

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

\$3.00

PERIODICAL NEWSPAPER
CLASSIFICATION
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE RUSH!!



Vol. 45, No. 4

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Oct. 4, 2025



Seattle Under Siege

Ohio State Sacks Williams Six Times In 24-6 Win Over Huskies

SONNY BROCKWAY

BRICK WALL — The Ohio State defense took the threat out of Washington dual-threat quarterback Demond Williams Jr. for a dominating 24-6 road victory on Sept. 27. Davison Igbinosun (1), Caden Curry (92), Kayden McDonald (98) and Tywone Malone Jr. (95) helped limit Williams to 173 passing yards and minus-28 rushing yards and sacked the quarterback six times.

By GREG WILSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Travel back in time just under a year from Ohio State's 24-6 win over Washington on Sept. 27 and head to Eugene, Ore.

On Oct. 12, 2024, the Buckeyes went to Autzen Stadium to take on Oregon on the West Coast in what was a raucous environment. They went into that game with

a defensive front four that was considered one of the best in college football — each of whom has gone on to an NFL career — but finished the game with just two tackles for loss and no sacks despite all of that talent.

This time, Ohio State went into an also very loud Husky Stadium for its West Coast trip with a defensive line that was questioned going into the season, with many wondering whether they would be

able to live up to the expectations of the "Rushmen" that are there because of their predecessors.

The defensive line as a whole left Husky Stadium with 24 total tackles, nine tackles for loss, six sacks and three quarterback hurries. Leading tackler Caden Curry acknowledged that he and his linemates don't have the name recognition that last year's front four did, but he said that doesn't matter much to them.

"You love to see the pressure put on you as a defensive line," Curry said. "Our defensive line this year is a bunch of no-names. We just go out there, try to ball and try to play as hard as we can."

"Havoc, there isn't anyone who can block us," added junior defensive end Kenyatta Jackson Jr. "Go get the dude with the ball. Do your job."

It was Washington quarterback Demond Williams Jr. who was getting all

kinds of attention leading up to the game, and rightfully so. Williams showed off his talent against the Buckeyes with a final stat line of 173 yards through the air on 18-of-22 passing (81.8 percent completion), multiple rushes to extend drives and an impressive ability to remain comfortable in a collapsing pocket to let a play develop.

Many times, plays developed, and he would find a receiver downfield. But more often, the pocket would collapse too quickly before a play could develop, or before he could tuck the ball and run for a first down, which he had done in the Huskies' first three games with great success.

But Ohio State defensive coordinator Matt Patricia seemed to have made the decision that, if Washington was going to beat the Buckeyes, it wasn't going to be with Williams' legs. He was forcing Wil-

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

Continued On Page 10

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State went on the road to defeat Washington 24-6, ending the Huskies' 22-game home winning streak. 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.

Sam Cipriani, BSB: The Buckeyes' big man in the trenches, defensive tackle Kayden McDonald, or as he likes to call himself, K-Mac, is getting my Buckeye Leaf. McDonald was an overwhelming presence against Washington, routinely wreaking havoc and creating push against the Huskies' interior line.

He finished his afternoon with seven tackles (four solo), two sacks and three tackles for loss. Both of McDonald's sacks came at important moments in the second half. With Washington threatening with third-and-goal with four minutes left in the third quarter, McDonald swallowed up quarterback Demond Williams Jr. for a 7-yard sack, forcing the Huskies to kick. Then, with just over eight minutes to play, McDonald sacked Williams on fourth-and-2 to secure a turnover on downs for Ohio State.

Bobby Gorbett, BSB: My Buckeye Leaf is going to the Buckeyes' only first-half touchdown scorer, Jeremiah Smith. At times, it wasn't easy for Ohio State's offense in the win over Washington.

Ohio State's first two drives went for no points as the Huskies often followed Smith with a couple of defensive backs. Smith, who finished the game with a game-high eight catches for 81 receiving yards, scored his touchdown late in the first half when the Buckeyes were behind the sticks on third-and-11 at the Washington 18-yard line.

Smith got free of the Huskies' man coverage, and after catching the ball at the line of scrimmage, he used his speed to surge into the end zone.

Greg Wilson, BSB: My Buckeye Leaf goes to Caden Curry, who was the biggest part of Ohio State's defense being as dominant as it was throughout the game. Between the 20s, Washington was moving the ball at some points during the game, but the Buckeyes were able to keep the Huskies out of the end zone the entire contest.

Curry was a large piece of that, with multiple sacks when Williams seemed to have the offense moving along, and continually got into the backfield to either disrupt a play or completely bring it to a halt.

He finished the game with 11 total tackles, five tackles for loss and three sacks, an impressive stat line. Five tackles for loss tied him with seven other former Buckeyes for the most in a single game.

BSB Subscribers

Tiffin Buckeye: Caden Curry for three sacks, and Jeremiah Smith on offense.

John Lanning: I really enjoyed this game. I would give leaves to Caden Curry. He was everywhere. Another leaf to Bo Jackson for his contribution with his run game and killing the clock. Finally, Julian Sayin managed a very good game and executed well. Another week of experience.

PeyoteBuck: Bo Jackson and CJ Donaldson get my leaves, though it's hard to pick. This victory was a team effort, and despite some blunders, the Bucks rolled to victory. Special leaves to Jayden Fielding for showing up on every front.

Bob Cody: Buckeye Leaves were earned today in a great road win by offensive players: Jeremiah Smith, Julian Sayin, all three RBs who rose up with critical plays – Bo Jackson, CJ Donaldson and James Peoples. Brandon Inniss, who made up for his fumbled punt return, Carnell Tate, and Max Klare, especially his blocking.

Jayden Fielding nailed every kick and made a TD-saving tackle when the game was possibly still in doubt. The entire coaching staff guided us to a big win on the road.

Defense was spectacular, and Leaves go to: Caden Curry, Kayden McDonald, Sonny Styles and Davison Igbinosun. Aaron Scott for his big hit on special teams.

realisticbuck: Caden Curry is one player who deserves Buckeye Leaves. He was a man on a mission with 11 total tackles, three sacks and five tackles for loss.

JJ Smith is another player who had an excellent game with eight receptions for 81 yards and one TD. He is a do-it-all WR with the ability to stretch defenses in the deep passing game, the possession passing game to keep the chains moving and on end-around plays. Any defense needs to know where he is lined up at all times.

I'd give a few leaves to CJ Donaldson for scoring two touchdowns, one on a fourth-down screen pass late in the game to seal the hard-fought victory, more than making up for the fourth down he got stuffed on early in the game on Ohio State's first drive.

R1TBDBITL: A leaf for whoever designed the silent count. I can only remember one false start during the game.

Luckeeman: Caden Curry beyond any doubt!



From The Message Board

On pages 23-25 of this issue, we asked several former Ohio State football players from the pre-NIL days their thoughts on NIL. One of the questions we asked them was, "Which player from your era would have made the most in NIL money?" We also asked subscribers on the BSB Fan Forum for three to five players they thought would have made the most. Here are some of the responses.

"Terrelle Pryor, Archie Griffin, Eddie George, Cris Carter, Ted Ginn Jr., Keith Byars."

— **BuckeyeScott**

"Braxton Miller, Troy Smith, Ezekiel Elliott."

— **Tiffin Buckeye**

"I could name many more than three. I'll say Art Schlichter, Archie Griffin and maybe Chris Spielman as the top three and maybe in that order."

— **Terrier Buck**

"Tippy Dye, Hop Cassady, Bob Ferguson, Rex Kern, Jack Tatum, Archie Griffin, Keith Byars, Cris Carter, Chris Spielman, Eddie George, Troy Smith, Braxton Miller."

— **Bob Cody**

"A lot to choose from. Chris Spielman, Rex Kern, Chic Harley, Braxton Miller, just to name a few."

— **PeyoteBuck**

"I'll turn on the 'way-back' machine and say Hop

Cassady, Paul Warfield, Neal Colzie and, of course, Archie Griffin."

— **R1TBDBITL**

"For a combination of athletic ability and personality for the endorsements, there is no question in my mind that it would be Archie Griffin. But if you are paying out in 1950s dollars, few players captured the imagination of a legion of Buckeye fans like Hop Cassady. Rex Kern did the same in the

'60s. But do endorsements make a difference in NIL payments anymore, or is it just a straight payout?"

— **Frank Moskowitz, BSB**

"NIL is about ability, but also personality and ability to draw attention. To that end, I would say Troy Smith, Orlando Pace and Terrelle Pryor."

— **Mike Wachsman, BSB**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin (USPS 705-690, ISSN 0883-6833.) is published 24 times a year (weekly September through November, biweekly January through April and monthly May 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: \$124.95/year.

PUBLISHER
Frank Moskowitz

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Becky Roberts

EDITOR
Greg Wilson

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Mark Rea

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER EMERITUS
Karen Wachsmen 1944-1999

PHOTOGRAPHY
Sonny Brockway Terry Gilliam
Kevin Dye Josh Winslow

CONTRIBUTORS
David Breithaupt Braden Moles
Samuel Cipriani Bob Roehm
Bill Conley Steve Siegfried
Rich Exner Jeff Svoboda
Bobby Gorbett Mike Wachsmen
Craig Merz

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Paula Serra Ron Friedman

2024-25 PUBLICATION SCHEDULE (VOL. 45)

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

The next issue (Oct. 11 cover date) will be mailed on Oct. 7.

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

Wachsmen Elite Donor:



OPINION

Huskies No Serious Threat To Buckeyes

As the Sept. 27 game unfolded with undefeated Washington hosting defending national champion and top-ranked Ohio State, I couldn't help thinking one head coach was playing checkers while the other was engaged in a three-dimensional chess game.

That might be the natural assumption in the wake of a workmanlike 24-6 victory by the Buckeyes, but it was how the 18-point victory was achieved in one of the most picturesque venues college football has to offer.

On the home sideline was Jedd Fisch, a 49-year-old coaching vagabond who crisscrossed the country before parlaying a successful three-year stint at Arizona into a seven-year, \$54 million payday at Washington.

Like most longtime assistants, Fisch is the product of some of the head coaches for whom he has worked – Brian Billick, Bill Belichick, Pete Carroll, Sean McVay and Jim Harbaugh, among others – and it showed in his willingness to sometimes roll the dice against Ohio State.

Meanwhile, on the visiting sideline was 46-year-old Ryan Day, now in his seventh full season (can it really be that long?) as head coach of the Buckeyes. Despite getting grief for everything from his record against Michigan to the color of his beard, Day doesn't receive nearly enough credit for just how good he is at his craft, something I thought was on full display along the shores of Lake Washington.

Day and his offensive staff obviously devised a game plan protective of first-year starting quarterback Julian Sayin, opening the proceedings with a little ground-and-pound to test the Washington rush defense. Six of the Buckeyes' first nine plays from scrimmage were runs, including a nifty 6-yard scramble by Sayin that was stopped just short of the goal line.

Ohio State would have finished that first possession with a touchdown had freshman tight end Nate Roberts – lined up in the backfield at the fullback position – cleared the way in front of C.J. Donaldson Jr. rather than peeling off to engage a Washington defender who was already being blocked. The unfortunate result was Donaldson being stuffed for no gain.

That was part of a rather ragged first quarter for the Buckeyes during which they managed only 45 total yards while the Huskies manufactured 117, a performance that helped lead the home team to a 3-0 lead early in the second quarter. And Washington threatened to increase that advantage after Sayin short-hopped a third-and-6 throw to Brandon Inness that forced Ohio State to punt with 10:36 remaining until halftime.

Huskies quarterback Demond Williams Jr. went 4 for 4 during the next series and added a 10-yard scramble on a fourth-and-1 to push his team into the red zone. But when the drive stalled and the Huskies set up for a 45-yard field-goal try, Fisch decided it was the time for some trickery. Holder Luke Dunne took the snap and flipped the ball over his head to kicker Grady Gross, who rolled out to pass. But potential receiver Decker DeGraaf apparently missed the memo, never coming off his block as the throw sailed over his head.

It's up for conjecture whether the play would have worked had DeGraaf turned around because Ohio State appeared to be in punt-safe mode. The Buckeyes had two players – linebacker Sonny Styles and safety Jaylen McClain – off the line of scrimmage, making it appear they had expected the fake. In any event, Fisch came away with the proverbial egg on his face while Day and his

team used the play as a springboard to score their first touchdown.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Sayin completed 5 of 6 attempts on the ensuing 73-yard scoring drive that featured a beautifully conceived touchdown toss to Jeremiah Smith. On third-and-11 at the Washington 18, Sayin faded back under the blitz of Huskies safety Makell Esteen. But just as Esteen was bearing down, Sayin retreated and delivered a strike to Smith, who had broken free on a short crossing route. The sophomore superstar caught the ball in full stride and then weaved his way untouched into the end zone with an 18-yard touchdown.

That gave the Buckeyes a 7-3 lead with 1:08 remaining until halftime. Then, when OSU took the second-half kickoff and marched 75 yards in 14 plays for another touchdown – chewing up nearly eight minutes of clock in the process – the game was essentially over.

Staying True To Yourself

What I particularly liked about Day's approach to the first road game of the 2025 season was the fact that he didn't try to hammer any square pegs into round holes. Perhaps the coach has finally learned from repeated losses to Michigan that denying one's true identity can produce poor results. Returning to his team's roots served him well during the national championship run last winter, and it worked again at Washington.

Day entered the game trying to protect Sayin as much as he could, but later the coach allowed his QB more of a chance to showcase his skills. That resulted in a 15-for-18 passing performance in the second half good for 145 yards and a touchdown. Overall, Sayin finished 22 for 28 (78.6 percent) for 208 yards and two scores.

While Day and his staff were fine-tuning their approach on the offensive side of the ball, defensive coordinator Matt Patricia and his staff were adjusting to what they were seeing as well.

After being content to pretty much let Williams do his thing for much of the first half, the scarlet and gray walls began to close in on the Washington QB in the second half. After connecting on 11 of 12 attempts for 102 yards in the opening half, Williams went 7 for 10 in the second half. But those completions amounted to only 71 yards, and he was sacked four times.

Two of those sacks came during the same possession early in the fourth quarter with the Buckeyes holding a 17-6 lead and the Huskies still entertaining hopes of an upset.

Defensive end Caden Curry bull-rushed his way to Williams on a third-and-3 play, dropping the Washington quarterback for a 7-yard loss. But the play was negated when OSU defensive tackle Eddrick Houston was flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct after he threw a punch at a Washington lineman well after the play was over.

The 15-year penalty gave the Huskies a fresh set of downs at their own 45-yard-line, but they stalled again before facing a fourth-and-2 situation. Williams retreated with the option of throwing or running, but as he took a step forward, he was met by 6-3, 326-pound

defensive tackle Kayden McDonald, whose blunt force staggered Williams before the QB stumbled backward for a 9-yard loss.

Curry finished the game with career-high totals in tackles (11), tackles for loss (five) and sacks (three). The TFL total tied the Ohio State program record originally set by Judah Herman against Iowa in 1991 and last equaled by Chase Young vs. Wisconsin in 2019. The three sacks were one shy of the OSU single-game record and the most since Haskell Garrett recorded three against Akron in 2021.

As a unit, the Ohio State defense held a fourth straight opponent to nine points or fewer. Not since 1973 have the Buckeyes opened a season by keeping their first four opponents from scoring in double digits.

Conference Familiarity

Before conference expansion included raiding teams from the old Pac-12, the University of Washington campus was nearly 1,700 miles from the nearest Big Ten school at the University of Nebraska. Still, Fisch has stocked his staff with assistants well-versed in Big Ten football.

That starts with running backs coach Scottie Graham, who was a three-year starter at fullback for the Buckeyes from 1989-91. Graham, a native of Long Beach, N.Y., rushed for 1,768 yards and 19 touchdowns during his OSU career before spending six seasons in the NFL with the Jets, Vikings and Bengals.

After his playing career, Graham spent 15 years in various capacities with the NFL Players Association. From 2014-20, he was a senior associate athletic director at Arizona State before moving into coaching as running backs coach for Fisch at Arizona. When Fisch moved to Washington last season, Graham moved with him.

Other Washington assistants with Big Ten ties include defensive coordinator Ryan Walters. He served as defensive coordinator at Illinois for two seasons before becoming head coach at Purdue in 2023. His two-year record with the Boilermakers was just 5-19, and he was fired following the 2024 season.

Taking over from Walters as head coach at Purdue this season is Barry Odom, whose younger brother, Brian, is in charge of inside linebackers at Washington.

Huskies safeties coach Taylor Mays was a three-time All-American at USC who went on to a five-year NFL career, mostly with the Bengals. Ohio State fans might remember him from a pair of losses to the Trojans in the late 2000s. Mays had seven tackles during his team's 35-3 blowout of the Buckeyes in 2008 and led the Trojans with eight stops when USC came to Columbus the following year and pulled out an 18-15 come-from-behind victory.

Then, there are the connections to Harbaugh. Offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Jimmie Dougherty was on Harbaugh's staff at the University of San Diego from 2004-06, the same time that tight ends coach Jason Paopao was an All-American center for the Toreros.

Fisch also has Harbaugh ties. During Harbaugh's first two years in Ann Arbor, Fisch served as quarterbacks coach, wide receivers coach and passing game coordinator. Unfortunately for Fisch, he didn't fare any better against Ohio State in those days than he did this year with the Huskies. The Buckeyes rolled to a 42-13 win against their archrivals in 2015 and a 30-27 overtime victory the following season.



OSU Still Ranked No. 1 In AP Poll

The Buckeyes are still ranked No. 1 in the AP poll after their 24-6 win over Washington in Week 5.

Another Big Ten team follows them in the top 25, with Oregon jumping four spots to No. 2 with its double-overtime win over Penn State in State College, Pa. The Nitany Lions fell four spots to No. 7 after the loss.

Miami (Fla.) fell from No. 2 to No. 3 with Ole Miss rising more than any other team in the top 25 to No. 4, up from No. 13. Rounding out the top 10 are No. 5 Oklahoma, No. 6 Texas A&M, No. 8 Indiana, No. 9 Texas and No. 10 Alabama.

The Hoosiers played a close game against Iowa in Kinnick Stadium, winning 20-15 thanks to a big game by wide receiver Elijah Sarratt. Alabama visited the Bulldogs and knocked off Kirby Smart's squad 24-21.

Florida State dropped more than any other team in the poll, falling from No. 8 to No. 18 after losing to Virginia.

The other Big Ten teams in the top 25 are No. 20 Michigan and No. 22 Illinois.

Newcomers in the top 25 are No. 24 Virginia and No. 25 Arizona State.

Buckeyes Healthy For Washington

Coming off the open week, Ohio State was as close to fully healthy as it has been all season in its win over Washington on Sept. 27. The Buckeyes had all of their first- and second-teamers available for the game

and didn't have an injury during the game.

Ohio State was without senior tight end Bennett Christian during its win over Ohio on Sept. 13, but he was ready to go against the Huskies. Christian didn't have a catch, but he still appeared in the game.

Senior cornerback Lorenzo Styles Jr. was hurt in that game against the Bobcats, but he also came back against Washington. He had a solid day in coverage and finished the game with four tackles (three solo).

Several depth players were listed as out, including safety Brenten "Inky" Jones, line-backer Eli Lee, quarterback Mason Maggs, defensive tackle Maxwell Roy, safety De-shawn Stewart, defensive tackle Ahmed Tounkara and receiver Preston Wolfe.

Minnesota Game At 7:30 On NBC

The game time for Ohio State's Week 6 home matchup against Minnesota has been revealed.

The Buckeyes will face off against the Golden Gophers at 7:30 p.m. on NBC on Oct. 4, which will be the second prime-time matchup of the season for the Scarlet and Gray. They won the first 37-9 over Ohio in Week 3.

The last time the Buckeyes matched up against Minnesota was Nov. 18, 2023, when the Gophers visited Ohio Stadium for a 37-3 OSU victory, narrowly avoiding a shutout with a fourth-quarter 54-yard field goal off the foot of Dragan Kesich.

Running back TreVeyon Henderson helped lead the Buckeyes to a win in the game with 146 rushing yards and two touchdowns, while quarterback Kyle McCord threw for 212 yards and two scores – one to Marvin Harrison Jr. and one to tight end Cade Stover.

The two teams have played a total of 55 times, with the Buckeyes leading the series 48-7. The most recent Gopher win came on Oct. 14, 2000, which was head coach John Cooper's last season at the helm. Steve Belisari was 11 of 28 passing the ball in the 29-17 loss for 130 yards and a touchdown in that game and was sacked four times.

Ohio State currently has a 13-game win-

| 2025 Ohio State Football Schedule | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Date | Opponent | Result/Time (ET) | TV | Record, Last Result | |
| Aug. 30 | TEXAS | W, 14-7 | FOX | 3-1, idle | |
| Sept. 6 | GRAMBLING | W, 70-0 | BTN | 3-2, 28-13 loss to Prairie View | |
| Sept. 13 | OHIO | W, 37-9 | Peacock | 3-2, 35-20 win over Bowling Green | |
| Sept. 27 | at Washington | W, 24-6 | CBS | 3-1, 24-6 loss to Ohio State | |
| Oct. 4 | MINNESOTA | 7:30 p.m. | NBC | 3-1, 31-28 win over Rutgers | |
| Oct. 11 | at Illinois | TBA | TBA | 4-1, 34-32 win over USC | |
| Oct. 18 | at Wisconsin | TBA | TBA | 2-2, idle | |
| Nov. 1 | PENN STATE | TBA | TBA | 3-1, 30-24 loss to Oregon | |
| Nov. 8 | at Purdue | TBA | TBA | 2-2, idle | |
| Nov. 15 | UCLA | TBA | TBA | 0-4, 17-14 loss to Northwestern | |
| Nov. 22 | RUTGERS | TBA | TBA | 3-2, 31-28 loss to Minnesota | |
| Nov. 29 | at Michigan | Noon | FOX | 3-1, idle | |

ning streak over Minnesota.

Former RB Wells Praises Frosh Jackson

A legendary Buckeye running back offered high praise for Ohio State's standout rookie.

On "The Script" podcast hosted by Dave Holmes, former Ohio State running back Chris "Beanie" Wells told former quarterback Cardale Jones that he thinks the Buckeyes should turn the keys of the offense over to freshman running back Bo Jackson.

"The No. 1 thing that I want to see is – turn the keys to the RB room over to Bo Jackson. I don't see any reason not to when the guy's phenomenal," Wells said.

In three games, the four-star freshman has rushed for 297 yards on 35 carries. He rushed for 108 yards and a touchdown late in the Buckeyes' dismantling of Grambling State and 109 yards against Ohio after not playing in Week 1 against Texas.

Jackson followed those performances up with 80 yards on 17 totes against Washington.

Wells emphasized that Jackson has both toughness and big-play ability, similar to last season's dominant tandem.

"The kid can grind out those tough yards," Wells said. "We can see him make those explosive plays in which we've been used to seeing the past couple of years with TreVeyon Henderson and Quinshon Judkins. Turn the keys over to him."

Jackson already has carries of 64 and 51 yards, averaging 8.5 yards per carry. The do-it-all back has also added three catches for 26 yards.

Though Jackson is just four games into his collegiate career, Wells doesn't view his youth as a concern.

"I know he's young," he said. "I know sometimes you want to bring young guys along slowly, but every now and then there's a young guy that's ready to play right now, ready to help you win right now, and I think that's him."

Jones responded to Wells, praising Jackson as "a star in the making" and drawing a comparison between the rookie sensation and Wells himself.

"I compare him in his freshman year to you in your freshman year," Jones said. "He was brought along slowly and then in the biggest moments we needed you, you went crazy. So continue to keep him on this track."

Bjork Wants To Reinstate 2010 Wins

Ohio State athletic director Ross Bjork told Paul Keels and Jim Lachey on "The Ryan Day Radio Show" that there have been talks to reinstate the 12 wins that were vacated from the Buckeyes' 2010 season due to "Tattoogate."

Although he said the conversations are in the preliminary stages, he thinks it's an important conversation to have with Ohio

SCORE BIG THIS SEASON!

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE
(614) 268-3933

The Touchdown Package

80% Efficiency Furnace
Up To 3 Ton Air Conditioner
FREE Smart Thermostat

\$8,120

The MVP Package

90% Efficiency Furnace
3 Ton Air Conditioner
FREE Smart Thermostat

\$8,966

**The price listed is for a standard system replacement. Additional costs may apply if your specific installation requires extra materials or modifications to meet current code requirements.

Sullingers To Be Honored At Agonis Club Banquet

The Agonis Club of Columbus is offering a unique take on their annual Agonis Club Person of the Year Banquet. This year the event will honor "Persons" of the Year, the Satch Sullinger family – Satch, JJ, Julian and Jared.

Join M.C. Paul Keels and many other local and Ohio State names at the banquet and meet and greet to be held on Wednesday, Oct. 22 at Villa Milano at 1630 Schrock Road, Columbus, 43229.

James "Satch" Sullinger is a retired educator and high school basketball coach from Columbus City Schools. He is a state champion, Naismith Award winner and Ohio Coach of the Year Award winner, and he was named National High School Coach of Year in 2010.

J.J. Sullinger played for nearby Thomas Worthington High School and played for Ohio State and coach Thad Matta (a former Agonis Club Person of the Year).

Julian Sullinger played for Kent State and then embarked on a coaching career that has led him currently to Duquesne University, where he is the assistant men's basketball coach.

Jared Sullinger played for his dad at Northland High School, led Ohio State to the Final Four and played in the NBA for the Boston Celtics and Toronto Raptors.

Doors open at 5:45 p.m., and the meet and greet runs from 6-7. There will be a silent auction and cash bar, with dinner served at 7 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at www.agonisclub.org for \$75 per person, \$125 per couple and \$500 for a table of eight and include dinner and the meet and greet. Sponsorship opportunities are also available starting as low as \$75.

For information on sponsorships or any other questions, email Tom Sappington at agonisclubcolumbus@gmail.com.

state legislators.

"There was a proposed state bill that would get those (wins) back. I heard about that," Bjork said. "It's something, I think, given the climate, you have to at least ask the question. We haven't really pursued a whole lot, but there are a few questions that we have asked. Who knows where it will go?"

Bjork was the athletic director at Ole Miss from 2012-19 and in 2019 had to undergo the program vacating 33 football wins over six seasons.

The team also had to vacate the Rebels' 2016 Sugar Bowl victory over Oklahoma State – one that Bjork was particularly upset about, he said.

"Those things are usually just a piece of paper," Bjork said. "We know what happened in those years. I was part of (the Ole

Miss) program that had to vacate some wins. We still won the Sugar Bowl here at Ole Miss because everyone was there. We held up the trophy. And so those are the things that you go through. But it's definitely a different climate. The conversations are a lot different than they were before."

Lachey joked that Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel was the head coach of the 2010 Buckeyes and could be a helping hand in the process.

Bjork acknowledged that the longtime Buckeyes coach was in a position to play an impactful role in reinstating the wins.

"He's right there at the statehouse," Bjork said. "We do have access to him. We can at least have a conversation with him."

Alford Sheds Black Stripe

Ohio State linebacker TJ Alford had his

black stripe removed on Sept. 17 to become an "official" member of the team.

Alford, a four-star recruit out of Vero Beach, Fla., was ranked the No. 144 player in the country, the No. 13 linebacker and No. 22 player out of Florida.

Alford has played in two games for the Buckeyes this year against Grambling State and Ohio and totaled three tackles over those contests.

In a room loaded with options, including Sonny Styles, Arvell Reese, Payton Pierce and fellow freshman Riley Pettijohn, Alford is unlikely to get significant opportunities anytime soon at linebacker. However, with his black stripe removed, the true freshman seems ready to make an impact in some capacity.

Alford is the 12th true freshman to have his black stripe removed since spring practices began.

Howard Almost Went To Notre Dame

Ohio State was a phone call away from a drastically different 2024 season.

On the "Not Just Football" podcast, hosted by quarterback Will Howard's Pittsburgh Steelers teammate and former Ohio State defensive end Cam Heyward, Howard revealed he was prepared to commit to Notre Dame before the Fighting Irish chose to bring in former Duke quarterback Riley Leonard instead.

Howard said he felt blindsided when Notre Dame pivoted to Leonard. The Irish had been his top choice in the transfer portal. It was a decision he learned about

through a call from his agent.

"I thought I was going to end up at Notre Dame," Howard said. "A lot of people don't know this. This was very under wraps. But they ended up signing Riley right before I was about to commit. Like, I was about to commit that day, and I called my agent, and he's like, 'Sorry, buddy, they just told me they took Riley.'"

To avoid distractions, Buckeye coach Ryan Day did not want to recruit a transfer quarterback until after Ohio State's 2023 Cotton Bowl matchup against Missouri.

Howard was in Dallas training at the time of the Buckeyes' bowl game, so Day and wide receivers coach Brian Hartline came to Howard's hotel for a secret meeting.

However, Howard said he wasn't sure what the interest level was like for Day and the Buckeyes when Day and Hartline first met with him in his hotel room.

"(Day) didn't want to do anything until after the Cotton Bowl because we had a bunch of quarterbacks still on the roster," Howard said. "He wanted to make sure everyone stayed and that nobody got feeling weird about them recruiting a quarterback. I finally met with them down in Dallas. It was kind of a secret meeting. And it was when I was down there training, and they were down there in Dallas. And he came over and met me in my hotel, him and Coach Hartline. At that point, I wasn't really sure what the interest level was."

It was quickly made known to Howard

Continued On Page 6

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

Press
Pub + on 5th
GOOD FOOD + FINE DRINKS

Press good food
fine drinks **Grill**

Both locations open for lunch & dinner daily!

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

Monday-Thursday
11 AM - 10 PM

Friday-Saturday
11 AM - 11 PM

Sunday
Noon - 10 PM

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

Monday- Saturday
11:30 AM - 1:30 AM

Sunday
Noon - 1:30 AM

KITCHEN UNTIL 1 AM DAILY

presscolumbus.com

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

what Day and Ohio State's intentions were. The Buckeyes didn't just want Howard. They apparently told him that they weren't going after any other quarterbacks.

"He came in, sat down in an office like this and basically told me, 'I believe you're

the guy. You're the only quarterback I'm recruiting in the portal. I think you can come and win us a national championship. And money, whatever, that'll come, whatever you need.' I was like, 'Wow.'"

Throughout the season, Howard said he was motivated to make Notre Dame regret its decision, particularly in the national title game when he came face-to-face with the Irish.

"They weren't even talking about (Leonard), so that pissed me off," said Howard about when Notre Dame was recruiting him. "A lot of people don't know that that had happened going into the national championship. So I remember the general manager was standing on the sideline right when we were warming up, and I was staring daggers through him the whole warmup. And I'm a chip-on-my-shoulder guy."

Ultimately, Howard and the Buckeyes

defeated Notre Dame 34-23 in the national championship game – a full-circle moment for Howard.

"It all ended up working out, and here we are," Howard said. "It was the best decision I ever made in my damn life."

Styles, Curry Named To PFF Team Of The Week

Pro Football Focus selected Styles and defensive end Caden Curry to its team of the week following their dominant performances in the Buckeyes' victory over Ohio on Sept. 13.

Styles was PFF's highest-graded line-backer in the country in Week 3, earning an 89.2 grade for an outing where the senior racked up six total tackles (one solo), one quarterback hurry and a forced fumble on fourth down that led to an Ohio State touchdown on the following offensive pos-

session.

Curry had four tackles on the night (two solo), while proving to be disruptive in the backfield. He also had a sack and broke up a pass.

According to PFF, Curry also managed to pressure Ohio's pair of quarterbacks seven times and won 35 percent of his pass rushes on his way to earning a 91.8 pass rush grade.

The Buckeyes were one of just five teams with two players named to PFF's team of the week in Week 3, joining Indiana, Stanford, Missouri and Baylor.

Players Of The Week Named For OU Win

In Ohio State's victory over its in-state rival, offensive tackle Austin Siereveld, Reese and Curry delivered standout performances and were named the Buckeyes'

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago — 1985

Let the word go forth – Ohio State quarterback Jim Karsatos could run with the football as well as throw it.

He always said he could, but going into the Sept. 28 confrontation with Washington State in Ohio Stadium with a rushing total of minus-28 yards, he was having trouble trying to convince anyone.

This time around, things were different. Besides having another outstanding day via the airways – completing 18 of 24 passes for 228 yards and two touchdowns – he carried the ball 13 times for a net gain of 58 yards and another six-pointer while leading the Buckeyes to a 48-32 win over the Cougars.

"That was great," Karsatos remarked afterward. "I got positive rushing yards for the first time."

His coach, Earle Bruce, couldn't resist engaging in a little I-told-you-so with reporters.

"I like to see him run," Bruce said. "He's a better runner than you think. He's in pretty good shape. He'll get better."

35 Years Ago — 1990

Lightning struck Ohio Stadium twice Sept. 29 – the real thing from Mother Nature and the bottled kind from Southern Cal senior tailback Ricky Ervins.

The nonconference game between the two old rivals was called off with 2:36 remaining in the fourth quarter because of a severe thunderstorm that had enveloped the stadium.

But before the game ended with the Trojans holding a 35-26 lead, Ervins had riddled the Buckeyes' defense for a career-high 199 yards, which included a pair of touchdown runs.

The defeat was a bitter pill to swallow for the Buckeyes, who had hoped to exact some revenge on the Trojans for the previous year's 42-3 embarrassment on national television.

"I think you have to give USC an awful lot of credit," said OSU head coach John Cooper said after the game. "A football team that got hammered like they did last week came in here today and wasn't supposed to have a running attack and took the ball time and time again and hammered on us."

When the referees conferred with both coaches about suspending the game, USC head coach Larry Smith was all for it since the Trojans had the lead. Cooper agreed to end the game on the condition that if his team successfully recovered an onside kick, they would play on. They did not recover, and the game was over.

"We were going to onside kick it, and I said if we get it, go ahead and suspend the game. If USC gets it, you might as well call it because it's over anyway."

30 Years Ago — 1995

After close to 10 years of buildup – and for some people, 59 years of waiting – the game lived up to its billing.

Ohio State capitalized on several Notre Dame miscues by going on a second-half scoring barrage and rolled past the Fighting Irish 45-26 on Sept. 30 at Ohio Stadium.

The Buckeyes prevailed in just the third game ever between the two schools steeped in football tradition, and, at the same time, exacted revenge for the school's 1935 and '36 teams that dropped consecutive games to Notre Dame.

Players and fans alike reveled in the nonconference game, an OSU event unmatched in recent memory.

"Coach Cooper talked about it at the beginning of the game," said OSU quarterback and co-captain Bobby Hoying, who tossed four touchdown passes against the Irish. "He said it's a game you'll be talking about for the rest of your life. We're the first Ohio State team to beat Notre Dame."

25 Years Ago — 2000

If it was a "tweener" game for Ohio State, it certainly was akin to the Super Bowl for Miami (Ohio), which would likely never play before a larger crowd than it saw at the Horseshoe.

Just as Ohio University had given the Buckeyes a tough run a year prior, Miami provided a stern test on Sept. 16 before succumbing 27-16 before an Ohio Stadium-record crowd of 96,721.

"I'd like to play a bad (MAC team) sometime," said Cooper. "It seems like we catch them at their best. I mean, last year the same thing happened – Ohio U and Cincinnati played us hard, Bowling Green played us hard when they came here, and Akron will play us hard next year when they come in."

"We have got to realize that these guys are on scholarship, too. They've got good football players. I think we tried to tell you that earlier in the week. And again, the credit goes to their football team. If you play hard and you play smart and you give effort, you've got a chance against anybody you play."

20 Years Ago — 2005

After saying that he didn't think the offense would change no matter who the quarterback was, Ohio State head coach Jim Tressel wasted little time after the Texas loss the week before in indicating a change at the position.

Troy Smith, who had lost his starting job at the end of the year prior after being suspended for accepting money from a so-called booster, reclaimed the spot over Justin Zwick and started under center for the Buckeyes when they hosted San Diego State for a 27-6 victory.

"I don't want to infer the quarterback position was the reason why we lost the game (to Texas)," Tressel said Sept. 13 during his weekly media luncheon. "That said, we did not grade a winning performance at that position."

"We have simply made the decision to have Troy get the bulk – probably 75 to 80 percent – of the preparation this week, with preparation being the key word. It's not that Justin did poorly. We just think that moving forward, Troy will be the quarterback that gets the bulk of the work."

Smith completed 14 of 26 passes for 149 yards and also rushed for 87 yards and a pair of touchdowns against the Aztecs.

15 Years Ago — 2010

Ohio State touched off an unprecedented fireworks display on Sept. 25 at Ohio Stadium, exploding for its highest point total in 60 years with a 73-20 blowout of nonconference foe Eastern Michigan.

The outburst represented the most points scored by the Buckeyes since an 83-21 win over Iowa in 1950 and eclipsed the highest total for any Tressel-coached team. The previous high in Tressel's 313 games as a head coach came during a 63-20 win over Alcorn State during Youngstown State's march to the Division I-AA national championship in 1994.

Tressel seemed a bit sheepish when asked about the bloated point total against his outmanned opposition from the Mid-American Conference.

"Well, we got off to a fast start," he said. "We weren't looking to ... you know, we had a lot of opportunities. We moved the ball OK, but we didn't come in saying we were going to go after X amount of points. I don't know how many times we punted. Once? But there have been times when we have not punted and not scored this many points."

10 Years Ago — 2015

You might have seen black Ohio State jerseys on racks at retail stores. You would see them on the field next.

The Buckeyes were set to wear black uniforms with scarlet

numbers for their home night game against Penn State on Oct. 17, team uniform supplier Nike announced Oct. 3.

The scarlet numbers would have gray borders while the sleeves would have one scarlet stripe sandwiched between two white stripes. The scarlet numbers with gray trim would also be present on the shoulders of the uniforms.

Black pants with the same scarlet and white stripe pattern would accompany the black jerseys, and the Buckeyes would don scarlet shoes for the occasion. Ohio State would be in black from the head down, as well, with the team wearing black matte helmets in place of their typical silver lids.

"The head-to-toe look, which is punctuated by scarlet numbers outlined in gray, characterizes the unyielding confidence of the eight-time national champions," Nike said in its news release.

Five Years Ago — 2020

Ohio State introduced the creation of a new program on Oct. 10, when it announced that fifth-year senior defensive end Jonathon Cooper would be the first Buckeye to don the No. 0 jersey, allowed in college football for the first time in the 2020 season. In a post shared by the official team account, Ohio State explained that it was defining the uniform not as the number zero, but as the "Block O" jersey and using it in honor of the late Buckeye legend Bill Willis.

"Toughness. Accountability. Fight. These are all traits Bill Willis exemplified throughout his life," the post read. "The number '0' is a badge of honor. It represents fight – the backbone of our culture."

"Jonathon Cooper shares these traits and has been presented the opportunity to wear the Block O jersey this season."

Cooper called it a unique honor.

"This honor stands out from the rest," Cooper said. "Being a captain, all the great things that have happened here at Ohio State, this one stands out a lot more to me personally. It doesn't just represent me, it represents a great man, a great player who played here. I know when I put that jersey on, I'm representing him and I have to go out there and be my very best, and I have to do that every single day. This one really means a lot to me."

One Year Ago — 2024

If the hype surrounding Jeremiah Smith subsided following a slightly quieter performance against Marshall than fans had become accustomed to, he made sure to bring that hype to new heights after he made two stunning one-handed grabs against Michigan State.

Smith's first one-handed grab came on a long pass from Will Howard, where the 6-3 freshman went up with two hands but apparently needed only one to pluck a ball out of the air and come down with a 27-yard reception as he fought through contact.

Smith gave an encore of sorts just three plays later. Before a key third-and-10 play as Ohio State attempted to take a three-possession lead going into halftime, Howard took a hit that he said knocked the wind out of him while delivering a pass in the direction of Emeka Egbuka. After the play, Howard was slow to get up, and because the trainers came out for a brief look at Howard, backup quarterback Devin Brown was forced to come off the bench cold on the crucial third-and-long.

With just over 30 seconds to go in the half, the Spartans brought pressure with a blitz, but a gem of a pass block from running back TreVeyon Henderson gave Brown just enough time to look for the freshman. Smith found himself open down the sideline, and Brown delivered a pass just in the range of the outstretched singular hand of Smith, which he used to snatch the football out of the air and sprint into the end zone for a 17-yard touchdown.

BSB Subscribers Show Support Through VIP Program

Now is the time for loyal Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers to show their support through our VIP subscription program as we struggle through these times of high inflation, which have affected all small businesses. As most of you know, the newspaper business these days is challenging in even the best of times.

"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 43 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," a \$10 gift card from College Traditions, as well as a card from either Rusty Bucket or Cameron Mitchell restaurants good for \$10 off your next food purchase.

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 \$150 or more will have their names listed as Elite-Plus VIPs. The four largest Elite-Plus donors to the Buckeye Sports Bulletin VIP program will have their names listed in each issue as Wachsman Level Elite Plus donors, in honor of the late BSB assistant publisher, Karen Wachsman, and our largest donor will be designated as the Woody Level Wachsman Elite-Plus Donor.

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

The following are our Elite Wachsman, Elite-Plus, Elite, Scarlet and Brutus VIP subscribers.

Woody Level Elite Wachsman Donor (in honor of late BSB assistant publisher Karen Wachsman): Roosters Foundation.

Elite Wachsman Donors (in honor of late BSB assistant publisher Karen Wachsman): Beth Wachsman, Columbus; Brian Bucher, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; Fred Krisch, Cleveland; Jim Walton, Naples, Fla.

Elite-Plus Donors: Roger Albrecht, Columbus; Fredrick Bradshaw, Columbus; Betty Devaul, Uhrichsville, Ohio; Gary Devaul, Uhrichsville, Ohio; Bob Doyle, Beavercreek, Ohio; Tom Farish, Greensboro, Ga.; Terry T. Farmer, Lancaster, Ohio; Sander Flaum, New York; Raminder Gill, Colusa, Calif.; Mike Heimann, Ashland, Ohio; Freddie and Joe Huber, Walpole, Mass.; Carl

R. Jeffery DDS, Van Wert, Ohio; Gregory Jones, Calabasas, Calif.; Noreen Kenney-Campbell, Mount Pleasant, S.C.; Don Kersey, Springboro, Ohio; Kris Kersey, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Larry Larson, Ladera Ranch, Calif.; Dan LaVille, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jerry Lawhun, Rio Verde, Ariz.; Alan Lord, Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Dr. Jonathan Lucas, Portsmouth, Ohio; W. Lee Mackewiz O.D., Bear, Del.; Allen McMillin Jr., Logan, Ohio; Jeff Montgomery, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.; Theodore Pegram, Eden Prairie, Minn.; In memory of Hugh and Dixie Rea, Washington Court House, Ohio; In memory of Lisa Rea, Greenfield, Ohio; Bob Redfield, Dublin, Ohio; Jim Reichler, Toledo; Field Retterer, Bonita Springs, Fla.; The Russell Group United, Columbus; Jim Shindler, Sylvania, Ohio; John Thomas, Kentfield, Calif.; Dominic Verrilli III, Columbus, Ohio; Bob Weber, Mishawaka, Ind.; Richard Yoss, Woodsfield, Ohio; Edwin Zechman Jr., Sarasota, Fla.; Jim Zimmerman, Springfield, Ohio.

Elite Donors: Robert Ankerman, Holland, Mich.; Marshall Beck, Sarasota, Fla.; Phillip Blue, Prior Lake, Minn.; In memory of Norwin Brovitz, Oakmont, Pa.; David Cobb, Tipp City, Ohio; 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; Frank Klaus, Pepper Pike, Ohio; John Krepop, The Villages, Fla.; Paul Lappert, Columbus; Tom Leggett, Dublin, Ohio; Brian Livingston, Louisville, Ky.; Robert Maddux, Cincinnati; George Massad, Bowling Green, Ohio; Mike from Marietta, Ga.; Col. George R. Nelson, New Albany, Ohio; Greg Place, Greenville, Ohio; Robert Risher, Celina, Ohio; James Robinson Jr., Council Bluffs, Iowa; C. David Shaffer, Akron; Charlie Shaffer, Edison, Ohio; Bill Short, Sparta, Ohio; Mark Skinner, Columbus; Kyle Smith, Marietta, Ga.; Dr. Earl Strimple, Washington, D.C.; James Thomas, The Villages, Fla.; Chuck Underwood, Miamisburg, Ohio; Dan van Blaricom, Dublin, Ohio; Elliott S. Wettstein, Waverly, Ohio; J.D. Wientjes, Mobridge, S.D.; Kenny Wright, Heath, Ohio; David J. Young, Supply, N.C.; Anonymous, Columbus; Anonymous, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Anonymous, Lancaster, Ohio; Anonymous, Lewisburg, W.Va.

Scarlet VIPs: William Adams, Willoughby, Ohio; Anthony Ananthanarayanan, Rochester, Mich.; Bill Bell, Chandler, Ariz.; Greg Brooks, Gahanna, Ohio; Marty Brumbaugh, Troy, Ohio; Dominic Caminiti, Canal Winchester, Ohio; Scott Clark, Gahanna, Ohio; Donald Collins, Kenton, Ohio; Joseph A. Cusma Sr., Massillon, Ohio; Dennis Dahm, Sandusky, Ohio; Julie Ellis, Apple Valley, Calif.; Mike Freeburn, Columbus; Tom Goila, Cincinnati; Gail Gonder, Fort Worth, Texas; Fred Grace, Utica, Ohio; Dave Hamilton, Canton, Ohio; Richard G. Hannan Jr., Chillicothe, Ohio; Doug Harris, Lima, Ohio; Ed Helal, Ashland, Ohio; Phil Helal, Strongsville, Ohio; Gerald Mann, Palm Coast, Fla.; Ed Maxwell, Jackson Center, Ohio; Dave Palmer, Washington, Mich.; In memory of Ike Reynolds, Columbus; Lawrence Romanoff, Powell, Ohio; Jim Shaw, Lake Forest, Calif.; Dr. William Thomas, Gallipolis, Ohio; Anonymous, Dallas; Anonymous, Gaffney, S.C.; Anonymous, Girard, Ohio; Anonymous, Norwalk, Ohio.

offensive and defensive players of the week, the team announced on Sept. 16.

Siereveld anchored an offensive line that allowed only one sack against the Bobcats. After surrendering the sack on fourth-and-goal on the opening drive, Ohio State's unit settled in and dominated, giving up no additional sacks and just one tackle for loss over the Buckeyes' final nine possessions.

Reese was all over the field with seven total tackles (two solo), a sack and two pass breakups.

Curry was especially effective on third down, with three tackles, a sack and a pass breakup on that down forcing the Buckeyes' hand to name two defensive players of the week.

OSU Coaches Receive "Exceeds Expectations" Grades

It was a fantastic year for Ohio State football, and the performance reviews the program's coaches received reflected that.

While Day graded his assistants, Bjork graded the Buckeyes' head coach. Not only did Bjork give Day a grade of "exceeds ex-

pectations" for the 2024-25 academic year, but he also gave him high praise for leading the program to its first national championship since 2014.

"It has been a true pleasure to work alongside Coach Day over the past year," Bjork wrote of Day, according to documents obtained by Eleven Warriors. "Coach leads an amazing program and anchors a great culture of academic success, socially responsible young men, a championship level of performance, and provides leadership that is expected here at Ohio State."

As Bjork pointed out, not only did Day help lead the Buckeyes to a 14-2 record with wins over six playoff teams – Indiana, Notre Dame, Penn State, Oregon, Tennessee and Texas – but he also helped the Buckeyes excel in the classroom.

Ohio State was the only football program in the FBS to post a perfect multi-year Academic Progress Rate score of 1,000, and the Buckeyes have accomplished that feat in each of the past two seasons.

Ohio State's assistant coaches also received their flowers from Day. All seven of

Ohio State's assistants who were with the team for the 2024-25 season – including Hartline, co-defensive coordinator/cornerbacks coach Tim Walton, co-offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Keenan Bailey, safeties coach/pass game coordinator Matt Guerrieri, defensive line coach/associate head coach Larry Johnson, linebackers coach James Laurinaitis and running backs coach Carlos Locklyn – all received "above expectations" grades.

Notably, Walton, who has helped the Buckeyes' secondary solidify itself as one of the best position groups in the country, included becoming a college football head coach as his top professional development goal.

Ohio State's new assistant coaches, including defensive coordinator Matt Patricia, offensive line coach Tyler Bowen and quarterbacks coach Billy Fessler, received "meets expectation" grades, but that was to be expected since they assumed their current positions during the offseason.

General manager Mark Pantoni and director of sports performance Mickey Ma-

rotti also received grades of "above expectations."

Former OSU Players Nominated For HOF

The Pro Football Hall of Fame announced on Sept. 24 that former Ohio State running back Eddie George, center Nick Mangold and linebacker A.J. Hawk are among the 128 modern-era nominees for the class of 2026.

George played at Ohio State from 1992-95, winning the Heisman trophy in his senior season before being drafted No. 14 overall by the Houston Oilers (before the franchise moved to Tennessee in 1997). He played for Houston and Tennessee from 1996-2003 before playing one season for the Dallas Cowboys in 2004.

The Philadelphia native totaled 10,441 rushing yards and 2,227 receiving yards in his pro career, finishing with 78 total touchdowns. George earned four Pro Bowl selections and was named to both the All-

Continued On Page 8

OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 7

Pro first and second teams one time each.

Hawk was a member of the Buckeyes from 2002-05, winning the national championship along with Mangold as a freshman. The linebacker earned first-team All-Big Ten honors in each of his final three seasons at Ohio State, was twice named an All-American, and was selected No. 5 overall in the 2006 NFL draft by the Green Bay Packers, where he spent nine of his 11 NFL seasons.

Hawk won Super Bowl XLV with the Packers in 2011, and over his nine seasons he became the franchise's all-time leading tackler (922). He also made stops with the Cincinnati Bengals (2015) and Atlanta Falcons (2016).

Mangold also played for the Buckeyes from 2002-05 and was named a first-team All-American in his senior year. The 6-4, 307-pound center was then selected 29th overall by the New York Jets in 2006.

Hailing from Centerville, Ohio, Mangold spent his entire career with the Jets, where he played from 2006-16. Mangold was a seven-time Pro Bowler, made first-team All-Pro twice (2009, 2010) and second-team All-Pro once (2011).

George likely has the best chance to be inducted into the Hall of Fame this time around, as the all-time great running back was a modern-era semifinalist in 2022 and 2024.



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

8

Next BSB Print Issue Set To Mail Oct. 7

The next copy of Buckeye Sports Bulletin mails Oct. 7. There is no reason to wait for your next Buckeye Sports Bulletin print edition to get the latest OSU sports news, including any recruiting activity. The BSB staff will be reporting from every press conference or other availability and following all the Ohio State's sports activity. All the news is available in real time at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com.

The website also offers plenty of additional content not found in your paper. The Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff mans BuckeyeSports.com, reporting on breaking stories plus posting additional features.

Along with daily posts, we offer reprints from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin archives as part of our popular Reprint Thursdays. The always entertaining Staff Predictions appear the Friday before every game. While all staffers chose Ohio State to win over Washington, they all thought the Buckeyes would be more productive offensively. Sam Cipriani had it 33-14, Bobby Gorbett 31-17, and Greg Wilson 40-21.

Also, staff members man the Fan Forum, where the discussion between staff and readers is always lively, and it is more so during football season. Staff and readers also discuss games in real time on the Official Game Thread on the Forum.

We want to remind readers that the complete edition of each BSB is posted at BuckeyeSports.com immediately

upon completion of the paper, making the site a must for readers having continuing mail problems. This electronic service, while not a substitute for your print edition, is a stopgap as your paper winds its way – frequently slowly – through the postal system and is also free to subscribers.

For those who are considering upgrading to first-class mail for football season, the good news is that the cost of the upgrade has come down. You can upgrade to first-class mail through the Michigan game for \$25 and through the playoffs to the Football Recruiting Wrap-Up in February for \$35. Just give us a call at (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862 to order by credit card. Or you can send your check, money order or credit card information (don't forget your three- or four-digit security code) to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Be sure to mention either the "Football Upgrade" or the "Recruiting Upgrade."

If you are not already taking advantage of BuckeyeSports.com, 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.

49ers Bosa Out For Season With Torn ACL

Former Ohio State defensive end Nick Bosa will miss the remainder of the San Francisco 49ers' season with a torn ACL, according to multiple reports.

Bosa suffered the injury during the first quarter of the 49ers' 16-15 win over the Arizona Cardinals on Sept. 21. Bosa played for Ohio State from 2016-18 and earned Big Ten Defensive Lineman of the Year honors in 2017.

Bosa has had a very successful NFL career with the 49ers, the team that selected him with the second overall pick in the 2019 draft. He is a five-time Pro Bowler and was named the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year in 2022. For his career, he has totaled 278 tackles, including 91 for loss and 64½ sacks.

The former Buckeye was off to a great start again this year, tallying a sack in each of his team's first two games. Before getting injured against the Cardinals, Bosa had two total tackles and forced a fumble in the game.

Tressel Won't Run For Governor

Tressel will not be running for Ohio governor in 2026. The former Ohio State head football coach and Ohio's current lieutenant governor announced his decision in a statement released on Twitter on Sept. 19.

"It has been an extraordinary honor of a lifetime for Ellen and me to serve alongside Governor Mike DeWine and First Lady Fran DeWine," the statement read. "After considerable thought and prayer, we have decided not to run for Governor in 2026."

Tressel coached the Buckeyes from 2001-10 and led them to a national championship in 2002. He gained experience as an administrator after his coaching days when he became the president of Youngstown

State in 2013. Tressel held that role until 2023 and assumed his current role as lieutenant governor in February of 2025.

Tressel was previously considering a run to replace term-limited governor Mike DeWine earlier this year.

"I believe that our crucial opportunities in the areas of education and workforce deserve my full attention for the remainder of our term," Tressel's statement read. "My goal is to help finish the amazing work started by the DeWine-Husted Administration. Ohio is winning and it must continue."

Snyder Wins World Title

Former Ohio State wrestler Kyle Snyder won his fourth world wrestling title in the 97kg freestyle division at the 2025 world championships in Zagreb, Croatia.

In the gold medal match, Snyder came back from a late deficit to defeat Iran's Amirali Azarpira 4-2 in a rematch of the 2024 Olympic bronze-medal match. Azarpira led 2-1 with 45 seconds left before Snyder scored a takedown to claim gold.

Snyder was a gold medalist at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and a silver medalist at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. He has also won world championships in 2015, 2017, and 2022.

The Woodbine, Md., native also won gold in the heavyweight division of both the Big Ten and national championships in his final three seasons at Ohio State.

With the win, Snyder ties John Smith in second place all-time for men's freestyle world titles won by an American at four, which is two shy of the record six, held by Jordan Borroughs.

Canzone Homers Three Times In A Game

Former Ohio State baseball player Dominic Canzone had quite the performance in the Seattle Mariners' 12-5 win over the

Kansas City Royals on Sept. 16.

In the win, Canzone went 5 for 5 with three home runs and four RBI. Canzone became the second player in Mariners history to have a five-hit, three-home run game.

He played for the Buckeyes from 2017-19 and broke a program record previously held by Nick Swisher with a 59-game on-base streak.

Canzone was an eighth-round pick by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the 2019 MLB draft and made his debut with the big-league club in 2023, getting traded to the Mariners midway through the season.

Canzone had a career-best season this year. In 82 games, he had a slash line of .300/.358/.481, helping Seattle clinch its first AL West title since 2001.

Hall Charged With Felonious Assault

Former Ohio State running back Jordan Hall, 34, was charged with felonious assault for an incident that occurred at a Columbus Speedway gas station at 1 a.m. on Sept. 20, according to court records.

A surveillance camera caught Hall at the Speedway on 744 W. 5th Ave., dragging a man out of a vehicle multiple times and hitting the individual repeatedly. Hall hit the man in the face multiple times, causing the victim to fall backward and hit his head on the ground.

The man was transported to Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center in critical condition, and homicide detectives are leading the case due to the severity of the victim's injuries.

Hall appeared in court on Sept. 22, where Franklin County Municipal Court Judge Zach Gwin set his bond at \$175,000 and ordered him to avoid any contact with the victim or his family.

Hall was a member of the Buckeyes from 2009-13, serving as a team captain in 2012.

OSU Passes First Road Test Against Huskies

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Stuffed in the red zone. A lost fumble on a punt return. An opponent determined to keep its home dominance intact.

There were a lot of factors working against Ohio State, but the No. 1-ranked Buckeyes were unfazed, even facing an early deficit with quarterback Julian Sayin making his first road start.

He threw for 208 yards and two touchdowns, and CJ Donaldson ran for a score and caught a pass for a TD when the Buckeyes defeated Washington 24-6 in Seattle on Sept. 27 to end the Huskies' 22-game home winning streak before a crowd of 72,485 at Husky Stadium.

Ohio State (4-0, 1-0) led 7-3 at the half on a late 18-yard touchdown reception by Jeremiah Smith, and the lead was extended to 14-3 midway through the third quarter on a Donaldson 1-yard run before Grady Gross made his second 28-yard field goal to make it 14-6.

Jayden Fielding added a 34-yard field goal to make it 17-6.

Later, on a fourth-and-1 from the 4, Donaldson's reception made it 24-6 with 4:56 remaining in the game.

Washington (3-1, 0-1) was first nationally in scoring going into the game, averaging 55.7 points, while the Buckeyes were tied with BYU for the fewest points allowed (5.3).

Slow Going

The Huskies went three-and-out off the opening kick, and a 17-yard punt by Luke Dunne gave OSU the ball at the 50.

Donaldson ran for 30 yards on four carries with a long of 11, and Smith had a 6-yard catch before Sayin, on a third-down scramble, went for 6 that left the Buckeyes facing fourth-and-1 from the 5.

Donaldson tried to go off left tackle but was met by a swarm of Huskies and picked up nothing as the red-zone woes continued a game after OSU had to settle for three field goals in the red zone against Ohio.

With Washington starting from the 5, a second-down gain of 16 to the 23 on a catch by Dezmen Roebuck was followed by an 11-yard sideline interference penalty on UW that put the ball on the 12. Two plays later, Washington coach Jedd Fisch was penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct from the 17 to the 9, and an illegal snap placed the ball on the 4.

The Huskies got new life when a 42-yard punt was returned 32 yards by Brandon Inniss, but he fumbled and it was recovered by Decker DeGraaf at the Washington 21.

Jonah Coleman, on second down, raced for a 34-yard gain to the OSU 45. Denzel Boston made a sideline catch of 17 for a first at the 27. After a false start, Roebuck made another catch of 20 yards to the 12, and Quentin Moore made a reception to the 2 for a first down. Coleman lost 1 on a run, and the third false start of the game for UW pushed the Huskies to the 8, where Coleman was stopped by Caden Curry for a 2-yard loss to end the first quarter.

On a third-and-goal from the 10 to start the second quarter, Arvell Reese stopped quarterback Demond Williams Jr. for no



SONNY BROCKWAY

D-NIED — Defensive ends C.J. Hicks (11) and Caden Curry (92) were among many who helped keep Washington's high-powered offense out of the end zone in the 24-6 win. The Huskies were averaging 55.7 points before they were shut down by the Buckeyes.

gain, and Gross booted a 28-yard field goal for a 3-0 lead at 14:05.

On OSU's next possession, Bo Jackson ran for 4 and 5 yards, and Donaldson converted on third down with a hard 2 yards and a first down at the Buckeye 36, but three plays produced only 4 yards, and Joe McGuire's 35-yard punt to the 25 was not returned.

Washington had a fourth-and-1 at its 45, and Williams, on a keeper, rushed right for 10 yards to the OSU 45. Williams then found Omari Evans for 22 yards to the 23, and Adam Mohammed ran for 5. Kenyatta Jackson Jr. sacked Williams for 4 yards back to the 22, and a pass to Mohammed lost another 5.

Washington tried to get cute, but it backfired. On fourth down, Gross, the kicker, tried a pass that fell incomplete on a botched fake, and the Buckeyes escaped without falling further behind.

The Buckeyes, starting at their 27, then took a 7-3 lead with 1:08 left in the half on an 18-yard reception by Smith.

Inniss got a first down with an 11-yard catch and then, on a third-and-1 from the UW 48, picked up another 11 off a reception before Bo Jackson, on first down, ran for 8 to the 29 at the 2:00 timeout.

Jackson powered his way for 12 then 2. Coming out of a UW timeout, Jackson ran for 2 more, which led to a second Washington timeout. Needing 6 on third down, OSU committed its first false start.

From the 18, UW blitzed, Smith ran a crossing route and made a catch at the scrimmage line and went unimpeded into the end zone to complete the 10-play, 73-yard, 3:31 drive.

Mohammed returned the kickoff 41 yards to the UW 41 and might have gone all the way if Fielding hadn't made the tackle. Any chance of a Washington response from there was dismissed when Curry sacked Williams for 12 yards, and the Huskies ran one more play before heading to the locker room.

UW totaled 165 yards in the first half (102 passing, 63 rushing); the Buckeyes gained 138 (63 passing, 75 rushing). Williams was 11 of 12 for 102 yards while Sayin completed 7 of 10 for only 63 yards, with Smith making three catches for 33 yards.

OSU coach Ryan Day said the defense allows for a margin of error when the offense isn't clicking.

"When you have a defense that's playing the way it is right now, you can play with confidence knowing that you don't have to score every single possession," he said. "You can control the clock and play it – I wouldn't say more conservative, but you understand time, score and situation."

Dominant Half

Aided by a Washington penalty, the Buckeyes went ahead 14-3 at the 7:19 mark of the third on Donaldson's 1-yard run.

The Buckeyes got the ball to start the second half, and Sayin tossed to Smith for 13 and 8 on the first two plays. Donaldson would gain 3 to get a first down by a yard, and Smith had another catch for 6 to the UW 45.

Tight end Jelani Thurman hauled in a 9-yarder, and James Peoples made two grabs for a total of 13 yards to the 23.

An illegal use of hands on Phillip Daniels cost OSU 15 yards on the next play to the 35, and Smith was able to get only 2 yards on his catch. Sayin then threw incomplete, but UW was flagged for a roughing the passer infraction by Ta'ita'i Uigalelei to give the Buckeyes a first down and a reprieve at the 18.

On third-and-4 from the 12, a pass to Carnell Tate up the middle went to the 1, and Donaldson took it in from there on the next play. OSU went 75 yards in 14 plays while consuming 7:41 off the clock.

It didn't take long for UW to counter with a 28-yard field goal when the Huskies got the ball back, but they could have had more if not for a goal-line stand.

During the drive, Roebuck had a catch for

18, a face-mask penalty on Tywone Malone gave UW a first at the OSU 30 and DeGraaf gained 23 yards on a catch. On third-and-goal from the 3, Kayden McDonald had a 7-yard sack to force the three-pointer.

On the Buckeyes' next possession, Inniss opened with a 12-yard catch, and Tate later made a nice sideline grab for 11 to the OSU 48. Bo Jackson ran to his right for 11 to the Washington 40. Tight end Max Klare added 8 off a rollout by Sayin, and Tate added 11 more to the 21 on his catch to end the third quarter.

The first play of the fourth sent the Buckeyes backward when Daniels took a holding penalty back to the 31. On third-and-17 from the 28, Sayin ran for 12.

Fielding made a 34-yard field goal at the 13:19 mark to increase the score to 17-6 and make it a two-score game.

After the kickoff, Washington got a third-down conversion on Williams' 13th straight completion, a 4-yarder to Boston at the UW 30.

The Huskies would have been forced to punt after a Curry sack of 7 yards to the 30, but Eddrick Houston was penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct to keep the drive alive at the UW 45.

On fourth-and-2 from the OSU 47, McDonald broke through to sack Williams for 9 yards at the Washington 44 with 8:44 to play.

OSU looked for the kill, and Klare made a catch for 18 prior to Tate on an end-around going for 8 to the 16.

Looking at a third-and-17 from the 20, Bo Jackson ran for 16, just inches short of a first down after a review to overturn the original first-down call.

No matter, Sayin rolled right and connected with Donaldson for the 4-yard score to make it 24-6 with 4:56 remaining. The drive was 44 yards, eight plays and 3:48.

Washington's last drive lasted five plays and 9 yards, including a Curry 7-yard sack, and the Huskies punted to the OSU 23 with 3:19 to go. The Buckeyes ran out the clock, or more accurately ran four times and Smith picked up 19 on a third-and-5 to the OSU 47, and the game ended with a Peoples run of 2 to the UW 46.

Sayin was 22 of 28, Smith made eight catches for 81 yards, and Bo Jackson gained 80 yards on 17 carries.

Notes

The game took a crisp 2 hours, 55 minutes. ... The kickoff temperature under sunny skies was 69 degrees. ... The Buckeyes totaled 357 yards, including 149 rushing. ... They were 6 of 10 on third down; UW was 1 of 11. ... Donaldson totaled 39 yards on nine carries. ... The Huskies had 234 yards (173 passing, 61 rushing). ... Williams was 18 of 22 for 173 yards. Roebuck's four catches went for 58 yards, and Coleman gained 70 yards on 13 carries. ... Curry had a monster game with 11 tackles (nine solo), three sacks for 26 yards and five tackles for loss totaling 29 yards. ... McDonald made seven tackles (four solo) with two sacks for 16 yards and three TFLs for 18 yards. ... The Buckeyes had six sacks for 46 yards. ... UW had one sack for 7 yards.

Front To Back, Stopping Huskies A Team Effort

Continued From Page 1

Williams to throw from the pocket with Arvell Reese sitting behind the line as a spy for much of the game and the defensive line doing well at caging Williams in the pocket.

Washington head coach Jedd Fisch believes that Williams may have held on to the ball too long sometimes, which contributed to the inflated number of sacks in the game.

"I have to help Demond understand that an incompleteness is OK sometimes," Fisch said. "He doesn't throw many incompleteness at all. Sometimes that leads to holding the ball a little bit longer and, unfortunately, at times could turn into a sack. Demond is exceptionally accurate. He's really good with the ball. He makes extremely good decisions. He protects the ball at all costs."

When a talented quarterback who can pass and run at a high level is across the field, sometimes preparation can only do so much. There are days when good players simply get beaten by other good players. But that wasn't the case for Ohio State against Williams.

"We knew we were playing a great athlete and a great playmaker," Curry said. "We knew we had to contain the quarterback, and we knew we had to do our job. Honestly, plays just come off of that. When you cage the pocket that well, he's going to come to you eventually."

Curry had the best game of the group, with a total of 11 tackles (nine solo), three sacks, and five tackles for loss, which tied a single-game Ohio State record. Seven former Buckeyes have reached that mark, with Chase Young (2019) being the last to do it before Curry did it in Seattle.

But not far behind him was defensive tackle Kayden McDonald, who had seven tackles (four solo), three tackles for loss and two sacks of his own, as well as a quarterback hurry.

Head coach Ryan Day was extreme-

ly pleased with the duo and the unit as a whole after the game, smiling from ear to ear when asked about the dominant performance.

"(Curry and McDonald) both played well. The plan going in, Larry Johnson talked about four guys playing as one when you're going against a quarterback like this," Day said. "It's easy to find yourself going out on your own and trying to make plays, and then it's easy for there to be layers that get disoriented, and before you know it, (Williams) can split out."

Day also acknowledged the play of the secondary. It wouldn't be possible for the defensive line to get home so often if the coverage in the defensive backfield wasn't good enough to take away some downfield pass-catching options.

Denzel Boston, Washington's leading receiver and a possible first-round pick in the 2026 NFL draft, came into the game with 249 receiving yards on 16 catches for three touchdowns. He was held to three catches for 26 yards against Ohio State.

"All those guys working together worked because, if you understand that the coverage and the rush are working together, you start to see how this works," Day said. "The second part of it, you're able to stick with it and cage it in there and get the sack. We did a great job stopping the run, had a good plan, but it was about the execution."

Curry might have come out of the day with slightly better numbers, but the argument could be made that McDonald walked away with the more memorable play.

When Washington was down 17-6 in the fourth quarter with just under nine minutes to play in the game, the Buckeyes were able to force a fourth-and-2 at midfield. Williams dropped back to pass, and McDonald lined up over the center, made a hard fake right and swam around Geirean Hatchett into the backfield, wrapped around Williams on his attempt to escape the pocket, and threw him backward for a sack.



SONNY BROCKWAY

NO. 1 WITH A SILVER BULLET — Defensive tackle Tywone Malone Jr. and first-year defensive coordinator Matt Patricia celebrate following the 24-6 win at Washington. The Buckeyes have the top scoring defense nationally (5.5 points) and have not allowed a red-zone touchdown through four games.

"Well, it was fourth down, so I just brought out my best move," McDonald said. "I got past the center, and the rest was history."

With great field position, the Buckeye offense was able to drive down the field and score another touchdown to seal the win.

Curry said the defensive line takes pride in being able to swing games the way they did against Washington.

"We love to do our job, and we love to do it at a high level," he said. "We love to make plays when our numbers are called. If it happens to be on the goal line, or in the middle of the field, or if the game is on the line, we love all of the energy behind it."

Washington entered the game first in the country in scoring, averaging 55.7 points per game as an offense, and had punted just two times in three games.

It didn't take long for that number to double against the Buckeyes when they forced a three-and-out on Washington's first drive and another punt about eight minutes later, although the second ended up a positive play for the Huskies when returner Brandon Inniss fumbled after running a 42-yard boot back 32 yards.

Coming into the year, the defense as a whole had some question marks, with the line being the biggest of them. With only safety Caleb Downs, linebacker Sonny Styles and cornerback Davison Igbinosun returning as starters on that side of the ball, nobody expected that the unit would be able to repeat some of the heights it reached in the 2024 national championship season, when it was the top scoring defense in the country and the No. 1 in total defense.

But through five weeks of college football, this year's defense has come about as close as it could have. Giving up just 5.5 points per game, the Buckeyes enter their fifth game as the No. 1 scoring defense in the country and the No. 8 total defense, giving up 229.3 yards per game.

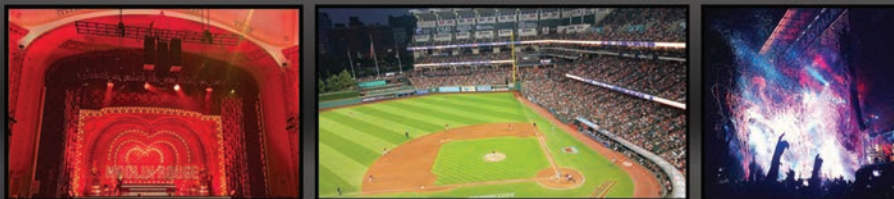
Day didn't doubt the players the Buckeyes are putting on the field this year but acknowledged that there's a lot of season left for those numbers to get worse. But he did say that the potential for this defense to be special this year is there.

"Well, we're only four games in, so we've got a lot of work to do here. But I'd rather it this way than any other way," he said. "It

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

doesn't surprise me with the coaches that we have. It doesn't surprise me with the players that we have.

"No, I'm not surprised, but it's exciting to see the capability and the potential. I think if we can all stick together as a team, we'll have a chance here. But there's a long way to go and a lot of work to do."

Part of the reason the defense has been as good as it has is that, although there are many first-time starters in the unit, many of them have been with the program for a long time. Both Curry and Jackson are in their fourth year with Ohio State and were able to sit behind Jack Sawyer and JT Tumloloau and learn from them during that time, which Curry said was extremely valuable.

"(The defensive line has) been here together for two or three years now," he said. "We've seen the guys before us. We see the great defensive line last year, all of our guys in the NFL, and we learned every day off of them. Being able to play with them, learn and being able to be taught by them, it definitely paid off."

Those players have experience in the program and have been able to learn the defense well, but there are also the players who have the in-game experience: Downs, Styles and Igbinosun, who are the leaders of the defense.

"You have some guys in there like Caleb, Sonny and IGB that have played a lot of football, and they're the guys that are leading the way," Day said. "Quickly, these guys are following because they believe in them, because they've seen it. You mix that

in with the chemistry of the defensive staff, the game planning and the execution of it all, you're seeing that."

Red-Zone Domination

Maybe even more impressive than the numbers that Curry, McDonald and the rest of the defensive line put up in the win is the fact that teams are incapable of scoring touchdowns on Ohio State in the red zone, or at least that's how it has gone through four games in 2025.

Washington had three tries to do so against the Buckeyes. One only got to the Buckeye 18-yard line before the Huskies were sent back to fourth-and-14 and tried to catch Ohio State's special teams sleeping with kicker Grady Gross rolling right and ultimately throwing a pass to nobody, giving the ball back to Ohio State.

Given the situation they were in, Day would have been pleased with simply forcing a field goal, but the turnover on downs was even better.

"When you get down to the red zone, we have to force field goals, but when you get a stop, it's a four-point play, and when you get a stop like that, it's a seven-point swing. That's the way we look at it, so that was a big point in the game."

There were two other examples of Washington getting into the red zone, both of which were within 3 yards of scoring a touchdown.

The first was in the first quarter when the Huskies had a first-and-goal on the Ohio State 2-yard line. Washington running back Jonah Coleman, who had nine

touchdowns in three games coming into the contest, was stopped for a 1-yard loss by Curry before a false-start penalty on Hatchett pulled them back to the 8-yard line. Coleman had a 2-yard loss, and Williams was brought down by Reese, who was spying the QB, for no gain. Washington had to settle for a 28-yard field goal.

The next trip made it to the Buckeyes' 3-yard line in the third quarter. After a 1-yard gain on first down and a 3-yard pass on second down got the Huskies that close, McDonald came up with another one of his big plays with a 7-yard sack, forcing another 28-yard field goal by Gross.

Ohio State had a similar stop in the season opener against then-No. 1 Texas when the Longhorns were threatening in the third quarter with a fourth-and-goal on the 1-yard line. Quarterback Arch Manning tried sneaking up the middle and was stuffed by Curry and Lorenzo Styles Jr.

With how often the defense has been able to make stops in the red zone the past two seasons, it seems like that is just the identity of the Buckeye defense. Sometimes it will bend – not often – but it will seldom break.

While the Buckeyes were extremely strong in the red zone against Washington, they were just as strong on third downs overall, forcing a fourth down on 10 of 11 opportunities in the game.

With the new clock rules and both teams utilizing the huddle, possessions are valuable, and Day emphasized how important it was for the Buckeyes to get those stops because of that.

"You're talking about 53 (plays for Washington) and 62 (plays for Ohio State). It's just not a lot of football," he said. "That means there is going to be a high percentage of situational plays. We have to be great in situations, and it's something we worked hard on in the preseason, certainly. Matt and the defensive staff understand that part of it and work hard at it. That's really what it comes down to."

This dominance inside the 20-yard line is nothing new to the Ohio State defense. When Jim Knowles was leading the unit in 2024, it was the red-zone and specifically the goal-line defense that made huge stops for the Buckeyes.

It was the reason they beat Penn State in State College, Pa., and that there was still a late chance to beat archrival Michigan late in the fourth quarter, and – as will be remembered by Buckeye fans as long as there is college football – Sawyer's 83-yard scoop and score in the Cotton Bowl sealed the win over Texas and sent Ohio State to the national championship.

There were many other examples of the red-zone defense standing tall in those moments, and Curry believes that, while that is partially due to the talent the defensive unit has to be able to make those plays, it's also the mindset the players have when the ball gets into the red zone.

"A lot of defenses can break down, and you can start to give up a little bit," Curry said. "The voice in the back of your head is saying, 'All right, they've already got this drive. They're already done.' We just play up to the standard, and we never give up."

Roosters
A FUN, CASUAL JOINT

**HOME OF THE
AWARD WINNING
WINGS AND
WAIT STAFF!**

WINGS ★ SALADS ★ SANDWICHES ★ PIZZAS ★ SUBS ★ FUN

Sayin Survives First Road Test Against Huskies

In his first road test as Ohio State's starting quarterback, redshirt freshman quarterback Julian Sayin often looked like a seasoned veteran. Making the fourth start of his collegiate career, Sayin completed 22 of 28 passes for 208 yards and two touchdowns.

Most importantly, he commanded the Buckeye offense with poise in Husky Stadium, one of the loudest environments in the Big Ten.

Although the Buckeyes committed five penalties in the win, only one of those was an offensive pre-snap penalty.

The quarterback said that his head coach, Ryan Day, stressed the importance of Sayin having poise in the road environment in the days leading up to the game.

"Coach Day preached it all week having poise in the noise out there," Sayin said. "I think we did a good job of having poise in the loud environment. Our mindset was to just keep swinging. Things aren't going to go our way the whole time. There's going to be momentum shifts. We just have to keep swinging."

Early on, the momentum was not with Sayin or the Buckeyes. The usually accurate Sayin completed only two of his first four passes, as the Buckeyes failed to score on either of their first two drives.

It wasn't until the end of the first half that Sayin found a rhythm. During a 73-yard touchdown drive that consumed much of the 4:39 left on the clock, Sayin completed 5 of 6 passes for 54 yards. His best moment on the drive came on a third-and-11 play at the Husky 18-yard line. On the play, Sayin calmly drifted away from a six-man pressure to find Jeremiah Smith on a drag route at the line of scrimmage and watched as his favorite target cruised into the end zone for a touchdown.

"We kind of knew what look we were going to get there, and they ended up bringing (the blitz), and so I had to drift and kind of get out of there," Sayin said of his first touchdown pass. "Jeremiah did a nice job

GAME NOTEBOOK Bobby Gorbett

of finding the window, and the receivers made some great blocks, and the O-line did a great job as well."

From there, Sayin and Ohio State's passing offense were pretty close to unstoppable. Against a Husky defense that gave plenty of respect to the Buckeyes' explosive pass catchers, Sayin was perfectly content checking the ball down to find open running backs and receivers for moderate but important gains.

On the Buckeyes' first drive of the second half, Sayin completed 8 of 9 passes for 62 yards. Sayin's passes helped the Buckeyes get down to the 1-yard line, and running back CJ Donaldson punched it in to put the team up two scores.

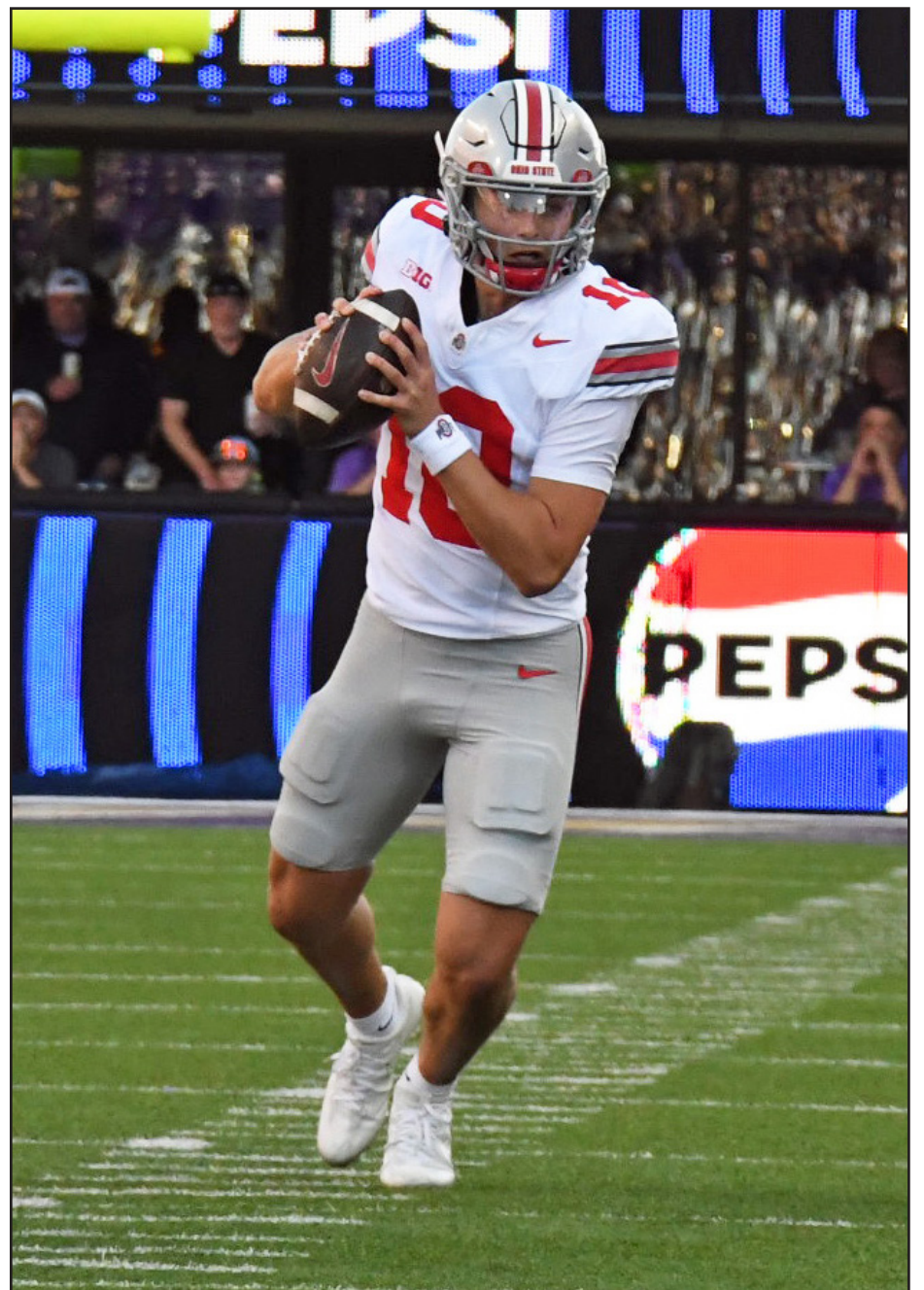
Sayin didn't just impress with his arm, though. The five-star quarterback managed to extend plenty of plays as a runner and even picked up a season-high 12 rushing yards on four carries.

According to Sayin, he simply took the rushing yards that were available to him against a fairly conservative Washington defense.

"I think it was just what the game called for," Sayin said of his runs. "A couple of times, they were either dropping eight guys and there were only three guys rushing, or they were playing man coverage and nobody had the quarterback. So I think it was just a couple times where it was kind of what the game called for, and I had to go make a play with my legs."

Freshman, Senior Lead Run Game

With the Huskies giving the Buckeye receivers plenty of respect, Ohio State had



SONNY BROCKWAY

SMOOTH OPERATOR — Starting in a hostile environment for the first time in his Ohio State career, redshirt freshman quarterback Julian Sayin took what the Washington defense offered, and his steady hand led the Buckeyes to a 24-6 win in Husky Stadium. He threw for 208 yards and two touchdowns.

ample opportunity to run the football. The Buckeyes ran for 149 yards on 34 carries for a 4.4-yard average.

Freshman running back Bo Jackson had more carries than anyone in the room. He ran for 80 yards on a season-high 17 attempts.

Donaldson, though, came out with the offense first. He ran for a modest 39 yards on nine carries but also had the team's only rushing touchdown.

Interestingly, sophomore running back James Peoples, who was the Buckeyes' leading returning rusher, had just three carries for 10 yards.

Although Donaldson took a bit of a back seat to Jackson against the Huskies, he said after the game that he liked the Buckeyes' three-man rotation.

"It's special, man. You have speed, you have the change-of-pace guy, then I'm the power guy. So when we all work together, we are dangerous. When you try to separate

us, it's very hard because we play as one," Donaldson said. "That's something Coach (Carlos) Locklyn continues to preach to us. If you play as one, trust that the game will go the right way."

Donaldson got the majority of his carries on that first drive, when Ohio State started at the Washington 50-yard line and got inside the Husky 10-yard line. Donaldson ran for 30 yards on his first four carries on the drive, running behind an Ohio State offensive line that seemed to have no issues pushing around Washington's defensive line.

However, on fourth-and-1 from the Washington 5-yard line, the Husky defensive line finally got some push, and Donaldson wasn't able to fight through contact to reach the line to gain.

"On that fourth-and-1, I have to do a better job at getting my pads down," Donaldson said. "That's something I have to continually work on. Coach Day always tells us to weather the storm, so that's something we

Harr's

FORKLIFT SERVICE, INC

SALES | RENTAL | SERVICE | PARTS

NOBLELIFT KOMATSU



harrs-forklift.com

1181 Refugee Road
Columbus, OH 43207

(614) 443-4651

Fax: (614) 443-4711

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

The Buckeyes' red-zone defense shone against Washington. An Ohio State defense that hadn't allowed a single red-zone score of any kind all season allowed just six points on three Huskies attempts inside the Buckeye 20-yard line. On Washington's third drive and first into the red zone, the Huskies were just 2 yards away from the goal line, and Ohio State's defense bent, but it didn't break. A Washington penalty gave the Buckeyes a few more yards to work with before defensive end Caden Curry wrapped up Huskies running back Jonah Coleman for a 1-yard loss. Then, linebacker Arvell Reese forced Washington to kick a field goal after he took quarterback Demond Williams Jr. down on third down for no gain.

Ohio State's defense stifled Washington again on the following Huskies' offensive possession. After Washington sophomore running back Adam Mohammed rushed for a 5-yard gain on first down at the OSU 18, the Buckeyes sacked Williams before Williams delivered a low ball to Mohammed on third down that he caught and fell to the ground for a loss of 5. Washington faked a field goal on fourth-and-14, with kicker Grady Gross tossing an incomplete pass to give the ball back to Ohio State.

Midway through the third quarter, Washington found itself deep in Ohio State territory once again to no avail. On third-and-goal with 3 yards to go, defensive tackle Kayden McDonald and the Buckeye defensive line took down Williams for a 7-yard sack that forced the Huskies to attempt a field goal and kept Washington out of reach with an eight-point deficit.

What Didn't Work

Ohio State was once again sloppy on multiple fronts of its special teams. The first gaffe came with just over five minutes left in the first quarter, when Brandon Inniss fielded a Washington punt

and returned it 32 yards before Huskies senior tight end Quentin Moore punched the ball out from behind. Fellow Washington tight end Decker DeGraaf recovered the football, ultimately ending what could have been a promising Ohio State drive before it started.

Then, just before the half, the Buckeye kickoff unit nearly cost Ohio State another score. Mohammed took kicker Jayden Fielding's kickoff from the edge of the end zone and returned the boot 41 yards to the Husky 41-yard line before Fielding was forced to make the tackle. Ohio State was fortunate enough that its defense sacked Williams, halting any chances Washington had at scoring before the half. The Buckeyes cleaned up their special teams play in the second half, but Ohio State's early mistakes could have proved to be damaging against Washington had Ohio State's offensive struggles continued.

Play Of The Game

McDonald made multiple plays that could be deemed Ohio State's top play in its 24-6 win over Washington, but one effort stuck out above the rest. Ohio State led 17-6 with just under nine minutes left to play in the game, and Washington was threatening after having crossed into Buckeye territory at the 47-yard line.

Ohio State was able to force a fourth-and-2, and McDonald took over for the Buckeyes. Off the snap McDonald burst past Washington senior Geirean Hatchett, leaving the center in the dust before grabbing onto Williams and swinging the Huskies quarterback to the ground to force a turnover on downs. McDonald's sack ultimately sealed the win for Ohio State, as the Buckeyes capitalized on the stop with a touchdown on their ensuing drive.

— Sam Cipriani

did as a team. We weathered the storm very well, and we responded quickly.”

The Buckeyes didn't rely on their rushing attack the rest of the game as much as they did on that first drive, but that didn't mean the Buckeye running backs weren't involved in the offense. Instead, Ohio State's running backs combined for five catches for 25 yards. Peoples led the running backs with three catches for 16 yards, but it was Donaldson who had the most impactful catch.

Ironically, Donaldson's big play came on another fourth-and-1 with 4:56 remaining in the game. Lined up just to the right of Sayin, Donaldson was wide open when he sprinted beyond the line of scrimmage, and after catching the ball, he sprinted toward the end zone to give the Buckeyes an insurmountable 24-6 lead.

“To be honest, it was electrifying,” Donaldson said of his receiving touchdown. “Just having an opportunity to seal the game, that was special.”

Special Teams Blunders Plague OSU

It wasn't a perfect showing from all three phases for the Buckeyes. While the offense and defense had solid performances, the Buckeyes' special teams were a big weakness, especially in the first half.

Ohio State's issues started as early as the first quarter when the defense forced the Huskies to punt from deep inside their own territory. Junior receiver Brandon Inniss broke through the first line of the Huskies' punt coverage and appeared poised to give the Buckeye offense great field position. However, when Inniss was tackled, he coughed up the ball and gave the Huskies an extra possession.

The Huskies weren't able to take full advantage of the mistake, getting only three points from Inniss' fumble. Still, the turnover meant one fewer opportunity for the Ohio State offense to score points.

The Buckeyes' next error came just before halftime when they kicked the ball off to

the Huskies. On the play, Ohio State allowed a hole for Washington returner Adam Mohammed to run through. It took an impressive tackle from placekicker Jayden Fielding to prevent an even bigger play, but as it was, the Huskies still had good field position after the 41-yard return by Mohammed.

It wasn't completely negative for the Buckeyes' special teams unit, though. In the second quarter, when Washington held a 3-0 lead with the ball in Ohio State territory, the Buckeyes were ready for a fake field goal that the Huskies called on fourth-and-14. On the play, Washington kicker Grady Gross had the ball flipped to him by his holder and looked to pass the ball to pick up the first down. Gross didn't have a receiver ready for the pass, though, and the Buckeyes were able to force the turnover on downs.

While the Huskies looked discombobulated on the play, the Buckeyes were ready for the fake, and senior cornerback Davison Igbinosun put pressure on Gross as soon as he got the ball.

According to Day, the Buckeyes' stop on the fourth-down play served as an important turning point in the game.

“I thought it was a big swing in the game for sure,” the coach said. “They were being aggressive, and we showed resilience. Our guys were prepared for it. That was a big stop.”

OSU Commits Five Penalties In Win

Special teams wasn't the only area where the Buckeyes were sloppy. Not only did the Buckeyes commit five penalties, but three of them cost the team 15 yards each.

The Buckeyes did a great job avoiding penalties in the first half, with their only infraction in the first 30 minutes being a false start from sophomore offensive lineman Tegra Tshabola.

In the second half, though, the Buckeyes lacked the same sort of discipline they had early on.

Junior offensive lineman Phillip Daniels

was the culprit of a couple of penalties that pushed the Buckeye offense back. Daniels committed a personal-foul penalty when he had his hands on a defensive lineman's face mask. That mistake backed up the Buckeyes well behind the sticks, and if it hadn't been for a questionable roughing-the-passer penalty called on the Huskies, Ohio State might not have scored its second touchdown of the game on that drive.

Daniels was subsequently called for holding in the fourth quarter, and that mistake was in part why Ohio State had to settle for a field goal.

Defensive tackle Tywone Malone Jr. gave the Huskies 15 yards with a face-mask penalty, but that mistake wasn't nearly as bad as the one made by his fellow defensive tackle.

Sophomore defensive lineman Eddrick Houston couldn't have committed his unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at a worse time. The flag came after a 7-yard sack by junior defensive lineman Caden Curry that would have brought up a fourth-and-10.

It wasn't a ticky-tack call on Houston. The sophomore defensive lineman, who has struggled with penalties this season, took a swipe at Washington offensive lineman Geirean Hatchett well after the play ended.

The Buckeyes' penalties didn't cost them the win – partially because Washington had its own issues with flags, committing six for 49 yards – but that doesn't mean those mistakes are OK with Day.

“We can't be doing this,” he said of the penalties. “We can't be having these self-inflicted wounds. It's going to cost us a game. That happened too many times in this game. We had five penalties. We can't do that.”

Buckeyes Snap UW Home Win Streak

Not only did Ohio State come away with a crucial win in its Big Ten season opener, but it also snapped a unique winning streak. Entering the game, the Huskies had won 22 consecutive home games at Husky Stadium.

The 22-game winning streak, which

was the second-longest active win streak in the FBS, started back in 2022. Heading into Week 5, Georgia had the longest active home win streak at 33, but it also lost at home on Sept. 27, 24-21, to Alabama, leaving Oregon with the current longest streak at 18.

The Huskies didn't lose the game to the Buckeyes because of a lack of spirit from their home fans. Husky Stadium was packed with 72,485 fans, a sellout crowd, and, according to Sayin, the atmosphere was a fun one for the Buckeyes to play in.

“The atmosphere was awesome, and the environment was awesome, and we were playing a great team,” Sayin said.

While the Buckeyes' signal-caller didn't go so far as to say the Buckeyes were motivated by the Huskies' winning streak, he felt like his team was excited for the challenge.

“They're definitely a really good opponent, and we were excited about the challenge of playing them,” Sayin said. “We were just going to keep swinging and just keep playing.”

For a young Buckeye team that will face other tough road tests against Big Ten foes such as Michigan and Illinois later on in the season, Day values the experience the Buckeyes gained playing in front of a raucous crowd.

“It's a great reference point to come into a stadium like this,” he said. “It's a great environment. The fans on their end were loud and showed up in a big way.”

Junior defensive end Kenyatta Jackson Jr. shared Day's appreciation for the Huskies' environment but also added that the Buckeyes can overcome that type of challenge by controlling what they can control.

“That was a pretty good team out there,” Jackson said. “The environment was really good. It was really loud, but we're the Ohio State Buckeyes at the end of the day. We play our football. It's all about us. We don't really care about who our opponent is. It's just about us.”

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 24, Washington 6

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on playing just as well on the road: "was great for our guys to see some red here. Anytime you take a young team on the road, it's great to have familiar faces in the crowd, and they have a presence. That was great. I think the guys believe in the system."

Ohio State defensive tackle Kayden McDonald on the defensive line rushing as a unit: "I'll say Coach Larry Johnson, this whole week he was preaching rushing as one. We have Caden Curry, Kenyatta Jackson Jr., Eddrick Houston, all those guys. We just played together. Their quarterback was really good, but we all rushed together and made a play."

Day on Ohio State's third-down defense with the Huskies converting only once on 11 attempts: "It starts with first and second down and trying to get them into third-and-long. It's playing situational football. The way that we're playing now and the way that most teams are playing – they huddle, we huddle, you're just not going to get as many plays."

Washington head coach Jedd Fisch on what cost Washington the game: "We weren't very good on third down, which hurt us. We're not accustomed to that. We got to a situation where we were in the red zone, and we had some penalties, and that hurt us. We took some sacks that hurt us. So some situational football that we've been good at, we struggled in this one. When you play the No. 1 team in the country, a team that knows how to win, they've won a lot. They win every year. If you're going to be able to finish the game and be able to win those games, those penalties can't happen, those sacks can't happen and the mistakes that were made can't happen. We're going to learn from that."

Fisch on Ohio State defensive coordinator Matt Patricia's red-zone defense: "That red-zone defense has been tried and true for the last 25 years up in New England. There were a lot of challenges there, a lot of

different coverages."

Jackson on keeping the standard of Ohio State's 2024 defensive line: "Just keeping the standard, the Rushmen standard. We lost four good guys, but Caden Curry and I and the older guys, we live up to that standard. The other players just follow that standard."

Defensive end Curry on whether predictions of Washington pulling off an upset over the Buckeyes motivated the defensive line: "Our defensive line, we're always motivated. The whole defense is always motivated. We always have a chip on our shoulder. We lost so many players last year, and we have so much to gain now. We have so many players who just have an edge, and we just have such a good defense that just wants to play."

McDonald on how Curry makes him better: "Caden Curry, man, he's a hard worker. How you practice is how you play, and we work really hard and we always push each other to go as hard as we can, and it shows."

Ohio State quarterback Julian Sayin on winning the "middle eight" minutes of the game: "We were excited to score right at the end of the half, and we knew we were getting the ball coming out and I think we had a 15-play drive to go down there and punch it in. The offensive line did a great job. It was a long drive for them."

Ohio State running back CJ Donaldson on getting pass-catching reps and seizing his touchdown opportunity: "We ran plays all through camp and in the spring. So we finally got an opportunity to run it. I was definitely cheesing. I was like, 'Man, hurry up, hurry up, call the play.' But I had the opportunity, and I made the catch."

Sayin on the biggest challenge of playing in the loud Husky Stadium: "I think when you're not on your cadence and you have to go on the silent count, it's definitely tough,



SONNY BROCKWAY

SEATTLE FISCH MARKET — Head coaches Jedd Fisch (left) of Washington and Ohio State's Ryan Day chat before Ohio State rolled over the Huskies 24-6 in Seattle.

but we practiced it all week and I think we did a good job with it."

Day on Ohio State's first conference win of the season and how the Buckeyes can use the game to get better: "That's our first conference win. We've got a lot of work to do, but it does give us something to refer back to in terms of, you just went into an environment where they've won 22 straight games and this team won. If we can do some things a little bit better, we're going to come out of this film session thinking we could have even played a little better in certain areas. This time of year, you have to continue to figure out what the issues are and continue to get better. But the confidence is there, and it should be."

Sayin on grinding out a tough win: "We knew it was going to be a gritty game. It wasn't going to be perfect. Like I said before, Coach Day and our whole offense, his message was 'Just keep swinging. Things are going to go our way, and we just have to keep playing.' "

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**



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
Typesetting
NCR Forms
Laminating
Brochures

Digital Color Copies
Ship UPS
Fax Service
Announcements
Wedding Invitations

Digital B&W Copies
Rubber Stamps
Business Cards
Binding
Labels

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 24, Washington 6

Sept. 27, 2025 – Husky Stadium, Seattle, Wash.

| Score by Quarters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | F |
|-------------------|---|---|---|----|----|
| OHIO STATE | 0 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 24 |
| WASHINGTON | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 |

Second Quarter

UW – Gross, 28-yard field goal, 14:05.

OSU – Smith, 18-yard pass from Sayin (Fielding kick), 1:08.

Third Quarter

OSU – Donaldson Jr., 1-yard rush (Fielding kick), 7:19.

UW – Gross, 28-yard field goal, 3:49.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Fielding, 34-yard field goal, 13:19.

OSU – Donaldson Jr., 4-yard pass from Sayin (Fielding kick), 4:59.

Att. – 72,485

Weather – Sunny, 69 F

Team Statistics

| | OSU | UW |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| First Downs | 23 | 15 |
| Rushing | 8 | 4 |
| Passing | 14 | 9 |
| Penalty | 1 | 2 |
| Rushes-Yards | 34-149 | 30-61 |
| Passing Yards | 208 | 173 |
| Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.) | 22-28-0 | 18-23-0 |
| Offensive Plays | 62 | 53 |
| Total Net Yards | 357 | 234 |
| Third Down Efficiency | 6-10 | 1-11 |
| Fourth Down Efficiency | 1-2 | 1-3 |
| Punts-Avg. | 1-35.0 | 3-38.3 |
| Fumbles-Lost | 1-1 | 0-0 |
| Penalties | 5-60 | 6-49 |
| Time of Possession | 31:55 | 28:05 |

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – OSU: Jackson 17-80; Donaldson Jr. 9-39; Sayin 4-12; Peoples 3-10; Tate 1-8. **UW:** Coleman 13-70; Mohammed 3-13; Roebuck 1-6; Williams Jr. 13-(-28).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – OSU: Sayin 22-28-0-208-2. **UW:** Williams Jr. 18-22-0-173-0; Gross 0-1-0-0-0.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – OSU: Smith 8-81; Inniss 3-34; Tate 3-33; Peoples 3-16; Klare 2-26; Thurman 1-9; Jackson 1-5; Donaldson Jr. 1-4. **UW:** Roebuck 4-58; Boston 3-26; Coleman 3-26; Evans 2-24; DeGraaf 2-24; Vines-Bright 2-10; Q. Moore 1-10; Mohammed 1-(-5).

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – OSU: McGuire 1-35.0-35. **UW:** Dunne 3-38.3-56.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Inniss 1-32. **UW:** None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: None. **UW:** Mohammed 3-71.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) – OSU: None. **UW:** DeGraaf 1-0.

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

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Curry 3-26; McDonald 2-16; Jackson Jr. 1-4. **UW:** Lane 1-7.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – OSU: Curry 5-29; McDonald 3-18; Jackson Jr. 1-4. **UW:** Lane 1-7.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – OSU: Curry 9-2-11; McDonald 4-3-7; Styles 4-2-6; Igbinosun 3-3-6; Reese 3-2-5; Styles Jr. 3-1-4; Malone 1-2-3; McClain 2-0-2; Mathews Jr. 2-0-2; Downs 2-0-2; Scott Jr. 2-0-2; Pierce 1-0-1; Jackson Jr. 1-0-1; Fielding 1-0-1; Smith Jr. 1-0-1; Sanchez 1-0-1; Atkinson 0-1-1. **UW:** McLaughlin 10-3-13; D. Bryant 6-1-7; Uiagelelei 3-1-4; Alexander 2-2-4; Esteen 0-4-4; Robinson 3-0-3; Manu 3-0-3; Prysock 2-1-3; Davis 2-1-3; Lane 2-1-3; Dillard-Allen 2-1-3; Durfee 1-1-2; Butler 1-1-2; Ward 1-1-2; Q. Moore 1-0-1; Bryant 1-0-1; Lynch 1-0-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – OSU: Inniss, Sayin, Donaldson Jr., Tate, Smith, Montgomery, Siereveld, Daniels, Hinzman, Tshabola, Kacmarek, Styles, Igbinosun, McClain, Downs, Styles Jr., Mathews Jr., Reese, Curry, Malone, Jackson Jr., McDonald, Delane, Hicks, West, Rodgers, Atkinson, Thurman, Pettijohn, Peoples, Stover, Jackson, Pierce, Roker, Fielding, Velazquez, McGuire, Ferlmann, Scott Jr., Graham, Smith Jr., VanSickle, Sanchez, Padilla, Moore, Onianwa, Adolph, Roberts, Christian, Klare, Hartford, Houston. **UW:** Coleman, Boston, Williams Jr., Willis, G. Hatchett, L. Hatchett, Vines-Bright, Mills, Azzopardi, Roebuck, Q. Moore, L. Bryant, Uiagelelei, McLaughlin, D. Bryant, Esteen, Lane, Durfee, Robinson, Prysock, Manu, Davis, Alexander, Williams, Dillard-Allen, Mohammed, Holmes, Mencke Jr., Kean, Moczulski, Lynch, H. Moore, Dunne, Evans, Hyde, Finau, Thompson, A. Ward, Henning, Faasolo, Pepa, McCree, DeGraaf, I. Ward, Butler, Parker, Gross, Sagapolu.

Season Statistics

| 2025 Game-By-Game | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------|--|
| Date | Opponent | Result/Time | Crowd | |
| Aug. 30 | (3) TEXAS (1) | W, 14-7 | 107,524 | |
| Sept. 6 | (1) GRAMBLING STATE | W, 70-0 | 100,624 | |
| Sept. 13 | (1) OHIO | W, 37-9 | 105,765 | |
| Sept. 27 | (1) at Washington | W, 24-6 | 72,458 | |
| Oct. 4 | (1) MINNESOTA | 7:30 p.m. | | |
| Oct. 11 | at Illinois (22) | TBA | | |
| Oct. 18 | at Wisconsin | TBA | | |
| Nov. 1 | PENN STATE (7) | TBA | | |
| Nov. 8 | at Purdue | TBA | | |
| Nov. 15 | UCLA | TBA | | |
| Nov. 22 | RUTGERS | TBA | | |
| Nov. 29 | at Michigan (20) | 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 | 93 | 50 |
| Rushing | 37 | 25 |
| Passing | 51 | 20 |
| Penalty | 5 | 5 |
| Average Per Game/Rush | 181.3 | 97.3 |
| Average Per Game/Pass | 264.5 | 132.0 |
| Total Offense | 1783 | 917 |
| Total Plays | 245 | 230 |
| Average Per Game | 445.8 | 229.3 |
| Average Per Play | 7.3 | 4.0 |
| Penalties-Yards | 16-140 | 21-164 |
| Fumbles-Lost | 3-1 | 3-3 |
| Third Down Efficiency | 19-38 | 12-53 |
| Percentage | 50% | 23% |
| Fourth Down Efficiency | 3-6 | 5-12 |
| Percentage | 50% | 42% |
| Sacks-Yards | 13-81 | 2-12 |
| Time Of Possession Avg. | 31:55 | 28:06 |

Score

| By Quarters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | OT | Tot. | Avg. |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|------|------|
| Ohio State | 24 | 38 | 38 | 45 | 0 | 145 | 36.3 |
| Opponents | 0 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 22 | 5.5 |

| Individual Statistics | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------|-----|------|----|------|
| Rushing | Att. | Net | Avg. | TD | Long |
| Bo Jackson | 35 | 297 | 8.5 | 1 | 64 |
| CJ Donaldson Jr. | 42 | 190 | 4.5 | 3 | 27 |
| James Peoples | 28 | 136 | 4.9 | 0 | 17 |
| Isaiah West | 8 | 42 | 5.3 | 1 | 12 |
| Lincoln Kienholz | 3 | 18 | 6.0 | 0 | 8 |
| Jeremiah Smith | 1 | 17 | 17.0 | 1 | 17 |
| Carnell Tate | 2 | 16 | 8.0 | 0 | 8 |
| Sam Dixon | 2 | 9 | 3.0 | 1 | 6 |
| Brandon Inniss | 1 | 8 | 8.0 | 0 | 8 |
| Julian Sayin | 10 | 5 | 0.5 | 0 | 12 |
| Team | 4 | -13 | -3.3 | 0 | 0 |
| OSU Totals | 137 | 725 | 5.3 | 7 | 64 |
| OPP Totals | 134 | 389 | 2.9 | 0 | 34 |

| Passing | Comp. | Att. | Pct. | Yds. | TD-INT | Effic. |
|------------------|-------|------|------|------|--------|--------|
| Julian Sayin | 78 | 99 | 78.8 | 987 | 10-3 | 189.8 |
| Lincoln Kienholz | 6 | 7 | 85.7 | 71 | 1-0 | 218.1 |
| Tavien St. Clair | 0 | 2 | 0.0 | 0 | 0-0 | 0.0 |
| OSU Totals | 84 | 108 | 77.8 | 1058 | 11-3 | 188.1 |
| OPP Totals | 56 | 96 | 58.3 | 528 | 2-2 | 107.2 |

| Receiving | Rec. | Net | Avg. | TD | Long |
|-------------------|------|------|------|----|------|
| Jeremiah Smith | 28 | 396 | 14.1 | 4 | 87 |
| Carnell Tate | 16 | 252 | 16.8 | 3 | 49 |
| Brandon Inniss | 8 | 71 | 8.9 | 0 | 12 |
| Max Klare | 6 | 74 | 12.3 | 1 | 18 |
| Jelani Thurman | 5 | 59 | 11.8 | 1 | 26 |
| James Peoples | 5 | 27 | 5.4 | 0 | 10 |
| Will Kacmarek | 4 | 67 | 16.8 | 1 | 47 |
| CJ Donaldson Jr. | 4 | 26 | 6.5 | 1 | 9 |
| Bo Jackson | 3 | 26 | 8.7 | 0 | 11 |
| Bennett Christian | 2 | 7 | 3.5 | 0 | 6 |
| Bryson Rodgers | 2 | 22 | 11.0 | 0 | 21 |
| David Adolph | 1 | 8 | 8.0 | 0 | 8 |
| Mylan Graham | 1 | 23 | 23.0 | 0 | 23 |
| OSU Totals | 84 | 1058 | 12.6 | 11 | 87 |
| OPP Totals | 56 | 528 | 9.4 | 2 | 67 |

| Scoring | TD | EPK | EPR | EPRC | FG | PTS |
|------------------|----|-------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Jeremiah Smith | 5 | - | - | - | - | 30 |
| Jayden Fielding | - | 15-15 | - | - | 4-4 | 27 |
| CJ Donaldson Jr. | 4 | - | - | - | - | 24 |
| Carnell Tate | 3 | - | - | - | - | 18 |
| Will Kacmarek | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Max Klare | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Jelani Thurman | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Sam Dixon | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Riley Pettijohn | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-------|---|---|-----|-----|
| Bo Jackson | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Isaiah West | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| Jackson Courville | - | 4-4 | - | - | - | 4 |
| OSU Totals | 19 | 19-19 | - | - | 4-4 | 145 |
| OPP Totals | 2 | 1-2 | - | - | 3-4 | 22 |

| FG Distance | 0-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50+ | Total |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| Jayden Fielding | 2-2 | 2-2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 4-4 |
| OSU Totals | 2-2 | 2-2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 4-4 |
| OPP Totals | 2-2 | 0-1 | 1-1 | 0-0 | 3-4 |

| Punting | No. | Yds. | Avg. | Bk | Long |
|--------------|-----|------|------|----|------|
| Joe McGuire | 7 | 295 | 42.1 | 0 | 55 |
| Nick McLarty | 1 | 45 | 45.0 | 0 | 45 |
| OSU Totals | 8 | 340 | 42.5 | 0 | 55 |
| OPP Totals | 21 | 903 | 43.0 | 0 | 56 |

| Interceptions | No. | Yds. | Avg. | TD | Long |
|----------------|-----|------|------|----|------|
| J. Mathews Jr. | 1 | 5 | 5.0 | 0 | 5 |
| Caleb Downs | 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 |
| OSU Totals | 2 | 5 | 2.5 | 0 | 5 |
| OPP Totals | 3 | 4 | 1.3 | 0 | 4 |

| Punt Returns | No. | Yds. | Avg. | TD | Long |
|----------------|-----|------|------|----|------|
| Brandon Inniss | 4 | 66 | 16.5 | 0 | 32 |
| Jeremiah Smith | 1 | -6 | -6.0 | 0 | 0 |
| OSU Totals | 5 | 60 | 12.0 | 0 | 32 |
| OPP Totals | 1 | 3 | 3.0 | 0 | 3 |

| Kickoff Returns | No. | Yds. | Avg. | TD | Long |
|-----------------|-----|------|------|----|------|
| Brandon Inniss | 2 | 20 | 10.0 | 0 | 17 |
| OSU Totals | 2 | 20 | 10.0 | 0 | 17 |
| OPP Totals | 5 | 100 | 20.0 | 0 | 41 |

Def. Leaders

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|--------|--------|
| Caden Curry | 16 | 9 | 25 | 8.0-39 | 5.0-35 |
| Arvell Reese | 10 | 15 | 25 | 2.0-3 | 2.0-3 |
| Kayden McDonald | 10 | 11 | 21 | 5.0-24 | 3.0-20 |
| Sonny Styles | 9 | 11 | 20 | 0.5-1 | 0-0 |
| Jaylen McClain | 15 | 4 | 19 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Davison Igbinosun | 8 | 11 | 19 | 0.5-0 | 0-0 |
| Caleb Downs | 9 | 6 | 15 | 2.0-2 | 0-0 |
| Lorenzo Styles Jr. | 9 | 5 | 14 | 1.0-1 | 0-0 |
| Payton Pierce | 3 | 9 | 12 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| J. Mathews Jr. | 7 | 1 | 8 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Will Smith Jr. | 2 | 4 | 6 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| K. Jackson Jr. | 2 | 4 | 6 | 2.0-6 | 1.0-4 |
| C.J. Hicks | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1.0-0 | 0-0 |
| Tywone Malone | 2 | 4 | 6 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Riley Pettijohn | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Beau Atkinson | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2.0-10 | 1.0-9 |
| Eddrick Houston | - | 4 | 4 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Garrett Stover | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| TJ Alford | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1.0-2 | 0-0 |
| Zion Grady | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.0-10 | 1.0-10 |
| Faheem Delane | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Eli Lee | - | 2 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Devin Sanchez | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Aaron Scott Jr. | 2 | - | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Eric Mensah | - | 2 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Bryce West | 2 | - | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Malik Hartford | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| James Peoples | 1 | - | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Leroy Roker | - | 1 | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Dominic Kirks | - | 1 | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Logan George | 1 | - | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Joshua Mickens | 1 | - | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Carnell Tate | 1 | - | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Jayden Fielding | 1 | - | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Jarquez Carter | 1 | - | 1 | 0-0 | 0-0 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-----|---------|---------|
| OSU Totals | 129 | 120 | 249 | 26.0-99 | 13.0-81 |
| OPP Totals | 145 | 104 | 249 | 5.0-15 | 2.0-12 |
| Fumbles Forced: | McDonald, Pettijohn. Styles. | | | | |
| Fumbles Recovered: | Pettijohn, Sanchez, Sitanilei. | | | | |

Fleck’s Gophers Still Trying To Break Through

By **GREG WILSON**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

The story of the Minnesota football program under P.J. Fleck is a little bit like the story of Fleck’s new defensive coordinator, Danny Collins.

Collins graduated from Western Michigan in 2014, hoping to land a graduate assistant job on Fleck’s Western Michigan staff, but without any space for him, he ended up helping as a volunteer and getting permission to live in a storage closet at the football facility to try to work his way up. Now he’s in his first season with the Golden Gophers as a coordinator.

When Fleck began with the Gophers in 2017, it might have been fair to say the program was in the storage closet of the Big Ten, never threatening to win many games and serving as somewhat of a tuneup for the top-tier teams in the conference.

But Fleck helped them out of that closet into a level of consistency that a program like Minnesota hopes for in the Big Ten. The Gophers haven’t been a top-level team in the conference, and Fleck likely won’t get them there, but they have become a respectable opponent with him at the helm.

But one thing Fleck hasn’t been able to do, which makes him one of many in the Big Ten, is reach the next level of competing in the conference, the way that Indiana – which was in a worse spot than Minnesota was – has been able to do the past two seasons with head coach Curt Cignetti.

Now, Collins is helping lead what has been one of the better defenses in the country through four games. Minnesota is No. 25 in scoring defense and No. 9 in total defense, and it has been very successful at stopping the run and the pass through four games at fifth and 23rd in the country, respectively.

He’s done that by creating “HAVOC,” which is an acronym he coined. The H stands for “how much effort” the defense will play with, the A is for “attacking style,” the V is for “violence,” the O is for “playing as one” and the C is for its level of competition.

“I know exactly how they play the game and how exactly we can plug them into a scheme to create that HAVOC defense,” said Collins before the season, when asked why he was a better option to be the new DC of the Gophers than an outside hire would have been.

The biggest part of that defense has been safety Koi Perich, who was a first-team All-Big Ten selection last season as a

true freshman. Perich was a recruit whom Ohio State desperately tried to flip toward the end of the 2024 cycle, unsuccessfully.

He made 46 tackles last year (2½ for loss), broke up three passes, had five interceptions and forced one fumble to also be named a second-team All-American by Sporting News. This season, Perich has 21 tackles, two for loss, and a sack through four games.

He has also been used on the offensive side of the ball, which the Gophers planned to do often. He has run the ball once for minus-9 yards and caught three passes for 55 yards so far.

But in the Gophers’ 27-14 loss to Cal on Sept. 13, Perich had the worst game of his college career, being involved in negative plays on offense, defense and special teams.

“All great players go through adversity,” Fleck said after the loss. “This is probably his first piece of adversity in the 15 months that he has been here. Adversity strengthens you if you use it properly. You swallow the pill of adversity, and you take accountability and responsibility for it. We all do. It’s going to make you better.”

He came back from that performance with 11 total tackles (four solo) and a sack in the Gophers’ 31-28 win over Rutgers on Sept. 27.

Next to Perich in the secondary is Aidan Gousby at free safety, Za’Quan Bryan and John Nestor at cornerback and Kerry Brown at nickel. Nestor has two interceptions and has broken up to passes as well and has been strong in coverage. Brown had an interception against Rutgers.

Starting at linebacker are Maverick Baranowski and Devon Williams, who have combined for 56 tackles and five tackles for loss.

Defensive ends Anthony Smith and Jaxon Howard join interior linemen Deven Eastern and Jalen Logan-Redding in the front four.

Offensive coordinator Greg Harbaugh Jr. – no relation to former Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh – is in his third season leading the Gopher offense and has improved each year so far. They ranked 122nd in the country two years ago with 300.9 yards gained per game, then 107th in 2024 with 337.8 yards per game. Now coming into the matchup against the Buckeyes, Minnesota has gained 405.3 yards per game, which ranks 62nd in the country.

The Gophers offense will likely try to control the clock as much as it can coming into Ohio Stadium for a night game and make it so possessions are extremely valu-

Get To Know ... Minnesota

- **2025 Record:** 3-1, 1-0 Big Ten.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Multiple; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters returning – Offense 5, Defense 5, Specialists 0.
- **Head Coach:** P.J. Fleck, 9th year at Minnesota, 61-40.
- **Series History:** 55th meeting; Ohio State leads 47-7.
- **School Facts:** Location – Minneapolis, Minn.; Enrollment – 56,666; Nickname – Golden Gophers; Colors – Maroon and Gold; Conference – Big Ten; Stadium – Huntington Bank Stadium (Surface – FieldTurf; Capacity – 50,805).

Top Offensive Players

| Rushing | Att. | Net | Avg. | TD |
|------------------|------|-----|------|----|
| Darius Taylor | 33 | 161 | 4.9 | 0 |
| Fame Ijeboi | 35 | 173 | 4.9 | 1 |
| Grant Washington | 20 | 126 | 6.3 | 0 |
| Cam Davis | 24 | 77 | 3.2 | 2 |

| Passing | Comp-Att. | Pct. | Yds. | TD-INT |
|---------------|-----------|------|------|--------|
| Drake Lindsey | 77-117 | 65.8 | 958 | 7-2 |

| Receiving | Rec. | Net | Avg. | TD |
|----------------|------|-----|------|----|
| Javon Tracy | 12 | 204 | 17.0 | 2 |
| Jalen Smith | 6 | 179 | 29.8 | 2 |
| L. Brockington | 15 | 177 | 11.8 | 1 |
| Jameson Geers | 10 | 79 | 7.9 | 2 |

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 33.5
Rushing Yards Per Game – 144.0
Passing Yards Per Game – 261.3
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 405.2

2025 Schedule

| Date | Opponent | Time/Result (ET) |
|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Aug. 28 | BUFFALO | W, 23-10 |
| Sept. 6 | NORTHWESTERN ST. | W, 66-0 |
| Sept. 13 | at California | L, 27-14 |
| Sept. 27 | RUTGERS | W, 31-28 |
| Oct. 4 | at Ohio State | 7:30 p.m. |
| Oct. 11 | PURDUE | 7 p.m. |
| Oct. 17 | NEBRASKA | 8 p.m. |
| Oct. 25 | at Iowa | TBA |
| Nov. 1 | MICHIGAN ST. | TBA |
| Nov. 14 | at Oregon | 9 p.m. |
| Nov. 22 | at Northwestern* | TBA |
| Nov. 29 | WISCONSIN | TBA |

* at Wrigley Field

Top Defensive Players

| Def. Leaders | Solo | Asst. | Tot. | TFL-Yards | Sacks |
|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|--------|
| Devon Williams | 13 | 18 | 31 | 2.5-5 | 1.5-3 |
| M. Baranowski | 8 | 17 | 25 | 2.5-10 | 1-7 |
| Koi Perich | 8 | 13 | 21 | 2-7 | 1-6 |
| Aidan Gousby | 7 | 5 | 12 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| Deven Eastern | 4 | 7 | 11 | 1-4 | 0.5-3 |
| Anthony Smith | 5 | 6 | 11 | 6-43 | 4.5-36 |

| Interceptions | No. | Yds | Avg | TD |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|----|
| John Nestor | 2 | 29 | 14.5 | 1 |
| Kerry Brown | 1 | 28 | 28 | 0 |

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 16.3
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 65.5
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 164.5
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 230.0

able, which is usually the formula teams use when coming into the ‘Shoe to try to upset the Buckeyes.

While the defense has been one of the best in the country through four games, the offense has had its struggles. The Gophers are 43rd in passing offense with 261.3 yards per game through the air and 87th in rushing offense with 144.0 yards per game on the ground.

“I go back to the same thing with what we want, and we want to be 1-0 on each play,” Harbaugh said. “And if we can do that, and we can stack plays on top of each other, play after play, we’ll see where we end up when the clock hits zero.

“I’m very encouraged by the mix of intermediate passing game, down-the-field passing game, and being able to be multiple in the run game. That’s what I’m really encouraged by, and I think our guys have handled it very well, but I just want to see us be physical, execute and not put the ball in harm’s way.”

Quarterback Drake Lindsey is in his first year starting for Minnesota as a red-shirt freshman, and Harbaugh was impressed with the young QB after the first game of the season, although he believes there is still a lot of growing to do.

“As far as the accuracy, seeing things the right way, conversation in between drives, it was elite,” Harbaugh said. “He saw everything the way that we were seeing it. Him and I were aligned completely. It’s the way I would like a first game to go.”

Catching passes from Lindsey are Le’Meke Brockington and Jalen Smith out wide with Logan Loya manning the slot. Wide Receiver Javon Tracy has also been a big part of the offense through four games. He leads the Gophers with 204 yards on

12 catches and two touchdowns.

Receivers had some issues with drops in the loss to Cal, and Lindsey missed a couple of open pass catchers along the way as well. But Fleck isn’t worried about that becoming a consistent issue because of what he sees in practice.

“There’s perfection and then there’s reality. We strive for perfection, and I think there wasn’t any quarterback in NFL or college that (has gone) 35 for 35. I don’t think if you go back through NFL and college that somebody didn’t have a dropped ball or a ball that was just outside the reach or hit their fingertips,” Fleck said. “We had three or four balls I would love to be able to have back, but I don’t think it’s a massive problem because I watch them every day in practice. They’ve just got to transfer that over.”

The running game has been split up between three different main backs, with each of Darius Taylor, Fame Ijeboi and Grant Washington going for over 100 yards through three games. Against Rutgers, Ijeboi took the majority of the carries and had just 37 yards rushing on 12 attempts with a touchdown. Taylor could still be back in time for the game against the Buckeyes after dealing with an injury for the last few weeks.

But while Fleck has turned Minnesota into a fairly stable program, the goal for the Gophers is still to rise to the top of the Big Ten, which can’t happen unless they can compete in games like they play in Columbus on Oct. 4. A solid performance even in a loss to Ohio State would be a sign of more progress.

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!



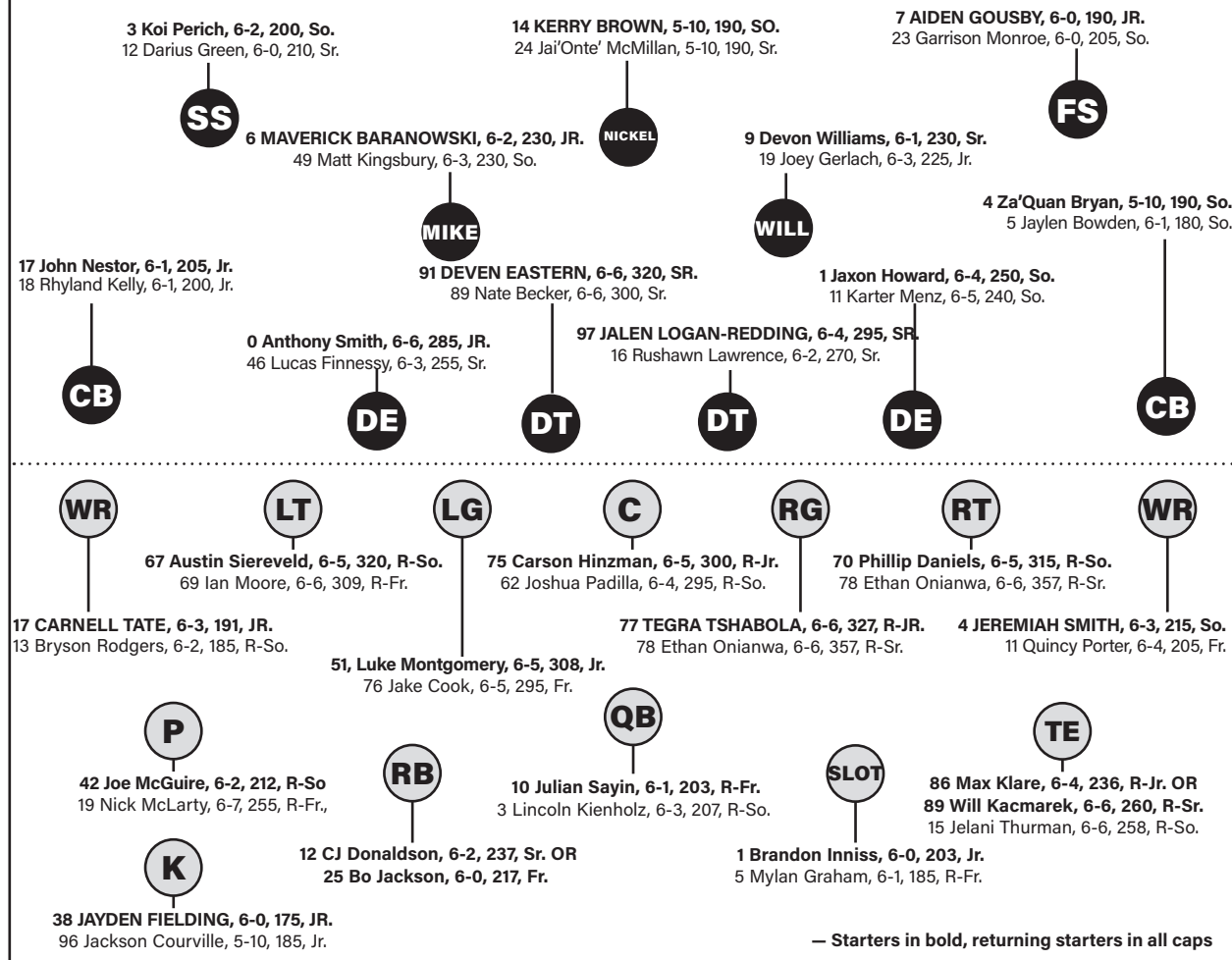
Minnesota at Ohio State

Oct. 4 • 7:30 p.m. • NBC
Ohio Stadium; Columbus

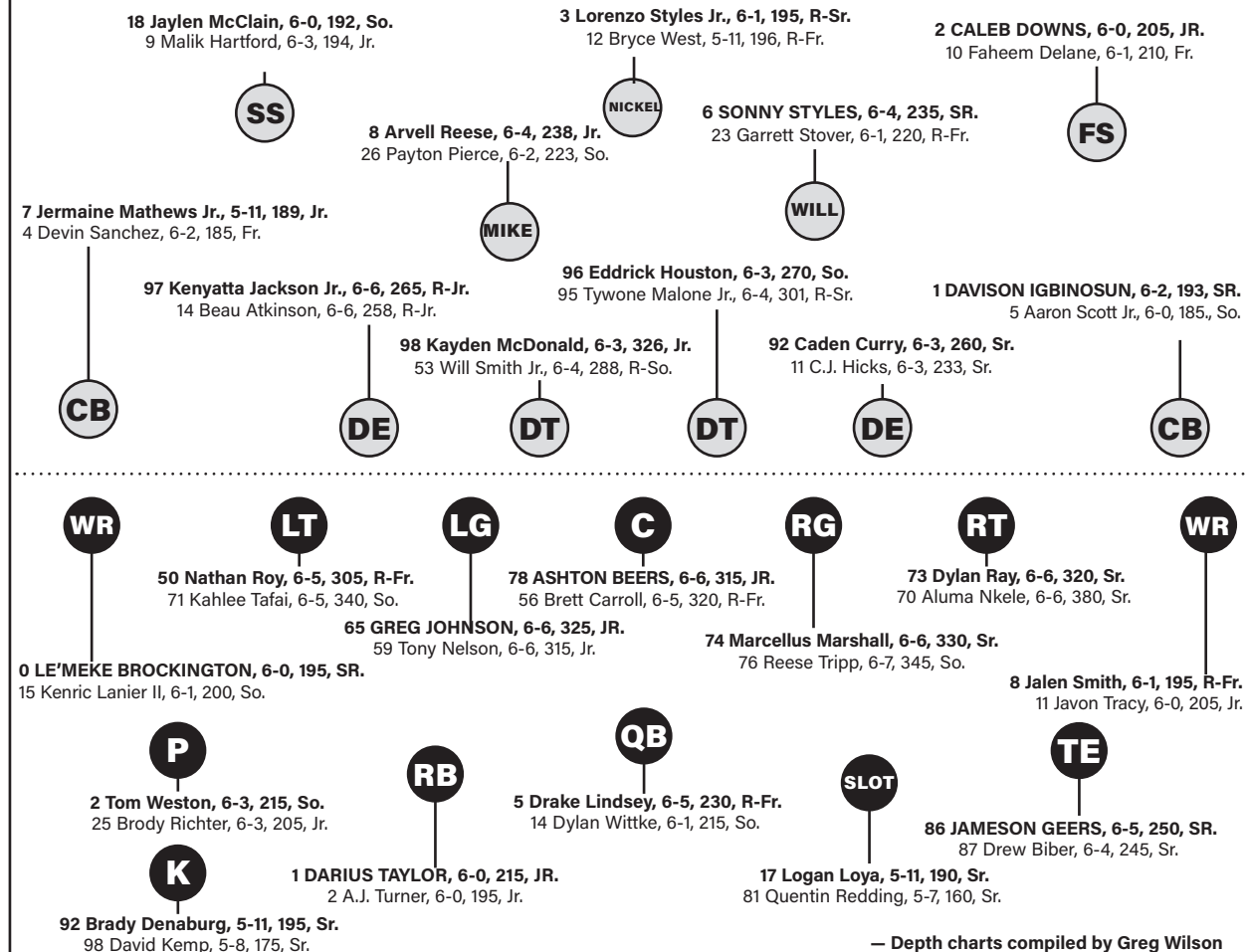


Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN MINNESOTA HAS THE BALL...



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. MINNESOTA RUSH DEFENSE

Minnesota rallied from a 14-0 deficit to down Rutgers 31-28 on Sept. 27, so the Gophers come into Ohio Stadium with confidence. But the Scarlet Knights aren't the Scarlet and Gray. Minnesota entered the game allowing only 177.7 total yards and led the country with 41.3 rushing yards given up, but Rutgers ran for 138 yards (3.3 average carry), with the QB sacks included, and the Gophers allowed their first two rushing touchdowns of the season. They proved to be vulnerable as evidenced by Antwan Raymond running for 161 yards (6.2) with a long of 23. Freshman Bo Jackson totaled 80 yards (4.7) to lead the Buckeye rushers in the 24-6 victory against Washington. CJ Donaldson added a 1-yard TD but was stopped on a fourth-and-1 from the 5 early in the game. **EDGE: EVEN**

MINNESOTA RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

First, let's get this out of the way – offensive coordinator Greg Harbaugh Jr. is not related to the famous Harbaugh coaching family. In fact, his name is pronounced Hair-bow. Also, he was the passing game coordinator among many duties at Division III Marietta (Ohio) College from 2013-14. The Golden Gophers look foremost to Darius Taylor, but he and backup A.J. Turner were out with injuries, so Minnesota suffered against Rutgers. The Gophers netted 35 yards on 18 carries (1.9) but did get a 2-yard touchdown run from Fame Ijeboi. Taylor, by the way, is 54 yards away from 2,000 career rushing yards, but his status is unknown for the game. The OSU defense is menacing. Washington managed only 61 yards on 30 carries (2.0), although Jonah Coleman ripped off a 34-yarder. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. MINNESOTA PASS DEFENSE

Julian Sayin was efficient, some would say conservative, in his first career road start, but he still threw for 208 yards and two TDs. His longest completion was just 19 yards to Jeremiah Smith with 1:52 left in the game and the outcome no longer in doubt. He made the plays when he needed to and spread the wealth with completions going to eight players, led by Smith's eight catches for 81 yards. Rutgers' Athan Kaliakmanis, a former Minnesota QB, completed 21 of 34 for 249 yards and two touchdowns and was picked off once. The Gophers recorded a season-high seven sacks and 11 tackles for loss. Devon Williams posted a career-high 13 tackles, and Anthony Smith had 1½ sacks. If the Buckeyes can control the line of scrimmage and give Sayin time, he'll have a massive game. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

MINNESOTA PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

Saddled with the lack of a running game, redshirt freshman Drake Lindsey had a great day in rallying the Gophers. He was 31 of 41 for 324 yards and three touchdowns with no interceptions. In the second half, he went 23 of 28 for 202 yards and two TDs. Most impressively, he completed 6 of 7 on the winning drive late in the fourth quarter. Move over, Jeremiah Smith. Jalen Smith (no relation) made four catches for 103 yards with a long of 78 yards. Lindsey was sacked twice, and he can expect a fierce OSU rush led by Caden Curry, who had three sacks vs. Washington, and Kayden McDonald, who had two. The Huskies had 234 total yards, 173 through the air. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Buckeyes had two major foibles: Brandon Inniss' lost fumble after a 32-yard punt return and Washington's Adam Mohammed reeling off a 41-yard kickoff return. Koi Perich had a 56-yard kickoff return for the Gophers, and RuShawn Lawrence blocked a field-goal try. **EDGE: MINNESOTA**

INTANGIBLES

Minnesota is one of those second-tier Big Ten teams which has its moments but is unable to crack the top echelon, especially in the expanded conference era. The Gophers have an exciting young quarterback, so the Buckeyes, under defensive coordinator Matt Patricia, will apply the pressure early and often to see if he cracks. The Buckeyes still have room for improvement but must avoid a letdown after all the hype about going to Washington. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

STAFF PREDICTION

Minnesota will try to hang with the Buckeyes, but ultimately big players make big plays, and an unleashed Sayin, combined with a relentless defense, will be too much for the Golden Gophers. **OHIO STATE 42, MINNESOTA 7**

OSU RB Room A Three-Headed Monster

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Heading into the 2025 season, there didn't seem to be a mystery about which running backs would get the bulk of the carries for Ohio State this year.

It was assumed that senior running back CJ Donaldson Jr. and redshirt freshman back James Peoples were going to be the team's starters at the position, and other youngsters would get on the field in the case of injury or in garbage time.

Through four games, though, it isn't Donaldson or Peoples who is leading the team in rushing, but true freshman Bo Jackson.

Jackson leads the Buckeyes with 297 rushing yards on 35 carries and is the only runner on the team with a run of longer than 30 yards.

He was at his best in Ohio State's 37-9 win over Ohio on Sept. 13. He had 109 rushing yards on nine rushes with a 64-yard run, the longest run from a Buckeye so far this year. He apparently did enough to capture the praise of his head coach.

"Bo has some home run-hitting ability, which is a weapon for us, and we'll figure out how that fits in moving forward," said Ohio State coach Ryan Day after the Ohio game. "The more he plays, the more he's going to learn. But you can see the vision, and you can see the explosiveness."

Peoples and Donaldson have also had respectable starts. Donaldson, whose 42 carries are the most on the team, has provided the Buckeyes with a reliable physical presence. The transfer from West Virginia has gone for 190 yards and three touchdowns this season. Peoples hasn't broken off a big run like Jackson, but he's tallied 136 yards on 28 carries and, at times, has shown the explosiveness he flashed last season as a freshman.

"I think they've been OK," Eleven Warriors deputy editor Dan Hope told BSB on Sept. 22, before Ohio State's 24-6 win over

Washington. "I think they've not been bad, but I also don't think they've been great."

While Peoples and Donaldson have been serviceable, it's Jackson who is the talk of the Buckeye running back room.

"That's the guy right there. I've been saying it since spring – Bo Jackson is next up, for sure," wide receiver Jeremiah Smith said after Ohio State's 70-0 win over Grambling State. "He's a tough, tough running back. He's fast. I mean, he can do it all. Me and him were working out together in the offseason, and I was like, 'Yeah, this guy is going to be the next great running back to come through.'"

Jackson Jolts OSU Offense

As well as Jackson has played, he's only a true freshman, and not every youngster has the ability to make the sort of impact that Smith had last year.

But despite Jackson's youth, Day said on Sept. 23 that the coaching staff isn't going to shy away from giving him more responsibility if he earns it.

"Well, I mean, we were just talking about that as an offensive staff. It doesn't take a veteran coach to recognize talent when you see it, and Bo has talent, and we're going to keep bringing him along. It's a long season, and so we're going to continue to give him the opportunities to prove that we can trust him with the ball in his hands," Day said. "So far, he's done that. You can see his vision. You can see his ability to catch the ball."

In some ways, though, youth isn't necessarily a bad thing at a position like running back. As young as Jackson is, his speed, agility and physicality have all seemed to translate to the collegiate level. According to Hope, Jackson's age is not holding him back.

"Definitely," Hope said when asked if it's easier for a freshman running back to make an impact immediately. "I think you've seen that a lot, whether it be with



SONNY BROCKWAY

ACTION, JACKSON — Freshman Bo Jackson leads Ohio State with 297 rushing yards through four games, including a 64-yarder against Ohio to state his case as the go-to running back.

J.K. Dobbins, TreVeyon Henderson – there are plenty of other examples across college football. If you compare it to quarterback or offensive line, or tight end, safety, positions like that, I think the learning curve for a running back to get in and make a big impact is certainly shorter."

That doesn't mean there isn't a learning curve for freshman runners, though. Many talented running backs aren't asked often to pass protect in high school. Pass protection and ball security are two vital skills for Buckeye running backs, but according to Day, his young running back has hit his marks in those respects so far this season.

"He's got a lot of different skills," Day

said about Jackson. "We're going to keep bringing him along, and the more he can take, the more we're going to give him, but I also think just like any other position, there's a way you bring guys along. The No. 1 thing is ball security, taking care of that football, and then there's pass protection, and he's checked these boxes. He's doing a nice job, so we're going to need everybody in that room."

At least at this point, Jackson isn't necessarily turning heads with his pass protection or ball security, but rather his explosiveness. As mentioned previously, Jackson is the only one in the room with a run of over 30 yards, and he has two of them.

Hope said Jackson's ability to break off the long runs is a product of his impressive speed.

"I think it's speed and acceleration," Hope said. "I don't know what their 40 times are, but if I were just ballparking, it seems to me like Bo is a 4.4 guy, and the other guys are 4.6 guys, so I think that's really the difference. I think you see when he's out there, he just has a different gear. There are runs where James or CJ are getting stopped after 4, 5 or 6 yards, that Bo is able to run by a guy and maybe turn it into a bigger play."

Buckeye Huddle's Kevin Noon is slightly less optimistic than others about Jackson. Noon said that although Jackson is off to a good start, he could hit a freshman wall later on in the season and struggle to deal with the length of the college football slate.

"I'm still taking a cautious stance with Bo Jackson," Noon told BSB on Sept. 22. "It has nothing to do with his ability and everything else. As we see him start to play earlier and earlier in games, he's going against teams that are not completely beat up, having the Ohio State offensive line lean on them, and everything else. So that's all well and good. But what happens

 **barcelona**
restaurant & bar

REFLECTIONS OF SPAIN  EVERY DISH, EVERY SIP, EVERY MOMENT.

Lunch ■ Dinner ■ Happy Hour ■ *Now booking holiday parties*

www.barcelonacolumbus.com ■ 614-443-3699

Historic German Village ■ 263 E Whittier St, Columbus





SONNY BROCKWAY

RUNNING TO DAYLIGHT — West Virginia transfer CJ Donaldson (12) has been a valuable addition to the backfield and has rushed for 190 yards and three touchdowns. He ran for a score and caught a TD pass in the 24-6 win against Washington.

when Ohio State gets to game seven, game eight, game nine, you're getting to the point where he's going to have as much action as you might in a high school season? And you hit that proverbial freshman wall."

Hope, meanwhile, was less concerned about Jackson slowing down toward the end of the season. He anticipates the Buckeyes limiting Jackson's carries so that he can still be fresh as the season goes on.

"The good news is, he's only run the ball 18 times through three games," Hope said. "So I think that is a thing that Ohio State is going to be very cognizant of. I'm sure there are people out there who see Bo running the ball better than the other backs, and they want to see him get 20-25 carries a game. I do not think that's going to happen."

OSU Likely To Maintain Committee

One reason Jackson seems unlikely to get the majority of carries for the Buckeyes is that no running back has done so recently. Since Day's first year as the program's head coach in 2019, no Buckeye running back has had more than 50 percent of the carries.

Instead, Ohio State has relied on multiple backs throughout each season. Last year, the Buckeyes leaned on Quinshon Judkins and Henderson to run the ball and occasionally gave carries to James Peoples during garbage time or when one of the main contributors needed a breather.

Before this season, second-year running backs coach Carlos Locklyn seemed to indicate that sort of running-back rotation would be employed by the team once again.

"I believe in the philosophy that Coach (Jim) Tressel said: 'You need two and a spare,'" Locklyn said in March. "And so I'm hoping we get two and a spare and another spare after that."

Headed into conference play, Jackson seems much more like a workhorse for the Buckeyes than a spare, meaning instead of having a two-man rotation as they did last year, the coaching staff may have to juggle a three-man rotation fairly early in games.

"We will need all of the running backs

throughout the season," Day said when asked about a potential three-man rotation. "However that shakes out, we'll see each week. We'll look at the game plan, we'll look at where we are, we'll look at the health of everybody, and then figure out who deserves carries."

While Joey Kaufman of The Columbus Dispatch thinks the running back by committee approach is the right one for the Buckeyes, he added that the team hasn't always worked out the kinks of the three-man rotation.

"They've typically done it by committee," Kaufman told BSB on Sept. 24. "I think the interesting thing is that they haven't always done it with the three backs. 2023 was a kind of situation where they did have three guys getting a bunch of carries between Miyan Williams, Chip Trayanum, with Henderson as well."

"But they have not very easily done that in the past, and I'll be curious to see how they do it this year, because even Dallan Hayden flashed toward the end of 2022, but it never really seemed like they were rotating those guys all at the same time. It was typically one guy went down and then another came in for relief."

In the first two games, the Buckeyes didn't really employ much of a three-man rotation because Jackson wasn't necessarily a known commodity headed into the season. Jackson didn't even play in Ohio State's season-opening win and had much of his production in Ohio State's 70-0 win over Grambling when Peoples and Donaldson were done for the day.

Against Ohio, the Buckeye rushing attack was much more evenly split. In that game, Jackson and Donaldson each had nine carries, while Peoples had seven.

The three-man rotation was successful for the Buckeyes that day. Ohio State had perhaps its best game on the ground so far this season, rushing for 225 yards and a touchdown with 31 carries as a team.

While the team did well, it wasn't necessarily a perfect day for Peoples and Donaldson. Peoples went for 47 yards against the Bobcats thanks to two late rushes of 11 and 17 yards in the fourth quarter, while

Donaldson had 39 yards.

According to Hope, Peoples and Donaldson haven't quite lived up to expectations so far.

"I'd say they've been a little bit short of expectations," Hope said of Peoples and Donaldson. "I think particularly of James Peoples, because you heard all the talk this offseason, a lot of people were comparing him to J.K. Dobbins. There was kind of this sense that he was going to be a breakout star this year. It feels to me like things are trending toward Peoples probably being the RB3, with Bo climbing the depth chart and him and CJ splitting most of the carries."

In Ohio State's 24-6 win over Washington on Sept. 27, it certainly seemed like Peoples was the team's third-string running back. While Donaldson, who finished the game with nine carries for 39 yards, came out first with Ohio State's offense, Jackson had a team-high 17 carries for 80 yards. Peoples had only three carries for 10 yards.

And while Donaldson had nine rushes in the game, five of them came on the first

drive of the first quarter for the Buckeyes. He was stuffed on a fourth-and-1 to finish the drive, and from there, Jackson seemed to take over as RB1. Donaldson had just four carries the rest of the game compared to Jackson's 16 and Peoples' three.

Day hasn't made the proclamation that Jackson will be the No. 1 back for Ohio State, but after he was the lead back in a tough Big Ten road test for the Buckeyes, it's becoming clearer where the coaching staff stands on the true freshman.

Although Jackson is by far the team's leading rusher through four games, Hope said he thinks the Buckeyes will still use multiple running backs even if Jackson continues to be the team's most effective runner.

"They don't want to wear out their top back during the regular season, so, come College Football Playoff time, if Bo Jackson emerges as the best running back, could we see him get the lion's share of the carries? I think that's certainly possible, but I think during the regular season, they're definitely going to want to continue to split carries."

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, \$124.95
- ☐ 2 Years, \$199.95

- ☐ 1 Year, First Class Mail, \$209.95
- ☐ 2 Years, First Class Mail, \$359.95

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

Stroud, Sayin Led Contrasting Offenses In Debuts

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

C.J. Stroud and Julian Sayin were both redshirt freshman quarterbacks with very little experience under their belts before their first starts at Ohio State, but the similarities surrounding their debuts stop there.

Stroud used his arm to throw for 294 yards and lead the Buckeyes to a 45-31 win over Minnesota, Ohio State's upcoming opponent, in 2021. Sayin, in contrast, threw for just 126 yards and was aided by a strong defensive effort as Ohio State beat Texas 14-7 on Aug. 30.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates why Stroud threw for more than twice as many yards against Minnesota as Sayin did against Texas than head coach Ryan Day's postgame comments after each player's respective starts.

"C.J. and I had a conversation early on," Day said after Stroud's first game. "He and I decided that we were going to keep swinging, no matter what happened. We were not going to play it close to the vest because that's not the way we do it here."

Four years later, Day offered a very different perspective on Sayin's first game.

"When you have that first start and you're out there, there are so many things to take into consideration," Day said. "When you're the quarterback at Ohio State and you're playing No. 1 Texas, one of the top defenses in the country, the one thing we didn't want to do was put him in a bad spot. It's not fair to him. Coming out of it, quite honestly, he probably could have handled it. But we weren't going to do that because we know it's a long season, and that was the decision that was made."

While it remains to be seen what Sayin will accomplish this year, Stroud's first year was one for the history books. The eventual first-round pick threw for 4,435 yards and 44 touchdowns and earned All-America honors in his first season as a starter.

With the 2025 Buckeyes now headed



FILE PHOTO

LET 'ER RIP — Coach Ryan Day took contrasting approaches to the debuts of quarterback C.J. Stroud (above) in 2021 and Julian Sayin four years later. Stroud was given more freedom to throw against Minnesota while Sayin played conservatively against top-ranked Texas. Both won their game.

into conference play and set to face Minnesota on Oct. 4, BSB sat down with three Buckeye beat reporters including The Columbus Dispatch's Joey Kaufman, Eleven Warriors deputy editor Dan Hope and Kevin Noon of Buckeye Huddle to find out what they remember from Stroud's first start and the different approach that Ohio State used during the two players' first starts.

Stroud Gets Past First-Half Obstacles

In retrospect, it seems obvious that Stroud, a two-time Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year and two-time All-American, was the right man to lead the Buckeyes during the 2021 and 2022 seasons, but before his first season as a starter, it wasn't so obvious.

Stroud, a former four-star recruit, appeared only briefly in two games during his true freshman season and didn't attempt a pass. Going into the 2021 season, it wasn't even a guarantee that he would start over true freshman quarterback Kyle McCord, according to Noon.

"Let's not forget that there were a lot of detractors who thought that it was the wrong choice and that Kyle McCord should have been the guy," Noon said.

"There was a lot of uncertainty going into the Minnesota game when you're going with a new quarterback, and especially opening on the road the way Ohio State did. C.J. Stroud wasn't C.J. Stroud until — the Oregon game was a challenge, and then he started to kind of round into form."

Stroud didn't necessarily do a lot to quiet his doubters in the first half of Week One. Instead, Stroud threw for just 58 yards on 8-of-14 passing in the first half and poorly misthrew a pass aimed for Chris Olave that resulted in an interception.

The 14-point underdog Golden Gophers capitalized on Stroud's poor start and took a 14-10 lead into halftime. It wasn't until the second half that Stroud started to flash his potential. The then-Buckeye hit Olave

and Garrett Wilson for three lengthy touchdowns on well-thrown balls and also connected with running back TreVeyon Henderson for a 70-yard score.

"It felt like he was just dropping the ball in buckets that whole night," Kaufman said. "I remember seeing some of those throws the way he could just place the ball in windows and thinking, 'OK, they have a pretty good quarterback who can take over for Justin Fields.' The other thing, too, is they had him do a fair bit. I was looking at the stats: He threw it 22 times, but it felt like they gave him the keys to the car right away, where he was able to take some shots, even though it was a road opener at a Big Ten school."

Defense Forced Stroud To Do More

One of the many differences between Ohio State's opening games against Minnesota and Texas was the Buckeyes' defense. In their last year under then-defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs, the Buckeyes finished the 2021 season ranked 59th in total defense (372.9 yards allowed per game), whereas Ohio State's defense is currently one of the best units in college football.

According to Noon, the Buckeyes' defensive issues certainly played a role in Ohio State's aggressive approach against Minnesota.

"If it's about outscoring your opponent, which apparently it was, you're going to have to sit there and kind of let her rip," Noon said. "That hasn't necessarily been the case coming off last year's defense, and you didn't know what the Matt Patricia experiment was going to look like this year out of the gate, but it's proven to be pretty darn good at this point."

The differences between the two defenses showed up in each team's first game. While the Buckeyes allowed 408 yards and 31 points against the Golden Gophers in 2021, they stifled Texas's offense in their 14-7 triumph this year.

Although the difference in Ohio State's approach in both teams' opening games may make it seem like Day had more trust in Stroud than Sayin, Kaufman said the Buckeyes' defensive issues that year made it so that Ohio State couldn't ease Stroud into the year, even if they had wanted to.

"Even in Week One — Denzel Burke was a freshman starting in that game, I think they had another injury at cornerback and you saw some of the recruiting misses in past years affect the personnel where they were having to rely on some young guys to play right away," Kaufman said of Ohio State's 2021 defense.

"Because of the defense being in a state of flux, they ended up putting a lot on C.J.'s plate that year, especially early on, even though he was the young starter. I don't think they had the luxury of what they've had with Julian this year, where you have a little more clarity and cohesion with what you want to do defensively."

The difference in opponents can't be ignored, according to Hope. While the Longhorns have returned many of the best players from their 2024 defense, which was one of the best units in the country, Minnesota was coming off a 3-4 season in 2020.

TAVERN FOOD & BREWS WITH

WITH BIG TEN ENERGY.

JOIN US FOR DRINKS, APPS & FOOTBALL

at any of our 10 Columbus locations!

OR ORDER GAME DAY GRUB TO-GO AT MYRUSTYBUCKET.COM

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL

“The big difference in terms of the first game for those two was Julian Sayin was playing Texas, the No. 1 team in the country, whereas C.J. was playing a conference game, but Minnesota was not what Texas was going into this year,” Hope said. “And so I think Ohio State intentionally left things a little bit more vanilla for Julian in that first game, just because it was Texas, it was the No. 1 team in the country.”

Experts Say QBs Have Plenty Of Similarities

In their next game against Oregon, the Buckeyes leaned on Stroud even more. Stroud completed 35 of 54 passes in that game for 484 yards and three touchdowns, but the Buckeyes lost the game 35-28.

In the weeks following the Buckeyes’ win over Texas, Sayin had more responsibility than he did in that Week One game, but he still didn’t throw the ball as often as Stroud did against Oregon. Instead, Sayin had 19 passing attempts (18 completions) in Ohio State’s 70-0 win over Grambling and 32 pass attempts (25 completions) in his team’s 37-9 win over Ohio.

None of the experts had a definitive answer about whether it was more beneficial to throw a young quarterback into the fire or ease him into the season, but Kaufman said circumstance often determines which approach a team will go with.

“I think Julian probably could be thrown into the fire a little bit like C.J. was,” Kaufman said. “He seems like he’s got some composure and poise to him. Ideally, you’d want to bring him along at a slower pace and not get him rattled. That just seems like the most logical thing to do in this environment. Sometimes today it gets dictated by what you actually need your quarterback to do more so than what is best for the long-term development.”

Kaufman isn’t the only one who thinks Sayin likely could have handled more responsibility during the Texas game. Day said as much after the game, but according to Kaufman, just because Sayin is capable of throwing the ball all over the field like Stroud did doesn’t mean he should.

“He could win you a game if he has to throw 30-40 times. It’s just probably not what you want to do with him over the long haul,” Kaufman said. “That’s where you would be more concerned about, because if Penn State had defeated Notre Dame (in last year’s CFP semifinals), it would have played 17 games. That is just why you would want to avoid that sort of workload. It’s more of a marathon now in the sport rather than a sprint.”

Even if the Buckeyes asked a lot of Stroud early on in the year, the finished product was undeniably great. The former Buckeye’s gaudy numbers were good enough to get him an invite to New York as a Heisman trophy finalist.

Sayin has a lot of football left to play, but so far, his numbers are solid. The former five-star recruit has completed 78.8 percent of his passes for 987 yards, 10 touchdowns and three interceptions. According to Hope, Sayin has what it takes to have the type of season Stroud had in 2021.

“I’m not going to sit here right now and predict that it will happen, but I would say that I think he has the capability (of having the season Stroud had),” Hope said. “It certainly helps when you have Jeremiah Smith,

Carnell Tate and Max Klare, and all the other weapons that Julian Sayin has around him.

“You just look at the numbers so far (through Week Four), he’s first in the nation in completion percentage and third in the nation in quarterback rating. Now, granted, a lot of those stats were put up against Grambling State and Ohio, so we have to see how he does against better competition. But based on what we’ve seen so far, the capability is there, and it certainly appears like he’s well on his way to being one of the best quarterbacks in college football.”

Although Kaufman agrees Sayin has what it takes to have a spectacular season as the Buckeyes’ quarterback, he said it may be unlikely Sayin has the number of pass attempts needed to match Stroud’s production.

“College football is so different, even four years later, because of the 12-team playoff and the clock changes, and the helmet technology that started last year,” Kaufman said. “Ohio State has played much slower on offense in terms of the pace of play and trying to be cautious of load management to really save itself for the playoffs.

“Ohio State is not running as many plays and not really pushing tempo as much as it did when C.J. Stroud was the quarterback. Part of that is knowing that you’re potentially playing 16-17 games, which was not the case in 2021. I don’t think they’re going to put Sayin in a situation where he’s throwing the ball as much as C.J. did.”

If Sayin isn’t quite what Stroud was in his first year as a starter, it won’t be for a lack of similarities between the two players. Noon, Hope and Kaufman all agreed that Sayin and Stroud have plenty in common.

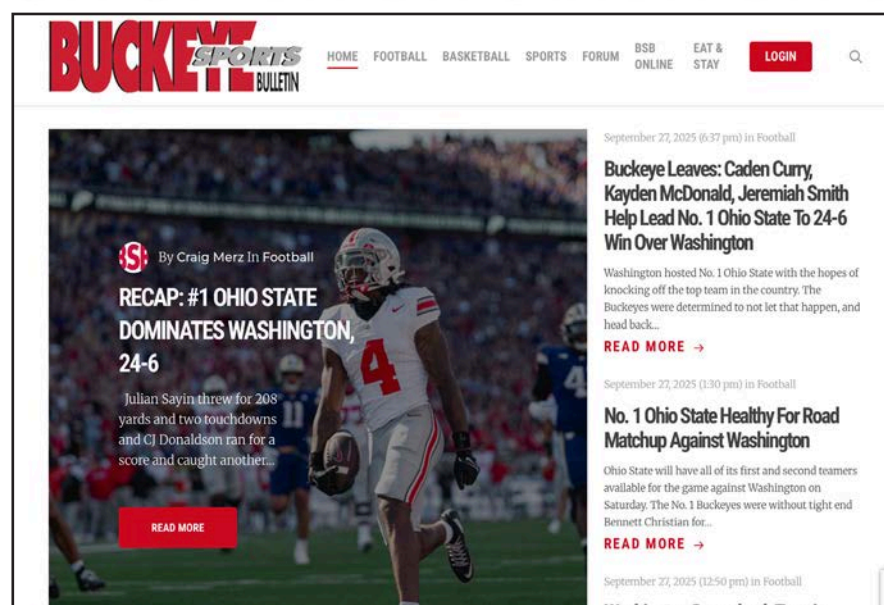
“They both can, really, make a lot of throws. The thing you probably bring up about both quarterbacks is their No. 1 physical trait is their arm talent, the way they can place balls, where they can sort of fit the ball into some spots,” Kaufman said. “I think C.J. played maybe a higher level of competition out of the gate, where you could trust him to make some throws into tighter windows more than Julian at this stage, because we just haven’t seen him do it a ton yet, but that’s probably their biggest similarity. I do think Julian’s release is probably more comparable to (Dwayne) Haskins, who had a really fast release.”

For Sayin to be compared to Stroud, one of the better quarterbacks in Ohio State history, is not only a testament to his talent but also to how he’s played through three games. Still, as he showed in games against Grambling State and Ohio when he threw bad interceptions, there will certainly be freshman mistakes along the way. Day said all the way back on Aug. 18, when he named Sayin the team’s starter, that it’s his job to help his quarterback keep growing, just as he did with Stroud in 2021.

“I don’t know if anybody after that Oregon game – I saw it, (Stroud) threw for over 400 yards, and I was like, ‘Oh, we have a special one,’ and (the fans) were ready to throw him out of town,” Day said when asked if he has to treat Sayin with patience as a red-shirt freshman and first-year starter. “That’s part of being a coach and counseling these young men is like, ‘Here’s what we know and here’s what we see. You have to trust the process on this thing because that’s what it’s all about and just keep growing.’”

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

Multifaceted Inniss Finding His Role At OSU

By **SAM CIPRIANI**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Brandon Inniss consistently steps into the roles assigned by the coaching staff, contributing to multiple facets of the game and adapting to the team's needs. The junior has taken on multiple responsibilities for Ohio State, whether it's as a wide receiver, a returner on special teams or off the field as a captain.

Inniss is confident in his versatility, believing he can step into any receiver role – and even slide into positions outside his usual spots.

"I can do everything," Inniss said. "That's the beauty of it. I can play the slot, play outside. I could block. I could catch. I could be in the backfield. I could throw."

A product of American Heritage High School in Hollywood, Fla., Inniss came to Ohio State as a high four-star prospect, with big expectations as the Buckeyes' top recruit in the class of 2023.

Through Ohio State's first four games in 2025, Inniss has posted eight catches for 71 yards, while also carrying the ball once for 8 yards. The junior has returned two kicks for a total of 20 yards and four punts, which he returned for 66 yards.

While those numbers don't jump off the page, Inniss' impact has been felt in key moments, including punt returns and drive-extending blocks.

Offensive coordinator Brian Hartline said that when he puts together a game plan, Inniss serves almost like a jack-of-all-trades, allowing him to slot the receiver wherever he's needed and not worry about whether he is getting the ball as much as some of his predecessors at the slot position have.

"I'm not really concerned about (Inniss') job description as it is just where he fits this week and in weeks moving forward and then how defenses are going to account for him," Hartline said. "So the tool sets are vast. How we want to use them is probably what's going to change the most week to week. But he's done a great job."

In head coach Ryan Day's tenure at Ohio State, beginning in 2017 as the co-offensive coordinator, the slot receiver has been one of the most important pieces of the Buckeye offense.

Former Buckeyes receivers K.J. Hill (2016-19) and Emeka Egbuka (2021-24) both played in the slot – finishing as Ohio State's all-time leaders in receptions with 201 and 205, respectively.

Jaxon Smith-Njigba, another of the Buckeyes' ever-talented slot receivers who played alongside Egbuka from 2020-22, is the program's record holder for most catches and yards in a single season (95 receptions for 1,606 yards) and has the top two single-game reception records (15 against Utah and Nebraska in 2021).

Ohio State has leaned more on its outside receivers in recent years, with the talented Marvin Harrison Jr. and Jeremiah Smith leading their respective offenses the last two seasons, but Egbuka was still a major part of the offense, finishing with 1,011 receiving yards last year.

But that production hasn't materialized for Inniss this season now that he is the No. 1 slot receiver, which could be due to a few different



SONNY BROCKWAY

HANDYMAN — Versatility is the hallmark of junior receiver/returner Brandon Inniss (1), whose work ethic and leadership enabled him to be named a captain on Aug. 16.

reasons, including that the deep tight ends room allows the offense to use heavy formations often.

Because of that, Inniss had 23, 16 and 32 snaps in the first three games OSU played, while Carnell Tate, Smith and the starting tight ends were featured much more in the offense. But Hartline remains confident that Inniss' chance to be more involved will come.

"Brandon has done a great job in his job description regardless of where the targets have been," Hartline said. "That's got to continue, and obviously that's going to change over time. That's just Ohio State's offense. It's always going to be Ohio State's offense. So the slot is always a big part of what we do."

But Inniss' ability to be just as effective without the ball in his hands with his blocking and route running has still made him a valuable tool for the Ohio State offense.

Day emphasized that Inniss' route freed up Tate on his 49-yard catch and score against Ohio early in the fourth quarter.

"Brandon did a great job getting Carnell open, and then we hit the big post, and it kind of opened up from there," Day said.

In his first two seasons with the Buckeyes, Inniss had a much smaller role behind a stacked receiving corps, totaling 15 catches for 234 yards and two touchdowns over that time, and acted as one of Ohio State's top punt returners in 2024, amassing 107 return yards on 14 attempts.

With the return team being a position group where Day emphasized a need for improvement over the first two games, Inniss has flashed in some of his opportunities.

Inniss showed promise in the punt-return game early on in 2024 when he won the job but tailed off after what was a hot start, failing to follow through on his preseason guarantee to score on a return.

After shaky outings in Weeks One and Two and during the first half of Ohio State's 37-9 Week Three win over Ohio, Inniss sharpened his play in the second half.

Inniss played it safe by signaling for fair catches on three of his four second-half returns, but on the lone punt return he took out, he broke loose for a 28-yard gain, which kick-started an offense that was struggling to find the end zone in the first half.

"Brandon did a great job on the punt return to get us going," Day said.

Inniss had similar issues on special teams during the Buckeyes' road trip to Seattle. After a strong 32-yard punt return, he had the ball punched out by Washington tight end Quentin Moore, and the Huskies pounced on the ball.

Inniss did clean up his play on special teams in the second half and had an overall strong outing with three catches for 34 yards.

Although his role was limited in his first two seasons with Ohio State, Inniss' confidence never wavered. Day noted that he consistently encouraged his teammates and will-

ingly put the team's needs ahead of his own.

Day said Inniss, along with Tate, has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic and a willingness to embrace his responsibilities since arriving on campus.

"When you have your best players who have that type of work ethic, a guy like Carnell Tate. What an example he sets for the other guys. Brandon Inniss too," Day said. "So your best players are the ones that are setting the tone, and that's a great sign."

Inniss' versatility is a valuable asset for any team, but many Ohio State coaches and players believe the wideout has made his biggest impact this season as a leader.

He was named a captain on Aug. 16 along with safety Caleb Downs, left tackle Austin Siereveld and linebacker Sonny Styles – earning the honor for his hard work and leadership, particularly in spring and fall camp.

"It means everything to me," Inniss said on Aug. 27. "When Coach Day told me that I was a captain after practice that day, it felt surreal. You just come here wanting to be a captain. First of all, that's one of the greatest honors you can have as an Ohio State player. Not a lot of people get to do it, and I'm just honored and blessed."

Inniss said he didn't truly find his voice until his final two years of high school, when he developed his vocal leadership as a quarterback leading the offense.

"I wasn't very vocal when I was younger," Inniss said. "I definitely grew into it. I would say at American Heritage, I grew into that a lot more my junior and senior years. When I played quarterback, actually, that helped me, because they all looked to me like 'We need you.' So I felt like ever since then, I became a vocal leader."

Day said Inniss' unrelenting energy and enthusiasm contributed to him being named captain, as he routinely saw the receiver hype up the Buckeyes in the huddle.

"He did that multiple times during camp, brought the whole offense together and got them fired up and got them moving," Day said. "I thought that was a big step that probably had an impact on him being captain."

That passion for his team and the game has been evident throughout Inniss' entire career at Ohio State.

Day recalled multiple specific times when Inniss embodied what it meant to be a great teammate, adding that he is always encouraging his teammates through good and bad.

"When Carnell ran that double move against Northwestern at Wrigley Field, I remember watching (Inniss) run down the field," Day said. "On third-and-Jeremiah (Smith's 56-yard catch to seal Ohio State's win in the national championship game), he's the first guy chasing down a play because he's just a great teammate. He encourages his teammates. You look at his work ethic now in year three, and his body of work is starting to speak for itself."

Now a junior with a bigger role, Inniss believes his breakthrough is just beginning, confident in both his own skills and his teammates' support to fuel a standout season.

"I feel blessed, man," Inniss said. "I feel like my time is finally here, and I know what I can do. I know what my teammates believe in me to do, and I'm ready for the moment."

Ex-Bucks Say NIL Comes With Drawbacks

By **BOBBY GORBETT**
and **SAM CIPRIANI**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writers

It has been a little over four years since the NCAA allowed collegiate athletes to profit off their Name, Image and Likeness, and student-athletes have taken full advantage of the legislation. Many athletes have reportedly commanded well over \$1 million a year in NIL deals and, starting this year, have received payments straight from their respective universities, after the House vs. NCAA settlement was approved in June.

With the NIL era of collegiate sports in full swing, BSB sat down with eight former football players to get their perspective on NIL and asked each of them the same five questions.

LB Jim Laughlin, 1976-79

What do you like about NIL?

"The money. They're playing ball. You get to play at Ohio State – or wherever, Michigan, Notre Dame, the big schools. You get to play where you always dreamed about, and now you're getting paid for it."

What don't you like about NIL?

"I guess some of the unfairness. Some guys will get so much more than others. I know some guys, the money they get is just outrageous. Let's say a guy like Archie (Griffin), my god, what would he have gotten, winning two Heismans? But he wouldn't get that unless he had a great offensive line, and they dominated every year. I just would like it to be fair, but I guess they're all making money. Growing up, I always wanted to play for Ohio State. That was enough. It's just like an added bonus now. Then again, I always thought, 'Well, why should the coach make so much, Urban (Meyer) or (Nick) Saban or whomever, making 5, 8, 10, 12, \$13 million and the players get nothing?'"

What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"I'd like to see everybody get some. You don't have to do it equally, because obviously some guys are worth more, just like in the NFL, where they pay quarterbacks an average of \$20 million or something. Whereas, like 67 percent of the guys in the NFL make minimum salary, like I did, which was fine, it's great, but the quarterbacks, the left tackles, a great receiver, an edge rusher and a cornerback get all the money because those are the most crucial positions. I'd just like to see it kind of doled out so that everybody gets a chunk, because there's so much money in the game now. The TV money is just so huge."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"Yeah, sure. That's just the way it was. I was more than satisfied, because I grew up an Ohio State fan from back in 1968 when I was 10 years old, and they won the national title with Rex Kern and all of those guys.

Ever since then, I loved Ohio State and the Cleveland Browns. That's all I ever wanted to do was grow up and go to Ohio State and play in the NFL or Major League Baseball, so that was fine with me. And I loved Ohio State. Great people, great friends, so that was plenty enough for me."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"Tom Cousineau, because he was the first player drafted in the NFL draft. Bob Brudzinski was great. He was an All-American. Obviously, like I said, Archie right before me. Chris Ward was a great left tackle who went in the first round. Jeff Logan was our tailback, who's on the radio. He would have made a lot of money. Then, of course, Art Schlichter would have been like Arch Manning. Schlichter, he'd have gotten almost all the money, of course. He would have blown it all gambling or writing bad checks or whatever."

RB Vaughn Broadnax, 1980-83

What do you like about NIL?

"What I like about it is it gives the opportunities for the players to get some of the benefits that college football is producing. We've seen escalating, outrageous college coaching salaries. We've seen product licensing that is out of the wazoo. So why can't players get a piece of the action, since they are the participants?"

What don't you like about NIL?

"There have to be some controls put in place that are enforceable. We recently had some rulings that came down that do that, but I don't think there are enough watchdogs or enforcement, so to speak, and that could be vastly improved, because it's still kind of a Wild, Wild West out there, especially this past summer. If you're going to give high school kids money to attend a school, it's got to be more regulated. It's no longer under the table, but what can be managed?"

What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"I would give the teeth to the NCAA so they can regulate what they should be regulating and put standards in place. Now they talk about Jeremiah Smith, he's going to have far much more value than a walk-on, but that can be measured. It could be scaled up in various ways. And if you put some levels to the value, that could greatly enhance the fairness of what's going on and make it more legitimate, in my eyes, as far as to the fans."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"I actually did a paper in my microeconomics class talking about how much the school was making per football game, not only on ticket sales, but also on concessions. Unlike most other schools, we have not cut any of our women's teams or men's teams. So there's a lot of money being generated. But getting back to when I was in school, we didn't have the restrictions of two hours a day on the practice field. We didn't have

the restrictions that have been allotted for basically free time for the student-athletes now to do other things other than practice. So when you look at the hours per practice we were making, put it this way, if we were paid minimum wage for the time that we spent practicing, we made more than the tuition and board. We would have been paid more than the tuition and room and board that the school provided in a grant in aid for that year. So that was my point."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"My sophomore year, Art Schlichter. Then I would say you probably had Tim Spencer, who was a running back, one of the top running backs in the country at that time, when running backs were valued."

LB Andy Gurd, 1987-91

What do you like about NIL?

"I think from a player perspective, it is good because players now have options. In the past, a coach could leave, and good for the coach and good for their new contract. But the school and the players that are left with that, too bad you can't do anything about it, you just have to deal with it. I think the players have options. Certain players might have the ability to gain wealth that might change generations of their family for the positive, and that's amazing, and that's empowering, and that should be celebrated."

It's good from a university standpoint, perhaps in that a university has an opportunity now or the athletic department or football team has the ability now to potentially upgrade their team significantly in one offseason."

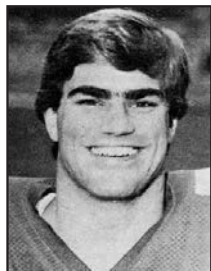
What don't you like about NIL?

"I have always been a guy that enjoyed building strong, trusted relationships, and that takes time and continuity, and we have that same flip opportunity now with student-athletes being empowered. Some kids are at four schools in six years, and I think that can really hurt a team from jelling. Maybe this is just old-guy talk, but I think it takes time for a team to jell and to really trust each other. Maybe the kids today are able to do that a lot faster. Maybe the coaches have adapted to that, and they can do it better. I think from a fan perspective, and from a player perspective, you're going to see changes on teams every year where hopefully, for the Buckeyes, it means that we're gaining some really good players. Hopefully, it doesn't mean that we're losing them, but that opportunity is there. So I think from a team perspective, I would have concerns around chemistry."

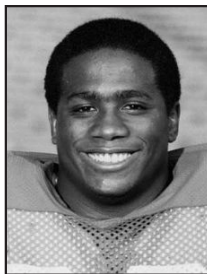
What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"First of all, this is so multifaceted. Are you trying to answer that from the totality

Continued On Page 24



Jim Laughlin



Vaughn Broadnax,

- 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

Pursuit Of Money Can Hurt Players, Teams

Continued From Page 23

aggregate, or are you trying to answer that from one of the facets? Because then if you answer it for one of the facets, it impacts the other facets. And that's what makes this so complex, because for every change, there will be a reaction and there will be a ripple effect."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"Was I satisfied? The answer is yes, and that is because, as I previously said, it was beaten into our brains – by my parents as well. What an amazing opportunity you get that your university paid for this. This is a bit like a job as to how you're paying for it. We never thought about what revenue the university was making. Never thought about it. So did I see it as quid pro quo? Absolutely. I think that I came out on top, that's how I viewed it, but I also know that I had Mom and Dad, that if I needed 50 bucks to try to take a girlfriend to dinner, then I could ask for that. Not everybody had that. So my experience is my experience, but I know I had teammates who had a very different experience. I have empathy for that, and that's where we go back to today. This can give young men and women an opportunity that they never had before, and that's a very positive, empowering thing, until it isn't."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player

on your team?

"I think my freshman year, that would have been my teammate and co-linebacker Chris Spielman. Think about Spiels. He had already been on a Wheaties box. Marcus Marek and other guys before Chris – that number 36 meant everything on the defense. It defined toughness and linebacker. And quite frankly, I think Ohio State football, and I think that Chris and his personality really fit the state of Ohio in many ways. I think after Chris graduated, maybe Carlos Snow. Carlos has got a great smile and was an amazing running back as well. I think Carlos has an infectious personality that, if you had the TV commercials and maybe the social media and that kind of stuff, I think he could have done very well with that."

QB Greg Frey, 1987-90

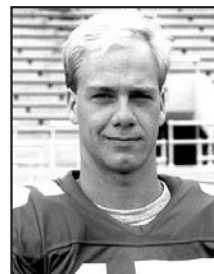
What do you like about NIL?

"As a former player, these guys, the players, have an opportunity to share in revenue. I've felt that for a long time, for as hard as these guys work, they are definitely part of the marketing attraction and that they should share some of the percentage of what went on. So from that standpoint, I do believe in NIL."

What don't you like about NIL?

"We saw last year (quarterback Nico Iamaleava) trying to get a better offer after having a very good year and having a pretty good contract with a Tennessee NIL cooper-

ative. I think sooner or later, it was going to happen, where a player is taking bad advice and it's blowing up in his face. Sooner or later,



Greg Frey

er, that was going to happen when you've got, whether it's a dad or an agent, trying to pull them in and say, 'Hey, you got a better opportunity over here, and the grass looks greener.' The downside is there, as in the portal, and to me, there's too many guys where the NIL and the portal kind of overlap. Too many guys are switching just because they think the grass is greener, and you're not seeing as much continuity in a program. I think that's going to be changing. That's probably part of the portal. There needs to be some limitations there, because it's almost like absolute free agency, where teams are turning over too much year to year, and that makes it very difficult as a coach."

What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"I've heard rumors that there might be consideration of getting one transfer for a student-athlete, and then maybe putting a penalty on the second. You go back in my day, you could transfer, but you had to sit out a year. I was part of a coaching change back in 1987 at Ohio State, and I very much considered transferring and chose not to, because of the penalty to sit. So I think when you're already seeing guys now that they're in their second or third school in three or four years, that is too much. I'm not sure what we're teaching our young student-athletes, to say, 'Hey, if it's not good, just leave.' As a parent, I think your kid's got to stick it out a little bit more, and not in every case, but in some cases. So I think there's got to be some modifications for that, and it appears that that's being considered."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"In my example, in the summertime, I had maybe a six- or eight-week window that I could work a little bit to earn extra money, and I did. I worked on a construction crew on I-670. I remember going to bed at 9 p.m. every night because I was exhausted. You can't make a lot of money in six to eight weeks, and I wasn't. I didn't come from money. We got a little bit of a stipend back then for laundry or whatever, but it wasn't much. So I always felt there was a need for more, because you're pretty much playing football for 12 months, and there's just not an opportunity to go work, per se. So from that standpoint, I think what these guys are getting now, even the guys that aren't big names, are still getting a decent amount."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"We had some high-profile guys. I mean, Cris Carter was one that was high-profile and ended up taking an agent that cost him. The crazy part is he was condemned back then, but now it's just normal. I'd probably say Chris Spielman, too. I mean, Chris was on the cover of the Wheaties box, which to-

day, we know what that's worth. So those are the two that probably come to mind initially."

DB Bryan Cook, 1990-92

What do you like about NIL?

"I like the concept of NIL. I think the opportunity for an athlete, male, female, whatever sport is, to be able to earn money on their name, image and likeness, is the American way. You should be able to earn income based on who you are and what you do. So the concept, I believe in wholeheartedly."

What don't you like about NIL?

"What I don't like is the collective concept. I don't think that has a place or a fit in with the true spirit of NIL. I think if a car dealership wants to work with a player to promote cars, because they feel that that's going to help them sell more cars, that's exactly what it should be. But for an outside organization just to raise money to give to an athlete, to come to a school, is not what I feel the spirit of the whole idea of NIL embodies."

What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"I would definitely get rid of the collective. I don't believe in that concept. The revenue share is great. I think with parameters around that, I think that could help a lot of things. It could help students moving around from school to school, if we did it the correct way. It could help them in the long run, in terms of their careers after sports, if we help them be responsible and maybe even set it up as some type of deferred comp program. I think those things are great. I think that's the direction of the sport, football, as well as basketball, and many of the other revenue sports. And there's absolutely the need for the student-athlete to share in that revenue."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"The times have changed. The money has definitely gotten bigger. But I think to have this back when we played, of course, it would have helped us. I mean, anytime that you have an opportunity to make a living or earn money off of what you're doing is going to be awesome. There's a lot to be said for the hustle part of it, too. I mean, we had a great experience. I wouldn't trade my experience for anything else. But of course, things have changed."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"Without a doubt, Eddie George would have been probably the most highly compensated player. But we had a lot of great, great guys who played during my time. I think Carlos Snow could have really benefited from NIL back in the day."

DE Matt Finkes, 1993-96

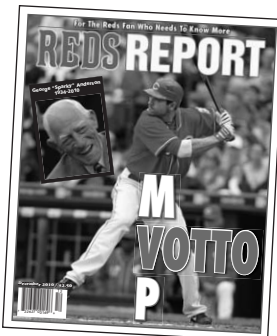
What do you like about NIL?

"I think that the latest iteration of NIL has been a positive step forward. I think the original wasn't NIL. It was pay for play. It was boosters, collecting money, giving it to kids, not a real value. The entire purpose of NIL is to allow kids to market themselves and create value for themselves in a marketing environment where they're using

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

their name, image and likeness for a career brand. I think the clearinghouse that has happened now and the revenue share, which I think is a positive step in the right direction, still needs a lot of work, because even at Ohio State, you have four sports that are part of the revenue share. The other 32 aren't getting anything. So there's definitely some work to do, but I think that this was a step in the right direction."

What don't you like about NIL?

"Honestly, it is the lack of structure with it. And when I say that there are agents out there that are taking advantage of kids and families – quite frankly, those agents out there are taking 15 percent of a revenue share contract with the university. The NFL caps contracts for agents at 4 percent, and those things are pretty rigid and structured. There's not a lot of negotiating when you're talking about that, unless you're a top-five player. You're going to fit into the system where the university can pay you. I think shifting it to a market-based system of what they've been trying to do here since July has been overall good."

What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"There should be more revenue share. I think that you've got to get the Olympic sports and the nonrevenue sports involved. The majority of college athletes aren't going professional, so the education is valuable. You don't want to see that go away. You started to see schools cut sports already to be able to abide by this revenue share. With the amount of information and the amount of outlets that are out there with streaming services – you've got Big Ten Plus, you've got ESPN Plus, baseball, all these sports are being viewed and consumed in some way, but they're not being compensated. Volleyball, wrestling, all of these sports are being consumed. Wrestling, their national championship is a huge ratings grabber at ESPN. Wrestling is not getting a dime of revenue share. I don't know that they're getting a revenue share anywhere in the country. So I think that there's definitely some tweaks that can be made with that, renegotiating some of these TV contracts and streaming services contracts with the universities in the leagues to expand the revenue share out to more schools."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"Yes and no. I was able to be stable financially. There's a lot of people that aren't, though, and there's still a lot of people that aren't. It's where your family came from, your resources that are available. Yes, the degree is valuable, and it's very important for the rest of your life. When I was a high school coach, I would tell our players, 'You go to school where you want to spend the next 40 years of your life, not the next four, because of the network that you build.' The resources that you're going to be able to accumulate with the alumni associations and the brand that you're going to be able to create by being a college athlete are going to be significant, especially in a town like Columbus. So there's definitely value there. Would I have loved to be a part of NIL back in the day, doing some autograph signings and things like that, or selling my jerseys? Absolutely. But different times are what they are, so you can't kind of look back and wish what was. It just is what it is."

When you played, who would have

been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"Eddie George, without a doubt. You got a Heisman Trophy winner, great personality, obviously. If social media was around back then, Eddie would have killed it."

CB Ty Howard, 1993-1996

What do you like about NIL?

"I believe that the athletes should be compensated. There's too much money being made and generated from collegiate sports now, and it's long overdue that athletes get their fair share, so I'm a fan that has been corrected to a degree, but I also believe that there should be some limitations with it as well. I think overall, it's a great thing for the student-athletes."

What don't you like about NIL?

"I don't like it as it pertains to team dynamics. Even though it's feeling more like semipro and professional football, there's still a dynamic shift in the locker room. Playing collegiately and playing professionally, I know there's a noticeable difference with that locker-room shift. Meaning, you have the elite players when I was drafted and played for the Cardinals – we had Larry Centers, Eric Swann, Aeneas Williams, those guys making \$3 and \$5 million-plus a year. Then you have a third-rounder like myself making good money, but there was a big discrepancy in terms of how they were treated, expectations and just the overall ranking and hierarchy in the locker room. Now, how that plays out collegiately, it's there, and it's always been there, even back when I played, playing with Orlando Pace and Eddie George, guys that you knew were first-round or top-five picks, but the concept of the team never varied. That wasn't questioned in terms of hierarchy. It was always your coaches, and then we're all players."

"In today's game, you have a guy like Jeremiah Smith making \$3-4 million. There's a level of respect and a level of he's the franchise player. We're dealing with 18-, 19-, 20-year-old kids who are all competitive, who all think they have a shot at the league. That has to do something to a locker room. I don't know how that is being managed. Clearly, Coach (Ryan) Day, Coach (Tim) Walton, all those guys are doing a great job with it, but in the long term, that creates some dissension, some jealousy, I'm sure, in some regards. And if it's not managed and corrected properly, it could be the downfall of some teams."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"Absolutely not. We got Pell Grants. We played Tonk and gambled and did little side jobs to make money in the summer. Going back to my playing days, knowing what revenue we generated back then, it would have been easily acceptable to pay athletes back then. To have guys struggle to make ends meet, worrying about their families coming to attend games, was a bitter pill to swallow. I believe anyone on full scholarship – hell, anyone playing collegiately, their parents, their family members and loved ones should have access to attending games. That's the biggest positive I see in all this. There should have been some type of compensation even back then, because when I first started my freshman year, we were still with Pony, and then we finally signed the Nike deal, and we heard about the numbers we generated with that. Not that we weren't



FILE PHOTO

TOP DOLLAR — Former Ohio State safety Tyvis Powell likes the idea of athletes getting paid, but he feels like they should earn the money for their performances and not just potential.

grateful for the gear, the cleats and all the apparel that came along with that, but trust me, to a player, we would have gladly taken a couple grand, 20-30 grand. That money would have gone a long way to help a lot of guys."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"Orlando Pace would have been one. Eddie would have been up there, of course. Shawn Springs was my cornerback mate. He would have made some money, for sure. Between those three players, probably those would have been the top three during my era. Now, I'm talking my senior year, but before that, I played with Joey Galloway and Robert Smith as well. So I could easily see Joey and Robert making a great deal of money, especially at those positions."

SAF Tyvis Powell, 2012-2015

What do you like about NIL?

"I love the fact that the players are getting paid. They get to actually use their names to get money to be able to take care of their families and take care of all the things that they want to do in college. I love that aspect of it. I was always a fan of if people want to go out and buy a jersey with my name on it, I should get paid for that. The fact that they're able to get that type of stuff, I love that. I love the fact that companies can say, 'I like that guy, so I want to give him money to market our stuff.' The kids can directly benefit from that. So I like that."

What don't you like about NIL?

"I don't like the aspect of it where people get money they haven't earned. It's just astronomical numbers where some people

get millions of dollars, and they haven't done anything for the school yet. How are you going to pay this kid all this money, and he hasn't done a thing, whereas there are guys on the roster who have done stuff that aren't getting that same type of treatment? So that would probably be the only thing, but outside of that, I'm all for people getting their money."

What changes would you make to NIL, if any?

"The only change would be to even the playing fields because some schools are falling to the wayside because they don't have the money to pay for some of these kids, but in the same breath, I still want kids to make as much as possible. I guess the salary cap thing would probably be the best option, where if you truly value this kid, and you think he's one of the best, this is the most you can give him, whether that number be \$500,000 or \$1 million, whatever that may be. I feel like that would make things a little easier, where it's like a set limit on the maximum amount you could give a kid out of high school."

When you played, were you satisfied with your scholarship?

"It's all I knew, so I had no choice. Looking in hindsight, no, I would have loved to have been able to make a couple of dollars. I didn't need to break the bank. I didn't need millions of dollars, but it would have been nice to have a couple of dollars in my pocket."

When you played, who would have been the most highly compensated player on your team?

"Braxton Miller, Joey Bosa or Ezekiel Elliott, easily."

George Steady In Week 3 Victory Over Pitt

Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Eddie George's 1995 Heisman Trophy win this season with a game-by-game look at his march to college football's most coveted award. In this issue, BSB looks at Ohio State's 54-14 win at Pitt on Sept. 23, 1995.

By MARCUS HARTMAN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In Week 3 of the 1995 season, Ohio State's game against Pittsburgh took a back seat to hype for the one coming up against Notre Dame seven days later.

Eddie George was overshadowed by Terry Glenn in a similar fashion.

Perhaps that George could run for 122 yards on 24 carries without many people really noticing was a hint of things to come for the senior from Philadelphia.

"I had a solid performance," George said. "I had what, 122 yards? That was cool against their defense. I expected to have that kind of day where I struggled for every yard."

Meanwhile, Glenn hauled in nine passes for a school-record 253 yards and scored four touchdowns.

Glenn Takes Spotlight In First Half

After Ohio State's first possession ended with an interception, George carried around the left end for 10 yards the next time the Buckeyes got the ball.

The reigning Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week was tackled at the Ohio State 25, close enough on this day for Glenn to do the rest.

The junior receiver from Columbus streaked up the middle between two Panthers and hauled in a pass from Bobby Hoying. With the safeties running into each other, Glenn had nothing but open field for a 75-yard touchdown catch.

It was the result of some improvisation – Glenn was supposed to run a deep crossing route but went up the field when he saw how the defense was aligned – and got the Buckeyes on the board early in front of more than 54,000 fans at Pitt Stadium.

The Glenn Show continued on Ohio State's next possession. After George lost 3 yards on first down, Hoying and Glenn connected for gains of 4 and 24, followed by fullback Nicky Sualua picking up 15 and then 10 on the ground.

George got those 3 yards back on first down at the Pitt 15, setting up a 12-yard touchdown pass from Hoying to Glenn.

The Buckeyes led 14-7 at that point, but they had a hard time putting the Panthers away on their home field. It was 20-14 Ohio State at halftime as thoughts about looking ahead to the Fighting Irish lingered.

"Pitt's a good team, but everyone's looking forward to Notre Dame. In practice, everyone got focused on Pitt and came out and played," Glenn said.

OSU coach John Cooper was more concerned with his defense than his offense at halftime.

"They were moving the football," Cooper said of the Panthers after the game. "They're a dangerous offensive football team, and anything could happen. We were only up six points. I felt it was very important for us to take the second-half kickoff and make something happen. They won the toss and took the ball to start the game. We felt like we let them live too long in the first half. We didn't go out there and put them away, but give Pitt credit."

George Set Stage For Blowout

The Buckeyes received the kickoff to start the third quarter and let their big back carry four straight times. He picked up 30 yards to get them to the 36, where Hoying and Glenn hooked up again for both a touchdown and a two-point conversion that gave Ohio State a 28-14 lead.

George remained heavily involved on the following drive, including as a decoy twice in four plays.

He first took a handoff and gave it to Glenn on a reverse that gained 17 yards then ran twice for 6 yards and no gain.

On third-and-goal, Hoying faked a handoff to George, pulled the ball and threw a 2-yard touchdown to a wide-open Sualua.

"I think they bit on that play," the fullback said. "We worked on that in practice, and it worked in the game. That was a good call by the coaches."

"I knew coming into this season the fullback would have a bigger role. The fullbacks just have to step up and do their part. I was just trying to do my job. I came into the season with some problems, but now it's time for me to put that all aside."

His touchdown catch gave Ohio State a 21-point lead, leaving little drama and effectively canceling any upset watch ahead of the showdown with Notre Dame.

"Last week we didn't practice very well in my opinion," George said. "There were some concerns because we didn't want to come in here and take these guys lightly and get upset. We handled it pretty well, overcame our mistakes and just played ball."

While Glenn was the headliner, Cooper left little doubt about how integral George was to Ohio State's success.

His 200-yard day against Washington basically meant the Buckeyes had already established the run even before the first snap at Pitt, and Glenn was the beneficiary as he repeatedly torched one-on-one coverage in the Panthers' secondary.

"To beat us, people have to stop our running game, and with Eddie George

having the success he's had so far, you take your chances there," Cooper said. "We had good protection today and, without blitzing, it's hard to get a lot of pressure on the quarterback, and when you have that much time to throw the ball, and you have a receiver like Terry Glenn, it's really hard to defend against the post."

Pitt defensive back John Jenkins said his team never planned on conceding anything, but it turned out they couldn't stop the Buckeyes by land or by air.

"We tried to have a balanced attack," Jenkins said. "We tried to stop George and their excellent receivers, but there was no excuse. Eddie George is an excellent tailback, and he ran for I don't know how many yards. He ran good, the receivers caught the ball well and the quarterback did a heck of a job."

When the day was done for the starters, the reserve offense got its chance and did not disappoint.

No. 2 quarterback Stanley Jackson threw a touchdown pass, and Tommy Hoying (Bobby's younger brother) threw another.

"It just shows how powerful our offense can be," Jackson said. "We'll be ready for Notre Dame. We just have to have good practices and play the game."

Focus Shifts To Notre Dame

With no other games to prepare for, Ohio State was happy to fully turn its attention to the Fighting Irish even before leaving Pittsburgh.

"I don't think we sent a message at all other than we hope there will be two good football teams playing in Columbus next week," Cooper said. "Notre Dame had a great victory over Texas, which I thought would happen. You're going to see them get better, and hopefully we'll get better. We want to play better than we did today and in the first two ballgames. The message is loud and clear that the place will be rocking over in Columbus next week."

At the same time, Notre Dame head coach Lou Holtz did his best to try to undersell his team and hype up Ohio State, a favorite tactic of the Ohio native who spent the 1968 season on Woody Hayes' staff coaching the Buckeye defensive backs.

"One, we aren't very big up front. Two, we have a little bit of a problem, obviously, with running out wide, and we give up a lot of plays when we have people in position," Holtz said. "Ohio State is very big up front (on offense), and we are very small up front. With George, they may have the premier back in the country. He's proven."

He went so far as to suggest the '95 Buckeyes could be the best version of the Scarlet and Gray since the '68 national title team.

"I haven't watched the film on them, but I saw them on TV," Holtz said. "My wife said I'd better have a brain operation and a heart transplant."

"I mean, with George, Glenn and Hoying and a great defense and a great kicking game, they're definitely one of the top teams in the country. Our players should be pretty excited about it."



**The Best Selection
of OHIO STATE
Gifts &
Sportswear!**

Order Online
collegetraditions.com

Order Toll Free
(800) 628-4678

**Red
Nike
Crew**

S - 3X
Item # 22411
\$75.00

**HOT item
this month!**



"Your National Championship Merchandise Headquarters."

Egbuka Making Name For Self With Buccaneers

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The matchup of former Ohio State receivers was a talking point of the Sept. 25 Thursday night game between the Seattle Seahawks with Jaxon Smith-Njigba and the Arizona Cardinals' Marvin Harrison Jr., and rightly so.

Each played a critical role in the fourth quarter for their respective teams in what turned out to be a 23-20 win for the Seahawks.

But another proud alum of Wide Receiver U. is garnering attention as well.

Emeka Egbuka, the 19th pick in the 2025 NFL draft, has received acclaim for the start of his career with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and was an early favorite for the NFL's Offensive Rookie of the Year after three games in which he totaled 14 catches for 181 yards (12.9 yards per catch) and three touchdowns. He was the first Buccaneer rookie to have three TD catches in his first two games.

The spotlight was even bigger in Week 4 at home against the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles on Sept. 28 because receiver Mike Evans, the Bucs' all-time leading scorer, missed the first of an expected several games because of a left hamstring injury sustained on Sept. 21 vs. the New York Jets.

"I don't know if you can replace him," Tampa Bay coach Todd Bowles said of Evans. "Other guys can do other things, and we'll try to tailor it toward those things, but you can't replace a Mike Evans."

Bowles said prior to playing the Eagles that Egbuka was ready for more responsibilities.

"Right now, we do not even consider him a rookie," he said. "He has been doing it so much at practice and the details of his work that we kind of expect it from him in the building, and I think outside, everybody is kind of seeing it for the first time. But it is a little early for Rookie of the Year-type things. If he can do that for 16, 17 weeks, we will be happy."

Egbuka had another big game on Sept. 27 in the 31-25 loss to the Eagles. His 77-yard touchdown catch from Baker Mayfield pulled the Buccaneers (3-1) to within 24-13 early in the third quarter.

He made four catches for 101 yards and rushed once for no gain.

Out Of The Shadows

Egbuka is getting the type of recognition that was harder to come by at Ohio State, despite a notable career that included being the all-time leader in receptions (205), second with 2,868 receiving yards and seventh with 24 TD catches in 49 games.

The problem, if it can be called that, was that Egbuka was often overshadowed in the talented receivers room.

Garrett Wilson was the 10th pick by the Jets in the 2022 draft, Chris Olave was the next selection in the same draft by the New Orleans Saints, Smith-Njigba went 20th in 2023, and Harrison was the fourth overall draftee in 2024.

Of course, Jeremiah Smith was the freshman sensation last season for the national champion Buckeyes when Egbuka led the



FILE PHOTO

CATCHING ON — Former Ohio State receiver Emeka Egbuka is off to a strong start in his rookie season with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and is considered an early favorite for the NFL's Offensive Rookie of the Year.

team with 81 receptions and had 1,011 yards and 10 TDs.

Egbuka immediately made a good impression with Tampa Bay for his attention to detail, absorption of the playbook and ability to play all the receiver spots (X, Y and Z).

In his first regular-season game, he made four catches for 67 yards and two touchdowns. The second score, a 25-yarder, provided the margin in the 23-20 win against Atlanta.

Egbuka showed his moxie during the game by calling the play in the huddle that led to his winning score.

"Right before he caught that last touchdown, he called it," Evans said to JoeBucs.com. "He wanted a post route. He said, 'I'm about to game one.'"

"We were in the huddle, and he said we need to run this certain play and I'm going to game (the cornerback) and I was just like, 'Maybe we do need to run it.' And then literally he runs the post and touchdown, next play."

Added Mayfield: "True professional. Doesn't play like a rookie. Doesn't act like a rookie. His head is never spinning. He made some unbelievable catches and plays today for us. Obviously, we're going to continue to lean on him."

"I expected him to play really, really well just from what he was putting on tape, the communication, being in his playbook. It's even better to see when it comes to life on the field, under the lights. The spotlight will never be too bright for him. It's fun to see him thriving and doing his job."

Someone else was not surprised by Egbuka's success.

"He's a good example of somebody who is a student of the game," said Ohio State coach Ryan Day. "His football IQ is off the charts. I'm sure he's bringing a lot to the ta-

ble there down in Tampa."

Egbuka followed with 29 yards and a TD on four catches in a 20-19 win against the Houston Texans and his former quarterback, C.J. Stroud.

He upped his game in the 29-27 win over the Jets when he grabbed six passes from Mayfield for 85 yards. Included was his second 30-yard catch of the season, a spectacular over-the-shoulder, one-handed effort.

"He is doing a great job, man," Buccaneer linebacker Yaya Diaby said. "That one-handed catch, I was just like, 'Whoa, no way he just caught that.' He is just coming along really well."

"I see him and Baker getting along really well, and I am just excited for where he is going to go as the season keeps going along."

Mayfield was caught by microphones on the sideline after the catch playfully chiding his young receiver, "You disrespect one of my passes like that again, we're going to have a problem, all right? Two hands."

A few days later, Egbuka delivered his response on "Up and Adams," hosted by Kay Adams on FanDuel TV, when he said with a smile, "You've got to put it in a better spot. Put it where I can use two hands."

Later in the game, Egbuka made another great catch by keeping his right foot in bounds while dragging his left foot, but it was ruled incomplete.

"There are going to be some calls that go our way, some calls that don't go our way. I thought he caught it," Bowles said.

Egbuka was the go-to receiver during the final game-winning drive in the absence of the injured Evans.

"My mindset is to just win the game," Egbuka said afterward. "That's what's on my mind. No matter who's in, who's out, everyone has that same mentality."

"We're trying to get the win. That's all that

matters at the end of the day in the NFL, and we ended up getting it done today."

The Buccaneers won their first three games in the final moments, and Egbuka has quickly learned that there is some Mayfield magic at work.

"You see it every single day in practice, a natural-born leader, someone who's willing to die on the field before giving up or shutting down," Egbuka said. "So I think it's pretty special to have someone like that at the helm of your offense, at the helm of your team. We're in good hands."

If his connection with Mayfield continues to develop, Egbuka could be in the running to be the 12th receiver to be named the top rookie. The most recent was Wilson in 2022.

The Other Guy

Former Buckeye Michael Jordan was elevated from the Bucs' practice squad twice and started at left guard the first two games due to injuries along the line. However, he was injured and unable to play against the Jets and was not activated for the Philadelphia game.

Tampa Bay signed him as an unrestricted free agent on July 24, 2025. Jordan has played 69 career games (42 starts) with the Cincinnati Bengals, Carolina Panthers and most recently the New England Patriots.

He started all 41 games for the Buckeyes from 2016-18 and was a first-team All-America honoree by CBS Sports and SI.com as a junior. He was the first true freshman to start on the Ohio State offensive line in 23 years (Orlando Pace in 1994).

Prime Time

The heat was on Harrison heading into the stand-alone game vs. the Seahawks. Considered a sure-shot superstar coming out of Ohio State, he has not lived up to the hype and was having a subpar second season.

In Week 3, he dropped two passes against San Francisco, including one while wide open at midfield.

He didn't have a good start against Seattle. He and QB Kyler Murray were not on the same page, and Harrison appeared to stop on a route that resulted in an interception. A second pick occurred when Harrison bobbled a pass into the hands of Ernest Jones. There was also a play where Murray threw a stop route, and Harrison continued on a fade.

Harrison was targeted six times in the first half but had one catch for 8 yards.

But things changed, and he caught five passes for 58 yards and a 16-yard TD in the second half to finish with six catches for 66 yards.

Smith-Njigba followed a similar pattern. All four of his catches for 79 yards came in the final 16 minutes. Two were third-down conversions, including a 22-yarder on the final drive, successfully lunging after the catch to reach the sideline to save a timeout, which led to the winning field goal as time expired.

For the season, Smith-Njigba has 26 catches for 402 yards (15.5) and one TD. Harrison has 16 catches for 208 yards (13.0) and two scores.

Oregon Defeats Penn State in 2OT Battle

In a clash of two Big Ten powerhouses, Oregon (5-0) outlasted Penn State (3-1) 30-24 in double overtime in front of a “White Out” crowd at Beaver Stadium on Sept. 27.

BIG TEN NOTES Sam Cipriani

The Ducks held the Nittany Lions’ offense in check for the first three quarters of the game, jumping out to a 10-3 lead at the end of the third, to the ring of boos raining down in Happy Valley directed at Penn State head coach James Franklin and quarterback Drew Allar.

After Oregon quarterback Dante Moore led the Ducks to another touchdown on the fourth quarter’s opening drive, capped off by an 8-yard touchdown rush from running back Jordon Davison, Penn State kicked off a ferocious comeback from down two scores.

Penn State racked up 142 total offensive yards in the fourth quarter, besting its total of 109 from the three previous quarters combined, while Allar threw two touchdowns to Devonte Ross to tie the score at 17.

Following scores from each team in the first overtime, which deadlocked the game at 24 apiece, Moore tossed a 25-yard touchdown pass on the first play of double overtime to wide receiver Gary Bryant Jr. to give

the Ducks a 30-24 lead over the Nittany Lions.

Oregon missed the two-point conversion attempt, opening the door for Penn State to win with a touchdown and their own two-point conversion. However, on the first play of the Nittany Lions’ next drive, Allar tossed an interception to Ducks defensive back Dillon Thieneman, sealing the game for Oregon.

“I tried to get the ball over the guy’s head,” Allar said. “He jumped up and caught the ball.”

Penn State, which was ranked third in the nation coming into the matchup, fell four spots in the AP poll to No. 7, while the No. 6 Ducks leaped four placements to the second-ranked team in the nation. Oregon also received 16 first-place votes in the AP poll for its strong performance.

With the loss, Franklin fell to 4-21 against AP top-10 opponents and 1-18 in conference games against AP top-10 teams. His only win against a top-10 Big Ten team was in 2016 when the Nittany Lions beat Ohio State 24-21.

“I get that narrative, and it’s really not a narrative – it’s factual. It’s the facts,” Franklin said. “I try to look at the entire picture and what we’ve been able to do here. But at the end of the day, we have to find a way to win those games. I totally get it. And I take ownership. I take responsibility.”

B1G Likely Won’t Play 10 Power Four Opponents

The Big Ten apparently will not be follow-

ing the course of the other three Power Four conferences when it comes to scheduling.

According to a report from On3’s Brett McMurphy, the Big Ten has not discussed requiring teams in the conference to play a minimum of 10 Power Four teams – a move the SEC, ACC and Big 12 have already adopted or have plans set in place to formalize.

An unnamed source in the Big Ten said, “there is nothing on the immediate horizon” to add the rule, while another unnamed affiliate of the Big Ten said that the change “hasn’t been discussed.”

The Big 12 has required teams to play 10 total Power Four opponents since 2024, comprising nine conference opponents and one nonconference game, with the SEC and ACC planning to implement the rule starting in 2026.

The Big Ten pushed for the SEC to adopt the nine-game conference schedule in July at the conference’s media day, a rule the SEC adopted on Aug. 21.

The Big Ten was also the only Power Four conference to be in favor of the 4-4-2-2-1 format of the College Football Playoff versus the 5-11 model proposed by the ACC and Big 12.

As the lone holdout in adjusting conference scheduling and the format of the College Football Playoff, the Big Ten could end up stalling potential playoff expansion and bracket adjustments, sources told McMurphy.

Alvarez Says Badger Fans ‘Spoiled Rotten’

Following Wisconsin’s 27-10 loss to Maryland on Sept. 20, former Badgers head coach Barry Alvarez had critical words for the team’s fans.

Alvarez, Wisconsin’s head coach from 1990-2005 and the program’s interim head coach in 2012 and 2014, said Badgers fans are “spoiled rotten” on ESPN Madison after they booed and chanted “Fire Fickell” at head coach Luke Fickell during the defeat.

“I think it’s embarrassing,” Alvarez said. “I think it’s terrible, despicable. They’re spoiled rotten. Here’s a team that you’ve got young players trying to come on, they’re competing, they’re going to have a chance to get better, and you flip on them. We’re early in the season, and you flip on them and you’re chanting for the coach (to be fired).”

Fickell was plucked from a successful tenure at the University of Cincinnati to be Wisconsin’s head coach in November of 2022 – signing a seven-year contract to replace former head coach Paul Chryst.

Through his first 30 games with the program, Fickell coached the Badgers to a 15-15 record, with a 7-6 record in 2023 being his best year with Wisconsin.

Despite a mediocre record and a particularly bad game against the 10.5-point underdog Terrapins, Alvarez believes Wisconsin fans must remember that victories aren’t guaranteed and that the players put in significant effort every week to compete.

“How do you think that makes the players feel?” Alvarez said. “That’s disrespectful. You’re not loyal. You’re not a fan. If the person sitting next to me is booing, ‘Get your ass out of here. We don’t need you here. You don’t want to watch this? Go someplace else. Go boo at a bar.’ That really upsets me.”

BIG 2025 Standings

| | Conf. | | | All | | |
|-------------------|-------|---|-------|-----|---|-------|
| | W | L | Pct. | W | L | Pct. |
| Indiana | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | 5 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Oregon | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | 5 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Maryland | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 4 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Ohio State | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 4 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Michigan | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 3 | 1 | 0.750 |
| Minnesota | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | 3 | 1 | 0.750 |
| USC | 2 | 1 | 0.667 | 4 | 1 | 0.800 |
| Illinois | 1 | 1 | 0.500 | 4 | 1 | 0.800 |
| Iowa | 1 | 1 | 0.500 | 3 | 2 | 0.600 |
| Northwestern | 1 | 1 | 0.500 | 2 | 2 | 0.500 |
| Michigan State | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 3 | 1 | 0.750 |
| Nebraska | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 3 | 1 | 0.750 |
| Penn State | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 3 | 1 | 0.750 |
| Washington | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 3 | 1 | 0.750 |
| Rutgers | 0 | 2 | 0.000 | 3 | 2 | 0.600 |
| Purdue | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 2 | 2 | 0.500 |
| Wisconsin | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 2 | 2 | 0.500 |
| UCLA | 0 | 1 | 0.000 | 0 | 4 | 0.000 |

Sept. 19 Game
Iowa 38, Rutgers 28

Sept. 20 Games
Maryland 27, Wisconsin 10
Oregon 41, Oregon State 7
Michigan 30, Nebraska 27
Notre Dame 56, Purdue 30
Indiana 63, Illinois 10
Washington 59, Washington State 24
USC 45, Michigan State 31

Sept. 27 Games
Illinois 34, USC 32
Minnesota 31, Rutgers 28
Northwestern 17, UCLA 14
Ohio State 24, Washington 6
Indiana 20, Iowa 15
Oregon 30, Penn State 24

Oct. 4 Games
Wisconsin at Michigan, noon
Illinois at Purdue, noon
Penn State at UCLA, 3:30 p.m.
Washington at Maryland, 3:30 p.m.
Louisiana-Monroe at Northwestern, 3:30 p.m.
Michigan State at Nebraska, 4 p.m.
Minnesota at **Ohio State**, 7:30 p.m.

All times Eastern

Fickell received a one-year contract extension in February, meaning he is under contract for Wisconsin through the 2031 season. If he were to be bought out, it would cost the Badgers about \$25 million to move on from their head coach.

Riley Unhappy With USC Schedule

Southern California head coach Lincoln Riley expressed his frustration with the Trojans’ scheduling on Sept. 24.

USC played Michigan State at 11 p.m. Eastern in Week 4 and had to travel to Illinois to face the Illini for the earliest start time in the country at 11 a.m. Central on Sept. 27. USC lost the game 34-32.

Riley acknowledged the difficulty of such drastic time changes but remarked that the team has little control over the schedule.

“Going from the absolute latest kick in the country to the absolutely earliest kick in the country has its challenges, but the chal-



lenges – it is what it is, right?” Riley said. “We don’t make the schedule. Clearly.”

Despite the challenges of a difficult schedule, the Trojans are rolling with the punches.

Riley said that USC has had to adapt both its preparation and workload to navigate the challenges of travel and unusual game times.

“We’ve had to adapt a little bit in the way that we’ve prepared and how much that we’ve done, and even when you go back to (the weather-delayed game at) Purdue being a factor now and being so late and getting back so late, it compounds if you’re not careful,” Riley said. “So we’ve tried to be mindful of getting our work done, but at the same time knowing that we need to put a fresh football team on that airplane.”

He is the second Big Ten head coach on the West Coast to express frustration with the conference’s scheduling. Oregon’s Dan Lanning previously made multiple comments about the Ducks’ difficult scheduling.

IU’s Moore Wins Suit Against NCAA

Indiana’s leading tackler has been granted eligibility for the remainder of the 2025 season.

Judge Dale Tillery ruled in favor of Indiana safety Louis Moore on Sept. 24, allowing him to play the rest of the season for the Hoosiers. Moore filed a lawsuit in early August to contest the NCAA’s five-year eligibility rule and argued that his three years at Navarro Junior College shouldn’t count toward his eligibility.

The initial injunction filed allowed Moore to play while the case was ongoing.

Tillery said that the NCAA’s eligibility rule violated the Texas Antitrust Act, preserving Moore’s eligibility.

“This is a big victory for not only Louis Moore, but for all similarly situated student-athletes who have illegally had their eligibility for attending junior colleges taken from them by the NCAA,” said Brian P. Lauten, one of Moore’s attorneys. “I am so proud of Louis for navigating this. Louis leads Indiana in tackles, interceptions, pass breakups,

and he’s had to do that while living a lawsuit. I couldn’t be more proud of him. He has earned everything he deserves.”

The temporary injunction order, filed in the District Court of Dallas County, Texas, stated the ruling was necessary due to “immediate need to allow Moore to play football for Indiana for the 2025-26 season, in order to prevent irreparable harm to Moore’s career – including development with the team, the opportunity to play with the team, and the opportunity to effectuate his NIL deal.”

Lauten said he hopes the ruling not only secures Moore’s opportunity to play but also sets a precedent for other athletes facing similar eligibility disputes.

“I commend our judge,” Lauten said. “He carefully listened to the evidence, he let everybody put on their case, and this result is a righteous result for a very deserving client. The students at Indiana, the faculty at Indiana, the fan base at Indiana – they should really be proud of Louis. He is an asset to their school.”

Moore leads Indiana with 30 total tackles (19 solo) and has two interceptions, which he returned for a total of 41 yards. He’s also added two pass breakup and 1½ tackles for loss.

IU Climbing The Rankings Again

With a 63-10 victory over then-No. 9 Illinois on Sept. 20, Indiana climbed from No. 19 in the Week 4 AP top 25 up to No. 11.

The Hoosiers are proving to have sustained last year’s success under second-year head coach Curt Cignetti when they improved from a 3-9 record in 2023 to an 11-2 mark in the 2024 season with an appearance in the first-ever 12-team College Football Playoff bracket.

Now, after losing some of the important pieces who were big parts of last year’s team, Cignetti has seemingly retooled and shown that Indiana is a real force to be reckoned with in the new era of college football.

Cal transfer quarterback Fernando Mendoza was a big part of the blowout win over Bret Bielema’s Fighting Illini, completing 21

of 23 passes for 267 yards and five touchdowns. The defense also managed seven sacks in the game, which didn’t surprise Cignetti.

“I thought our defensive line could whip their offensive line, and we did,” he said. “They came out and played with tempo early. And give (Illini QB Luke Altmeyer) time to throw, he’s going to get the ball where it has to go.

“But I think the sacks were huge, the blocked punt got us going. And then they couldn’t stop us. They couldn’t match up on the perimeter. And then we broke their will and just pounded them.”

But the Hoosiers have a much tougher schedule coming up than they faced last season. Following up the win over Illinois, Indiana beat to Iowa 20-15 in Kinnick Stadium on Sept. 27 and will have to go to Autzen Stadium to take on No. 2 Oregon on Oct. 11 after an off week.

They will also be tested when they visit State College, Pa., for a contest against Penn State on Nov. 8.

U-M’s Barham Making Big Impact At DE

Michigan defeated Nebraska 30-27 in Omaha on Sept. 20, thanks in large part to a solid defensive performance from Jaishawn Barham, who is emerging as one of the better defenders in all of college football since his move to the edge.

Barham played the first two games with the Wolverines at linebacker, but while he did well there, his coaches thought his pass-

rush ability was better suited coming off the line. They were quickly proven right.

In a 63-3 win over Central Michigan on Sept. 13, Barham played 27 snaps on the line and had two sacks. By the time the Wolverines visited the Cornhuskers, Barham was on the line full time.

In the win, Barham had another sack and added seven pressures and five quarterback hurries. He was part of a defensive effort that pressured sophomore quarterback Dylan Raiola 35 times in the game, which was a season high for Michigan.

“The week before they moved Jaishawn Barham, they moved him from middle linebacker,” said Nebraska head coach Matt Rhule. “They moved him out to their outside linebacker. I walked up to him after the game. I said, ‘Boy, you’re a top-10 pick.’ I mean, that move disrupted everything.

“He didn’t play that against Oklahoma. He played off the ball, and he’s a great off-the-ball linebacker, but he is a difference-maker coming off the edge.”

Michigan head coach Sherrone Moore said the coaching staff wasn’t happy with the way the defense was performing the first two weeks, especially in the Week 2 24-13 loss to Oklahoma, which prompted the position change.

“If you’re doing things really good, you continue to do them and just do them in different ways,” Moore said. “If you’re not doing things as good as you thought, you should probably stop doing them (and don’t) just keep beating your head against the wall.”

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.

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.

BUCKEYE CLIFFHANGERS, a new book from Tim Sullivan covering football seasons from 1916 through the 2024 national championship (Harley to Howard). During that period, the Buckeyes participated in 116 games that were decided in the last minute of play or the last play of the game. This book details the key plays and play makers in each of them. Available on Amazon.com.

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 mem-

orabilia, programs, ticket stubs, pennants, championship rings, gold pants, helmets, autographs, game-used equipment, small or large collections. Call Chris at (419) 957-6789.

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 football programs including bowl games, national playoff and championship games. OSU basketball programs, NFL programs, golf, Olympics, NBA, other print sports memorabilia. Call John at (330) 507-7339.

TIM POND, member of both the Bishop Watterson High School and the Otterbein University Basketball Halls of Fame, recently offered his publication entitled “Coaching Youth Basketball: Coaching the Coaches” for sale on Amazon.com. Access to this instructional manual was previously limited to attendees of his basketball clinics and camps only.

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!

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.



1997 OSU Harley Davidson Wide-Glide
43,453 miles • \$10,000 OBO
Custom airbrushed pictures on both fuel tanks of all Ohio State Heisman trophy winners plus Woody Hayes.
Serious inquires only call (740) 334-2459.

Three-Star '27 Safety Smith Commits To OSU

Ohio State added to its 2027 recruiting class on Sept. 21 with a commitment from three-star safety Angelo Smith.

RECRUITING
OUTLOOK
Greg Wilson

Smith is the younger brother of star Ohio State sophomore wide receiver Jeremiah Smith. Angelo Smith is ranked the No. 402 player in the country, the No. 38 safety and the No. 46 player in the state of Florida out of Chaminade-Madonna in Hollywood, the same school his brother came out of in the 2024 class.

Smith had offers from four schools, with Miami (Fla.), Oklahoma State and Toledo being the others. The Buckeyes also beat out Georgia State for Smith as well.

He originally received an offer from Ohio State on June 17 after a one-day recruiting camp in Columbus, and he didn't take long to decide that he wants to play where his brother currently is, although the two won't likely overlap in the program.

Smith visited for the 14-7 season-opening win over Texas, his most recent time on campus.

He joins Huber Heights (Ohio) Wayne five-star wide receiver Jamier Brown (5-11, 170) and Huntington Beach, Calif., four-star quarterback Brady Edmunds (6-5, 220) as the only three commits in Ohio State's 2027 class so far.

NCAA Votes To Eliminate Spring Portal

The NCAA Administrative Committee voted on Sept. 17 to eliminate the spring transfer portal window.

Going forward, there will be just one transfer portal window, though the com-

mittee has not decided when that portal will be open.

Earlier this month, the NCAA Football Oversight Committee voted to move to a single 10-day transfer window that would be open on Jan. 2 and close Jan. 11, which would be during the College Football Playoff. However, the NCAA said that the dates for the window will be decided at a meeting in late October after listening to the feedback it received.

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day was one of the figures who offered his opinion on the January 10-day window proposal when he was asked about it.

"I don't think it's a good idea at all," Day said. "The conversations we had with Big Ten coaches, I think the majority of them agree. I don't quite understand how teams that are playing in the playoffs are expected to make the decisions and sign their upcoming players while they're getting ready to play games. It doesn't make any sense to me."

Day said that Big Ten commissioner Tony Petitti was working hard toward getting the NCAA to decide on another date, and the pushback seems to have had some effect on the NCAA's decision.

However, the difficulty of having a transfer window open another time after the season causes issues with the timing of the academic calendars for universities. Coaches who are getting new players likely want those players to participate in spring practices if possible, so the portal opening between the CFP championship and spring practices would be in the middle of a semester for most colleges.

The committee also voted to make the month of December a dead period in recruiting, which will start after the early signing period is over on Dec. 6. Jan. 5-31 will be a contact period moving forward. The date that a high school senior can receive a written offer was also changed from Aug. 1 to Nov. 15.

| OSU Football 2026 Commitments | | | | | | |
|--|------|-----|-----|-------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 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 | |
| Favour Akih | RB | 6-0 | 190 | ★★★★ | Delaware (Ohio) | Rutherford B. Hayes |
| Brock Boyd | WR | 6-2 | 183 | ★★★★ | Southlake (Texas) | Carroll |
| Blaine Bradford | S | 6-1 | 207 | ★★★★★ | Baton Rouge (La.) | Catholic |
| Cameron Brickle | DL | 6-2 | 305 | ★★★★ | Bradenton (Fla.) | IMG Academy |
| Simeon Caldwell | S | 6-3 | 185 | ★★★★ | Jacksonville (Fla.) | The Bolles School |
| Kayden Dixon-Wyatt | WR | 6-2 | 180 | ★★★★ | Santa Ana (Calif.) | Mater Dei |
| Luke Fahey | QB | 6-0 | 185 | ★★★★ | Mission Viejo, Calif | |
| Corbyn Fordham | TE | 6-4 | 215 | ★★★★ | Jacksonville (Fla.) | The Bolles School |
| Sam Greer | OT | 6-7 | 310 | ★★★★ | Akron | Hoban |
| Jerquaden Guilford | WR | 6-3 | 190 | ★★★★ | Fort Wayne (Ind.) | Northrop |
| Chris Henry Jr. | WR | 6-5 | 205 | ★★★★★ | Santa Ana (Calif.) | Mater Dei |
| Cincere Johnson | LB | 6-3 | 225 | ★★★★ | Cleveland | Glenville |
| Jamir Perez | DL | 6-4 | 360 | ★★★★ | Cleveland | Glenville |
| Jaeden Ricketts | WR | 6-0 | 187 | ★★★★ | Pataskala (Ohio) | Watkins Memorial |
| Maxwell Riley | OT | 6-5 | 280 | ★★★★ | Avon Lake, Ohio | |
| CJ Sanna | LB | 6-3 | 225 | ★★★★ | Lewis Center (Ohio) | Olentangy |
| Damari Simeon | DL | 6-3 | 275 | ★★★★ | Richland (N.J.) | St. Augustine Prep |
| Tucker Smith | OL | 6-5 | 280 | ★★★★ | Glendale (Ariz.) | Sandra Day O'Connor |
| Aaron Thomas | OT | 6-7 | 300 | ★★★★ | Phoenix Mountain | Pointe |
| Jordan Thomas | CB | 6-1 | 185 | ★★★★ | Oradell (N.J.) | Bergen Catholic |
| Khary Wilder | DE | 6-4 | 260 | ★★★★ | Gardena (Calif.) | Junipero Serra |

| OSU Football 2027 Commitments | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|-----|-------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Player(s) in the class of 2027 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State. | | | | | | |
| Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Stars | High School | |
| Jamier Brown | WR | 5-11 | 170 | ★★★★★ | Huber Heights (Ohio) | Wayne |
| Brady Edmunds | QB | 6-5 | 215 | ★★★★ | Huntington Beach, Calif. | |
| Angelo Smith | S | 5-10 | 170 | ★★★★ | Hollywood (Fla.) | Chaminade-Madonna |

| OSU Football 2028 Commitment | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|-----|-------|--------------|-------|
| Player(s) in the class of 2028 who have issued a verbal commitment to play football at Ohio State. | | | | | | |
| Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Stars | High School | |
| Elijah Newman-Hall | RB | 5-11 | 195 | ★★★★ | Tampa (Fla.) | Blake |

Buckeyes Well-Represented In Rivals300

The Rivals recruiting rankings were updated since BSB last went to press, and Ohio State has six commitments in the 2026 class who are inside the top 100.

The Buckeyes now have a five-star edge rusher for the first time since the 2021 recruiting class, although that isn't reflected by the composite rankings. Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra defensive end Khary Wilder (6-4, 260) is the No. 14 player in the country according to the Rivals300 rankings.

His composite ranking is still a four-star on 247Sports, as the No. 133 player in the country, the No. 16 defensive lineman and the No. 15 player in the state of California. In the updated Rivals300 rankings, Wilder is the highest rated of Ohio State's commits, with Akron Hoban four-star offensive tackle Sam Greer (6-7, 320) close behind at No. 17. He is the No. 5 offensive tackle in the county according to the Rivals rankings.

Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. (6-5, 205) is a four-star according to On3 and is the No. 39 player in the country, with Baton Rouge (La.) Catholic four-star safety Blaine Bradford (6-1, 195) close behind at No. 45.

Buckeye commits who are also in the top 100 are Richland (N.J.) St. Augustine Prep four-star defensive lineman Damari Simeon (6-3, 275) at No. 63 and Cleve-

land Glenville four-star linebacker Cincere Johnson (6-3, 225) at No. 92.

Simeon and Wilder are both among the top 10 defensive linemen in the 2026 class, with Wilder at No. 1 and Simeon at No. 5. The Buckeyes are the only team with two commits in the top 10.

Michigan is the only team with two commits in the top 10 of the Rivals300 rankings, with Washington (D.C.) Gonzaga five-star defensive end Carter Meadows (6-6, 225) and Mineral (Va.) Louisa County five-star running back Savion Hiter (6-0, 200) coming in at No. 3 and No. 8, respectively, in the rankings. The Buckeyes were in the running at one point for both Hiter and Meadows, but both ended up with the Wolverines. They are the No. 28 and No. 8 players, respectively, according to 247Sports composite rankings.

Four-Star DL Brewster To Commit Oct. 4

The Buckeyes hope to add another commitment to their 2027 class on Oct. 4 when Cedar Hill, Texas, five-star defensive lineman Jalen Brewster (6-3, 302) is set to announce his commitment.

He is still considering the Buckeyes, as well as Indiana, LSU, Oklahoma, Oregon, SMU, Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and USC.

The day before Brewster announced that he would be committing on Oct. 4, he was in Bloomington, Ind., for Indiana's 63-10 win over then-No. 9 Illinois, which

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 12/31/25

\$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 12/31/25

ASK AN ANALYST

with Marc Givler of Buckeye Huddle

Ohio State is going after Mentor, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Landry Brede (6-5, 280) to try to add to its 2026 class. Have you been able to see Brede play? What would he add to the Buckeyes' offensive line group that is already committed? Do you think OSU will be able to pull off the flip?

"I do think they're going to be able to flip him. Obviously, he's been thinking about this for a couple of weeks now and will probably continue to think on it for another week or two at least. But I think they're ultimately going to be able to pry him away from NC State. I think the biggest thing with him is his versatility to play tackle, and he can play guard. I don't know if this name will excite people, but he's been a pretty good player for them early on in his career – but he reminds me a little bit of Gabe VanSickle, who's already in the two-deep right now, pretty early in his career at Ohio State. He is a guy with tackle and guard capabilities. These other guys in the class are penciled into certain spots. I think he gives them that added flexibility to get their best five out there."

Jeremiah Smith's brother, Hollywood (Fla.) Chaminade-Madonna three-star safety Angelo Smith (5-10, 170), committed to Ohio State on Sept. 21. Have you been able to see him play? What do you make of him as a prospect?

"I actually saw him a couple of weeks ago. I was in Florida at the end of August, and I have to be honest, he looked way better than I expected. He's obviously not a

very big guy. He's 5-10, probably, but boy, he really runs to the ball. He's like a missile out there. He just kind of throws his body around. He had several big hits in run support, had an interception. They couldn't try to go over top of him, and he was able to show that range and get to the sideline and make an over-the-shoulder type of catch for an interception at the sideline.

"He's extremely fast. He's extremely physical. He's nowhere near Jeremiah in terms of measurables, like height and weight. They're two completely different body types, and I think Angelo will very likely slot in either as a safety or even a nickel type position. He's got a little versatility back there in the secondary as well. He plays the game with a chip on his shoulder. He plays the game like someone who's 5-10, has an older brother who's a generational talent and has kind of been overlooked all his life, so it kind of makes sense."

Ohio State is hosting Pointe Vedra Beach (Fla.) Nease three-star safety Jacob Curry (6-1, 208) on a visit for the Minnesota game. Where do you believe they stand in his recruitment currently?

"I think they're probably right up there in the top two or three at the moment. I think they're a major threat. It's one of those when you get down to these kinds of later recruitments, where they're not like long-standing things. This hasn't really been something that's been going on for a year or two. It's more of a thing that's coming together quickly. You always have to wait and see how the visit goes. I think they're a contender, but

the visit will be, obviously, very important and will clear up whether they're a top-three or -four contender, or whether they're the top contender. But, yeah, I think Ohio State has a shot. Obviously, anyone coming in on a visit this late in the process is serious about things, so we'll just have to see how that trip goes."

There will be only one transfer portal window moving forward, although the time it will be open still hasn't been decided. When do you think is the right time for one portal window, and why?

"I think it should be in February. This allows the college football season to be over, so no one's having to manage their season and the portal, and it allows all players to be on campus in time for spring football. The argument against that is going to be the academic calendar, but we're in an era now where guys are making millions of dollars. Do we really have to still worry about the academic calendar? I'm sure there are ways that they could make this work. They wouldn't even have to necessarily be enrolled. Just don't enroll them right away in class. Let them participate in football and enroll in the upcoming quarter or semester, and let them work out with the football team in the meantime. I don't see why that's such a sticking point, but that's my thought on it. I think it's nuts. I think they need to take a real hard look at how the NFL formulates its calendar and how things are spaced out almost perfectly in the NFL, and they need to apply that."

could be a great sign for head man Curt Cignetti and the Hoosiers. If Cignetti is able to land a commitment from Brewster, it would be the first-ever five-star commitment the Hoosiers have landed.

The program's top commitment ever, according to 247Sports composite rankings, was Dasan McCullough in the 2022 class, who was the No. 75 player in the country by signing day, and he didn't last long with the program.

But Ohio State still hopes that it has a chance with Brewster and will likely be in touch with the five-star before his commitment date.

Brewster visited Columbus for a recruiting camp in the month of June. He hoped to make it back for the OSU game against Texas on Aug. 30, but the noon kickoff made that difficult for Brewster, who had a game the night before the Buckeyes' season opener. He has not been able to make it back to campus since then.

The Buckeyes also have to worry about all of the Texas schools that Brewster is still considering, since those programs try to keep in-state talent as much as they can. Recruiting expert Steve Wiltfong of On3 predicted that Brewster will land with Texas Tech.

No matter where Brewster announces his commitment to, with over a year to go until the early signing period for the 2027 class, his recruitment will still likely be active up until then, with other programs attempting to flip the five-star.

Four-Star '27 OL Down To Top 5

Angelo Smith was the first commitment the Buckeyes have had in the 2027 class since Edmunds pledged on Dec. 2, 2024, but the trail is beginning to heat up more.

On Sept. 18, Fort Pierce (Fla.) John Carroll four-star interior offensive lineman Sean Tatum (6-4, 310) narrowed his scholarship offers to five schools, a list that

included Ohio State. Along with the Buckeyes, Tatum had Florida, Florida State, Miami (Fla.) and Tennessee included in his top schools.

As a prospect out of the state of Florida, the in-state programs could have somewhat of an advantage over the Buckeyes, but offensive line coach Tyler Bowen has proved to be a good recruiter to this point and will put up a fight if he decides Tatum is worth it.

Tatum was offered by Ohio State on May 8 and is considered the No. 120 player in the country, the No. 4 interior offensive lineman and the No. 12 player in the state of Florida in the 2027 class.

Five-Star '27 LB Narrows List To 12 Schools

Tampa (Fla.) Jesuit five-star linebacker Kaden Henderson (6-2, 200) is also narrowing his list of scholarship offers down, though he is still considering 12 schools.

Ohio State is on his list of 12 programs along with Alabama, Clemson, Florida, Florida State, LSU, Miami, Notre Dame, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and USC.

Henderson is the No. 33 player in the country, the No. 2 linebacker and the No. 4 player in the state of Florida. His offer from Ohio State came on Oct. 31, 2024, and linebackers coach James Laurinaitis has made sure to stay in the running for Henderson since then.

Henderson worked out with Laurinaitis when he was on campus for a one-day recruiting camp over the summer and talked to Eleven Warriors about the experience after the camp.

"The coaching staff," Henderson said when asked what stands out about Ohio State. "I feel like they have one of the best coaching staffs in the nation. Every single (visit) I'm up here, I get a little bit of nuggets of knowledge, and I get a grasp of how they feel about me, and I know I'm definitely a top priority for them."

In his sophomore season, Henderson had 92 tackles, four forced fumbles and an interception. That was after his freshman season when he had 85 tackles (six for loss), a forced fumble, two intercep-

tions, three pass breakups and a fumble recovery. Through four games of his junior high school season, Henderson had 25 to-

Continued On Page 32

CAMERON'S AMERICAN BISTRO | CAP CITY FINE DINER & BAR | MARTINI MODERN ITALIAN
VALENTINA'S RISTORANTE, BAR, PIZZERIA | THE BARN AT ROCKY FORK CREEK | CENTO ITALIANO
HUDSON 29 KITCHEN + DRINK | DEL MAR | BUTCHER & ROSE | THE GUILD HOUSE
MARCELLA'S | MOLLY WOO'S ASIAN BISTRO | THE PEARL RESTAURANT, TAVERN & OYSTER ROOM
THE AVENUE STEAK TAVERN | BUDD DAIRY FOOD HALL | MITCHELL'S OCEAN CLUB
SOCAL KITCHEN AND BAR | LINCOLN SOCIAL ROOFTOP | CAMERON MITCHELL PREMIER EVENTS
CAMERON'S AMERICAN BISTRO | CAP CITY FINE DINER & BAR | MARTINI MODERN ITALIAN
VALENTINA'S RISTORANTE, BAR, PIZZERIA | THE BARN AT ROCKY FORK CREEK | CENTO ITALIANO
HUDSON 29 KITCHEN + DRINK | DEL MAR | BUTCHER & ROSE | THE GUILD HOUSE
MARCELLA'S | MOLLY WOO'S ASIAN BISTRO | THE PEARL RESTAURANT, TAVERN & OYSTER ROOM
THE AVENUE STEAK TAVERN | BUDD DAIRY FOOD HALL | MITCHELL'S OCEAN CLUB
SOCAL KITCHEN AND BAR | LINCOLN SOCIAL ROOFTOP | CAMERON MITCHELL PREMIER EVENTS
CAMERON'S AMERICAN BISTRO | CAP CITY FINE DINER & BAR | MARTINI MODERN ITALIAN
VALENTINA'S RISTORANTE, BAR, PIZZERIA | THE BARN AT ROCKY FORK CREEK | CENTO ITALIANO
HUDSON 29 KITCHEN + DRINK | DEL MAR | BUTCHER & ROSE | THE GUILD HOUSE
MARCELLA'S | MOLLY WOO'S ASIAN BISTRO | THE PEARL RESTAURANT, TAVERN & OYSTER ROOM
THE AVENUE STEAK TAVERN | BUDD DAIRY FOOD HALL | MITCHELL'S OCEAN CLUB
SOCAL KITCHEN AND BAR | LINCOLN SOCIAL ROOFTOP | CAMERON MITCHELL PREMIER EVENTS

WE L♥VE
COLUMBUS!
*The Best Hometown
in the Land!*

CAMERON MITCHELL
▪ R E S T A U R A N T S ▪
View locations and reserve online: CameronMitchell.com

OL Coach Bowen Working To Flip Prospects

Continued From Page 31

tal tackles (six for loss), five sacks and two passes broken up.

Bowen Visits In-State Clemson Commit

When former Ohio State offensive line coach Justin Frye left for the NFL, the Buckeyes were in the running for three Ohio offensive linemen.

Avon Lake four-star offensive tackle Maxwell Riley (6-5, 280) and Greer both ended up committing to Ohio State and Bowen in March. Washington Court House Miami Trace four-star offensive tackle Adam Guthrie (6-7, 285) didn't wait around long and committed to Clemson early in March.

But Bowen is going back to Guthrie to see whether there's a chance that he wants to stay in-state after all and flip to Ohio State. During the Buckeyes' off week, Bowen was at Miami Trace High School, where both Guthrie and 2028 offensive tackle Matthew Barnard (6-5, 280) play.

Before his commitment, Guthrie made

multiple visits to Ohio State, but he ultimately decided to go with Dabo Swinney and Tigers offensive line coach Matt Luke, who is known as one of the better position coaches in the country.

During the off week, Bowen also paid a visit to recently offered Mentor, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Landry Brede (6-5, 280). On Friday night (Sept. 20), when most high school football was being played, Bowen decided Brede was the most important target for him to be in attendance for, which Brede took notice of.

"It's huge," he told Eleven Warriors. "I mean, he's really showing interest, and I love Coach Bowen. He's a great guy, and I'm glad he was able to come out."

Brede is currently committed to NC State, which he pledged to on June 25 over this summer, but Bowen seems to be working hard to get a flip from the three-star and turn his class into a five-player haul.

Brede would join Greer, Riley, Phoenix (Ariz.) Mountain Pointe three-star offensive tackle Aaron Thomas (6-7, 300) and Glendale (Ariz.) Sandra Day O'Connor three-star interior offensive lineman Tucker Smith (6-5, 280) in the class if he flips to

the Buckeyes.

His offer from Ohio State came when he was on campus for a visit on Sept. 6, when Ohio State beat Grambling State 70-0.

"I grew up watching them, so it was a big, big offer for me," Brede said. "I didn't want to get too starstruck by the name of the offer, but it's obviously a big thing – national championship."

Prime-Time Minnesota To Be Key Visitor Weekend

It was announced on Sept. 22 that the Buckeyes' Oct. 4 game against Minnesota will be a prime-time kickoff at 7:30 p.m. on NBC, and that game is shaping up to be an important recruiting event for the Buckeyes as well.

Since BSB last went to press, multiple recruits have said that they will be on campus for the game.

From the 2026 class, the Buckeyes will host Ponte Vedra Beach (Fla.) Nease four-star safety Jacob Curry (6-1, 208), who has received a lot of attention lately on the recruiting trail after he decommitted from Northwestern on Aug. 26. Since then, he has received offers from Ohio State and

Florida State, taken an official visit to Oklahoma on Sept. 20, and scheduled visits to get to OSU, Auburn and Baylor.

He is the No. 411 player in the country, the No. 32 safety and the No. 56 player in the state of Florida in the 2026 class.

The Buckeyes will also host Baltimore St. Frances Academy three-star Khmari Bing (6-0, 190), who is listed as a corner-back but was offered by Ohio State safeties coach Matt Guerrieri as a safety.

He received an offer from Ohio State on Sept. 16 and was intrigued by the idea of playing for the Buckeyes.

"They're a winning program, a championship-chasing program," Bing told 247Sports. "Everybody that's committed to Ohio State or plays for Ohio State, they want to go to the league. I like that mentality. I see myself being a great fit, and I see myself going to the league (if I play for OSU)."

Bing is currently committed to Maryland and has been since Aug. 5, 2024, but is considering multiple other options. He was also offered by Alabama and has an official visit scheduled to Tuscaloosa on Nov. 8. His high school teammate, five-star

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago — 1990

One of the strongest high school football seniors in the state of Ohio was West Chester Lakota offensive lineman Scott Stratton.

Stratton was on SuperPrep magazine's All-Midwest first team and was the defending state high school powerlifting champion.

"He's got tremendous strength," Lakota coach John Sabatalo said. "He gets a great explosion off the ball and then is able to maintain his block downfield.

"We don't have a powerlifting team, but Scott entered the tournament on his own and won the state meet as a junior," Sabatalo added.

The Lakota head coach said Stratton's bench press at the end of summer conditioning had reached 405 pounds. But even with that immense strength, Sabatalo said Stratton (who ran a 5.0 40-yard dash) still had good quickness.

"I think he runs really well for someone who is so big. He is a good athlete. He doesn't play anything besides football or do anything else except run and work out in the weight room," he said.

30 Years Ago — 1995

The state of Ohio might have been witnessing the second coming of Ki-Jana Carter.

Nick Goings, an All-Ohio tailback out of Dublin Scioto, had the same tools the former Penn State All-American had when he was in high school, according to Dublin Scioto head coach Bryan Deal.

"He is the best prospect I have ever been associated with," Deal said. "I saw Ki-Jana Carter come out of Westerville South, which is the same league as us, and I thought he was a great prospect. I also think Nick Goings is a great prospect."

The question was which college would get to find out just how talented Goings was going to be. The tailback said he was considering Ohio State, Penn State, Michigan, Michigan State and Notre Dame.

"I'm looking for a college where I can get a good education and one that has a good football tradition," Goings said.

25 Years Ago — 2000

Friends of Brandon McKinney from Dayton Chaminade-Julienne didn't call him "The Pig Paw" for nothing. After all, McKinney had big hands to match a 6-4, 310-pound frame anchored to the ground by size-15 shoes.

"My size is my best friend," said McKinney, who admitted that he loved to eat, especially at buffets. "I've enjoyed getting bigger, but at the same time, I've reached all of my preseason goals this year, like weighing over 300 pounds, benching over 400 pounds and squatting 550 pounds."

McKinney became OSU's third verbal commitment for 2001 when he pledged on Feb. 28 over Michigan State and Michigan, among others.

According to Jim Place, the big fellow's coach at Chaminade-Julienne, McKinney was able to wear all of that size pretty well on the gridiron.

"He's very athletic," Place said. "He's got very quick feet. He jumps over people, he jumps around people, and he's just athletic."

20 Years Ago — 2005

From the sound of things, Tyler Moeller had known for some time that he wanted to play his college football at Ohio State. He just wanted to make sure.

Apparently, the game-night atmosphere for the Buckeyes' showdown with Texas Sept. 10 was all Moeller needed to see. After saying all along that the one thing he did not want to do was make a rushed decision, the Cincinnati Colerain star lasted only a matter of days after the OSU-Texas affair, extending his commitment to Buckeye head coach Jim Tressel on Sept. 15, five days after the loss.

Moeller had been a reluctant participant, at best, through the course of the recruiting process. He had said in the past that Colerain head coach Kerry Coombs had asked him not to do recruiting interviews during his team's season, and he had hardly spoken with reporters since his commitment.

However, BSB was able to confirm his intentions through his mother, Amy.

"We can't wait to be a part of the OSU tradition," she told BSB. "We had our first experience at a game this past weekend, and it was pretty exciting. His father and I would have supported any decision he made, but in the end, we were very proud that he looked deep inside and made a decision to a school that was right for him."

15 Years Ago — 2010

As Ohio State played host to lowly Eastern Michigan, it did the same to cornerback prospect Jabori Gorman. The three-star prospect from Monsignor Pace High School in Miami was accompanied by his mother, Carolyn, for a surprise visit to Columbus.

Although Gorman departed Sept. 26 without having issued a verbal commitment, the weekend was an overall positive one for him and his mother. While on the OSU campus, the Gormans got to spend time with Tressel, safeties coach Paul Haynes, cornerbacks coach Taver Johnson and receivers coach Darrell Hazell.

"The visit was great, and my mom and I enjoyed it a lot," Gorman told BSB. "I got a chance to talk to all the coaches, and my mom and I got to sit down with Jim Tressel this morning. We were both impressed by him. He talked about the type of people they produce and about me as a man more than just a football player. That was the main point of his talk."

10 Years Ago — 2015

Ohio State would go back to the drawing board after Arlington Heights (Ill.) St. Viator tight end Cole Kmet committed to Notre Dame on Oct. 2.

Kmet, a four-star prospect in the class of 2017, announced his decision on Twitter on Oct. 2. The 6-6, 240-pound prospect was the No. 3 tight end and No. 171 overall prospect for the class of 2017 in Scout's rankings. He held offers from top Midwest programs Michigan, Mich-

igan State and Ohio State as well as Iowa and Northwestern before his pledge to the Fighting Irish.

The Irish made a jump in his recruitment when he visited for Notre Dame's 38-3 win against Texas on Sept. 5.

"I wasn't expecting it to be like that," Kmet told Notre Dame's Scout.com site. "I was expecting it to be fun and cool, but it was just unbelievable. That was the first Notre Dame game I've ever been to. It was just unbelievable. I've never been to anything like that."

Five Years Ago — 2020

Once considered to be the favorite in his recruitment, Ohio State did not make the cut for Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic four-star defensive tackle Tywone Malone, who trimmed his list of nearly 30 scholarship offers down to Florida State, Ole Miss, Rutgers, Tennessee, Texas A&M, and USC on Oct. 5.

The 6-4, 300-pound Malone – who was considered the fifth-best defensive tackle and No. 55 prospect overall in the class of 2021 – had been outspoken about his desire to play both football and baseball in college, and the schools still vying for his signature had offered him the opportunity to do just that. The Buckeyes, on the other hand, didn't often allow players to play two sports in college, unless it was a skill-position player running track.

"The big key was the baseball part of things," Malone told Rivals recruiting analyst Adam Friedman. "I really haven't been talking to Ohio State's baseball program as much as these other schools. Coach (Ryan) Day, Coach (Larry) Johnson and I were calling and texting a lot, and that's what I really liked about Ohio State. But like I said, baseball is a big thing in my recruitment, and that was making it tough."

One Year Ago — 2024

A Buckeye commitment who was a flip risk was Newberry, Fla., four-star defensive lineman Jarquez Carter, who had committed to Ohio State on July 18 and made it to campus for the 49-14 win over Marshall in Week 4 during an off week for his high school team.

"Always good being back," Carter told 247Sports. "This was my fourth time. I went up with my mom and granddad."

He said that he was impressed with what the Buckeyes were able to do on the field despite missing Tyleik Williams, who was out for the game with an injury.

"They did good, even without number 91, Tyleik Williams," Carter said. "It was definitely good talking to Coach Johnson. He talked about how I can compete and have an effect on their defensive line."

Carter also said he planned to graduate early and enter college in January, which would likely be at Ohio State, and he said he was locked in with the Buckeyes.

"I'm real locked in," Carter said about his Ohio State commitment. "I'm not thinking about changing my mind. I'll probably be back (at Ohio State) for the Team Up North game."

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL RECRUITING

safety Jireh Edwards (6-2, 210) – once an Ohio State target – committed to Alabama on July 5.

A prospect from the 2028 class, Drexel Hill (Pa.) Monsignor Bonner Catholic offensive tackle Tyrie Davis-Winn (6-8, 271), will also be on campus for the game.

OSU Misses On Four-Star DL

Ohio State missed out on one of its top remaining uncommitted targets in the 2026 class when Bessemer (Ala.) City four-star defensive lineman Emanuel Ruffin committed to Colorado on Sept. 23.

Ruffin chose the Buffaloes over the Buckeyes, Alabama and LSU. His commitment comes just four days after he took an official visit to Colorado and seven days after he received his initial offer from Colorado. He took an official visit to Ohio State over the summer.

He is the No. 192 player in the country, the No. 25 defensive lineman and the No. 12 player in the state of Alabama.

The Buckeyes' 2026 defensive line commits are Wilder, Simeon, Bradenton (Fla.) three-star Cameron Brickle (6-2, 305) and Cleveland Glenville three-star Jamir Perez (6-4, 360).

Ohio State Offers More Prospects

Ohio State coaches took full advantage of the off week, making visits to prospects and making scholarship offers.

Gibsonia (Pa.) Pine-Richland four-star cornerback Jay Timmons (5-11, 185) was one prospect who received a scholarship offer from the Buckeyes. He is committed to Florida State and has been since June 24, but OSU seems to be hoping to flip him.

Timmons is the No. 161 prospect in the country in the 2026 class, the No. 17 cornerback and the No. 4 player in the state of Pennsylvania.

Atlanta Banneker three-star offensive tackle Jared Doughty (6-6, 300) is now on the Buckeyes' radar in the 2026 class with an offer. He is the No. 913 player in the country, the No. 76 offensive tackle and the No. 97 player in the state of Georgia. He has a top five of Auburn, Georgia, Florida State, Missouri and Ohio State right now.

The Buckeyes also offered Massillon (Ohio) Washington three-star linebacker Ja'Dyn Williams (6-2, 205), who is currently committed to Indiana. He is the No. 660 player in the country, the No. 50 linebacker and the No. 30 player in the state of Ohio.

Leading up to the 24-6 win over Washington on Sept. 27, Ohio State offered Oakland (Calif.) McClymonds three-star cornerback Rahsjon Duncan (6-1, 186), who has been committed to the Huskies since July 20.

He is considered the No. 464 player in the country, the No. 35 cornerback and the No. 38 player in the state of California. He was on site for the Buckeye win over Washington, which Ohio State hopes will have an impact on his recruitment.

In the 2027 class, Indianapolis Franklin Central four-star defensive end Jayce Brewer (6-5, 240) got an offer from the Buckeyes on Sept. 14.

He is considered the No. 232 player in

the country, the No. 26 defensive end and the No. 3 player in the state of Indiana. He holds 25 Division I offers, a list that includes Arizona State, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, LSU, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Penn State, Purdue, USC and Wisconsin.

Princeton (N.J.) Hun School three-star tight end Tommy Douglas (6-4, 225) was also extended an offer. He is the No. 350 player in the country, the No. 20 tight end and the No. 9 player in the state of New Jersey. His 14 Division I offers include Alabama, Auburn, Michigan State, Nebraska, Pitt and USC.

Cumming (Ga.) North Forsyth four-star defensive end Adriel Rojas (6-5, 220) was another prospect to receive an offer from OSU. He is ranked the No. 275 player in the country, the No. 32 edge rusher and the No. 33 player in the state of Georgia, and has 18 Division I offers, which include Duke, Georgia Tech, Indiana, Ole Miss, SMU and USC.

Lawndale (Calif.) Leuzinger four-star safety Pole Moala (6-0, 165) also received an offer after visiting for Ohio State's 37-9 win over Ohio on Sept. 13.

"The experience was good," Moala told 247Sports of his visit. "We went over in the morning for the walkthrough and got shown around the facility. I met with coach Ryan Day and he spoke to me about the culture and the atmosphere they have over there, playing under the bright lights. That's when he offered me, and getting that offer was, of course, exciting. After that, we went over to the game, the defense made plays and it was a great experience."

Moala is the No. 85 player in the country, the No. 5 safety and the No. 6 player in the state of California in his class and holds offers from 21 Division I teams. Those offers include Florida State, Miami, Nebraska, Oregon, Penn State, SMU, Texas A&M, UCLA, USC and Washington, among others.

Las Vegas Bishop Gorman four-star defensive lineman Tayaun Lawrence (6-3, 250) also got an offer. He is the No. 82 player in the 2028 class, the No. 9 defensive lineman and the No. 1 player in the state of Nevada. He has just six Division I offers from Alabama, Arizona, Ohio State, San Diego State, UNLV and Washington.

Another 2028 defensive lineman, Franklin (Tenn.) Battle Ground Academy four-star Ayden Woodruff (6-5, 265) was offered by Ohio State. Woodruff is the No. 98 player in the country, the No. 14 defensive lineman and the No. 3 player in the state of Tennessee, already with 14 Division I offers.

Chicago Brother Rice four-star tight end Jack McNamara (6-5, 235) received an offer from Ohio State, his 13th from a Division I team. He is the No. 117 player in the country, the No. 4 tight end and the No. 4 player in the state of Illinois.

Santa Rosa (Calif.) Cardinal Newman four-star offensive tackle King Pitts (6-5, 255) now has an offer from the Buckeyes. Pitts is the No. 61 player in the 2028 class, the No. 7 offensive tackle and the No. 4 player in the state of California and already has 22 Division I offers, which include Florida State, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, UCLA, Utah and Washington.

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (4-0)

Aug. 30 Texas, W 14-7.

Sept. 6 Grambling STATE, W 70-0; **13** Ohio, W 37-9; **27** at Washington, W 24-6.

Oct. 4 Minnesota, **11** at Illinois; **18** at Wisconsin.

Nov. 1 Penn State,, **8** at Purdue; **15** UCLA; **22** Rutgers; **29** at Michigan.

FIELD HOCKEY (4-5, 0-1)

Aug. 17 MIAMI (OH) (Exh.); **24** at Michigan (Exh.); **29** at Ball State, W 7-0; **31** KENT STATE, W 9-3.

Sept. 5 VIRGINIA, L 1-0; **7** SYRACUSE, L, 2-1(2OT); **12** at Harvard, L 2-1 (2OT); **14** at Northeastern, W 2-0; **19** at Louisville, L 3-2; **26** at Rutgers, L 2-1 (OT); **29** at Delaware.

Oct. 3 MARYLAND; **5** PENN STATE; **12** MICHIGAN; **19** at Michigan State; **24** at Indiana; **26** at Northwestern; **31** IOWA.

Nov. 6-9 Big Ten Tournament at Bloomington, Ind.

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 8-10 Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 10th/15; **15-16** Bearcat Invitational at Cincinnati, 6th/18; **29-30** Windon Memorial Classic at Lake Forest, Ill.

Oct. 13-14 Moraine Inter-collegiate at Kettering, Ohio.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Sept. 8-10 Folds of Honor Collegiate at Grand Haven, Mich., 9th/15; **15-16** Inverness Collegiate at Toledo, 1st/12.

Oct. 19-20 Jim West Challenge at San Marcos, Texas.

MEN'S SOCCER (4-4, 1-1)

Aug. 9 NOTRE DAME (Exh.); **15** WRIGHT STATE (Exh.); **21** at Virginia Tech, L 1-0; **28** at OAKLAND, W 1-0; **31** TEMPLE, W 2-1.

Sept. 5 AKRON, L 2-0; **9** LOUISVILLE, L 1-0; **13** at Butler, W 4-0; **19** at Michigan State,

W 3-2; **26** at Rutgers, L 2-0; **29** UCLA.

Oct. 3 WISCONSIN; **10** at Indiana; **14** MICHIGAN **18** MARYLAND; **24** at Washington; **31** PENN STATE.

Nov. 7 at Northwestern; **12** Big Ten Semifinals; **16** Big Ten Championship.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (5-1-5, 1-0-4)

Aug. 6 at West Virginia (Exh.); **9** Ohio (Exh.); **14** CLEMSON, T 1-1; **21** at South Carolina, L 1-0; **24** at UNC Wilmington, W 1-0; **28** at Princeton, W 4-1; **31** ASHLAND, W 3-0.

Sept. 7 at Kentucky, W 2-0; **12** MICHIGAN, T 0-0; **18** WISCONSIN, T 0-0; **21** NEBRASKA, T 0-0; **25** at Northwestern, T 0-0; **28** at Illinois, W 3-0.

Oct. 5 at Michigan State; **9** OREGON; **12** WASHINGTON; **16** at Rutgers; **19** at Maryland; **26** at Penn State.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (3-7, 0-2)

Aug. 23 at Kentucky (Exh.); **29** at Canes Classic in Coral Gables, Fla., vs. VCU, L 3-0; **30** at Canes Classic in Coral Gables, Fla., vs. Miami (FL), L 3-0.

Sept. 3 at Miami (OH), W 3-2; **7** FLORIDA, L 3-0; **12** Beaver Creek Invitational in Dayton vs. Ohio, W 3-0; **13** Beaver Creek Invitational in Dayton vs. Wright State, L 3-2; **19** VIRGINIA, L 3-2; **21** TROY, W 3-2; **26** UCLA, L 3-2; **27** USC, L 3-0.

Oct. 3 at Washington; **4** at Oregon; **9** PURDUE; **12** at Minnesota; **17** ILLINOIS; **19** at Indiana; **24** MICHIGAN; **26** PENN STATE; **31** RUTGERS.

Nov. 2 WISCONSIN; **8** at Maryland; **9** at Rutgers; **14** at Michigan; **16** at Penn State; **21** NORTHWESTERN; **23** MICHIGAN STATE; **28** at Iowa; **29** at Nebraska.

B10 Schedule Revealed For 2025-26 Season

Ohio State's 2025-26 men's basketball conference schedule was revealed by the Big Ten on Sept. 18.

COURT REPORT Greg Wilson

Ohio State will play home-and-home series against Michigan – which both head coach Jake Diebler and Wolverines head man Dusty May have advocated to keep – as well as Penn State and Wisconsin.

The Buckeyes begin their conference schedule at Northwestern on Dec. 6 before coming home to host Illinois on Dec. 9. Those are the only two league games in the month of December for the Buckeyes.

In January, Ohio State will go on the road to visit Rutgers (Jan. 2) before hosting Nebraska (Jan. 5), then heading to the West Coast for games at Oregon (Jan. 8) and Washington (Jan. 11). To finish the month, the Buckeyes will host UCLA (Jan. 17) and Minnesota (Jan. 20), visit Michigan (Jan. 23), host Penn State (Jan. 26) and head to Wisconsin (Jan. 31) to finish the month.

The month of February includes six games. The Buckeyes will start the month at Maryland (Feb. 5) and host Michigan (Feb. 8), USC (Feb. 11) and Wisconsin (Feb. 17) before heading on the road to Michigan State (Feb. 22) and Iowa (Feb. 25).

To finish up the conference schedule before the new 18-team Big Ten tournament, Ohio State will play Purdue at home (March 1) and at Penn State (March 4), and it ends the conference slate by hosting Indiana (March 7).

The Buckeyes' Big Ten schedule adds on to the nonconference slate they will begin the season with. Ohio State also plays IU Indy (Nov. 3), Purdue Fort Wayne (Nov. 7), Appalachian State (Nov. 11), Notre Dame (Nov. 16), Western Michigan (Nov. 20), Mount St. Mary's (Nov. 25) and Grambling State (Dec. 23) at Value City Arena. They go on the road to play Pitt on Nov. 28, and will play West Virginia (Dec. 13), North Carolina (Dec. 20) and Virginia (Feb. 14) at neutral sites.

Tip-off times and TV networks for the majority of the schedule have not yet been determined.

CBS Sports Classic Set For 3 P.M. Tipoff

One matchup that does have a tip-off time already set on the Buckeyes' schedule is the nonconference game against North Carolina.

When Ohio State heads to State Farm Arena in Atlanta for its CBS Sports Classic matchup against the Tar Heels on Dec. 20, the game will tip off at 3 p.m.

The other game in the event, Kentucky against St. John's, will be played at 12:30 p.m.

The contest will come during a break in

the Big Ten slate with a gap between the Dec. 9 game against Illinois and the Jan. 2 matchup against Rutgers.

Last year's CBS Sports Classic featured Bruce Thornton leading OSU to an emphatic 85-65 victory over No. 4 Kentucky in Madison Square Garden.

This will be the 15th time that Ohio State and North Carolina have played each other, with the Tar Heels leading the all-time series 12-2 going into this season. The last time they matched up was in the 2022 CBS Sports Classic when OSU fell 89-84 in overtime.

The only other game with a set time as BSB went to press was the exhibition on Oct. 26 against Ohio, which will be played at 2 p.m. in Value City Arena.

Conference Tournament Expanded To 18 Teams

When the Big Ten schedule was revealed on the Big Ten Network, it was also revealed that the conference tournament would be expanded from 15 teams, where it was for the 2024-25 season. Now, the tournament will include all 18 teams, beginning with the bracket at the end of the 2025-26 season.

With the three extra teams included, there will be another round of games to play, meaning the top four teams will have three

byes.

Seeds No. 15 through 18 will play the first day of the tournament, which will be Tuesday, March 10, this season with Nos. 15 and 18 competing to move on and Nos. 16 and 17 playing each other. The rest of the tournament schedule will be back to the usual Wednesday through Sunday structure.

Seeds No. 9 through 14 will get a bye to the second round of the tournament, and Nos. 5 through 8 will make it through to the third round automatically. Seeds No. 1 through 4 will automatically be slated into the quarterfinals as usual and won't play until the fourth day of the tournament.

Last season, both the men's and the women's tournaments kept the brackets at just 15 teams despite the additions of Oregon, UCLA, USC and Washington to the conference. That left Nebraska, Penn State and Washington out of the tournament, with Ohio State finishing 10th in the conference, two games better than the Cornhuskers, who missed out due to a tiebreaker between five teams that were 7-13 in the Big Ten.

Recruits Schedule Future Visits

The Buckeyes will host Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy four-star center Maxime Meyer on an official visit from Oct. 3-5.

The 7-1, 215-pound, 2026 prospect recently narrowed his scholarship offers down to Ohio State, Michigan State, SMU, Stanford, St. Mary's and Vanderbilt on Sept. 2.

"A young, exciting program, they have done a great job recruiting me, and nothing really compares to the Buckeyes," Meyer told 247Sports when he narrowed his list.

Meyer is coming off a spring and summer season when he averaged 9.1 points,

OSU Men's Basketball Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2026 who have issued a verbal commitment to play basketball at Ohio State.

| Player | Pos. | Ht. | Wt. | Stars | High School |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-------|--------------------------------------|
| Marcus Johnson | G | 6-2 | 180 | ★★★★ | Garfield Heights, Ohio |
| Alex Smith | F | 6-9 | 195 | ★★★★ | Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Prolific Prep |

8.1 rebounds and 3.2 blocks per game for his Lu Dort Elite team on the 3Stripes Select Basketball circuit. The 3SSB circuit is a premier, invite-only basketball platform for high school and middle school players sponsored by Adidas.

He is the No. 102 player in the country, the No. 12 center and the No. 18 player in the state of Florida according to 247Sports composite rankings.

Fishers, Ind., four-star combo guard Jason Gardner Jr. (6-1, 185) will take five unofficial visits throughout the fall, with Ohio State making the cut for a Nov. 1 visit when the football team hosts Penn State.

He will also visit Notre Dame (Oct. 4), Kentucky (Oct. 18), Purdue (Oct. 25) and Cincinnati (Nov. 15). Gardner is a 2027 prospect and is the No. 28 player in the country, the No. 3 combo guard and the No. 2 player in the state of Indiana. He is also trying to set up dates to visit Florida, Indiana, Iowa and Louisville.

Gardner first received an Ohio State offer on June 9 and hasn't yet decided on a commitment date, though the junior is able to take his time with over a year to go until signing day.

Three-Star SF Down To Five Schools

Washington (D.C.) Sidwell Friends School three-star small forward Jalyn Collingwood (6-5, 190) narrowed his top schools down to five on Sept. 21.

His list includes Michigan State, Mississippi State, Ohio State, Vanderbilt and Texas Tech. Collingwood is considered the No. 173 player in the 2026 class, the No. 51 small forward and the No. 2 player in D.C.

He decided to chisel his list down to five soon after the weekend that he visited Columbus, being on campus for an official visit during Ohio State football's off weekend.

He is also taking official visits to his other top schools, with a trip to Mississippi State already in the books (Sept. 12) and trips to Michigan State (Oct. 3), Texas Tech (Oct. 10) and Vanderbilt (Oct. 17) already scheduled.

If Ohio State is able to land Collingwood, he would add to what is currently a two-man recruiting class in the 2026 cycle, which includes Cleveland Garfield Heights four-star point guard Marcus Johnson (6-2, 180) and Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Prolific Prep four-star power forward Alex Smith (6-9, 195).

Buckeyes Host Recruits For Ohio Game

Ohio State also hosted multiple visitors on campus for the weekend of Ohio State football's 37-9 victory over Ohio on Sept. 13.

The Buckeyes had Milwaukee Wisconsin Lutheran four-star power forward Kager Kneuppel (6-9, 205), Branson (Mo.) Link Academy four-star center Tristan Reed (6-9, 230), Dayton Northridge small forward Keonte Smith (6-5, 180) and Geneva (Ohio)

SPIRE Academy four-star power forward Jaylan Mitchell (6-7, 220) on campus for the game.

They all spent the football game with each other, and Kneuppel said that he enjoyed his time on campus, as well as the conversation he was able to have with Diebler.

"He was super nice as well as all the other coaches," Kneuppel told The Columbus Dispatch after his visit. "I also really liked watching the (basketball team) practice because it was so fast playing-wise and they shot a lot of threes in the scrimmage. Of course, the football game was fun, too."

Kneuppel is the younger brother of Kon Kneuppel, whom Ohio State recruited when he was in high school, but the elder Kneuppel ended up going to Duke for the 2024-25 season before he went fourth overall in the 2025 NBA draft to the Charlotte Hornets.

Kagar Kneuppel is a 2027 prospect who is the No. 113 player in the country, the No. 15 power forward and the No. 5 player in the state of Wisconsin. He hasn't taken any other visits yet but holds an offer from Toledo and has gotten interest from Purdue, Butler and Notre Dame.

Smith also talked with the Dispatch after his visit, which he said went well.

"It was fun," Smith said. "Everything was nice. It was a lot of culture. I liked how the basketball and the football teams play. It was just nice all over."

"I started building a little bit of a relationship with (Diebler). He was asking me questions like what's my daily routine and stuff like that. He was telling me stuff that I should be working on to get to the next level."

Smith is a 2028 prospect and doesn't have a 247Sports rating yet, but he is considered the No. 2 player in the state of Ohio in his class by PrepHoops.com behind Cleveland Lutheran East combo guard Dylan Zeigler (6-1, 155), whom the Buckeyes hosted on Sept. 6 for the Grambling State football game.

Smith has an offer from Pepperdine, which is his only one to this point, but it seems likely that Diebler and the Buckeyes will extend a scholarship offer to the high school sophomore at some point.

Reed is from the same high school as Ohio State freshman Amare Bynum and considers the Buckeyes one of his top four teams along with Michigan State, Mississippi State and Missouri. He is the No. 79 player in the 2026 class, the No. 9 center and the No. 4 player in the state of Missouri.

Mitchell is a 2027 prospect and is considered the No. 27 player in the country, the No. 6 power forward and the second-best player in the state of Ohio.

Conference Schedule Released By Big Ten

The Ohio State women's basketball team's conference schedule was released by the Big Ten on Sept. 18. While the Buckeyes already knew which Big Ten teams they would play, the schedule release revealed the dates of those games.

DOUBLE DRIBBLE Bobby Gorbett

Ohio State will open Big Ten play with a road test against Northwestern on Dec. 7 and won't play another conference game until after Christmas. The Buckeyes will then play their Big Ten home opener against defending-champion UCLA on Dec. 28 before traveling west to take on Purdue for a road game on New Year's Eve.

The Buckeyes will start the new year with a home contest against Rutgers on Jan. 4 and will go on the road to face Illinois three days later. After a road game against Maryland on Jan. 11, Ohio State will play two straight conference home games when it hosts Penn State on Jan. 14 and Indiana on Jan. 22.

The Buckeyes will go back on the road for a Jan. 25 contest against Iowa, and then they will face Wisconsin and Nebraska on Jan. 29 and Feb. 1, respectively.

Ohio State will then make its West Coast trip to take on Washington and Oregon. Those games will be played on Feb. 5 and Feb. 8.

The Buckeyes will return home to renew their rivalry with Maryland with a Feb. 15 matchup. Ohio State will play its penultimate Big Ten road game against Minnesota on Feb. 18.

The Buckeyes will wrap up their Big Ten home slate with a couple of tough tests. Ohio State will face USC, an Elite Eight team last year, on Feb. 22 and will go against Michigan three days later.

Ohio State will conclude its regular season at Michigan State on March 1.

B1G Tournament To Remain At 15 Teams

During the reveal of the Big Ten's conference schedule in men's and women's basketball, the conference also revealed that the men's Big Ten tournament is expanding to 18 teams, while the women's tournament is staying at 15 teams for 2026.

The women's tournament could have expanded like the men's tournament, but the coaches within the conference voted to have only 15 teams in the tournament.

It isn't a huge surprise that coaches of the women's programs opted against expansion for the conference tournament. Last year, one that included new Big Ten programs Oregon, UCLA, USC and Washington for the first time, the three teams that missed the conference tournament were Penn State, Northwestern and Purdue. Those teams finished conference play with respective records of 1-17, 2-14 and 3-15.

Ohio State is unlikely to be in danger of missing the Big Ten tournament anytime



SONNY BROCKWAY

DRIVING FORCE — Former Ohio State guard Kelsey Mitchell (3) was at her best when the Indiana Fever needed her most. With superstar Caitlin Clark out with an injury, she helped the team reach the playoffs and was named to the All-WNBA first team.

soon. The Buckeyes haven't had a losing record in the conference since head coach Kevin McGuff's first year at the helm in 2013-14.

The 2026 Big Ten tournament will take place at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis from March 4-8.

Mitchell Ends 2025 Season In Stellar Fashion

Former Ohio State guard Kelsey Mitchell had a stellar finish to a career-best 2025 WNBA season.

Mitchell was a key contributor to the Indiana Fever making the playoffs. She averaged 19.3 points per game over her last four regular-season contests to help the Fever go 3-1 during that span and make their second consecutive playoff appearance with an overall record of 24-20.

Mitchell, a four-time All-America guard at Ohio State from 2015-18, finished the regular season averaging 20.2 points, 3.4 assists and 1.8 rebounds per game. She became the first player in the history of the franchise to finish the regular season averaging over 20 points.

Mitchell earned her third All-Star nod of her career this year and received multiple postseason honors. She was named to

the All-WNBA first team by The Associated Press, which she said was a big moment for her after losing her father, former Ohio State assistant coach Mark Mitchell, last year.

"It's very humbling," Mitchell said. "It's big for where I come from, as far as my legacy and the name I represent. 'Mitchell' means a lot to me. You know about my dad and losing him in 2024, so it hits home a little bit more different."

"It's less about the accolades and more about the pain and all that stuff I kind of had to go through to get here. It was a big moment for me and my family personally because of how much we've been through."

Additionally, Mitchell was named one of five finalists for the league's MVP award, ultimately finishing fifth, with Las Vegas Aces star Aja Wilson winning the award for the second straight season.

Then in the playoffs, the ex-Buckeye was even better and helped lead the Indiana Fever to their first appearance in the WNBA semifinals since 2015 by averaging 23.3 points, 3.1 assists and 1.4 rebounds on 42.3-percent shooting.

As the No. 6 seed in the playoffs, the Fever weren't expected to go far at all in the postseason, especially considering star

guard Caitlin Clark was ruled out for the season with an injury ahead of the playoff run.

The Fever immediately had their backs against the wall when they dropped the first game of a three-game playoff series to the Atlanta Dream in the first round. However, Mitchell scored a team-high 19 points to lead the Fever to a 77-60 win in the second game, their first playoff win since 2015. Then in Game 3, Mitchell again showed out, scoring a game-high 24 points to advance her team to the semifinals.

Mounting an even greater challenge against the best team in the WNBA, the Las Vegas Aces, in the WNBA's semifinal round of the playoffs, the Fever were again up to the task, taking the Aces to a fifth game in the series. Game Five was set to take place soon after BSB went to press, tipping off on Sept. 30 at 9:30 p.m.

Mitchell wasted no time in making a statement in the opening game of the series. In the Fever's 89-73 road win, she scored 34 points on 12-of-23 shooting and connected on 4 of 6 shots from three-point range. Mitchell's 34 points in Game 1 were the most scored by any player making her first appearance in the semifinals.

Mitchell's impressive performance drew lofty praise from Las Vegas Aces coach Becky Hammon.

"Clearly, we had no answer for Mitchell," Hammon said after the game. "We couldn't even attempt to slow her down a little bit."

The Aces came up with some solutions headed into their next game and held Mitchell to only 13 points on 4-of-14 shooting.

Mitchell struggled again in Game Three. She scored a team-high 21 points, but connected on just 8 of 26 shots as her team lost 82-70.

However, with the season on the line in Game Four, Mitchell turned in a more efficient performance, making 9 of 20 shots to score 25 points and lead the Fever to a 90-83 win.

Thierry, Petty Conclude Rookie Seasons

Mitchell wasn't the only former Buckeye to play in the playoffs. Former Ohio State guard Taylor Thierry made her postseason debut in the Dream's Game 2 loss to the Fever. Thierry, who played for the Buckeyes from 2021-25, was in the game for only two minutes and didn't record a stat.

After being drafted by the Dream in the third round with the 36th overall pick, Thierry managed to get minutes in 17 games during the regular season for the Dream. Thierry, known more for her defensive presence with the Buckeyes, took 11 shots this season and converted on only two attempts. She did, however, end the season with four steals and six rebounds.

Ajae Petty also wrapped up her first year in the WNBA. Although she was signed by the Dallas Wings at the end of the season, she appeared in two games and didn't attempt a field goal.

Petty played for the Buckeyes for one season in 2024-25 after transferring in from Kentucky. She averaged 9.4 points and 7.2 rebounds per game with the team.

OSU Embarks On Redemption Tour In '25-26

By **SAM CIPRIANI**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The 2024-25 season ended in what was likely the most disappointing way possible for the Ohio State women's hockey team. Leading 3-2 over Wisconsin with just over two minutes remaining in the 2025 national title game, it looked as if the Buckeyes were well on their way to repeating as national champions.

However, disaster struck for Ohio State.

With 1:50 left to play, the Buckeyes were called for too many players on the ice, giving the Badgers a power play. Then, with just 18 seconds left, Ohio State forward Maddi Wheeler covered the puck in front of the Buckeye goal, and Wisconsin was awarded a penalty shot that ultimately sent the game into overtime.

It took under three minutes for Wisconsin to seal Ohio State's fate in the extra period, and the Badgers defeated the Buckeyes 4-3 in arguably the most heartbreaking collapse in the program's history.

Still, Ohio State head coach Nadine Muzerall kept her team from dwelling on setbacks, channeling that anguish and frustration into a drive she hopes will propel the Buckeyes to new heights this season.

Coming off their third consecutive appearance in the national championship, Muzerall and the Ohio State women's hockey team enter the 2025-26 season ready to build on past success and failures, driven by the lessons of heartbreak, an elite recruiting class, and a core of experienced returning players.

That balance of experience and hunger will be central to the Buckeyes' identity this year, Muzerall said.

At the Western Collegiate Hockey Association media day on Sept. 10, Muzerall highlighted two main factors that could lead to Ohio State's success this season: the players themselves – including a strong, tal-



PHOTO COURTESY OF OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

FUELING THE FIRE — Coming within 18.9 seconds of repeating as national champions last season before Wisconsin tied it then won in overtime has the Ohio State women's hockey team even more motivated for the 2025-26 season, junior forward Jocelyn Amos (17) said.

ented freshman class – and the team's motivations, fueled by last year's championship game loss, which Muzerall described as a "vendetta."

"I think two different things," Muzerall said. "One, it's a special group of girls. I do think this is the strongest freshman class in the country, and two, 18.9 seconds. I'm talking about the fact that we lost the gold and only got a silver with 18.9 seconds left. So there's a vendetta for that. So the girls took that to heart and came in really strong for the season."

Ohio State junior forward Jocelyn Amos, who finished last season as the Buckeyes' second-leading scorer with 27 goals, expressed a similar mindset, stating this year's roster is more driven than ever to put in the work and open the season strong after last year's difficult finish.

"The team's been working all summer," Amos said. "Obviously, we're motivated to get back out there, ready to go, just putting the work in and getting ready. The way last season went, it just adds fuel to the fire for this year. It's definitely just been cracked here."

Amos, joined by fellow junior forward Joy Dunne, leads an Ohio State attack aiming to once again produce a high-powered offense after averaging 3.9 goals per game last season.

Dunne has been the Buckeyes' top goal scorer in each of her two seasons with the

team, scoring 24 goals in her freshman campaign before improving that total to 29 in her sophomore season. The O'Fallon, Mo., native has also accumulated 104 total points over the course of her two years at Ohio State.

Now more than ever, Ohio State will need to lean on the pair to lead – in more ways than one. The Buckeyes lost nine total players in the offseason, including seven seniors or graduates who exhausted their eligibility and two freshmen who transferred, with Josie St. Martin headed to Minnesota Duluth and Lexington Secreto to Lindenwood.

The departure of seven veterans leaves leadership roles waiting to be claimed at Ohio State. The Buckeyes have a youthful roster with as many freshmen as returning juniors and seniors combined. And even more turnover comes after Ohio State lost all four of its captains from the 2024-25 season (defender Jenna Buglioni, goalie Amanda Thiele, and forwards Riley Brengman and Makenna Webster).

But despite the losses of many of the team's leaders and stars on the ice, Muzerall is confident the duo of Dunne and Amos can guide the 2025-26 roster to success.

Muzerall highlighted how Amos and Dunne's influence extends beyond their on-ice performance, emphasizing their leadership and role in shaping both the team's culture and the development of the large group

of freshmen on the roster.

"(Amos and Dunne) bring more than just what you guys see on the ice," Muzerall said. "They are leaders. They are captains. They are two of our four captains this year, and they're great kids. And that goes back to why our fitness looks the way it does, because some of our leaders are fantastic human beings. They have high IQs. They have what we call 'the embrace.' The productive discomfort during the preseasons to get people going, and all of who we are as Buckeye hockey and what that encompasses. They're great role models and leaders for these eight freshmen that we have."

The Buckeye head coach added that the qualities making Dunne and Amos exceptional aren't always visible on the ice and expressed her excitement to watch the forwards' development over the next two seasons.

"Again, a lot of things that people don't see are what they're truly great at," Muzerall said. "It's their leadership and their team-first mindset that make them great hockey players. On the ice, they bring IQ, knowledge and experience and they deliver in the big games when it matters, but they stay composed and confident. So I'm very excited for them and what the next two years with them will be like."

Ohio State is returning its top two players offensively, but the Buckeyes will need their new faces and last season's emerging stars to take a big step with the loss of five of their top 10 point scorers.

Outside of Dunne and Amos, key returners for the Buckeyes include sophomore forward Jordyn Petrie (22 points), senior forward Sloane Matthews (19 points), senior defender Emma Peschel (34 points) and sophomore defender Mira Jungåker (16 points).

The Buckeye squad that finished last season with a 29-8-3 converted on 9.8 percent of its shots, while also posting strong numbers defensively.

Ohio State allowed just 2.1 goals per game on 18.8 shots from opponents in 2024-25, while also winning 58.3 percent of its faceoffs.

Colgate transfer forward Kaia Malachino is also projected to contribute to the Buckeyes' front line. The junior scored 25 goals and dished out 22 assists in two seasons with the Raiders.

Additionally, the Buckeyes signed five freshman forwards in Macy Rasmussen, Maxine Cimoroni, Sanni Vanhanen, Cassidy Carmichael and Hilda Svensson — all of whom will have an opportunity to compete for minutes with Muzerall being open to having a deeper bench.

In 2024-25, Ohio State routinely dressed and played 10 forwards, a luxury Muzerall said she might not be able to count on this year, as a major wrench could be thrown into Ohio State's season.

The 2026 Winter Olympics are scheduled for Feb. 6–22 in Milan, Italy, and several Buckeyes are expected to join national team practices in preparation for the games.

With players leaving Ohio State for training camps and international competitions throughout the season, there will be stretches where the Buckeyes will have to adjust

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.

2025-26 Ohio State Women's Hockey Roster

| No. | Name | Yr. | Pos. | Ht. | Hometown | High School/Last Team |
|---|--------------------|-----|------|------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Genny Klein | So. | G | 5-6 | Apple Valley, Minn. | Shattuck-St. Mary's |
| 4 | Sara Swiderski | Sr. | D | 5-9 | Langley, B.C. | Clarkson |
| 7 | Emma Peschel | Sr. | D | 5-10 | Edina, Minn. | Benilde-St. Margaret's |
| 8 | Hilda Svensson | Fr. | F | 5-6 | Oskarshamn, Sweden | Sanda High School |
| 9 | Jenna Raunio | Fr. | D | 5-9 | Huskvarna, Sweden | Sanda High School |
| 11 | Kaia Malachino | Jr. | F | 5-8 | Brighton, Mich. | Colgate / Detroit Little Caesars |
| 12 | Grace McCoshen | So. | D | 5-6 | Northfield, Minn. | Northfield |
| 14 | Mira JungÅker | So. | D | 5-7 | Jönköping, Sweden | HV71 |
| 15 | Macy Rasmussen | Fr. | F | 5-4 | Orono, Minn. | Orono |
| 16 | Joy Dunne | Jr. | F | 5-11 | O'Fallon, Mo. | St. Louis Lady Blues |
| 17 | Jocelyn Amos | Jr. | F | 5-7 | Ailsa Craig, Ontario | Medway High School |
| 18 | Maxine Cimoroni | Fr. | F | 5-9 | Toronto, Ont. | Bishop Strachan School |
| 19 | Jordyn Petrie | So. | F | 5-9 | Lincoln, Neb. | Shattuck-St. Mary's |
| 20 | Maria Roth | So. | D | 5-9 | Dubuque, Iowa | Shattuck-St. Mary's |
| 21 | Sanni Vanhanen | Fr. | F | 5-6 | Tampere, Finland | Mäkelänrinne High School |
| 22 | Sloane Matthews | Sr. | F | 5-6 | Plymouth, Minn. | Wayzata High School |
| 23 | Leah Wicks | Fr. | D | 5-5 | St. John's, N.L. | Shattuck-St. Mary's |
| 27 | Jordan Baxter | Jr. | F | 5-7 | Coquitlum, B.C. | North Delta Secondary |
| 28 | Brooke Disher | Sr. | D | 5-8 | Fort St. John, B.C. | Boston University |
| 29 | Kassidy Carmichael | Fr. | F | 5-7 | Westford, Mass. | North American Hockey Acad. |
| 30 | Taylor Kressin | Fr. | G | 5-7 | Moorhead, Minn. | Moorhead |
| 35 | Hailey MacLeod | Sr. | G | 6-0 | Abbotsford, B.C. | Minnesota Duluth |
| Head Coach — Nadine Muzerall. | | | | | | |
| Associate Head Coach — James Wisniewski. Assistant Coach — Kelsey Cline. Assistant Coach/Director of Operations — Logan Davis. Assistant Strength & Conditioning Coach — Rebecca Freiburger. Director, Athletic Training — Kevin Lennon. Assistant Director of Equipment Services — Tyler Howe. Senior Academic Counselor — Eric Vendemia | | | | | | |

without key contributors.

Muzerall noted the challenge of managing a season where players are splitting time between Ohio State and international commitments, emphasizing the importance of maintaining both physical fitness and mental readiness.

“Well, we’ve never really had to manage that,” Muzerall said. “This is going to be the first year that there’s not a centralization for anybody. So this will be new for all teams, where our players from all over the world are being taken each month to train for their Olympic team.

“So it’s going to be a new environment for everybody, and it is what it is, and you want them to represent their country. We’re just going to have to make sure that the fitness piece is key, and not only their legs being ready and their heart pumping, but also that their mind is able to wrap around the playing time that they might have. The importance of our sports performance team and our recovery, too, making sure that the athletes stay healthy.”

Ohio State is already planning well ahead to ensure the team develops strong chemistry before then, with the goal of minimizing the impact of losing key skaters.

Amos echoed that sentiment, stressing the importance of building culture from the very start.

“This year will definitely be interesting with people in and out with their national teams,” Amos said. “I think for us, it’s really important to build the culture right from the start, just team bonding right away, get together with the girls, so even though with people leaving, people coming back, we stay together as a unit. Even when people leave, we’ll stay in touch with them, and then we keep the chemistry going with each other

when we’re all here.”

Even though losing key players presents an obstacle for Ohio State, Muzerall said the number of Buckeyes chosen for national teams is a reflection of the program’s strength.

“It is going to be different, especially the last 10 games that we’ll have going into the conference quarterfinals,” Muzerall said. “There’s going to be a very short bench on both the forwards and the defensive side, which is a good problem for our program to say that we have a lot of elite, quality players that can represent their country.”

With players coming in and out of national teams, it will provide the opportunity for more Buckeyes to see in-game action throughout the season, Muzerall said.

Defenders senior Sara Swiderski, sophomore Grace McCoshen and senior Brooke Disher, all of whom played in at least 32 games for Ohio State last season, are expected to be significant contributors to the back line for the Buckeyes.

Freshman defenders Leah Wicks and Jenna Raunio could also contribute with thinned rosters deep into the season.

In goal, the Buckeyes will need to fill the void of the star keeper Thiele, who started in 28 of Ohio State’s 40 contests in 2024-25, ending her season with a 20-7-2-1 record. Senior goaltender Hailey MacLeod is the clear front-runner to be the top starter. A Minnesota Duluth transfer, MacLeod started 11 games for the Buckeyes last year, saving 90.7 percent of shots on goal, which was just higher than Thiele’s mark (88.7), while finishing with an 8-1-1-3 record on the year.

Sophomore Genny Klein should also see significant time. As Ohio State’s third-string goaltender in 2024-25, the Apple Valley, Minn., native played in six games, record-

ing 15 saves with an 88.2 save percentage. Freshman Taylor Kressin will likely be the Buckeyes’ reserve keeper.

Ohio State will open its season in a return home for Malachino with nonconference matchups against Colgate on Oct. 3 and 4, before opening WCHA play at home against Bemidji State on Oct. 10 and 11. The Buckeyes will face their first true test of the season against Minnesota in Minneapolis, Oct. 18 and 19.

Then Ohio State will take on St. Cloud State (home Oct. 24 and 25), St. Thomas (away Oct. 31 and Nov. 1), Minnesota State (home Nov. 14 and 15), and Minnesota Duluth (away Nov. 21 and 22) before participating in the D1 in DC tournament against Clarkson (Nov. 28) and Colgate (Nov. 29).

The Buckeyes then face rival Wisconsin in a title-game rematch at the OSU Ice Rink Dec. 5 and 6, in games where Ohio State is hoping to avenge its championship loss.

Amos said she’s already marked Ohio State’s rematch with Wisconsin on her calendar but noted the Buckeyes must take care of business in the games leading up to it.

“Obviously, the home opener is a big one, the first game of the season,” Amos said. “I think we’re looking at the first game we have against Wisconsin is going to be the one on our mind, but we’ve got some games to go before we get there, so we’ll focus on those. But that one will be a big one when the time comes.”

While Amos is keeping an eye on the marquee matchups, her focus isn’t limited to any single game.

Amos said each practice, each scrimmage, and each challenge on the ice serves as a chance to push the Buckeyes closer to their collective goals.

A product of Medway High School in Ailsa Craig, Ontario, Amos said she’s embracing the daily grind and intrasquad competition as fuel to keep pushing herself and the Buckeyes to new heights this season.

“Every year you just want to strive to push yourself to get better,” Amos said. “I mean, motivation comes from practice. Every day with the girls on our team, every day is a battle in and out. So it just pushes you to get better. Obviously, you want to keep striving for more, keep working for more. So I’m just going to keep doing that this year.”

Ohio State’s standard of excellence, Muzerall said, comes from more than just wins and championships. It’s rooted in the habits the program has built over the past decade.

Muzerall said the upcoming season will once again be guided by the same core expectations that have defined her players through her 10 years at the helm of the Buckeyes.

“Well, I expect them to do the three pillars of how our program has been established over the 10 years that I’ve been here,” Muzerall said. “That is, they’re going to be fit, they’ll be very physical, relentless, and they’ll be fast. I’ve already seen that within our preseason training here, where our numbers are the best they’ve ever been and the best with the incoming freshmen that I’ve seen since I’ve been here. So I’m excited for the young kids that are coming in.”

The Ohio State University Alumni Association

GUIDE YOUR CAREER

3,200+ active employers working with Alumni Career Connection

4,500+ AlumniFire members ready to network

The Buckeye Network reaches 9,000+ active members on LinkedIn

BOND WITH FELLOW BUCKEYES

Join one of 121 Regional Clubs

Connect with one of 48 Societies supporting your interests

Attend special events—168 hosted in FY16

PAY FORWARD

More than 150 volunteer projects done by Buckeyes in 2016

TRAVEL THE WORLD

Join one of 30+ trips with Alumni Tours

GET SOCIAL

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

32,515 Likes

34,300 Followers

540,000+ alumni across the globe

YOU'RE A BUCKEYE FOR LIFE

Into The Wayback Machine With The Buckeyes

Where were you in 1973?

Yours truly was waiting to turn 8 years old, getting into mischief with friends, bike riding, and thinking how cool my long hair was and generally enjoying life. And also, really starting to get into Ohio State football. Good time to do so, eh?

THE FACTS MAN Mike Wachsmen

Those early 1970s Buckeye squads were some of the best in school history, but '73 was really the first one that I can remember things from.

That team did not lose a game, and the only real "blemish" came in the now-infamous 10-10 tie with rival Michigan, which precipitated an even more infamous league vote to send the Buckeyes to Pasadena to play in the Rose Bowl. Something about Michigan quarterback Dennis Franklin being hurt, even though Michigan folks will tell you he would have been fine for the Rose Bowl. And maybe he would have been. We will never know.

What we do know is that the Buckeyes blasted USC and finished the season ranked second in the final Associated Press poll behind undefeated (11-0) Notre Dame. Without going into too much detail, the thing that really sticks out for me with that team is just how dominant it was on defense. Sure, the schedule may not have been great as the Big Ten was not nearly as deep as it is currently, but it's still pretty amazing.

The Buckeyes did not allow more than seven points in a game that season until Nov. 17, when they beat Iowa 55-13. Michigan was the only other team to hit double-digit points during the regular season against OSU.



TIM SWANSON
Certified Personal Trainer

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

614-886-9331

foreverfitsswan@yahoo.com

This is important because what we are seeing from Ohio State through four games is historic stuff, at least defensively. It is no secret that OSU finished first in the nation in defense last season under Jim Knowles, the completion of a three-year plan to turn things around and add some power to Ryan Day's finesse. It worked as Ohio State brought home the national championship.

Knowles, of course, left after some posturing about wanting a raise and ended up one state to the East, in Pennsylvania, the state in which he grew up. He's running Penn State's defense, and as is the case in year one of his system, not everything is taking hold quickly. Oregon scored 30 points in a thrilling double-overtime victory and knocked the Nittany Lions from the ranks of the unbeaten.

At the same time, the Buckeyes were making mincemeat out of the nation's top scoring squad in Seattle. That's right, Washington entered the game averaging over 55 points per contest, but Ohio State was masterful in holding them to just six, all on field goals. Washington had scored touchdowns on 15 of 16 trips to the red zone but had none against these Buckeyes.

Dynamic quarterback Demond Williams Jr. had amassed over 200 rushing yards in three games. Ohio State held him to minus-28 yards, with a long run of 10. All week long, the coaching staff made it known that Williams was lightning in a bottle and that if you let him out of the pocket, he could make you pay. So OSU did everything in its power to keep Williams inside the pocket and was largely successful. Williams does have a nice arm and put most of his 22 passes – 18 of which were completed – on the money. The kid can play and has toughness, as evidenced by repeatedly brushing himself off after another Ohio State defender brought him down.

Ohio State confounded Williams, lining up in a five-man front, a four-man front, and occasionally a three-man front that would bring another defender up post-snap. He never had a clear picture, and that is the secret to coordinator Matt Patricia's success. He makes you believe you're seeing something that you are not actually seeing, which makes you play a beat slower. And then it's game, set, match.

Ohio State has allowed fewer than 10 points in each of its four contests this season, the first time that has happened in Columbus since that 1973 squad was running roughshod.

There were some great players on that squad, most notably linebacker Randy Gradishar. Rick Middleton was another standout, along with Bob Brudzinski, Neal Colzie, Tim Fox and Van DeCree. Loaded defense.

Having a defense such as that one, or this year's for that matter, allows the offense to not worry very much when it bogs down. Sure, Ohio State was not the most efficient on offense against Washington, but was there anyone out there who truly believed that the Huskies had a chance after the Buckeyes made it 14-3 early in the second half?

There is a lot of football yet to be played, and a couple of potential stumbling blocks

in Illinois and Penn State. But I don't think it's hyperbole to say that as long as the offense can score 14 points, the game is won.

I haven't had this much fun watching Ohio State play defense in ages. Last year was fun, but there was also some unease given the risk-reward of Knowles' system. The Buckeyes are third nationally with just 28 plays allowing 10 yards or more, and looking at the schedule, there are not many real worries as far as explosive offenses remaining.

It will be fascinating to track just how well this group will stand up historically to defenses of years past at Ohio State.

I do know this – watching this defense has given me flashbacks to that magical season of 1973, and the Buckeyes playing dominant football, on both sides. Those flashbacks make me smile, except for one thing. I wish I still had enough hair to wear it longer.

Knowing When You're Ready

Day was asked during his weekly press meeting about when he knew he was truly ready to assume the leadership role for the Buckeyes.

Folks remember how Urban Meyer symbolically hung the whistle around Day's neck in the locker room at the Rose Bowl in 2019, and though Day was happy about taking that next step in his coaching progression, he also had some deep breaths and moments of uncertainty.

"I don't think I knew at the time," Day said. "You're never ready, probably to buy your first house, to have your first kid and to take your first head-coaching job, certainly at a place like Ohio State."

Day was smart enough to lean on coaches he had served under and savvy enough to implement a variety of ideas.

"I had great coaches around me, and I would follow their press conferences and sit in meetings with administrators, sit in recruiting meetings," he said. "I would watch them work with the staff and I would take a lot of notes so that when it was my turn to become a head coach I'd know how I would want that to look."

Meyer will go down in Ohio State lore as one of its all-time greatest coaches, and he left a foundation for Day that seemed to set him up for success. But other blue-blood schools have done the same and not always had great results.

Day felt confident in himself but admitted that confidence is no guarantee.

"You're never quite too sure how it's going to go," he said. "But you learn every year. We're going on almost a decade now of being here, and it goes fast. Every year, you learn more and more about yourself, about your staff, about your team, what can be done on a daily basis. Setting expectations and then meeting them. We have a growth mindset every day that says you have to get better, and you go from there."

Even with a national championship on his résumé forever, Day has not stopped working. He treats the job as if he is still new to it, and it fuels his desire to succeed.

"It's the same thing as being a coordinator, same time as when you're a first-time position coach. You're never sure if you're re-

ally ready," Day said. "You just go and learn and grow. That's what this job is all about."

Playing His Role

Entering the 2025 season, one of the unknowns for the Buckeyes was linebacker Arvell Reese. He had teased a bit with some flashes of action last season but was mostly a bit player.

It's safe to say that Reese has embraced his elevation to a starting role, and he has been one of the most impactful players on the Buckeyes' stop unit. He's tied for the team lead in tackles with 25 and has a pair of sacks and two pass breakups. But beyond the numbers, the thing that stands out about Reese is his closing speed. He appears to be out of a play, then the next minute, he's making the tackle.

Reese can do a lot of things – he can play stand-up edge rusher, linebacker, even a little bit as a stand-up in the interior gap. That versatility has served him well in Patricia's scheme, and the DC is doing his best to maximize Reese's talent.

"Arvell has a skill set where he can do a lot of things really well," Patricia said. "He's really long, so he can cover guys. We want to put a little bit of uncertainty into the offense, so they won't know what he's going to do. His pass rush is certainly dynamic. We will continue to ask him to do different things, and he understands that."

Reese was charged with playing spy against Washington's Williams and passed that assignment with flying colors. Sonny Styles may grab more of the headlines, but Reese has done more than enough to be in the discussion for top linebackers in college football.

Smiles All Around

Knowles had a reputation for being a bit prickly, and even though the players knew his system was sound, there was never the sense that they were particularly close to their DC.

That has totally changed with Patricia, who is lighthearted, jovial and blessed with the energy of a 20-something. The players see that he is genuine, and they want to succeed, as much for him as for themselves.

Patricia was on the field after the Washington game embracing some of his stars and saying, "You did it, you did it," and seems to really be reveling in the success the Buckeye defense is having.

One player who has bought in fully to Patricia is All-America safety Caleb Downs. Talk to Downs for just a few minutes, and you realize he sounds like a coach-in-waiting in demeanor and phrasing. When told that Patricia saw himself and Downs as "kindred spirits," the junior just laughed and said, "I don't know if I'd say kindred spirits, but he definitely has taught me some things. He's one of the smartest people I've met on and off the field. He talks about Greek philosophers before practice. He talks about the Bible before practice. He talks about so many different things in terms of just mindset and mentally being clear, and on the field, he's one of the sharpest people I've met. He's been great for me and great for our team."

Sleepless Over Buckeyes In Seattle? Worries Unfounded

The morning of the game with Washington, I started to get a little nervous. Admittedly I had just been reading about Ohio State's stunning 40-7 loss at Washington in 1986 in our Reprint Thursday feature at BuckeyeSports.com. Recalling that game from nearly 40 years ago reminded me just how tough it is to play out at Husky Stadium.

I noted on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum that I was suddenly a little nervous about the game. One of the other posters, a generally optimistic one, wondered why I was nervous.

"I'm a little spooked by just having read about that 1986 game," I responded. "I'm also concerned that Washington is a hostile environment and we have a quarterback, however talented, who has only played in the friendly confines of Ohio Stadium. I worry about jet lag."

My concerns about the hostile environment, the inexperienced quarterback used to home cooking and the jet lag all seemed to roll into one as the Buckeyes came out against the Huskies not looking anything like the No. 1 team in the nation.

Was the offensive coaching staff nervous too? It looked like they had reverted to the conservative offense of the Texas game, with a mix of runs and a couple of short passes. The team squandered great field position after a 17-yard Husky punt when the Buckeyes couldn't convert on fourth-and-1. What's the matter with a good old-fashioned quarterback sneak? Red-zone problems again?

My worries only intensified when, on the Huskies' next possession, the Buckeye defense allowed Washington only 6 yards, forcing a punt on which Brandon Inniss made a rare strong return for the Buckeyes, bursting for 32 yards, but then fumbled the ball away. Additionally, the defense was yielding chunk plays – a 34-yard Jonah Coleman run, a 20-yard burst by quarterback Demond Williams Jr., a 20-yard catch by Dezmen Roebuck and one for 17 by Denzel Boston, among them.

The Buckeyes never really took control of the game – and gave me some peace of mind –until late in the second quarter.

Facing a third-and-11 at the Washington 18, Sayin found a streaking Jeremiah Smith for a touchdown, giving Ohio State a 7-3 lead at the half and starting a 24-3 run for the Buckeyes the rest of the game.

Smith finished the game with eight catches for 81 yards and his touchdown. That gives him 28 catches for 396 yards, a 14.1-yard average, a long of 87 and an average of 99.0 yards a game. Given expectations, those numbers may not be as gaudy as some may have anticipated. But just that one play showed how quickly the super soph can change the trajectory of a game – and my emotions.

In the second half, Ohio State outgained the hosts, 219-69, including 74 vs. (minus-2) on the ground. Sayin completed 15 of his 18 passes after the intermission, for 145 yards as the coaches seemed to abandon the Texas playbook, and Smith had five catches for 48 yards in the final 30 minutes.

Once the Buckeyes got untracked (or over their jet lag), they proved that even in Husky Stadium, they were the better team on both sides of the ball – special teams, maybe not so much.

Speaking of special teams, there was a pivotal play when the game was still being highly contested that doesn't really jump out of the box score but may have changed the outcome of the game. Buckeye kicker Jayden Fielding, who has taken his knocks in his time in Columbus, kicked off to Adam Mohammed, who got loose for 41 yards before Fielding stopped him with a form tackle at the Husky 41. Ohio State was leading just 7-3 at the time, right after Smith's touchdown. If Mohammed had scored there, or the Huskies scored on a short drive right before the half after the re-

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

turn, the momentum would have swung back to Washington. And nothing whips up an already frenzied crowd like a long return (though it's been so long, Buckeye fans may not recall that).

Instead, Fielding saved the day. In case you are wondering, the hard-hitting Fielding is listed at 6-2, 175 pounds.

Inniss worked hard to make up for *his* special teams gaffe. On Ohio State's scoring drive late in the first half, he caught two 11-yard passes, both good for first downs, and he finished the game with three catches for 34 yards.

Also on offense, what most Buckeye fans had predicted was coming was evident from the get-go. After three games, most thought that freshman Bo Jackson was going to jump one of the veteran running backs on the depth chart – maybe both.

CJ Donaldson got the first four carries, good for 30 yards, but when a second running back joined the West Virginia transfer on that first possession, it was Jackson who came in.

For the third straight game, Jackson led the team in rushing, this time with 80 yards on 17 carries. Donaldson had nine tries for 39 yards and James Peoples three attempts for 10 yards. For the season, Jackson has 297 yards on 35 carries (8.5-yard average) and a score.

While it appears that Peoples has dropped to No. 3 on the depth chart, his competition with Donaldson must be tight. Donaldson has 42 carries for 190 yards, three scores and a 4.5-yard average. Peoples has 28 carries for 136 yards and a 4.9-yard average. He has yet to run for a touchdown. One thing the Buckeyes *do* appear to like to do with Peoples is throw to him. He had three catches against the Huskies and has five catches on the year.

Jackson's season yards per carry average dipped after the game against the Huskies from 12.1 to 8.5, which was probably to be expected because he wasn't racking up yards against reserves from teams like Grambling State and Ohio University.

Elsewhere in this issue, in a story about the running backs, Kevin Noon of Buckeye Huddle saw the dip coming.

"It has nothing to do with (Jackson's) ability and everything else," Noon explained. "As we see him start to play earlier and earlier in games, he's going against teams that are not completely beat up, having the Ohio State offensive line lean on them, and everything else."

Past Players Talk NIL

There is an extensive piece in this issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin where staff members talked to Buckeyes from the pre-NIL era about Name, Image and Likeness. Much of the comments are predictable. I was curious to hear answers to two of the questions. One was whether the former players thought their scholarship was adequate compensation at the time, and the other was who in their day would have made the most NIL money.

Before I get too far into this, let me say that NIL today is not what I thought it was going to be. What I had envisioned was players doing ads for car dealerships and the like, going to card shows and being paid to sign autographs. If someone made a jersey or sweatshirt with their name or number on it, they would get a royalty. In no way did I foresee what was coming, where people were just giving money to athletes with no obligation other than to come to a chosen school.

I always like when I see someone more of an

expert than me – not just about NIL, but anything – agrees with me.

"What I don't like is the collective concept," former defensive back Bryan Cook said. "I don't think that has a place or a fit in with the true spirit of NIL. I think if a car dealership wants to work with a player to promote cars because they feel that that's going to help them sell more cars, that's exactly what it should be. But for an outside organization just to raise money to give to an athlete to come to a school is not what I feel the spirit of the whole idea of NIL embodies."

Added defensive lineman Matt Finkes, "The entire purpose of NIL is to allow kids to market themselves and create value for themselves in a marketing environment where they're using their name, image and likeness for a career brand."

As for the value of a scholarship, there were a variety of answers. Defensive back Tyvis Powell was candid, as he generally is.

"It's all I knew, so I had no choice" he said about how he felt when he was on scholarship. "Looking in hindsight, no (he would not have been satisfied). I would have loved to have been able to make a couple of dollars. I didn't need to break the bank. I didn't need millions of dollars, but it would have been nice to have a couple of dollars in my pocket."

On the other end of the spectrum was a guy like linebacker Jim Laughlin, who was just thrilled to be a Buckeye.

"That's just the way it was. I was more than satisfied, because I grew up an Ohio State fan from back in 1968 when I was 10 years old, and they won the national title with Rex Kern and all of those guys. Ever since then, I loved Ohio State and the Cleveland Browns. That's all I ever wanted to do was grow up and go to Ohio State and play in the NFL or Major League Baseball, so that was fine with me. And I loved Ohio State. Great people, great friends, so that was plenty enough for me."

Or in the middle, is somebody like quarterback Greg Frey.

"In my example, in the summertime, I had maybe a six- or eight-week window that I could work a little bit to earn extra money, and I did," Frey recalled. "I worked on a construction crew on I-670. I remember going to bed at 9 p.m. every night because I was exhausted. You can't make a lot of money in six to eight weeks, and I wasn't. I didn't come from money. We got a little bit of a stipend back then for laundry or whatever, but it wasn't much. So, I always felt there was a need for more, because you're pretty much playing football for 12 months, and there's just not an opportunity to go work, per se. So from that standpoint, I think what these guys are getting now, even the guys that aren't big names, are still getting a decent amount."

As for past players who would have been the most compensated, it's not surprising that names like Archie Griffin, Eddie George or Chris Spielman came up. Those guys were not only great players, but guys with great personalities, which would have been the formula before today's straight "pay for play."

While Griffin and George were well known for their pleasing personalities, I would classify Spielman more as "colorful." He had a Spielman-esque quote for everything. When talking about the 40-7 loss to Washington in 1986 that I mentioned earlier, he was extremely upset, like he always was after a loss.

"I can't explain it," Spielman said after the game. "Right now I'm hurting and embarrassed.

You just have to put your head between your legs and crawl away, or whatever.

"I'm upset, my father and mother are upset, and my dog is upset."

And everyone knew that this wasn't just talk. He meant it.

Linebacker Andy Gurd reminded us that even before Spielman got to Ohio State, he had been on the front of a Wheaties box, uncompensated I am sure. What would that have been worth for Spielman on today's market?

By the way, I have the Spielman Wheaties box. Unopened. I shudder to think what is inside of it. That's 40 years ago.

No Column Complete

No View From 15th and High is complete with a note about postal issues.

Let's start with some good news. The price of upgrading your subscription to first-class mail in an envelope through football season is now down to \$25 through the Michigan game and \$35 through the playoffs and the Recruiting Wrap-up.

Just give us a call at (614) 486-2202 or (800) 760-2862 to order by credit card. Or you can send your check, money order or credit card information (don't forget your three- or four-digit security code) to P.O. Box 12453, Columbus, Ohio, 43212. Be sure to mention either the "Football Upgrade" or the "Recruiting Upgrade."

Don't forget your first-class copy comes in an envelope, which saves wear and tear on your BSB.

Now for a question that has been perplexing me.

As I have admitted many times through the years, I am a graduate of the Washington, D.C., public schools when they were at their worst (I'm certainly hopeful they are better 55 years later) so I am sometimes a little slow grasping ideas that make perfect sense to others. Senior citizenship doesn't make my comprehension powers any better.

My question is for the BSB readers who have been with us 30 or 40 years or more and are not renewing their subscriptions because we can't deliver the paper in a "timely fashion."

First of all, we do not deliver the paper. The United States Postal Service does. I am at the post office each week to make sure the paper gets on the postal truck at the same time and place as it has for as long as I can remember. The USPS complaint number is (800) 275-8777, a number I have called many times on behalf of Buckeye Sports Bulletin readers.

But here's what I don't get, longtime BSB readers who are not renewing.

Presumably, your local newspaper doesn't exist anymore, has reduced its publishing schedule, has cut back its Buckeye coverage or that coverage no longer comes in a "timely fashion" because of deadline issues (I'm talking to you, Columbus Dispatch readers).

So that means if you drop BSB you either don't get Buckeye coverage anymore or you are getting your Buckeye news off the Internet. This is what I don't understand.

The complete issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin is posted online on Tuesday morning. You've loved Buckeye Sports Bulletin for decades, you read other Buckeye news online, but you won't read your BSB online, even if just for a couple of days while your hard copy winds its way (slowly) through the postal system.

So, what are you gaining by dropping us other than weakening BSB for other readers who love the paper like you, but are more patient, and for staff members who work really hard to provide you a quality publication – *on time*.

Please drop me a note at the above number and explain this to me, a proud graduate of Western High School, Washington, D.C., class of 1970.



PRESENTED BY
Dinsmore

THE GREAT EIGHT 50TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION COMMEMORATIVE STATUE SET



Order Yours Today!



REDSMUSEUM.ORG

/GreatEight