

BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 45, No. 9

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Nov. 15, 2025

Push Forward

Buckeyes Run For 170 Yards In 34-10 Win Over Boilermakers

SONNY BROCKWAY

FRESH APPROACH — Freshman running backs Isaiah West (32) and Bo Jackson (25) led the charge against Purdue as part of the 170 rushing yards in the 34-10 victory on Nov. 8. Jackson gained 75 yards and West 60 while senior CJ Donaldson Jr. had two touchdown runs from the 1.

By GREG WILSON

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

On Ohio State's first offensive play of the game, Buckeye fans probably felt a weight come off their shoulders when freshman Bo Jackson went up the middle, made a few Purdue defenders miss and bounced out to the right for a 70-yard touchdown.

Jackson and his teammates who ran to the end zone with him – which was everyone except quarterback Julian Sayin, who was still watching from afar – celebrated together like they just scored on a long, ex-

plosive run play.

But the Buckeyes celebrating on the field found out soon after Buckeye fans watching from home did that there was a flag thrown on the play about 13 yards into the run.

Wide receiver Jeremiah Smith was called for a block in the back, and the play was called back, forcing Ohio State to get back to the line of scrimmage and try again, much to the dismay of first-time starting right tackle Ian Moore, who played in place of the injured Phillip Daniels.

"I had zero clue (there was a flag)," Moore said. "I was screaming in Bo's face. I was running damn near side-by-side with

him.

"I was so mad (when I realized there was a flag). I was just like, 'Oh my God. I have to run back.'"

Jackson was still credited with 13 yards on the run, but Ohio State had to try to make its way down the field again.

The Buckeyes gained a first down on the next play but were unable to get past the sticks again on that drive, and they sent Joe McGuire out to boot a punt 44 yards to give Purdue a chance at what ended up being a field-goal drive.

Tight end Max Klare, who was making his return to his former school, said that even though the run was called back and the drive ended with a punt, it was still something that energized the offense.

"It's great to have any running back break an explosive (run). It gives our team energy," he said. "We love that, especially to start the game. Obviously, it was a tough call, but a play like that even gives us a lot of energy going forward."

What could have been an early career-defining game for Jackson if that play had counted ended up still being an overall

solid day for the run game, with the freshman back still finding ways to break free for a few runs later in the game, although none came close to what his first play was.

Day said that it was good to see what Jackson was able to do in the run game after the Buckeyes have been trying for the entire season to get their running backs going. He even compared Jackson to Quinshon Judkins, who was with Ohio State for just one season but was dominant in the backfield when he got the chance to take over.

"(Getting explosive runs) has been an emphasis point," Day said. "The short yardage where there was a free guy in the hole and he brought his own blocker, that kind of reminded me of Quinshon last year. That was a good step for him in the right direction."

The high praise from Day has to be a good sign for anyone hoping for a competent run game for the Buckeyes moving forward. While the head coach hasn't said outright that the run game has been an issue for

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Continued On Page 8

FAN FORUM

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From The Message Board

Buckeye Leaves

Ohio State was able to get some players down the depth chart time in the 34-10 win over Purdue on Nov. 8 at Ross-Ade Stadium, improving to 9-0 overall and 6-0 in the Big Ten. 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: For his crucial interception in Ohio State's victory over Purdue, my Buckeye Leaf is going to junior cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr.

Midway through the second quarter, the Boilermakers were backed up on second-and-15 before Purdue quarterback Ryan Browne sent a pass into heavy traffic intended for wide receiver Jesse Watson. However, Buckeye safety Caleb Downs got a hand on the pass, tipping the ball right to Mathews, who snatched it out of the air and took the interception back 23 yards to the Purdue 30.

Mathews' pick set up Ohio State for a nine-play, 30-yard touchdown drive to give the Buckeyes a 21-3 lead in the second quarter. The Cincinnati native also added one tackle in the win.

Bobby Gorbett, BSB: With junior receiver Carnell Tate sidelined for precautionary reasons, sophomore receiver Jeremiah Smith stepped up for the Buckeyes.

Smith had a career-high and team-leading total of 10 catches for 137 yards and a touchdown. Smith had three catches that went for at least 20 yards, including a 35-yard touchdown that put the Buckeyes up 14-3 midway through the second quarter.

On the play, Smith zoomed past Purdue linebacker Mani Powell to get open and haul in a perfect pass from redshirt-freshman quarterback Julian Sayin. Smith needed only three quarters to have his career day. The Miami Gardens, Fla., native went for seven catches and 109 yards in the first half alone.

Greg Wilson, BSB: My Buckeye Leaf is going to true freshman running back Isaiah West, who seems to have earned himself a spot in the regular rotation alongside fellow freshman back Bo Jackson.

West had the highest average yards per carry in the game for the Buckeyes at

6.7, which came from nine carries for 60 yards. He likely won't end up needing to carry a giant load this season, but he is proving that if Ohio State wants to figure out its run game, then West needs to be part of the solution.

BSB Subscribers

Tiffin Buckeye: Jeremiah Smith

John Lanning: When you control the ball for almost 41 minutes, kudos to the game plan and staff. My leaves go to:

1. Jeremiah Smith. Great game and great hands.
2. Jermaine Matthews. Great interception. I wonder why we don't have more each season.
3. Max Klare. He had five grabs and played well against his old team.

Bob Cody: Buckeye Leaves earned by: Julian Sayin for another outstanding game, despite the pick; Jeremiah Smith, who was just awesome again; Max Klare – glad he could be featured and is in Columbus; Jayden Fielding for a career-long FG and nailed everything; the entire running back room – Bo, Isaiah, CJ Donaldson Jr., James Peoples – good day for all; Lincoln Kienholz for his TD!; Jermaine Mathews – with an assist from Caleb Downs; Sonny Styles; Payton Pierce, the leading tackler.

Luckeeman: Lots of good performances! Jeremiah Smith led the way offensively with 10 catches. Payton Pierce led defense with seven tackles, five solo.

BuckeyeScott: Give a Buckeye Leaf to Caleb Downs and Kayden McDonald. High-level defensive consistency and beast mode need to be rewarded!

PeyoteBuck: West and Brandon Inniss for plugging away, and big man Kienholz for plowing into the end zone. And what about Jayden Fielding's extra-long kicks? Good job!

R1TBDBITL: A rare leaf for the special teams. Jayden Fielding 2 of 2 FGs, both over 40 yards and 4 of 4 XPs. Joe McGuire a 44 yd. punt. Brandon Inniss for smart decisions on returns and good kickoff coverage.

Ohio State had 170 yards rushing against Purdue, its highest total of the season against a Power Four team, while true freshmen Bo Jackson and Isaiah West led the way in carries over sophomore James Peoples and senior CJ Donaldson. We asked subscribers on the BuckeyeSports.com Fan Forum if they think OSU still could improve its run game, and who they think the best options are at the running back position.

"The run game is coming along. I like Bo Jackson. He seems quick, and he is starting to see the alleys. He's not fast like Henderson was, but quick to the hole."

— John Lanning

"Definitely getting better. We'd all be raving if Bo's long TD run wasn't negated by a penalty. Carlos Locklyn knows what he's doing."

— Bob Cody

"They need to just play two running backs and stop trying to play four or five."

— Tiffin Buckeye

"The run game looks promising. Bo Jackson can break those arm tackles and make the next man miss. Isaiah West appears to be the next man up and is good at looking ahead to slip through the cracks in the defense. CJ Donaldson may not be an open-field threat, but he clearly can get some of those tough yards near the goal line with his great leg drive. The offensive line appears to

be working on stepping it up. It's a long and physical season, and we need multiple running backs ready when needed. Is it where it needs to be to run on Michigan? We will see."

— BuckeyeScott

"Yes, there's always room for improvement. Keep Jackson as the starter. Twice in the game, I thought he was stopped for a loss, but he found a last-second crease to pick up crucial first downs. Make West the next man up, with Donaldson Jr. the 'tough yards' guy. Until Peoples can show more toughness, keep him in mop-up duty."

— R1TBDBITL

"Still room for improvement, but I think I see marginal improvement. Rotating backs is to keep players healthy and fresh. I won't be surprised if the rotation ceases around Nov 29."

— Terrier Buck

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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

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OPINION

Business As Usual For OSU At Purdue

Beginning with Ohio State's first offensive play from scrimmage when freshman Bo Jackson's 70-yard touchdown run was wiped out by a somewhat-dubious illegal block in the back penalty called against Jeremiah Smith, there seemed to be something just a little off about the Buckeyes on Nov. 8 as they hit the road at Purdue.

Not so far off the chart that there was any danger of revisiting the still-inexplicable losses in 2009 and 2018 at Ross-Ade Stadium to teams that eventually lost seven games in each of those seasons, but I don't think Ryan Day envisioned Julian Sayin putting the ball in the air 33 times or facing any kind of deficit (albeit a modest 3-0 one in the first quarter) against this year's version of the Boilermakers, who haven't beaten an FBS opponent since late August.

Still, the Buckeyes did what they had to do to with a workmanlike 34-10 victory that might well have been the most humdrum game during an afternoon of thrillers around college football. The Big Ten alone featured fantastic finishes to keep No. 2 Indiana undefeated and No. 8 Oregon firmly in the College Football Playoff picture while Wisconsin fans stormed a rain-soaked Barry Alvarez Field at Camp Randall Stadium after the Badgers somehow defeated Washington during a game in which their punter had more passing yards than their quarterback.

Meanwhile in West Lafayette, it was business as usual for Ohio State as it slopped around early before a 24-point second quarter set things right. By the time the game was over, the Buckeyes had struck the kind of balance that allowed the offense to pile up at least 30 first downs for the second time in 2025 while the defense limited a sixth opponent this year to 200 or fewer total yards.

If one was to nitpick, one could describe Sayin's performance as uneven. He took a pair of sacks – the most of any game so far this season – and he threw a dunderheaded red-zone interception in the third quarter, the kind of forced error he seldom ever makes. But he also turned in his sixth 300-yard passing game of the season and topped the 80-percent accuracy mark for the fifth time, including the last three games in a row.

His 303 yards against the Boilermakers zoomed Sayin into the top 20 on Ohio State's career passing list after only 13 games. His total of 2,575 yards vaulted him past some pretty big names in program history – Don Unverferth (2,518, 1963-65), Rex Kern (2,444, 1968-70), Kirk Herbstreit (2,437, 1989-92), Cornelius Greene (2,348, 1972-75) and Cardale Jones (2,323, 2013-15).

Obviously, it helps to have a football catching machine at your disposal, and while excitable Fox Sports announcer Gus Johnson was positively apoplectic about Indiana receiver Omar Cooper Jr.'s acrobatic touchdown reception to keep his team unbeaten (full disclosure: it was one hell of a catch), Smith was doing what he does on a weekly basis by providing more than his share of highlight-reel grabs.

Whether it was a sideline catch at full extension with both toes just inches in-bounds, a high-pointed grab with a defender draped over his shoulders or a reception made after being tripped and tipping the ball to himself, Smith totaled a career-high 10 catches (on 10 targets) for 137 yards and a touchdown.

The touchdown catch was a particular thing of beauty, a 35-yard, on-the-money rainbow from Sayin that Smith cradled like a baby despite the best efforts of Purdue linebacker Mani Powell. Powell, a Columbus native who is currently with his third college program,

had an otherwise outstanding afternoon with a game-high 13 tackles that included a sack. Against Smith, however, it was a mismatch as Powell became just another defender left choking down the OSU receiver's dust.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

One week after posting 164 yards on the ground against Penn State, the Buckeyes rushed for 170 against the Boilermakers. While that represents a high-water mark in Big Ten play so far this season, it can be couched a bit since it was accomplished against a Purdue rush defense that entered the game ranked 16th in the 18-team league and 91st in the country. Of course, the rushing total would have been a lot more impressive had Jackson's early 70-yard touchdown romp not been erased.

Still, credit the offensive line with creating some holes despite redshirt-freshman Ian Moore starting at right tackle for the injured Phillip Daniels. The Buckeyes have seemingly settled into a pattern of evening out carries between Jackson, James Peoples and Isaiah West while CJ Donaldson has become the short-yardage preference – that is, if you don't count backup quarterback Lincoln Kienholz.

Ohio State learned last year the luxury of having two interchangeable options at the running back position, and now it appears to have four. In terms of Kienholz, the offensive staff has obviously installed special short-yardage packages to take advantage of its backup quarterback's mobility. But if you don't let Kienholz at least occasionally throw the ball in those situations, you run the risk of opponents loading the box and rendering your special packages not-so special. More about that later.

Speaking of luxuries, how satisfying must it be for Day to be able to run scrimmage-style scenarios a full nine games into the regular season? I'm specifically talking about the end of the first half when kicker Jayden Fielding was sent into the game to attempt a 49-yard field goal.

The Buckeyes had reeled off rapid-fire touchdowns on each of their previous three possessions and held a 21-3 lead when they got the ball back at their own 24 with 47 seconds remaining in the second quarter. Sayin quickly moved the offense down the field, and an 8-yard sideline throw to Smith put the ball at the Purdue 31 with 0:08 showing on the clock.

Although OSU had used all of its timeouts, it could have run one more play to get Fielding a little closer for his field-goal try. After all, he hadn't kicked one longer than 38 yards all season with his career-long of 47 yards coming two years ago against Minnesota.

But Day remains mindful of the CFP semifinal game against Georgia in 2022 when he miscalculated the outer range of then-kicker Noah Ruggles, so what better time to gauge how much leg Fielding truly has than during a game whose outcome is no longer in doubt?

Whether it was the 50-degree temperatures, the unusual Bermuda grass surface at Ross-Ade Stadium or some combination of the two, Fielding added a 45-yard field goal in the fourth quarter to his career-long 49-yarder. No Ohio State kicker had kicked two field goals of 40 yards or more in the same game

since Ruggles converted from 46 yards twice during a 26-17 win at Nebraska on Nov. 6, 2021.

Long Way To Go

The Purdue football program has taken several steps backward since Jeff Brohm left as head coach after the 2022 season to return to his alma mater Louisville. Brohm won 17 games over his last two seasons in West Lafayette, a total the Boilermakers haven't come close to matching in the two-plus seasons since.

Purdue is a combined 7-27 overall since Brohm's departure, and that includes a 16-game losing streak in Big Ten play.

First-year head coach Barry Odom is using the same kind of strategy that has worked so well for Curt Cignetti at Indiana, utilizing the transfer portal to completely restructure the roster. But while Cignetti has enjoyed instant success with the Hoosiers, Odom is still trying to get his program on track.

Odom turned a moribund program around at UNLV, so there is every indication he can do the same at Purdue. But he seems to be facing a steep climb with a team that doesn't appear ready to compete in the Big Ten.

Not that the coach did himself any favors early in the game.

On its second possession, Purdue had moved the ball out from its own 7-yard line with sophomore quarterback Ryan Browne completing 6 of 7 pass attempts for 64 yards. Faced with a third-and-2 at the Ohio State 22, Browne should have been armed with the confidence of knowing he had already converted a pair of third-down situations on the drive. But Odom didn't let him try for a third.

Browne was replaced by backup Malachi Singleton, whose reputation as a run-first quarterback is well-documented. The Ohio State defense stacked the line of scrimmage, linebacker Arvell Reese dropped Singleton for a 1-yard loss, and Purdue was left having to settle for a 40-yard field goal.

Later in the first half, it was a pair of physical mistakes that cost the Boilermakers.

They were still very much in the game, facing a 14-3 deficit but on the move with a second-quarter possession. After getting the benefit of a pass-interference call against OSU cornerback Davison Igbinosun – a penalty that moved Purdue to its own 38-yard line – Browne just missed connecting with receiver Jesse Watson at the Ohio State 35. Had the completion been made, however, it wouldn't have counted because a Purdue offensive lineman was flagged for being too far downfield.

Two plays later, Browne tried to get a deep ball to receiver Tra'Mar Harris when OSU freshman Devin Sanchez was hit with a pass-interference penalty of his own. That would have moved the ball to the Purdue 48 and given the Boilermakers a fresh set of downs – except that they were hit with another ineligible receiver downfield penalty to offset Sanchez's PI.

One play later, Jermaine Mathews Jr. picked off a Browne pass and returned it to the Purdue 30. Nine plays after that, Kienholz scored on his 3-yard keeper, the Buckeyes stretched their lead to 21-3, and the Boilermakers were never heard from again until a meaningless fourth-quarter touchdown against the second- and third-team OSU defense.

Two linemen drifting far enough from the line of scrimmage to be penalized as ineligible receivers – during the same possession – is pretty much unacceptable anytime during the season but downright inexcusable by the time you get to early November.

OHIO STATE INSIDER

OSU Without Tate, Two Linemen In Win

Ohio State was without multiple key offensive contributors in its 34-10 victory over Purdue at Rose-Ade Stadium on Nov. 8. The most notable player held out was junior wide receiver Carnell Tate, who wasn't listed on the injury report but felt tight in warmups.

After the game, head coach Ryan Day said Ohio State chose to keep Tate on the sidelines as a precautionary measure.

"Carnell, we felt like he was going to be OK to play, but when he went through warmups, he just felt something there," Day said. "We just wanted to be really careful. Could he have played? Probably, but we're going to just rest him and make sure."

Also out for the Buckeyes were two players on the right side of their offensive line.

Right tackle Phillip Daniels was questionable ahead of the matchup with the Boilermakers and ended up not seeing any action. Ian Moore earned his first start in

Daniels' place.

Josh Padilla, who had been rotating at right guard with Tegra Tshabola for the previous few games, did not travel with the Buckeyes and was listed as out. Tshabola started at right guard, with redshirt freshman Gabe VanSickle and senior Ethan Onianwa both getting time behind him.

Freshman wide receiver Quincy Porter was also questionable prior to the game and did not see any time in the win.

OSU-UCLA To Kick Off At 7:30 p.m.

When UCLA comes to Columbus for its first Big Ten matchup against Ohio State on Nov. 15, the game will be at 7:30 p.m. and broadcast on NBC.

It will be the Buckeyes' third home night game of the season, with the wins over Ohio (Sept. 13) and Minnesota (Oct. 4) both being primetime matchups as well.

This will be the 10th matchup between the two teams, with the series tied 4-4-1. The last time the Buckeyes played the Bruins was in 2001, when OSU was defeated 13-6 in Jim Tressel's first season at the helm.

In the game, quarterback Steve Bellisari completed just 5 of 23 passes for the 21st-ranked Buckeyes for 45 yards and two interceptions while Deshaun Foster, former Bruins head coach, led No. 13 UCLA with 66 rushing yards on 29 totes.

Foster began the season as the head coach of UCLA, but after an 0-3 start, he was relieved of his duties. He was 5-10 overall in his two years with the team.

The last time Ohio State beat the Bruins



SONNY BROCKWAY

RECOGNIZED — Senior defensive end Caden Curry (92) along with senior linebacker Sonny Styles and junior linebacker Arvell Reese were nominated as semifinalists for the Lombardi Award, given to the best lineman/linebacker. Curry, a first-year starter, has 38 tackles and seven sacks while wreaking havoc in the backfield.

was in 1999, when Austin Moherman and Bellisari split time at quarterback, combining for 21 completions on 35 attempts for two scores, both thrown by Bellisari. Foster ran for 51 yards and a touchdown in the game, and the Buckeyes won 42-20.

Four Bucks Semifinalists For National Awards

Ohio State had four players nominated for three different national awards for top college football players at their positions.

After eight games, defensive end Caden Curry, senior linebacker Sonny Styles and junior linebacker Arvell Reese were nominated as semifinalists for the Lombardi Award.

Styles and Reese were also among 12 semifinalists for the Butkus Award, given

to the top linebacker in the country, while quarterback Julian Sayin was named a semifinalist for the Shaun Alexander Freshman of the Year Award.

Curry, Reese and Styles make up nearly 25 percent of the semifinalists for the award (13 players) that is given to the top lineman or linebacker in college football each year.

Curry has broken out in his first year starting on the edge, totaling 38 tackles, 10½ of which are for loss, seven sacks and five quarterback hurries, constantly finding his way into the backfield.

Reese has also experienced a breakout campaign in 2025, racking up a team-leading 55 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, 6½ sacks and two passes broken up through nine games.

His counterpart, Styles, is second on the team with 50 tackles, which included 2½ tackles for loss, and he has added an interception and a forced fumble.

Finally, Sayin was one of 14 players nominated as semifinalists for the Shaun Alexander Freshman of the Year award.

Sayin skyrocketed into being the front-runner in the race for the Heisman Trophy after his performance against Penn State in a 38-14 win, and he is now in a tightly contested race with Indiana quarterback Fernando Mendoza. Against Purdue, Sayin threw for 303 yards, a touchdown and an interception while completing 27 of 33 passes.

On the season, Sayin has completed 203 of 251 passes (80.9 percent) for 24 touchdowns and four interceptions. As the current Heisman favorite according to some platforms, Sayin is likely currently the favorite to take home the Freshman of the Year award as well.

The Shaun Alexander Freshman of the Year Award has not been given to a Buckeye in its seven-year history, but safety Caleb Downs received the accolade for his impressive season at Alabama as a true freshman before he transferred to play for the Buckeyes.

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2025 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	Record, Last Result
Aug. 30	TEXAS	W, 14-7	FOX	7-2, idle
Sept. 6	GRAMBLING	W, 70-0	BTN	7-3, 31-23 win over Bethune-Cookman
Sept. 13	OHIO	W, 37-9	Peacock	6-3, 24-20 win over Miami (Ohio)
Sept. 27	at Washington	W, 24-6	CBS	6-2, 13-10 loss to Wisconsin
Oct. 4	MINNESOTA	W, 42-3	NBC	6-3, idle
Oct. 11	at Illinois	W 34-16	FOX	6-3, idle
Oct. 18	at Wisconsin	W, 34-0	CBS	2-6, 13-10 win over Washington
Nov. 1	PENN STATE	W, 38-14	FOX	3-6, 27-24 loss to Indiana
Nov. 8	at Purdue	W, 34-10	BTN	2-8, 34-10 loss to Ohio State
Nov. 15	UCLA	7:30 p.m.	NBC	3-5, 28-21 loss to Nebraska
Nov. 22	RUTGERS	TBA	TBA	5-5, 35-20 win over Maryland
Nov. 29	at Michigan	Noon	FOX	7-2, idle

Day Says OSU Striving For Efficiency

So far through nine games, Ohio State’s offensive attack has been effective, but it hasn’t played very fast. In fact, through nine games, Ohio State’s offense had run only 63.1 plays per game. Despite the slow pace, Ohio State is averaging 36.3 points per game and 441.4 total yards per game.

Both marks rank among the top 25 in college football.

On “The Ryan Day Show” on Nov. 6, Day indicated that Ohio State is fine taking its time on offense as long as the unit continues to score points.

“When you’re efficient and you’re playing like that, a three-score game can feel way out of reach where I feel like maybe in the

past it was like, ‘OK, we’re just getting started on the game,’ ” Day said.

Day added that Ohio State will play faster when it’s the right time, but the offense is ultimately after efficiency.

Against Purdue, the Buckeyes ran more plays than they typically have this season, but that worked out well. On 76 plays, Ohio State totaled 473 yards for an average of 6.2

OSU Ranked No. 1 In First CFP Rankings

After its 38-14 win over Penn State in Week 10, Ohio State was No. 1 in the first College Football Playoff rankings of the season, released on Nov. 4.

The Buckeyes have been ranked at the top of the AP poll since their Week 1 win over Texas and now have received the same recognition from the CFP committee.

Following Ohio State in the rankings were No. 2 Indiana, No. 3 Texas A&M and No. 4 Alabama, which are the other three teams that would get a bye in the first round if the bracket were based on these rankings.

Rounding out the rest of the top 12 were No. 5 Georgia, No. 6 Ole Miss, No. 7 BYU, No. 8 Texas Tech, No. 9 Oregon, No. 10 Notre Dame, No. 11 Texas and No. 12 Oklahoma.

However, the five highest-ranked conference champions are each guaranteed a spot in the College Football Playoffs, meaning in this version of the rankings, Memphis, which was not in the initial top 25, would get into the tournament ahead of Oklahoma. Texas would also be out of the bracket, with No. 14 Virginia making it into the tournament ahead of the Longhorns as the top ACC team.

Other Big Ten teams ranked in the top 25 were No. 19 USC, No. 20 Iowa, No. 21 Michigan and No. 23 Washington.

Day was asked about the rankings and said that he hoped his players weren’t paying attention to them.

“I hope nobody pays attention to it because it doesn’t matter,” Day said. “It’s good

Continued On Page 6

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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.

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OHIO STATE INSIDER

Continued From Page 5

for the fans, and I think it's great for college football to be talking about it, but nothing matters if we don't continue to win."

Following its win over Purdue on Nov. 8, Ohio State still ranked atop the AP poll. The Buckeyes received 55 first-place votes.

Reese Named Bednarik Defensive POTW

For his standout performance in the 38-14 win over Penn State, Reese earned national recognition.

Reese was named the Chuck Bednarik National Defensive Player of the Week after his 12-tackle game, which included 2½ tackles for loss and a sack. He helped the Buckeyes' No. 1-ranked defense hold Penn State to 200 total yards of offense, including just 60 in the second half.

This is Reese's first time getting conference and national recognition this season.

He's the second Buckeye to receive the honor this season, after Curry's five tackles for loss against Washington on Sept. 27 earned him Player of the Week.

Seven Bucks Named Players Of The Game

Considering Ohio State thoroughly dominated Penn State in its win, it should come as no surprise that the Buckeye coaching staff felt seven players were worthy of Player of the Game honors.

On the offensive end, Sayin, sophomore receiver Jeremiah Smith and Tate were

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The next print issue of BSB does not mail until Nov. 18. 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 of the Ohio State sports activity. All the news is available in real time at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com.

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appear the Friday before every game. For the Purdue game, Sam Cipriani saw it 49-6, Bobby Gorbett 41-10, and Greg Wilson 41-6.

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.

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each named Players of the Game, while Reese, junior defensive end Kenyatta Jackson Jr. and junior defensive tackle Kayden McDonald earned recognition defensively.

Sayin, Tate and Smith teamed up to fuel an explosive Ohio State passing attack. In the win, Sayin threw for 316 yards and four touchdowns while completing 20 of 23 passes. The majority of Sayin's passing production came when he targeted either Smith or Tate. Smith led the way with six catches for 123 yards and two touchdowns, while Tate went for five catches, 124 yards and a touchdown.

Smith and Tate were especially effective catching passes deep down the field. The star receivers combined for three catches of over 40 yards in the win.

Jackson and Reese each set career highs in Ohio State's win. Jackson went for four tackles, including 2½ for loss, and had a career-high two sacks.

McDonald also had a solid performance. He tied his career high with eight total tackles.

Freshman linebacker Riley Pettijohn also earned Player of the Game honors as a special teamer. The freshman logged one tackle in the game.

Gough, Williams Have Black Stripes Removed

Two Buckeyes had their black stripes removed since BSB last went to press.

Former Ohio State club football player and second-year defensive back Glorien Gough shed his black stripe for Ohio State on Nov. 5, and one day later, sophomore walk-on receiver Dorian Williams had his black stripe removed.

Gough spent 2023 with Ohio State's club football team, racking up 38 tackles, five pass breakups and four interceptions in nine games in his freshman season. Hailing from Palos Verdes Estates, Calif., Gough joined Ohio State as a walk-on in 2024 and has spent the past two years developing before officially losing his black stripe.

Gough has made one appearance for Ohio State in 2025, earning a single rep as a member of the kickoff coverage during the Buckeyes' 70-0 thrashing of Grambling State.

Williams joined the team in 2024 as an invited walk-on. He didn't play in a game last year as a true freshman but, like Gough, made his collegiate debut in Ohio State's win over Grambling State.

Burke Says Knowles Concerned Defense

In the aftermath of Ohio State's win over Penn State and ex-defensive coordinator Jim Knowles, former Buckeye cornerback Denzel Burke shed a harsh truth about how

little trust the cornerback placed in its defensive play caller during their national title run last season.

On an appearance on the "Bleav in Buckeyes" podcast hosted by former Buckeyes Chimdi Chekwa and Bryant Browning, Burke said Ohio State's defense had little faith in Knowles, particularly stating his playcalling in the Buckeyes' 34-23 victory over Notre Dame was "questionable."

"I won't lie, there were moments," Burke said. "Some of the play calls that were being called on the defensive side were pretty questionable. We were just hoping that our DC wasn't going to put himself in a bind and put us in bad positions."

The Buckeyes jumped out to a 31-7 lead in the third quarter but gave up two touchdowns and two-point conversions on the Irish's last four drives before Ohio State sealed the game with a late Jayden Fielding field goal.

In his first season in the NFL with Arizona, Burke has recorded 11 tackles (three solo) and one interception. Burke was selected as the 174th pick in the fifth round of the NFL draft by the Cardinals.

Former OSU DL Jones Traded

A former Ohio State defensive lineman has found a new home in the NFL.

Dre'Mont Jones of the Tennessee Titans was dealt to the Baltimore Ravens for a conditional fifth-round pick that could become a fourth-round pick.

Jones has been a bright spot for a Titan defense that has struggled through a tough 1-8 campaign. Through nine games, Jones had racked up 26 tackles (13 solo), 4½ sacks and a fumble recovery, but his last four contests were particularly strong with the seventh-year defensive lineman earning all of his sacks in that span.

In a Twitter post, Jones showed his appreciation for his short time in Tennessee,



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while expressing his excitement to join the Ravens.

“The NFL is too crazy. Thank you, Titans family. I loved and appreciated my short time in Nashville too much,” his post read. “(Quarterback Cam Ward) is the truth, too. You all give him time. He can be great!

“I’m ready to be a Raven rocking that purple and black!”

Jones was drafted as the 71st overall pick in the third round of the 2019 NFL draft by the Denver Broncos, where he spent the first four seasons of his NFL career. He then spent two seasons with the Seattle Seahawks from 2023–24 before signing a one-year \$8.5 million contract to join the Titans last offseason.

Lucas Will Dot The 'i' At The Schott

NBA Hall of Famer and former Buckeye Jerry Lucas will have his statue unveiled outside the Schottenstein Center on Nov. 14

at 4 p.m. Although it's been nearly 25 years since Lucas’ No. 11 was retired by Ohio State, he will be the first Buckeye athlete to have a sculpture outside the arena.

Two days later, during Ohio State’s Nov. 16 matchup with Notre Dame, Lucas will take the court with the fall athletic band for Script Ohio. The honor will come one day after the band performs its same rendition for the football team’s showdown with UCLA on Nov. 15. Lucas will be the first basketball player ever to dot the “i.”

Lucas was honored when it was revealed that he would get a statue at Ohio State.

“It’s an unbelievable honor,” Lucas told BSB in September. “I shouldn’t think about it. It might be the biggest honor I’ve ever gotten in my life. I understand certain things have happened (for me), but this is very, very rare to have this happen.”

Lucas is widely considered the best men’s basketball player in Ohio State’s history. The Middletown, Ohio, native was a

three-time All-American and two-time national player of the year. He averaged 24.3 points per game over his three years on the varsity roster, totaling 1,990 career points, which was the most in school history upon his departure.

Lucas now ranks third all-time in points scored behind Dennis Hopson (2,096 points) and Herb Williams (2,011).

The 6-9 forward was also a rebounding machine. Lucas grabbed 1,411 rebounds in his career, averaging 17.2 per game – the best in program history by 300 boards.

Lucas helped the Buckeyes earn their only national championship in program history in 1960, while finishing as the nation’s runner-up in the following two seasons.

Dingler Earns Gold Glove

Former Ohio State baseball player and current Detroit Tigers catcher Dillon Dingler became a Gold Glove recipient on

Nov. 2.

Dingler earned the honor after a stellar 2025 season behind the plate. The former Buckeye allowed no passed balls and threw out 31.7 percent of potential base stealers.

The Gold Glove, given to the best defensive player at each position in each league, had previously never gone to a former Buckeye.

Dingler played at Ohio State from 2017-20. Despite his last season with Ohio State being cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dingler hit .340 with five home runs and 14 RBI in 13 games.

Five years after being drafted in the second round of the 2020 draft by the Tigers, Dingler started to realize his offensive potential in MLB. He led the Tigers with a .278 batting average and also tacked on 13 home runs and 57 RBI, helping Detroit to a second straight appearance in the playoffs this past season.

From The Pages Of BSB

40 Years Ago — 1985

The grin reached from one side of his face to the other. Earle Bruce was tickled pink. In fact, his face was a little flush from all the beaming.

Bruce, who had anything but a 9-to-5 job as head coach at Ohio State University, could not help but smile after his Buckeyes, ranked anywhere from eighth to 12th in various national polls, had knocked off Iowa. That’s top-ranked-in-every-poll Iowa.

Having just stepped off a rain-soaked Ohio Stadium carpet, Bruce was swimming in pride after his Buckeyes had sent the Hawkeyes back to Iowa City on the short end of a 22-13 score on Nov. 2.

“You saw a great effort out there today,” said Bruce, addressing the largest media gathering of the season. “The defense kind of came back and did a great job, intercepting the ball four times and forcing a fumble. They swarmed to the football and played well.”

35 Years Ago — 1990

Deron Brown. Tony Moore. Allen DeGraffenreid. Bill Seach. Paul Long. Matt McCoy. Those were certainly not familiar names to most Ohio State football fans.

Most of the time, players like the ones mentioned above were relegated to scout-team duty throughout the week without much hope of getting actual playing time on Saturday.

But since the Buckeyes had been on such a tear, the most recent game being a 48-7 thrashing of Northwestern in Ohio Stadium on Nov. 3, Brown, Moore, DeGraffenreid, Seach, Long, McCoy and many more well-known backups such as Kent Graham, Butler B’ynote, William Houston, Dave Monnot and Craig Griffey saw action against the Wildcats.

While many of those players entered the game long after the game was no longer in doubt, most coaches and players believed the experience they were gaining would benefit the entire team in the future.

“I think the fact that we have been able to play so many players and so many different combinations throughout the last three games has been one of the best things to come out of these wins,” said Ohio State head coach John Cooper.

30 Years Ago — 1995

In one game, Ohio State played both the bully and the pipsqueak.

The fourth-ranked Buckeyes bullied No. 25 Iowa for a school-record 56 first-half points.

But a mishmash of OSU first-teamers and backups then took on the pipsqueak role by surrendering 35 unanswered points, and what was once an unquestionable rout simply became a high-scoring, 56-35 win on Oct. 28 at Ohio Stadium.

OSU’s record-setting first-half performance included quick-strike touchdown drives of two, three and four plays.

After a week of hearing how it had not played well in a rainy 28-0 win over Purdue, the Ohio State offense simply exploded against Iowa.

OSU quarterback Bobby Hoying took center stage, throwing for two touchdowns and rushing for one before leaving at half-time. He shattered the OSU single-season TD passing record he had previously shared with Jim Karsatos, finishing the day with 21 touchdown passes for the season.

25 Years Ago — 2000

Hero or goat, big play or bonehead move.

These are the labels people place on athletes and their exploits when championships are truly at stake.

Such was the case on Oct. 28 when Ohio State ventured to Purdue with the upper hand in the Big Ten football race and the scramble for the conference’s coveted Rose Bowl berth at stake.

In the absolute final analysis, Purdue and its record-setting quarterback, Drew Brees, simply outlasted Ohio State, 31-27.

“It was a big ballgame, and big players make big plays,” said OSU safety Mike Doss. “Drew Brees made the last play for Purdue, and they won.”

Doss himself was there on the firing line and was positioned to be the hero. After all, his second interception paved the way for Ohio State, which fell to 6-2 overall and 3-2 in Big Ten play, to take a 27-24 lead with just 2:16 left.

But in a game as cruel as it is physical, Doss found himself in no man’s land just a few plays later as Brees threw a 64-yard bomb to former walk-on Seth Morales for the game-winning touchdown with 1:55 left.

20 Years Ago — 2005

Ohio State’s Big Ten battle on Oct. 29 against Minnesota pitted the nation’s No. 1 rushing defense (Goolden Gophers) against the country’s best rushing offense (Ohio State), trench warfare that was a throwback to the days when the conference championships were won and lost on the ground.

But for all of the fancy passing yards of the day – and OSU quarterback Troy Smith and Minnesota counterpart Bryan Cupito combined to throw for 629 yards – at the heart of the Buckeyes’ 45-31 victory was a re-emerging running attack led by sophomore tailback Antonio Pittman.

Going head-to-head with Laurence Maroney – the Gophers’ star tailback who entered the game No. 3 in the nation with a 161.9 rushing yards per game average – Pittman took over the spotlight for himself, running for a career-high 186 yards and two touchdowns as the Buckeyes flexed their muscles and kept pace in the Big Ten championship race.

Pittman bettered Maroney in that he had more yards on fewer carries and even one-upped the Minnesota running back when it came to long runs.

“Without a doubt, he’s a great running back,” Pittman said of Maroney. “I’ve watched a lot of Minnesota film, watching how he does things, watching for little things to see if maybe I can use them, too. I look up to the dude, and it was a challenge for me to go toe to toe with him today.”

15 Years Ago — 2010

Minnesota staged a Halloween party on Oct. 30 at TCF Bank Stadium with everyone in attendance from Elvis to Lady Gaga. It wasn’t all that difficult, though, to figure who was who when it came time for the unmasking at night’s end.

As with most masquerade parties, early deception gave way to reality when Ohio State simply overpowered its mistake-prone hosts and ran away with a 52-10 victory.

The Buckeyes did some masquerading of their own, often resembling Swiss cheese on defense in the early going with Minnesota quarterback Adam Weber completing his first three pass attempts of the game for 103 yards.

But after the Gophers tied the score at 7 at the 7:44 mark of the first quarter, OSU had evidently had all the tricks it was going to stand. The Buckeyes outscored the Gophers by a 45-3 margin from that point and gained 461 total yards to only 158 for the disappointed party hosts the rest of the way.

10 Years Ago — 2015

Ten games into the season, Ohio State was exactly where everyone thought it would be, even if the team hadn’t always looked

like the defending national champions in the process.

The Buckeyes were a perfect 10-0 after a sometimes-sloppy, sometimes-dominant, consistently inconsistent 28-3 win at Illinois that kept the Illibuck trophy in their possession for the eighth straight game. They had topped every team that stood in their way, but with the two most difficult games of the regular season still ahead of them, the Buckeyes hadn’t had a chance to evaluate themselves against a high-quality opponent.

Urban Meyer’s team was set to close the season with games against Michigan State and Michigan, who were ninth and 14th, respectively, in the AP poll, and while the Buckeyes hadn’t played their best in every game, they had done enough to arrive at those challenges with an unblemished record.

“We’re definitely in a good place,” said sophomore quarterback J.T. Barrett. “We’re 10-0. We’re one of the top teams in the country. Not a lot of teams can say they’re 10-0, so we feel like we’re in a good place.”

Five Years Ago — 2020

The first 30 minutes of Ohio State’s Nov. 7 game against Rutgers played out in typical fashion. The Buckeyes jumped out to a 35-3 halftime lead thanks in large part to another Heisman Trophy-worthy performance from junior quarterback Justin Fields, who started the game 15 of 17 passing for 232 yards and three touchdowns.

But the Scarlet Knights, who gained just 83 yards in the first half, racked up 290 yards and scored touchdowns on four consecutive second-half possessions to make things a little too close for comfort late. And though his team ultimately won the game, 49-27, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day attributed the second-half struggles to missed tackles and penalties.

“It was a tale of two halves,” Day said after the game. “It was a really dominant first half, and the guys played well, but then the second half, we didn’t play great. We had some penalties and allowed some big plays. We didn’t close them out. We should have really dominated in the first five or six minutes of the second half and allow some of our other guys to get in the game. That didn’t happen.”

One Year Ago — 2024

For 40 years, former Ohio State legend Cris Carter had possessed by far the best season by a true freshman receiver in program history, catching a school-record 41 catches for 648 yards and eight touchdowns over 12 games in 1984.

In Ohio State’s 45-0 win over Purdue on Nov. 9, Jeremiah Smith officially improved upon Carter’s legendary year by surpassing his single-season receptions and receiving touchdown marks.

Smith, who had previously surpassed Carter’s 648 receiving yards record in Ohio State’s 20-13 win over Penn State on Nov. 2, came into the game against Purdue needing just one more receiving touchdown and three more receptions to break Carter’s remaining freshman records.

Smith finished the game as the Buckeyes’ leading receiver with six catches for 87 yards and a touchdown, bringing his total receptions for the season to 45, his total receiving yards to 765 and his total touchdown receptions to nine. Smith, who had originally made a personal goal all the way back in January to break the single-season freshman receiving records, understood the weight of his accomplishment after the game.

“It means a lot,” Smith said. “It’s a blessing for sure to be able to break Cris Carter’s freshman records, but we have to keep it going. No stopping.”

Better Line Play Would Aid Running Game

Continued From Page 1

the Buckeyes, he has been consistent with pointing out any issues he has seen and notably has called the ground game “good, but not great,” multiple times.

But when Day has spoken about the run game, he seemed to believe that the problems could be arising from the blocking rather than from the running backs themselves, though he did say it’s still a learning process for the young backs as well.

“Each game they play, they’re learning more and more,” Day said on Oct. 21. “They still have to continue to get better. There were some breakdowns in terms of technique (in the win over Wisconsin). We have to be more consistent in terms of identifying who we’re going to and then using the technique to block them. For the most part, it was technique.”

In the 34-10 win over Purdue on Nov. 8, the running game showed that it may be progressing.

In a game against the Purdue rush defense that came into the game ranked 91st in the country, giving up 160.6 yards in the first nine games of the season, rushing totals might not mean as much as they would in games against better defenses. But Day and the Buckeyes were adamant that the Boilermakers were a perfect team to work on their run game against.

“We wanted to run the ball, and in order to get the run game going, you had to



SONNY BROCKWAY

ON THE GO — Bo Jackson (25) leads Ohio State with 613 yards on 95 carries (6.5 average) and two touchdowns. The freshman ran for 75 yards and had a 70-yard TD negated by a penalty in the 34-10 over Purdue.

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give it a chance to get going,” Day said. “In this game, we ran the ball 43 times for 170 yards. I think it was efficient. It wasn’t great, but there were some good hits there.”

In Moore’s first game as a starter, he was happy to be part of that type of offense.

“It’s just big-man football,” he said. “It’s Big Ten football. It runs through an offensive line and runs through a defensive line. I don’t watch much SEC ball, but in the Big Ten, it starts up front. We just asserted it.”

Moore might have been the least experienced player on the line, but he didn’t look like he was. Instead, it was right guard Tegra Tshabola who had struggles at times throughout the contest, which has become consistent with his game.

He began the season in a rotation with Ethan Onianwa at the position, and when Onianwa fell out of that rotation, Josh Padilla has recently had a chance to slot in with Tshabola. However, Padilla was out for the game against the Boilermakers, so Tshabola played almost all of the offensive snaps OSU had.

Usually, Day won’t comment much on offensive-line play immediately after games, saying that he needs to watch the film to be sure about what his feelings are. And while he continued to do that after the win, he did give a little more when asked about Tshabola’s inconsistent play showing back up against Purdue.

“I do agree with you, because I watched it and saw it,” Day said. “Then there were some other things that were good. But we need a grade out of champion here, and that’s for everybody, so that’s what the expectation is. We’ll continue to look at it. I don’t know how many snaps Gabe (VanSick-

le) got in there today, or Ethan, but we’re going to keep swinging at this thing and make sure that in the end we get the best guys on the field.”

The right guard spot seems less settled than it did at the beginning of the season, but if there’s one thing the Buckeyes do have there, it’s options.

Moore said the depth of the Buckeye offensive line can stand up against anyone else’s in the game.

“(Offensive line coach Tyler) Bowen says it almost every day,” he said. “I think we have the best offensive line depth in the country. We have five dudes who have played, and Ethan played at Rice. I think we have the best depth and best offensive line in the country. It’s almost – not easy, but it’s natural. Coach Bowen plugs us in every now and then, so it’s just more natural.”

Day made clear that Padilla won’t be out long, and he will remain an option at right guard as well.

“We’re hoping to get him back next week. He didn’t make the trip, so that was one that we knew he’d be out, and so we’ll continue to look at it next week. But if he’s not back next week, he should be back in two weeks.”

Young Bucks Take Over

At the beginning of the season, running back was another position that seemed fairly settled, with James Peoples and CJ Donaldson Jr. getting the majority of the carries early on.

Last season, Judkins was more of the power back for the Buckeyes, while TreVeyon Henderson was more explosive. The belief was that, while they wouldn’t be quite as talented as Henderson and Judkins, Peo-

ples could provide the explosiveness in the run game, while Donaldson would be the power.

It quickly became obvious that those two backs weren't going to provide what was expected, and Jackson burst onto the scene and made himself the No. 1 running back fairly quickly.

Now, recently, true freshman Isaiah West is showing that he could very well also be one of the best options in the run game.

In the game against Purdue, Jackson led the way with 14 carries for 75 yards (5.4 yards per carry), and West followed with nine totes for 60 yards (6.7).

Peoples had eight carries, most of them coming late when the game was already in hand, and took them for just 26 yards (3.3).

Donaldson got five carries and has seemingly settled into the power back role for the Buckeyes, coming in mostly at the goal line when a few yards are needed to get seven points on the scoreboard. He was successful in doing so twice in the game and has been nine times this year, which by far leads the team.

But to get OSU into the red zone, it was Jackson and West getting the carries, and it shouldn't be a surprise if that continues after what they did with those carries.

"I thought we got better today because they had more opportunities to run these," Day said. "These are young backs that we've got to continue to give them the opportunity to grow, and I think we'll get on the film and get better from this game."

Starters Catch Their Breath

From the first kickoff, it was obvious that this wasn't being treated like a match-up game by Ohio State, and rightfully so, as proven by the final score.

Even when Purdue took a 3-0 lead in the first quarter – the third time the Buckeyes have faced a deficit this season, each of them a field goal to start the game – there was no flinching from the Scarlet and Gray.

With Daniels missing the game after being listed as questionable on the injury report and Carnell Tate hanging out on the sideline for "precautionary reasons," Ohio State was not playing at full strength.

It wasn't only injuries either. There was constant rotation at most positions throughout the game, even early on in the first half, with usual pine-sitters Mylan Graham, Bryson Rodgers, Onianwa, Nate Roberts, Riley Pettijohn and David Adolph regularly getting into the contest, along with many others.

That didn't matter much, with the Buckeyes getting out to a 24-3 lead by the time the teams went into their respective locker rooms.

The fact that players missed the game and the Buckeyes still took a big lead into halftime was exactly what Day wanted to see, so that he could continue to give his regular starters breathers throughout the game and pull them fully later on.

"It gave us an opportunity to get some other guys in the game, which was great. That was kind of the idea of watching guys

step up," he said. "It was great to see Ian Moore playing. I don't know what he graduated out, but when you don't notice somebody, that's a good sign."

Buckeyes In The Driver's Seat

Former head coach Urban Meyer used to have a saying when the Buckeyes were undefeated. For the 2025 Ohio State team, it would go something like: "The best thing about being 9-0 is having the opportunity to go 10-0."

As is the case for the Buckeyes many times, they have full control over what the rest of the season looks like.

When it comes to the Big Ten race, Ohio State and Indiana are both undefeated – the Hoosiers nearly losing that perfect mark when they went to Penn State on Nov. 8 – and there are three teams behind them with one loss. Those teams are Oregon, USC and Michigan.

The Buckeyes' remaining schedule is two straight home games against UCLA and Rutgers on Nov. 15 and 22, respectively, before they go on the road to Ann Arbor.

Of course, there are no guarantees when it comes to The Game. That has been proven time and time again over the long history of the rivalry. But in order to have a chance at two of the three goals that Ohio State sets every season, the equation is extremely simple – at least on paper: Win on Nov. 29.

Any Buckeye fan is well aware that a loss to the Wolverines this season would be the fifth in a row, which would be the first time

OSU dropped that many in a row since the 1920s.

Ohio State will go into each of its final three games as the favorite and, in that way, controls its own destiny in the Big Ten race.

Day spoke about the approach of his team this season and why they have been able to stay away from any upsets through the first nine contests.

"(It's) businesslike. They know what they want to get done. They have perspective," Day said. "They've seen it. They know what it's supposed to look like. So now we have to get back to work this week in practice and continue to do it again next week against UCLA."

Cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr., who had his second interception of the season against the Boilermakers, said that his head coach has been giving the team the same message all year, which has helped them remain consistent even when they are major favorites.

"The message Coach Day is giving us every week is just staying consistent, playing our Buckeye football," Mathews said.

And while he didn't call out any future opponents, Mathews believes that the No. 1 in front of Ohio State in both the CFP rankings and the AP poll are there for a reason.

"I don't think anybody in the country can really hang with us, in my opinion," he said. "I think if we go out there every Saturday and play our game, we won't have too much to worry about."



Smith Set Career High In Catches At Purdue

After junior wide receiver Carnell Tate was ruled out for Ohio State's 34-10 win over Purdue following an undisclosed injury, the Buckeye offense had to quickly change its game plan, and that involved a heavy dose of wideout Jeremiah Smith.

GAME NOTEBOOK Sam Cipriani

The sophomore receiver set a career high with 10 receptions, taking those catches for 137 yards and one touchdown as redshirt-freshman quarterback Julian Sayin went to his star receiver early and often against the Boilermakers.

Even with the career-high performance, Smith said he's focused less on celebrating the achievement and more on making sure he keeps raising the bar for himself and stays consistent.

"It feels good, but it's just another day in the office," Smith said. "I (continue to set career highs). It's all about staying consistent. That's all that matters."

Smith's most impactful play of the afternoon came midway through the second quarter. In the midst of a 10-play, 89-yard drive, the Buckeyes found themselves with a first-and-10 on the Boilermakers' 35-yard line. Sayin connected with Smith down the middle of the field just as he broke free from two Purdue defenders for a 35-yard touchdown.

Smith praised Sayin's downfield touch, noting that his quarterback consistently drops the ball exactly where it needs to be for him to make a play.

"It's very pretty just looking at the ball coming down when you're about to catch it," Smith said. "You just have to see it for yourself to experience something like that,

but every ball that he throws is on time and perfect."

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day emphasized the importance of Smith being a steady presence in the offense with Tate out.

"For Jeremiah to have the impact he did with not having Carnell on the other side of the ball, it just speaks volumes to what he does and just how impactful he is," Day said. "It goes without saying, but when you don't have Carnell out there, it is a little different, and so that does change things a little bit."

Smith caught four passes of over 15 yards and two passes of more than 30 yards against the Boilermakers.

For the season, Smith has hauled in 65 catches for 862 yards and 10 touchdowns. He's also rushed the ball two times for 20 yards with one score on the ground.

WR Depth Steps Up Without Tate

Though Smith did most of the heavy lifting, he wasn't the only Buckeye pass catcher to step up in Tate's absence.

Wide receivers Brandon Inniss, Bryson Rodgers and Mylan Graham all had strong performances in the Buckeyes' victory over Purdue.

Outside of Smith and junior tight end Max Klare, the veteran wideout Inniss had the best day of the bunch. Inniss finished with three catches for 26 yards, while returning two punts for 24 yards on special teams.

The junior receiver Rodgers had two catches for a career-high 30 yards, while Graham had one catch for 20 yards after missing an opportunity for a catch in the first half.

Day expressed the importance of Ohio State's pass-catching depth against the Boilermakers, giving props to several Buckeye wideouts who made the most of their opportunities.

"Brandon Inniss had three catches, Bryson Rodgers had two catches. Then it was good to see Mylan come back with a catch in the second half as well," Day said. "We're going to need all these guys."

Smith, whose performance led the group, showed a similar appreciation for his fellow wideouts. The sophomore added that though he was disappointed Tate was unavailable, he was excited for his teammates to have the opportunity to showcase their talents.

"It just shows that we've got guys all around this room that can play," Smith said. "When Carnell went down, it was sad for us, but we have Mylan Graham, Bryson Rodgers. All the guys that were doing that, they made plays today. I'm very excited for those guys."

Freshman tight end Nate Roberts, who has primarily appeared as a blocker in jumbo sets for Ohio State, secured his first two catches of the season for a total of 6 yards.

Through nine games this season, Inniss has recorded 21 catches for 180 yards and a touchdown, Rodgers has caught four passes for 52 yards, and Graham has hauled in three catches for 53 yards.



SONNY BROCKWAY

DOMINATE WITH A D — Although Ohio State allowed an early field goal and a late touchdown against the backups, the defense was solid as usual, limiting Purdue to 186 total yards in the 34-10 win on Nov. 8. Cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr. (7) did his part with the lone Buckeye interception in the second quarter.

Klare Solid In Homecoming

It was a homecoming to remember for Klare.

After spending the previous two seasons with Purdue before transferring to Ohio State in the offseason, Klare had a solid outing in his return to West Lafayette, Ind.

The junior tight end brought in five receptions for 59 yards, tying his season high in catches.

Sayin said that though Klare played well, he wishes he had connected with him on one of the red-zone throws that could have given the transfer a touchdown at his former school.

"Max did a great job," Sayin said. "We actually had a deep shot for him, and he ended up slipping on the grass. He had a really good game and did some great things. I missed him in the red zone, and he would have had a touchdown if I had put it on him. That one's on me. On that last drive, he had that back-shoulder fade, too.

He had a great day."

Klare was productive in his two years at Purdue, despite the program struggling with a 5-19 record during his time playing, hauling in 73 passes for 881 yards and four touchdowns. Klare then transferred to Ohio State before his junior campaign and has amassed 26 catches for 269 yards and one score in nine games with the Buckeyes.

Klare said that though he enjoyed his return to Ross-Ade Stadium, he couldn't help but feel odd at times playing against his former team and seeing his brother, Boilermakers redshirt-freshman tight end Luke Klare, on the opposite sideline.

"It's definitely different, but it was really cool," Klare said. "I have a lot of love for Purdue, everything they've done for me, from an academic level to an on-the-field level. I mean, there's so many great people here, and I wouldn't trade my time here for anything. I'm really grateful for Purdue and grateful to be back here."

Day said Klare has been excited to return to his roots at Purdue, adding that

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Game Analysis

What Worked Well

As it has been all season, Ohio State's secondary was dominant in its 34-10 win over Purdue. Outside of a couple of issues with penalties, the Buckeye secondary shut down Purdue's passing attack and held Ryan Browne, the Boilermakers' starting quarterback, to just 10 of 19 passing for 76 yards and an interception.

It didn't necessarily start great for the secondary. Ohio State allowed Browne to complete eight of his first 10 passes for 67 yards in the first quarter, but it was impenetrable the rest of the way. In the last three quarters, Browne completed only two of his last nine passes.

The best moment for Ohio State's secondary came in the second quarter, when Purdue trailed 14-3. On a second-and-15 play from Purdue's 33-yard line, Browne attempted to find freshman receiver Jesse Watson over the middle, but junior safety Caleb Downs was there to tip the ball away and into the arms of Jermaine Mathews Jr.

Fellow cornerback Davison Igbinosun committed one of Ohio State's two pass-interference penalties, but overall, he was effective in coverage. Igbinosun, senior linebacker Sonny Styles and sophomore safety Jaylen McClain each had a pass breakup.

It was the fourth time that Ohio State held an opposing quarterback under 100 yards this season.

What Didn't Work

There wasn't a lot that didn't work for the Buckeyes in their blowout win over Purdue, but Ohio State's ground game was still inconsistent. The Buckeyes finished the game with 170 rushing yards on 43 carries for a 4.0-yard average. As has been the case in some of their other mediocre rushing performances, the Buckeyes struggled to get much going during the first half.

Ohio State went for just 78 yards on 22 carries (3.5-yard average) in the first 30 minutes of the game. Freshman running back Isaiah West was Ohio State's most efficient runner. He had 60 yards

on nine carries (6.7-yard average) for the game, but more than half of those yards came in the second half. Fellow freshman Bo Jackson was Ohio State's leading rusher. He went for 75 yards on 14 carries and consistently fought through contact to pick up tough yardage. However, with starting right tackle Phillip Daniels and right guard Josh Padilla out of the game, the Buckeyes struggled to create many holes.

Additionally, Ohio State committed two 10-yard penalties on run plays, including one from sophomore receiver Jeremiah Smith that wiped away what would have been a 70-yard touchdown by Jackson.

The Buckeyes were effective in short-yardage situations, though. Senior running back CJ Donaldson Jr. and backup quarterback Lincoln Kienholz were both able to score rushing touchdowns from inside the 5-yard line.

Play Of The Game

It's difficult to pick out just one play from Ohio State's dominant win over Purdue, but redshirt-freshman quarterback Julian Sayin's 35-yard touchdown pass to Smith stands out above the rest. The play was Ohio State's longest of the game and came midway through in the second quarter.

At that point, the Buckeyes led 7-3 with 7:30 to go before halftime. Smith allowed his team to create some separation on the leaderboard when he got past Purdue linebacker Mani Powell. Powell, who was unlucky to have the assignment of matching up against Smith in zone coverage, simply couldn't keep up with the Buckeye wideout.

Sayin tossed a perfect pass into the window created by Smith's speed, and the Buckeye standout surprised no one by completing the catch through traffic.

— Bobby Gorbett

he knows his tight end has a tremendous amount of respect for the university after spending his first two collegiate years with the Boilermakers.

"He was excited to come back and play," Day said. "He's got a lot of respect for this place. He loves this place. A lot of the guys, certainly, he played with, and obviously, his brother is on the team. So I know it meant a lot to him to play in this game and get a win. I thought he played well in the game."

Defense Dominant At Ross-Ade

In a stadium that has been the site of some of Ohio State's most heartbreaking losses, the Buckeye defense delivered a performance that ensured history had no chance of repeating itself.

Ohio State's defense held Purdue to just 186 yards of total offense. It marked the sixth time this season that the Buckeyes have held an opponent to 200 yards or less of total offense.

Though the Boilermaker offense looked solid in the first quarter, jumping out to a 3-0 lead late in the period, the Buckeye defense wasn't fazed.

Ohio State junior cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr., who came away with Ohio State's lone takeaway – an interception off a tipped pass by Caleb Downs in the second quarter – said he doesn't let the momentum of a game affect him negatively, adding that the key is to respond instead of panicking when an opponent lands a blow.

"It's just the flow of the game," Mathews said. "Things happen. They're going to make a couple of plays. They are a Power Four football team just like us. They're going to make a couple of plays here and there. So it's just about making the right adjustments and just getting in our groove and playing our game."

Following Purdue's field goal, Ohio State's offense reeled off 34 unanswered points, while the defense earned five stops,

including forcing four punts and Mathews' interception.

For the first time this season, sophomore linebacker Payton Pierce led the way for Ohio State with seven tackles (five solo). Senior captain and linebacker Sonny Styles tacked on five tackles (three solo) and a pass breakup, while his starting counterpart, Arvell Reese, had just one tackle, which went for a loss.

Ohio State's defense also held Purdue quarterback Ryan Browne to just a 52.6 percent completion rate, while the Boilermakers averaged 4.2 yards per carry.

Junior defensive tackle Kayden McDonald, who finished his outing against the Boilermakers with four solo tackles and one tackle for loss, said the team's focus on improving each week is what drives their success.

"Because it's not about (the opponent), it's about us," McDonald said of why they concentrate on improvement. "Each week, each practice, each game, we have to get better because we have goals in mind. We play scary. Never be comfortable, never stay complacent and always be ready to play and have an edge."

Through nine games, Ohio State's defense is allowing just 7.2 points per game, which still remains as the nation's best mark by a significant margin. The Buckeyes are also allowing just 211.6 yards of total offense per game, which also ranks first nationally.

Fielding Makes Career-Long FG

Ohio State's senior kicker Jayden Fielding had a career day against Purdue.

Fielding was a perfect 2 for 2 on field-goal attempts and extended the Buckeyes' lead twice with field goals in the second and fourth quarters.

Fielding's first kick came with just three seconds remaining in the first half. After Ohio State received the ball with just

under a minute remaining, the Buckeyes managed to reel off a seven-play, 45-yard drive in just 44 seconds to set Fielding up for a 49-yard attempt. Fielding drilled the kick just before halftime, setting a new career long.

Day said he was impressed with Fielding's poise in knocking through a long field-goal try, noting it was a big confidence boost for the kicker going forward.

"We put Jayden in that spot like, 'Come on man, we've got to make this field goal.' He did. He stepped up, protection was good, and again, he pounded it," Day said. "So that was great for him, and it was important for his confidence to know that we're going to need those as we move forward."

After a scoreless third quarter for both teams, Ohio State added insurance early in the fourth quarter. The Buckeyes took just over six minutes and 11 plays to march 58 yards down the field before Fielding drove in a 45-yard field goal, which also would have been his season-long, if not for the 49-yarder earlier in the game.

Fielding had not made any field goal longer than 38 yards this season prior to Ohio State's win over Purdue. The League City, Texas, native is now 11 for 13 on field-goal tries through nine games. Fielding was also 4 for 4 on extra-point attempts against the Boilermakers and is 38 of 38 this season.

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Purdue Does Slow Boil As Buckeyes Dominate

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

While many teams are looking to drive in the fast lane, top-ranked Ohio State (9-0, 6-0) preferred traveling at or below the speed limit with the blinkers on to bleed out a 34-10 win against Purdue in West Lafayette, Ind., on Nov. 8.

Six of the Buckeyes' eight drives – before the last one to end the game – were at least nine plays.

Overcoming a rare deficit, Julian Sayin threw for 303 yards, and CJ Donaldson Jr. rushed for two scores before a lot of scarlet among the 57,701 fans on a 52-degree afternoon at Ross-Ade Stadium.

Without star receiver Carnell Tate, who did not play as a precaution due to an unknown injury, Jeremiah Smith had a career-high 10 catches for 137 yards, and former Purdue tight end Max Klare's five catches went for 59 yards.

The Buckeyes spotted the Boilermakers (2-8, 0-7) a 3-0 lead before scoring 24 straight points in the second quarter.

Second Chance

Purdue, on the opening drive, got one first down – a third-down run of 10 yards to the 37 by quarterback Ryan Browne – before a 45-yard punt was returned 15 yards to the OSU 30 by Brandon Inniss.

On the first play, Bo Jackson's 70-yard touchdown was negated by an illegal block in the back by Smith.

Jackson was credited with a 13-yard run and a first down, and Sayin hit Klare for 19 yards to the Boilermaker 48. A pass to Smith went for 3, but Sayin was sacked for 6 and an incompletion forced a punt.

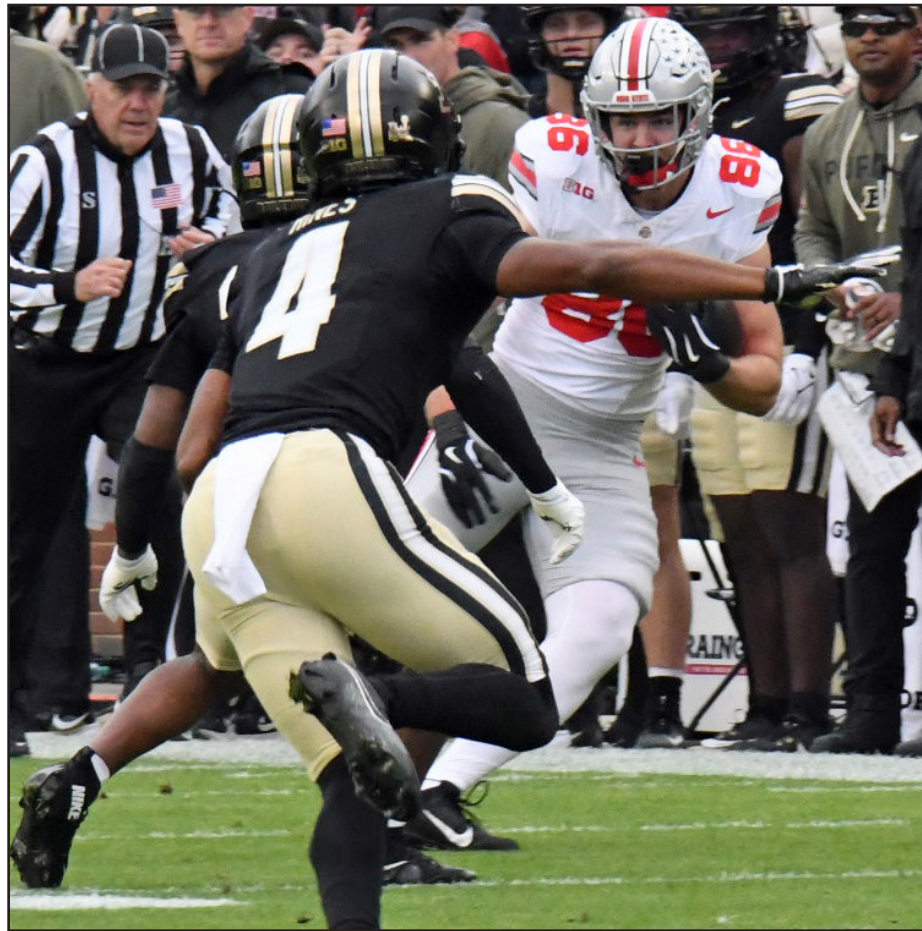
The Boilermakers faced a third-and-5 from their 12, which led to a 30-yard catch by Rico Walker. A 9-yard pass to Michael Jackson III produced a first at the OSU 47, and another third-down completion of 8 to Nitro Tuggle moved the chains to the 30.

Purdue then gained 7 yards on three plays, and Spencer Porath kicked a 40-yard field goal for a 3-0 lead at 4:23.

On OSU's next possession, Inniss snared a pass from Sayin for 9 yards to the Buckeye 40 on a third-and-4.

The next first down came on a pass interference on a throw to Smith at the 50. On second down, Sayin rolled right and spotted Smith for 16 to the 32.

Then, Smith was covered but reached over his head to grab the ball for a 31-yard completion to the 1 to end the quarter,



SONNY BROCKWAY

HOMEcoming VICTORY — Tight end Max Klare (86), who transferred to Ohio State this season, had a big game against his former team to help the Buckeyes to a 34-10 victory over Purdue. He was second on the team with five catches for 59 yards.

meaning OSU trailed after the first quarter for the first time this season.

To open the second quarter, tight end Nate Roberts was stopped at the line before Donaldson pushed his way in to make it 7-3 at 14:16 to complete the nine-play, 75-yard, 5:07 drive.

After Purdue coach Barry Odom opted to punt on a fourth-and-3 from its own 44, to the consternation of the slight majority of Boilermakers fans in attendance, OSU took over at the 11.

Sayin had a third-down conversion of 11 to Bryson Rodgers to the 24. Inniss had a catch for 5, Smith's reception went for 7, and Isaiah West, two plays later, rushed left for 16 to the Purdue 48.

After another 9-yard pass to Smith and Jackson's run for 4, Sayin hit Smith down the middle in stride for a 35-yard TD at 7:18 for a 14-3 lead. It took 10 plays and 5:44 to

go the 89 yards.

When Purdue got the ball, a pass interference on Davison Igbinosun gave the Boilermakers a first at their 38. Later, offsetting penalties were critical in getting a turnover. OSU's Devin Sanchez was called for pass interference at the Buckeye 42, but Purdue had an ineligible receiver downfield for the second time in the drive.

On the ensuing play, Caleb Downs tipped the pass, and Jermaine Mathews Jr. made the interception at the OSU 47 and returned it 23 yards to the 30.

The Buckeyes methodically used eight runs and one pass that used 5:21 off the clock to go ahead 21-3 with 1:12 remaining when backup QB Lincoln Kienholz ran in from the 3.

West rushed for 3 and 5, Donaldson got 4 and James Peoples 5 on his first carry. Roberts had his first career reception for 2 yards to the 11, and Jackson powered his way 4 yards for a first down at the 7. Donaldson then ran for 2 to reach 2:00 left.

Jackson carried for 2 before Kienholz replaced Sayin and followed the lead block of Donaldson to score.

OSU forced a three-and-out thanks to a questionable Purdue third-down pass from its 30 even though the Buckeyes did not have a timeout left.

The result was a career-long 49-yard field goal for Jayden Fielding with three seconds to go for a 24-3 lead.

The Buckeye drive began at the OSU 24 with 47 seconds left with an incompletion before a 10-yard catch by Klare. Sayin

scrambled for 10 before hitting Klare again for 5. Peoples then had a 12-yard catch to the 39, and Smith made a catch for 8 and got out of bounds at the 31 to set up the kick that sneaked inside the left upright.

Sayin was 15 of 17 in the half for 182 yards with Smith having seven receptions for 109 yards.

"For Jeremiah to still have the impact he did, not having Carnell on the other side, speaks volumes to what he does and just how impactful he is," said Ohio State coach Ryan Day.

The Buckeyes outgained the Boilermakers 260-109 for the half and held the ball for 12:33 in the second quarter to 2:24 for the hosts.

Methodical

Ohio State got the ball to start the third quarter and continued its domination of the clock. The Buckeyes went 68 yards to the 7, but on the 15th play, CJ Nunnally IV picked off Sayin in the end zone for Sayin's fourth interception of the season.

During the drive that used 8:34, Jackson had a 9-yard run and a 10-yard reception. There was a 19-yarder to Rodgers and a 12-yard toss to Inniss.

Following a Purdue punt to the 15, the Buckeyes were on the march again.

On a second-and-20 from the OSU 17, Smith made a catch for 23 to the 40. West ran for 12, and Mylan Graham pulled in a pass for 20 to the 28 to end the third quarter in which OSU had possession for 12:24.

It looked like more of the same to start the final quarter. West ran for 14 only for Sayin to throw incomplete, and after no gain by West, Sayin was sacked for 13 yards back to the 27, and Fielding booted a 45-yard field goal to make it 27-3 with 12:41 remaining.

Later, after a Purdue punt, Donaldson carried for a 1-yard TD at the 6:19 mark of the fourth quarter to extend the margin to 34-3 off a nine-play, 65-yard, 5:22 series.

Klare continued his big day with a 20-yard catch from the OSU 35. Jackson had back-to-back runs of 11 and 14 to the 20. Jelani Thurman's catch added 6 yards, and Peoples ran for 4 then 5. Donaldson went for 4 to the 1 and then scored.

Purdue scored with 1:45 left against the second unit on a Malachi Singleton pass of 7 yards to Jesse Watson on the end of the 75-yard drive in 4:34 and 10 plays. A face-mask penalty by OSU's Aaron Scott Jr. placed the ball on OSU 27, and a roughing-the-passer infraction by Beau Atkinson after a 12-yard pass play spotted the ball at the 7 a play before the score.

OSU finished the game with Peoples running three times for 7 yards to the 32.

Notes

Sayin was 27 of 33. ... Jackson gained 75 yards on 14 tries while West's nine carries went for 60 yards. ... Browne was 10 of 19 for 76 yards. ... OSU had 473 total yards – 303 passing and the 170 rushing that came on 4.0 yards per carry. Purdue gained 186 (94 passing, 92 rushing). ... The Boilermakers' two sacks went for 19 yards while the Buckeyes had none.

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BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 34, Purdue 10

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on other players stepping up in the absence of junior receiver Carnell Tate: "It was good to see (junior tight end Max Klare) get some plays and (junior wide receiver Brandon Inniss) have an impact on the game, and then the running backs had to do their deal. So we always want to score as many points as we can, but we also need to continue to improve in certain areas. And that was certainly an emphasis point in this game."

Sophomore receiver Jeremiah Smith on how he found out Tate was unable to go: "I found out when we came back here from warmups. It was like, 'He's probably not going to play today.' We all were like, 'OK, we all have to go. (Tate's) gone. We all have to go out and make plays.' "

Smith on his connection with red-shirt-freshman quarterback Julian Sayin: "There was a lot of hard work that went into that from this offseason, in spring, fall camp as well. (You're) just seeing the byproduct of everything, but there's a lot of hard work that goes into that."

Klare on Sayin's growth this season: "He just continues to grow his game. He continues to be himself, even with all the outside noise. He's impressive, for sure."

Sayin on the Heisman Trophy and if he and Smith would split it if

one of them won: "It's a team award. We're talking about team success. We're just trying to reach our goals and get to Indianapolis. We're focused on team success. We think highly of our teammates, and we're excited."

Sayin on Smith reaching a career-high 10 catches: "He's a really hardworking player. He shows up on Saturdays, and he puts in the work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. He's a really smart player. He knows what he's doing, where he's going, and rarely makes mental mistakes."

Klare on his experience returning to Purdue: "It was a lot of fun. I had a lot of fun out there, especially just looking over across the field and seeing my brother. It was a cool experience, for sure."

Day on Ohio State scoring a field goal before halftime after getting the ball back with less than a minute on the clock and no timeouts: "That was kind of the first two-minute drill we had to work on in a game, which was one of those other things we wanted to make sure we could improve on, and I thought that was well done. The guys had pretty good awareness, were getting out of bounds and the protection was good. All of that was done well."

Sophomore cornerback Jermaine Mathews Jr. on backup players stepping up in place of injured team-

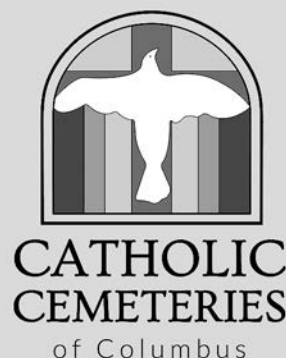
mates: "That's why we're at Ohio State. It's next man up. The next man goes and makes some plays. I didn't even realize that we were out a couple of people at first until I was watching the game."

Mathews on if Ohio State was upset giving up the late touchdown: "A little bit upset they got in there, but it's all good. We just have to get back to the drawing board and get ready for next week."

Mathews on his interception: "I say thank you to Caleb Downs. He deflected it. I just grabbed it. I tried to score it, though. I tried to get in the end zone. But, great play, good turning point in the game."

Purdue head coach Barry Odom on Ohio State: "There will be some people upset with this statement, but that's what we're chasing. Right now, in our league, they are setting the standard. We're working every single day to chase that. From recruiting, from development, from calling the game, all of those things, right now, they are setting the standard. It's our job to chase that, catch up. I give them a lot of credit for how they're built."

Day on Odom and the Boilermakers' defense: "Barry does a good job, and I think they do a good job on defense. They do their job across the board, and the kids play hard. They had a good plan coming in."



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The Numbers Game

Ohio State 34, Purdue 10

Nov. 8, 2025 – Ross-Ade Stadium, West Lafayette, Ind.

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	0	24	0	10	34
PURDUE	3	0	0	7	10

First Quarter

PU – Porath, 40-yard field goal, 4:23.

Second Quarter

OSU – Donaldson Jr., 1-yard rush (Fielding kick), 14:16.

OSU – Smith, 35-yard pass from Sayin (Fielding kick), 7:18.

OSU – Kienholz, 3-yard rush (Fielding kick), 1:12.

OSU – Fielding, 49-yard field goal, 0:03.

Fourth Quarter

OSU – Fielding, 45-yard field goal, 12:41.

OSU – Donaldson Jr., 1-yard rush (Fielding kick), 6:19.

PU – Watson, 7-yard pass from Singleton (Porath kick), 1:45.

Att. – 57,701

Weather – Cloudy, 52 F

Team Statistics		
	OSU	PU
First Downs	30	13
Rushing	12	6
Passing	17	4
Penalty	1	3
Rushes-Yards	43-170	22-92
Passing Yards	303	94
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	27-33-1	13-22-1
Offensive Plays	76	44
Total Net Yards	473	186
Third Down Efficiency	9-13	3-9
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0
Punts-Avg.	1-44.0	5-45.0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	0-0
Penalties	6-63	2-13
Time of Possession	40:53	19:07

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) – **OSU:** Jackson 14-75; West 9-60; Peoples 8-26; Donaldson Jr. 5-12; Kienholz 1-3; Inniss 1-3; Roberts 1-0; Sayin 4-(-9). **PU:** A. Harris 13-45; Browne 3-27; Thomas 4-15; Singleton 2-5.

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) – **OSU:** Sayin 27-33-1-303-1. **PU:** Browne 10-19-1-76-0; Singleton 3-3-0-18-1.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Smith 10-137; Klare 5-59; Inniss 3-26; Rodgers 2-30; Peoples 2-9; Roberts 2-6; Graham 1-20; Jackson 1-10; Thurman 1-6. **PU:** A. Harris 3-19; Jackson III 3-15; Tuggle 2-15; T. Harris 2-2; Walker 1-30; Watson 1-7; Horton 1-6.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) – **OSU:** McGuire 1-44.0-44. **PU:** McCallister 5-45.0-46.

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Inniss 2-24. **PU:** None.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** None. **PU:** Thomas 1-22; Moore 1-13.

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

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** Mathews Jr. 1-23. **PU:** Nunnally 1-0.

SACKS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** None. **PU:** Ishmail 1-13; Powell 1-6.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) – **OSU:** McDonald 1-1; Moore 1-1; Reese 1-1. **PU:** Powell 1.5-7; Correa 1.5-4; Ishmail 1-13; Sanford 1-2.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) – **OSU:** Pierce 5-2-7; Styles 3-2-5; McDonald 4-0-4; Downs 3-1-4; McClain 3-1-4; Igbinosun 1-2-3; Jackson Jr. 2-0-2; Grady 1-1-2; West 0-2-2; Pettijohn 0-2-2; Curry 1-0-1; Reese 1-0-1; Moore 1-0-1; Mathews Jr. 0-1-1; Styles Jr. 0-1-1; Smith Jr. 0-1-1. **PU:** Powell 6-7-13; Ra-El 5-5-10; Correa 5-2-7; Ishmail 3-4-7; Sanford 2-5-7; Grimes 5-0-5; Hines 3-2-5; Slusher 3-2-5; Bradford 3-0-3; Cobb 3-0-3; Nunnally 2-1-3; Jeffries 1-2-3; Dinkins 1-1-2; Berglund 1-1-2; Purvis 1-0-1; McLaurin 1-0-1; Cummings 1-0-1; Raab 1-0-1; Smith 0-1-1; Harkless 0-1-1; Kennedy 0-1-1; Madden 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME – **OSU:** Inniss, Sayin, Jackson, Smith, Montgomery, Siereveld, Moore, Hinzman, Tshabola, Klare, Kacmarek, Styles, Igbinosun, McClain, Downs, Styles Jr., Mathews Jr., Reese, Curry, Houston, Jackson Jr., McDonald, Delane, B. West, Donaldson Jr., Rodgers, Atkinson, Thurman, Grady, Tate, Alford, Pettijohn, Peoples, Jones, Stover, Pierce, Roker, Kienholz, I. West, Fielding, Velazquez, McGuire, Ferlmann, Rudzinski, Scott Jr., Graham, Mickens, Smith Jr., Kema, Sanchez, Terry, Lowe, Onianwa, Adolph, Roberts, Christian, Carter, Moore. **PU:** Tuggle, Horton, Browne, Jackson III, Thomas, Joiner, Purvis, St. John, Coly, Tanona, Earls, Grimes, Sanford, Powell, Ra-El, Hines, Jeffries, Correa, Ishmail, Slusher, Nunnally, Harkless, Bradford, Watson, T. Harris, Dean, Smith, Cobb, Walker, Kennedy, Berglund, A. Harris, Smith, Coffey, McLaurin, Cummings, Smith, Singleton, Marable, Porath, McCallister, Moore, Raab, Needam, Vicari, Ott, Dinkins, Ellis, Vaccaro, McCoskey, Trent, Madden, Mitchell, Turner, Cree, Carlson.

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	W, 42-3	105,114
Oct. 11	(1) at Illinois (17)	W, 34-16	60,670
Oct. 18	(1) at Wisconsin	W, 37-0	72,795
Nov. 1	(1) PENN STATE	W, 38-14	105,517
Nov. 8	(1) at Purdue	W, 34-10	57,701
Nov. 15	(1) UCLA	7:30 p.m.	
Nov. 22	RUTGERS	TBA	
Nov. 29	at Michigan (18)	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	209	120
Rushing	79	53
Passing	122	53
Penalty	8	14
Average Per Game/Rush	155.1	82.9
Average Per Game/Pass	286.3	128.7
Total Offense	3973	1904
Total Plays	568	502
Average Per Game	441.4	211.6
Average Per Play	7.0	3.8
Penalties-Yards	40-357	33-251
Fumbles-Lost	4-2	6-5
Third Down Efficiency	54-96	30-113
Percentage	56%	27%
Fourth Down Efficiency	7-10	9-21
Percentage	70%	43%
Sacks-Yards	25-175	5-35
Time Of Possession Avg.	33:13	26:44

Score								
By Quarters	1	2	3	4	OT	Tot.	Avg.	
Ohio State	65	96	76	90	0	327	36.3	
Opponents	6	23	16	20	0	65	7.2	

Individual Statistics					
Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Bo Jackson	95	613	6.5	2	64
CJ Donaldson Jr.	72	278	3.9	9	27
James Peoples	52	247	4.8	0	33
Isaiah West	34	177	5.2	1	16
Julian Sayin	25	21	0.8	0	12
Lincoln Kienholz	7	26	3.7	2	8
Jeremiah Smith	2	20	10.0	1	17
Carnell Tate	2	16	8.0	0	8
Brandon Inniss	2	11	5.5	0	8
Sam Dixon	3	9	3.0	1	6
Nate Roberts	2	1	0.5	0	1
Team	11	-23	-2.1	0	0
OSU Totals	307	1396	4.5	16	64
OPP Totals	270	746	2.8	3	34

Passing	Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT	Effic.
Julian Sayin	203	251	80.9	2491	24-4	192.6
Lincoln Kienholz	7	8	87.5	86	1-0	219.1
Tavien St. Clair	0	2	0.0	0	0-0	0.0
OSU Totals	210	261	80.5	2577	25-4	191.9
OPP Totals	140	232	60.3	1158	4-6	102.8

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD	Long
Jeremiah Smith	65	862	13.3	10	87
Carnell Tate	39	711	18.2	7	57
Max Klare	26	269	10.3	1	29
Brandon Inniss	21	180	8.6	1	29
Bo Jackson	12	124	10.3	1	17
James Peoples	9	45	5.0	0	12
CJ Donaldson Jr.	8	56	7.0	1	14
Will Kacmarek	7	90	12.9	2	47
Jelani Thurman	6	65	10.8	1	26
Bennett Christian	4	11	2.8	1	6
Bryson Rodgers	4	52	13.0	0	21
Mylan Graham	3	53	17.7	0	23
Quincy Porter	3	45	15.0	0	22
Nate Roberts	2	6	3.0	0	4
David Adolph	1	8	8.0	0	8
OSU Totals	210	2577	12.3	25	87
OPP Totals	140	1158	8.3	4	67

Scoring	TD	EPK	EPR	EPRC	FG	PTS
Jayden Fielding	-	38-38	-	-	11-13	71
Jeremiah Smith	11	-	-	-	-	66
CJ Donaldson Jr.	10	-	-	-	-	60
Carnell Tate	7	-	-	-	-	42
Bo Jackson	3	-	-	-	-	18
Will Kacmarek	2	-	-	-	-	12

Lincoln Kienholz	2	-	-	-	-	12
Bennett Christian	1	-	-	-	-	6
Max Klare	1	-	-	-	-	6
Brandon Inniss	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jelani Thurman	1	-	-	-	-	6
Sam Dixon	1	-	-	-	-	6
Riley Pettijohn	1	-	-	-	-	6
Isaiah West	1	-	-	-	-	6
Jackson Courville	-	4-4	-	-	-	4
OSU Totals	42	42-42	-	-	11-13	327
OPP Totals	7	5-6	-	-	6-8	65

FG Distance	0-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Total
Jayden Fielding	4-4	5-6	2-2	0-1	11-13
OSU Totals	4-4	5-6	2-2	0-1	11-13
OPP Totals	4-4	0-1	2-3	0-0	6-8

Punting	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Bk	Long
Joe McGuire	16	661	41.3	0	55
Nick McLarty	1	45	45.0	0	45
OSU Totals	17	706	41.5	0	55
OPP Totals	48	2239	46.6	0	63

Interceptions	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
J. Mathews Jr.	2	28	14.0	0	23
Caleb Downs	2	0	0.0	0	0
Payton Pierce	1	15	15.0	0	15
Sonny Styles	1	5	5.0	0	5
OSU Totals	6	48	8.0	0	23
OPP Totals	4	4	1.0	0	4

Punt Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Brandon Inniss	12	145	12.1	0	32
Lorenzo Styles Jr.	1	36	36.0	0	36
Jeremiah Smith	1	-6	-6.0	0	0
OSU Totals	14	175	12.5	0	36
OPP Totals	1	3	3.0	0	3

Kickoff Returns	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Long
Brandon Inniss	3	57	19.0	0	37
OSU Totals	3	57	19.0	0	37
OPP Totals	1	235	18.1	0	41

Def. Leaders	Solo	Ast.	Tot.	TFL-Yds.	Sacks
Arvell Reese	29	26	55	10.0-45	6.5-41
Sonny Styles	30	20	50	2.5-4	0-0
Caleb Downs	28	15	43	3.0-3	0-0
Kayden McDonald	24	17	41	7.0-26	3.0-20
Caden Curry	25	13	38	10.5-53	7.0-48
Jaylen McClain	29	6	35	0-0	0-0
Payton Pierce	16	18	34	1.5-2	0-0
Davidson Igbinosun	18	15	33	0.5-0	0-0
Lorenzo Styles Jr.	11	8	19	1.5-1	0-0
Tywayne Malone	8	8	16	0-0	0-0
J. Mathews Jr.	11	5	16	1.5-7	1.0-6
K. Jackson Jr.	9	6	15	7.0-40	4.5-35
Will Smith Jr.	6	8	14	0-0	0-0
Eddrick Houston	2	7	9	1.0-6	1.0-6
Devin Sanchez	6	3	9	0-0	0-0
Beau Atkinson	3	6	9	2.5-12	1.0-9
Zion Grady	4	4	8	2.0-12	1.0-10
Riley Pettijohn	2	6	8	0-0	0-0
Aaron Scott Jr.	6	-	6	1.0-5	0-0
Bryce West	4	2	6	0-0	0-0
C.J. Hicks	2	4	6	1.0-1	0-0
TJ Alford	2	3	5	1.0-2	0-0
Faheem Delane	3	2	5	1.0-1	0-0
Garrett Stover	4	1	5	0-0	0-0
Jason Moore	1	3	4	1.0-1	0-0
Leroy Roker	2	2	4	0-0	0-0
Joshua Mickens	1	2	3	0-0	0-0
Eli Lee	-	2	2	0-0	0-0
Logan George	2	-	2	0-0	0-0
Eric Mensah	-	2	2	0-0	0-0
Malik Hartford	1	1	2	0-0	0-0
Carnell Tate	2	-	2	0-0	0-0
Dominic Kirks	-	1	1	0-0	0-0
James Peoples	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
Joey Velazquez	-	1	1	0-0	0-0
Jayden Fielding	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
Ryan Rudzinski	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
Epi Sitanilei	-	1	1	0.5-0	0-0
Jarquez Carter	1	-	1	0-0	0-0
OSU Totals	295	218	513	56.0-221	25.0-175
OPP Totals	346	224	570	28.0-70	5.0-35

Fumbles Forced: McDonald (2), Mathews Jr., Houston, Pettijohn, Styles.
Fumbles Recovered: Curry, McDonald, Pettijohn, Sanchez, Sitanilei.

George Dominant In First Half Against Iowa

Buckeye Sports Bulletin is 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 56-35 win over Iowa on Oct. 28, 1995.

By MIKE WACHSMAN

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In sports, there's clicking, and then there's *clicking*.

Against Iowa in 1995, Ohio State showed just how far into the latter camp it was, scoring 56 first-half points on the way to a 56-35 victory over the visiting Hawkeyes. OSU scored eight times in the first half, which seems impossible until you see that one score was an interception return and two others came after interceptions.

The offense finished with 438 yards, the bulk of those coming in the first 30 minutes, and senior tailback Eddie George had a huge hand in that total, finishing with 110 yards and four touchdowns on just 15 carries. He and the other offensive regulars sat out the entire second half. Otherwise, his numbers would have been much more impressive. Still, it was George's seventh consecutive 100-yard outing, and his Heisman Trophy campaign was still intact.

"I felt bad for Eddie because he had maybe a little over 100 yards, and like somebody said who asked a question, that might send the wrong message to those people that vote for the Heisman," said Buckeye coach John Cooper. "But you have to take into consideration what he's done so far."

All George had done was rush for 1,100 yards and 15 touchdowns, averaging a hefty 5.6 yards per carry. He was also Ohio State's second-leading pass catcher, with 23.

All-America tackle Orlando Pace ran interference for George most of the afternoon, paving the way for two of his four touchdown runs. He knew about Iowa's reputation and admitted to being a bit surprised that the Hawkeyes showed so little resistance.

"I think we were a little surprised that we put up that many points," Pace said. "We thought Iowa would come out with a stronger defense, but we exposed them and things happened."

It wasn't things as much as it was the Ohio State offense – mostly George, with a helping of Bobby Hoying and Terry Glenn.

Heisman campaigns are all about numbers, and even though George's day against Iowa was productive, it was tepid in the grand scheme of things. But Cooper was thinking of the big picture, which appeared to be a smart approach.

"If you come out and play Eddie George in that first series of the second half and he gets hurt, then everybody says, 'Why didn't you take him out?'" Hoying said. "There's a lot of second-guessing that could go on. It was very smart to take

some of us out."

As a competitor, you never want to leave a game. But George understood why Cooper rested the starters after half-time.

"A win is a win, and I'll take it," George said. "I came in and did my job. The offensive line opened up some holes there, and we just got the job done. I think we handled the situation pretty well. We were up 56-7, and there wasn't any need for me or the first team to go back in."

George opened the scoring with a 3-yard touchdown run two minutes into the contest and capped the Buckeyes' third series with a 9-yard score right up the gut to put Ohio State ahead 21-0 with just over five minutes to play in the first quarter. The power back added two more touchdowns in the second quarter, one from 10 yards out and the fourth and final of his day on a 3-yard burst around the left end.

"I think we were due for a day like this," George said. "We had struggled for three or four games. Today, we didn't just come out and talk about it. We got the job done. That first half was the best half we've played all season. We were consistent with the running game and the passing game."

Iowa came into the contest with just one loss on the season, but Hawkeye coach Hayden Fry was aware of how much talent the Buckeyes possessed and thought there was always the possibility his team could be on the wrong end of things.

"I was afraid this was going to happen," Fry said. "Their wide receivers are so fast. And Eddie George runs for tough yards. It's not any mystery what happened."

To its credit, Iowa never stopped playing and made the final score appear respectable. Ohio State's reserves could not do very much right on offense, tallying less than 75 yards after halftime.

There was a smattering of fans who yelled at the team as it left the field, agitated that it allowed Iowa to have its way in the second half. But they were minimal and did not overshadow what Ohio State accomplished in the first half.

"One of our main focuses was getting out early," George said. "The previous weeks we've been dilly-dallying around, not coming off the ball and making silly mistakes. We just wanted to play a solid ballgame today."

George may have been the one in the biggest spotlight, but he was far from the game's only standout. Hoying finished with 273 yards despite completing just eight of his 16 passes, and Glenn caught three passes for a whopping 149 yards and two scores. The Buckeyes had five scoring plays of 10 or more yards, including a 60-yard interception return by Shawn Springs, and made a pretty solid Iowa defense look like a bunch of schoolkids.

"It was great to see us clicking like that in the first half," George said. "The defense was really getting after people,

and we had an easy time. I haven't had it this easy in a while. This is the type of day we needed to have."

The 56 points scored was Ohio State's highest total of the season, barely eclipsing the 54 scored in a 40-point win over Pittsburgh in the third week of the season.

George's exploits were squarely in the national focus as he battled Florida's Danny Wuerffel and Nebraska's Tommie Frazier for the pole position in the race for the Heisman Trophy.

George understood the cacophony of attention but preferred to keep things within the team dynamic.

"The season isn't over yet, and the mission isn't complete," George said. "As long as we handle our business week in and week out, we'll be fine."

This was all pretty heady stuff for a kid from Philadelphia who came to Co-

lumbus without much fanfare and who alternated between burgeoning star and doghouse resident during a wild freshman campaign.

George had matured into a reliable force on the gridiron but also commanded respect with his work ethic and quiet leadership skills. If he said he was going to accomplish something, his teammates believed and helped him get there.

With the sand slowly slipping out of his Ohio State hourglass, George took a moment to reflect on just how special his season was and how he would not trade his experience in scarlet and gray for anything in the world.

"It's an unbelievable experience," George said. "Not very many people get to have a season like this. I'm just trying to get the most of it because it's not going to last long."

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Ohio State Defense Playing At Historic Level

By **BOBBY GORBETT**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

With only three weeks left in the 2025 regular season, Ohio State's defense is not simply off to a good start. The Silver Bullets are closing in on having one of the more dominant regular seasons in recent college football.

Despite being led by a first-year defensive coordinator and consisting of eight first-year starters, Ohio State's defense has caught almost everyone outside the program by surprise to be arguably the best unit in the country. Through nine games, defensive coordinator Matt Patricia's defense had allowed just 7.2 points per game, and 211.6 yards per game. Both marks were by far the best in the country.

"I think you have to be surprised based on the fact that they lost eight starters and the coordinator," said Steve Helwage of 247Sports. "You couldn't have predicted that the guys replacing those guys were going to be as good as they've turned out to be. I think it's a testament to the development of the other four assistant coaches and the things that they did to bring their guys along at each of those positions, to put this team in this position."

"And of course, Matt Patricia comes in as the defensive coordinator, and everything he's called seems to work up until this point. It's kind of been a perfect storm, and better than I think Ryan Day could have probably ever hoped it would turn out."

With Ohio State's defense showing no signs of slowing down toward the end of the regular season, BSB sat down with Helwage, The Athletic's Cameron Teague-Robinson and Andy Anders of Eleven Warriors to discuss what has made the Buckeyes so good and potential challenges that could lie ahead for the unit.

Reese, McDonald Break Out For Buckeyes

Like Helwage, Anders and Teague-Robinson have been at least moderately surprised by the extent of the success of Ohio State's defense. Anders said while he thought the Buckeyes would have a great defense, he didn't necessarily expect them to be the best in the country with so many new pieces.

"Coming into the season, I think I was expecting them to be maybe a top-five defense, maybe a little lower than that," Anders said. "I certainly didn't expect them to be one of the best Ohio State defenses of all time. At least so far, they've been that. We'll see how the rest of the season plays out, but they've certainly exceeded expectations."

As many players as Ohio State needed to replace after its 2024 national championship-winning season, it was widely accepted that the Buckeyes were not short on star power.

Although junior linebacker Sonny Styles wasn't perfect in coverage last year for Ohio State, he earned All-Big Ten second-team honors, and junior safety Caleb Downs became only the 39th player in Ohio State history to earn unanimous All-America honors.

Still, with so many players leaving the program after last season, eight first-year starters have had to step up. Through nine games, that's exactly what new Buckeye starters Arvell Reese and Kayden McDonald had



SONNY BROCKWAY

NO REBUILD NECESSARY — Despite losing eight starters and the departure of defensive coordinator Jim Knowles from the 2024 CFP national champions, the Ohio State defense under coordinator Matt Patricia (above) has been stellar. Through nine games, the Buckeyes top the nation, allowing just 7.2 points and 211.6 yards per game.

done.

"It starts in the interior, and Kayden McDonald has been one of the best defensive tackles in recent Ohio State memory, certainly one of the best nose guards," Anders said. "Johnathan Hankins was the last time they had a guy that was that big, that productive, playing on the inside. What (McDonald) has been able to do in terms of production up the middle, having three games with seven or more tackles this season, two games of eight, is something no Ohio State defensive tackle has done since 2012."

"It starts with Kayden McDonald and then the two linebackers behind him playing up the middle. Arvell Reese being such a physical freak and being able to overpower offensive linemen while also running sideline to sideline and getting after the quarterback — I think if I had to pick a team MVP for Ohio State this year, it would probably be Arvell Reese."

Reese and McDonald were not necessarily viewed as question marks heading into the season, but few envisioned either player making the sort of impact they've made. Reese led Ohio State with 55 total tackles, and his 10 tackles for loss and 6½ sacks were both the second most on the team.

McDonald, a 6-3, 326-pound defensive tackle, has always had the size to clog rushing lanes, but this year he's been able to prove he's much more than a run-stopper. McDonald's three sacks and two forced fumbles rank fourth and first on the team, respectively.

Reese and McDonald may not have been entrenched in positional battles before the season, but sophomore safety Jaylen McClain certainly was. McClain, who eventually won the battle over third-year safety Malik Hartford to start alongside Downs, has been a surpris-

ingly good player, according to Teague-Robinson.

"I thought maybe they would rotate him in with Malik Hartford, but Jaylen McClain has been quietly a very stabilizing presence in the secondary," Teague-Robinson said. "He doesn't give up big plays, and he has really good instincts at the line of scrimmage. I think he's going to be a superstar next year. I think he's had a really good year."

While McClain has been a success story at safety and has logged 29 solo tackles, tied for second-most on the team, sophomore defensive tackle Eddrick Houston hasn't been quite as effective after winning his positional battle to start the year. At a three-technique spot that was somewhat of a concern for Ohio State before the season, Houston originally beat out graduate defensive tackle Tywone Malone Jr. and Jason Moore to start in Week 1.

Houston had some early-season struggles, and the Buckeyes turned to Malone and sophomore defensive tackle Jason Moore to play more snaps. Malone has stepped up after earning more playing time and has provided some stability at the three-technique position alongside McDonald.

The three-technique spot may not be a strength for Ohio State, but Helwage has liked what he's seen from the players who have earned playing time there.

"Houston got hurt early in the preseason, and it hasn't seemed like he's been healthy all season until the last few weeks. He had a nice sack and a fumble forced in the game against Penn State, and you could tell his excitement from making that play," Helwage said. "He kind of got out a lot of his frustration about not being able to be the player he thought he was going to be."

"Tywone Malone has filled in and done a great job. They got a young guy, Will Smith Jr, who is really coming into his own. It appeared like he was going to make a sack against Penn State. He was tackled by one of the offensive linemen and still almost got there on his knees. There was no holding call, of course. But they're putting in a good day's work and giving a good effort."

Assistant Coaches Deserve More Credit

Like many others involved in Ohio State's defense, Patricia was not expected to be as successful as he's been. Despite having plenty of success as the defensive coordinator of the New England Patriots from 2012-17, Patricia hadn't ever been a coordinator at the collegiate level.

However, through nine games, Patricia had fit right in and given opposing quarterbacks and play-callers fits. According to Anders, the key has been to fit the scheme around his players' strengths.

"I think great schemes — and this is a great scheme — are always built around not trying to take players and fit them into a predestined scheme," Anders said. "It's more of building a scheme that fits your talent. I think that's what Matt Patricia has done."

It may seem easy to lead a defense with star players as talented as Reese or Downs, but Anders pointed out how Patricia has highlighted those players' varied skill sets by using them in several different roles.

"You have Arvell Reese, who's this incredibly diverse athlete, who can do so many different things, and he's been able to do so many different things because of the Matt Patricia scheme," Anders said. "They specifically coordinate ways for him to be that fourth rusher, or to be the quarterback spy, or to just get him open in space. If teams are hurting you in the perimeter run, you can send Arvell Reese out to the perimeter, like they did against Penn State."

"You can tell all the different stuff they do with Caleb Downs, too, is similar to what he did last year — at least during the second half of last year — playing all over the field. He'll be in the box some, he'll be deep some, he'll be in the slot some. They do so many different things with Caleb Downs, who I still believe is probably the best defensive player in the country."

With Ohio State's defense being as dominant as it's been, Teague-Robinson went so far as to say Patricia has fit the Buckeyes better than departed DC Jim Knowles did.

"This year's defense is better with the way things are being called and the versatility they have," Teague-Robinson said. "Would this defense be better than last year's defense if the defensive coordinator were the same? I don't think so. I don't know that Arvell Reese would be what he is right now, just because Jim Knowles kind of liked things the way he liked them."

It's hard to deny that Patricia's NFL background and football IQ have made an imprint on Ohio State's defense, but the Buckeye head coach made sure to give a shout-out to the team's position coaches on Oct. 28.

"Jim did a great job last year, Matt's doing a great job this year. What's the common denominator?" Day asked. "Those coaches and

the players.”

Helwagen, Anders and Teague-Robinson agreed that Ohio State's position coaches, who have not only helped recruit the players who make up the defense but have also played a role in developing those players, should receive more credit for the jobs they have done.

“I think (co-defensive coordinator and cornerbacks coach) Tim Walton has done a really good job of taking a secondary that was one of the worst in the Big Ten for two years and bringing it back to being the best in the country for three years in a row,” Teague-Robinson said. “That's Tim Walton, and that's (safeties coach) Matt Guerrieri, and that's the work they put in in developing and recruiting a really good secondary room. Larry Johnson speaks for himself. He's the best defensive line coach in the country. Then, James Laurinaitis has done a really good job of just building that linebacker room up with athletic freaks.

“I don't know if they get enough credit for all the work they do. I think everybody just goes to the play-caller, but as Patricia was putting in all this stuff, the continuity of the position coaches played a big role in (the success of the defense).”

Perhaps the most surprising part of the statistical excellence of the 2025 defense is that the unit has so far achieved better marks than its national championship-winning predecessor. Through nine games, Ohio State's defense had given up fewer rushing yards, fewer passing yards and fewer points than the 2024 defense.

Helwagen said this defense may be better

than last year's group, but he pointed out that it's a difficult comparison to make because the 2024 defense was much more battle-tested than this year's defense has been.

“It's an apples-to-oranges comparison, almost. I think that team with (Jack) Sawyer and (JT) Tuimoloau had maybe a little bit better pass rush. This team's been OK with it,” Helwagen said. “That team really struggled in the secondary at times with committing penalties in coverage, and this team really hasn't, so there are two differences.

“I think the linebacker play has been pretty consistent with Reese replacing (linebacker Cody) Simon, and Styles obviously playing on both teams has been pretty good in both years. There are areas where they're better, areas where maybe they're not quite as good, and areas where we honestly still don't know, because they haven't played one of the top offenses in the country, other than maybe Washington, early. Maybe we'll find out as they get deeper into this.”

Teague-Robinson, on the other hand, has seen enough to feel like the defense has improved in most areas from last year.

“I think they're better at everything,” Teague-Robinson said. “I think the only thing last year's defense might have had that this year's defense doesn't have is just the pure ability to rush four guys and get pressure off the edge. And really, last year's defense didn't have that until the playoffs. I think they're better in the secondary. I think they miss Jordan Hancock, because his versatility in the slot was so good, but I think Jermaine Mathews has taken a massive step, and so has (Davison) Igbinosun on the outside.”

Few Offenses Can Challenge OSU's Defense

Ohio State's defense hasn't faced many tough tests so far through nine games, but it won't be much more difficult the rest of the regular season. The Buckeyes end the season with Rutgers, UCLA and Michigan, each of which ranks outside the top-40 nationally in total offense.

The Buckeyes' remaining opponents will need to find some sort of weakness in Patricia's unit if they want to spring an upset, but according to Anders, they may have a tough time finding one.

“Penn State was the first team that showed some sort of sustained success doing a specific thing,” Anders said. “They attacked the perimeter for 1½ quarters with some success. They basically did student body left, student body right, tossing the football one direction or the other, and did some bubble screens to get it to the edge, to the receivers.

“Then in the third quarter, Ohio State said, ‘Well, we're just going to send Arvell Reese or Sonny Styles out there. Good luck blocking either of them with a receiver or tight end.’ And that was that.”

As Anders pointed out, Penn State came as close as any team has had to having prolonged success against Ohio State's first-team defense, and the Nittany Lions totaled only 200 yards. Anders said it would take at least two elite receivers and a quick-witted offensive coordinator for the Buckeyes to run into trouble.

“Maybe, if you have one of the best slot receivers in the country going up against (Lorenzo Styles Jr.), he might run into some

problems,” Anders said. “You're going to have to have an offensive coordinator who not only has an incredible attack to run with incredible personnel, but also can constantly switch and adjust, because this defense has been great at making adjustments.

“Because there's no real weakness that I can point to in the defense, it's hard to say exactly what that scheme would look like that could actually expose them.”

Ohio State is the favorite to win the national championship and the No. 1-ranked team in the country, but Helwagen said the toughest assignment the defense may face could come as soon as the Big Ten Championship Game. Although both teams still have a ways to go before they match up in Indianapolis, it certainly seems like the Buckeyes will meet Indiana, the only other undefeated team in the Big Ten.

“We keep thinking about Indiana and their great quarterback, (Fernando) Mendoza, great receiver (Elijah) Saratt, great running back,” Helwagen said. “They have a great team, and they've had a tremendous year, but they haven't faced a defense – I guess they faced Iowa. I was going to say they haven't faced a defense this good, which they haven't, obviously, but they did face Iowa, which is a very good defensive team. Does that give us an indication of what they're going to do against a great defense?

“It cuts both ways. They haven't played a great defense like Ohio State. Ohio State hasn't played a great offense like them. If we get that matchup that week, that's going to be what everybody's looking forward to seeing. If Ohio State can get off the field on third down, make Indiana punt the ball, and what kind of game will that turn out to be?”





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Skipper, Bruins Still Searching For Consistency

By **GREG WILSON**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

UCLA might seem to be a little behind in modern college football, but when it comes to this season, the Bruins might have been ahead of the curve on one specific thing.

With so many Power Four head coaching jobs coming open due to head coaches being fired, the Bruins were the first of the pack, letting go of DeShaun Foster on Sept. 14 after getting out to an 0-3 start in nonconference play.

Foster's team had lost 43-10 to Utah in the season opener before dropping two straight games against Mountain West teams (30-23 against UNLV, 35-10 against New Mexico).

"It's pretty low right now," said Foster about the state of the program after the loss to the Lobos. "I've been around this program for a long time, and it's just unfortunate what's going on at this moment. Just not executing."

Going into the season, there weren't expectations for the Bruins to compete at the top of the Big Ten, but after finishing last year with a 4-2 record in their last six games and adding quarterback Nico Iamaleava through the transfer portal, the winless beginning of the season was enough to let go of Foster.

But athletic director Martin Jarmond didn't put the full blame on the head coach after he made the move.

"I regret putting DeShaun in that situation where we were going into the Big Ten, and even though we were supported from a resource perspective, getting a start so late really disadvantaged the beginning to his coaching career here," Jarmond said.

But interim head coach Tim Skipper had a simple message for his players when the program felt as if it couldn't be lower.

"There's no excuses with football," he said. "Nobody's going to feel sorry for you once that whistle's blown and it's kickoff time. The standard's the standard. Adapt, overcome, and let's go play."

Things didn't get better right away, losing to Northwestern, 17-14, after an off week. But when the calendar turned to October, the Bruins hosted Penn State, which was fresh off a double-overtime loss to Oregon at the time, and UCLA put up 42 points while holding the Nittany Lions to 37, shocking the college football world.

It was in that game that Iamaleava seemed

to reach his potential with UCLA. He was 17 of 24 passing the ball for 166 yards and two touchdowns, while also running the ball 16 times for 128 yards and three scores.

Skipper and interim offensive coordinator Jerry Neuheisel had seemingly turned the Bruins around when they went into Michigan State for a 38-13 win the next week, followed by their third straight win, 20-17, over Maryland on Oct. 18.

But going into Bloomington, Ind., sent the Bruins back to reality, where they were beaten 56-6 by the Hoosiers.

UCLA had its second off week of the year before its matchup with Nebraska on Nov. 8, and Skipper said the coaching staff was trying to make everything simple for their players the rest of the year after the loss to Indiana.

"We're just getting back to the basics," Skipper said. "It's about fundamentals and little details. That's kind of been what we've been preaching on last week, moving into this week. Just using the little things. Using our three weapons: our eyes, feet and hands. Running between drills. Everything is fine-tuned."

"We're trying to really harp on the little things. So every little detail matters right now. We just want to get back to playing good Bruin football. So that's where we're at right now with everything."

That approach didn't seem to work too well for the Bruins against Nebraska when they lost 28-21.

In the game, they allowed backup quarterback TJ Lateef to go 13 of 15 for 205 yards and three touchdowns, with usual starter Dylan Raiola out for the season.

Now the Bruins head to Columbus to face off against the No. 1 Buckeyes and hope to find some of the same magic they did when the Nittany Lions came to the Rose Bowl on Oct. 4.

They don't bring an impressive résumé to Ohio State as the No. 101 total offense and No. 114 scoring offense. The other side of the ball hasn't been any better overall, as the No. 111 scoring defense and No. 77 total defense.

Iamaleava will be throwing the ball to wide receivers Kwazi Gilmer, Titus Mokiao-Atimalala and Rico Flores Jr. Backup Mikey Matthews and tight end Hudson Habermehl will also be featured in the passing game. But it's Gilmer who leads the way with 33 catches for 395 yards and two touchdowns.

The Bruins have split the rushing work between three different running backs this



Tim Skipper



Nico Iamaleava

Get To Know ... UCLA

- **2025 Record:** 3-6, 3-3 Big Ten.
- **Team Information:** Offensive Formation – Spread; Defensive Formation – 4-3; Starters returning – Offense 2, Defense 2, Specialists 0.
- **Head Coach:** Tim Skipper, 1st year at UCLA, 3-3.
- **Series History:** 10th meeting; Series tied 4-4-1.
- **School Facts:** Location – Los Angeles, Calif.; Enrollment – 46,676; Nickname – Bruins; Colors – Blue and Gold; Conference – Big Ten; Stadium – Rose Bowl (Surface – Grass; Capacity – 91,136).

Top Offensive Players

Rushing	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD
Nico Iamaleava	96	474	4.9	4
Jaivian Thomas	72	277	3.8	1
Jalen Berger	64	268	4.2	2

Passing	Comp-Att.	Pct.	Yds.	TD-INT
Nico Iamaleava	165-259	63.7	1,659	12-7

Receiving	Rec.	Net	Avg.	TD
Kwazi Gilmer	33	395	12.0	2
Rico Flores Jr.	23	212	9.2	0
Mokiao-Atimalala	19	247	13.0	3
Mikey Matthews	19	254	13.4	1
Anthony Woods	17	166	9.8	2

Team Offensive Stats

Points Per Game – 20.4
Rushing Yards Per Game – 160.2
Passing Yards Per Game – 184.3
Total Offense Avg. Per Game – 344.6

2025 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time/Result (ET)
Aug. 30	UTAH	L, 43-10
Sept. 6	at UNLV	L, 30-23
Sept. 12	NEW MEXICO	L, 35-10
Sept. 27	at Northwestern	L, 17-14
Oct. 4	PENN STATE	W, 42-37
Oct. 11	at Michigan State	W, 38-13
Oct. 18	MARYLAND	W, 20-17
Oct. 25	at Indiana	L, 56-6
Nov. 8	NEBRASKA	L, 28-21
Nov. 15	at Ohio State	7:30 p.m.
Nov. 22	WASHINGTON	TBA
Nov. 29	at USC	TBA

Top Defensive Players

Def. Leaders	Solo	Asst.	Tot.	TFL-Yards	Sacks
JonJon Vaughns	38	50	88	3-4	0-0
Isaiah Chisom	34	36	70	1.5-2	0-0
Key Lawrence	32	22	54	3-13	0-0
Cole Martin	21	29	50	3.5-7	0-0
Jalen Woods	20	18	38	1.5-2	0.5-1

Interceptions	No.	Yds	Avg	TD
Scooter Jackson	2	9	4.5	0
Key Lawrence	1	27	27.0	0

Team Defensive Stats

Points Per Game Allowed – 30.7
Rushing Yards Per Game Allowed – 191.1
Passing Yards Per Game Allowed – 185.6
Total Offense Avg. Per Game Allowed – 376.7

season, with Anthony Woods, Jaivian Thomas and Jalen Berger all getting consistent carries. Because of that split, it's been Iamaleava who leads the team in rushing, much of that production coming in the win over Penn State.

On the offensive line, UCLA has transfers left tackle Courtland Ford and left guard Eugene Brooks, with returners center Sam Yoon, right guard Garrett DiGiorgio and right tackle Reuben Unije filling out the rest of the line.

On the other side of the ball in the trenches, edge rushers Anthony Jones and Kechaun Bennett are joined by Keanu Williams and Gary Smith III on the interior. Getting into the backfield has not been a strength of the defensive unit this season. It has just six sacks and 28 tackles for loss.

Skipper wasn't pleased with the defensive front of the Bruins in the 50-point loss to Indiana.

"When we got the contact, we stopped our feet," Skipper said. "You have to keep your feet moving as you wrap up and knock people backwards. It's fundamental stuff. We have a bye week to attack it, and then we get to the game week, then we get another opportunity in two weeks."

If there were ever a time for the Buckeyes to figure out any holes in the run game, it could be against UCLA, which is last in the Big Ten in rushing yards allowed. The Bruins have given up 191.1 rushing yards per game this season.

At linebacker, the Bruins will start JonJon Vaughns at the Mike and Isaiah Chisom at the Will. The two lead the team in tackles, with 88 and 70, respectively.

The secondary is full of transfer additions. At cornerback are Robert Stafford III and Rodrick Pleasant. Then at safety are Cole Mar-

tin and Key Lawrence with Scooter Jackson at nickel back.

Lawrence and Jackson are the only two who have interceptions this year for the Bruins, with Jackson having two of the three total.

Skipper has hoped to make things as simple as he can on the defensive side of the ball as well.

"Just fundamental stuff and then giving them a game plan that we hope will be successful against opponents we play, and then them executing it," he said. "And to me, being a defensive player and a former player myself, when you're confident and you know what's going on, you play a lot better and you play faster and stuff starts clicking."

The defense has been slightly better overall after interim defensive coordinator Kevin Coyle took over the unit.

But in every aspect of the game, UCLA has been very inconsistent over the full season, with different versions of the team showing up week to week.

But no matter which of those teams shows up in Columbus, it should be an easily winnable game for the Buckeyes and head coach Ryan Day, who seems to have his team ready for the games that they are expected to win.

But the Bruins obviously won't just roll over. They hope to give Ohio State trouble in the 'Shoe on Nov. 15.

"The sun is going to rise tomorrow," Skipper said after the Nebraska game. "We're not in quit mode or anything like that. The sun is going to rise, and we are going to get back to work. We are going to watch this film and get better from it. Then we are going to have Monday and Tuesday, and we are going to get after it. We are going to fly over to Ohio and go play ball. That's what we are going to do."



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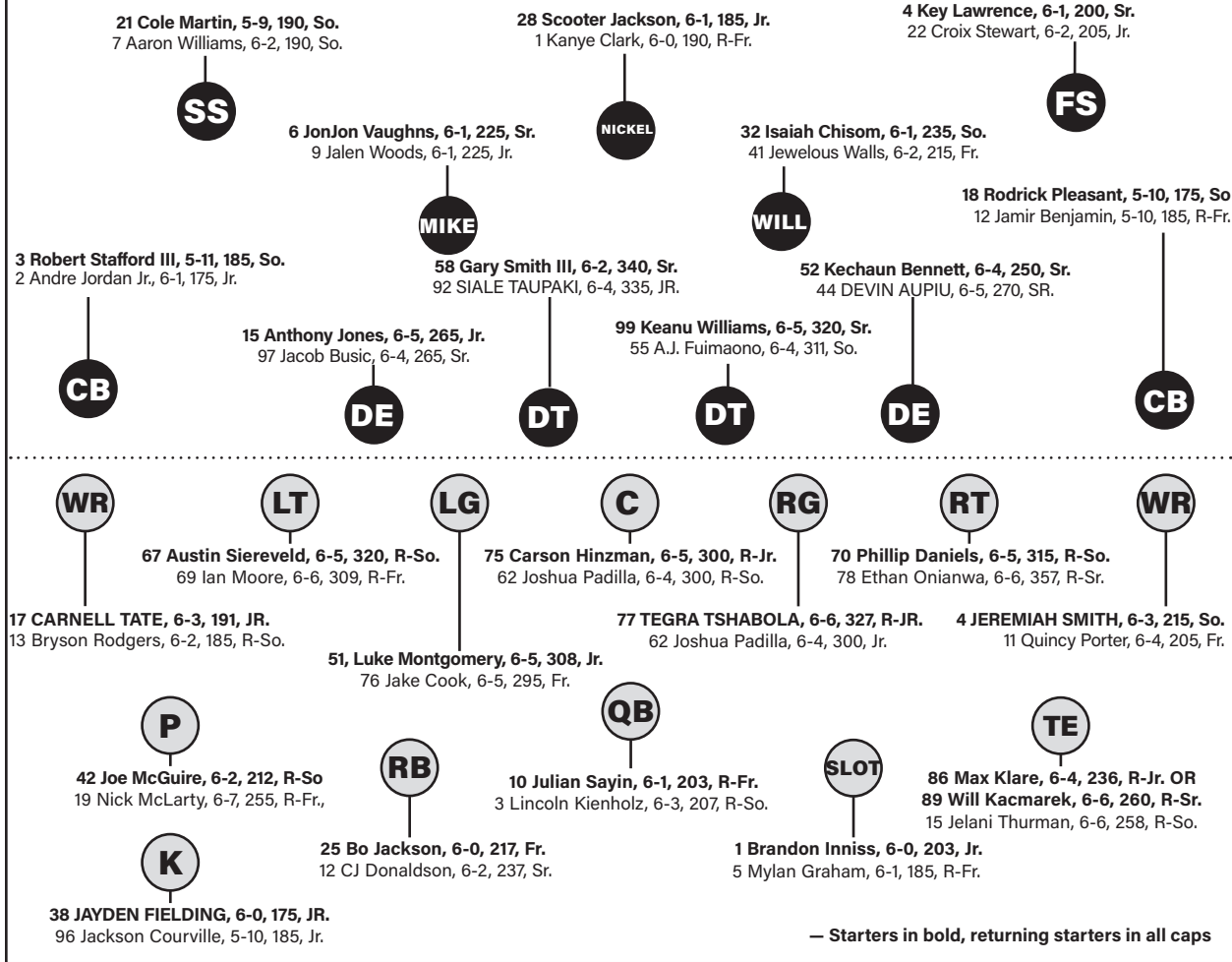
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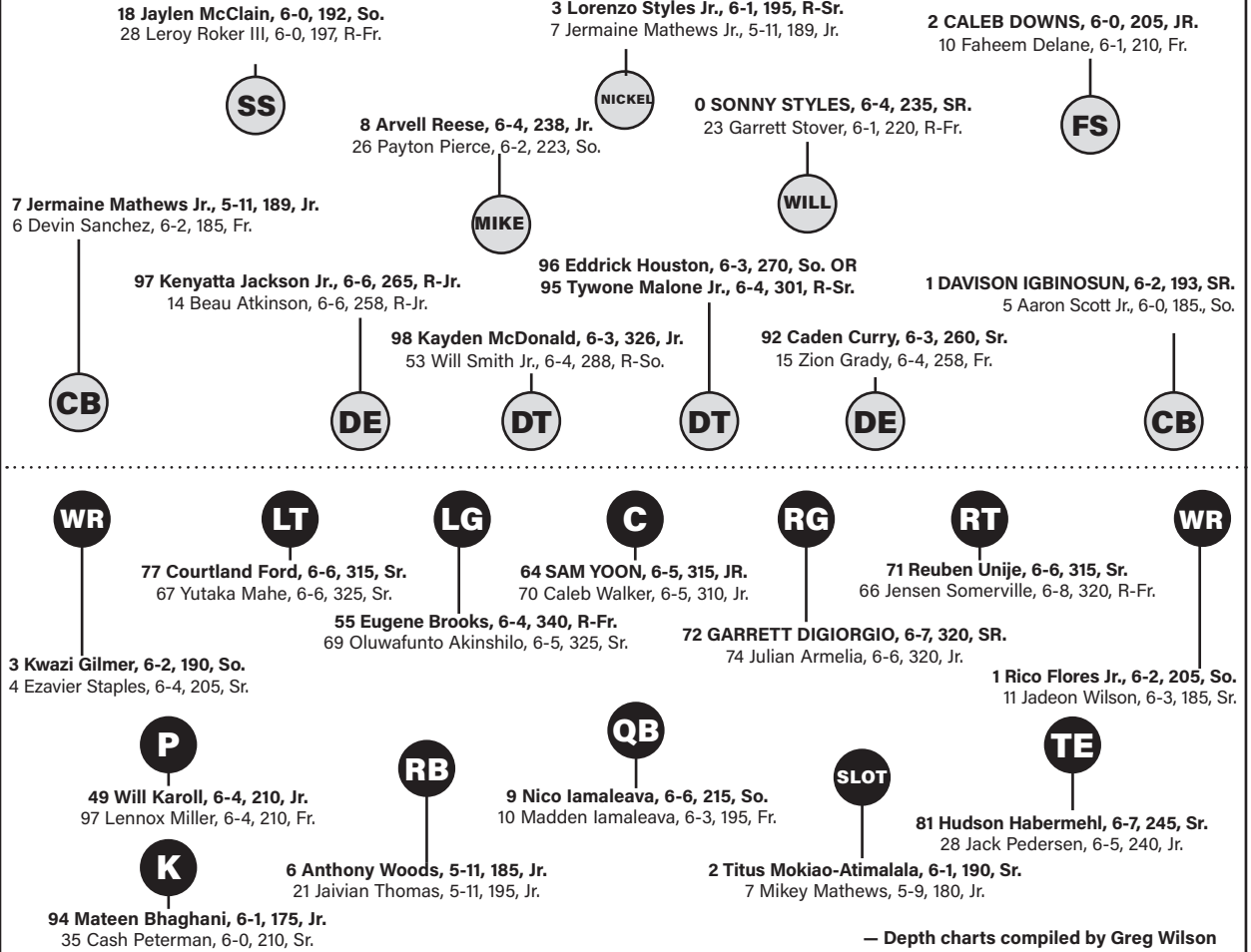


Projected Depth Charts

WHEN OHIO STATE HAS THE BALL...



WHEN UCLA HAS THE BALL...



How We See It

OHIO STATE RUSH OFFENSE vs. UCLA RUSH DEFENSE

This isn't your grandfather's three yards and a cloud of dust, but the 2025 version of Ohio State has a similar mindset with grinding, methodical drives, although the current Buckeyes rely more on an aerial game. The best thing that can be said about the rushing attack is that there are a lot of them. Eight players, including quarterbacks Julian Sayin and Lincoln Kienholz (one run for a 3-yard touchdown) and receiver Brandon Inniss, had carries against Purdue while Bo Jackson battered his way to 75 yards on 14 carries (5.4 average). He unfortunately had a 70-yard TD on the Buckeyes' first play called back because of a block in the back penalty. Isaiah West continues to shine in an expanding role, running for 60 yards on nine carries (6.7) with a 16-yarder. Overall, the Buckeyes rushed for 170 yards (4.0). The numbers for UCLA (3-6, 3-3) are a bit skewed because the Bruins have played better since DeShaun Foster was fired after an 0-3 start to the season. The rushing defense went from allowing 244.0 yards a game in the first three to 166.4 under interim coach Tim Skipper and new defensive play-caller Kevin Coyle in the next five games heading into the matchup with Nebraska on Nov. 8. The Cornhuskers won 28-21, and Emmett Johnson rushed 28 times for 129 yards and one touchdown and had three receptions for 103 yards and two scores to become the first Cornhusker running back in history to have a 100/100 game. Nebraska had 156 yards on the ground (4.0). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

UCLA RUSH OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE RUSH DEFENSE

The Bruins' ground game has also dramatically improved from the Foster regime of 122.0 per game to 197.0 in games five through eight under new offensive play-caller Jerry Neuheisel. Quarterback Nico lamaleava has been the leading rusher and added to his 388 yards and four touchdowns with 86 yards vs. the Cornhuskers, but the Bruins totaled only 157 yards (4.2). The Buckeyes were pretty stingy against a Purdue team that had been averaging 141.2 yards by giving up 92 on 22 carries (4.2). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

OHIO STATE PASS OFFENSE vs. UCLA PASS DEFENSE

That Sayin passed for 303 yards (27 of 33) and a touchdown was notable in the absence of Carnell Tate, who was held out as an injury precaution. Still, Jeremiah Smith was able to shed the double coverage for a career-high 10 catches for 137 yards and a score. As in the running game, everyone seemed to be involved with nine players making catches. Tight end Max Klare had five receptions for 59 yards against his former team. What wasn't good was the ugly interception Sayin threw into the end zone. UCLA is allowing 185.6 yards per game for the season. Nebraska, without injured QB Dylan Raiola, still had easy pickings when freshman TJ Lateef, in his first start, went 13 of 15 for 205 yards and three touchdowns. He didn't throw an incompletion until the fourth quarter (11 for 11). **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

UCLA PASS OFFENSE vs. OHIO STATE PASS DEFENSE

If the name lamaleava sounds somewhat familiar, it's because he may be about to relive a nightmare, literally. The last time he stepped into Ohio Stadium was last Dec. 21 on a 25-degree night when the Buckeyes routed Tennessee 42-17 in the first round of the College Football Playoff. He was 14 of 31 for 104 yards and was sacked four times while also rushing 20 times for 47 yards. Hey, NBC has gifted OSU another cool weather night game. lamaleava, against Nebraska, was 17 for 25 for 191 yards and two touchdowns under fierce pressure the whole game. He was sacked three times for 18 yards. The Buckeyes limited Purdue to 94 passing yards with a long of 30, but did not have a sack, and lamaleava's dual threat may be the sternest test yet. **EDGE: OHIO STATE**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jayden Fielding made a career-long 49-yarder plus another from 45 against Purdue to boost his confidence. UCLA kicker Mateen Bhaghani has made 14 of 18 field goals with a 54-yarder vs. Penn State this season and a 57-yarder last season. However, he missed from 49 yards vs. Nebraska. **EDGE: EVEN**

INTANGIBLES

A stat to remember: Entering the Nebraska game, the Bruins led the Big Ten and ranked sixth in the FBS in red-zone efficiency with 23 scores on 24 trips (95.8 percent) with 14 TDs and nine FGs. They ran their streak to 25 straight scores by going 2 for 2 vs. the 'Huskers with two TDs. The Buckeyes can be frustrating when they take time to put away an opponent, as was the case against the Boilermakers. **EDGE: UCLA**

STAFF PREDICTION

It's hard to see a blowout if the Buckeyes continue to score from drives taking double-digit plays. Not that there's anything wrong with that. However, if Tate is back, the long ball returns and a few turnovers are created, the 40-point mark might be surpassed against a poor defense. **OHIO STATE 38, UCLA 14**

Bosa Wants Clean Bill Of Health With Buffalo

By **CRAIG MERZ**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Nov. 7 injury report was good news for Joey Bosa.

That's a sentence not often heard when it relates to the Buffalo Bills' defensive end and his younger brother, Nick, of the San Francisco 49ers. Injuries have been a big part of the careers of both of the former Ohio State standouts.

Joey was coming off his best game of the season when the Bills beat the Kansas City Chiefs 28-21 on Nov. 2. He proved why the Bills took a gamble by signing him to a one-year contract in March after recent injury-plagued seasons with the Los Angeles Chargers.

He sacked Patrick Mahomes once, pressured him 10 times and had five quarterback hits. Ryan Smith of Pro Football Focus said Bosa's performance was his best since Week 3 of the 2021 season.

"(I'm) just happy," said Bosa afterward. "It's fun to win. It's fun to play well. I just feel reinvigorated here. I'm so happy to be here. Proud of everybody. Man, it feels good. I'm just proud of everybody – the way we rushed, kept (Mahomes) in the pocket, affected him. I just couldn't be happier right now."

But when the Bills returned to the practice field three days later, he was missing because of a wrist injury. The next day, Bosa had a limited practice, and the thoughts of "Uh, oh, here we go again" had to be in his head and those of the fans, known as the Bills Mafia.

Bosa had played just 28 of 51 regular-season games (55 percent) and two playoff games the previous three seasons because of a variety of injuries. He was still producing when he did play, but after nine seasons with the team that made him the third overall pick in the 2016 NFL draft (then the San Diego Chargers), they released him.

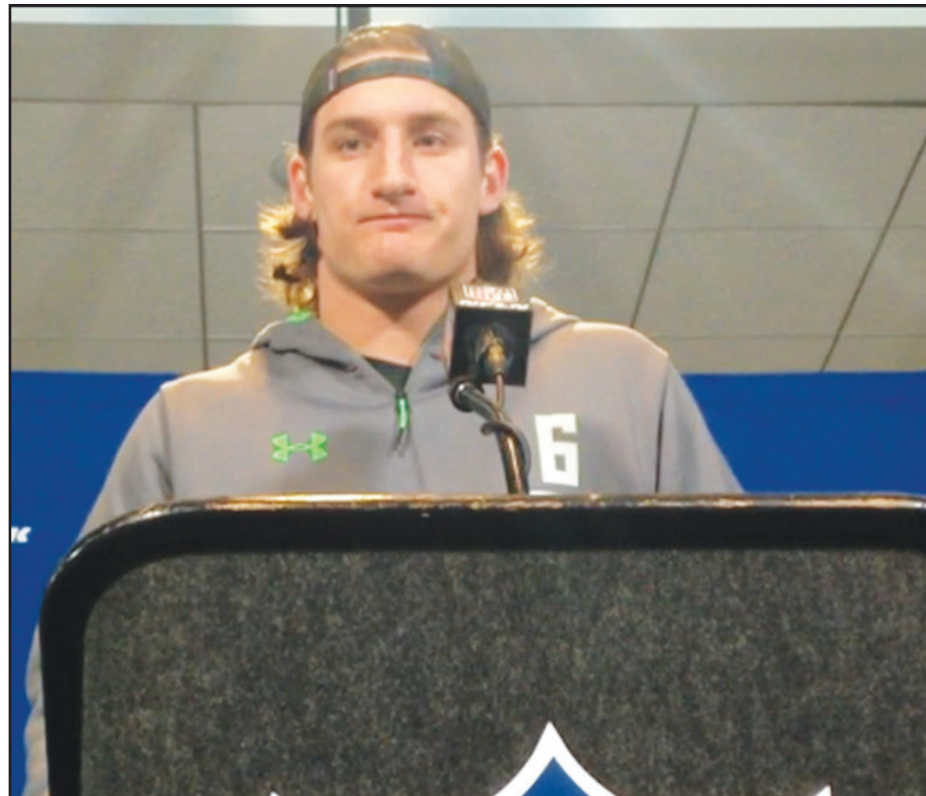
He was the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2016 when he had 10½ sacks and finished his time with the Chargers second in franchise history with 72 sacks, and he was named to the Pro Bowl five times.

Fortunately for Bosa, he was able to practice on Nov. 7, a Friday, and was cleared to play two days later against the Miami Dolphins. It was a relief because the numbers showed that Bosa, 30, was rounding into form at the right time as the Bills (6-3) headed into the second half of the season.

He made four tackles, two of them for losses, in the 30-13 loss to the Dolphins.

Through the first eight games, he had 19 tackles and four of both sacks and forced fumbles.

"He does a lot of things incredibly well," Bills defensive end A.J. Epenesa said. "His power rushes are so effective, and part of the reason is that, yes, he's so big, but his get-off is so impressive. You talk about how fast he can take that body and come off the line and come with force and speed and athleticism still, and then, having that power aspect. Obviously, he's such an incredible talent, a great guy. We love having him in the room. We can learn a lot from just what he does on the field."



FILE PHOTO

STAYING HEALTHY — Joey Bosa has dealt with injuries throughout his career, but the Buffalo Bills took a chance that the defensive end is still productive and signed him to a one-year contract in March after nine seasons with the San Diego/Los Angeles Chargers.

Worth The Risk

That's the key – "on the field."

A torn groin muscle limited Bosa to five games in 2022. He played only nine games in 2023 because of foot, hamstring and toe injuries. He struggled through a hip injury while playing 14 games last season and still made the Pro Bowl team.

Bosa even missed the Bills' offseason mini-camp in May because of a calf injury shortly after signing a \$12 million contract.

Bills general manager Brandon Beane said the team was willing to take the good with the bad.

"Yes, he has had some injuries," Beane said. "Most of them, if you watch him play, he plays the game violently. He plays reckless, without care for his body, which you love. Sometimes ... he plays the wrecking ball style. He knows how to rush. He hasn't lost that. We have a plan with every player, not just guys who have been injured. Our performance guys do a really good job. We put an individualized plan for each of these guys in."

Coach Sean McDermott has tried to enforce load management with Bosa, but it's not easy to keep talent on the sideline.

Bosa played 87 percent of the defensive snaps in Week 3 against the Dolphins, but the following game against the New Orleans Saints, the number was down to 73 percent.

"I won't mention the exact count of what the plan is, but there is a plan, and it kind of got away from us (vs. the Dolphins)," Bosa said. "Some of those drives were long, and they'd look at me, and I'd be like, 'No, no.' I hate being pulled out in the red zone, even if it's a really long drive, because I just want to be out there no matter how tired you are. But yeah, I felt that game for sure."

He played 44 of 60 (73.3 percent) defensive snaps vs. the Chiefs.

"Ideally, we keep it below that (87 percent) but at the end of the game, if it's crunch time and I need to be out there, I'm going to play as many snaps as I need to. But I think the goal is to try to get rest earlier in the game and steal some snaps on first and second down early," he said. "So, by the time the third, fourth quarter rolls around, we have some in the tank that we could use. But yeah, the goal isn't to go out there and have an incredible one game. It's about consistency and longevity for the season to manage that."

So far, it's working.

"Joey is a big, long, talented dude," Beane said. "When you watch him in one-on-one pass-rush, or when he's in a true one-on-one situation (and) he's got nothing to do but beat the tackle, you can see he clearly still knows how to rush. We like where he's at."

Good Vibes

It's been a long process to stay healthy and positive for Bosa.

"I think there's a point of actually being discouraged a little bit after last year and injuries in the past," Bosa told The Buffalo News. "It feels good to have a team like this take a chance on you, and I just want to prove to everybody – more importantly, myself, and the people around me – that I still have stuff to give. I feel like I'm playing at a very high level, right now."

"It hasn't gone perfectly the last few years," he added. "I think when I've been out there, I've been effective, but it's about being out there and being healthy and being able to help the team. I definitely feel extremely motivated this year, because every

year, you're getting closer to the end. I'm just excited to have this opportunity that they've given me and another chance to prove the kind of player I am."

Impactful is how defensive coordinator Bobby Babich describes him.

"Joey Bosa is an incredible dude," Babich said. "He wants to assimilate to what we're doing. If he makes a mistake, it weighs on him heavily. He doesn't want to let his teammates down."

Bosa said the transition to Buffalo has been smooth.

"It's just work now. It's just my life and my routine, and I'm not like figuring things out," he said. "I'm just going about my day. It feels like I've been doing it for 10 years. So, I mean, I've made friends with my teammates, know everybody, coaches and all that. I'm feeling comfortable, comfortable with it all, and it's funny how fast you can just adapt to a new situation and then it's like it was never any different."

Familiar Feeling

While Joey is enjoying his time with the Bills, Nick's season ended almost before it started when he tore his right ACL on Sept. 21 vs. the Arizona Cardinals in the third game.

The injury occurred in the first quarter, and Bosa, who had torn both ACLs before, knew he had done it again.

"He was pretty confident that he did it," coach Kyle Shanahan said the next day. "You could tell walking on the field, seeing his face, and could tell talking to him last night just how sure he was of it and knowing his body, and then an MRI confirmed it this morning."

Bosa, 27, partially tore the right ACL in high school, had a core muscle injury that prematurely ended his 2018 season at Ohio State and led him to enter the draft, tore his left ACL in 2020, which cost him the entire season, and missed three games in 2024 with a groin injury.

"You don't just replace a guy like Nick," Shanahan said of the 2022 NFL Defensive Player of the Year. "Everyone's got to continue to get better at everything."

"When you lose your better players, it gets harder. But throughout this year, I expect all of our players to get better as it goes. And that's stressed even that much more when you lose a great one like Nick."

Injuries have been a big part of the Bosas' lives, but Joey said he and Nick can't worry about that.

"It's really tough, but playing scared and trying not to get injured is just going to cause more issues than not," he said. "So, when you decide to play it another year, you make that deal with yourself, like 'I'm OK with getting injured. It's part of the game,' but you're not going to think about it while you're out there. You're going to go full speed, a hundred miles an hour, and whatever happens, happens."

"But usually if you're playing fast and violent and physical, then you're actually going to end up protecting yourself more than if you're watching around the pile. You're not running to the ball, you're going to roll up or whatever it is."

Buckeyes Add Four-Star 2026 Cornerback

Ohio State added a second cornerback to its 2026 class when four-star Jay Timmons pledged his services to the Buckeyes on Nov. 6.

RECRUITING
OUTLOOK
Greg Wilson

Timmons' commitment came just five days after he was on campus for the 38-14 win over Penn State, flipping from Florida State, where he had been committed since June 24.

He joins four-star cornerback Jordan Thomas, who has been committed to the Buckeyes since May 12. OSU also has four-star safeties Blaine Bradford and Simeon Caldwell in the class.

Timmons, out of Pine-Richland High School in Gibsonia, Pa., is the No. 136 player in the country, the No. 17 cornerback and the No. 3 player in Pennsylvania. His father, Lawrence, played at Florida State and went on to play 11 seasons at the NFL level, 10 for the Pittsburgh Steelers and one for the Miami Dolphins.

In the 2024 season, the younger Timmons helped his team to a WIPAL 5A championship, finishing with 42 tackles, 10 passes broken up, four interceptions and three forced fumbles. He also caught 40 passes for 755 yards and eight touchdowns on the offensive side of the ball.

Wilhelm Commits To OSU

Ohio State's hot week on the recruiting trail continued with three-star interior offensive lineman Mason Wilhelm pledging his services to the Buckeyes on Nov. 7.

He is the son of former Ohio State line-backer Matt Wilhelm, who played with the Buckeyes from 1999-2002 before going on to an eight-year NFL career. Wilhelm is ranked the No. 1,276 player in the country, the No. 101 interior lineman and the No. 56 player in Ohio, according to 247Sports' composite rankings.

He had been committed to North Carolina since June 1, but the Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward prospect has decided that he wants to remain in state for his college ball.

Wilhelm joins Akron Hoban four-star offensive tackle Sam Greer (6-8, 315), Avon Lake, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Maxwell Riley (6-5, 280) along with Glendale (Ariz.) Sandra Day O'Connor three-star interior offensive lineman Tucker Smith (6-5, 280) and Mentor, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Landry Brede (6-5, 280), who flipped from NC State earlier this fall.

Four-Star DL Ruffin Joins Class

Ohio State was in the race until the end with Bessemer (Ala.) City four-star defensive lineman Emanuel Ruffin (6-4, 295), who committed to Colorado on Sept. 23.

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
Khマリ Bing	S	6-0	190	★★★	Baltimore St. Frances Academy
Brock Boyd	WR	6-2	183	★★★	Southlake (Texas) Carroll
Blaine Bradford	S	6-1	207	★★★★	Baton Rouge (La.) Catholic
Landry Brede	OT	6-5	280	★★★	Mentor, Ohio
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
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
Emanuel Ruffin	DL	6-4	295	★★★★	Bessemer (Ala.) City
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
Jordan Thomas	CB	6-1	185	★★★★	Oradell (N.J.) Bergen Catholic
Jay Timmons	CB	5-11	185	★★★★	Gibsonia (Pa.) Pine-Richland
Khary Wilder	DE	6-4	260	★★★★	Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra
Mason Wilhelm	OL	6-4	285	★★★	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward

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
Mason Wilt	OT	6-5	265	★★★	St. Clairsville, Ohio
Kellen Wymer	OT	6-5	265	★★★★	Liberty Center, Ohio

OSU Football 2028 Commitments					
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
Jameer Whyce	DL	6-4	270	★★★★★	Trotwood (Ohio) Trotwood-Madison

But Ruffin had second thoughts about that decision and backed off his commitment on Nov. 4.

"After much prayer and consideration, I want to take a moment to thank my family, friends, and teammates for always supporting me throughout this journey," Ruffin posted on Twitter when he announced his decision. "I'd also like to thank the University of Colorado and their staff for believing in me and recruiting me. With that being said, I have decided to decommit from the University of Colorado."

It took just five days after his decommitment for Ruffin to pledge his services to the Buckeyes, making him the fourth defensive tackle in the class for OSU.

He is another big addition to the 2026 class as the No. 197 player in the country, the No. 26 defensive lineman and the No. 12 player in the state of Alabama.

He joins Richland (N.J.) St. Augustine Prep four-star Damari Simeon (6-3, 275), Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy three-star Cameron Brickle (6-2, 305) and Cleveland Glenville three-star Jamir Perez (6-4, 360) on the interior defensive line in the class. Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra four-star defensive end Khary Wilder (6-4, 260) is also pledged to the Buckeyes.

Three-Star OT Flips To Minnesota

Ohio State also lost a commitment in the 2026 class since BSB last went to press when Phoenix Mountain Pointe three-star offensive tackle Aaron Thomas (6-7, 300) decommitted on Nov. 3.

The reason he decided to go back on his pledge became a little clearer just two days later when he subsequently committed to Minnesota. He had been committed to Ohio State since June 25.

The flip comes as no surprise, but the fact that he flipped to the Golden Gophers was a little more of a surprise since they didn't seem to be in the race for Thomas previously. He had visited Florida State, Texas A&M and Arkansas before his commitment to OSU, and he took another visit to Tallahassee, Fla., on Oct. 4.

But now Thomas will remain in the Big Ten if his decision holds.

Thomas is considered the No. 506 player in the country, the No. 46 offensive tackle and the No. 8 player in the state of Arizona.

The Buckeyes have been searching for another offensive lineman to add in the 2026 class long before Thomas decided to decommit. One of the strongest possi-

bilities to add at offensive tackle seems to be Harrisburg, Pa., four-star Kevin Brown (6-5, 270).

Brown A Priority To Flip For Bucks

Brown visited Ohio State for the 38-14 win over Penn State on Nov. 1. As of publication, Brown was still committed to the Nittany Lions and has been since July 27, 2024.

After his visit to Columbus, many recruiting experts seem to think that commitment may not last long, including national analyst Steve Wiltfong of On3.

"He was back and forth on visiting (Ohio State), and he is very glad that he did," Wiltfong said in a video posted to the Rivals' YouTube channel. "He told me it was awesome. 'They had everything for me. They treated me like a king. They're the best team in the nation for a reason. Their facilities are top-tier. Their coaching staff is beyond the best. The player development is unmatched.'

"He said he's coming back for an official visit. The Buckeyes have two more home games, so I expect him at one of those, where he'll get a chance to spend more time around the coaching staff and players. With that, I like the way this one is trending for Ohio State. I do not expect him to sign with Penn State."

Brown has also been considering West Virginia as another possible destination, taking an official visit there on Oct. 28.

But during his unofficial visit to Ohio State, it was obvious that offensive line coach Tyler Bowen was making Brown a major priority of his. He spent a good amount of time with Brown on the field pregame and made a point to walk off the field with Brown after the win.

Brown is obviously still leaving the door open to go to Penn State, remaining committed despite the firing of former head coach James Franklin, but the longer the Nittany Lions wait to find a head coach, the less likely it seems that Brown will end up in State College, Pa. Brown told 247Sports after his visit that he still wants to sign on Dec. 4, during the early signing period this year.

As of now, Ohio State and West Virginia seem to be the only two other major players in his recruitment, but that could change with still nearly a month to go until he wants to sign.

But Brown isn't stressing about the situation he's in, having less than a month to make his final decision if he wants to stick to his timeline.

"It hasn't been super difficult," Brown told 247Sports. "I'm blessed to have parents and grandparents to take me to these places. And I'm blessed to even be in this situation that I'm in. Most kids would dream of being offered by Ohio State and Penn State and have to make that decision."

Visitors For UCLA Game Piling Up

The Buckeyes come back home for their next game against UCLA on Nov. 15,

Continued On Page 22

UCLA Game Proves A Big Draw For Recruits

Continued From Page 21

and they are already starting to add some visitors to the list for that day that could prove to be very important.

One prospect who will be on site is Hoschton (Ga.) Mill Creek three-star linebacker Braxton Rembert (6-5, 200), who is committed to Wake Forest. He has been pledged to the Demon Deacons since June 23, but Ohio State has made him a target recently and seems to be gaining momentum.

He is considered the No. 1,375 player in the country and the No. 138 player in the state of Georgia, and OSU linebacker coach James Laurinaitis would like to add him to a linebacker class that already includes Cleveland Glenville four-star Cincere Johnson (6-3, 240) and Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy four-star CJ Sanna (6-3, 225).

The Buckeyes have also been in contact with Massillon (Ohio) Washington three-star linebacker Ja'Dyn Williams (6-2, 205) and West Charlotte, N.C., four-star Elijah Littlejohn (6-2, 205).

Williams is considered the No. 662 player in the country, while Littlejohn,

who is considered an edge rusher by 247Sports, is the No. 379 player in the country. Williams is committed to Indiana, and Littlejohn was a Penn State commit but backed off his pledge on Oct. 16, shortly after Franklin was fired.

The Buckeyes are also set to host Indianapolis Warren Central three-star defensive lineman JJ Finch (6-3, 260), according to a report from 247Sports' Tom Loy.

Finch is the No. 532 player in the country, the No. 63 defensive lineman and the No. 5 player in Indiana. He has been committed to Alabama since June 22 but has been looking at other options recently, visiting Tennessee on Nov. 1 as well.

There will be many other prospects on campus for the game against the Bruins, but with the early signing period approaching quickly, Rembert and Finch could prove to be the most important names on the list.

Five-Star Safety Taking Visit

Another 2026 prospect who seems to be considering elsewhere after he chose another school over the Buckeyes is Flowood (Miss.) Hartfield Academy five-

star safety Bralan Womack (6-0, 195).

Womack committed to Auburn on Aug. 21, but with head coach Hugh Freeze fired, he is considering other options.

"I'm going to stay committed to Auburn, but I'm opening up my recruitment," Womack told 247Sports.

One of those options is Texas A&M, where he will be taking an official visit when the Aggies take on South Carolina at noon on Nov. 15.

Womack also had a conversation with Auburn Undercover about how Auburn was performing on the field. The Tigers were 4-6 overall with a 1-6 conference record after losing 45-38 in overtime to Vanderbilt on Nov. 8.

"The honest truth in how I'm feeling right now, the defense has got to stop leaving the game up to the offense," Womack said. "At this point, the defense – in the college world we live in now – you've got to score 20 or more points to compete. And we've done that zero times in SEC play."

After receiving some backlash for those comments, Womack took to Twitter.

"In regard to the article that's circulating, I want to clear the air," Womack posted. "My intentions were never to bad-

mouth Auburn's offense. I'm just a competitor who's passionate about the game and excited about what's being built here. Auburn has so much potential, and I can't wait to be a part of it. I just don't want anything taken out of context from what I said about the recent games. I will continue to support my team win, lose or draw, but I will also continue to hold us to the highest standard! War Eagle!"

As BSB went to press, Womack was still committed to Auburn. Ohio State didn't seem to be back in the race with the five-star, but since the Buckeyes went down to the wire for Womack before his initial commitment, he could be a potential flip candidate to keep an eye on until early December. However, it does seem unlikely that it will be to Ohio State if he does flip.

Womack is the No. 19 player in the country, the No. 1 safety and the No. 2 player in Mississippi.

Commits Dominate In Prep Games

Two Ohio State commits in the 2026 class had impressive games for their respective high school programs.

A Look Back At Recruiting From The Pages Of BSB

35 Years Ago — 1990

Recruiters could not go wrong with Youngstown (Ohio) Rayen defensive end Craig Powell. He had the tools and was versatile. Powell, a SuperPrep magazine All-American coming into his senior year, was considering several schools, including Ohio State, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Syracuse and Penn State.

Any of those schools would have been glad to take him, as he possessed excellent speed, and his blocking ability and good hands also made him a candidate at tight end for whatever college he selected.

"I would say he would play an outside linebacker in college," said Rayen coach John Turco. "He runs a 4.5 (second) 40-yard dash, which is defensive back speed."

Powell also played basketball and ran track the previous year for Rayen.

"He has run an 11-flat 100 meters in track and also had a 49.5 in the quarter (mile). He just has great quickness for someone with his size."

30 Years Ago — 1995

Vanness Provitt took a short detour, but he was eventually going to get where he wanted to go: Ohio State.

Provitt, a standout receiver at Warren (Ohio) Harding the previous year, had failed to meet Prep 48 guidelines after graduating from high school the previous summer.

Provitt had told BSB he intended to play for the Buckeyes. But when his test score didn't meet standards, he ventured to Fork Union in Virginia and reopened his college search, primarily looking at OSU, Illinois, Michigan and Michigan State.

That search was open, that is, until the weekend of Oct. 21. Provitt told members of the OSU coaching staff that he was committing, but then he had some second thoughts.

One more telephone call from the OSU staff on Oct. 24 clinched the deal, though.

"He touched base with me (on Oct. 24) and told me he was definitely going to go to Ohio State, and he would work on getting eligible," said Fork Union postgraduate head coach John Shuman.

25 Years Ago — 2000

Ohio State picked up its 11th verbal commitment for the 2001 class when Sandusky (Ohio) Perkins fullback/linebacker Brandon Schnittker committed to the Buckeyes on Oct. 22.

According to Schnittker, OSU assistant George Belu had called him earlier that day to offer him a scholarship. It did not take him long to accept, he said.

"Coach Belu called and said they wanted me to play for them," Schnittker said. "I was amazed. I was kind of overwhelmed. This was my first Big Ten offer.

"I talked to my family, made up my mind and called him back.

He was excited about it, and he said the coaching staff was excited. Their interest had been increasing, and they were calling me every week.

"I guess they just saw some things on film they liked."

Schnittker was related to former Buckeye great Dick Schnittker, who played both football and basketball at Ohio State.

20 Years Ago — 2005

Once the Ohio State scholarship offer he had always dreamed of was in his possession, Grant Schwartz felt like the right thing to do was wait. Other teams had treated him well during the recruiting process, and he didn't want to make a rash decision by committing to the Buckeyes.

But after some further consideration, he realized there was nothing rash about his feelings. How could there be, especially when he had been waiting his whole life for an opportunity to don the scarlet and gray?

With that in mind, he gave members of OSU's coaching staff his verbal commitment shortly before the Buckeyes' game with Minnesota, ending a recruiting process that, in some ways, began after Schwartz visited Ohio State's summer football camp and in other ways had been going on far longer than that.

"I just decided that it's been my lifelong dream to play for Ohio State," said Schwartz, whose father, Brian, played at Ohio State from 1976-79.

15 Years Ago — 2010

There were plenty of people across the nation already convinced that Cardale Jones was a great quarterback. Just ask the dozen or so colleges to have offered him a scholarship, as well as the others still debating such a move.

But as Jones went through his senior season at Cleveland Glenville, one of the most important voices in his life had been preaching a decidedly different message to the three-star prospect.

That would be Tarblooders head coach Ted Ginn Sr., who took it upon himself to make sure Jones realized what was expected of him as a quarterback.

"I cannot allow him to get caught up in the 60-yard pass, which is hard because you've got the outside influence and you've got everybody that's talking to him," the coach said. "I have to be the guy to cut his throat because I work with him every day and I want him to be successful. That's what our job is, to put kids in positions to reach their full potential."

10 Years Ago — 2015

Ohio State played Michigan State and Michigan once a year on the gridiron, but the programs battled on a daily basis in the recruiting world.

As the trio got ready to settle matters on the field, Ohio State had a slim lead over its northern neighbors in the Scout.com recruiting rankings. The Buckeyes had the No. 2 class in the country – narrowly trailing No. 1 LSU but leading No. 3 Alabama – which put them ahead of the No. 6 Wolverines and No. 10 Spartans. Fellow Big Ten East Division team Penn State checked in at No. 4 nationally.

"Those three or four schools could all finish in the top 10, which has definitely never happened for Scout," Scout.com recruiting analyst Allen Trieu said.

With four teams in the top 10, the Big Ten was second only to the SEC, which had five teams among the 10 best. Florida State, at No. 8, was the only ACC squad, and the Pac12 and Big 12 were both shut out.

Five Years Ago — 2020

Pilot Mountain (N.C.) East Surry four-star tight end Benji Gosnell committed to Ohio State on Nov. 4, choosing the Buckeyes over finalists Florida and North Carolina.

The 6-4, 225-pound Gosnell was considered the 11th-best tight end and No. 265 prospect overall in the class of 2022. He caught 25 passes for 422 yards and five touchdowns to lead the Cardinals to their first state championship the previous season. He also added 14 tackles for loss, six sacks, two forced fumbles, one fumble recovery and an interception as a linebacker, where he garnered first-team all-state honors.

Ohio State extended an offer to Gosnell in July, and though he had never been to campus, he was able to build a strong relationship with head coach Ryan Day and offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson through virtual visits and Zoom calls.

One Year Ago — 2024

Ohio State sent out a scholarship offer to a 2025 Cincinnati commit on Nov. 3, extending it to Cartersville, Ga., three-star cornerback Jordyn Woods (6-3, 175).

"Coach (Tim Walton) and Coach (Gerren) DuHart offered me," Woods told 247Sports. "I had a feeling they were going to offer, but I didn't know for sure. It was exciting when they did, being committed to Cincinnati and then getting an offer from Ohio State and the Big Ten."

Woods had been committed to the Bearcats since June 25 and hadn't been exploring many options since, not taking any more official visits after he had gone to Virginia, Boston College and Cincinnati, three of the five schools he held offers from.

But despite his previous lack of interest in flipping from Cincinnati, now that he had an Ohio State offer it was something he was exploring.

ASK AN ANALYST

with Bill Greene of Buckeye Scoop

Ohio State got two in-state commitments from 2027 offensive linemen, Liberty Center, Ohio, four-star interior offensive lineman Kellen Wymer (6-5, 265) and St. Clairsville, Ohio, three-star interior offensive lineman Mason Wilt (6-5, 295). What do you make of them as prospects?

"I watched film on both of them this week, and I'm kind of surprised they took those kids now, when you look at both of them. Those are kids you could get a year from now on this date. I don't care where they're committed to, they'll flip back to you. It seems a little early to me when I look at both of those kids on film. Not to say they're bad players, either of them. I probably like Wilt a little better, but I think it's too early to take those two kids. They're not going anywhere, and they're not signing anything for a long time. (This is) from my point of view. I don't work for Ohio State. (Offensive line coach) Tyler Bowen is sold, and obviously, if you are, then you go get them.

"But to me, I would put these kids in a class with Phoenix Mountain Pointe three-star offensive tackle Aaron Thomas (6-7, 300). They took him early, and then as time goes on, it's like, 'Boy, I don't know about this

guy.' I'm not saying these two kids couldn't both end up being superstars. With the in-state kids, maybe my recruiting view is older, because I'm older, but I would wait longer on the in-state kids, because you can get them at any time. The bottom line for me is I like both those kids, but I don't think I'd take either of them a year before signing day."

How do you grade how Ohio State offensive line coach Tyler Bowen has done as a recruiter in his short time with the Buckeyes?

"You don't have a huge sample size to go on. They obviously made a mistake with Aaron Thomas, and that happens, so they fix their mistake. Then you have Avon Lake, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Maxwell Riley (6-5, 280) committed, who I like a lot. You have Glendale (Ariz.) Sandra Day O'Connor three-star interior offensive lineman Tucker Smith (6-5, 280), who I think has a chance. Mentor, Ohio, three-star offensive tackle Landry Brede (6-5, 280) is an in-state kid that, if I'm going to roll the dice, he's probably someone I'm rolling the dice on. So if you look at 2026, I don't think it's an amazing offensive line class by any means.

"So, I don't know. He certainly had the reputation

coming to Ohio State as just a super recruiter. But if you look at who he's taken, a lot of in-state kids that I think you could recruit if you or I were the O-line coach. He's not going head-to-head with Georgia and Alabama for the top kid in Georgia, and beating them on him. So I see a lot of instant kids that anybody could get. I see some questionable kids. Carter Lowe, to me, was a given, but that's last year's class. I like Riley, and we'll see him. I don't know, but in 2027, I'm kind of shocked they took (Wilt and Wymer) now, but hey, man, if he identified those kids as two of the best offensive linemen in America, then you go get them."

Harrisburg, Pa., four-star offensive tackle Kevin Brown (6-5, 270) was on campus for Ohio State's 38-14 win over Penn State. Do you believe the Buckeyes will be able to flip him from the Nittany Lions?

"Absolutely. I would almost put him at a 75 to 25 percent chance that he is going to flip to Ohio State. I think there's a pretty good chance they're getting that kid. I like him a lot."

The prospect who has been committed to Ohio State the longest in his class, Santa Ana (Calif.) Mater Dei five-star wide receiver Chris Henry Jr. (6-5, 205), was one of the two who stood out.

When Henry played against the No. 1 team in the country, St. John Bosco of California, he had five catches and took those for 213 yards and two scores.

His teammate – another Ohio State commit – four-star wide receiver Kayden Dixon-Wyatt, also had a great game, scoring three touchdowns, one of which ended up being the game-winner.

Mater Dei trailed in the game 21-3, looking like it would fall like every other team that had played St. John Bosco this season, which had been by an average of 35.5 points per game.

But Henry and Dixon-Wyatt were able to power their squad to a 36-31 upset victory.

The Buckeyes' 2026 quarterback also had a game worth noting.

In a 76-49 win, Mission Viejo, Calif., three-star signal caller Luke Fahey (6-0, 185) threw for 562 yards and five touchdowns. He was 24 of 31 in the win over Los Alamitos (Calif.).

Buckeyes Make Top Lists For WRs

Since BSB last went to press, Ohio State was included on more narrowed-down scholarship lists, this time for three different wide receivers in the 2027 class.

Glassboro, N.J., five-star wide receiver Xavier Sabb (6-1, 180) included the Buckeyes in his top 10. The Buckeyes were there with Alabama, Georgia, Miami (Fla.), Nebraska, Notre Dame, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas A&M and USC.

Sabb is considered the No. 21 player in the class, the No. 1-rated athlete and the top player in New Jersey. His brother, Keon, began his college career at Michigan before transferring to Alabama.

Los Angeles Cathedral four-star wide receiver Quentin Hale (6-3, 175) is down to nine schools. He is considering Alabama, Miami, Notre Dame, Ohio State,

Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas A&M, Texas and USC. He is the No. 50 player in the country, the No. 9 wide receiver and the No. 6 player in California.

Brentwood (Tenn.) Academy five-star wide receiver Kesian Bowman (6-1, 174) is also down to 10 schools. He narrowed his scholarships down to Alabama, LSU, Miami, Ohio State, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas A&M, Texas, USC and Vanderbilt.

Bowman is considered the No. 29 player in the country, the No. 5 wide receiver and the No. 2 player in Tennessee.

Buckeyes Extend Scholarship Offers

The Buckeyes have also been active when it comes to extending scholarship offers since BSB last went to press. Here's a look at the prospects that Ohio State offered.

• **Lafayette (La.) Acadiana three-star defensive lineman Darryus McKinley (6-3, 270)** – McKinley is currently committed to LSU and has been since Aug. 1. But with the firing of Brian Kelly, McKinley could be looking at other options, and defensive line coach Larry Johnson is hoping that the Buckeyes are one of those options. McKinley is the No. 555 player in the country in the 2026 class, the No. 69 defensive lineman and the No. 19 player in Louisiana.

• **Pittsburgh Pine-Richland four-star wide receiver Khalil Taylor (5-11, 180)** – A common theme in recruiting this year, Taylor decommitted from a school in turmoil. It was Penn State that Taylor, a 2027 prospect, was pledged to, and now the Buckeyes hope to make up any ground. He is considered the No. 63 player in the country, the No. 12 wide receiver and the No. 4 player in Pennsylvania.

• **Hattiesburg (Miss.) Oak Grove three-star defensive lineman Deven Robertson (6-3, 320)** – Johnson also offered Robertson, who is in the 2027 class. He has 24 Division I offers already and is the No. 409 player in the country, the No. 46 defensive lineman and the No. 14 player in Mississippi.

Other Notes And Tidbits

• As is often the case for quarterback recruits, Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy five-star signal caller Jayden Wade (6-3, 190) of the 2028 class is ready to make an early decision. He is planning to commit on Nov. 16. Wade will decide between Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio State, Oregon, Texas and Washington. Wade is

the No. 5 player in the 2028 class, the No. 1 quarterback and the No. 4 player in Florida.

• Crowley, Texas, four-star wide receiver Antayvious Ellis (6-0, 175) committed to Nebraska on Nov. 3. He chose the Cornhuskers over Texas, Texas A&M and Ohio State. He is considered the No. 345 player in the country, the No. 43 wide receiver and the No. 49 player in the state of Texas.



U-M's Haynes Out Indefinitely After Surgery

Michigan junior running back Justice Haynes is set to miss significant time to undergo foot surgery, according to CBS Sports' Matt Zenitz.

BIG TEN NOTES Sam Cipriani

Haynes suffered the injury in the second half of Michigan's 31-20 win over Michigan State on Oct. 25 and missed the Wolverines' following game against Purdue on Nov. 1.

The current timetable for his return from the injury is unknown, though the Wolverines are hoping to get Haynes back before the end of the season.

In seven games of action, the Alabama transfer had been one of the nation's most effective rushers. He totaled 857 yards on 121 carries for an average of 7.1 yards – the sixth-best average in the country at the time of his injury. Through Nov. 8, Haynes was also second in the nation to Jacksonville St. running back Cam Cook with an average of 122.4 rushing yards per game.



Justice Haynes

Sophomore running back Jordan Marshall, who was already a close No. 2 back behind Haynes, has stepped up in his teammates' absence, rushing for 110 yards and a score against Michigan State and a career-high 185 yards and three touchdowns in the 21-16 win over Purdue. Marshall also rushed for 133 yards and a score in Michigan's 24-7 victory against Washington on Oct. 18.

Haynes previously missed six quarters of

action – including the entire win over Washington – before his most recent injury. He was out previously due to an abdominal/rib injury suffered during the Wolverines' 31-13 loss to USC on Oct. 11.

Seven B1G Teams In CFP Rankings

Two Big Ten teams topped the first College Football Playoff rankings of 2025.

Ohio State (9-0, 6-0 Big Ten) ranked No. 1, while Indiana (10-0, 7-0) followed at No. 2 in the initial rankings. The Buckeyes defeated then-No. 1 Texas 14-7 in Week 1 and haven't relinquished the top spot in the AP poll since.

Indiana made a major jump in the rankings last month after a 30-20 Oct. 11 victory over then-No. 3 Oregon (8-1, 5-1), which was the only other Big Ten team that would receive a bid into the playoffs if the current CFP rankings hold.

Four other Big Ten teams also made their way into the first CFP top 25, with No. 19 USC, No. 20 Iowa, No. 21 Michigan and No. 23 Washington also included.

Iowa is arguably the most surprising inclusion. The Hawkeyes have yet to appear in the top 25 of a single AP poll at any point this season, but their strength of record and early-season performance evidently carried enough weight in the committee room to crack the playoff rankings.

USC barely topped Michigan in the rankings after the two matched up head to head in October, while Washington made its first appearance in both the AP poll and CFP rankings the same week.

Former NU Coach Fitzgerald Seeking New Job

Following a long saga that had Pat Fitzgerald fired from Northwestern amid hazing allegations – and later win a wrongful termination suit against the university – the former Wildcat head coach said he finally feels vindicated and now hopes to return to the college football sidelines.

Fitzgerald, who spoke publicly about the incident for the first time since his termination in July 2023, said he's been encouraged by the reception he's received as he's re-entered the coaching market.

"I feel very fortunate," said Fitzgerald when asked how he has been received in the college hiring space. "I feel fully vindicated. It's been great working through this process. There's been conversations with a lot of folks. It's been face to face, it's been on Zoom, it's been phone calls. (My candidacy has) been received very well."

Prior to his termination, Fitzgerald was at the helm of Northwestern for 17 years, posting a 110-101 record over his long tenure as the head coach. Between his time as a linebacker (1993-96) on the Wildcats and his time as an assistant and head coach, the 50-year-old Fitzgerald spent 26 years with the Northwestern football program.

Fitzgerald expressed his love for Northwestern, despite disappointment in how the university handled the situation, adding that he feels revitalized after his time off and ready to bring a new program to the promised land.

"I love Northwestern," Fitzgerald said. "Unfortunately, things went the way that they went. It's all about how you respond. If you talk to anyone that's been around me, (my wife) Stacy, and our boys the last few years, the Fitzgerald family is going to respond and respond boldly."

"I just feel like I've got a Ph.D. I'm well rested, no bags under my eyes, ready to put the whistle around my neck and put the neck roll on and get ready to go. Somewhere, hopefully, this will work out, and we'll go win some championships."

MSU QB Chiles Benched

After a tumultuous 3-5 start to the season, where Michigan State lost its first five Big Ten games, head coach Jonathan Smith made a major change to the Spartan offense.

Smith elected to bench starting quarterback Aidan Chiles for redshirt-freshman Alessio Milivojevic before Michigan State's contest against Minnesota on Nov. 1.

Though Milivojevic impressed in his first-ever collegiate start, completing 20 of 28 passes while throwing for 311 yards and a touchdown, it was to no avail, with the Spartans falling 23-20 in overtime for their sixth straight loss.

Prior to his benching, Chiles had produced solid numbers for Michigan State, passing for 1,392 yards, 10 touchdowns and three interceptions on a 63.1 completion percentage. Chiles – who transferred to Michigan State from Oregon State in the offseason during which Smith took the Spartan job – had started in each of the Spartans' last 20 contests before Smith decided to roll with a new quarterback in hopes of turning the season around.

Despite the fact that Chiles started in each of Michigan State's first eight games this season, Milivojevic had still seen significant time in 2025.

Milivojevic had completed 42 of 65 passes for 592 yards, four touchdowns and one interception.

Michigan State's next game was sched-

uled for Nov. 15 against Penn State at home before the Spartans were set to go on the road to play Iowa on Nov. 22 and finish the season with Maryland on Nov. 29.

U-M Won't Play In Germany

What was supposed to be an international game for two Michigan schools will now be played in the Big House.

Originally slated to be played at Deutsche Bank Park in Frankfurt, Hesse, Germany, Michigan and Western Michigan's season-opening contest on Sept. 5, 2026, will now be played at the Big House in Ann Arbor.

Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel released a statement on behalf of the athletic department explaining the school's decision to switch the venue.

"We did a thorough and exhaustive evaluation in relation to playing an international game," said Manuel. "Based on the analysis of all the factors, we felt it was best to keep the game in Ann Arbor as it was originally scheduled for the 2026 season. I want to thank Eintracht Frankfurt and their stadium management company for all the work that they did in partnership with our staff to try to make this game a possibility."

Despite the decision to cancel plans to travel to Germany in 2026, Manuel said the university will remain open to exploring overseas opportunities in the future.

"We have fans and alumni around the globe, and many have expressed excitement about attending a game on foreign soil," Manuel said. "We remain open to exploring the right opportunities for our teams to play internationally."

Michigan head coach Sherrone Moore will be suspended for the Wolverines' Week 1 contest against Western Michigan as a part of the NCAA's punishment for his role in the team's illegal scouting scheme.

Oregon CB To Enter Portal

Oregon cornerback Dakoda Fields plans to enter the transfer portal, according to a report from On3.

Head coach Dan Lanning was asked about Fields' departure in his weekly press conference on Nov. 5, and he stated there hasn't been any communication with the cornerback about his departure and that Fields did not attend practice before his intention to enter the portal was revealed.

"He didn't come to work today," Lanning said. "We haven't talked to Dakoda, so I guess that's the way it goes nowadays."

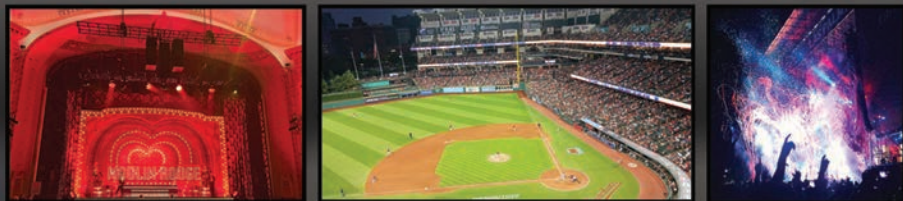
Coming out of Junipero Serra High School in Compton, Calif., the four-star recruit committed to Oregon as the No. 90 player nationally and the No. 13 cornerback in the class of 2024.

After redshirting his freshman year because of a knee injury in August 2024, the 6-2, 200-pound cornerback saw action in just three games for the Ducks in 2025. Fields recorded one tackle in Oregon's 59-



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BIG
2025 Standings

	Conf.			All		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Indiana	7	0	1.000	10	0	1.000
Ohio State	6	0	1.000	9	0	1.000
Oregon	5	1	0.833	8	1	0.889
Michigan	5	1	0.833	7	2	0.778
USC	5	1	0.833	7	2	0.778
Iowa	4	2	0.667	6	3	0.667
Minnesota	4	2	0.667	6	3	0.667
Nebraska	4	3	0.571	7	3	0.700
Illinois	3	3	0.500	6	3	0.667
Washington	3	3	0.500	6	3	0.667
Northwestern	3	3	0.500	5	4	0.556
UCLA	3	3	0.500	3	6	0.333
Rutgers	2	5	0.286	5	5	0.500
Maryland	1	5	0.167	4	5	0.444
Wisconsin	1	5	0.167	3	6	0.333
Michigan State	0	6	0.000	3	6	0.333
Penn State	0	6	0.000	3	6	0.333
Purdue	0	7	0.000	2	8	0.200

Nov. 7 Game

USC 38, Northwestern 17

Nov. 8 Games

Nebraska 28, UCLA 21
Rutgers 35, Maryland 20
Indiana 27, Penn State 24
Wisconsin 13, Washington 10
Oregon 18, Iowa 16
Ohio State 34, Purdue 10

Nov. 14 Game

Minnesota at Oregon, 9 p.m.

Nov. 15 Games

Michigan at Northwestern, noon
Wisconsin at Indiana, noon
Penn State at Michigan State, 3:30 p.m.
Maryland at Illinois, 3:30 p.m.
Iowa at USC, 3:30 p.m.
Purdue at Washington, 7 p.m.
UCLA at Ohio State, 7:30 p.m.

All times Eastern

exceeding its obligations under the lease agreement, investing significant time, effort, and financial resources into the partnership with UCLA, including ongoing major renovation work. The potential economic and reputational damage of UCLA's attempt to break its lease is significant to the Rose Bowl Stadium, Pasadena residents, and the local and regional economy."

In the 200-page lawsuit, Pasadena city officials claim the move from the Rose Bowl to SoFi would cost the city over \$1 billion.

UCLA's current lease with the Rose Bowl runs through 2044, and the Bruins have played in the venue for 43 years and counting after leaving their previous home, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, in 1982.

SoFi Stadium is currently the home of both the Los Angeles Rams and the Los Angeles Chargers of the NFL. The stadium is just 12 miles from UCLA's campus compared to the Rose Bowl's 24.

Despite the lawsuit filed by the city of Pasadena and the Rose Bowl Operating Company, UCLA vice chancellor for strategic communications Mary Osako said the university has yet to find a long-term home for the Bruins football team.

"While we continue to evaluate the long-term arrangement for UCLA football home games, no decision has been made," Osako said in a statement to ESPN on Oct. 30.

Purdue RB Mockobee Out For Season

Purdue star running back Devin Mockobee will miss the remainder of the season for the Boilermakers after undergoing ankle surgery, head coach Barry Odom announced on Nov. 3.

Mockobee suffered an ankle injury late in Purdue's heartbreaking 27-24 loss to Rutgers on Oct. 25 and did not return for the remainder of the contest.

The season-ending surgery will also mark the end of Mockobee's solid four-year career at Purdue.

Odom reflected on the impact of Mockobee's career and cited his dismay with the unfortunate end to the running back's time as a Boilermaker.

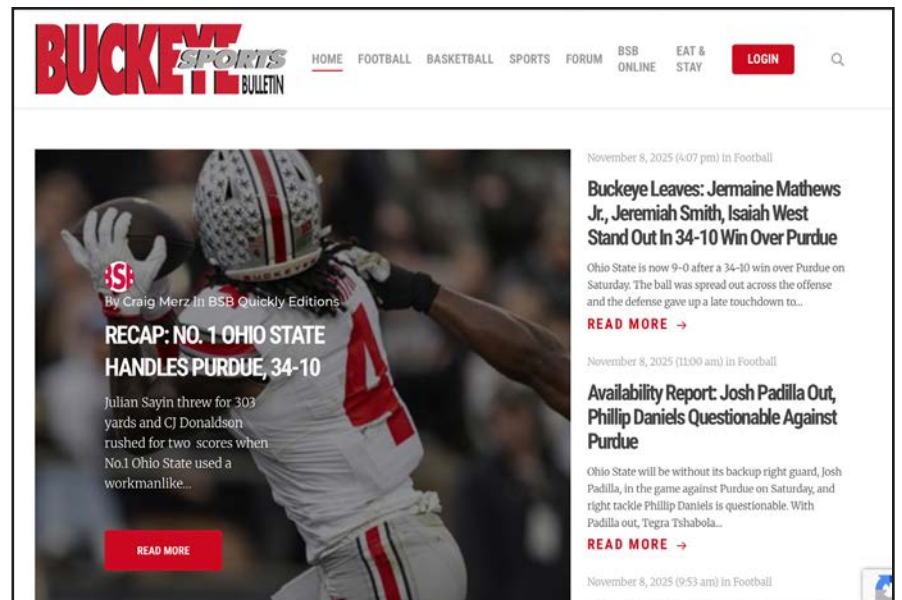
"We were hoping we would get a little bit better news after they did that procedure on his ankle, but unfortunately, the injury he sustained, he's played his last game here," Odom said. "I sure hate that because he is such a wonderful young man, a great leader of this program and a great representative of Purdue University. The things he poured into this program and university since I've been here, he will go down as one of the really enjoyable, great guys I've had a chance to coach. We'll be connected forever, and I know this place means a lot to him."

In eight games for the Boilermakers in 2025, Mockobee rushed for 521 rushing yards and four touchdowns, also catching 18 passes for 215 yards and one score. For his career, Mockobee accumulated 2,987 rush yards for 23 touchdowns on the ground, while adding 86 catches for 839 yards and three scores through the air.

His career rushing yard total ranks fourth all-time for the Purdue program.

With the loss of Mockobee, Purdue will now likely rely on the duo of running backs, Malachi Thomas and Antonio Harris, as the Boilermakers did in their 34-10 loss to Ohio State.

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13 victory over Montana State in Week 1.

Fields was the second Oregon defensive back to leave the program, joining junior Jahlil Florence, who announced his plans the previous weekend.

UCLA Sued
By Rose Bowl

In the wake of UCLA's alleged plan to move to SoFi Stadium, the city of Pasadena, Calif., and the Rose Bowl Operating Company are suing the university over its relocation away from the iconic Rose Bowl Stadium.

In a statement issued by the city of Pasadena on Oct. 30, city officials pushed back strongly against UCLA's effort to exit its lease with the Rose Bowl, stating breaches in the lease agreement and trust with each of the parties involved, while highlighting the potential damage of the university's actions.

"The City expects UCLA will honor the terms of the (lease) agreement, and the City Council will do everything in its power to protect and defend the city's contractual rights," the statement read. "The city of Pasadena and the Rose Bowl Stadium, steadfast partners to UCLA for more than four decades, are extremely disappointed with UCLA's attempt to terminate the lease.

"The Rose Bowl has acted with transparency and integrity, not only fulfilling but

Buckeyes' Starting Lineup Could Fluctuate

Ohio State's season-opening starting lineup was revealed in its 88-59 win over Coppin State on Nov. 9.

Sophomore point guard Jaloní Cambridge, senior guard Chance Gray, junior guard Kennedy Cambridge, redshirt freshman forward Kylee Kitts and sophomore center Elsa Lemmilä received the first minutes of the season for the Buckeyes, but head coach Kevin McGuff made it clear on Nov. 4 that the lineup could certainly be subject to change as the sea-

son goes on.

"It's really open right now," McGuff said when asked about his starting lineup. "It's as open as it's ever been. You think about last year, (Ajae) Petty was in her fifth year of college. The experience she had, she had really distinguished herself as our primary starting center. Taylor (Thierry) was in her fourth year, Cotie (McMahon) was in her third year, Chance had a lot of experience, and Jaloní (Cambridge) had kind of emerged. I don't want to say it was easier, but a little more iden-

tifiable early on last year." As McGuff pointed out, last year the Buckeyes had Cambridge, the No. 2-ranked player in the country out of her high school class, and four experienced upperclassmen around her. This year, though, Cambridge and Gray are the only two returning starters on the team, and many of the other Buckeyes have limited experience.

With many positions in a state of flux, McGuff said that Ohio State may determine its starting lineup on a game-to-game basis.

"I think this year it may be much more game-to-game based on who we're playing," McGuff said. "We didn't change a whole lot last year in terms of who started. I don't think that will be the case this year."

On Nov. 4, McGuff said no player had established herself as a starter except for Jaloní Cambridge and Gray, but apparently Kennedy Cambridge, Kitts and Lemmilä did enough to earn respective roles in the starting lineup.

Lemmilä Tore Meniscus In Last Game

Before the season began, Lemmilä revealed she was rehabbing more than just a foot injury over the offseason. The center said she tore her meniscus during Ohio State's season-ending 82-67 loss to

OSU Women'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.	Stars	High School/Previous Team
Atlee Vanesko	G	5-11	★★★★	Norristown (Pa.) Westtown School

Tennessee last year.

Lemmilä said she had surgery for the meniscus injury and her foot injury over the offseason but felt like she was getting healthier heading into this season.

"This summer has been a lot of rehabbing. It's been kind of hard. There's definitely been some bumps, but I've had a couple weeks behind me of full practice, so I'm feeling pretty good," Lemmilä said.

Although no rehab process is easy, Lemmilä's was made easier by the presence of redshirt freshman Ella Hobbs, who has had to overcome her own injury issues at Ohio State.

Hobbs tore her ACL during her final high school season and had to miss her entire first season with the Buckeyes. Through their respective issues with injuries and a shared affinity for movies, Hobbs and Lemmilä have formed a bond off the court.

"I would say we're very relatable to each other," Hobbs said. "We have gone through pretty much the same thing. I've just been able to talk to (Lemmilä) and share my challenges on the court and off the court too. We love to go to the movies. Any new movie that comes out, we're there in the movie theater."

Lemmilä, the tallest player on Ohio State's roster at 6-6, is a defensive specialist and led the team in blocks per game last year, but this year she hopes to improve her shooting.

Despite having decent shooting form, she made only one three-point shot last year. Lemmilä said continuing to practice

her shot from beyond the arc will be key to her development as a shooter.

"Just getting the reps in," Lemmilä said when asked how she's trying to develop confidence in her shot. "Especially in high school, I didn't really ever shoot the three-pointer, and growing up, I was never really taught to shoot the three-pointer. I was taught to just play inside. I never really played on the perimeter."

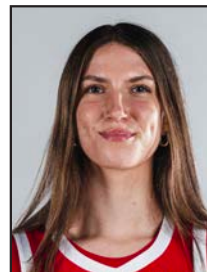
"Coming here, we play a lot of five-out offense, so it's been a lot of learning to know when to shoot the three and just getting the reps in knowing that I'm able to make that three-pointer."

Lemmilä hasn't had much choice but to shoot more threes. Not only has McGuff said he thinks she is a better shooter than she gives herself credit for, but her teammates will yell at her in practice if she doesn't take open three-point shots.

"That is obviously what's making me shoot the ball more. If they weren't yelling at me, I'd be more hesitant to shoot," Lemmilä said, "but they continue to shout at me so that helps a lot."

With two different injuries to recover from and a new skill set to harness, it certainly wasn't an easy offseason for Lemmilä, but she said she's ready for the start of the season, even if Big Ten play is another story.

"I feel ready to play, maybe a little less mentally, but I'll get there. We're starting with nonconference games, and I think I just need to really mentally prepare for Big Ten games, but I'm getting there."



Elsa Lemmilä

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Cambridge Makes Naismith Watch List

Cambridge is expected to have another big season for the Buckeyes. That was recognized when she was among 50 players named to the Naismith Trophy pre-season watch list on Oct. 30.

Cambridge's inclusion on the watch list for the award given annually to the most outstanding player in the country comes as no surprise. She averaged 15.4 points, 4.5 rebounds and 3.9 assists per game on the way to earning All-Big Ten first-team and Big Ten Freshman of the Year honors last year.

She also proved she has the ability to make plays on the defensive end. Her 2.0 steals per game were the sixth-highest mark in the Big Ten.

Cambridge was joined on the watch list by McMahon and fellow Big Ten players UCLA center Lauren Betts; USC guards Jazzy Davidson and Kennedy Smith; Maryland guards Yarden Garzon and Kaylene Smikle; UCLA guards Gianna Kneepkens, Charlisse Leger-Walker and Kiki Rice; Michigan guards Olivia Olson and Sylva Swords; Iowa forward Hannah Stuelke; and Michigan State forward Grace VanSlooten.

Cambridge showed why she's viewed as one of the best guards in the country. She led Ohio State with 23 points, eight rebounds and six assists.

Scheduling Quirk Helps Bucks

While many teams in Division I college basketball opened their respective seasons on Nov. 3, the Buckeyes had to wait almost a week to start their season. McGuff said he wasn't happy when he first found out Ohio State would have an extra six days before starting its season, but as Nov. 9 drew closer, he became grateful for the extra time to prepare his new team.

"Four months ago I was kind of like, 'Man, I can't believe we're not opening in the first couple of days,' but today I'm like, 'Great,' " he said. "If we need a few more days to make sure we can get as many people back and healthy, into the lineup, into some rotations in practice just to see how they do (we have them)."

Although no player was unavailable for Ohio State's first game, McGuff said the overall wear-and-tear of the offseason made it so that he had a hard time identifying which lineups and rotations would be most effective to start the season.

"This is probably the most unsettled we've been heading into game one that we've been in a long time," McGuff said. "It mostly has to do with people kind of being banged up. We have not had every-

Ohio State 88, Coppin State 59							
Nov. 9, 2024 Value City Arena • Columbus							
		1	2	3	4	F	
Coppin State (1-2)		11	15	18	15	59	
Ohio State (1-0)		23	9	29	27	88	
Coppin State	Total	FT	Reb.				
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
Morris	38	4-11	7-8	0-4	4	0	15
Gamble	15	4-7	3-3	4-2	2	4	11
Henry	29	3-8	1-2	1-3	0	3	8
McBride	30	1-5	2-2	1-4	0	2	5
Burris	13	0-4	0-0	0-1	0	1	0
Sosa Lora	13	4-7	2-2	2-6	0	2	10
Barnes	19	1-7	6-6	1-7	3	3	8
Gary-Grayson	14	0-2	2-2	0-0	0	1	2
Nwachukwu	16	0-3	0-0	0-3	0	1	0
Wells	9	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	0
Adderly	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Lowry	2	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	17-57	23-25	9-32	9	18	59
Percentages: FG: 29.8%. FT: 92.0%. Three-point field goals: 2-13. (Henry 1-3, Morris 0-3, McBride 1-2, Gary-Grayson 0-2, Barnes 0-1, Nwachukwu 0-1, Wells 0-1). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 1 (Burris). Turnovers: 23 (Morris 5, McBride 5, Gary Grayson 4, Gamble 3, Henry, Burris, Sosa Lora, Barnes, Wells, Lowry). Steals: 3 (McBride, Sosa Lora, Wells).							
Ohio State	Total	FT	Reb.				
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.
J. Cambridge	26	10-16	2-4	1-7	6	2	23
Gray	25	7-12	2-4	0-3	2	1	17
K. Cambridge	26	5-9	1-3	3-2	5	4	11
Kitts	20	3-9	1-1	2-3	0	4	8
Lemmila	26	3-6	0-0	1-3	2	2	6
Martin	11	3-4	0-0	0-2	0	2	8
Todd	17	2-5	0-2	0-2	0	2	5
Watson	19	1-6	2-2	2-0	3	2	4
Hobbs	13	0-4	2-2	1-5	0	0	2
Biriuk	10	1-3	0-0	1-1	1	0	2
Henry	7	1-3	0-0	2-1	0	2	2
Totals	200	36-77	10-18	14-31	19	21	88
Percentages: FG: 46.8%. FT: 55.6%. Three-point field goals: 6-26 (J. Cambridge 1-4, Gray 1-4, Kitts 1-4, Martin 2-3, K. Cambridge 0-3, Todd 1-2, Hobbs 0-2, Biriuk 0-2, Watson 0-1, Henry (0-1). Team rebounds: 3. Blocked shots: 5 (Lemmila 2, Kitts 2, K. Cambridge). Turnovers: 15 (J. Cambridge 3, Gray 3, Watson 3, Martin 2, Biriuk 2, Kitts, Todd). Steals: 13 (K. Cambridge 7, J. Cambridge 2, Kitts, Martin, Biriuk, Henry). Officials: Kenya Kirkland, Bruce Morris, Kelsey Reynolds Attendance: 5,504							

body out there to see the different lineups like we normally would, and so we're still in that process.

"I think it's always about where you are now and how much you improve throughout the year and where you get to at the end of the year. But this year in particular, with – I don't want to say a slow start because we've worked really hard in the pre-season. All of our kids have worked hard. This is as hardworking a team that we've had in a long time. We just haven't had everybody out there. So I'm still kind of learning who plays best with each other."

In the first game, the extra rest proved to be helpful for Ohio Statein its win over Coppin State.

Cambridge Sisters Fuel Ohio State Win In Opener

By BOBBY GORBETT
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Led by sophomore point guard Jaloni Cambridge on the offensive end and her sister Kennedy on the defensive end, Ohio State opened its season with an 88-59 win over Coppin State on Nov. 9 in front of 5,504 fans at Value City Arena.

Jaloni Cambridge finished the game with team-high totals of 23 points, six assists and eight rebounds, while Kennedy Cambridge went for 11 points and a career-high seven steals.

For a team playing in its first game, Ohio State looked sharp early on against Coppin State. Jaloni Cambridge and fellow starting guard Chance Gray combined to score eight points in the first four minutes, allowing the Buckeyes to take a 10-4 lead before a media timeout at 4:44.

Coppin State converted a three-point play to cut Ohio State's lead in half, but the Buckeyes ended the opening frame on a 13-4 run. Kennedy Cambridge played a significant role in the Buckeyes taking a 23-11 lead into the second quarter. In the final three minutes of the first quarter, she scored five points and had a steal.

The Buckeyes appeared to pick up right where they left off after the break in between quarters when Jaloni Cambridge scored four more quick points and redshirt-freshman guard Kylee Kitts connected on a three-pointer to make the score 30-16 at the 6:50 mark. However, the Buckeyes went cold to end the half. Ohio State made just one of its last 11 field-goal attempts in the half. Ohio State's second-quarter shooting slump allowed Coppin State to end the half on a 10-2 scoring run. The Buckeyes were outscored 15-9 in the second quarter.

Leading just 32-26 coming out of halftime, Ohio State's offense showed signs of life again in the third quarter. After going for just two points in the last 6:49 of the first half, the Buckeyes scored 18 points in the first 4:36 of the third quarter. Jaloni Cambridge was the source of the Buckeyes' improved offense. She

went for 10 points and had two assists during that span to help Ohio State lead 50-34.

The Eagles responded with four straight points, but freshman guard Bryn Martin helped Ohio State stay comfortably ahead with a three-point jumper that made the score 59-40 with under a minute to go in the third quarter.

Coppin State trimmed Ohio State's lead down to 15 early in the fourth, but the Buckeyes went on a 16-5 scoring run from 8:42 to 4:16 that made the score 79-53 and ended virtually any hope the Eagles had of a comeback.

After the game, Ohio State coach Kevin McGuff said the Buckeyes can make some improvements, but there were positives to take away from the win.

"We've got to get a lot better, I know that," McGuff said. "It was really a game of extremes today. We had some great moments, but we had some not-so-good moments. I would say, in general, our halfcourt defense has to be better. We had a stretch in the second quarter where I thought we settled for too many jump shots. We kind of got that taken care of in the second half. We had 14 assists in the second half vs. having five at halftime."

Gray was the only other Buckeye to reach double figures. She finished the game with 17 points on 7-of-12 shooting.

The Buckeyes connected on 36 of 77 field goals (46.8 percent), which included 6 of 26 (23.1 percent) from three-point range, and they allowed Coppin State to shoot just 17 of 57 from the floor (29.8 percent).

Ohio State slightly outrebounded Coppin State in the win (45-41), and the Buckeyes forced 23 turnovers and committed 15.

Khila Morris was Coppin State's leading scorer. She finished the game with 15 points and four rebounds, while shooting 4 of 11 from the field.

In upcoming action, the Buckeyes will play Bellarmine at home on Nov. 13 at 6:30 p.m. (B1G+) before facing the defending national champion , No. 1 UConn, on Nov. 16 at noon (Peacock) at People's Bank Arena in Hartford, Conn.



Kennedy Cambridge



Jaloni Cambridge

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Defense An Early Question For Buckeyes

Head coach Jake Diebler spoke multiple times over the offseason about how he wanted Ohio State to be a fast-paced team and that he tried to build the roster around that idea.

COURT REPORT Greg Wilson

Being a team that moves up and down the court quickly gives rise to high-scoring games, like the Buckeyes' 118-102 win over IU Indy on Nov. 3.

It was the first time Ohio State gave up over 100 points in regulation since Feb. 7, 1998, when it lost 107-75 to Purdue at St. John Arena. The Jaguars aren't a power-conference team and were able to break that streak, which lasted over 27 seasons, causing some concern about that side of the ball early on.

"We did a good job offensively," said senior center Christoph Tilly, who had 28 points in his Buckeye debut. "A lot of good stuff that we're working on. But defensively, we still have to work on some stuff. Over 100 points (scored against us), that can't happen. We'll keep working on that."

Diebler knows that there were issues on defense in the first game of the season as well.

"(IU Indy shooting) 50 percent stands out. Only six steals stands out right away, and then only having 13 turnovers," Diebler said. "Fifty percent is obviously not good enough. Then we have to get more deflections, and we've got to be more active and pressure more defensively."

But Diebler also gave credit to the Jaguars of the Horizon League, noting that the fast-paced offense they also worked with in the game was something that is tough to defend and it gave their offense plenty of opportunity to make shots and go on runs.

He gave credit to first-year head coach Ben Howlett, who was very successful at the Division II level at West Liberty, playing that style of basketball, managing the Hilltoppers for a 217-37 record while consistently ranking among the top in the country in points scored, scoring margin and assists.

West Liberty averaged 100.2 points per game in the 2024-25 season, finishing the season with a 30-5 record, and Howlett has already brought that style of basket-

ball to IU Indy, also full-court pressing the Buckeyes and causing stress for the OSU offense whenever possible.

But even though Howlett's style of basketball leads to large point totals, as does Diebler's, the OSU head coach still knows there are areas that he would like to see his team improve defensively.

"They cut for layups really well," Diebler said. "We felt like taking away those layups first and rebounding were the two most important keys defensively. We had some poor closeouts and some long closeout situations."

"Then they started moving behind some handoffs on our switching, and there were times when we needed to not press up as much and maybe not switch. We were anticipating a switch too early, and they bumped behind and had good shooters getting some clean looks."

Senior guard Bruce Thornton believes the experience against a team that plays like IU Indy is something that will help the Buckeyes down the road.

"It was a great test," he said. "That team is a very well-coached and unique team. Give props to them. It's hard to play like that."

Diebler Pleased With Tilly's Performance

Last season, some of the transfers whom Ohio State brought in and hoped would have an impact did not have much experience. That approach didn't work out well for the Buckeyes.

This offseason, Diebler went into the portal looking for players who had a lot of experience in the college game, and Tilly was one of those players. He spent three years with Santa Clara before coming to Columbus.

In the first game, that approach already seemed to be paying dividends for the Buckeyes, when Tilly was the leading scorer in the win over IU Indy. His 9-of-11 shooting performance also included a three-pointer from the top of the key. Tilly added nine rebounds and had three assists in the game as well.

"I didn't really anticipate picking up the box score and seeing those numbers," Diebler said of Tilly's performance. "His efficiency stands out, and certainly seeing him active on the glass is great for us."

After Tilly was slightly less aggressive with the ball in his hands in the scrimmage win over Ohio on Oct. 26, Diebler was mostly happy to see that Tilly was comfortable pulling up from deep. Diebler had

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
Alex Smith	F	6-9	195	★★★★	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Prolific Prep
Anthony Thompson	F	6-8	205	★★★★	Hudson (Ohio) Western Reserve Acad.

talked about the 7-footer's ability to shoot the long ball well, but he hadn't done that in front of anyone outside of practice yet.

"Thankfully, he shot some threes tonight," Diebler said. "I wanted him to shoot some threes so you all can see I'm not crazy when I'm talking about him being a three-level scorer. His versatility is unique. He was really good. He's been really fun to coach."

But it was not just his shooting that Diebler was happy to see. After he proved he would pull up from deep if left open, Tilly's defender was forced to close out on him and face guard the center at the perimeter. When that happened, Tilly was not afraid to put the ball on the floor, take a lane to the hoop and get physical at the rim to score, getting to the line often and making 9 of 13 free throws.

"He can score inside, he can score from three, he can drive when guys close out aggressively," Diebler said. "And his passing – he had three assists and one turnover in a game that's designed to turn you over."

Tilly followed that performance up with 15 points, six rebounds and four assists against Purdue Fort Wayne on Nov. 7.

Transfer Suing NCAA For Eligibility

There seems to be a small possibility that Ohio State could be gaining another player for the 2025-26 season with Donovan "Puff" Johnson filing a lawsuit against the NCAA, looking to receive immediate eligibility to play for the Buckeyes this season.

Johnson already requested a medical hardship waiver from the NCAA, which was denied on Sept. 30.

According to the suit, which was shared by his attorney, Mit Winter, Johnson is already enrolled at Ohio State and his waiver for eligibility was declined because he appeared in more than 30 percent of his team's games during the 2024-25 season and also appeared in two games after the midpoint of the regular season, using what was supposed to be his last year of eligibility.

Johnson filed an appeal to the original denial of his eligibility request that his Dec. 10 wrist injury was misdiagnosed by Penn State medical staff and that he shouldn't have been cleared to play. Instead, Johnson continued to play with ailments that he says directly contributed to the broken wrist he suffered on Jan. 15 playing with the Nittany Lions.

The complaint also states that a broken foot suffered in 2020-21 and a torn patellar tendon in 2023 should be considered as well, since he has missed a total of 54 games over his five years in college basketball.

"Unless his eligibility is immediately clarified and restored, Johnson will be irreparably harmed by missing games, prac-

tices, and exposure opportunities that cannot be recovered as the season begins," the complaint states. "Because each missed contest permanently reduces Johnson's opportunities for athletic competition, professional development, and contractual NIL earnings, prompt judicial intervention is necessary. Accordingly, Johnson seeks expedited consideration of his claims and emergency injunctive relief to ensure his eligibility determination is resolved prior to him missing any further competitions in the 2025-2026 season."

If the 25-year-old Johnson is allowed to play with the Buckeyes at some point, he would add a lot of college experience, with 111 games between his time at North Carolina and Penn State. In his final season with the Lions, he averaged 10.2 points and 4.4 rebounds per game.

Thornton First Four-Time Captain

When Ohio State voted on a team captain for the 2025-26 season, it was no surprise when Thornton was the player chosen by teammates.

He is the player on this team who has been at Ohio State the longest, and this is his fourth time being voted a team captain, making him the first player ever to be a captain four times.

"It's an honor and ablessing, especially (since the recognition comes) from my peers and my coaches," Thornton said. "I've always been a guy who leads by example first. I wasn't the most vocal guy coming in, but I let my work and what I do each and every day show what I'm capable of doing."

"(Diebler) helped me be more vocal, and understand that leading by example and using your voice at the same time can be very helpful. As players, sometimes you get tired of your coach's voice. Me speaking up is different because it's from a person you're going through hardships with every day in practice."

Thornton was not named a captain until midway through his freshman season, when there was a revote. However, he was chosen at the beginning of his sophomore and junior seasons to be the team leader.

Thornton On Naismith Watch List

Thornton received more preseason recognition right before the start of the college basketball season. He was included on the Naismith Award watch list, an award given to the best player in college basketball each year.

Thornton was one of 50 players recognized for their potential to be the best in the country and was included alongside 12 other Big Ten players.

Thornton was also included on the Bob Cousy Award watch list, given to the nation's best point guard each season.

He got off to a good start to his senior



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MEN'S BASKETBALL

campaign with 26 points on 7-of-10 shooting, and he made 10 of 12 from the free-throw line. He followed that up with one of the best games of his career against Purdue Fort Wayne, scoring a career-high 38 points and making 14 of 17 shots with five assists.

Thornton Believes OSU Scoring Record Coming

The Buckeyes were just short of the all-time program scoring record in the win over IU Indy, finishing the game four points short of breaking it.

The record of 121 points was set on Jan. 8, 1995, in a game against George Mason. Ohio State's 118 points against the Jaguars put the team in second place in program history, passing two separate 116-point performances. One of those was a Nov. 28, 1990, contest against Delaware State, and the other was just over a year later on Nov. 30, 1991, against Chicago State.

After being told that they were just three points shy of tying the all-time record, Thornton and Tilly both jokingly argued with each other in the postgame press conference about which of them was responsible for not reaching the record.

Tilly told Thornton that he "sold," and Thornton responded by telling the 7-footer that he missed four free throws, which would have been enough to get them over the mark.

But Thornton ultimately said that he believes this Ohio State team will be able to set the record at some point with the pace they play at.

"With this team and how we play, we're definitely going to break it," he said.

Thornton said that the ability to score not only comes from the fast pace, but also that there are so many different scoring threats on the team.

"We're so versatile offensively that any given night somebody can have 20 (points) easily just by how the offense is run and the unselfishness everybody on the team has," Thornton said. "When you have guys like that, it's hard to guard and to scout us."

Diebler Likes New Court

The new basketball court that was teased over the offseason was officially put in for the Buckeyes' season opener.

The gray court features a scarlet block "O" at center court, which has a white outline. Out of bounds and in the paint on both sides of the floor are both scarlet as well.

Diebler made sure to mention his thoughts on the new floor before his press conference on Nov. 3 finished.

"I think the court is awesome. I loved it. It pops," he said. "I'll have to see what it looks like on film, but in person, I think the gray is perfect. It's got almost a bit of a retro feel with this new-age kind of twist to it."

Men's Basketball Recruiting News

When the football Buckeyes hosted Penn State for a 38-14 win on Nov. 1, the basketball Buckeyes took advantage of the event and hosted some recruits on campus.

Five 2027 prospects were on campus for the weekend, with Montverde (Fla.) Academy four-star combo guard Oneal Delancy (6-2, 165); Garner (N.C.) The Burlington School shooting guard Geren Holmes (6-

BUCKEYE SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (9-0, 6-0)

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, W 42-3; **11** at Illinois, W 34-16; **18** at Wisconsin, W 34-0.
Nov. 1 PENN STATE, W 38-14; **8** at Purdue, W 34-10; **15** UCLA; **22** RUTGERS; **29** at Michigan.

MEN'S BASKETBALL (2-0)

Oct. 26 Ohio (Exh.), W 103-74.
Nov. 3 IU-INDY, W 118-102; **7** PURDUE-FORT WAYNE, W 94-68; **11** APPALACHIAN STATE; **16** NOTRE DAME; **20** WESTERN MICHIGAN; **25** MOUNT ST. MARY'S; **28** at Pittsburgh.
Dec. 6 at Northwestern; **9** ILLINOIS; **13** at Cleveland Hoops Showdown in Cleveland vs. West Virginia; **20** at CBS Sports Classic in Atlanta vs. North Carolina; **23** GRAMBLING STATE.
Jan. 2 at Rutgers; **5** NEBRASKA; **8** at Oregon; **11** at Washington; **17** UCLA; **20** MINNESOTA; **23** at Michigan; **26** PENN STATE; **31** at Wisconsin.
Feb. 5 at Maryland; **8** MICHIGAN; **11** USC; **14** at Nashville Hoops Showdown in Nashville, Tenn., vs. Virginia; **17** WISCONSIN; **22** at Michigan State; **25** at Iowa.
March 1 PURDUE, **4** at Penn State; **7** INDIANA; **10-15** Big Ten Tournament in Chicago.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (1-0)

Nov. 9 COPPIN STATE, W 88-59; **13** BELLARMINE; **16** at UConn; **19** KENT STATE; **24** at Pink Flamingo Championship in the Bahamas vs. Belmont; **26** at Pink Flamingo Championship in the Bahamas vs. TBD; **30** NIAGARA.
Dec. 7 at Northwestern; **11** NORTHERN KENTUCKY; **14** TOLEDO; **18** NORFOLK STATE; **22** WESTERN MICHIGAN; **28** UCLA; **31** at Purdue.
Jan. 4 RUTGERS; **7** at Illinois; **11** at Maryland; **14** PENN STATE; **19** at Coretta Scott King Classic in Newark, N.J., vs. TCU; **22** INDIANA; **25** at Iowa; **29** Wisconsin.
Feb. 1 NEBRASKA; **5** at Washington; **8** at Oregon; **15** MARYLAND; **18** at Minnesota; **22** USC; **25** MICHIGAN.
March 1 at Michigan State.

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 5 at Mike Baumer Classic in Dayton, Men 2nd/13, Women 1st/13; **12** at Spartan Invite in East Lansing, Mich., Men 3rd/16, Women 6th/17; **26** at Gans Creek Classic in Columbia, Mo., Men 2nd/26, Women 26th/31.
Oct. 17 Arturo Barrios Invite in College Station, Texas, Men 4th/32, Women 10th/37; **31** Big Ten Championships, Men 10th/15, Women 10th/18.
Nov. 14 NCAA Great Lakes Regional Championship in Evansville, Ind.; **22** NCAA Championship in Columbia, Mo.

FENCING

Oct. 11 OSU OPEN, NTS; **12** OSU DUALS, M 4-0, W 4-0.
Nov. 8-9 OSU ELITE INVITATIONAL, M 3-2, W 4-1; **22-23** Western Invitational at USAF Academy, Colo.
Jan. 17 St. John's Invitational in Queens, N.Y.; **18** Dave Micahnik Penn Invitational in Philadelphia; **31** Schiller Duals in Evanston, Ill.
Feb. 1 Schiller Duals in Evanston, Ill.; **21-22** CCFC Championships in Granville, Ohio.
March 8 NCAA Midwest Regionals in

Cleveland; **19-22** NCAA Championships in South Bend, Ind.

FIELD HOCKEY (7-9, 3-5)

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); **28** at Delaware, W 4-0.
Oct. 3 MARYLAND, W 2-1 (OT); **5** PENN STATE, W 2-0; **12** MICHIGAN, W 1-0; **19** at Michigan State, L 4-3; **24** at Indiana, L 2-1 (OT); **26** at Northwestern, L 7-0; **31** IOWA, L 3-2 (2OT).
Nov. 6 Big Ten Tournament at Bloomington, Ind., vs. Maryland, W 2-1; **7** Big Ten Tournament at Bloomington, Ind., vs. Iowa, L 3-1

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (4-4, 0-2)

Oct. 10-11 NORTHERN MICHIGAN, W 5-2; W 3-1; **17-18** at UConn, L 3-2, W 4-2; **24-25** SACRED HEART, L 2-1 (OT); W 3-0; **30-31** PENN STATE, L 3-2, L 4-3.
Nov. 14-15 at Wisconsin; **21-22** at Michigan; **28-29** at Arizona State.
Dec. 4-5 MINNESOTA.
Jan. 2-3 BOWLING GREEN; **9-10** MICHIGAN STATE; **23-24** at Notre Dame; **30-31** MICHIGAN.
Feb. 6-7 at Minnesota; **13-14** WISCONSIN; **20-21** at Penn State; **27-28** at Michigan State.
March 5-6 NOTRE DAME; **11-21** Big Ten Tournament.

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (9-1-0, 7-1-0)

Oct. 3-4 at Colgate, W 5-3; W 9-4; **10-11** BEMIDJI STATE, W 6-0; W 2-1; **18-19** at Minnesota W 4-1; L 6-3; **24-25** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 5-1; W 4-2; **31** at St. Thomas, W 3-2 (OT).
Nov. 1 at St. Thomas, W 8-0; **14-15** MINNESOTA STATE; **21-22** at Minnesota-Duluth; **28** at D1 in DC Tournament in Washington, D.C., vs. Clarkson; **29** at D1 in DC Tournament in Washington, D.C., vs.Colgate.
Dec. 5-6 WISCONSIN.
Jan. 2-3 PENN STATE; **9-10** at St. Cloud State; **16-17** at Minnesota State; **23-24** ST. THOMAS; **30-31** MINNESOTA-DULUTH.
Feb. 7-8 at Wisconsin; **13-14** MINNESOTA; **20-21** at Bemidji State; **27-March 1** WCHA First Round.

MEN'S SOCCER (6-10, 3-7)

Aug. 9 NOTRE DAME (Exh.); **15** WRIGHT STATE (Exh.); **21** at Virginia Tech, L 1-0; **28** 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, W 2-1.
Oct. 3 WISCONSIN, L 1-0; **10** at Indiana, L 4-2; **14** MICHIGAN, L 3-1; **18** MARYLAND, L 4-0; **24** at Washington, L 5-0; **31** PENN STATE, W 1-0.
Nov. 7 at Northwestern, L 2-1.

WOMEN'S SOCCER (8-4-6, 4-2-5)

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, T 1-1; **9** OREGON, W 1-0; **12** WASHINGTON, L 1-0; **16** at Rutgers, W 4-2; **19** at Maryland, W 3-1; **26** at Penn State, L 2-0; **30** Big Ten Tournament vs. Illinois, L 1-0.

MENS SWIM & DIVE (1-1)

Nov. 7-8 Raleigh Rumble in Raleigh, N.C., vs. NC State, L 790.0-485.5; vs. Virginia Tech, W 485.5-429.0; **18-21** OHIO STATE FALL INVITATIONAL.
Dec. 3-6 US Open at Austin, Texas.
Jan 17 MICHIGAN; **23-24** Texas Invitational at Austin, Texas; **31** PITTSBURGH.
Feb. 13-15 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL; **25-28** Big Ten Championships at Madison, Wis.
March 8 LAST CHANCE MEET; **9-11** NCAA Zone Diving Championships, TBD; **13-15** CSCAA National Invitational Championship at Ocala, Fla.; **25-28** NCAA Championships at Atlanta.

WOMENS SWIM & DIVE (1-1)

Nov. 7-8 Raleigh Rumble in Raleigh, N.C., vs. NC State, L 790.0-546.0; vs. Virginia Tech, W 546.0-364.5; **18-21** OHIO STATE FALL INVITATIONAL.
Dec. 3-6 US Open at Austin, Texas.
Jan 17 MICHIGAN; **23-24** Texas Invitational at Austin, Texas; **31** PITTSBURGH.
Feb. 13-15 OHIO STATE WINTER INVITATIONAL; **18-21** Big Ten Championships at Minneapolis.
March 8 LAST CHANCE MEET; **9-11** NCAA Zone Diving Championships, TBD; **13-15** CSCAA National Invitational Championship at Ocala, Fla.; **18-21** NCAA Championships at Atlanta.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL (5-17, 2-12)

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, L 3-1; **4** at Oregon, L 3-0; **9** PURDUE, L 3-0; **12** at Minnesota, L 3-0; **17** ILLINOIS, L 3-1; **19** at Indiana, L 3-1; **24** MICHIGAN, L 3-0; **26** PENN STATE, L 3-1; **31** RUTGERS, L 3-0.
Nov. 2 WISCONSIN,, L 3-0; **8** at Maryland. W 3-2; **9** at Rutgers, W 3-2; **14** at Michigan; **16** at Penn State; **21** NORTHWESTERN; **23** MICHIGAN STATE; **28** at Iowa; **29** at Nebraska.

WRESTLING

Nov. 2 Clarion Open at Clarion, Pa., NTS; **9** at Tennessee-Chattanooga, W 42-4; **15** National Duals Invitational at Tulsa vs. Wyoming; **20** KENT STATE.
Dec. 3 BELLARMINE; **12** NC STATE; **21** Collegiate Duals at Nashville, Tenn.
Jan. 4 at Oregon State; **11** INDIANA; **23** at Minnesota; **25** at Nebraska; **30** WISCONSIN.
Feb. 1 MICHIGAN; **6** IOWA; **13** at Penn State; **15** at Maryland.
March 7-8 Big Ten Championships at State College, Pa.; **19-21** NCAA Championships at Cleveland.

due, and has one scheduled on Nov. 15 at Cincinnati.

Cornett is ranked the No. 103 player in the country, the No. 15 shooting guard and the No. 5 player in Ohio. He has just four offers, according to 247Sports, from Cleveland State, Kent State, Marshall and Ohio.

The Buckeyes also hosted one 2028 prospect for the game. Mishawaka (Ind.) Penn combo guard Caleb Coolman (6-4, 185) was also at the game. Coolman led his prep team in scoring last season as a freshman with 15.6 points per game, also leading in rebounds (6.0), assists (4.8) and steals (2.0). He is not yet ranked.

Ohio State Begins Season With Two Wins

By **GREG WILSON**
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Since BSB last went to press, Ohio State began its basketball season with wins over two Horizon League teams, beating IU Indy in a high-scoring matchup on Nov. 3 and following that with a win over Purdue Fort Wayne on Nov. 7.

The Buckeyes were led by upperclassmen in their first two games with 7-0 senior center Christoph Tilly leading in scoring in his first game with OSU and senior guard Bruce Thornton scoring a career high against the Mastodons.

OSU Opens With High-Scoring Win

Ohio State (1-0) used its fast-paced offense and an efficient shooting performance to reach triple digits in its season-opening 118-102 win over IU Indy (0-1) in front of 8,141 fans at Value City Arena on Nov. 3.

The Buckeyes' 118 points were a program record in a season opener, topping a 111-point performance against Bethune-Cookman on Nov. 25, 1990. They were just three points shy of tying the program record for most points in a game.

"Playing fast is a strength for us," OSU coach Jake Diebler said after the game. "We

wanted to meet aggression with aggression, and I think our guys did a good job of that."

Ohio State was 7 of 7 to start the game, jumping out to a 19-8 lead at 16:21 on junior forward Devin Royal's second three-point basket of the game. Thornton added two threes of his own, with sophomore guard John Mobley Jr. also knocking one down from beyond the arc.

Mobley had the first two missed shots for the Buckeyes, but he soon got the offense going again, finding sophomore forward Colin White on a fast break for an easy layup. Then the next time down the court Mobley again connected with White, who lobbed the ball to freshman forward Amare Bynum, who showed off the dunking ability his teammates raved about before the season, giving OSU a 26-17 lead.

IU Indy brought the game within two points, 28-26, with a 9-2 run, capped off by a made jumper from senior forward Finley Woodward at the 10:53 mark.

Royal ended a 3:44 period without a field goal with a jumper that was part of a 13-0 run and included six forced turnovers for the Buckeyes on seven Jaguar possessions. During the run, Tilly knocked down his first three of the season from the top of the key. The run put OSU up 46-32 at 6:14 before senior guard Jaxon Edwards hit a free throw to stop the bleeding temporarily.

After going into the locker room up 66-50, Tilly started the scoring in the second half with an old-fashioned three-point play, and he scored nine of the first 11 Buckeye points in the frame, which had OSU out to a 77-58 lead at 16:27.

Ohio State struggled to extend its lead over the next few minutes, but a Taison Chatman three-pointer brought it back to 16 points, 85-69. Chatman's three was the beginning of a 9-0 run, capped off by two Tilly makes from the foul line.

The Jaguars managed a 10-2 run of their own immediately after, with sophomore forward Kameron Tinsley knocking down two from deep during the 46-second stretch.

The Buckeyes passed the 100-point threshold with 7:18 remaining on a layup by Tilly, which made the score 101-85.

The Jaguars brought the game within 10 points, 103-93, on a three-pointer by JP Dragas at 5:23, the end of a 6-0 mini-run for IU Indy.

It was Gabe Cupps who took the Buckeyes over the record for points in a season opener, making two free throws to make it 112-95 with 2:24 left on the clock.

Tilly led the Buckeyes with 28 points and had nine rebounds plus three assists, with Thornton (26) and Royal (22) both eclipsing the 20-point mark. Mobley had 16 points and a game-leading eight assists. Brandon Noel led the way with 10 rebounds in the game.

As a team, OSU was 34 of 54 shooting (63.0 percent) and made 42 free throws on 53 attempts (79.2 percent), which broke a program record, previously 38.

IU Indy was led by Tinsley and Kyler

D'Augustino, who had 22 and 21 points, respectively.

Thornton Scores 38 To Beat Mastodons

Led by a career-high 38 points from Thornton, Ohio State (2-0) beat Purdue Fort Wayne (0-2), 94-68, at Value City Arena on Nov. 7 in front of 8,926 fans.

"I'm just so happy for (Thornton) because he deserves it," Diebler said. "He's earned the right to play at such a high level with the way he approaches practice and individual work every single day."

The Buckeyes got out to a very quick 13-2 lead in the first half bookended by a made jumper from the elbow by Thornton and a three-pointer from the left wing by the senior guard, forcing a Purdue Fort Wayne timeout at 17:39. The Buckeyes added a layup by Tilly to make it 15-2 before the visitors finally scored to make it 15-4 at 16:26.

The Mastodons were unable to consistently knock down shots, and the Buckeyes took advantage. A three-pointer by Mobley put the Buckeyes up 22-7, with Tilly, Thornton and Mobley doing all of the scoring for Ohio State in the first seven minutes of the game.

That continued with Mobley and Thornton each knocking down a three to make the lead 30-14 at 10:33. That score held until Bynum scored the first non-Thornton, Mobley or Tilly point by making 1 of 2 from the free-throw line exactly two minutes later.

Thornton found a cutting Noel on the baseline for an emphatic dunk that looked like it would start a Buckeye run after a Mobley three followed at 4:01, but a turnover by Chatman gave the Mastodons a fastbreak layup, and the Buckeye lead remained at 15, 38-23.

Purdue Fort Wayne seemed to be putting together a run to finish the half, but Thornton made sure OSU went into the locker room with the momentum, with three layups, one a three-point play, to get the lead up to 18, 45-27, with 37 seconds before the break. That ended a streak of sloppy play by the Buckeyes, with four of their 10 first-half turnovers coming between 3:27 and 1:39. Mikale Stevenson nailed a three pointer to bring the score to 45-30 at intermission.

"They seized some momentum and we took it right back to close out the half," Diebler said. "I think that was a really important stretch."

The Buckeyes and Mastodons went back-and-forth for the first few minutes of the second half, with a Tilly layup making the lead 55-41 before a media timeout at 15:37.

Ohio State had turnovers on three out of four possessions which allowed Purdue Fort Wayne to pull within nine points, 55-46 at 14:28.

Royal and Thornton made back-to-back three-pointers to get the lead back to 63-50 with 11:40 to play.

The Buckeyes started to pull away at that point, with Mobley and Thornton hit-

Ohio State 94, Purdue Fort Wayne 68									
Nov. 7, 2025 Value City Arena • Columbus									
		1	2	F					
Purdue Fort Wayne (0-2)		30	38	68					
Ohio State (2-0)		45	49	94					
Purdue FW	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Nelson	24	1-4	0-0	0-1	0	1	3		
Duffy	23	5-5	0-2	1-0	0	0	10		
Stevenson	30	9-17	1-2	1-2	3	2	21		
Craig	25	5-11	7-7	0-3	2	4	18		
Hadnot II	34	2-9	1-2	0-1	2	3	5		
Mosley	20	1-4	0-0	0-0	0	1	3		
Kaba	19	1-1	0-0	2-1	1	1	2		
Elisee	8	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	3	0		
Levin	13	2-6	0-2	2-1	1	1	4		
Shrout	4	0-1	2-2	1-0	0	0	2		
Totals	200	26-59	11-17	7-10	9	16	68		
Percentages: FG: 44.1%. FT: 64.7%. Three-point field goals: 5-22 (Craig 1-5, Stevenson 2-4, Nelson 1-4, Levin 0-3, Mosley 1-2, Hadnot 0-2, Elisee 0-1, Shrout 0-1). Team rebounds: 0. Blocked shots: 3 (Duffy 2, Kaba). Turnovers: 13 (Hadnot 3, Kaba 3, Stevenson 2, Elisee 2, Levin 2, Craig). Steals: 11 (Hadnot 6, Levin 2, Stevenson, Craig, Kaba).									
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Noel	23	2-3	0-0	0-4	0	2	4		
Royal	17	2-3	0-0	1-2	1	3	6		
Tilly	23	7-11	0-0	1-5	4	4	15		
Mobley Jr.	34	6-13	2-2	0-3	4	0	19		
Thornton	36	14-17	5-5	0-5	5	1	38		
Bynum	16	2-2	3-4	1-1	1	2	9		
Cupps	19	0-1	0-0	0-4	3	2	0		
Njegovan	17	0-0	0-2	0-4	3	1	0		
White	5	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	1	0		
Chatman	8	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0		
Nash	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Grujicic	2	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	3		
Totals	200	34-51	10-13	4-29	22	17	94		
Percentages: FG: 66.7%. FT: 76.9%. Three-point field goals: 16-28 (Mobley 5-9, Thornton 5-8, Tilly 1-5, Royal 2-2, Bynum 2-2, Grujicic 1-1, Cupps 0-1). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 0. Turnovers: 19 (Tilly 5, Mobley 4, Thornton 3, Bynum 3, Njegovan 2, Chatman 2). Steals: 5 (Cupps 2, Royal, Tilly, Thornton). Officials: O'Brien, Phillips, Richardson. Attendance: 8,926.									

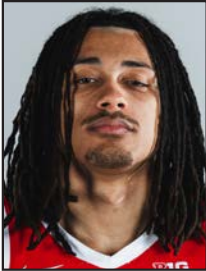
ting back-to-back shots from beyond the arc – the shot for Thornton that tied his career high in points – to take a 78-57 lead at 7:02. Thornton set a new career high with his first of two free throws at 5:36 and scored his final points of the game on a three at 2:14 to make it 86-64.

The Buckeyes were led by Thornton's 38 points in the game. He also added five assists and five rebounds. Thornton was 14 of 17 from the field, including 5 of 8 from deep. Mobley and Tilly were the only other double-digit scorers for the Buckeyes with 19 and 15 points, respectively. Tilly had a game-leading six boards.

Purdue Fort Wayne was led by fifth-year guard Stevenson, who had 21 points in the game, with DeAndre Craig (18) and Darius Duffy (10) both getting into double digits as well. Four different Mastodons had three rebounds in the game. The Buckeyes nearly doubled them up off the glass, 33-17.

Ohio State also had a strong shooting night, connecting on 34 of 51 shots (66.7 percent) including 16 of 28 from beyond the arc (57.1 percent).

The Buckeyes will play two games before BSB next goes to press, hosting App State on Nov. 11 (6:30 p.m., B1G+) and Notre Dame on Nov. 16 (12:30 p.m., FS1).



Devin Royal



Bruce Thornton

Surgery Doesn't Deter Freshman Goalie Labre

Going to college for the first time is a life changer. Doing it in another country is a challenge, as is taking classes in your second language.

IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

Add in the rehabilitation from knee surgery, and Ohio State goalie Dawson Labre from Les Cedres, Quebec, has had an eventful start to his time in Columbus.

"It's really good," he said. "It's a lot different from back home in Montreal, but I love it so far. The boys made it super easy for me to adapt."

He has two other Quebecers on the team in forwards Félix Caron and Jake Rozzi. Labre and Caron, who transferred this season from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, share an apartment.

"He's my best friend on the team, and he's a really good guy," Labre said. "It definitely makes it easier. We can speak in French together. So, it's been great."

French is Rozzi's secondary language.

"He's my stall mate (in the locker room) so I'm close to him," Labre said. "He speaks only English, which is weird, but he's a great guy."

The two played against each other growing up, so it's been a nice reunion for them.

"It's crazy how it worked out, me and him being here," Rozzi said.

Labre had an indirect connection with Caron. Both played junior hockey for the West Kelowna Warriors of the British Columbia Hockey League, although Caron was already at RPI by the time Labre played for them in 2024-25.

"I didn't know him before I came here, even though we have a lot of common friends back home," Labre said.

He had a 6-8-4 record with a 3.06 goals-against average and a .895 save percentage in 18 games last season before a hip injury required season-ending surgery in early December.

"It just got worse," he said. "I tore my labrum at first in December (2023), and then I kept playing on it and played the whole playoffs on it. This time, I tore the full labrum last year."

He had already committed to the Buckeyes for this season, but Ohio State coach Steve Rohlik had trepidation when he heard Labre was headed to surgery.

The Buckeyes were going to lose Logan Terness after the 2024-25 season when his eligibility was exhausted, and Rohlik was looking for someone to compete with Kristoffer Eberly.

"Especially in that position, it puts you in a spot where it's the unknown, like, is he going to be healthy? How long is it going to take?" Rohlik said. "It's a pretty important position to not know if he's going to be ready or not for this season. So, it put us in a spot where certainly we had to make some decisions as well."

He decided to be proactive and recruited

another goalie – Sam Hillebrandt, who was the backup for Team USA at the 2024 and 2025 World Junior Championships when they won back-to-back gold medals.

"It gave us a chance to go out and recruit a heck of a goalie in Sam, so we were fortunate," Rohlik said.

Meanwhile, Labre went through months of rehab with the goal of being ready for this season.

"After the surgery, they told me it was going to be four to five months without touching the ice," he said. "I got back on the ice in May, and then I was ready to go."

He never considered delaying his entry to Ohio State.

"Oh, I wanted to come this fall," he said.

"I knew I was going to be 100 percent ready to go.

"It was hard mentally at first, not playing for six, seven months, but then I thought to take my recovery seriously and work hard and stay positive, and everything turned out really well. My surgeon did a great job. My physical therapist did a great job.

"I did a lot of physical therapy two, three times a week, a lot of resting at first," he said. "I mean, I couldn't even walk, so I just had to sit on the couch for hours and hours and then just stay positive. I feel like a big part of it is mental and never give up, so that helped me a lot."

Labre was cleared for preseason practice.

"We were confident he would be," goalie coach Carter Krier said. "With the summer rehab, and he came here in the summer to work with our trainers, that was a big part of us feeling confident that he was going to be ready to go day one. We're glad he's healthy and battling right now."



Dawson Labre

Rohlik was not only relieved to see Labre on the ice but also impressed.

"When you're out as long as he was with the procedure and everything that he went through, I give him a ton of credit for how hard he worked throughout the summer to get back," he said. "He's worked extremely hard to put himself in a position to be out here every day. And it's just like anybody else. If you miss pretty much a full season, or three quarters of a season, you're catching up with everything, and he's done that."

Between The Pipes

Eberly played the first seven games of the season before Hillebrandt made his debut on Oct. 31 vs. Penn State, while Labre waits his turn.

"I'm so excited. I can't wait," Labre said. "It's been almost a year since I played a full game, so I'm just ready to go whenever the coach puts me in."

He's been a goalie since he was 5 years old, despite his mother's protests. She wanted him to be a player (forward or defenseman), "But every time I was a player, I'd go back and try to save the puck in my player gear, so I think they knew that goalie was my position."

"I just love stopping the puck. I think I was born with it."

His favorite goalies were Carey Price of the Montreal Canadiens and Marc-André Fleury, especially when he was playing for the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"Pittsburgh was my favorite team, and I loved him," Labre said. "He made me want to be a goalie. The Canadiens are now. I love the Canadiens. But when I was younger, it was Pittsburgh."

When Labre was 18, he left the comforts of Quebec to play about two hours away in the Ontario province for the Smith Falls Bears in the Central Canada Hockey League.

"I was a little nervous at first, but the boys were so nice," he said. "I had a couple

of guys from back home in Montreal who played with me, so it made it easier. My billet family was super nice. I still talk to them every week."

Fortunately, language was not a problem there.

"I knew English because my dad grew up, my whole family grew up in Toronto," he said. "They speak English very well. Actually, on my dad's side of my family, they mostly only speak English. So, when I was younger, it would be a little hard when I went to, like Christmas parties, to understand what they were saying, but you pick it up pretty fast."

Once he decided to go the American college route, Ohio State was always on his radar.

"I came to visit at Christmas two years ago," he said. "I loved all the facilities, the staff. Everyone I met was super nice to me. It was an easy choice. I always followed Ohio State growing up, and it was one of my dream schools, actually."

"Growing up, I was watching college football with my dad, and I just was fascinated by the school. A little part of me wanted to be here, so that turned out really well."

His 18-year-old brother, Maddox, is a 6-4, 181-pound defenseman playing for the Victoriaville Tigres of the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League who is committed to OSU and will join the program in 2026-27 or the following season.

Next

The Buckeyes (4-4-0) had an open weekend Nov. 7 and 8 before playing at Wisconsin on Nov. 14 and 15 and at Michigan on Nov. 21 and 22.

For recaps of the upcoming series against Wisconsin, go to the BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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Wrestlebucks Return Strong Squad In 2025

By **SAM CIPRIANI**

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

In the wake of a season that saw Ohio State finish fifth nationally and produce nine NCAA tournament qualifiers, head coach Tom Ryan and the Buckeye coaching staff took a new approach to the offseason.

For the first time, Ohio State not only replenished its starting lineup through recruiting but also dipped its foot in the transfer portal. Ohio State added two wrestlers from the portal in Ethan Stiles of Oregon State and Dylan Fishback of NC State.

Last season with the Cowboys, Stiles finished sixth at the 2025 NCAA championships in the 149-pound weight class. Fishback joined Ohio State as a two-time NCAA qualifier for the Wolfpack at 184 pounds and was brought in late to replace Rocco Welsh, who transferred out of Ohio State despite signing a multiyear NIL deal. Welsh joined the reigning champion Penn State wrestling team through the portal.

"This is the first time we really jumped in the portal," Ryan told BSB. "I met with our team after we lost Rocco late in the summer. Regarding Ethan Stiles, we knew at 149, we had some good young guys, but we didn't have anybody that, at least last year at this time, that we felt was progressing at the standard of Ohio State wrestling. So I let them all know, 'Look, we're going to have to look in the portal, unless one of you really

moves to a level that meets our standard.'"

Ohio State also added three freshmen in Brogan Fielding (141 pounds), Carson Mize (184) and Maddox Shaw. Shaw, the No. 27 overall recruit in the 2025 class, is expected to sit behind Stiles at 149 pounds and is the rookie with the highest projected ceiling.

Despite routine success in the 20 years under Ryan since he took over as the Buckeye head coach in 2006, Ohio State will still have an uphill battle to win its first national championship since 2015.

Penn State has claimed 11 of the last 14 national wrestling championships under head coach Cael Sanderson. The Nittany Lions beat out the second-place Buckeyes in three of those years (2017, 2018 and 2019).

Penn State also reloaded before its run to a fifth straight title, poaching the former Buckeye Welsh – who qualified for nationals with a 26-6 record as a freshman at Ohio State and wrestled unattached in 2024-25, finishing with a perfect 15-0 record while taking a redshirt – of the 174-pound division in the transfer portal and received commitments from the top two wrestlers in the class of 2025.

With a roster that returns a two-time national champion in senior Jesse Mendez and boasts 12 NCAA tournament qualifiers and four former All-Americans (Mendez, Stiles, Carson Kharchla and Nick Feldman), Ohio State will have the opportunity to yet again contend for both a Big Ten and national ti-

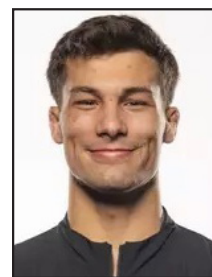
tle, though it will be a steep hill to climb with the Nittany Lions still thriving.

Having earned individual titles at the 141-pound division in each of the past two seasons, Mendez said he expects Ohio State to enjoy the same level of success and lift its first team national title trophy in 10 years.

"We're excited, the work has been going really well," Mendez told BSB. "We had a great preseason, and I think that come March, we're going to be hoisting up a team trophy."

The following is a look at the Ohio State personnel at each weight class.

125 pounds: The 125-pound division is one of the Buckeyes' most contested weight classes. With two former two-time national qualifiers in juniors Brendan McCrone and



Nic Bouzakis

Nic Bouzakis, as well as redshirt-sophomore Vinny Kilkeary, the Buckeyes have multiple wrestlers with an opportunity to earn Ohio State's starting spot at 125.

"Nic Bouzakis has moved down to 125 (from 133 pounds). So Nic is no longer challenging Ben Davino. He's challenging Brendan McCrone and Vinny Kilkeary for the spot," Ryan said. "So that's the way we (adjusted those weight classes), we're watching closely. McCrone has been to nationals twice, and Bouzakis has been to the nationals twice. So that competition could go on for a while."

After spending two seasons at 133 pounds, Bouzakis cut down to 125 this year once Ben Davino established himself as the top option at that weight class. The Tampa, Fla., native earned 25-11 and 24-9 records in his two seasons as the starter at 133 pounds, while taking third place at the Big Ten championships in 2025.

McCrone has started for Ohio State at 125 in each of the last two seasons, improving his record from 20-13 in his first season as the top wrestler in the class to a 23-11 finish last year.

At the Clarion Open on Nov. 2, McCrone defeated Bouzakis in the 125-pound final by decision, 5-4, giving McCrone a slight leg up on the former 133-pounder in the battle.

Kilkeary went 2-2 in Ohio State's opening weekend at the Clarion Open, and while he's strong from the top position, his issues wrestling on the mat and in neutral positions are what separate him from the more seasoned McCrone.

Behind McCrone, Bouzakis and Kilkeary is Elyria, Ohio, native Peyton Fenton. The redshirt sophomore posted a 9-6 record in his first season with the Buckeyes after transferring from Virginia in the summer of 2023 but didn't see any action on the mat last season.

133 pounds: Unlike the 125-pound weight class, Ohio State's top dog at 133 is clear, even more so with Bouzakis shedding weight to compete at 125.

Redshirt-freshman wrestler Ben Davino is set to start for the Buckeyes at 133 following a solid rookie season. The then-fresh-

man racked up a strong 14-1 overall record and a perfect mark in duals (4-0) and Big Ten duals (2-0).

Davino came to Ohio State as the No. 4 overall wrestler in the class of 2024 out of St. Charles East High School in Elgin, Ill., breaking out for the Buckeyes with a 5-3 defeat of Bouzakis in the 2024 Clarion Open finals.

After earning his black shirt – given to wrestlers "deserving of elite distinction" at Ohio State – alongside Brandon Cannon on Oct. 9 for his performance in all areas, Davino earned a strong endorsement from Mendez, who believes the redshirt freshman has the talent to win it all.

"I think Ben Davino is going to have a great year," Mendez said. "He's a killer, and I expect really great things from him. He's got the mindset to be a national champion. In my book, it's a done deal."

141 pounds: Despite his lauding of Davino, in terms of "done deals," Mendez himself still remains the Buckeyes' best bet to win an individual title in 2025. The senior is looking to join a select group and defend his two straight national championships at the 141-pound division to become the third Ohio State wrestler ever to earn three individual titles.

Before Mendez, the only two Buckeyes to achieve that feat were Kyle Snyder and current assistant coach Logan Stieber, who won the national championship in each of his four seasons.

As a sophomore, Mendez posted a 30-2 record while taking home both the Big Ten and national titles at 141 pounds, and though he fell in the semifinals of the Big Ten tournament in 2025, he bounced back to claim his second straight NCAA championship.

Feldman said he sees no reason to doubt Mendez, adding that the senior represents exactly what an Ohio State wrestler should be.

"Jesse Mendez is someone that I admire very deeply, somebody I really care about every day. Seeing his work ethic and his drive is unbelievable," Feldman said. "My goal every day is to do what Jesse is doing, so if he's jogging, I'm jogging, that kind of thing. So the room is a real blessing, just because he is able to push everyone else in the room just through his attitude, and that's made me better, and everybody else on the team better."

With Mendez firmly established atop the 141-pound division for the Buckeyes, redshirt-freshman Dakota King and Fielding are expected to use this season to learn behind the reigning national champ. Fielding had an impressive opening weekend at the Clarion, finishing in sixth place with a 5-2 record, while King faltered, splitting his four matches and failing to place.

149 pounds: Without a surefire starter at 149 pounds, Ohio State picked up Oregon State's Stiles to bridge the gap. The sophomore compiled a 32-11 overall record in his time at Nebraska and Oklahoma State before joining the Buckeyes.

"Stiles was in the portal, and as a returning freshman All-American who's from this region – a lot closer here than Oregon State – we thought we could get him. We got









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OHIO STATE WRESTLING

him. He's been really good. He trains really hard. He has a competitive fire that is really strong. He loves the sport and wants to be great."

In Stiles' debut for Ohio State at the Clarion Open, the 2025 All-American won three of his five matches, placing fourth at 149 pounds after defeats in the semifinals and third-place match.

Filling out the 149-pound weight class are redshirt freshmen Landon Desselle and Daxton Chase. Desselle, who earned a 9-6 record last season, is listed as a 149-pounder but wrestled at 157 pounds in both the Cleveland State Open and Edinboro Open last season.

Although Stiles will likely start the majority of the season, Ryan said both Shaw and Chase will have the chance to earn time on the mat.

"Shaw was a big recruit out of Pennsylvania, and he's at 149 as well. We'll probably use him," Ryan said. "We also have a young buck named Daxton Chase who redshirted last year. He's a four-time all-state kid from Ohio, great work ethic, so we're watching both of them. Maddox, if he beats out Daxton, he'll be a guy that we will probably throw in there a couple times in the starting lineup, because as a true freshman, you get five competitions without burning your redshirt."

157 pounds: The 157-pound division will be a one-man show for Ohio State. With multiple 157-pounder wrestlers gaining weight to move above the class, sophomore Brandon Cannon is set to start.

Following a solid freshman campaign for the Buckeyes when he totaled a 12-2 record (6-2 unattached, 6-0 attached), he earned a starting role in 2024-25.

Cannon compiled a 24-5 record in his second year, placed second in the Big Ten tournament and qualified for the NCAA tournament.

Cannon won his first three matches of the Clarion Open but fell to unattached Melvin Miller in the championship bout.

165 pounds: Cannon's move to the 157-pound weight class paved the way for

a tighter competition between senior Paddy Gallagher and surging redshirt-freshman e'Than Birden.



Paddy Gallagher

Gallagher could be the favorite to start after two national tournament appearances in 2023 and 2025. The veteran Buckeye is coming off a career year, finishing with a 17-9 record and a seventh-place finish in the 2025 Big Ten tournament.

Birden, on the other hand, earned a 9-6 record and received a redshirt. However, he impressed as a freshman with his strength and technique and has jumped out to a strong start in 2025, with a 5-1 finish at the Clarion Open that earned him sixth place at 165.

Ryan said Birden, backed by a freshman campaign when he showed flashes of starting material, will serve as Gallagher's top contender at 165 pounds.

"So 165 is really a challenge between Paddy and e'Than Birden, who had a great freshman year," Ryan said. "(Birden) had some really great moments, and some moments that he looked like a true freshman, so those two will fight it out at 165."

With Gallagher and Birden leading the pack, sophomore T.J. Schierl and redshirt-freshman Patrick Downing are unlikely to have significant roles for the Buckeyes. Downing did not wrestle in 2024-25 but struggled his freshman year with a 1-10 (0-2 unattached, 1-8 Ohio State) individual record, while Schierl compiled a 7-7 total record (3-2, 4-5) last season.

174 pounds: Graduate Carson Kharchla, the Buckeyes' longest tenured wrestler and one of three captains, is looking to finally put it all together in his final season. Having been on Ohio State's roster since 2019, Kharchla has had multiple years cut short due to the COVID pandemic and injuries.

Kharchla has been a symbol of consistency when he does perform on the mat. He has qualified for the national tournament three times (2022, 2023 and 2025), earning All-America honors with a seventh-place finish in 2022, and placed inside the top four three times at the Big Ten tournament.

Ryan said although Kharchla's career has been riddled with injuries, when he's healthy, the veteran is as capable as anyone of contending for an NCAA championship.

"Carson, due to all his injuries, he's just had a tough college experience," Ryan said. "Obviously, he's an All-American, but this guy has the potential to win the national tournament, and he's in his seventh year."

Kharchla is the surefire starter at 174, but junior Carter Chase and redshirt-freshman Boede Campbell will still have the chance to make appearances. Chase has totaled a 16-11 record over his multiyear career with Ohio State, while Campbell has claimed a win in only one of his five matches.

184 pounds: Ryan's decision to search for talent in the transfer portal to replace Welsh has clarified concerns at the 184-pound weight class. Fishback was brought in after a dominant three years with the Wolfpack. Fishback accrued a 46-22 record in his first three collegiate seasons, including a 20-9 finish in 2023-24 when he placed second at the ACC championships.

Fishback has earned high praise early from coaches and wrestlers alike early in his time as a Buckeye. McCrone said Fishback has meshed well into the Ohio State wrestling culture with one of the team's top work ethics.

Fishback met expectations in his first outing with Ohio State, going 4-0 on his way to the 184-pound title at the Clarion Open on Nov. 2

Also in the 184-pound class are Mize and redshirt-freshman Cayaen Smith. Mize is a likely redshirt, barring injury, while Smith, who accrued a 4-6 record in 2024-25, isn't expected to see the mat often behind Fishback.

197 pounds: In a crowded 197-pound group, the Clarion Open may have finally provided some clarity for Ohio State in a weight class stacked with veterans.

Sophomore Luke Geog dominated in Ohio State's opening tournament with a perfect 5-0 record, defeating fellow Buckeye Ryder Rogotzke 10-4 in the championship.

Junior Seth Shumate, who started for the Buckeyes for the majority of the 2024-25 season, finished with a 2-2 record, including a victory over redshirt-freshman Xander Myers due to a medical forfeit.

Ryan said that both Geog and Rogotzke will have the chance to oust the former starter Shumate, and the results at the Clarion Open only reaffirmed that the internal battle at 197 pounds is far from settled.

"Shumate, who was in the All-America round last year at 197, is going to be challenged by Geog and Rogotzke," Ryan said. "If Shumate can't beat Geog and Rogotzke, there's a good chance that he will drop down (to 184 pounds)."

Shumate finished with a 20-15 record in 2024-25.

Geog has shown the most promise of the bunch, and with a 36-11 record over three years, he holds the best winning percentage of the three contenders at 197 pounds.

Even with his 18-10 record at Cleveland State in 2024-25, Myers is a long shot to threaten the trio of Geog, Shumate and Rogotzke at 197 pounds.

Heavyweight: Feldman is set to return as the Buckeyes' top heavyweight after back-to-back seasons as Ohio State's starter. After a freshman campaign when he ended the year 29-8, finished second at the Big Ten tournament and fifth in the NCAA tournament, Feldman had a disappointing sophomore season by his standards.

The junior wrestler posted a 20-10 record last season, finishing 3-2 in both the conference and national tournaments.

Following his self-proclaimed down year in 2024-25, Feldman is hoping to bounce back and has his sights on winning major titles for both himself and Ohio State.

"The big goals are becoming Big Ten champions and national champions," Feldman said. "Those are the top two goals that I have in mind. But for myself, I just want to be an offensive monster and always be the guy that is always taking risks and taking attacks."



Nick Feldman



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Early Polls Can Be More Fiction Than Fact

Did you ever wish there were no early-season football polls? Just play the games and start publishing rankings about when the playoff committee does, which this year was the first Tuesday in November.

EXNER POINT Rich Exner

It makes a whole lot of sense since those early-season rankings are pretty much nonsense, this year or about any year.

Take even the Sept. 7 AP poll, after a couple of games were played.

Penn State was No. 2. LSU was No. 3. Miami was fifth, Illinois ninth, and Florida State 10th. Among those, only Miami at 18th was in the top 25 in the first committee rankings.

And as far as Indiana and Texas A&M, two teams in the top three grouping by everyone now, the Hoosiers were 22nd and the Aggies 16th. Alabama, another very likely playoff team, was 19th.

Things really have sorted out. Yes, there will be changes and plenty of sur-

prises between now and Selection Sunday on Dec. 7. But the contenders have separated themselves from the pretenders, for the most part.

Indiana and Ohio State will be in the playoffs. So will Texas A&M.

In fact, if Indiana and Ohio State go into the Big Ten Championship Game undefeated, you can pretty much expect both will have first-round byes as top-four seeds in the playoffs.

There is some sorting out to do below Texas A&M, especially in the SEC. And who knows who will emerge as the likely lone representative for the ACC, but that's a low-level discussion not dependent on ratings, but on the league title game.

As for Notre Dame, they're in if they win out against Pittsburgh, Syracuse and Stanford. A third loss puts the Irish in extreme danger of being left out.

No three-loss teams made the playoffs a year ago. Alabama, with three losses, was ranked 11th in the final committee rankings, but got bumped by lower-ranked conference champions Arizona State and Clemson.

In the Big Ten, we've learned Oregon is not the same Oregon this year, as the committee correctly said with its first rankings, placing the Ducks at No. 9 rather than No. 6 as the AP had them. That played out on Nov. 8, when Oregon bare-

ly escaped Iowa with a win, adding to its close call at Penn State.

Oregon, now 8-1, is in with two losses, likely out with three. Left on Oregon's schedule are USC and Washington, both danger games. But at this point, include Oregon in the field as well. As for the rest of the Big Ten, USC very likely gets in if it wins out vs. Iowa, Oregon and UCLA. And Michigan gets in if it wins out.

The biggest intrigue left involves Georgia. The Bulldogs would be a scary opponent for anyone in the playoffs, but they've also been shaky at times, and Texas and Georgia Tech remain on their schedule. Lose both of those, and the Bulldogs are out.

But these are things that will fall in line with the results, not driven by early-season rankings.

A Little Mystery With The Bucks

The Buckeyes have been that proverbial well-oiled machine, going about business and controlling nearly every minute of every game this year. The only time there was a twinge of doubt about winning came during just a few minutes late in the Texas game on opening day.

We know by now that this team has a tremendous defense, receivers like no other team in the country, and the nation's most accurate passer.

But what will happen against a really, really good opponent, especially when things are turned up a few notches in the playoffs? Surely, we can expect this team to succeed, but the schedule so far hasn't afforded us the opportunity to create a comfort level for knowing that.

Sayin No Longer A Secret

We've seen since the beginning of the season that Julian Sayin is the real deal. And watching him get better, it doesn't appear as if his ceiling has been reached.

But it's also been interesting to see out-

siders across the country coming around to acknowledging what close watchers of Buckeye football have seen for months. He's more than just a guy who runs a potent offense packed with great receivers.

Will he win the Heisman? Who knows what's in the minds of the rather random collection of voters? But he is firmly planted in the conversation.

I took some time to closely watch Alabama's Ty Simpson over the last few weeks because of all the talk about him.

I now don't understand people putting Simpson in the same conversation with Sayin and Indiana's Fernando Mendoza. Simpson is a good quarterback. He makes some spectacular throws. But too often, he's also way off target.

The other guy we often hear about is Marcel Reed, who has done wonders in helping to guide Texas A&M to an undefeated season so far. But again, he doesn't stack up against Sayin and Mendoza.

It's more than the eye test. By the numbers, as well, the choice should be clear, with the caveat being that the season is not over.

Here's where each ranked nationally in various passing statistics through the games of Nov. 8.

Passer efficiency: Sayin, 192.6 (No. 1); Mendoza, 178.6 (2); Simpson, 159.5 (19); Reed, 155.5 (26).

Completion percentage: Sayin, 80.9% (No. 1); Mendoza, 71.3% (6); Simpson, 66.9% (31); Reed, 62.3% (73).

Touchdowns: Mendoza, 26 (No. 1); Sayin, 24 (4); Simpson, 21 (9); Reed, 19 (17).

Interceptions: Simpson, 1 (No. 2 for lowest interceptions per attempt); Sayin, 4 (20); Mendoza, 5 (35); Reed, 6 (85).

Passing yards per game: Sayin, 276.8 (No. 12); Simpson, 273.4 (14); Reed, 243.7 (34); Mendoza, 234.2 (43).

Top 10

Here's my top 10 heading into mid-November.

1. Ohio State (9-0) – No reason to think otherwise.

2. Indiana (10-0) – I thought about dropping the Hoosiers a notch after their shaky win at Penn State.

3. Texas A&M (9-0) – I kept the Aggies below Indiana, because they've had multiple close calls, including a 45-42 win against Arkansas, a 16-10 win against Auburn and a 41-40 win against Notre Dame.

4. Alabama (8-1) – The Tide doesn't roll, but they keep winning games of 11 or fewer points, now four of them.

T-5. Georgia (8-1), Ole Miss (9-1) and Texas Tech (9-1) – There are cases to shuffle these three in any order. But if I were a playoff team, I'd fear Georgia's raw talent the most.

8. Oregon (8-1) – I feel like Oregon is clearly a step below all others above.

9. Notre Dame (7-2) – Should be smooth sailing for Notre Dame the rest of the way. If not, this team is not what it seems.

10. Texas (7-2) – Hanging around so far. Let's see if the Longhorns can stay here.

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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.

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Boilermakers Make For Nice Afternoon Nap

Before Ohio State's 34-10 victory over Purdue on Nov. 8, I made the bold prediction on our BuckeyeSports.com Forum Live Game Thread that I would nod off at some point during the game. Sure enough, during the fourth quarter, I dozed off (am I the only one who didn't make it all the way through this barn burner?) and missed Jayden Fielding's second field goal.

I hope the truly diehard Buckeye fans cut me some slack for missing a few minutes of a game that was so riveting that among the highlights were a Buckeye making a field goal longer than 40 yards, commonplace in high school these days, for the first time this season (did it twice, no less) or our Heisman hopeful quarterback throwing his ugliest interception of the season.

I am wide awake right now, and I am here to report that the Buckeyes probably accomplished what they set out to do in the game – come in, record a decisive victory, avoid any major injuries, and go home.

I thought Jeremiah Smith continued to force his way back into the Heisman Trophy discussion. After starting the season as one of the favorites, the buzz surrounding Smith had slowly diminished. With opposing defenses guarding him like Fort Knox, he was putting up solid but workmanlike numbers. As I said in this space last issue, workmanlike does not win Heismans.

Against the Boilermakers, Smith had 10 receptions, catches of all varieties, for 137 yards and a touchdown. If I am reading the stat sheet correctly, he was targeted 10 times and caught all 10 of them. And he did this without his wingman, Carnell Tate, who sat this one out with some sort of mystery ailment. I don't know about you, but about midway through the first quarter I started wondering, "Where's Carnell Tate?" I found the whole thing kind of odd. You are talking about a guy who had 39 receptions for 711 yards, an 18.2-yard average, and seven touchdowns, and no one seemed to notice that he was missing.

Getting back to Smith, without Tate there to draw at least some attention away from the star sophomore, he was still able to post his big numbers. You couple his numbers against the Boilers with the six catches (on six targets), some of the acrobatic variety, for 123 yards and two scores he had the week before against Penn State and you are back to a legitimate Heisman contender.

"For Jeremiah to still have the impact he did, not having Carnell on the other side, speaks volumes to what he does and just how impactful he is," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said.

As for Ohio State's other legitimate Heisman contender, I had been telling anyone who would listen to me that the great thing about Julian Sayin is that he has been getting better every week. I would consider this the first week since the kickoff against Texas that he has not shown marked improvement.

Not that he had a bad game. On the contrary. A 27-of-33 performance for 303 yards keeps him on target for the trip to New York City in December. However, it is hard to ignore that interception in the third quarter that stymied a 15-play, 8:34 march to the Boilermaker 7. Even the greatest quarterbacks are going to throw interceptions – Sayin already had a minuscule three of them – but he threw this one directly at Purdue's CJ Nunnally IV. He wasn't particularly being pressured. He just threw an ill-advised pass. Sayin was also sacked twice, only the third and fourth times he's been taken down behind the line in conference play.

Judging from the readers' responses to our Fan Forum question on page 2 about whether the Ohio State running attack is improving, I was clearly not as impressed as others with Ohio State's 170-yard rushing performance, a

THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

number that would have been even better if Bo Jackson's dynamic 70-yard run to start the Buckeyes' first possession hadn't been called back on a ticky-tack foul.

I can't exactly put my finger on why I am still not sold, but I'm not. Maybe it has to do with the fact that those numbers were put up against the No. 91 rush defense in the country. Maybe I'm left wondering what would happen if Day and Brian Hartline decided to double down on Chip Kelly's strategy of running the ball up the middle against Michigan on Nov. 29. Is this rushing attack up to that challenge? The Wolverines are currently 12th in the country in rush defense, giving up 100.2 yards per game.

Ohio State is averaging 155.1 yards rushing per game. If you take just the Texas game and the three conference games the Buckeyes have played against teams with records in conference of .500 or better (Washington, Minnesota and Illinois), Ohio State averaged 116.3 yards a game and 3.4 yards per carry against those squads. That total per game would rank 116th in the nation right now. So take OSU's rushing numbers for what you will but do so at your own risk.

Day clearly thought his run game needed work heading into the Purdue game. Thus the 43 carries. And his evaluation of the progress after the game doesn't strike me as a ringing endorsement.

"We wanted to run the ball, and in order to get the run game going, you had to give it a chance to get going," Day said of why they ran the ball so much against the Boilermakers. "In this game, we ran the ball 43 times for 170 yards. I think it was efficient. *It wasn't great* (my italics), but there were some good hits there."

Fortunately, the Buckeyes feature an amazing defense and an amazing passing attack. But will that be enough to carry them when they step up in class, starting with the Michigan game and then moving on into the postseason?

This is as good a time as any to bring up the lone complaint I have had with Day through the years. Why not bring the reserve quarterback in earlier during blowouts? Against Purdue, not counting a gimmick play in the first half, Lincoln Kienholz did not come in until there was just 1:45 left in the game. He handed the ball to James Peoples three times.

Get Sayin out of the game. No need to risk having your franchise quarterback injured. And get Kienholz some real game experience in case the unthinkable happens.

By the way, the play that Kienholz ran for his 3-yard touchdown in the second quarter was both well-designed and well-executed.

One other thought about the run game.

Isaiah West is moving his way up the depth chart, just the way Bo Jackson did a few weeks back. In the last three games, West has carried 22 times for 128 yards and a 5.8-yard average. And he has not been limited to mop-up time. Against Purdue, five of West's nine carries were in the first half.

CJ Donaldson Jr. has carved out his niche in the running back rotation and has nine rushing touchdowns and one through the air to show for it. That leaves Peoples as the odd man out right now, but the way the rotation has fluctuated this season, Peoples may get his moment to shine yet.

One last, last thing about the OSU running game.

Did you realize that, because of the spot of

the penalty, Jackson was credited with 13 yards on his negated run? That would go down as one of Ohio State's longest runs of the game. The actual honor for longest run went to West, who had a 16-yard burst.

Fielding's Field Goal

It feels like only at Ohio State is someone nailing a 49-yard field goal a big deal these days. Kicks of 50 yards or more are fairly commonplace around the nation anymore, but kickers in Columbus have struggled to connect from much beyond 40 yards lately.

Congratulations to Fielding for connecting on not one, but two kicks that would have been his long of the season. The 49-yarder broke his career record of 47.

So, is 49 yards his range, or was that kick just a fluke? My preference would be that the powerful Buckeye offense just go ahead and score a touchdown, or at the least move into closer range if possible if a kick is needed. However, I would imagine that if Ohio State needed a field goal in the 49-yard range to win a game, Day would trot Fielding out there.

Or would he go for it on fourth down?

Just a reminder. Fielding will always be one of my guys because of his touchdown-saving tackle on a kickoff earlier this season.

The Beauty Of The Catch

I found Jeremiah Smith's description of catching a long ball from Julian Sayin almost poetic.

"It's very pretty just looking at the ball coming down when you're about to catch it," Smith said. "You just have to see it for yourself to experience something like that, but every ball that he throws is on time and perfect."

I picture Smith streaking down the field, the crowd silent to his ears – just him and the ball. The vision is quite beautiful.

That Was Targeting

A left-over piece of business from the Penn State game:

Here is AI's definition of targeting, courtesy of Google:

"In college football, targeting is a penalty for a player who initiates forcible contact to an opponent's head or neck area, particularly when the opponent is 'defenseless.' This rule is a player safety measure that prohibits illegal hits, such as using the crown of the helmet or launching into an opponent's head or neck. Penalties include a 15-yard penalty and an automatic ejection for the player."

I hate the targeting rule. I find it one more effort to legislate defense out of football. But if that is the definition of targeting, then Caleb Downs was guilty of it against the Nittany Lions, right down to the launch. I felt that in real time. In fact, I had already made up my mind that Ohio State could beat Purdue the following week without their best defensive player playing in the first half. Google the play and see for yourself. "Caleb Downs targeting" should find it for you.

Remarkably, the call on the field was overruled, and Downs played out the PSU game and was able to start at Purdue.

You know what? I feel like this was a case of karma delivering a payback. Doesn't it seem like Ohio State has been on the wrong end of every targeting call it has been involved with since the rule was enacted?

Pace For Heisman In Retrospect

You may recall that in the last issue I was looking at seasons when Ohio State had multiple players competing with each other for the Heisman Trophy, as Sayin and Smith are doing this year. I noted that in 1973, offensive tackle John Hicks finished second in the voting to Penn State's John Cappelletti. Hicks would have been the first true lineman to win the coveted award. There are some who believe that fellow Buckeyes Archie Griffin (fifth) and Randy Gradishar (sixth) siphoned off votes that might have earned Hicks the award.

Hicks finishing so high in the voting made me wonder if Orlando Pace, arguably the greatest Ohio State offensive lineman of all time, received any serious Heisman Trophy consideration.

In 1996, Pace's final year at Ohio State, Pace finished fourth in the balloting, garnering 87 first place votes. Florida quarterback Danny Wuerffel (300 first place votes) won the trophy, followed by Iowa State running back Troy Davis (209), and Arizona State quarterback Jake Plummer (116).

Postal Holidays

For those rare readers who have not been having delivery problems but received this issue a day or two (or more?) later than you usually do, don't forget that Veterans Day fell on Tuesday, Nov. 11, not a good factor when it comes to BSB delivery. And looking ahead, I have been trying to give everyone fair warning. The week of the Michigan game, Thanksgiving, of course, falls on Thursday.

It is my experience in 45 years of doing this that a one-day holiday can cause more than a one-day delay. The mail backs up and sometimes it takes some time for postal workers, short-handed as they are, to eliminate the backlog.

Holiday or not, we continue to recommend that those having problems with delivery of their Buckeye Sports Bulletin upgrade to first-class mail in an envelope. The cost to upgrade your subscription is now down to just \$15 through the Michigan game or \$25 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 say I didn't warn you (several times) about Thanksgiving and its delivery implications.

There Is Another Option

I had a nice note from Al Taday (Class of '64), a longtime reader from Connecticut. Mr. Taday is up front about the delivery of his BSB, but he has a reading strategy that I have been advocating for years with mixed success.

"My Bulletin is always late," he informed me. "However, I download the PDF version every Tuesday and therefore have my own 'print' version until my Bulletin arrives which keeps me up to date with the news and comments."

"The only real news I get about the Buckeyes is from the Buckeye Sports Bulletin. I really look forward to and appreciate the news and insight I receive from the Bulletin, and I thank you for that."

Al, I thank *you* for being a BSB subscriber for nearly 45 years, and I hope you have more luck convincing your fellow readers to implement your strategy than I have had.

For information on how to access BSB online immediately upon each issue's completion, free with your subscription, see page 6 of this issue.



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