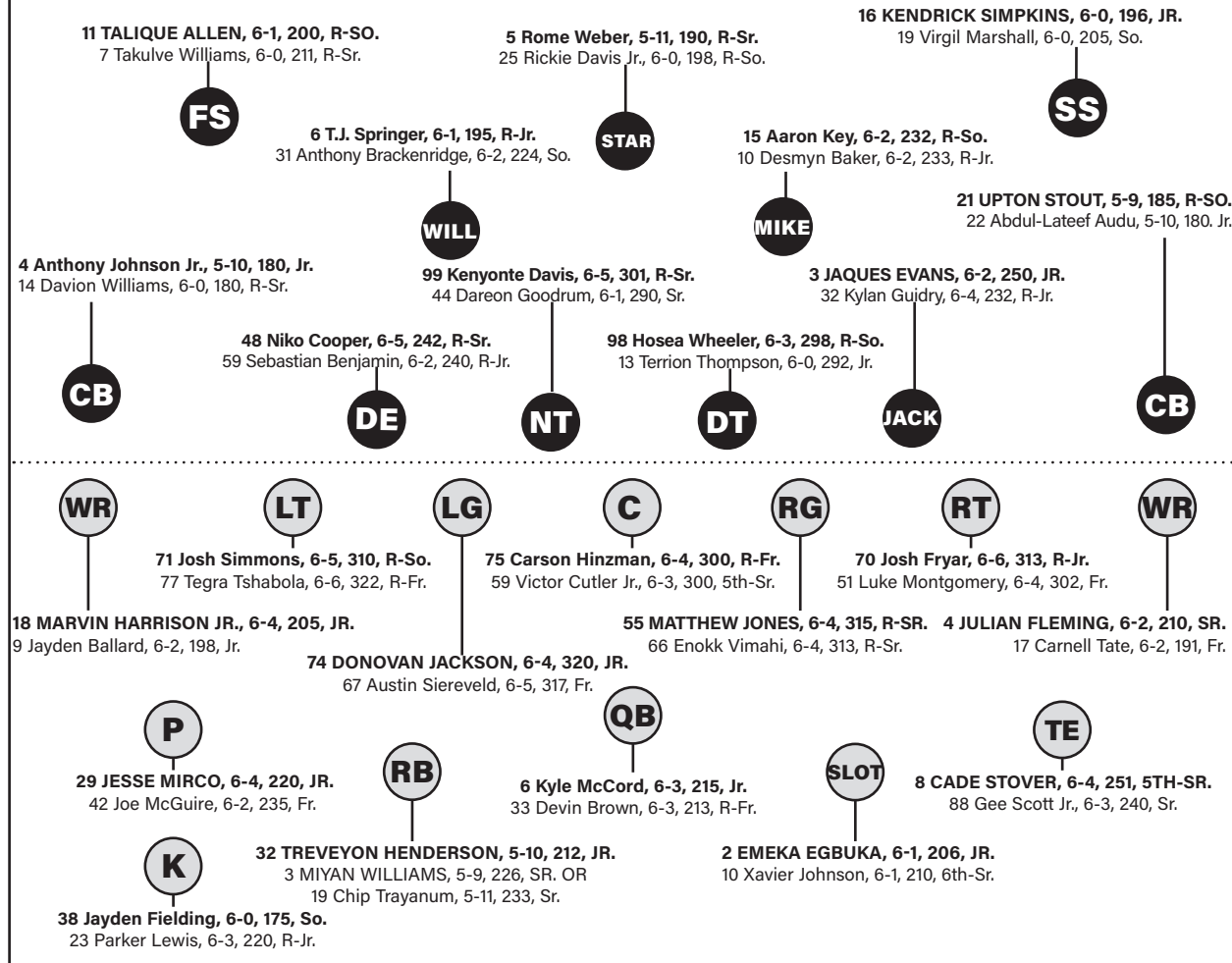
Western Kentucky at Ohio State

Saturday, Sept. 16 • 4 p.m. • FOX
Ohio Stadium; Columbus, OH

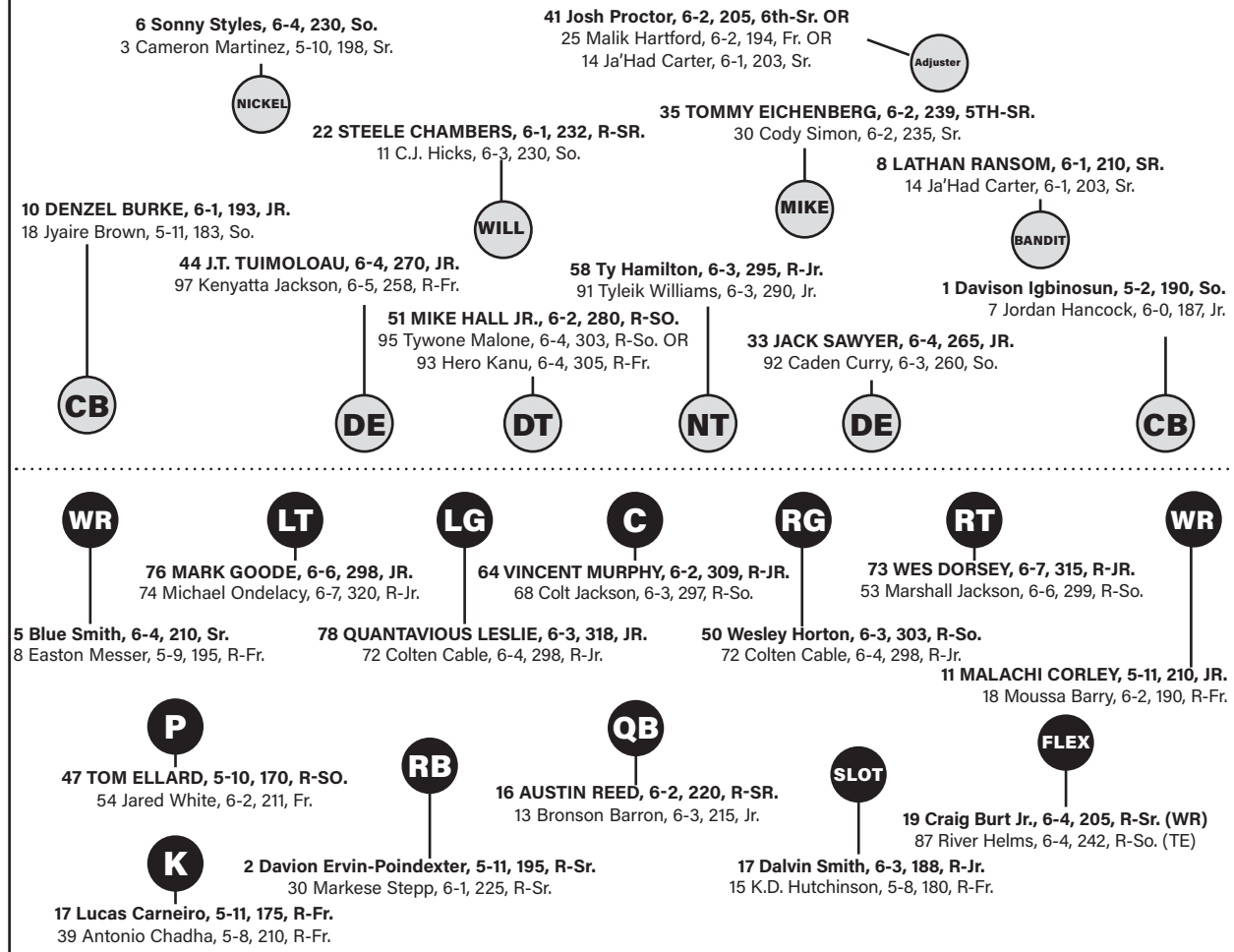


Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN WESTERN KENTUCKY HAS THE BALL...



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. WESTERN KENTUCKY RUSH DEFENSE

We're in a new era with the new NCAA rule that the clock doesn't stop after first downs except in the final two minutes of either half, and it has already made an impact. In two games, the Buckeyes are seeing fewer possessions – nine full drives excluding the final consisting of one play against Youngstown State – and as a result the running game looks tepid. In fairness, the inconsistent offensive line is partially to blame. The Buckeyes ran for a mere 123 yards on just 27 attempts in the 35-7 win over YSU. They had 143 yards on 31 rushes the prior game against Indiana for a grand total of 266 yards through two games, during which they have averaged 4.6 yards per carry. TreVeyon Henderson led the way against YSU with 56 yards and two touchdowns on just five carries. Look for the Buckeyes to establish the run game against Western Kentucky with an eye on the Sept. 23 game at Notre Dame. The Hilltoppers are vulnerable. They gave up 374 yards in their opening 41-24 win vs. South Florida and 155 during a 52-22 downing of Houston Christian. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

WESTERN KENTUCKY RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Hilltoppers are a pass-first team but still managed 129 yards through 23 rushes vs. South Florida and 115 yards on 25 runs vs. Houston Christian. Davion Ervin-Poindexter had 45 yards (4.5 average) in the first game of the season with K.D. Hutchinson adding a 23-yard run. Markese Stepp got 48 yards (5.3) against Houston Christian. OSU allowed 99 yards (3.0) to Youngstown State with a long of 12 yards. Indiana managed 71 yards (2.2). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. WESTERN KENTUCKY PASS DEFENSE

Against Youngstown State, starter Kyle McCord was 14 of 20 for 258 yards with all three touchdowns and 253 of those yards in the first half. Marvin Harrison Jr., after getting 18 yards on two catches vs. Indiana, responded with seven catches, two TDs and 160 yards in the first half. He did not have a reception after halftime but drew a pass-interference penalty and another should have been called. Devin Brown (7 for 13) threw for 101 yards. The Hilltoppers are very good at snatching the ball. Their 19 interceptions last season tied for third in the NCAA, and their 32 forced turnovers tied for the best nationally. They opened this season with two picks (plus a fumble recovery) against South Florida. They produced three turnovers (an interception, two fumbles) vs. Houston Christian but allowed 213 passing yards to the Huskies. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

WESTERN KENTUCKY PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Austin Reed established himself last season as one of the best quarterbacks no one ever heard of. All he did was lead the nation in passing yards (4,744) while tossing 40 touchdowns. He entered the most recent game ranked first in FBS active career leaders in passing yards per game (338.8) and total offense (355.5). He threw for 336 yards and two TDs vs. South Florida and followed up with 253 yards and four TDs while completing 27 of 33 vs. Houston Christian, where Easton Messer was his favorite target, turning nine catches into 116 yards and a touchdown. Nine players had at least two catches. Blue Smith will be a name familiar to some Buckeye fans. He redshirted at Ohio State in 2018 then played the next three seasons at Cincinnati before transferring to Western Kentucky this season. Youngstown State QBs were 17 of 26 for 135 yards and an interception by Denzel Burke. **EDGE: WESTERN KENTUCKY**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Lucas Carneiro made two field goals (41, 42 yards) in his first college game vs. South Florida and added a 27-yarder on his only attempt against Houston Christian. OSU's Jesse Mirco averaged 45.3 yards on three punts against Youngstown State, and Xavier Johnson gained 40 yards on two kickoff returns. **EDGE: EVEN**

INTANGIBLES

Ohio State coach Ryan Day talked after the Youngstown State game of the urgency in making improvements. He's right with Notre Dame looming. Western Kentucky presents challenges to the secondary that will be a major test before facing Sam Hartman the following week. The Hilltoppers will come to Ohio Stadium relishing their underdog role. **EDGE: EVEN**

STAFF PREDICTION

This has the potential to be a shootout that will entertain but also make the fans squirm, especially if the Hilltoppers go up-tempo. The Buckeyes have been meandering, but if they really want to reach another level, now would be a good time to start climbing to the top of the hill. **OHIO STATE 45, WESTERN KENTUCKY 24**

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (2-0)

Sept. 2 at Indiana, W 23-3; **9** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, W 35-7; **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.

5th/7; **29** Sean Earl Lakefront Invitational at Chicago, Ill.

Oct. 13 Arturo Barrios Invitational at College Station, Texas; **27** Big Ten Championships at Madison, Wisc.

Nov. 10 NCAA Regional Championships at Madison, Wisc.; **18** NCAA Championships at Charlottesville, Va.

IGAN, 4 p.m.; **17** Michigan State, noon **22** NORTHWESTERN, 1 p.m.; **24** OHIO, 1 p.m.; **29** Iowa, 4 p.m.

Oct. 1 Indiana, noon; **6** Penn State, 5 p.m.; **8** Kent State 1 p.m.; **13** RUTGERS 3 p.m.; **15** MARYLAND, 1 p.m.; **22** BELLARMINE, 1 p.m.

Nov. 2 Big Ten Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich.; **3** Big Ten Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich.; **5** Big Ten Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich.

State, 1 p.m.; **21** NEBRASKA, 6 p.m.; **24** Maryland, 1 p.m.; **28** INDIANA, 7 p.m.

Oct. 1 ILLINOIS, noon; **8** Penn State, 1 p.m.; **12** Minnesota, 7 p.m.; **15** Wisconsin, 2 p.m.; **19** RUTGERS, 6 p.m.; **22** MICHIGAN, 1 p.m.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sept. 16 Debbie Southern Furman Fall Classic at Greenville, S.C.; **22** Fall Spotlight at Raleigh, N.C.

Oct. 1 ITA All-Americans at Cary, N.C.; **14** Buckeye Invite at Columbus, Ohio; **20** ITA Midwest Regionals at Ann Arbor, Mich.

Nov. 2 ITA Fall Championships at San Diego, Calif.; **4** ASU Thunderbolt Invitational at San Diego, Calif.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 1 Wright State Mike Baumer Cross Country Classic at Dayton, OH, Men: 1st/15; Women: 1st/13; **9** Badger Classic at Wisconsin, Men 3rd/6; Women

FIELD HOCKEY (6-1)

Aug. 25 Lehigh, W 5-2; **27** Lafayette W 4-1.

Sept. 1 NEW HAMPSHIRE, W 4-1; **3** BUCKNELL, W 2-1; **4** UC DAVIS, W 5-0; **8** Louisville, L 2-1; **10** STANFORD, W, 6-0; **15** MICH-

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 8 Maui Jim Collegiate at Scottsdale, Ariz., 6th/15; **9** Maui Jim Collegiate at Scottsdale, Ariz., 5th/15; **10** Maui Jim Collegiate at Scottsdale, Ariz., 4th/15;

Oct. 2-3 Hamptons Invitational at East Hamptons, N.Y.; 30-31 Cal Poly Collegiate at Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 11-12 Dick McGuire/ Branch Law Firm at Albuquerque, N.M.; **17-18** Mary Fossum Invitational at Michigan State.

Oct. 9-10 Illini Invitational at Medinah, Ill.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (3-4)

Aug. 25 at NKU Tournament in Highland Heights, Ky., vs. Northern Kentucky, W 3-0; **26** at NKU Tournament in Highland Heights, Ky., vs. Bowling Green, W 3-2; **27** at NKU Tournament in Highland Heights, Ky., vs. East Tennessee State, W 3-0.

Sept. 1 SPORTS IMPORTS CLASSIC VS. GEORGIA TECH, L 3-1; **2** SPORTS IMPORTS CLASSIC VS. GEORGIA TECH, L 3-1; **8** Big Ten/Pac 12 Challenge in Stanford, Calif., vs. Stanford, L 3-0; **9** Big Ten/Pac 12 Challenge in Stanford, Calif., vs. Oregon, L 3-1. **14** Texas, 8 p.m.; **15** Baylor, 8 p.m.; **22** Nebraska, 9 p.m.; **24** Iowa, 3 p.m.; **27** WISCONSIN, 8 p.m.

Oct. 1 MARYLAND, noon; **6** Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **7** Penn State, 6:30 p.m.; **13** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **15** PURDUE, 1 p.m.; **18** Wisconsin, 8 p.m.; **21** Indiana, 8 p.m.; **25** Northwestern, 6 p.m.; **29** Michigan, 2 p.m.

Nov. 3 MINNESOTA, 6:30 p.m.; **4** INDIANA, 7 p.m.; **8** MICHIGAN STATE, 7 p.m.; **12** Maryland, 1 p.m.; **15** Illinois, 9 p.m.; **18** Minnesota, 8 p.m.; **24** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **25** RUTGERS, 7 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (4-2-1)

Aug. 17 MIAMI (OHIO), W 3-0; **20** BUFFALO, L 2-1; **24** Memphis, L 6-1; **27** Montana, T 2-2; **31** OAKLAND, W 6-0.

Sept. 7 OHIO, W 4-1; **10** AUBURN, W, 2-0; **17** Michigan

Ohio State Fans!



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

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



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

☐ 1 Year, \$119.95

☐ 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$189.95

☐ 2 Years, \$199.95

☐ 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$339.95

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

☐ Money Order ☐ Check ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ Amer. Express

Credit Card # and Exp. Date _____

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

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

Undrafted, Unfazed Hickman Makes Browns' Roster

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Ronnie Hickman picked up the nickname "Rocket" at an early age, and little did he know at the time that it would not only describe his rapid ascent from an undrafted rookie free agent to making the Cleveland Browns roster this season, but also his quickness to the ball.

The former Ohio State safety, in four preseason games, equaled his three interceptions in 31 games for the Buckeyes. Obviously, they don't officially count in the NFL, but his play drew the attention of Browns head coach Kevin Stefanski.

"You can't do your job unless you know your job, and he's a young man that really works hard at knowing what to do, so that puts him in position," he said after Hickman made two interceptions against Washington on Aug. 11. "And I think he has really good ball skills."

Those were on display on one of the picks.

"I knew I was close to the end zone, so I didn't want to back up too much," Hickman said. "I felt the breaking route, was able to lock eyes with the quarterback and saw him staring at it. I just went to go make a play on the ball and was fortunate enough to come down with it."

As for his speed, he apparently was born with it. In an interview with ClevelandBrowns.com, he said his father came up with his nickname.

"It started off when I was a really young, like a small baby, my pops used to see me try to take off and run like a rocket," Hickman said. "He said it one time, and it just stuck ever since. It actually worked out perfect. I don't know if it was premeditated, but it ended up working out."

Hickman is one of four Ohio State players – three of them rookies – who made the Browns' 53-man roster to begin the season.

Starting cornerback Denzel Ward is in his sixth season. Right tackle Dawand Jones (fourth round, 111th overall) and center Luke Wypler (sixth, 190th) were chosen in the 2023 NFL draft, marking the first time the Browns drafted multiple Ohio State players in the same draft since running back Robert "Bo" Scott (third, 32nd) and offensive lineman Ed Orazen (19th, 265th) were chosen in 1965.

Safety Tanner McCalister was also undrafted, signing on the same day (May 12) as Hickman, and earned a spot on the practice squad. He had a breakout performance in the third preseason game against Philadelphia when he had six tackles (five solo) and a sack.

Former Buckeye Tommy Togiai, a 2021 fourth-round pick (132nd overall) in the 2021 draft, was waived on Aug. 29. The Browns wanted to sign him after he cleared waivers, but he opted to sign with Jacksonville. He was released from the Jaguars' practice squad on Sept. 4.

That game in Philly was bittersweet for Hickman (6-1, 209), who is from nearby South Orange, N.J. He had many family and friends in attendance but his appear-

ance was cut short when he exited in the second quarter due to a possible concussion. Before he left, Hickman made his third pick of the pre-season.

Fortunately, he passed the protocol but did not re-enter the game. However, he played the final preseason game Aug. 26 vs. the Kansas City Chiefs and had six tackles (three solo).

"This game is about opportunity," Hickman said. "You never know when your number's called, but when your number's called, you've got to make the play, and not only for yourself but for your teammates."

Anxious Moments

Then the waiting game began. The deadline to trim rosters to 53 players was Aug. 29 at 4 p.m., and Hickman likened it to hoping for the call that never came during the seven-round draft in April. This time, though, the phone would ring with either good or bad news.

"I want to say around 10:30 in the morning," Hickman said of the call. "I was laying in bed. I knew the call was coming at some point. It kind of felt like draft day all over again."

"Extremely special," he said when the good word came. "A lot of emotions, just kind of using those emotions to drive me and help me get to the point to where I'm at now."

The Browns did their homework on Hickman and were just as thrilled that undrafted linebacker Mohamoud Diabate from Utah also made the team.

"We were really excited about getting both," said assistant general manager/vice president of player personnel Glenn Cook, while also praising the organization's college scouts. "It's the Wild, Wild West post-draft, so you've got to be aggressive with anybody that you're interested in. And those two, we definitely put our gas down on the pedal to acquire them."

"(The scouts) did a great job of putting us in position to be ready post-draft to sign guys like Mohamoud and Ronnie and we saw the talent, we saw the potential and then they came here and they performed. It started with them and just the coaching staff doing a great job of getting those guys ramped up, putting them in position to make plays and then ultimately, they did it."

What pleased Hickman the most was how his interceptions helped the team.

"That's one of the things that coaches talk about, coming up and being able to take the ball away and get the ball back in your quarterback's hands," he said. "So anytime you're able to do that as a defender, it's always a huge plus and you want to maximize this opportunity as much as you can."

Hickman drew the Browns' interest after earning second-team All-America honors in his final college season when he had 53 tackles, an interception and seven



Ronnie Hickman

pass breakups. In 2021, he led the Buckeyes with 100 tackles (54 solo) and two interceptions. His tackle total was the most in the program since Raekwon McMillan had 102 in 2015. After redshirting his freshman season to rehab a shoulder injury, Hickman made five tackles in 2020.

Hickman told the Browns' website that safeties coach Ephraim Banda has been instrumental in giving him a positive outlook on his chances to make the roster.

"Coming in as an undrafted guy, it's best to let the outside noise be the outside noise and really focus on what's going on in this facility day by day," Hickman said. "He says treat every day like your first day, so there's been a lot of success that people may see but there's still a lot of work to be done. And you've got to stay hungry in times like this being undrafted."

"I just keep my head down and stay focused. Coach Banda does a great job of bringing that energy and keeping us with that same mindset – to keep going and get keep getting better."

One inspiration is Browns assistant head coach/special teams coordinator Bubba Ventrone, who went undrafted out of Villanova but crafted an NFL career from 2005-14.

"It's just huge to know that what this guy is talking about, he's actually gone through it," Hickman said. "It's just one of those things where you want to do what he did and kind of replicate the stuff that he put in on the field."

More motivation comes from safety Rodney McLeod, who is in his 12th season after being undrafted, and second-year undrafted safety D'Anthony Bell.

"A big thing that I'm fortunate to be a part of was just being able to be a sponge to a guy like Rodney, a guy with a lot of years and experience under his belt, and luckily he was willing to share it all," Hickman said. "Whether it was questions just off the field, on the field. He was a guy who was an open book."

"I was right in D'Anthony's ear, just because he came from it. He did the exact same thing I did. So, he's been a huge help, as well."

The quickest way for Hickman to get on the field likely will be through special teams, a familiar role from his time at

Ohio State.

"Whenever you're on the field, you want to make a play and allow the coaches and players to trust you," he said. "Whenever you get a chance, you've got to make the most of it."

Hickman knows in the cutthroat business of pro football, he's only as good as his last play, and he doesn't intend to relax.

"The rent's due every day, for real," he said. "So, it's a small sigh, but you've got to earn it every day."

On The Line

Of the four Buckeyes with the Browns, Ward was the lone starter on the depth chart for the game against the Bengals. However, he had been out because of a concussion and did not return to practice until Sept. 6.

He played four days later in the 24-3 win over the Cincinnati Bengals and recorded four tackles (three solo) in the season opener.

Wypler is third at center behind seven-year veteran Ethan Pocic and Nick Harris, in his fourth season, while Hickman is third at the strong safety spot behind Grant Delpit, drafted in 2020, and Bell.

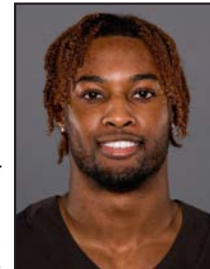
Meanwhile, Jones, a first-team All-American last season, is backup to Jack Conklin, the eight-year veteran who was an AP All-Pro for the Tennessee Titans in 2016 and 2020. Jones has impressed the Browns with his athleticism despite his size (6-8, 374).

"I really thought his pass protection took some major steps," offensive line coach Bill Callahan said. "He still has a long way to go yet. We're still working on the run technique aspects of his play to make him a more complete player, but it was good to see him perform under the lights against good competition, taking third-down sets, which are so critical to protection."

Jones has learned under fire the major difference between blocking in college and at the professional level.

"I would say just the physicalness," he said. "Most times you can get your hands on a guy just because you're longer. You get the advantage just because you're bigger, but now guys are the same size. I think that's like a wake-up call for me."

In addition to Ward, Jones and Hickman made their NFL debuts while Wypler was on the inactive list.



Denzel Ward

www.theredbricktapandgrill.com

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

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

100 Craft Beers!

New Food & Cocktail Menu

Newly Renovated Patio with Fire Pit

Handmade Pizzas & In-House Smoked Meats

QB-Turned-Doctor Left Lasting OSU Legacy

Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be offering a variety of historical pieces this fall, including a look back at the 1998 Ohio State football team, one of the better teams in school history, upon that team's 25th anniversary. The following is the second installment in our 2023 historical series.

By MARK REA

BSB Managing Editor Emeritus

A website devoted to Ohio State sports once described Don Unverferth as a “terrible quarterback,” adding the product of Chaminade High School in Dayton was “probably the worst multiyear starting quarterback in Ohio State history.”

Unverferth and his career numbers certainly pale in comparison to the kind of stats present-day quarterbacks are compiling, but the aforementioned descriptions are a bit harsh. After all, he finished his three seasons with an 18-7-1 record as a starter, a .712 career winning percentage higher than Kirk Herbstreit (9-4-1, .679), Steve Bellisari (19-12, .613), Greg Frey (19-14-2, .571), and Bill Long (9-8, .529).

Additionally, when Unverferth finished his career, he was the program's career leader with 2,518 passing yards as well as second all-time with 12 touchdown passes. Not bad for a guy who operated the controls of a three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust offense.

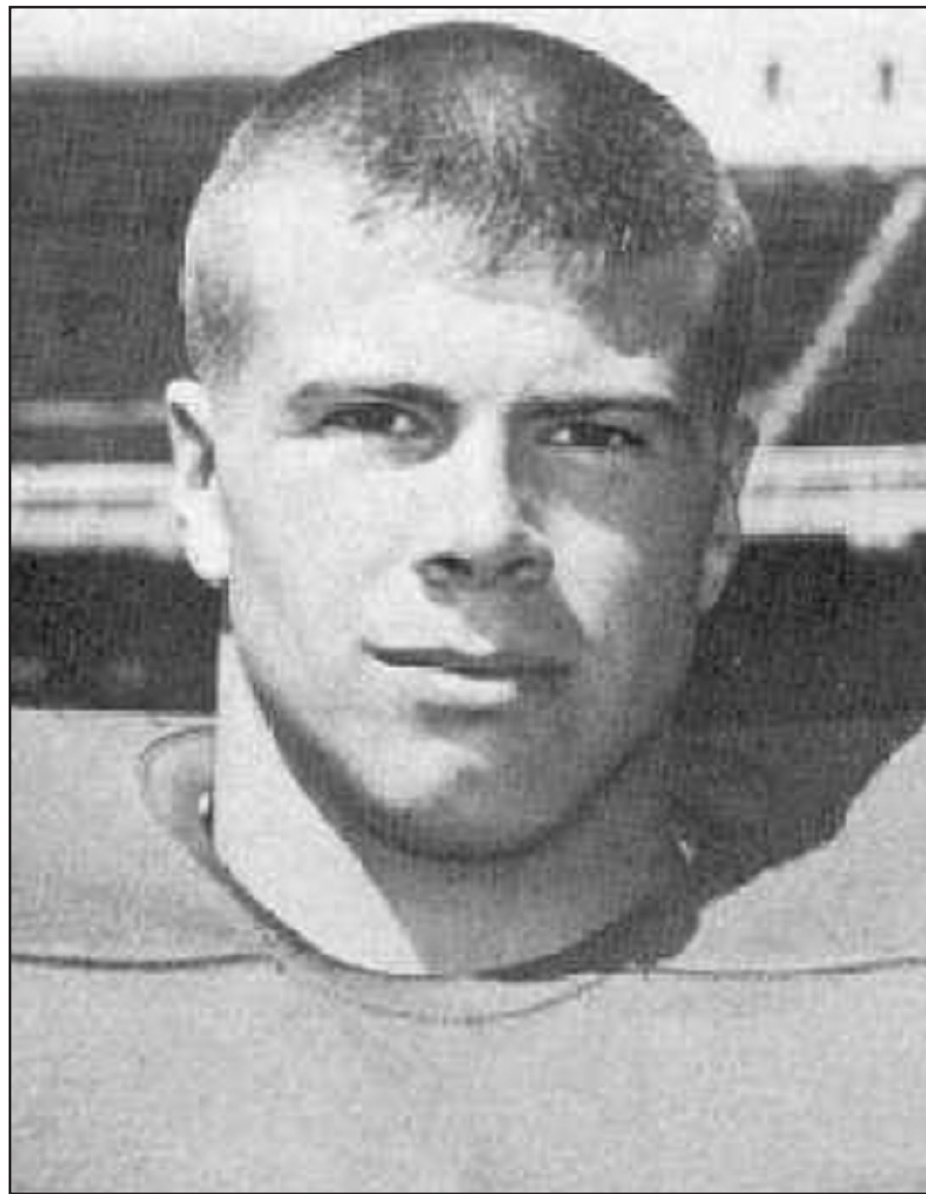
Yet, it isn't his football exploits – great, terrible or somewhere in between – that should make Unverferth memorable to Ohio State football fans on the 60th anniversary of the first game he ever played for the Buckeyes. It is the legacy he left behind as his teammates, colleagues and family members mark the 35th year of his passing.

Hundreds of heart patients and their families stay rent-free each year in a building near the Ohio State campus named for the doctor who in 1986 oversaw the University Medical Center's first heart transplant. About a mile and a half away from that building sits Ohio Stadium where that same doctor – then an athletic, handsome youngster from Dayton – encouraged Woody Hayes to embrace more of a passing attack and rewrote the university's record books in process.

The name of the cardiologist whose quiet, charismatic bedside manner put countless patients at ease, and the strapping young lad who convinced a legendary coach to modify his three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust philosophy were one and the same – Don Unverferth. Unfortunately, Unverferth has largely been relegated to the back pages of history, partly because his life was cut tragically short by cancer, and partly because his football exploits have been surpassed many times over since his playing days in the mid-1960s.

Still, those who knew him best say he didn't mind toiling in the shadows of others and would likely be comfortable in allowing his many accomplishments to speak for themselves.

“Don was clearly a leader,” said Dr. Charles Bush, a cardiologist and colleague of Unverferth at Ohio State. “You'd never



FILE PHOTO

HEART OF A WINNER — Former Ohio State quarterback Don Unverferth (1963-65) followed up his playing career by becoming a cardiologist and oversaw the first heart transplant at the Ohio State University Medical Center in 1986.

hear him talking about his achievements. He was not somebody who would go around tooting his own horn.”

Donald V. Unverferth was born April 21, 1944, in Dayton, the second son to Louis and Beatrice Unverferth. Louis Unverferth was a payroll accountant at the huge Frigidaire plants in Dayton that once employed as many as 22,000 workers manufacturing refrigerators, ranges, air conditioners and other household goods, while Beatrice was a professional stenographer.

The couple provided a loving and stable home for Don and his older brother, Jack, both of whom became star quarterbacks at Chaminade High School, the Catholic boys school located on South Ludlow Street near midtown Dayton.

Not surprisingly given how innovative he would become in later life, Don developed as a youngster a unique way of throwing the football. Most quarterbacks at the time cradled the football in the palm of their throwing hand with the fingers spread out over the laces, but the youngster was blessed with large hands and began placing his index finger on the rear tip of the football to gain more accuracy with his throws.

Today, putting the forefinger at the tip of the ball is the preferred method of delivery for nearly every college and National Football League quarterback, but Unverferth refused to take any credit for the innovation, explaining it was a style born from simple necessity.

“My brother was a quarterback,” he once said. “We'd play catch and he'd always pass it to me, but I'd just throw it back to him any way I could. I found that putting my index finger on the tip of the ball gave me better control. As I got older, I found I could throw a tighter spiral that way.”

Don followed Jack to Chaminade and became an all-state quarterback, and then he followed him again to Ohio State when it came time to select a college. Jack, however, had decided not to continue his football career, opting instead to concentrate on becoming a doctor. But his younger brother enjoyed the game so much that he figured he could do both, and he joined the Buckeyes as a freshman in the fall of 1962.

The mid-1960s represented a transitional period for the Ohio State football team and its head coach. A power struggle between Hayes and Alumni Association

founder and secretary Jack Fullen was being waged with battle lines drawn between the burgeoning athletic department and officials such as Fullen who believed athletics were taking over academics in terms of on-campus importance.

Fullen scored a major victory when the Faculty Council voted against sending the Buckeyes to the Rose Bowl following the 1961 season, a decision that had far-reaching ramifications.

“One of the things that is hardly discussed is the adverse effect the (Rose Bowl) decision had upon recruiting,” former Ohio State sports information director Marv Homan told BSB in 2008. “We lost some very good prospects who thought of Ohio State as sort of anti-Rose Bowl. That wasn't the case, of course, but it was something Woody had a tough time overcoming for a couple of years. It wasn't that the program went downhill, but it wasn't as good as it might have been.”

Further complicating matters for Hayes was his avowed offensive philosophy of ground control. When the Buckeyes won the national championship in 1954 with veteran quarterback Dave Leggett running the show, the team threw 125 times during the 10-game season. The following season, with untested Frank Ellwood handling most of the snaps, Hayes called for only 50 passes all season – just 26 of them from Ellwood.

The team total didn't rise much over the next several years, and when the 1961 team won the Big Ten title as well as the national championship from the Football Writers Association of America, it attempted only 90 passes while running the ball 522 times. Perhaps as a result, Hayes was unable to sign one of the nation's top high school quarterbacks at the time. Tommy Myers of Troy, Ohio, passed on an offer to attend Ohio State, heading instead to Northwestern to play for Ara Parseghian.

Myers became a three-year starter for the Wildcats from 1962-64, guiding them to 15 victories during that span – including wins in '62 and '63 against the Buckeyes – and finishing his career with 3,836 yards and 21 touchdowns. Each total was a program record at the time with the yardage mark still ranking among the all-time top 13.

Athletic, Intelligent

One year after losing out on Myers' services, Hayes put all of his recruiting efforts into bringing Unverferth to Columbus.

A standout at Chaminade for legendary head coach Ed Regan, who coached at the school from 1957-63, Unverferth quarterbacked teams that won seven games in both his junior and senior seasons. During his senior campaign in 1961, he led the Eagles to a 7-2-1 record in their first season as an independent after leaving the Dayton City League, where they had been a charter member since 1927.

Several other Midwestern schools found their way to Chaminade to check in on Unverferth's availability, but he had already made up his mind. With his older brother already on the Ohio State campus, and Unverferth eager to get into the univer-

sity's pre-med program, he was an easy sell for Hayes.

Substitution rules were also changing in college football, and Hayes embraced them. Players forced to play both offense and defense began to disappear in favor of the platoon system, paving the way for specialists on either side of the ball. Practice time could now be divided among separate offensive and defensive units, and Hayes began to tutor his offensive linemen in the fine art of pass protection.

Unverferth had come along at just the right time. Blessed with a strong right arm and a solid 6-3, 205-pound frame, he began his sophomore season as the Buckeyes' starting quarterback, and he never relinquished the position for the remainder of his career. He sometimes shared duties with Tom Barrington, who was a more accomplished runner, but Unverferth was clearly the better passer and became one of the first classic drop-back quarterbacks in Ohio State history.

His coming-out party occurred in late October 1963 at Wisconsin. With the Buckeyes trailing the second-ranked Badgers late in the game, the sophomore calmly completed four passes during an 80-yard drive that gave Ohio State a 13-10 victory and dealt Wisconsin its first loss of the season. Four weeks later, during the traditional season finale in Ann Arbor, Unverferth threw for one touchdown and ran for another as the Buckeyes took a 14-10 win against Michigan.

"I coached some fine passers," said OSU offensive backfield coach Lou McCullough, a slow-talking Alabama native who later served as defensive coordinator for Hayes from 1965-70. "But Unverferth had the best arm of them all. Plus, he was tall enough to see and throw over towering linemen charging at him."

Perhaps Unverferth's best attribute was his intelligence. He learned quickly and never made the same mistake twice. As a result, his numbers increased every season until he threw for 1,061 yards and four touchdowns as a senior in 1965, a season during which the Buckeyes finished second in the Big Ten standings behind eventual national champion Michigan State.

When his career had finished, Unverferth owned nearly every career passing record at Ohio State, including the aforementioned 2,518 yards through the air. It was a mark that would last for 14 years until Art Schlichter broke it 1979. Even with the proliferation of the intricate passing games of recent years, Unverferth remains No. 18 on the school's all-time passing list nearly 60 years after playing his final game.

Off the field, Unverferth's performance was every bit as outstanding as it was on it. He was a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity as well as an honor student in pre-med, and he was named the most outstanding cadet in a class of more than 3,900 in the ROTC program at Ohio State.

Once his playing days were over, he was offered a tryout by Green Bay Packers head coach Vince Lombardi, whose team was coming off the first of what would be three consecutive National Football League championships. Unverferth turned Lombardi down, however, deciding to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor, rising to the top of his class during his first year in

medical school.

After graduating from medical school, he joined the Army and served as a military physician. He later returned to Ohio State to complete training in internal medicine, specializing in cardiology. He joined the faculty at University Medical Center and in 1986 laid the foundation for the center's heart transplant program.

Eventually becoming a world-renowned expert in the areas of cardiomyopathy and the treatment of congestive heart failure, Unverferth published countless articles and several books, and occupied the first chair of the James Hay and Ruth Jansson Wilson professorship in cardiology at Ohio State, all the while retaining the charisma and steady pulse of a successful college quarterback.

"He was impressive," said renowned plastic surgeon Dr. Jan Adams, who was treated in 1978 by Unverferth for cardiomyopathy. "He was 6-feet-3-inches tall, still about 210 pounds, prematurely gray hair, but still looking all the part of the athlete. All the secretaries and all the nurses loved him. It was amazing to watch them all swoon as he walked by, oblivious to all of it. He simply loved taking care of people. I envied him that. He was just so happy to be doing it. The process was his reward."

Don's brother, Jack, director of orthopedic education at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus, echoed those sentiments when Don died in January 1988 at the age of 43, the victim of a two-year fight against a malignant brain tumor.

"He was a leading researcher – not only in Columbus, but in the nation," Jack said. "He really didn't make much money. He was so much like Woody in that way. His research was what was important to him, and unlike so many of those in our profession, it far outweighed the financial considerations. His work was what was important to him."

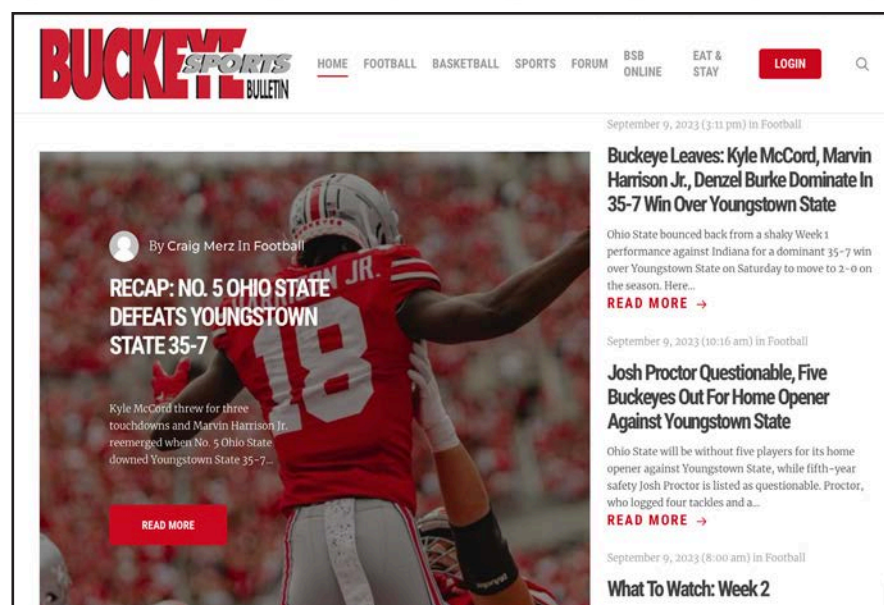
Seventeen months after Don's passing, the Unverferth House was established in his memory, a building containing nine fully-furnished apartments to house patients and their families during treatment at the Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital just five blocks away. The project was spearheaded by Don's widow, Barbara, who was struck by the outpouring of affection for her husband whose life touched so many others.

"The idea (for Unverferth House) really came from his patients because they loved him dearly," she said. "He would have so loved something like that."

As far as being termed "probably the worst multiyear starting quarterback in Ohio State history," those who knew Unverferth say he likely wouldn't have disagreed. But not so his teammates, who remain fiercely loyal despite the quarterback's death 3½ decades ago.

A week after the website published that assessment, it received a letter from former OSU tight end and Columbus mayor Greg Lashutka. It read in part, "A quarterback is the key to the offensive 11 on any football team. However, it is not always the passing or running statistics that tell the whole story. All 11 football players contribute because football is the ultimate team sport. Let me assure you that our overall success had at our core a gifted leader and athlete in our quarterback Don Unverferth."

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



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

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

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

Five-Star Tackle Baker To Announce Sept. 24

Ohio State's top remaining target in 2024, Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star offensive tackle Brandon Baker (6-5, 285), is set to announce his commitment on Sept. 24.

RECRUITING OUTLOOK Braden Moles

Baker will announce his college of choice on his birthday, and he will be deciding between Georgia, Nebraska, Ohio State, Oregon and Texas, though the Buckeyes and Longhorns are considered the finalists in his recruitment.

"Sept. 24 is my birthday, so I felt like it was a good time to announce," Baker told 247Sports. "It has been a really fun process, but I have a good idea what I want to do and I'm ready to get this done."

He took official visits over the summer to Georgia, Ohio State and Texas, and he has a final official visit planned to Nebraska for Sept. 16 before his announcement.

"I liked all my visits, but Ohio State was probably my favorite one," Baker said. "I really like the coaches there, Coach (Ryan) Day, and I'm very close with Coach (Justin) Frye. He might be the OL coach I'm closest with, and I really like the plan they have in place for me."

Ohio State is hoping that Baker joins an offensive line group that includes New Palestine, Ind., four-star Ian Moore (6-5, 295), Toledo Central Catholic three-star Marc Nave (6-5, 315) and Devontae (6-5, 297) and Deontae (6-6, 280) Armstrong of Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward, which would make for an impressive collection of commitments

for Frye.

The Buckeyes also continue to pursue Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star interior lineman Jordan Seaton (6-5, 287), who is expected to take an official visit at some point this fall. Ohio State was previously considered a leader in Seaton's recruitment but is looking to ramp things back up after things cooled down between the parties.

"Me and Coach Frye's relationship is good," Seaton told 247Sports. "I recently got to talk to Coach Day, and they put the message out that I'm definitely a priority for the school."

"They're the Ohio State Buckeyes. Their name speaks for itself, and just the culture they have. Paris Johnson Jr., he's a left tackle, we have the same type of measurables, same size. I'm probably a little bigger than him, but I want to get better than him and compete."

The last five-star offensive tackle to sign with Ohio State was Johnson in the 2020 recruiting class, while the most recent five-star at any position on the offensive line to sign with the Buckeyes was interior lineman Donovan Jackson in the 2021 class.

OSU Still Pursuing In-State DL Kirks

In the other set of trenches, Ohio State is continuing to assess a variety of targets with only Chicago St. Ignatius four-star defensive lineman Justin Scott (6-4, 310) and Buford, Ga., five-star defensive end Eddrick Houston (6-3, 265) committed to the Buckeyes in 2024.

One potential target is Painesville (Ohio) Riverside four-star defensive lineman Dominic Kirks (6-5, 250), who has been committed to Washington since June. Despite his pledge to the Huskies, Kirks is exploring visits this fall to Michigan State and Ohio



FILE PHOTO

BIG BOYS — Ohio State is continuing to pursue several offensive linemen in 2024, including Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star offensive tackle Brandon Baker (right), pictured here with former Ohio State offensive tackle Paris Johnson Jr. (left).

State, though he does not yet hold an offer from the Buckeyes.

The Buckeyes are also expected to continue pursuing several prospects on the de-

fensive line whom they missed out on earlier in the cycle, including Chicago Kenwood Academy four-star defensive end Marquise Lightfoot (6-5, 220) and Washington (D.C.) Friendship Collegiate Academy five-star defensive end Dylan Stewart (6-5, 235), who are committed to Miami (Fla.) and South Carolina, respectively.

"They're still working on Marquise Lightfoot, who certainly I thought — I think a lot of people thought — that they were getting," Buckeye Huddle recruiting analyst Marc Givler told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "They're still working on that one, and he's still talking to Larry Johnson, so I think we'll see where that one goes the next month or two. That's definitely one that they haven't given up on. And they haven't really given up on Stewart yet either, but I think that's going to be tougher."

Givler also pointed to Towson (Md.) Concordia Prep four-star defensive lineman Ernest Willor Jr. (6-4, 250) and Tampa (Fla.) Wharton four-star defensive end Booker Pickett Jr. (6-3, 205) as potential targets moving forward. Pickett has long been on Ohio State's radar, with the Buckeyes offering him in April of 2022 and hosting him for a visit this spring, with an official visit expected this fall.

"They've been recruiting Pickett for a very long time, and he is now kind of an even higher priority than he was before because of some of the misses," Givler said.

Through his first three seasons of high school football, Pickett — who, should the



The Ultimate Tailgate

AVAILABLE FOR CHARTER

Hotel Suite, Conference Room,
and Private Jet...All Rolled into One



Close the deal.....
at 65 mph!



Coach Quarters™
CORPORATE HOSPITALITY & TRANSPORT

www.coachquarters.com • 614-738-8889

Columbus • Cincinnati • Nashville

OSU Football 2024 Commitments

Players in the class of 2024 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.					
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Deontae Armstrong	OL	6-6	280	★★★★	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward
Devontae Armstrong	OL	6-5	297	★★★★	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward
Mylan Graham	WR	6-1	170	★★★★★	New Haven, Ind.
Eddrick Houston	DL	6-3	265	★★★★★	Buford, Ga.,
Max LeBlanc	TE	6-4	222	★★★★	Chattanooga (Tenn.) Baylor School
Miles Lockhart	CB	5-10	185	★★★★	Chandler (Ariz.) Basha
Jordan Lyle	RB	6-0	180	★★★★	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas
Jaylen McClain	SAF	6-0	185	★★★★	West Orange (N.J.) Seton Hall Prep
Jeremiah McClellan	WR	6-0	190	★★★★	St. Louis Christian Brothers College
Ian Moore	OL	6-5	295	★★★★	New Palestine, Ind.
Marc Nave Jr.	OL	6-5	315	★★★	Toledo Central Catholic
Air Noland	QB	6-3	195	★★★★★	Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes
Payton Pierce	LB	6-1	225	★★★★	Lucas (Texas) Lovejoy
James Peoples	RB	5-10	192	★★★★	San Antonio Veterans Memorial
Aaron Scott	CB	6-2	190	★★★★	Springfield, Ohio
Justin Scott	DT	6-4	310	★★★★★	Chicago St. Ignatius
Jeremiah Smith	WR	6-3	198	★★★★★	Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep
Garrett Stover	LB	6-0	195	★★★★	Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut
Bryce West	CB	5-11	177	★★★★	Cleveland Glenville
Sam Williams-Dixon	RB	5-11	203	★★★	Pickerington (Ohio) North
Damarion Witten	TE	6-4	215	★★★★	Cleveland Glenville

position remain in defensive coordinator Jim Knowles' scheme, would likely play the Jack – accounted for 183 tackles, 38 tackles for loss, 60 sacks and eight forced fumbles.

WR Commit Smith Has Dominant Performance

Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep five-star wide receiver Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 198), who has been committed to Ohio State since last December, is the top-rated receiver (and second overall prospect) in

2024, and he showed why with a recent out-ing.

Before his unofficial visit to Columbus on Sept. 9 for the Youngstown State game – more on those visitors below – Smith and Chaminade-Madonna Prep picked up a 61-21 victory over New Jersey's Bergen Cath-olic on Sept. 8, with Smith going for 16 re-ceptions, 316 yards and three touchdowns. And those numbers piled up for Smith de-spite not playing in the fourth quarter, with nine of those receptions and 249 of those

OSU Football 2025 Commitment

Player(s) in the class of 2025 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.					
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Tavien St. Clair	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Bellefontaine, Ohio

OSU Football 2026 Commitment

Player(s) in the class of 2026 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State.					
Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Chris Henry Jr.	WR	6-5	185	★★★★	Cincinnati Withrow

yards coming before halftime.

Despite interest from schools such as Florida, Georgia and Miami (Fla.), Smith has consistently reaffirmed his commitment to Ohio State, and the expectation is that the nation's best receiver will sign with the Buckeyes in just a few short months.

TE Barbour To Commit Sept. 22

Another Ohio State target will announce his college of choice soon, with Alpharetta, Ga., four-star tight end Ethan Barbour (6-3, 215) set to announce on Sept. 22.

Barbour, who told 247Sports he is look-ing for a school that can develop him on and off the field, will decide between Alabama, Auburn, Florida State, Georgia, Ohio State, South Carolina, Texas and USC. He is the No. 179 overall prospect and fourth-ranked tight end in 2025, and he hauled in 51 re-ceptions last season for 714 yards and 12 touchdowns.

While Ohio State is still in the conversa-tion for Barbour, Georgia is considered the

favorite to land his services. That should be of no concern for the Buckeyes, however, as they're involved with several high-profile tight ends in the class.

That list is headlined by Washington, Okla., four-star Nate Roberts (6-4, 235), who recently decommitted from Notre Dame, as well as Calhoun, Ga., four-star Emaree Win-ston (6-2, 235) and in-state Luka Gilbert (6-8, 233) from West Chester Lakota West.

The Buckeyes also have an offer out to Saint Louis University three-star Landon Pace (6-3, 215), the son of legendary Ohio State offensive tackle Orlando Pace, and he is expected to visit Columbus this fall. He holds additional offers from Boston College, Iowa State, Louisville, Missouri, West Vir-ginia and Wisconsin, among others.

OSU Among Top Schools For Other 2025 Prospects

Ohio State is also among the finalists for a pair of other 2025 prospects, with Pitts-

Continued On Page 28

Get your sex life back!
And your youthful energy too...
With Columbus Men's Clinic!



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

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

Don't wait! Call today!
614.300.7400

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



COLUMBUS
MEN'S CLINIC

www.ColumbusMensClinic.com



Ohio State Hosts Prospects For YSU Game

Continued From Page 27

burg, Calif., four-star safety Jadyn Hudson (6-2, 175) and Aliquippa, Pa., four-star running back Tiqwai Hayes (5-10, 185) including the Buckeyes among their top schools.

Ohio State was in the top 10 for Hudson along with Georgia, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee, USC and Washington. He is the No. 66 overall prospect and seventh-ranked safety in the class, as well as the No. 8 prospect out of California.

“Coach (Perry) Eliano is a really good guy, and Ohio State is always competing for a national title and producing good defensive backs,” he said.

Hayes, the No. 342 overall prospect and No. 33 running back in the class, had Ohio State along with Cincinnati, Maryland, Michigan State, Penn State, Pittsburgh and West Virginia on his list. He was offered by the Buckeyes after visiting this past spring, though Ohio State is already involved with several high-profile tailbacks in 2025, including Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei four-star Jordon Davison (5-11, 203), Humble (Texas) Atascocita four-star Tory Blaylock (5-11, 175) and Cleveland Heights, Ohio, four-star Marquise Davis (6-0, 190).

2025 OT Petty Offered By OSU

Sticking in 2025, the Buckeyes issued a recent offer to Roswell (Ga.) Fellowship Christian School four-star offensive tackle Josh Petty (6-5, 262).

Petty, the No. 42 overall prospect and sixth-ranked tackle in the class, also holds offers from Auburn, Clemson, Duke, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, LSU, Miami (Fla.), Michigan, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Oregon and Penn State, among others.

Along with playing left tackle for Fellowship Christian, he’s also an accomplished multi-sport athlete, competing in track and field and wrestling, where he was Georgia’s 2A 285-pound state champion as a sophomore.

“Coach (Justin) Frye called me,” Petty told 247Sports. “Me and Coach Frye had talked before. I was supposed to go to camp there, but sadly I couldn’t make it. Coach Frye told me their recruiting process is different than anyone else – they take their time – and after he saw my first two games, he wanted to offer.

“I was very excited. Ohio State is a school I’ve been looking at for a long time. I’m just glad I got the offer. I’m going to try to get up there to see the campus and meet all the coaches. I’m definitely interested in

Ohio State.”

At offensive tackle, Ohio State has also been looking to flip Mobile (Ala.) C.F. Vigor four-star Micah DeBose (6-5, 315), who is committed to Georgia, and is also heavily recruiting Franklin (Mich.) Wylie E. Groves four-star Avery Gach (6-5, 275) and Toledo Whitmer four-star Carter Lowe (6-5, 290).

2026 QB Curtis Has Ohio State In Top 10

One of Ohio State’s top targets at quarterback in 2026 has started to narrow down his scholarship list, with Nashville (Tenn.) Christian School four-star quarterback Jared Curtis (6-3, 210) announcing a top 10 on Sept. 4 that consists of Alabama, Florida State, Georgia, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ole Miss, Ohio State, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas A&M.

Curtis was offered by Ohio State in May, and he is one of three quarterbacks offered in the class, along with Carrollton, Ga., four-star Julian Lewis (6-1, 185) – who is committed to USC – and Tampa (Fla.) Jesuit four-star Will Griffin (6-3, 215).

As a freshman, Curtis completed 59.1 percent of his passes for 2,285 yards, 27 touchdowns and eight interceptions with 61 carries for 481 yards and seven more

scores.

Though anything can happen with quarterback recruiting – look no further than the saga of Buford, Ga., five-star Dylan Raiola (6-3, 230) – with the Buckeyes already having their quarterbacks in 2024 and 2025 in Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes five-star Air Noland (6-3, 195) and Bellefontaine, Ohio, four-star quarterback Tavien St. Clair (6-4, 210), most of Ohio State’s energy can be reserved for scouting the program’s 2026 signal caller.

Several Prospects Come Out For YSU

Ohio State’s home opener this season was not quite the spectacle of last year’s opener against Notre Dame, but plenty of prospects still made the trek to Columbus to take in the Buckeyes’ 35-7 win over Youngstown State on Sept. 9. The following list of recruits was compiled using our own information, reports from other outlets and recruits themselves.

Beginning with committed prospects, the Buckeyes welcomed in Moore; Nave; Smith; Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star linebacker Garrett Stover (6-0, 195); Springfield, Ohio, four-star cornerback Aaron Scott (6-2, 190); Cleveland Glenville four-star cornerback Bryce West (5-11, 177); and

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago — 1988

Ohio State football fans were already delighted with the coaching techniques of first-year head coach John Cooper. And, according to several experts, fans would be every bit as delighted with Cooper when it came to recruiting homegrown talent to play for the Buckeyes in future seasons.

“I think you’re going to see a good recruiting year at Ohio State this year,” said prep football recruiting expert Tom Lemming. “Cooper himself is known to be an excellent recruiter and he has assembled an excellent recruiting staff. He should get everyone he wants in Ohio this year.”

Bill Kurelic of the Ohio Football Recruiting News agreed with Lemming.

“I’ve talked to a lot of coaches in the state, and they are impressed with Cooper and his staff,” Kurelic said. “They all give him a very high rating. I’d be real surprised if he doesn’t do well. I think he’ll get most of the kids he wants.”

30 Years Ago — 1993

Word around Columbus was that in order for Ohio State to recover from an exodus of quality offensive linemen after this football season, it better pick up the Pace. Orlando Pace, that is.

Regarded as one of the best offensive line prospects in the nation, Pace, a star at Sandusky (Ohio) High School, could be one of those rare linemen capable of impacting a team in his first year. He already had college size at 6-8 and 310 pounds. The natural skills were in place as well.

“The best way to describe Orlando is that he is simply a great athlete,” Sandusky head coach Larry Cook said. “If he was only 6-1 and 195 pounds, he’d still be an excellent recruit because of his athletic ability.

“A lot of guys who have great size are what I call ‘blobs.’ Orlando is no blob. The great ones need to have good feet, good use of their arms and mobility. This kid has it.”

25 Years Ago — 1998

Ohio State welcomed more than 30 football prospects to Ohio Stadium for its Sept. 12 home opener against Toledo.

A number of OSU’s verbal commitments, including Columbus Eastmoor defensive back Curtis Crosby (5-11, 185), Chillicothe (Ohio) Unioto tight end Ben Hartsock (6-4, 260), Columbus Upper Arlington running back Jesse Kline (6-2, 215), Lebanon, Ohio, running back Kelton Lindsay (6-1, 190), Dublin (Ohio) Coffman linebacker Fred Pagac Jr. (6-2, 230), Elyria (Ohio) Catholic linebacker Matt Wilhelm (6-5, 240) and St. Henry, Ohio, offensive lineman

Matt Zahn (6-7, 350) as well as Utica (Mich.) Ford quarterback Craig Krenzle (6-4, 215).

Most notable among the rest was Shaker Heights, Ohio, offensive lineman Adrien Clarke, who was weighing a scholarship offer from the Buckeyes as well as Michigan State. He got the red carpet treatment, spending several minutes on the field with the players and coaches during warmups. Later, the 6-6, 315-pound Clarke was asked whether he had committed to the Buckeyes.

“Not yet, but I’m thinking about it,” he said.

20 Years Ago — 2003

According to a report in The Plain Dealer, it was possible that Ohio State class of 2005 commitment athlete Jamario O’Neal (6-1, 190) would not see the field until October.

O’Neal transferred to Cleveland Glenville after encountering legal problems in Mansfield, where he had attended Mansfield High School.

He admitted to being present when he and two of his friends broke into a car and stole a stereo. He was sentenced to 60 days in the Richland County Juvenile Attention Center, all but five of which were suspended, along with 50 hours of community service.

Glenville head coach Ted Ginn Sr., father of standout Ohio senior Ted Ginn Jr., was attempting to gain guardianship of O’Neal.

“We have a court date set for Oct. 9, but there was talk about having that moved up,” Ginn Sr. told The Plain Dealer. “The paperwork is in and right now, we’re just waiting to go to court.”

15 Years Ago — 2008

The Buckeyes would need to take at least one quarterback in the 2010 recruiting class, and Devin Gardner of Inkster, Mich., was possibly at the top of their list. A 6-4, 196-pound prospect, Gardner was listed as a dual-threat quarterback who threw for 1,000 yards and rushed for 475 more as a sophomore for the University of Detroit Jesuit.

Now having transferred into the Inkster program, Gardner had drawn plenty of attention. He served as a ballboy for the Elite 11 quarterbacks camp – an honor that typically leads to being invited to participate in the camp the next year – and had worked out at camps hosted by both Ohio State and Michigan.

The Wolverines had offered him a scholarship, while the Buckeyes had not yet done so. He also boasted offers from Bowling Green, Cincinnati, Michigan State, Nebraska, Toledo and Wisconsin.

10 Years Ago — 2013

While Sept. 7 was not a huge recruiting visit weekend for the

Buckeyes, Ohio State did host at least one top prospect for its game with San Diego State. Sparta (N.J.) Pope John XXIII wide receiver Noah Brown was in attendance and got a firsthand look at the Buckeyes’ 42-7 beatdown of the Aztecs.

The 36th-ranked receiver in the 2014 class left Columbus without committing to Urban Meyer and his staff, but the Buckeyes remained one of the favorites to land the services of the 6-1, 190-pounder, who was also considering Rutgers, Vanderbilt and Virginia Tech.

“They’re still recruiting me hard,” Brown said. “There’s been a lot of controversy about whether or not I’ve gotten my written offer, which I have received. Really, nothing’s changed with them. I’m still in contact with them every week, and they still want me.”

Five Years Ago — 2018

When Meyer returned to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center the morning of Sept. 3 following a suspension for his handling of former assistant coach Zach Smith, his welcome back to football operations for Ohio State’s week of practice came with a surprise visitor.

Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson Jr. (6-7, 285) spent Labor Day in Columbus on campus with his family, recruiting assistant Ed Terwilliger and Meyer.

Johnson and his family made frequent trips up and down Interstate 71 to see the Buckeyes, but their latest day at the WHAC further showed the offensive tackle’s commitment to Ohio State following his pledge on June 28.

One Year Ago — 2022

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

Witten was the No. 240 overall prospect in 2024 and was listed as the No. 31 athlete, though he was being recruited as a tight end by Ohio State. His other offers included Akron, Iowa State, Kentucky, Michigan, Michigan State and Pittsburgh. Witten was in attendance for Ohio State’s win over Notre Dame on Sept. 3 and was expected to be back for the Buckeyes’ game against Wisconsin on Sept. 24.

“It was a great experience,” Witten said of the Notre Dame game. “Great atmosphere, excellent fans, great team.”

ASK AN ANALYST

with Marc Givler of Buckeye Huddle

You recently got to watch Fairburn (Ga.) Langston Hughes five-star quarterback Air Noland (6-3, 195) in person. What did you see from him, and what are your overall impressions of him as a prospect?

"This is actually the fourth or fifth time I've seen him in the last year, but he's very intelligent. He definitely has great leadership qualities. He reminds me, from a personality standpoint, of Jalen Hurts, kind of the way he carries himself. He has very good touch on the deep ball, he's generally a very accurate thrower, he does a great job generating spin. Obviously not his best performance on Sept. 2 (with three interceptions) nor was it his team's best performance this past weekend – they've won a lot of games over the years – so I think they're probably not very happy with how that one played out.

"But he's athletic – he's not Justin Fields or Terrelle Pryor or Braxton Miller – but he's very mobile. It's more of the type of mobility to extend plays. He really is a pass-first guy. To extend plays, he'll occasionally scramble and get those first downs. He has really good mobility. But again, it's not what he wants to do, if possible."

Outside of the offensive and defensive lines, what do you view as the most important positions left for Ohio State in 2024?

"They would like to add a fourth receiver. Now exactly who that is going to be at this point, I don't know. I don't think they know either. They've offered and are recruiting Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star wide receiver Chance Robinson (6-2, 190), but that could prove to be a tough flip (from Miami). They would gladly flip another player committed to Miami, Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep five-star wide receiver Joshisa Trader (6-1, 175). He's teammates with five-star

wide receiver and Ohio State commit Jeremiah Smith (6-3, 198). I think there's some hope there that maybe he'll take an official visit this fall, but we'll see how that goes. I think those are kind of long odds of getting him, but they're going to keep trying there.

"I think they would take another defensive back, particularly a safety. It's just a matter of who they can get. Buford, Ga., five-star safety KJ Bolden (6-1, 185) just committed to Florida State and Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna Prep four-star Zaquan Patterson (6-0, 185) is committed to Miami. They would certainly love to flip either of those guys, but is that particularly realistic right now? Probably not. Those are probably the biggest areas.

"And there's always room for those best available guys. If they can get some big-time linebacker or something like that, I'm sure they would at least look into that or consider that. But yeah, the trenches are big right now and maybe finding another safety."

What committed prospects in the 2024 class are you looking for to make a jump in their senior seasons?

Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward four-star offensive linemen Devontae (6-5, 288) and Deontae (6-6, 280) Armstrong I think have made really good improvements. Deontae, who is the (offensive) tackle, has really improved his body. He's a guy who was awfully thin last year. He's really filled out, starting to fill out very well. He looked tremendous a few weeks ago when I saw him. He looks like he can really be a legitimate left tackle down the road. And then his twin brother, Devontae, (he has) a guard body. He has kind of gone in the other direction, but in a good way. I thought he has trimmed down a little bit. And he's moving people, driving people off the ball.

Those two are guys who have high upside.

"One guy who I think continues to improve in his new position is Sunbury (Ohio) Big Walnut four-star linebacker Garrett Stover (6-0, 195). He was playing safety in high school, pretty much all his life, until last year. This is his first year playing linebacker. He's a tremendous athlete. A very physical, very fast kid. But he's starting to get better and better at just learning the position – not over-running so many plays, not being almost too aggressive with things. Just reading and reacting are things that he's improved on. I think that's another guy who has a lot of upside to continue to improve."

Nick Bosa recently signed the largest defensive contract in NFL history. Beyond simply seeing former Buckeyes get to the NFL, how much do recruits notice how much different college's alumni are making in the league?

"They definitely look at that. And if for some reason they don't, Ohio State will absolutely remind them of that via social media graphics or presentations on visits and things like that. This is 1,000 percent something Ohio State is going to use quite a bit on the recruiting trail for defensive linemen, and has in the past with guys like Joey Bosa when he signed his big deal, when Chase Young went No. 2 overall. So yes, these are things that Ohio State uses very effectively in recruiting.

"And these are things that kids look at, because with all the NIL stuff and everything else going on right now, it's really still about getting to the NFL. And not just getting there, but living out your dream of being a great NFL player. These types of things absolutely help in recruiting. You'll see a lot of recruiting graphics floating around the Internet from Ohio State about that."

Pickerington (Ohio) North three-star running back Sam Williams-Dixon (5-11, 203), as well as St. Clair in 2025.

"I expected them to win that game because the Bucks always have to take care of business," West told 247Sports. "I wasn't worried when YSU scored. I knew the Bucks would pick it up and figure out what's going on. The way guys were out there handling business today in those one-on-one coverage fade jump balls because they were being tested – I loved how they played tight coverage."

The only other 2024 prospects on hand were Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas three-star linebacker Nicholas Rodriguez (6-1, 190), who is committed to Missouri but holds an offer from Ohio State, and Stafford (Va.) Mountain View three-star defensive lineman Eric Mensah (6-3, 290), who is committed to Virginia Tech.

In 2025, notable prospects in attendance included Fishers (Ind.) Hamilton Southeastern three-star cornerback Mason Alexander (6-0, 161); Pickerington (Ohio) North three-star wide receiver Preston Bowman (6-0, 190); Clayton (Ohio) Northmont five-star cornerback Dorian Brew (6-2, 185); Davis; Pickerington (Ohio) North running back Michael Taylor (5-11, 185); and Clayton (Ohio) Northmont three-star defensive end Cedric Works (6-4, 220). One prospect that was expected to attend was Tampa (Fla.) Bay Tech five-star wide receiver Dallas Wilson (6-3, 180), who is committed to Oregon, though he ultimately did not end up attending the game.

In 2026, that list includes Pompano Beach (Fla.) Monarch four-star wide receiver Jabari Brady (6-2, 185); Loganville (Ga.) Grayson cornerback Demari Clemons (5-

10, 155); Carmel, Ind., quarterback Anthony Coellner (6-2, 175); and Avon Lake, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Maxwell Riley (6-5, 263).

As for Ohio State's home contest against Western Kentucky on Sept. 16, St. Clair will be in attendance again – as he plans to be for every home game this season – and he is expected to be joined by Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph four-star running back Bo Jackson (6-1, 190); Greenwich (Conn.) Brunswick School four-star safety Ethan Long (6-2, 185); and Roberts in 2025.

Other Notes And Tidbits

- Melissa, Texas, four-star defensive lineman Nigel Smith II (6-5, 260), a 2024 prospect who was offered by Ohio State, committed to Oklahoma on Sept. 8.

- A potential preferred walk-on addition for Ohio State in 2024 could be Westfield, Ind., offensive tackle Aidan Bryant (6-5, 285), who was reported as receiving a preferred walk-on offer following a visit to campus on Sept. 9. His only reported Division I offer is from Northern Illinois.

- Iowa added a verbal pledge on Sept. 8 from Cedar Rapids (Iowa) John F. Kennedy four-star offensive tackle Nick Brooks (6-7, 345), a 2025 prospect. He is the second commitment in the Hawkeyes' class along with Bettendorf (Iowa) Pleasant Valley three-star defensive lineman Joey VanWetzinga (6-2, 255).

For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting, be sure to visit BuckeyeSports.com, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

REDS FANS!

Follow The Reds Year-Round In Reds Report

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

1 Year (12 issues) — \$45.95



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

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

Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

For Faster Service On Credit Card Orders Call

1-800-760-2862

MSU's Tucker Suspended Amid Harassment Claims

Michigan State head football coach Mel Tucker was suspended by the university without pay on Sept. 10 less than 24 hours after a USA Today report revealed he faces allegations of sexually harassing renowned activist and rape survivor Brenda Tracy during an April 2022 phone call. Tucker, who had coached in Michigan State's 45-14 win against Richmond on Sept. 9, will be replaced by secondary coach Harlon Barnett until further notice, while former Spartans head coach Mark Dantonio will serve as associate head coach.

BIG TEN NOTES Patrick Engels

The announcement was made by interim university president Teresa Woodruff and athletic director Alan Hallar in a Sept. 10 press conference.

"As there have been new developments before the hearing, and with the best interest of everyone – including the student-athletes – and the university community in mind, I have suspended Mel Tucker without pay as a conditional interim measure," Hallar said. "While the investigation continues, I have made this decision with the support of university leadership."

According to the USA Today article, Tucker had been the subject of a university sexual harassment investigation which reviewed a Title IX complaint made by Tracy alleging the Spartans coach masturbated without her consent during a 36-minute phone call between her and Tucker on April 28, 2022.

The school hired an outside Title IX attorney to look into Tracy's complaint, and the investigation concluded on July 25. Tucker will face a university hearing from Oct. 5-6 that will determine if he violated the school's sexual harassment and exploitation policy.

Tracy, who operates a nonprofit company, Set The Expectation, that raises awareness of sexual misconduct, first met Tucker in August 2021 through a mutual friend. After the two reportedly "hit it off" and built a relationship, Michigan State paid her \$10,000 to come speak to his team about sexual abuse and misconduct that month, and welcomed her again to talk in April 2022, a meeting that ended with Tucker naming her an honorary captain for the Spartans' spring game. A few weeks after the second visit, Tucker called Tracy at 12:39 a.m. – one of 27 calls between the two – leading to the alleged act of sexual harassment.

"The idea that someone could know me and say they understand my trauma but then re-inflict that trauma on me is so disgusting to me, it's hard for me to even wrap my mind around it," Tracy told USA Today. "It's like he sought me out just to betray me."

Although Tucker admitted to masturbating on the phone call, saying that the two had a romantic relationship and were par-

ticipating in "phone sex," he has denied the allegations, claiming that Tracy's account of the event was overblown.

"Ms. Tracy's distortion of our mutually consensual and intimate relationship into allegations of sexual exploitation has really affected me," Tucker wrote in a March 22 letter to the investigator. "I am not proud of my judgment and I am having difficulty forgiving myself for getting into this situation, but I did not engage in misconduct by any definition."

Tucker is in his fourth season at Michigan State and signed a 10-year, \$95 million contract in November 2021. If the hearing in October does confirm Tucker was in violation of the school's policy and the university decides to fire him for cause, his contract would be voided, and the school would not owe him what's left in his remaining contract.

Petitti Says Oregon, UW Provide Strong Footprint

Big Ten commissioner Tony Petitti provided an explanation behind the unanimous decision on Aug. 4 to admit Oregon and Washington into the conference, citing the two universities' strong academic and athletic standings as well as the rapidly changing landscape of college athletics as the two main reasons for the historic partnership.

In a Sept. 7 interview with The Athletic, Petitti said he and his cabinet were not focused on further westward expansion until news broke on July 29 that Colorado would be leaving the Pac-12 for the Big 12 in 2024. This move, according to the commissioner, created urgency for the Big Ten and the two West Coast schools to come to an agreement.

"The Colorado move to the Big 12 increased some inbound conversations," Petitti said. "We then spent time talking about that with the group of our presidents, then involved the full group of presidents and the athletic directors just to sort of pursue what a structure would look like and (to discuss) whether it was real interest from Oregon and Washington. Those conversations all took place early during the week. What obviously changed was just the circumstances around it. It created a different time frame."

According to The Athletic, Petitti and his staff worked to perform their due diligence on the two universities after the initial conversations, evaluating Oregon and Washington's academic and athletic status. With the two schools both belonging to the Association of American Universities – an academic-based association consisting of 71 research institutions – and possessing high athletic performance rates, the dialogue between the two sides picked up.

"All those boxes were getting checked relatively quickly," Petitti said.

Petitti said the Big Ten remained in constant communication with the two Pac-12 schools starting on Aug. 3 and into the morning hours of Aug. 4, when they worked out an agreement for Oregon and Washington to become "partial-share members" of the league's historic \$7 billion media rights deal with CBS, FOX and NBC, earning an

average annual revenue in the low- to mid-\$30 million range.

This deal all but solidified the partnership, where the two universities were unanimously admitted into the conference later on Aug. 4.

"So that was ongoing the whole week, and then it really accelerated when the interest became real to the point where we had to have something concrete to say, 'Hey, they really do want to come here, and this is the path,' " Petitti said. "Then we needed to go to our membership and make sure that this was the right thing to do, and we communicated that. All of this was going on late Thursday night (Aug. 3) into Friday morning (Aug. 4)."

With Oregon and Washington set to join fellow Pac-12 schools USC and UCLA beginning in 2024, Petitti said his conference's westward expansion will help the Big Ten emerge as an athletic and academic powerhouse for years to come.

"We want to make sure that the system provides the best access for Big Ten teams, and we have a very deep league that can compete nationally across many members in any given year," he said. "We're extremely happy where we are."

Petitti Committed To No Divisions Amid Expansion

In addition to detailing the events that led up to the admittance of Oregon and Washington to the Big Ten, Petitti also commented on the future of conference scheduling. The soon-to-be 18-member league is committing to the same flex protect plus model it created in June while preparing to welcome USC and UCLA to the conference.

Under this model, which is planned to be implemented only for football in 2024 and 2025, each Big Ten team is given up to three protected opponents per season, a move that was intended to preserve historic conference rivalries. Each team will also get the opportunity to play every program in the conference at least once over the two years.

This framework, according to the Big Ten commissioner, is a much more efficient way to handle college football scheduling in his conference than having two extensive divisions, which, in his mind, "don't really work."

"They're very difficult to balance because they'd have to be large," Petitti said. "And secondly, if you're playing nine conference games and you're breaking into divisions, you're playing so much against your own division that you're not really crossing over. The inability to see other teams and really connect the conference is not ideal. So there's a competitive aspect to it, but there's also a practicality."

"We want our members to see each other as frequently as we can make it happen. The system that we have does that. Divisions would make that way more complicated."

As Buckeye Sports Bulletin went to press, Petitti had yet to introduce a concrete plan regarding the scheduling of non-football sports. During Gene Smith's retirement press conference on Aug. 9, the

BIG 2023 Standings

East Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Ohio State	1	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Rutgers	1	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Maryland	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Michigan	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Michigan State	0	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Penn State	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Indiana	0	1	0.000	1	1	0.500

West Division

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Minnesota	1	0	1.000	2	0	1.000
Iowa	0	0	0.000	2	0	1.000
Illinois	0	0	0.000	1	1	0.500
Purdue	0	0	0.000	1	1	0.500
Wisconsin	0	0	0.000	1	1	0.500
Northwestern	0	1	0.000	1	1	0.500
Nebraska	0	1	0.000	0	2	0.000

Sept. 8 Games

Indiana 41, Indiana State 7
Kansas 34, Illinois 23

Sept. 9 Games

Ohio State 35, Youngstown State 7
Penn State 63, Delaware 7
Colorado 36, Nebraska 14
Purdue 24, Virginia Tech 17
Iowa 20, Iowa State 13
Michigan 35, UNLV 7
Michigan State 45, Richmond 14
Northwestern 38, UTEP 7
Maryland 38, Charlotte 20
Minnesota 25, Eastern Michigan 6
Rutgers 36, Temple 7
Washington State 31, Wisconsin 22

Sept. 15 Game

Virginia at Maryland, 7 p.m.

Sept. 16 Games

Minnesota at North Carolina, TBA
Georgia Southern at Wisconsin, noon
Louisville at Indiana, noon
Penn State at Illinois, noon
Western Michigan at Iowa, 2:30 p.m.
Northwestern at Duke, 3:30 p.m.
Virginia Tech at Rutgers, 3:30 p.m.
Western Kentucky at **Ohio State**, 4 p.m.
Washington at Michigan State, 5 p.m.
Northern Illinois at Nebraska, 7 p.m.
Syracuse at Purdue, 7:30 p.m.
Bowling Green at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.

Ohio State athletic director mentioned he has conversed with Big Ten leaders about potentially "packaging" conference games, where a team will play multiple programs from the West Coast on one road trip to avoid unnecessary travel.

"That's already been talked about," Smith said. "It's something we need to consider. If our women's soccer team is going out to play UCLA, then they should have them stay (in California) and play USC. But now with Oregon and Washington coming in, we kind of have to re-evaluate and see if those frameworks still work."

PSU LB Carter Charged With Marijuana Possession

Penn State sophomore linebacker Ab-

dul Carter was charged with misdemeanor marijuana possession on Sept. 5, according to several reports. The charges stem from an incident that occurred in Carter's dorm room on Aug. 8, where university police were dispatched after a fire alarm sounded in Carter's residence.

Upon further investigation of the living space, Penn State police determined that the alarm was triggered because Carter had been smoking marijuana in his dorm room. According to police, the second-year Nittany Lion linebacker admitted to using the drug and handed a baggie containing marijuana to officers. Nearly a month later, Carter was charged with one count of marijuana-small amount for personal use.

"We are aware of the charges against Abdul Carter," the university said in a statement released to WJAC-TV in Johnstown, Pa. "These alleged actions do not reflect the values and standards of our program and will be addressed. We will not comment any further as this is an ongoing legal matter."

Carter, a former four-star prospect out of Glenside (Pa.) La Salle College, is coming off a stellar freshman campaign when he led the Nittany Lions with 6½ sacks and ranked second on the team in both tackles (56) and tackles for loss (10½). He became just the second freshman in Penn State history to record 10 or more tackles for loss and six or more sacks, joining current Nittany Lions defensive line coach Deion Barnes, who accomplished the feat in 2012.

Prior to publication, it was unclear if Carter will face any form of discipline from

Penn State this season. He appeared in the Nittany Lions' season opener against West Virginia on Sept. 2, logging just one tackle and also played in their Week 2 contest against Delaware, recording four tackles (three solo) and a quarterback hurry.

"As you know, we don't talk about those things publicly," PSU coach James Franklin said on Sept. 6. "Obviously, it's being handled and dealt with internally. This is new to you guys. It's not new to us, as you can imagine."

Maymi Hired As U-M Men's Tennis Coach

As the collegiate tennis season is set to get under way in September, Michigan will be doing so with a new head coach. Former associate head coach Sean Maymi will return to the school's men's tennis program and serve as the team's 16th head coach.

"We are thrilled for Sean Maymi to return to Michigan and lead our men's tennis program," AD Warde Manuel said. "Sean played a key role in eight of our NCAA tournament appearances and has seen success wherever he's been. We look forward to welcoming Sean, Samantha and their family back to Ann Arbor and to supporting the future of this incredible program."

Maymi, a native of Yorktown, Va., comes back to Michigan after a five-year stint as head coach of Nebraska's men's tennis program. The Cornhuskers compiled just a combined 12-27 (.308) record in his first three seasons at the helm, but they rebounded with successful stints over the last two seasons, securing 10 conference victories along with a No. 52 finish in the

Intercollegiate Tennis Association national rankings, the third highest in program history.

"I am beyond grateful for this opportunity to lead the men's tennis program," Maymi said. "Thank you to Warde and Elizabeth (Heinrich) for all their hard work during this process. Ann Arbor is a very special place for me and my family, and I can't wait to get to work. Go Blue!"

Prior to his time in Lincoln, Neb., Maymi compiled two strong tenures as Michigan's associate head coach. Manning the role from 2006-2011 and 2015-2018, he helped lead the Wolverines to eight NCAA tournament appearances in his nine seasons. Maymi earned the ITA Midwest Regional Assistant Coach of the Year in 2007-08 after helping guide the team to a 20-7 record, and in his second stint, he helped lead Michigan to three consecutive 20-win seasons along with three straight top-25 ITA finishes.

As a player, Maymi was a four-year letter winner and two-time captain at North Florida, where he helped the Ospreys to two NCAA Division II national championship appearances in 1999 and 2001. He also served as an assistant coach for both the men's and women's tennis programs during the 2001-2002 season before earning his degree in communications and advertising in 2003.

18 BIG Players Make ITA Preseason Rankings

The ITA released their first singles and doubles rankings of the season on Sept. 7, a list that included 18 men's tennis players

from six different Big Ten schools.

Ohio State led the way with five representatives in singles and doubles play. The Buckeyes had fifth-year Justin Boulais (No. 9), sophomore Alexander Bernard (No. 10), senior JJ Tracy (No. 12), fifth-year Robert Cash (No. 71) and sophomore Jack Anthrop (No. 81) featured for singles, with Cash/Tracy (No. 19) also being recognized for doubles.

Closely behind Ohio State was Michigan State with four representatives: sophomore Ozan Baris (No. 25), graduate Ronald Hohmann III (No. 37) and graduate Sebastien Collard (No. 110) for singles, and Baris/junior Max Sheldon (No. 2) and Collard/Hohmann (No. 52) for doubles.

Michigan and Illinois were also represented for both singles and doubles play. Senior Gavin Young (No. 31) and junior Will Cooksey (No. 85) earned singles rankings for the Wolverines with Young/senior Nino Ehrensneider receiving a No. 25 ranking in doubles, while junior Karlis Ozolins (No. 11), senior Alex Petrov (No. 54) and senior Hunter Heck (No. 74) were ranked in singles for the Illini, with Ozolins/Heck also ranking No. 6 in doubles.

Rounding out the Big Ten's list of ranked players is Wisconsin, which featured one Badger for singles and two for doubles. Senior Mihailo Popovic earned a No. 83 preseason ranking for singles play, while the tandem of graduate Gabriel Huber and sophomore Michale Minasyan ranked No. 12 in doubles.

We are committed to your health and safety





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



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



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



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



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

Holtmann Not Surprised By Big Ten Expansion

Ohio State head coach Chris Holtmann offered his opinion on Big Ten expansion in an Aug. 31 podcast interview, stating that the league did not consider the impact the change would have on college basketball when making their decision to admit Oregon and Washington.

COURT REPORT Patrick Engels

Appearing on Land-Grant Holy Land's "Bucketheads" with Connor Lemons and Justin Golba, the coach stated that the decision to expand to 18 universities was one driven primarily by the allure and reach of college football. Holtmann said this change may put non-football sports such as men's basketball at a disadvantage due to travel, but he also sees it as something he cannot contest, as the change is merely a reflection of the direction of college athletics.

"The obvious challenge is the schedule and the travel," Holtmann said. "You guys know and we know that while basketball is important to universities, in these kinds of conversations, it is not a consideration. Even the blue bloods, the basketball blue bloods, obviously Kentucky, they've been in the SEC forever, but everything is dictated by college football right now. I see it as just a necessary part of the evolution of college athletics."

Holtmann pointed to the difficult travel logistics as something that can put college basketball, along with the NCAA's Olympic sports, at a major disadvantage compared to football, as they will be required to make cross-country trips to Oregon, USC, UCLA and Washington starting in 2024. These

long road trips, which can sometimes fall on weekdays, have become a major issue of concern for him and his colleagues, prompting some coaches to voice their displeasure on the matter.

"You could certainly argue that it's not in the best interest of athletes with the travel," Holtmann said. "You could certainly make that argument. I would understand where you're coming from, and I've heard coaches make that argument, just because of the sheer travel."

Amid these apprehensions, Holtmann sees an avenue where his team and sport can return to a more reasonable schedule format that benefits the non-football student-athletes.

"I think at some point, we'll see football probably break away and then we'll (see) more regional scheduling potentially," he said. "I just don't know how far away that's going to be."

Coveted 2025 Five-Star Visiting OSU This Fall

Huntington (W.Va.) Prep five-star shooting guard Darryn Peterson (6-5, 195) – one of the more highly-touted prospects in the 2025 class – is set to make his second unofficial visit to Ohio State on Oct. 21, according to The Columbus Dispatch.

Peterson, who transferred to the basketball-focused West Virginia preparatory school from Cuyahoga Valley (Ohio) Christian Academy in August, is the nation's No. 2 overall prospect and top-ranked shooting guard in his class. Prior to the transfer, he was also tabbed as the No. 1 overall player in Ohio. He holds scholarship offers from several high-profile programs, including Baylor, Duke, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Texas and UCLA.

Peterson enters his first season at Huntington Prep with an already impressive list of accolades. In his sophomore campaign with the Royals, he recorded 31.7 points per game, earned first-team all-state Division II honors and received the third-most votes for Ohio's Mr. Basketball award. He also took home a gold medal in June while competing for Team USA during the FIBA U16 Men's Americas Championship, earning all-tournament honors after averaging 16.8 points, 3.8 rebounds and 3.7 assists per game.

Ohio State has been in heavy pursuit of the five-star shooting guard – who grew up in northeast Ohio – for the past two years, offering him a scholarship as a freshman at CVCA in August of 2021, months before he even logged a game on the high school level. Holtmann and his staff hosted the now-junior standout during the football program's game with Wisconsin last season and sat courtside to watch him compete for the AAU program Phenom United at the Adidas 3SSB circuit in Rock Hill, S.C., from July 5-9.

"My relationship with them is great," Peterson told On3 in July. "They're big on hometown hero talk. They text me and let me know what they see from me in the games, what I need to work on and how I did."

Peterson's father, Darryl – the CEO and director of Phenom United who also played

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2024 who have issued a verbal commitment to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
John Mobley Jr.	G	6-0	150	★★★★	Mt. Pleasant (Utah) Wasatch Academy
Colin White	SF	6-6	180	★★★	Ottawa (Ohio) Glandorf

for Akron from 2001-2005 and recorded 1,156 career points – said his son is heavily considering playing for his hometown team, despite the increasing national attention.

"Back in my day, a player like Darryn had to go to Duke or Kentucky or North Carolina to be successful," Darryl Peterson told the Dispatch. "Well, not anymore. It's not like that anymore with NIL, things like that. We're close-knit, hometown people. We've been in Ohio all our lives. It's important to us that Ohio State knows that they're in the top conversation."

Moreno Also Visiting Oct. 21

Peterson is not the only highly-regarded 2025 prospect who has planned a trip to Ohio State this fall. The Buckeyes are also slated to host Georgetown (Ky.) Great Crossing four-star center Malachi Moreno (6-11, 210) for an unofficial visit on Oct. 21.

The Buckeyes will be the seventh stop on Moreno's recruiting trail this fall. The big man has also scheduled unofficial visits to Arkansas on Sept. 9, Cincinnati on Sept. 16, Notre Dame on Sept. 23, Tennessee on Sept. 30, Michigan on Oct. 14 and Kentucky on Oct. 28, while he will have an official visit with Iowa on Oct. 7.

The four-star center is coming off a productive sophomore season at Great Crossing where he averaged 14.8 points and 11.4 rebounds per game while shooting 65.3 percent from the field. Those efforts, along with his 20 double-doubles, allowed him to be tabbed as the nation's 57th-best prospect and seventh-best center, as well as the No. 1 overall player in Kentucky. Moreno, who holds offers from prominent schools like Alabama, Florida and Michigan, was offered by Ohio State last August.

As with Peterson, Ohio State has kept tabs on Moreno throughout the summer. Holtmann and members of his staff were on hand to observe the junior compete for his high school at the 2023 Midwest Live recruiting showcase held at the Cedar Point Sports Complex in Sandusky, Ohio, from June 23-25, while they also watched him play for the AAU program Indiana Elite at the Adidas 3SSB circuit. This display of commitment from Holtmann and Ohio State, according to Moreno, goes a long way in showing how highly the program thinks of him as he heads deeper into his recruitment.

"Ohio State talks about how high of a priority I am for them," Moreno told Stock Risers. "Coach Holtmann is from the same place I am from in Lexington (Nicholasville, Ky.), so he knows exactly where I come from."

Buckeyes Pivoting After Burns Cancels Visit

Ohio State secured backcourt and wing depth for the class of 2024 – earning pledg-

es from Mount Pleasant (Utah) Wasatch Academy four-star combo guard John Mobley Jr. (6-0, 150) and Ottawa (Ohio) Glandorf three-star small forward Colin White (6-6, 180) – but it has yet to add a big man who can bolster its frontcourt.

That pursuit took a hit when Houston PSAT-XEA Academy three-star center Trent Burns (7-3, 210) removed the Buckeyes from his list of preferred programs on Sept. 7, a list that now includes Missouri, Rice, Tulsa and Xavier.

Burns – one of the more intriguing prospects in the class who has seen his stock rise this summer after displaying his unique combination of size and shooting – was originally scheduled to visit Ohio State from Oct. 7-9. But with the center now trimming his list of preferred schools down and Ohio State missing the cut, that trip will no longer happen.

The Buckeyes were a late entry in the Burns sweepstakes, offering him a scholarship on June 26, and they were set to be the final stop on his recruiting trail, following Missouri (Sept. 1-3), Rice (Sept. 8-10) and Xavier (Sept. 22-24).

Despite the recent setback, Ohio State is still in the mix to land a pair of 2024 frontcourt four-stars in Napa (Calif.) Prolific Prep center Aiden Sherrell (6-10, 215) and Hillside (N.J.) Patrick School small forward Jaiden Glover (6-6, 190).

Sherrell, a top-40 prospect and No. 6 center in the nation, placed the Buckeyes on his top five list on July 22 and paid a visit to Ohio State on June 11. The coveted center, who is also considering Alabama, Texas, Oklahoma and Michigan State, said during the spring that he has a "great" relationship with Coach Holtmann and his staff.

Glover, the No. 62 overall prospect and No. 16 small forward in the class who was offered by Ohio State on May 11, included Ohio State in his top eight on July 21 – a list that also includes Creighton, Illinois, Providence, Seton Hall, St. Joseph's and Villanova. The New Jersey native indicated in June that he planned to take a visit to Columbus "soon," but he has yet to do so this summer. Nonetheless, Glover mentioned that he has built a strong relationship with the Buckeye staff and has been enticed by the program's recent rich NBA pipeline.

"My relationship with Ohio State is good," Glover told 247Sports in June. "(A visit) has been in talks, but I'm not sure exactly when yet. (Assistant coach) Jack Owens is recruiting me, and he says he loves my game. He also sent (me) a shot chart of how my April went which stood out. All together the relationship is really good, and he shows how he's invested in me."

"The reason they are on my list is mainly because I really like that they've had a lot of recent players who have been drafted."



TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

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

614-886-9331
foreverfitswan@yahoo.com

Women's Volleyball Working Through Changes

By **GREG WILSON**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Last season, for the first time since 2004, the Ohio State women's volleyball team made it to the regional final, eventually suffering a 3-1 loss to Texas in a hard-fought, back-and-forth match that featured a veteran Buckeye roster with 10 seniors and no freshmen on the team.

Part of what allowed them to go on that tournament run was the camaraderie the group had built over years of playing with each other and being together off the court. Senior outside hitter Emily Londot and senior middle blocker Rylee Rader, veterans on this year's team, said as much.

"Last season we had a lot of success because I think that group played three years together," Rader told Buckeye Sports Bulletin. "We knew what each other needed on the court because we played so long together. We all just knew the common goal that we had, and we all just wanted to work for each other so we could win."



Rylee Rader

When players jell together on and off the court, in-match communication and pushing each other so the team can reach its highest potential become second nature. For the Buckeyes, reaching the regional final was expected because they knew how good they could be together. But after the deep tournament run last season, that veteran roster was largely broken up with several players graduating and others transferring to new schools. Of the 15 players on this year's roster, only eight are returnees, and just three received significant playing time last season.

Six of the eight players the Buckeyes lost were to the transfer portal, and five of them were consistent contributors for the team. Libero Kylie Murr is now at Minnesota, and setter Mac Podraza is now at Penn State, making them the only two to transfer within the Big Ten. Outside hitters Jenaisya Moore left for Tennessee, Gabby Gonzales for Oregon, and Adria Powell for Clemson, while setter Sarah White transferred to Missouri.

That type of roster exodus would normally be cause for concern, but as Podraza and head coach Jen Flynn Oldenburg explained in December, the transfers resulted from a roster crunch caused by a lack of available scholarships that had previously been afforded due to COVID-19.

"I have nothing but love and respect for Ohio State," Podraza said. "I never grew up a Buckeye and never thought I would end up being a Buckeye, but I could not be happier that I am a Buckeye, and I will always be a Buckeye. It came down to the fact that I came in with these girls and now four years is up and it's time to leave with these girls. The scholarship money just isn't there, so it is what it is."

"COVID really did a number on every program, good and bad," Oldenburg added. "In a situation like this, you want to

keep them all. Graduation is always tough and moving on is always tough, and you have an additional year where there isn't the grace that you had last year where you can go over the scholarship limit. That really changed how every program handles and manages their roster.

"Mac said it. I'm so fortunate that they're Buckeyes and they're part of this program and they always will be, and I'm excited for their next step even though it's not here, as much as I want them all to stay. It's not possible."

Replacing those outgoing transfers are five freshmen added to the team along with two transfers – Kamiah Gibson, a sophomore setter who came from West Virginia, and Anna Morris, a junior middle blocker and opposite hitter who came from Northwestern, but the pair have combined to play in just two sets this season.

Last season's regional final team had years to build relationships so they could come together on the court and win matches, but this year's team has to try to replicate that togetherness without those prior bonds. Despite that challenge, the team leaders say it isn't an issue for them this season, and they are confident in what this team has been able to build with each other already.

"Our culture is great," Rader said. "We're getting over the hump of, yes, our culture is great, but now we have to push each other – which we are pushing each other – but taking that next step of what we can be as a team."

Londot told BSB that while last year was great for them, there isn't any looking back at this point. She acknowledged that it can be tough to move on – especially from a roster turnover as dramatic as Ohio State's – but it's part of the environment of playing a sport in college.

"Every time there's a new team, you lose players, and you gain players, and we're really just focused on the present and the new seven girls that we have on our team," she said. "We have 15 total,



Jen Flynn Oldenburg

and us 15 are really jelling together and working to the goals we set as a team."

Before the season began, Rader and Londot agreed that it was an overseas trip they all took together that helped them get to this point so quickly, traveling to Greece and Italy early in the summer to play matches against several national teams.

Londot said the team won and lost matches, tested throughout the trip. They lost a match to the Italian Senior "B" Team – a match she called a great challenge – but beat the U19 Italian team to finish the trip. It was an important journey for them when it came to on the court, but Rader said the experience was worth much more than that to them.

"Honestly just traveling together, just being in that time zone, and just experiencing the things we did on that trip

– whether it was going to a small city in Greece, or walking around to the shops, or going to the beach and having team dinners," she said. "I think that brought us closer together because we got to get to know each other a lot better."

And that showed early in the season.

The Buckeyes began their season in Northern Kentucky for the NKU Tournament and came back to Columbus with a 3-0 record, sweeping Northern Kentucky and East Tennessee State University and beating Bowling Green in five sets.



Emily Londot

The seven newcomers – including Gibson and Morris as well as freshmen Eloise Brandewie, Grace Egan, Kaitlyn Hoffman, Lauren Murphy and Mia Tuman – combined for 37 sets played, 49 kills, 136 assists and 52 digs in those three matches, showing they can make an impact early, with Brandewie, Egan and Tuman specifically standing out.

"For the new faces on the court, just communication with each other is super important," Rader said. "Emily and I are trying to communicate with the new players who step on the court so we have the feeling of each other so we can work together as a team."

"Every single day in practice we're working hard to build that trust on the court," Londot added. "We've seen so much growth since the beginning of the summer to now. It used to be really quiet on the court, but now everyone is getting comfortable using their voice and we're starting to trust each other, and I'm super excited to see how far we can take that."

The experienced players on the team have been happy with how the younger players have adjusted to the new environ-

ment, and they feel that even without the experience of a deep playoff run under their belts, they can still contribute this season. They said it took some time to learn that they can use their voices to help coach them in practice, but they are to the point where everyone is comfortable with that.

"We've been getting more comfortable with each other about everything at practice, and the eight returners stepping up and calling the new people out on what we have as a standard here and holding that standard," Londot said. "That's helped everyone be on the same page, and that's what is really going to propel us forward."

After they won their first three matches, the Buckeyes returned home to the Covelli Center for the first time this season, a pair of 3-1 losses to then-No. 11 Georgia Tech from Sept. 1-2. After losing to the Yellow Jackets, the Buckeyes took a road trip to California to play then-No. 5 Stanford and then-No. 6 Oregon, with Ohio State falling 3-0 to the Cardinal and 3-1 to the Ducks.

But looming on the schedule is a date in Austin, Texas, against the Longhorns on Sept. 14, a match which Rader said they are looking forward to. It's a chance for the Buckeyes to avenge a loss in last season's NCAA tournament but can also serve as a measuring stick for where the program stands after the roster reset.

The goal for every team every season is to win a national championship – which Londot acknowledged – but with so much season ahead before they have to worry about the tournament, they want to worry about being able to make the tournament first. So the team is taking each day as it comes and trying to improve wherever it may be possible.

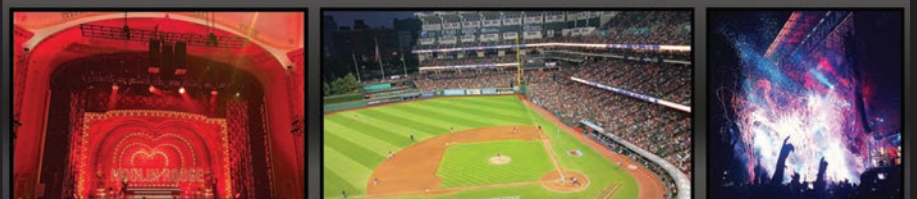
The Buckeyes feel that they have already formed the relationships needed to get there, and they are only going to get more time to build on that.

MAIN EVENT

TICKET SERVICE

Tickets to Events Anywhere!

Concerts • Theatre • Sporting Events



OSU Football & Basketball • Cleveland Browns • Blue Jackets

Nationwide Arena • Schottenstein Arena • NFL • NBA • NHL

We buy OSU football tickets!

614-488-9957 • 888-842-5877

ticketsohio@gmail.com

1890 Northwest Blvd., #220, Columbus, OH 43212

Buckeyes Have Questions On Both Sides Of Ball

Two games in. Two wins. And we still know less about this Ohio State football team than what we know.

We know now that Kyle McCord is the quarterback. He's separated himself from Devin Brown. And we know that McCord can be solid. That much is clear. He appears more comfortable with each additional series. Through two games, he's 34 of 53 for 497 yards and three touchdowns.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

His quarterback efficiency improved from 115.4 vs. Indiana to 227.9 vs. Youngstown State. For comparison, C.J. Stroud was 182.4 for his career, and Justin Fields was 179.1 at Ohio State. But the opponents to date blur what we really know about McCord. Is he a quarterback who can be a winner on the national stage in the playoffs? We should have a lot better read on that by Week 7, after Ohio State has played both Notre Dame and Penn State.

We also don't know whether this defense will be better in year two for the much ballyhooed coordinator Jim Knowles. Indiana and Youngstown State cannot provide that answer, and there have been some concerns. YSU was 3 for 3 on third downs in an opening scoring drive, and the defensive line hasn't exactly been a Columbus version of the Sack Exchange.

Yet there are points of encouragement. Coverage from the defensive backfield has been tight. I've especially liked junior cornerback Denzel Burke. Most importantly, the Buckeyes have yielded just 10 points. Sure, the competition hasn't been much, but you cannot do much better than allowing just one field goal and one touchdown

in two games.

We know on the defensive line that J.T. Tuimoloau has been very, very good, but not dominating good the way he flashed his talent against Penn State last year or the way Ohio State fans got spoiled in watching the Bosa brothers and Chase Young. We don't know yet Tuimoloau's ceiling in his third year in the program.

What is sure to help the defense, and Tuimoloau, is if the Mike Hall Jr. we've been seeing at defensive tackle is the Mike Hall Jr. we'll see all season. I gushed about him midway through last season, but then his play seemed to fall into the background amid shoulder problems. He's been back making a presence this year.

On the offensive side, is five touchdowns on nine possessions against Youngstown State good enough? I think not. Remember, YSU is at the FCS level, formerly known as Division I-AA. Three drives ended in punts, and a fourth was stopped on downs. (I'm not including the failure the last time Ohio State took possession, with just 25 seconds left in the game.)

Yet we did see a crisper passing game in Week 2. And through two weeks, it's clear that the running game is in good hands. TreVeyon Henderson, healthy again, is looking like the TreVeyon Henderson of two years ago. He averaged 11.2 yards on just five carries against Youngstown State.

The surprise addition has been Chip Trayanum, the fullback/tailback and former defensive player. And while we haven't seen a lot of Miyan Williams yet, I have no concern about him. Williams will perform when needed. Ohio State just needs to keep Henderson and Williams healthy this season.

On offense, my major question is whether McCord will continue to show strong improvement. He may. It's just too early to know.

On defense, I'm waiting on some real tests to feel confident on whether this defense will be better – better enough to beat



SONNY BROCKWAY

ANSWERING THE CALL — Ohio State quarterback Kyle McCord looked more poised in his second start of the season against Youngstown State, but questions still exist for the offense that has struggled to put up points.

Michigan and provide a few more needed stops in the playoffs.

For that, I'm holding judgment until the Penn State game on Oct. 21. The Lions' sophomore quarterback from Medina, Ohio, Drew Allar, looks to be living up to the billing that had some rankings listing him as the No. 1 quarterback recruit in the country two years ago.

Football season would be boring if we knew everything right away.

About Brown

While it sure looks like McCord has separated himself from Devin Brown, we've seen some good, and improving, things from Brown in his limited play.

He's made some poor plays. But he's made some very good plays as well. He led the Buckeyes on a 13-play, 60-yard touchdown drive in the second quarter, and a five-play, 61-yard touchdown drive in the third quarter.

Ohio State will not be green at quarterback if Brown is called into duty down the line. That's a good thing.

Tomczak Sighting

It was weird hearing the name of Tomczak in Ohio Stadium again after so many years.

Graybeards will remember Mike Tomczak as the guy who followed Art Schlichter in 1982, became a three-year starter in overcoming a brief benching his sophomore year, and then lasted in the NFL for 15 seasons after going undrafted back when the NFL draft had 14 rounds.

The Tomczak on the field against the Buckeyes was Youngstown State receiver Max Tomczak, who had three catches for

53 yards. He's Mike Tomczak's nephew. Both played their high school football in the Chicago area. In looking up some info about Max Tomczak, I got a kick out of this 2021 headline in the Chicago Tribune:

"Max Tomczak is having a breakout season for Lincoln-Way East. His uncle, Mike, played for the Super Bowl Bears. Both have stories to tell."

The elder Tomczak is "an advisor to the head coach" at Youngstown State.

Missing Plays

I wish if they wanted to speed the games, which had grown too long, the rule-makers would have shortened the play clock or taken other measures at the same time to keep the same number of plays.

The biggest change is that the clock now runs after first downs, like in the NFL, unless there is less than two minutes remaining in a half. Also, teams can no longer call consecutive timeouts (that's a good change). And if there is a penalty at the end of the first or third quarter, there will not be an untimed down.

Through two games, there have been an average of 120 plays a game (121 vs. Indiana and 119 vs. YSU). That's down from 129.5 plays a game last year. But historically speaking, the change is more profound.

Buckeye games averaged 140.5 plays in 2021, 139.9 in 2020, 139.3 in 2019 and a whopping 150.7 plays in 2018. I went as far back as the beginning of the Jim Tressel era and couldn't find a time when there were so few plays. The high was the 150.7 plays a game in 2018, with 80.8 of those by the offense. The low was 124.6 plays a game in 2006.

A Home for Hands that Build.™

The Strait & Lamp Group

Strait & Lamp Lumber Dublin Millwork Linworth Lumber

5th Ave. Lumber S&L Contracting Lumbercraft

www.straitandlamp.com

The Road To Notre Dame Gets Steeper Every Game

I kind of like the way Ohio State's early-season schedule is set up and is playing out.

The opener with Indiana, a conference road test, may have proved a little tougher than some had anticipated – Buckeye fans anyway – and it helped identify some problems that the Buckeyes may have had to start the season. Then came a game against FCS member Youngstown State to provide an opportunity to work out some of the kinks that had popped up against the Hoosiers. Up next is a date with Western Kentucky, a bit tougher of an opponent that will (hopefully) help build the team up for the much-anticipated rematch with Notre Dame on Sept. 23.

In retrospect, I wasn't quite as concerned with Ohio State's performance against the Hoosiers as I was initially.

Kyle McCord seemed to get stronger as the game went on; the running backs, led by Chip Trayanum, were adequate if not spectacular; and the lack of production by Ohio State's two star receivers may have been more of a product of the way Indiana was playing defense than an indictment of the Buckeyes. In fact, it may have actually been an endorsement of McCord's play, as he exploited that Hoosier defense by taking advantage of the availability of third receiver Julian Fleming and tight end Cade Stover for a combined 11 completions and 156 yards.

The defense played well, allowing IU just 153 yards and three points.

I think the critics are starting to realize that, with the new clock rules, a 20-point win over a conference opponent might not be quite as bad as it looks.

About the only major concern I had coming out of that game was the inconsistent play of the offensive line.

Fast-forward a week and most of those areas were improved on against Youngstown State. Star receivers Marvin Harrison Jr. and Emeka Egbuka were much more visible, with a combined 12 receptions for 254 yards and three touchdowns. McCord continued to get stronger with a 14-for-20 performance for 258 yards, the three scores to Harrison and Egbuka and no interceptions or sacks. With the rushing game, TreVeyon Henderson started to look more like the Henderson of old, averaging 11.2 yards per carry and scoring twice.

The defense allowed a big play or two from the Penguins but still gave up only 234 yards and seven points and turned in more of the big plays I thought were lacking in game one, although it was still a fairly modest total. The Buckeyes doubled their sack total from the first game with two, and Denzel Burke had an interception. Ohio State again spread the tackles around, with Tommy Eichenberg leading the way with a modest six stops, but eight players in total recorded four or more stops.

About the only area that remains a concern is, again, the offensive line, which I would classify as inconsistent. The big guys have had their moments – witness the runs by Henderson, who, as I have previously indicated, needs some help from the line to be truly effective – but will need marked improvement as the competition gets stiffer.

I am still puzzled by Ryan Day and his handling of the quarterbacks. He remains noncommittal about whether McCord is his starter.

"We'll look at it over this weekend and try to see if he's taken that step and where we're going," he said of McCord after the YSU game. "I'm not ready to make a decision right now."

When pressed on the subject, he added, "We'll see. We'll look at the film and kind of evaluate it after we watch the film and go from there. Like I said, we'll take it week to week."

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

If McCord was truly the starter coming out of camp, I didn't see him do anything to lose that position against Youngstown State, and while Devin Brown performed just fine against the Penguins, I didn't see him do anything to necessarily overtake McCord. If you are named the starter, I think the job is yours to lose, and I didn't see McCord losing it.

For the record, Brown was 7 of 13 for 101 yards without a score or a pick and he was sacked twice. He ran six times for 9 net yards.

And while I'm criticizing Day – which I don't do very often – let me pick a bone that I have picked before, but at a different position. With the game long ago in hand, why were Harrison and Egbuka still out there in the fourth quarter? It was similar to his leaving quarterback C.J. Stroud out there too long, too often last season.

Not only are you risking injury to your franchise receivers for no reason, but you are limiting the game reps for your star-studded group of young receivers, similar to the way McCord got little experience in 2022.

I guess they wanted to see what Brown could do with all of Ohio State's weapons available.

OK. You've seen it. Now get your stars out of there when the game is in hand.

I am anxious to see how Day and Brian Hartline handle the quarterback situation against Western Kentucky. With Notre Dame and the meat of the conference schedule coming up, it would be nice for McCord to not have to look over his shoulder, and it would be nice to have the full complement of receivers, unlike last year when the Buckeyes were minus Jaxon Smith-Njigba for much of the season due to injury.

Game-Changing Rule

I can't say that I like the new rule that keeps the clock running after first downs for most of the game. As a fan, which I am not supposed to be, I feel like I am getting cheated out of action. Sure, there are games that you wish would just end, but as it turns out, the games aren't much shorter. There is just less action. The Indiana game was 3:15 and the Youngstown State game was a shorter 3:10. Last year's first two games were 3:15 and 3:21 against Notre Dame and Arkansas State, respectively. So, you've shaved 11 minutes total off two games. Is it worth making a major change in the game for the sake of 5½ minutes? Fans want action.

In Ohio State's first two games, we have seen lesser teams employ the strategy of trying to milk the clock to limit the Buckeyes' possessions, thus limiting their scores. It worked, but neither the Hoosiers nor the Penguins were any closer to beating the Buckeyes. It just looks like they played mighty Ohio State tougher, but they really didn't.

And if Day – or is it Brian Hartline? – insists on playing his starters well into the fourth quarter, are fewer possessions limiting game reps for younger players in blowouts?

As the games get more difficult down the road, what happens if Ohio State gets behind early? Even though they hopefully will have an explosive offense, will they have enough possessions to come back? Last year Ohio State trailed Notre Dame 10-7 until there were 17 seconds left in the third quarter. Could the Irish have milked the clock and held on for the victory?

One potential change in strategy which might come out of this rule change was on display in the game with YSU. Ohio State bucked

traditional strategy and upon winning the opening coin toss took the ball. The strategy worked, as the Buckeyes scored on their first drive to quickly get the upper hand in the world of limited possessions.

Personally, I have always questioned the decision to defer if you were a team with a powerful offense. Why not take charge of the game early by coming out and scoring? Of course, I am sure teams have run the scenarios through the computer and determined that it is statistically better to defer – or at least it was.

Egbuka seems to agree with me.

"We wanted to get off to a hot start," he said of taking the ball against the Penguins, "and that's one of my favorite things when we take the ball when we win the toss because I want to get out there on the field, score, give our defense a little juice to rally behind."

In this case, I'm not sure how much "juice" the offense gave the defense, because YSU came right back with its only touchdown of the game. Still, I think you are going to see more teams, especially Ohio State, electing to receive.

I will be very interested to see if the new rules stick next season. Thumbs down from me.

Quick Hitters

- In the traditional tight end watch, Cade Stover went from outshining superstars Harrison and Egbuka against Indiana with five receptions for 98 yards to being held off the stat sheet against YSU. But that's not to say that the tight ends were not part of the action. Gee Scott Jr. converted a fourth-and-7 with a 9-yard reception in the second quarter on a drive that resulted in a 13-yard touchdown by Henderson. And in the third quarter, Scott threw a key block to help spring Henderson on a 30-yard TD run.

- Speaking of players being limited on the stat sheet, running back Miyan Williams has rushed for just 25 yards in each of the first two games (though he had two touchdowns vs. IU), but against the Penguins he reeled in a 27-yard reception to convert a third down on virtually the same play on which he converted a fourth down with a 12-yard catch against the Hoosiers. He now has 39 receiving yards to go with his 50 yards on the ground.

- While Harrison quickly bounced back from his subpar performance against Indiana, he is still not up to full Harrison speed in my book. At the end of the first half against Youngstown State, he couldn't convert a pass from McCord as he went out of bounds. It was a play where last season, he most likely would have gotten a foot down to complete the reception. On the next play he dropped a routine pass, helping kill a Buckeye two-minute drill.

- While big-time defensive ends J.T. Tuimoloau and Jack Sawyer have been fairly quiet so far this season, interior linemen Mike Hall Jr. and Tyleik Williams both made big plays against YSU with Hall recording a 10-yard sack and Williams being credited with a 5-yard tackle for loss. These two have always been playmakers, and hopefully that will continue throughout the season.

- I say this every time I see it. I am not a big fan of backs and receivers hurdling defenders. It is a move that draws the oohs and aahs and may even get you on "SportsCenter," but I find it a high-risk, low-gain proposition. Henderson got way off the ground on a run in the second quarter but gained only an additional yard or two

with his leap, while exposing himself to potential injury. He might have gotten that extra yardage by just lowering his shoulder and plowing into the defender.

How many times have you actually seen a player leap over a defender and carry on for a long gainer?

Low-Cost Help

I stated in this space last issue my goal of increasing BSB's circulation by 10 percent this fall, and everyone can help, even those of you who are cost-sensitive. I'm making the same suggestions as I did last week.

With the Notre Dame game coming up, now is a great time to send four free trial issues of Buckeye Sports Bulletin to any Buckeye fans that you know who are not enjoying the paper already. Send your names and addresses to BSB at subscriptions@buckeyesports.com, mail them to PO Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212, or give us a call at (614) 486-2202. Think of how many new readers we could introduce BSB to if each subscriber sent in just one name and address. There is absolutely no cost to you or the recipient. In fact, we will even pay for the phone call if you would like at (800) 760-2862.

Remember, if you have already sent us a name, there is no reason to send it again. We will reach out to those people on our own.

And to add some real new blood to the circulation list, consider sending a gift to your children or grandchildren. We are offering a special price of \$29.95 on subscriptions for readers under the age of 35 for one, two or three years – a \$90 discount over the regular rate for up to \$270 savings. Many of those potential readers may have never read a newspaper. Use the same addresses as above.

Thanks again and stay with us as we build Buckeye Sports Bulletin together.

First-Class Upgrade

We remain concerned about the timeliness of postal delivery this fall. You might want to consider upgrading your existing subscription to first-class mail service in an envelope during football season, especially if you are out of state. You can upgrade your subscription through football season for \$25 and through the traditional recruiting season in February for \$35. Use the phone numbers or addresses above to pay by credit card or send your check. Mention either the "Football" upgrade or the "Recruiting" upgrade.

I Really Said This?

While looking through the Sept. 4, 1993, issue of BSB I came across an interesting note from this space.

Bo Schembechler, who had been retired from his head coaching position at Michigan since 1989, told a Los Angeles Times reporter that he "wouldn't be interested in another college job, but if the right NFL job came around, I'd be interested."

To which I had this to say: "That has to be a disappointment to those Buckeye fans who, with Woody Hayes gone, had hoped to have what they perceive as the closest thing to him at the helm at OSU."

I can't believe I actually said that, because I don't believe that is what Buckeye fans would have wanted. But I must have thought it at the time.

With 30 years to look back on it, what do you think about Schembechler as coach at Ohio State?



SEPTEMBER LINEUP!



SEPTEMBER 1-3



FRIDAY // 1:10

FRIDAY // 6:40

- **Fireworks Friday Post-Game Show, presented by Staffmark**

- **City Connect Fridays**
The Reds will wear their Nike City Connect uniforms for all Friday home games.

- **Military Appreciation Days, presented by CareSource**
Visit reds.com/Military for details

SATURDAY // 6:40

- **Reds Tote Bag, presented by Jeff Wyler Automotive Family**
(To fans in attendance as part of Super Saturdays, while supplies last.)

SUNDAY // 12:10

- **Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery**
Visit reds.com/Family for details

- **Reds City Connect Hunter Greene Poster, presented by Toyota**
(To fans in attendance, while supplies last.)

- **Sesame Street Ticket Package**
(Elmo bobblehead only available through theme ticket package, while supplies last)



SEPTEMBER 4-6



MONDAY // 4:10

TUESDAY // 6:40



- **3-2-1 Tuesdays*, presented by Budweiser and Bud Light**
(At all Tuesday Reds home games, fans can purchase \$3 Buds and Bud Lights, \$2 hot dogs, and \$1 ice cream cups)
*Limit 2 items per transaction

- **Senior Days**
Visit reds.com/Senior for details

WEDNESDAY // 6:40

- **Bark in the Park, presented by Kroger, Good 'n' Fun, and DreamBone**
Ticket packages available for dogs and their owners with pet activities, samples and more!



SEPTEMBER 8-10



presented by
Jelly Belly and Kroger Sweet Spot

FRIDAY // 6:40

- **Fireworks Friday Post-Game Show, presented by Rozzi Fireworks**

- **City Connect Fridays**
The Reds will wear their Nike City Connect uniforms for all Friday home games.

SATURDAY // 6:40

- **Nick Lodolo Bobblehead, presented by Every Watch Has a Story**
(To fans in attendance as part of Super Saturdays, while supplies last)

- **Ohio Lottery Post-Game Concert featuring Lady A, presented by Dunkin'**
Free to all fans with game ticket! Upgrade to field passes at reds.com/Concerts

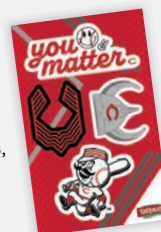


SUNDAY // 1:40

- **Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery**
Visit reds.com/Family for details

- **Kids Sticker Sheet, presented by LaRosa's**
(To kids 14 and younger as part of Family Sundays, while supplies last.)

FAMILY SUNDAYS



SEPTEMBER 18-20



presented by **NABISCO**

MONDAY // 6:40

TUESDAY // 6:40



- **3-2-1 Tuesdays*, presented by Budweiser and Bud Light**
(At all Tuesday Reds home games, fans can purchase \$3 Buds and Bud Lights, \$2 hot dogs, and \$1 ice cream cups)
*Limit 2 items per transaction

WEDNESDAY // 12:35

- **Business Day Specials**
Enjoy afternoon baseball and \$10 in concession credits for only \$20!

- **Senior Days**
Visit reds.com/Senior for details

SEPTEMBER 22-24



presented by
Kroger Zero Hunger Zero Waste

FRIDAY // 6:40

- **Fireworks Friday Post-Game Show**

- **City Connect Fridays**
The Reds will wear their Nike City Connect uniforms for all Friday home games.



SATURDAY // 6:40

- **Reds Team Photo, presented by Homemade Brand Ice Cream**
(To fans in attendance as part of Super Saturdays, while supplies last.)

SUNDAY // 1:40

FAMILY SUNDAYS

- **Family Sundays, presented by Klosterman Bakery**
Visit reds.com/family for details

- **Kids Sticker Sheet, presented by Chick-fil-A**
(To kids 14 and younger as part of Family Sundays, while supplies last.)

- **Fan Appreciation Day**
Lucky fans will win prizes throughout the game! Postcard entries accepted.



(513) 381-REDS (7337)



reds.Com/Tickets

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