

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN

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Vol. 38, No. 15

"For The Buckeye Fan Who Needs To Know More"

Feb. 2, 2019



## Final Push

TIM MOODY

**FIRST CLASS** – Ryan Day, who took over as head coach Jan. 2, is aiming for a strong finish to his first recruiting class leading the Buckeyes after signing 15 prospects in December.

## Buckeyes Focusing On Offensive Line As NSD Approaches

By GARRETT STEPIEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

As the clock ticks with the Feb. 6 National Signing Day approaching, Ohio State's priorities for the 2019 recruiting class have been known for the past month and change.

Before he officially took over as head coach of the Buckeyes on Jan. 2, Ryan Day directly pointed to one position group in his early signing day press conference on Dec. 19: the offensive line.

Ohio State secured two of its must-sign commitments down the stretch in December as Mentor, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Ryan Jacoby (6-5, 270) and Buford, Ga., five-star center Harry Miller (6-4, 310) inked letters of intent with the Buckeyes.

But between misses on Springfield (Ill.) Sacred Heart Griffin three-star offensive tackle Nick Broeker (6-6, 288), who stuck with his Ole Miss commitment and signed with the Rebels in December, and Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley four-star offensive guard Doug Nester (6-6½, 305), who remained committed to OSU but delayed his final decision until February, the offensive line's depth concerns became glaringly obvious.

Beyond just Nester, Ohio State went through December and stepped into January with few spots left in its 15-member class for 2019, but with a premium placed in the trenches.

"It's important to go identify them," Day said of the offensive linemen. "We've got to go identify them. We've got to do a really good job obviously in the 2020 class. We're a little bit down in the O-line, so we've got to do a great job moving forward to get that addressed. So into January we'll keep looking

at it. We have a few guys obviously that we're close with, and so we'll just look to close those guys out."

Committed to the Buckeyes since Aug. 5, 2017, Nester was originally set for early enrollment in Columbus before the announcement on Dec. 4 of head coach Urban Meyer's retirement. The 247Sports composite's No. 106 overall prospect, No. 6 offensive guard and No. 2 player in West Virginia took a step back with OSU still among the favorites but in competition against Georgia, Penn State and Virginia Tech.

Nester called off a planned trip to Georgia before returning to Ohio State the weekend of Jan. 18 and then subsequently taking PSU (Jan. 25) and Virginia Tech (scheduled for Feb. 2) official visits before BSB's press time. For more than just depth at the position for the recruiting class, national analyst Tom Lemming told BSB that Nester's addition is crucial for the Buckeyes' two-deep on the offensive line immediately in the 2019 season.

"He's a kid that can possibly play right away," Lemming said of Nester. "He's a bull. He's a good athlete, but kind of a bull and plays downhill. He's a big, strong kid. He's stronger than (Huntington, W.Va., five-star offensive tackle Darnell) Wright. Wright, at 6-6 and 320 pounds, is the better athlete of the two. But he's technically much sounder than Wright right now. Nester does everything right. He's a two-time all-state selection with great hands. Everything he seems to do right when you watch him on film.

"I sat in with him and watched film and his assistant coach, offensive line coach Brent Terry – he was singing his praises, but boy, were they right when you see a guy who dominates. He dominates the competition. West Virginia is not as competitive (in high school) as Ohio, but still."

Ohio State offensive line coach Greg Studrawa told BSB he likes the posi-

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A Trip To Remember

My one and only Rose Bowl experience was 1969, Ohio State vs. USC and O.J. Simpson. It was my junior year at OSU, and I went with two of my buddies. What a memorable time.

We missed the shuttle for the Rose Parade (overslept) so we took a taxi from our hotel to Pasadena. Glad we did because it was awesome. I remember the OSU float with the cheerleaders chanting a popular cheer, "Sock it to 'em State, Go Bucks!" And the lady from L.A. sitting behind us saying that was really a cute cheer.

The game, of course, was awesome. O.J. went on his 80-yard touchdown, but after that it was all Bucks! That was when the legendary comment from Woody to Lou Holtz was yelled. Woody asked Holtz why Simpson went 80 yards and his response was, "That's all the further he had to go, Coach!"

I had the opportunity to meet Coach Holtz (my nephew was a manager for the football team at South Carolina) and he confirmed it was true. It happened in the locker room at halftime.

My biggest thrill was getting on the field after the game, slapping Mike Radke on the back and actually getting a piece of the Ohio State goalpost. Back then they were wooden and the fans would tear them down. I had that goalpost for years on our mantle, but sadly after one of our moves it was lost. Still blame my wife, Sharon, but she denies culpability.

However, for my birthday she bought a football signed by all the Heisman Trophy winners at that time. This was before Eddie George won his.

Thanks for the trip down memory lane. The Rose Bowl is still the greatest of them all!

**Tom Hilliker**  
Hickory, N.C.

## Marching In Pasadena

My first Rose Bowl experience was as a member of the OSU marching band in 1973 (1972 football season and the

last year as an all-male band). For most of us, this was our first trip to California. As we left 20 degrees and snow in Columbus, we were greeted by 70 degrees and palm trees in L.A. It only got better from there.

Great memories include performing at numerous venues, highlighted by Buckeye day at Disneyland. We stayed in a UCLA dorm on campus.

Daily, we would assemble, march the halftime show and grudgingly march back up the hill (ugh), getting our legs in parade shape. One day at the practice field we took a break, and an older gentleman who had been jogging around the track stopped and spoke to us. It was none other than legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden. He welcomed us to campus and gave a 20-minute pep talk. We were in awe.

When Jan. 1 arrived, we rolled out of bed at 4 a.m., loaded onto the buses and made the trek to Pasadena. This was the day we had worked so hard for. The parade was amazing (and long – about 7 miles back then, now about 5½ miles). After some rest and box lunch consumption, we assembled at the stadium. Compared to marching on the AstroTurf carpet in the 'Shoe, the Rose Bowl turf was amazing – in pristine condition. The pregame and halftime shows went well. The only thing that didn't go well that day was the game, as USC trounced us 42-17. Little did we know, Woody and Archie would lead us back there for the next three years!

**Stephen Sinkey**  
Lak Havasu City, Ariz.

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

# BUCKEYE SPORTS BULLETIN.COM

## From The Message Board

**With winter workouts under way and spring football approaching, BSB subscriber PeyoteBuck posed this question on the BuckeyeSports.com Forum: Which Buckeye will have the biggest breakout season in 2019? Here's what subscribers and BSB staffers had to say.**

Looking forward to some Buckeyes catching on fire this season. I think Jeffrey Okudah is poised for a good one, maybe Shaun Wade. What will happen with Damon Arnette?

– PeyoteBuck

Dark horse: Teradja Mitchell. He'll have a chance to win a starting spot with a new position coach in place.

– Tim Moody, BSB

Dark horse: Marcus Crowley.

– Tiffin Buckeye

My nominee is Teradja Mitchell.

– Terrier Buck

On O – Jaelen Gill. They've got to get this kid on the field and the ball in his hands somehow.

On D – Baron Browning has played a lot but has been pretty average. With new D coaches on board I look for him to explode.

– mrbigbux

## From The Pages Of BSB

### 35 Years Ago – 1984

After just two seasons at Ohio State, defensive backfield coach Dom Capers departed for the professional ranks.

While the team was practicing in Arizona for the Fiesta Bowl against Pittsburgh, OSU announced that the United States Football League's Philadelphia Stars had hired Capers for a similar position. He replaced John Rosenberg, who left the Stars to become head coach at Brown University.

Capers came to Ohio State after coaching stints at California, San Jose State, Tennessee and Hawaii.

### 30 Years Ago – 1989

While the existing Ohio State coaching staff was intact, one former Buckeye was switching jobs often.

Tom Lichtenberg, who had been OSU's offensive coordinator in 1986 and 1987 under former head coach Earle Bruce, took his fourth job in three years. He had followed Bruce from Ohio State to Northern Iowa in 1988 and then Colorado State as assistant head coach/offensive coordinator.

Less than a month after accepting the Colorado State job, though, Lichtenberg jumped on his opportunity to become head coach at the University of Maine. He succeeded Tim Murphy, who departed from the Black Bears after just one season as head coach in 1988.

### 25 Years Ago – 1994

The NCAA's investigation into the Ohio State men's basketball program continued with officials saying the process could drag on two more months before any findings were released.

Assistant director for enforcement and eligibilities appeals S. David Berst said the NCAA expected to complete its ongoing investigation in the spring.

"I would like to tell you that an announcement is imminent, but that simply is not the case," Berst told BSB. "I think you could be looking at a scenario where it would be possibly two more months before we were ready to make anything public."

The investigation stemmed from what the NCAA considered 17 different violations committed by the Buckeyes' coaching staff – primarily head coach Randy Ayers and assistant coach Paul Brazeau – while recruiting Cincinnati Woodward's Damon Flint.

The violations were made public in May when the investigation started, making Flint immediately ineligible to play at OSU. He signed with Cincinnati instead, starting for the Bearcats as a freshman during the 1993-94 season.

Some of the violations appeared to be slight indiscretions, but the NCAA pointed to an incident on Oct. 31, 1991, when Brazeau paid for Flint's meal at a Columbus restaurant as well as those of Woodward coach Jim Leon and three others.

### 20 Years Ago – 1999

During his arraignment in Franklin County (Ohio) Municipal Court on Jan. 19, Ohio State offensive coordinator Mike Jacobs pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor charges of domestic violence.

The 49-year-old resident of Dublin, Ohio, was accused of assaulting his ex-wife, Robbin Jacobs, in an altercation on the night of Jan. 15. He was released on \$520 bond after his 1½ days spent in county jail and had a court date set for Feb. 16.

Judge Steven Hayes, the son of former Buckeye coach Woody Hayes, was slated to hear the case. Jacobs asked for a jury trial and remained on paid administrative leave from his post at OSU.

Robbin Jacobs appeared at her ex-husband's hearing with a blackened area under her eye and told Judge James J. Fais she feared for her safety. Fais granted her request for a temporary protection order against Mike Jacobs and ordered him to stay away from her.

David Winters, Mike Jacobs' attorney, discussed the charges with the media outside the courtroom.

"What you've heard, while devastating initially and it sounds terrible, is not necessarily so," Winters said.

### 15 Years Ago – 2004

The San Francisco 49ers found help in the kicking game with a former Ohio State punter when Andy Groom signed a contract with the franchise for the 2004 season.

Groom went unselected in the 2003 NFL draft, joining the Tampa Bay Buccaneers as an undrafted free agent. However, he was released before the campaign started when Tampa Bay instead went with veteran Tom Tupa – another former Buckeye – on the roster.

As OSU's punter, Groom averaged 45.0 yards on 109 attempts. The career average broke Tupa's school record of 44.7 from 1984-87.

### 10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State lost one of its most successful athletes of the 20th century when Dante Lavelli, a Hudson native, died in his northeast Ohio home on Jan. 20. He was 85.

Also known as "Gluefingers" for his pass-catching ability, he played on the Buckeyes' first national championship team in 1942. Lavelli served in World War II and became one of the original players for the Cleveland Browns, spending 11 seasons with the NFL franchise and playing in 10 league championships along the way.

He finished his professional career with 386 receptions for 6,488 yards and 62 touchdowns and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1975.

"Dante was one of the guys who brought credibility to not

only the Cleveland Browns but also to the All-America Football Conference when it started," said Hall of Fame vice president of communications Joe Horrigan. "He proved that talent is talent no matter what league it's in."

OSU head coach Jim Tressel called Lavelli "one of the true heroes of the Ohio football world" as "a great Buckeye and Cleveland Brown who loved his country, his state and the game of football."

### Five Years Ago – 2014

Ohio State announced Arkansas defensive coordinator Chris Ash as co-defensive coordinator on Jan. 23, filling the vacancy left by the departure of co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Everett Withers, who took over as James Madison's head coach.

The news came just over a week after the Buckeyes finalized the hire of Penn State defensive line coach Larry Johnson for the same position, offsetting Mike Vrabel's jump to the NFL with the Houston Texans.

"We've competed against a Chris Ash defense before, and I have respect for him as a coach," OSU head coach Urban Meyer said of Ash, who had been at Wisconsin from 2010-12. "I like the fact that he has experience in the Big Ten Conference and that he is a great recruiter. He was highly recommended by everyone I spoke to."

A spokesperson from Ohio State confirmed to BSB that Ash would make \$520,000 annually while Johnson would earn \$400,000 per year.

### One Year Ago – 2018

On Jan. 20, the Tennessee Titans hired Vrabel as head coach. The former Ohio State defensive lineman (1993-96), linebackers coach (2011) and defensive line coach (2012-13) climbed the NFL ranks quickly with the Houston Texans as linebackers coach (2014-16) and defensive coordinator (2017).

Vrabel dipped back into Columbus when he started to fill out his coaching staff. On Jan. 24, Vrabel poached OSU special teams coordinator/cornerbacks coach Kerry Coombs as Tennessee's secondary coach.

"I want to wish Kerry Coombs and his wife, Holly, the very best as Kerry pursues another opportunity in the National Football League and they begin a new chapter," Meyer said. "Kerry is a great coach and a great friend, and I thank him for the contributions he has made to this program in his six years with us."

Ohio State's Ryan Day reportedly had been considered as the Titans' offensive coordinator, but Meyer was able to keep the co-offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach on board. On Jan. 23, the Buckeyes announced Day's promotion to offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach.

# Catching Up On Leftover Thoughts From '18



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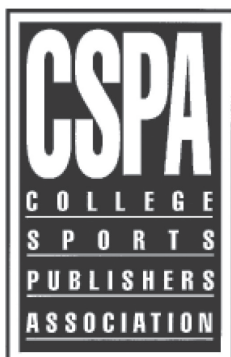
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The next issue (Feb. 16 cover date) will be mailed Feb. 12.

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Charter Member

Last year about this time, I explained that I sometimes write too much for the column space I am afforded during the Ohio State football season and therefore offered to share some of the material that had been trimmed from those columns.

The column was apparently well-received enough that I have been asked by several readers if I would consider sharing my leftovers again. Not only will I share them, I might even consider making this an annual happening.

While that possibility rolls around in my brain, here is some of what you missed over the last couple of months.

## Left In The Dust

This was left on the editing room floor after Urban Meyer announced his retirement following a 62-39 win against Michigan, pushing the coach's record to a perfect 7-0 against Ohio State's archrival.

The Wolverines have not finished a season as a top-five team since 1999, haven't won an outright Big Ten championship since 2003, and have never appeared in the Big Ten Championship Game.

Since Meyer arrived in Columbus in 2012 and began to compete with Alabama and Clemson for the bluest of the blue-chip high school prospects in the nation, the Buckeyes have won a division title every season, three Big Ten championships and one national title.

Simply put, if Michigan ever wants to regain any kind of footing in its rivalry with Ohio State, it is going to have to start recruiting more speed.

The kind of product Jim Harbaugh put on the field this season would probably have been strong contenders for the Big Ten championship a decade ago, but smash-mouth football has since gone the way of the dinosaur. The Wolverines were not physical enough on either the offensive or defensive line, and their defensive backs were a step or two behind Ohio State receivers all afternoon.

That's how you lose to a team that surrendered 150 yards in penalties, gave you a gift-wrapped touchdown right before half-time, yielded 39 points and 401 yards to your offense, and still took you to the woodshed.

I try to remain impartial, but at the same time I can't deny that I savor each and every Ohio State victory against Michigan. Part of that comes from what was instilled in me from my father, a proud OSU alum, at a very early age. Part of it also comes from what I consider to be payback for the boorish, unsportsmanlike behavior displayed by Michigan players and coaches during their dominance in the series when John Cooper was head coach of the Buckeyes.

Nevertheless, what I wrote in November 2010, after Ohio State had beaten Michigan for the ninth time in 10 years, bears repeating.

"(When) each win over Michigan seemingly becomes a foregone conclusion, the greatness of the overall rivalry seems to erode bit by bit. ... Any Ohio State victory over the Wolverines is a wonderful thing to be cherished, but how satisfying are countless victories if they come against a defenseless opponent? I contend a Michigan program that is merely a shadow of its former self is not good for the Big Ten and not good for the OSU-Michigan rivalry.

"For better or for worse, the reputation of the conference as a whole – and that of Ohio State to a great degree – is predicated on the Michigan football team being a national power."

Anyone caring to take notice of this year's version of The Game might infer that Michigan was vastly overrated, especially on defense. Furthermore, a 62-39 victory over the supposed No. 4 team in the nation seems to have been largely discounted when it came time for the College Football Playoff selection committee to debate the merits of including Ohio State in its four-team tournament.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK Mark Rea

Be that as it may, Harbaugh, who became the first head coach in Michigan program history to lose his first four games against Ohio State, may well wonder if he couldn't beat the Buckeyes this year, when will it ever happen.

The answer is not until the coach ups his game in recruiting.

## It's Been A While

In the wake of Meyer's retirement, it seems worth mentioning that the last Ohio State head coach who left Columbus of his own accord was Paul Bixler following the 1946 season.

Carroll Widdoes was Paul Brown's hand-picked successor after Brown left following the 1943 season to join the Navy, and Widdoes had a successful two-year run with a 16-2 record in 1944 and '45. But he didn't like all the other things that went with being the head coach at Ohio State and requested to be relieved of those duties following the 1945 season.

Bixler, who had been an assistant on Widdoes' staff in 1945, was elevated to the head coaching job in 1946 with Widdoes retaining an assistant coaching position. The Buckeyes went 4-3-2 that season, a campaign that ended with a 58-6 loss to Michigan. The powers-that-be at Ohio State suggested (privately as well as publicly) that Bixler was not up to the task of being head coach of the Buckeyes, and Bixler graciously resigned, resurfacing a few months later as head coach at Colgate.

In five seasons with the Red Raiders, Bixler compiled a 14-27-2 record before resigning to become an assistant on Brown's staff with the Cleveland Browns. Bixler later served as director of player personnel for the Browns.

One additional note: Bixler was the most recent man before Ryan Day to be hired as head coach at Ohio State with no previous head coaching experience (unless you include Luke Fickell in 2011).

## Running His Own Show

Immediately after the Dec. 4 press conference to formally announce Day as Meyer's successor, I had conversations with several friends who offered differing accounts of why the Ohio State program would be just fine moving forward.

One proffered that Day was 39, the same age as Woody Hayes when he was introduced in 1951 as Ohio State's new head coach. Another likened the Day hiring to when Jim Tressel was plucked out of lower-division Youngstown State to lead the program.

Hayes might have been the same age as Day, but he had five years of head coaching

experience before coming to Ohio State. And he wasn't successful with the Buckeyes right away, going 16-9-2 during his first three seasons that included two losses to Michigan. Think that kind of record is going to be acceptable from Day considering how high Meyer set the bar for excellence?

As far as Tressel, that argument holds absolutely no water. Not only did Tressel win four Division I-AA national championships in 15 years at Youngstown State, he was athletic director at the school for six years before coming to Ohio State.

## Evolving QB Position

During this past season, while Dwayne Haskins was rewriting the school record books and BSB was featuring Ohio State quarterbacks of the past, I asked OSU football historian Jack Park for his thoughts on a variety of QBs who have played for the Buckeyes.

When the conversation turned from whether Haskins was the best passing quarterback in school history to who was the best running QB in Park's estimation, he gave an out-of-the-box answer.

"In my opinion, one of the best running quarterbacks Ohio State has ever had was Tom Matte," Park said. "He came to Ohio State as a halfback and proved what kind of a runner he was in the NFL with the Baltimore Colts.

"Of course, Tom wasn't really a quarterback, and he would probably tell you that. I don't think he really ever wanted to play quarterback, but in 1959 the team really had no depth at that position."

During the first game of that season against Duke, starting quarterback Jerry Fields was knocked out of the game in the first half. Then at halftime, Hayes left the locker-room strategizing to his assistant coaches and took Matte and three other players to the practice field behind the south bleachers to get him ready to play quarterback.

"Woody went with (backup QB) Jack Wallace in the third quarter," Park said, "but when Duke was leading 13-7 in the fourth quarter, Woody put Matte in at quarterback and Tom drove the team for a touchdown. Ironically, the first pass he threw went for a touchdown to Chuck Bryant, and Ohio State wound up winning, 14-13.

"From that day on, and through the 1960 season, Matte was the quarterback and he did a fine job. But he was truly a running back playing the quarterback position."

Matte was the seventh overall pick in the 1961 NFL draft and played his entire 12-year career with the Baltimore Colts. He rushed for a team-best 111 yards in Super Bowl III when the Colts were victims of a shocking 16-7 upset by the New York Jets.

## What Might Have Been

Ohio State had a first-and-goal at the Michigan 9-yard line with the clock winding down to the final minute, and Meyer (or was it Day?) called for a Mike Weber run. Weber had just broken off a 23-yard bolt, and my question is this: Had Weber scored on the ensuing play, would Meyer not have been faced with a dilemma with regard to the extra point.

He would never have gone for two to give his team an even 70 ... would he?

Of course, had Meyer gone for two, and then been asked about it after the game, he could always have given his own version of the famous Woody Hayes line, "because I couldn't go for three."



## Martell Joins Hurricanes

Rising sophomore quarterback Tate Martell took to Twitter Jan. 16 and announced his transfer from Ohio State to Miami (Fla.), where he reunites with two Las Vegas Bishop Gorman teammates in tight end Brevin Jordan and safety Bubba Bolden.

Martell entered the NCAA transfer portal earlier in January, taking a visit to West Virginia before arriving in Miami. Prior to his announcement in favor of the Hurricanes, he was reportedly slated for a visit to Louisville.

After making his decision, Martell was greeted with plenty of fanfare in the Sunshine State.

"He's been received great," said Gary Ferman of CaneSport.com. "Miami very badly needs to upgrade its level of talent at quarterback, and I think there's the anticipation that he can do that. So he's been received very well and will continue to be, and from this point it's up to him."

For now, Martell is slated to sit out the 2019 campaign as a transfer. He is set to appeal to the NCAA for a hardship waiver, though, which would allow him to play right away if granted.

Even at Miami, though, he won't be guaranteed a starting spot just yet even if he receives that waiver.

"He's nowhere on the depth chart yet, he

hasn't had a practice," Ferman said. "But the good news for him is that everyone's equal – you have the new coaching staff coming in, new offensive coordinator, new quarterbacks coach. So when they go into spring practice, everybody will start on an even playing field, and the best man will rise to the top."

After he redshirted his 2017 season, Martell played in six games over the course of the 2018 campaign, completing 23 of 28 passes (82.1 percent) for 269 yards and one touchdown. On the ground, he ranked third among the Buckeyes' rushing attack with 22 attempts for 128 yards and two touchdowns.

The four-star Martell came to Columbus originally as the 247Sports composite's No. 56 overall prospect, No. 2 dual threat and No. 2 player in Nevada.

## Spring Game Set As Winter Workouts Begin

The 2019 Buckeyes, under the direction of strength coach Mickey Marotti, opened winter workouts Jan. 17 at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. The following day, the school announced its annual spring game would be held April 13.

Winter workouts go into March before spring drills begin March 4.

Ohio State announced that about 105 players had taken part in the first two days of conditioning and rehabilitation exercises, a group that includes 31 seniors (14 fifth-year seniors).

As things stand, the Buckeyes return 13 full-time starters, including running back J.K. Dobbins, wide receiver Austin Mack, left tackle Thayer Munford and tight end Luke Farrell on offense. On defense, linebackers Tuf Borland, Malik Harrison and Pete Werner all return, as do safety Jordan Fuller, cornerback Damon Arnette, safety Brendon White, defensive end Jonathon Cooper, defensive end Chase Young and defensive tackle Robert Landers.

Also participating in winter workouts are the seven newest Buckeyes – one sophomore transfer and six freshmen who enrolled early. That list includes Georgia quarterback transfer Justin Fields, who is expected to start for the Buckeyes in 2019 if he is granted a hardship waiver by the NCAA.



Tate Martell

The six early freshman enrollees are three-star running back Marcus Crowley, five-star defensive end Zach Harrison, four-star safety Ronnie Hickman, four-star offensive lineman Ryan Jacoby, four-star defensive end Noah Potter and five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson.

## Day Officially Announces Full Coaching Staff

Though Ryan Day's first coaching staff as Ohio State's head coach has seemingly been set since early January, there was no confirmation that additional changes were out of the question.

That changed Jan. 23 when Ohio State officially announced Day's 10-man coaching staff as his first spring leading the Buckeyes approaches. The group includes five holdovers from Urban Meyer's staff and five new additions.

"I am really excited with this foundation of coaches who will mentor, coach and prepare in all areas the young men in our program," Day said. "I am obviously very comfortable with the coaches who have been here and helped us win consecutive Big Ten championships and bowl games, and I am thrilled they want to continue to help this program pursue championships and achievements."

"I am also confident the new assistant coaches will make an immediate impact on this program. I'm really looking forward to working with this staff these next couple months shaping the program and developing our players for the 2019 season."

Returning to the fold are defensive line coach Larry Johnson, who was also promoted to associate head coach, assistant head coach for offense/running backs coach Tony Alford, offensive line coach Greg Studrawa, offensive coordinator/tight ends coach Kevin Wilson and wide receivers coach Brian Hartline, who spent 2018 on staff in an interim capacity before being promoted to a permanent spot in December.

The new additions are highlighted by two defensive coaches who arrived in Columbus from rival Michigan – co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison and linebackers coach Al Washington. Co-defensive coordinator/defen-

sive backs coach Jeff Hafley arrives from the San Francisco 49ers in the NFL while special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes signed on after previously coaching at Maryland. Day also hired Mike Yurcich from Oklahoma State to be passing game coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

Day's first season as head coach is scheduled to begin at home Aug. 31 against Florida Atlantic.

## Snead Leaves Ohio State

Alford's position room will be down a player when the Buckeyes open spring practice this year.

Running back Brian Snead is no longer part of the Ohio State football program, the school confirmed Jan. 18.

Snead confirmed his departure on Twitter that afternoon as well.

"I have to part ways with Ohio State University," Snead wrote in a note posted to his account. "Therefore, I will be transferring to another post-secondary institution to continue participating in the intercollegiate sport of football."

"I appreciate having the opportunity of being at the university and the encouragement provided to me. Respectfully, I would like to express my gratitude to those who supported me during this

past season. But it is in my best interest to pursue other options."

Snead (5-11, 211) arrived in Columbus as a four-star prospect out of Seffner (Fla.) Armwood for the 2018 season. He impressed in fall camp and appeared to be the No. 3 behind Dobbins and Mike Weber early in the year. After rushing seven times for 25 yards and a score in the season opener against Oregon State, Snead added four carries for 12 yards in a week-two win over Rutgers.

When the Buckeyes traveled to Arlington, Texas, the following week, though, Snead didn't make the trip for a disciplinary reason, and he didn't appear on the sidelines with Ohio State for the rest of the season – although he did continue to practice throughout the year.

With Snead out of the picture, Ohio State is down to just two scholarship running backs with collegiate experience – Dobbins and Master Teague, who was also a freshman in 2018. The Buckeyes also have Demario McCall, a former running back who spent most of last season as an H-back. Ohio State signed a pair of running backs – four-star Steele Chambers and Crowley – during the early signing period in December.

## Sheffield Departs For NFL

When the deadline for underclassmen to decide on the NFL draft came and went Jan. 15, there was no announcement made by junior cornerback Kendall Sheffield.

Despite the silence, there was an overwhelming clue pointing to Sheffield bypassing his senior season at Ohio State in 2019. He was listed in an Instagram post by EXOS Sports among the athletes in its program training for the NFL scouting combine.

Fifth-year senior Johnnie Dixon and junior center Michael Jordan, who have each begun to prepare for the NFL draft, are also listed as clients for EXOS Sports.

A quiet personality, Sheffield never participated in media availability over two years at OSU. For him to make no kind of announcement fits that track record.

On the field, he had mixed results. The 6-0, 193-pounder recorded 74 tackles (four for



Kevin Wilson

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## Recruiting Wrap-Up Set To Mail Feb. 12

The next print issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin will be our traditional Football Recruiting Wrap-Up, scheduled to be mailed Feb. 12.

However, the Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff will be providing plenty of coverage leading up to the traditional National Signing Day on Feb. 6 as well as blanket coverage of signing day itself at the electronic BuckeyeSports.com, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.

Readers will also want to follow both basketball teams, the hockey and wrestling teams and much, much more. Additionally, subscribers can talk about recruiting and other events of the day with members of the BSB staff and other Buckeye fans on BuckeyeSports.com's Forum.

As we continue our look at the Ohio State quarterback, we are turning things around on Reprint Thursdays with stories from games against some of the greatest quarterbacks of all time who have faced the Buckeyes in the BSB era. In honor of the Super Bowl, the next installment of reprints will feature the Patriots' Tom Brady on Jan. 31. Reprints featuring Kliff Kingsbury, John Elway and Drew Bledsoe when they faced the Buckeyes are archived for your information and enjoyment.

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## 2019 Ohio State Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Result/Time (ET)	TV	2018 Record
Aug. 31	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-5 Conference USA)
Sept. 7	CINCINNATI*	TBA	TBA	11-2 (6-2 American Athletic Conference)
Sept. 14	at Indiana	TBA	TBA	5-7 (2-7 Big Ten)
Sept. 21	MIAMI (OHIO)*	TBA	TBA	6-6 (6-2 Mid-American)
Sept. 28	at Nebraska	TBA	TBA	4-8 (3-6 Big Ten)
Oct. 5	MICHIGAN STATE*	TBA	TBA	7-6 (5-4 Big Ten)
Oct. 18	at Northwestern*	TBA	TBA	9-5 (8-1 Big Ten)
Oct. 26	WISCONSIN*	TBA	TBA	8-5 (5-4 Big Ten)
Nov. 9	MARYLAND	TBA	TBA	5-7 (3-6 Big Ten)
Nov. 16	at Rutgers	TBA	TBA	1-11 (0-9 Big Ten)
Nov. 23	PENN STATE*	TBA	TBA	9-4 (6-3 Big Ten)
Nov. 30	at Michigan*	TBA	TBA	10-3 (8-1 Big Ten)
Dec. 7	Big Ten Championship**	8 p.m.	FOX	

\* - 2018 bowl team

\*\* - at Indianapolis (Lucas Oil Stadium)

Mond, a former Ohio State target, took over full time this season. In 2017, Starkel completed 123 of 205 passes for 1,793 yards with 14 touchdowns and six interceptions. In 2018 he was 15 of 22 for 169 yards and a score.

The Buckeyes, for their part, are down to just three scholarship quarterbacks for 2019 - Fields, redshirt freshman Matthew Baldwin and fifth-year senior Chris Chugunov, a former West Virginia transfer. Day prefers to keep four scholarship quarterbacks on the roster and adding Starkel would provide valu-

able depth and collegiate experience for a young room.

### Buckeyes In Race For OL Transfer

Ohio State's search for depth on its offensive line has led the Buckeyes to the NCAA transfer portal.

Following four years at Rutgers, interior offensive lineman Jonah Jackson announced

Continued On Page 6

loss), two interceptions, 15 passes defended, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery in 28 games.

### LB Jones Enters Transfer Portal

Ohio State linebacker Keandre Jones, who will be a senior in 2019, entered his name in the NCAA transfer portal, according to reports.

The move means other schools can now contact Jones regarding a potential transfer, although it does not guarantee he will leave the Ohio State program. The Buckeyes also have the right to pull Jones' scholarship because of the decision, but there is no indication that is an expected move. Jones was listed on Ohio State's roster when winter workouts began.

According to a report from Lettermen Row, Jones hasn't made a final decision but would like to explore his options as a path to playing time in Columbus is unclear.

Jones (6-2, 228), from Olney (Md.) Good Counsel, was once committed to Maryland before flipping to Ohio State as a four-star prospect in the class of 2016. He was rated the No. 98 overall player and No. 9 outside linebacker in the class.

He played in six games as a true freshman in 2016, recording four tackles along the way. Jones became a key special teams contributor in 2017, making 15 tackles in 14 games before

coming up with 10 stops in 12 games this season in addition to a punt block for a safety against Nebraska.

Throughout the 2018 season, Jones was listed as a backup to fellow junior Malik Harrison, who is expected to keep his role in 2019. Ohio State's other starters at linebacker - Tuf Borland/Baron Browning in the middle and Pete Werner on the outside - will all be juniors in 2019.

### TAMU Transfer Reportedly Considering Buckeyes

Texas A&M quarterback Nick Starkel announced Jan. 22 that he intends to transfer, and Ohio State is reportedly among his top options.

Starkel, who will be a junior in the 2019 season, is looking at Duke, Ohio State, SMU and Arizona, according to Travis L. Brown of MyAggieNation.com. The signal caller opted to make his intentions public now rather than participating in spring practice.

According to Brown, Starkel expects to be on his new campus by July 1.

Starkel originally signed with the Aggies as a three-star recruit out of Argyle (Texas) Liberty Christian in the 2016 class. He was the No. 523 overall player and No. 21 pro-style quarterback in his class.

The 6-3, 218 pounder split time with Kellen Mond as a redshirt freshman in 2017 before

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Continued From Page 5

Jan. 24 his intent to leave the Scarlet Knights as he explores graduate-transfer options. According to Bobby Deren of 247Sports, Jackson's suitors include OSU, which offered and set a visit for the week of Jan. 28.

Iowa, Maryland, Oklahoma, Penn State, Pittsburgh, Texas and Virginia are the others in pursuit of Jackson. The 6-4, 305-pounder is one of the best offensive linemen available on the transfer market.

"I have no problem playing either (center or guard)," Jackson told Deren. "I feel comfortable at both. My first year starting, I played center and when I came to Rutgers, I was playing center. Even this last year, I was always snapping in practice with the quarterbacks and (offensive coordinator John) McNulty. When it came to game time, I played guard. I feel comfortable at both positions."

A big reason for Jackson's appeal is his versatility. A two-year starter, he won Rutgers' vacancy at center as a sophomore in 2017 and started five games before surgery for an undisclosed injury led to an indefinite absence into November.

With two-deep concerns along the offensive line in 2018, the Scarlet Knights slid Jackson from center to right guard, where he started 11 games en route to his All-Big Ten honorable-mention honor. Voted one of Rutgers' six team captains as a junior, Jackson was an anchor in the trenches for a unit with shaky depth.

"I will bring leadership to the offensive line and to the team," Jackson said. "I feel like I am a great person to have in the locker room. I get along with people well, and I can relate to everybody. I feel like that is something I bring to the table."

**OSU Athletics Hits Revenue Milestone**

The Ohio State athletics department hit a new financial milestone in the 2018 fiscal year, according to a financial report provided to The Columbus Dispatch.

According to the Dispatch, Ohio State hit the \$200 million mark for the first time in both operating revenue and expenses. The revenue went beyond \$205 million, making Ohio State one of just three schools – along with Texas and Texas A&M – to hit that mark. The expenses checked in at about \$203.8 million, making the Buckeyes and Longhorns the only programs to hit the \$200 million mark.

The revenue for the department increased about \$20 million from 2017 while the expenses were up about \$30 million.

Of the total revenue, \$110.7 million came from football while slightly less than \$24

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million was from men's basketball. Ticket sales for football games increased about \$7.6 million to \$59.4 million.

**MVB Coach Hanson Elected To HOF**

Ohio State men's volleyball coach Pete Hanson was selected Jan. 24 to be one of 25 individuals inducted into the USA Volleyball Hall of Fame on May 22 in Columbus at the Dorothy C. Boyce Banquet.

Hanson has coached the Buckeyes since 1985, winning three national titles in the process. He will be honored as the Donald S. Shondell All-Time Great Coach in the contemporary division.

Ohio State won back-to-back titles in 2016 and 2017, a stretch that included a 42-match winning streak. Hanson is a four-time American Volleyball Coaches Association National Coach of the Year and a member of the AVCA Hall of Fame.



Pete Hanson

**3 Buckeyes Set To Play In Super Bowl**

Nine Buckeyes entered the NFL conference championship round, but only three will

play in Super Bowl LIII at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on Feb. 3.

In a back-and-forth NFC Championship Game that went down to the wire, the Rams defeated the Saints, 26-23, on a game-winning field goal in overtime. New Orleans had an NFL-high six Buckeyes on its active roster.

Los Angeles kicker Greg Zuerlein will receive well-deserved credit for nailing a kick

to win the game and keeping the Rams' season alive, but long snapper Jake McQuaide deserves some credit as well. The former Ohio State long snapper from Cincinnati made precise snaps all game long, and most importantly, McQuaide did not botch any snaps.

In the AFC Championship Game, the Patriots defeated the Chiefs, 37-31, in what was another overtime thriller. New England defensive end John Simon had two tackles, half a sack and one

quarterback hit. The Youngstown (Ohio) Cardinal Mooney product is heading to his first Super Bowl. Patriots special teamer Nate Ebner had a solo tackle against the Chiefs in what was his fourteenth career playoff game. The Hilliard (Ohio) Davidson product will play in his third Super Bowl when the Pats square off against the Rams.

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# Ohio State Aiming To Keep Nester Amid Visits

Continued From Page 1

tion his first couple of signees, Jacoby and Miller, put OSU in because of their potential to push for immediate playing time on an open depth chart after the unit lost four starters – center Michael Jordan, right tackle Isaiah Prince, left guard Malcolm Pridgeon and right guard Demetrius Knox – from the 2018 season. Jacoby is already enrolled, and Miller joins Ohio State for its summer session in June.

“Ryan, obviously, is a tough-nosed Ohio kid from a great program in Mentor,” Studrawa said. “I’ve known those guys up there. The players they put out, they’re coachable, they’re tough, they’re hard-nosed – those are the characteristics that we look for – hard work. He’s got great size and athletic ability. The team there has had two great seasons. So he comes from a winning culture, a winning program. And I think his ceiling’s going to be outstanding. He may play tackle or guard. I don’t know. That’s where he can play, both of those spots. So I’m excited about him, really excited.

“And then Harry Miller is one of the best offensive linemen in the country. He can play center or guard, and he wants to try center, which is excellent. That gives us another young center to work with or a guy that can go play guard. He’s an intelligent football player – very, very mature for his age. He’s gone on missions and used his position and platform in football to reach other people in a lot of ways, which is outstanding. So really, his maturity level – the maturity level in both (Miller and Jacoby) will lead them to play sooner than the normal kid. So I’m excited about both of them.”

Where do the Buckeyes need to look now? With few spots, offensive line has brought OSU’s only official visitors in January, a careful part of Day’s evaluation process.

“We want to make sure that we sign the right guys moving forward,” Day said. “We don’t just want to take a guy down the stretch just to say that we took a guy. This is Ohio State and we want to recruit the best players



JOSH WINSLOW

**LEADING THE CHARGE** – The recruiting efforts of offensive line coach Greg Studrawa will be in focus leading up to National Signing Day as the Buckeyes try to add depth up front.

in the country. But that being said, we’re going to do a really good job of identifying who’s out there in January and evaluate them. That will be really important here because I think that’s a huge part of that.”

Indianapolis Ben Davis three-star offensive tackle Dawand Jones (6-8, 360) was the first target Ohio State got on campus, officially visiting the weekend of Jan. 18 – arriving that Saturday afternoon and departing two

days later – after unofficially visiting for practice on Nov. 21 and picking up an offer that day. The Buckeyes earned a spot in Jones’ top five on Jan. 21, with Southern California (Nov. 10 official visit) and Penn State (Jan. 27 official visit) among the other contenders for a commitment and signature on Feb. 6 from the massive but athletic lineman. He is one of the most intriguing prospects surging late in the cycle who may be better than the 247Sports composite’s rankings as the No. 1,036 overall prospect, No. 85 offensive tackle and No. 13 player in Indiana.

“For offensive linemen, you look for technique but also athletic ability,” Lemming said. “First, you’ve got to assess the size for the position. When you’ve got that, then you’ve got to check athletic ability and next aggressiveness and heart, because there’s a lot of big guys in high school that are real good athletes that beat up on the little guys, but almost everyone’s smaller than them.

“If they get to college and then another guy can punch them in the nose, how do they respond to that? And how do they respond to toughness and aggressiveness (of defensive players)? That’s just as important as athletic ability when it comes to choosing the right guy. I really believe that.

“You look at a guy’s toughness and their stick-to-it and technique and you’ve got to be smart. A lot of times, the guys that don’t make it, they’re always guys that don’t like to compete against guys that have got size once they get to college.”

As they did with Jones, OSU identified another offensive lineman late in the cycle

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## COVER STORY

when its offer went out to Enokk Vimahi on Jan. 4. The 6-4½, 263-pound offensive guard from Kahuku, Hawaii, was set to decide between Oklahoma, Notre Dame and USC on Jan. 19 before he delayed his decision to Feb. 6 and took an Ohio State official visit to Columbus the weekend of Jan. 25-27.

As the 247Sports composite's No. 124 overall prospect, No. 7 offensive guard and No. 2 player in Hawaii, Vimahi would be a huge boost for the Buckeyes, who were playing catch-up against the Sooners, Fighting Irish and Trojans going into the official visit. But the potential commitment and signature could give OSU an immense boost where its depth is needed.

"There's a lot of factors that go into (offensive line recruiting)," Studrawa said. "You have to really study and be careful with the level of play he's playing because a guy can look really, really good on film. And if you look at the competition level, it's not very good, then you can easily get fooled. If the guy's not from a program that really coaches him hard and getting after him, and demands, they won't have success here because they know it's demanding here.

"So there's so many factors other than just turning on the film and watching the film. You have to get to know and unlock the kid inside and see how hard you're going to be able to push him, how hard he wants success. That's really the key, and those things are hard sometimes."

From the early signing period to the NCAA transfer portal, Ohio State's recruiting has been nonstop. The Buckeyes have had their wins and losses on the trail, but they

need one, two or three more along the offensive line, where Studrawa hopes to build OSU's depth further.

"I think you've got to evaluate yourself (as a recruiter) two years after the class," Studrawa said. "Two years after those guys get here, how are they? We've got (sophomore guard) Wyatt Davis (6-4, 313), he's starting now. We've got (sophomore center) Josh Myers (6-5, 308), he's going to start. Those kids are going to start for three, four years. (Junior tackle) Thayer Munford (6-6, 319) came in, worked in one year and started this year. So those are the kinds of things that have to happen here. That's what's happened. We went and got Thayer, went and got Wyatt, went and got Josh Myers. I think (redshirt freshman) Max Wray (6-7, 305) had a knee injury, but he's going to be just fine.

"So after a year, that's when you have to look at, are those guys playing? If they're not playing, then that was a mistake. And that, like I said before, there's guys that aren't in our room that aren't here right now that after two years, they couldn't play here, so they decided to leave. We've gotten some guys in the last two years that have followed that protocol. Wyatt and Josh and Thayer and those kind of kids have followed the protocol – two years, ready, one year, ready – and then they jump in and they play and they play at a high level.

"That tells you you're getting the right guys. If they're not ready to play at that time, then you know what? You don't know if that guy's going to be able to make it or not and that might have been a mistake. So that's how I evaluate it."



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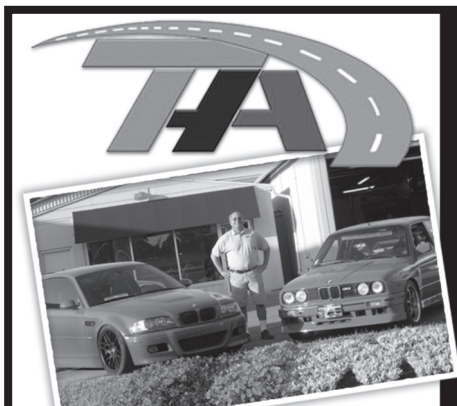
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# Ohio State Building Momentum For 2020 Class

With several spots left for Ohio State's 2019 recruiting class before National Signing Day on Feb. 6, the Buckeyes have allocated their time in December and January as they balanced efforts for both this cycle and those beyond.

## RECRUITING OUTLOOK Garrett Stepien

While the weekends of Jan. 19 and 26 placed the primary focus on three top remaining offensive linemen for the current cycle – Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley four-star offensive guard commit Doug Nester (6-6½, 305); Indianapolis Ben Davis three-star offensive tackle target Dawand Jones (6-8, 360); and Kahuku, Hawaii, four-star offensive guard Enokk Vimahi (6-4 1/2, 263) – on the second weekend, OSU hosted a handful of priority prospects in the 2020 and 2021 classes as well.

Among the unofficial visitors in the next two cycles, Ohio State landed a commitment at a position of need, hosted the nation's No. 1 offensive guard and brought a recent offer from across the country to campus for the first time.

Upon its recent 2020 pledge, the count for OSU's group for that year increased to seven commits – a five-star, five four-stars and a three-star. According to the 247Sports composite team rankings for 2020, Ohio State holds the third spot nationally – atop the Big Ten – behind only LSU (nine commits) and top-ranked Alabama (11 commits).

### In-State OT Announces On-The-Spot Commitment

After multiple visits from head coach Ryan Day and offensive line coach Greg Studrawa to his high school, Jakob James added an Ohio State offer Jan. 21 and wasted no time committing to the Buckeyes on the spot.

The 6-5, 275-pound offensive tackle from Cincinnati Elder took to Twitter and shared his instantaneous decision to stay home at OSU, calling the opportunity “a dream come true.”



Jakob James

“Thank you to Coach Day, Coach Stud and to the rest of the Ohio State coaching staff for not only the offer but for accepting my verbal commitment to play football at The Ohio State University,” James wrote. “It is an honor and a privilege that I have grown up learning about, having a family that have both worn the Scarlet and Grey and are fans as well. As a kid, being an Elder Panther and playing football in The

## OSU Football Signees & Verbal Commitments

Players in the class of 2019 who have signed letters of intent to play football at Ohio State. \* – Players who enrolled early on Jan. 9. \*\* – Verbal commitment only.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Steele Chambers	ATH	6-2	215	★★★★	Roswell (Ga.) Blessed Trinity Catholic
Marcus Crowley*	RB	6-1	200	★★★	Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian
Tommy Eichenberg	ILB	6-3	235	★★★★	Cleveland St. Ignatius
Cormontae Hamilton	TE	6-2	263	★★★	Memphis (Tenn.) Whitehaven
Zach Harrison*	DE	6-5½	243	★★★★★	Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange
Ronnie Hickman*	S	6-1	200	★★★★	Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic
Ryan Jacoby*	OT	6-5	270	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Jaden McKenzie	DT	6-3½	280	★★★	Wake Forest, N.C.
Harry Miller	C	6-4	300	★★★★★	Buford, Ga.
Doug Nester**	OG	6-6½	314	★★★★	Huntington (W.Va.) Spring Valley
Noah Potter*	DE	6-5½	250	★★★★	Mentor, Ohio
Bryson Shaw	S	6-2	175	★★★	Potomac (Md.) The Bullis School
Cade Stover	OLB	6-5	235	★★★★	Masnfield (Ohio) Lexington
Jameson Williams	WR	6-1½	169	★★★★	St. Louis Cardinal Ritter College Prep
Garrett Wilson*	WR	6-0½	181	★★★★★	Austin (Texas) Lake Travis
Craig Young	ATH	6-4	200	★★★	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Wayne

Players in the class of 2020 who have issued verbal commitments to play football at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Stars	High School
Darvon Hubbard	RB	6-0	200	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Jakob James	OT	6-5	275	N/A	Cincinnati Elder
Paris Johnson	OT	6-7	285	★★★★★	Cincinnati St. Xavier
Jack Miller	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral
Gee Scott	WR	6-3	211	★★★★	Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	6-1	188	★★★★	Rockwall, Texas
Luke Wypler	C	6-3½	285	★★★★	Montvale (N.J.) St. Joseph Regional

Pit is all I ever wanted to do. The next step is becoming part of a legacy and tradition that is OSU Football and Buckeye Nation ... something I can't wait to uphold and fulfill. Lastly, I would like to thank my teachers, coaches, and most importantly

my entire family for their incredible support and belief.”

James becomes Ohio State's third offensive lineman for the next cycle, joining Cincinnati St. Xavier five-star offensive tackle Paris Johnson (6-7, 285) and Montvale (N.J.)

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# ASK AN ANALYST

With CBS Sports Network's Tom Lemming

With the new phenomenon of the NCAA transfer portal, Ohio State reaped the benefits with Georgia quarterback Justin Fields arriving, but the Buckeyes have also seen players such as quarterback Tate Martell and linebacker Keandre Jones move on. What do you make of it and how recruiting could change?

"One thing – they knew it was going to be like the Wild West for quarterbacks because they don't want to sit behind anyone. Tate Martell – to get Fields, Ohio State had to almost promise him the job. It was pretty obvious that he wasn't going to leave Georgia to sit on the bench. Martell understood it. Even though he won't tell anyone that, it was time for him to hit the road. He wasn't going to be sitting behind another quarterback who's the same age or younger, so you knew he was gone. But it's a good tradeoff for Ohio State.

"With the new rules, that can always happen. A lot of schools – the rich get richer. But at the quarterback position, they're recruiting for depth. They want players three or four deep. They're not going to have that anymore because the third or fourth quarterbacks, they're going to want to leave. The second guy would definitely want to leave if he knows that he's not going to have a shot because if you're at a great program like Ohio State and you're the second guy, that means that you're pretty good of a quarterback that can compete elsewhere, nationally. So to me, that was a no-brainer.

"Notre Dame lost their starter – Brandon Wimbush, who was their starter until midseason. He'd been the starter the year before, Brandon Wimbush, and he's gone to UCF. They're all losing guys, like Austin Kendall from Oklahoma to West Virginia. The big-time programs are just not going to have as much depth at quarterback anymore. That's a certainty."

Ohio State parted ways with running back Brian Snead, who had joined the Buckeyes as a four-star recruit in the 2018 class. That leaves junior J.K. Dobbins, redshirt freshman Master Teague and freshman Marcus Crowley before Steele Chambers enrolls in June. How does OSU stack up recruiting the position going forward under Tony Alford?

"Ohio State, as long as you've got Tony as the running backs coach, he knows how to recruit and he knows how to evaluate. They're always going to be top heavy with running backs. You'll see some transfer. They can't say this, but they might want a guy or two to transfer. The guys that are going to be third- or fourth-string at running back, they might want those guys to leave so they can pop another great one in. A lot of times, the fans are upset about transfers, but they don't realize the coaches sometimes want some of these guys to leave.

"I think he may be the best running backs coach in the country when it comes to both coaching and recruiting. He should have been a head coach by now. You know, Colorado State, his alma mater, looked at him and he should have gotten the job at Colorado State. You can quote me on that, too, because there's no doubt he could have gotten the job.

"He puts a lot of effort into recruiting. He goes after the impact ballplayers – that's what you have to do. A lot of coaches at big-time schools will go for the easy-to-get guys. Tony did that – went after the impact ballplayers – everywhere he was at. The players really relate to him, and he's a really important cog in the offense of Ohio State, no doubt – maybe the most important when it comes to recruiting on the offensive side of the ball."

**Among other hires by head coach Ryan Day, Ohio State added Greg Mattison and Al Washington from**

Michigan. What kind of recruiting impact does that have between the Buckeyes and the Wolverines?

"Greg Mattison leaving Michigan, it's always interesting to see. He had battled Ohio State for some of the top players he got to Michigan. Obviously, there's no animosity for Mattison to come to Ohio State. I'm sure there is on the Michigan side, though, because they're losing one of their best recruiters. He was really the best guy Michigan's had, when it came to extolling the virtues of Michigan, which means you have to put down Ohio State. So how he makes that transition from Michigan to Ohio State now will be interesting to watch. When was the last time you saw a guy – let alone two – go between either school?

"I think the psyche of Michigan will be down. The fans have to be upset about losing two of – if not the best recruiters. And losing them to Ohio State makes it double the pain. If you lose them to USC or Texas, someone outside the area, that's fine, but losing them to your archrival, your most-hated program in your school history, that's something else. And I don't remember seeing that happening, someone going from one school to the other, like that. It's taboo, but it's another plus-plus for Ohio State. Michigan took a major hit in that one.

"Head coach Jim Harbaugh himself has been their best recruiter, just like Urban Meyer was the best recruiter at Ohio State. A lot of times, a head coach isn't. But at those two schools, Harbaugh is sort of the face of Michigan and the other guys kind of promoted the program. Mattison and Washington did that exceptionally well, but he'll have to find guys who can fill the void. He lost two really good ones and those who know now how Michigan operates in recruiting. Ohio State's obviously picking up a lot of tips about what's going on at Michigan."

St. Joseph Regional four-star center Luke Wypler (6-3½, 285).

"James is 6-5, but he's athletic enough to play guard," national recruiting analyst Tom Lemming told BSB. "Right now, he's more of the right tackle type. Paris Johnson's more of the left tackle type."

Rounding out the group are Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral's four-star duo of quarterback Jack Miller and running back Darvon Hubbard, along with Rockwall, Texas, four-star wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Sammamish (Wash.) Eastside Catholic four-star wide receiver Gee Scott.

The addition of James fills a growing need for OSU along the line of scrimmage after Day and Studrawa signed only two – Buford, Ga., five-star center Harry Miller (6-4, 310) and Mentor, Ohio, four-star offensive tackle Ryan Jacoby (6-5, 270) – in the 2019 cycle's early signing period.

Nester remains committed to Ohio State for the current cycle but is unsigned as National Signing Day approaches. (See the cover story for more on Ohio State's final push in the 2019 class.)

James frequently visited the Buckeyes for games in the fall but had to wait for an offer until after he completed his junior season at Elder.

Part of what OSU wanted to see from him, according to Lemming, was more physical maturation and mental aggressiveness.

"I like him a lot," Lemming said of James. "He really impressed me. He's got great size. He's motivated. And he was All-State this year, so he really put things together.

"He was sort of a mid-level Big Ten type of guy a year ago. He just got bigger, stronger, more confident and dominated as a junior. He didn't dominate as a sophomore, but he took the next step and dominated as a junior.

"He gained some weight and strength, and he got more confident with the extra year. He dominated his competition throughout the 2018 season. So that's why schools like Ohio State took notice."

James' other recent offers included Minnesota (Jan. 17), Penn State (Jan. 16), Tennessee (Jan. 11), Purdue (Dec. 11), Michigan (Nov. 28) and Nebraska (Nov. 27).

## 2020's No. 1 OG Makes Surprise Visit

Oak Park, Mich., five-star Justin Rogers visited Columbus on Jan. 19, posting a picture to Twitter with Detroit Cass Tech product and Buckeyes senior offensive tackle Joshua Alabi (6-5, 305).

Rogers' recruitment likely has a way to go before he makes his decision, but the surprise unofficial visit is the first for him since OSU's 2018 season ended.

With the news that Ohio State will keep Studrawa, the fourth-year offensive line coach gives the Buckeyes a foot in the door for Rogers as Day builds the relationship further.

"Coach Stud is a good guy, good guy," Rogers told BSB in May, "a good offensive line coach. He truly cares about his offensive line, working against the defense. He really talked down on the defense, but he loves the offensive line."

Rogers is the 247Sports composite's No. 14 overall prospect, No. 1 offensive guard and No. 1 player in Michigan for 2020.

## 2021 California WR Flies For Visit

When the Buckeyes practiced at Stubhub Center in Carson, Calif., Dec. 26-30 for the Jan. 1 Rose Bowl, they hosted and offered an underclassman in attendance.

Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco 2021

wide receiver Beaux Collins (6-3, 185) was on hand for their third practice that week, where he received his 15th scholarship offer Dec. 28.

Three days later, OSU's walkthrough Dec. 31 took place at St. John Bosco, which also produced sophomore offensive guard Wyatt Davis (6-4, 313).

Collins arrived on Ohio State's campus Jan. 26 for an unofficial visit.

Collins is 247Sports' No. 59 overall prospect, No. 10 wide receiver and No. 5 player in California for 2021.

## 2019 Class Comes Together Over Weekend

While the OSU coaching staff ramped up its recruiting efforts with Nester and Jones on campus the weekend of Jan. 19, Day and others got some recruiting help as a majority of the 2019 class was in Columbus.

Six early enrollees – Lewis Center (Ohio) Olentangy Orange five-star defensive end Zach Harrison (6-5, 243); Austin (Texas) Lake Travis five-star wide receiver Garrett Wilson (6-1, 180); Jacksonville (Fla.) Trinity Christian Academy three-star running back Marcus Crowley (6-1, 200); Wayne (N.J.) DePaul Catholic four-star safety Ronnie Hickman (6-1, 200); and the Mentor, Ohio, four-star duo of Jacoby and defensive end Noah Potter (6-5, 250) – were already at Ohio State.

Soon-to-be Buckeyes such as Potomac (Md.) Bullis School three-star safety Bryson Shaw; Cleveland St. Ignatius four-star linebacker Tommy Eichenberg (6-3, 225); Wake Forest, N.C., three-star defensive tackle Jaden McKenzie (6-3, 285); and Miller joined them.

Shaw took the trip to Ohio's capital after Day, co-defensive coordinator/secondary coach Jeff Hafley and defensive line

coach/area recruiter Larry Johnson had an in-home visit with the 6-2, 175-pounder Jan. 16.

The visit came two weeks after Shaw's primary Ohio State recruiter, former co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch, left OSU to become defensive coordinator at Oklahoma.

The weekend also marked the first big one for Day with Ohio State's 10 assistants officially in place. Co-defensive coordinator Greg Mattison, Hafley, linebackers coach Al Washington, passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mike Yurcich and special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach Matt Barnes were the new faces the future Buckeyes got to know better.

## Mattison Makes Recruiting Stop In Michigan

One of Day's eyebrow-raising hires came Jan. 7 when the Buckeyes plucked Mattison from Michigan, where he had spent the previous eight seasons as a top defensive assistant for the Wolverines.

Mattison, who turns 70 in November, is OSU's oldest coach, but he takes his recruiting seriously.

"He's got enthusiasm," Lemming said of Mattison. "He doesn't act 70 and he's always been a guy that you've worried about, if you're the opposition, in recruiting because he stays on top of the kids. It all comes down to hard work, and a lot of the times the older guys don't want to do it. That's why you see a lot of the older coaches give all the recruiting responsibilities to the young guys. Mattison isn't like that. He goes after his own guys, and he's very successful. He has not slowed down a bit, so he brings that to them."

Continued On Page 12

# OSU's New Coaches Make Recruiting Rounds

Continued From Page 11

In familiar territory, Mattison stopped by West Bloomfield, Mich., to check on a pair of targets Jan. 17 – 2020 four-star safety Makari Paige (6-3, 182) and 2021 running back Donovan Edwards (5-11, 190).

Mattison's latest visit, however, was with Day and not U-M head coach Jim Harbaugh. Mattison had been recruiting Paige and Edwards for Michigan as recently as December.

Paige, who picked up an Ohio State offer May 7, is the 247Sports composite's No. 200 overall prospect, No. 11 safety and No. 4 player in Michigan for 2020. Edwards earned an early offer from the Buckeyes on a Sept. 22 unofficial visit for OSU's 49-6 rout of Tulane at Ohio Stadium and has since added offers from Michigan State (Sept. 29), Penn State (Nov. 13), Notre Dame (Dec. 13), Miami (Fla.; Jan. 24) and Indiana (Jan. 24).

## Barnes Checks On 2020 2-Way Target

Ohio State's batch of new coaches has hit the recruiting trail hard for Day since the dead period ended, with one assistant in particular taking two trips in seven days to see a priority prospect for the upcoming cycle.

Barnes, whom the Buckeyes hired Jan. 10, wasted no time in getting involved with Milton (Mass.) Academy's Kalel Mullings. OSU's special teams coordinator/assistant secondary coach stopped by Milton Academy Jan. 16 and Jan. 23 to check on Mullings, the 2020 four-star running back/outside linebacker confirmed to BSB. Prior to those visits, on Dec. 13 Ohio State sent Corey Dennis to Milton Academy for Mullings when the senior quality control/assistant quarterbacks coach was reportedly acting as the Buckeyes' 10th assistant.

OSU offered July 27, but Mullings and Barnes go back to the coach's previous position. While at Maryland, where he spent his previous three seasons starting out as linebackers coach in 2016-17 before taking on additional duties of special teams coordinator in 2018, Barnes recruited Mullings. In fact he offered the 6-2, 215-pounder on April 24, 2017, for the Terrapins.

Mullings is the 247Sports composite's No. 102 overall prospect, No. 3 outside linebacker and No. 1 player in Massachusetts for 2020. He announced his decision Jan. 5 to play in the 2020 All-American Bowl, which takes place Jan. 4 of next year at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

## Two 2020 OSU Targets Commit Elsewhere

Top-200 overall prospects in the 2020 recruiting class with Ohio State offers announced commitments elsewhere Jan. 26 – both to the same school on an unofficial visit.

Carrollton, Ga., four-star outside linebacker Kevin Swint (6-3, 240) and Washington (D.C.) St. John's four-star defensive tackle Tre Williams (6-1½, 308) each pledged to Clemson during its Junior Day festivities.

According to the 247Sports composite, Swint is 2020's No. 195 overall prospect (No. 9 outside linebacker, No. 21 in Georgia) while Williams is its No. 96 overall prospect (No. 6 defensive tackle, No. 4 in D.C.).

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

### 30 Years Ago – 1989

In crunch time, Ohio State delivered another strong step forward before National Signing Day on Feb. 8. Over the weekend of Jan. 21-22, the Buckeyes received a commitment from Trotwood (Ohio) Trotwood-Madison fullback William Houston after an official visit. "There was just something that touched me during my visit to Ohio State," the 6-2, 230-pounder said. "I just felt like I belonged at Ohio State."

Houston became OSU's 13th addition to the 1989 recruiting class. Ohio State was also in the mix for Lorain (Ohio) Admiral King running back Raymont Harris and Youngstown (Ohio) East defensive lineman Sylvester Stanley, who were set to announce later in the week.

### 25 Years Ago – 1994

Ohio State approached National Signing Day on Feb. 2 with 16 commitments, adding four more recruits in one week as the 1994 recruiting class fell into place.

The Buckeyes first picked up pledges from Harvey (Ill.) Thornton Township offensive lineman Winfield Garnett (6-7, 310) and Deerfield Beach, Fla., defensive lineman Jeff Wilson (6-4, 260). OSU then kept two in-state prospects home when Canton McKinley defensive back Che Bryant committed and East Cleveland Shaw defensive lineman Calvin Brown flipped from Kansas.

Sandusky, Ohio, offensive lineman Orlando Pace and Jersey City (N.J.) Ferris linebacker Roedell Dupree headlined Ohio State's top targets left and were slated to officially visit Miami (Fla.) the weekend of Jan. 28-29. Upper Darby, Pa., defensive lineman Floyd Wedderburn was also among the remaining priority prospects, reportedly set to decide between the Buckeyes and Penn State.

### 20 Years Ago – 1999

Needing additional commitments on both sides of the ball, Ohio State looked to replenish several positions in its 1999 recruiting class before National Signing Day on Feb. 3.

"Now, we have to get these guys signed," Buckeyes head coach John Cooper said on Jan. 24. "This week we'll be back on the road, seeing these players for the last time. We'll be going over the scholarship papers and explaining them to them. We have to show them what to sign, where to sign and how to get them sent in. Sunday (Jan. 31) is the last day we can be on the road. Then all you can do is wait until Wednesday (Feb. 3)."

Recruiting coordinator Bill Conley broke

down the strategy for OSU's final few days on the trail.

"We go out and try to go see the guys who still haven't made a decision," Conley said. "We have to see all the guys who haven't committed. Plus, we have to see the ones we already have and go over the scholarship papers."

While the head coach was granted one in-home visit for each recruit, assistants were allowed to check with players once a week, setting up Ohio State's final push with quarterback, wide receiver, linebacker and the secondary among the positions of need.

"You always try to recruit your needs," Cooper said. "You start off just trying to get the best you can. You're always looking for athletes."

### 15 Years Ago – 2004

As a two-way standout at St. Louis Hazelwood Central, Ohio State commitment Nick Patterson had turned heads throughout the 2003 season when he racked up 74 tackles and an interception on defense and 45 receptions for 823 yards and 11 touchdowns on offense.

Rivals ranked the 6-2, 200-pounder the nation's No. 30 athlete. He was recruited by the Buckeyes as a safety, although his high school coach said not to rule out wide receiver

"I think he's very capable of playing on either side of the ball in college," Hazelwood Central coach John Pukala said. "He's not a Deion Sanders kid. I don't know that he could play both sides day in, day out, but I think he's capable of picking either one and being very successful at either one."

### 10 Years Ago – 2009

Ohio State's search for a quarterback in the 2009 recruiting class continued with top target Tajh Boyd set to decide between the Buckeyes, Clemson and Oregon on Jan. 27.

The Hampton (Va.) Phoebus product was slated to host a 5 p.m. press conference at his high school on the looming date. Although he was rumored to be leaning toward the Tigers over the Ducks and OSU, his father told BSB no decision had been made in the days leading up to the announcement.

"It's back and forth," Tim Boyd said. "Everything is still even. There are good things about every program. Right now we're just trying to figure out something negative about a program so we can eliminate them, but it's hard."

Originally, Boyd planned to make up his mind by Jan. 19, but he delayed the decision.

Members of the Ohio State coaching staff – offensive coordinator Jim Bollman and operations assistant Nick Siciliano – visited Boyd on Jan. 21, two days before Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney checked on him.

"We're not too concerned with who's there," Tim Boyd said of quarterbacks returning to each school. "With Terrelle Pryor being there he's not a factor. As a matter of fact, the Buckeyes having two quarterbacks is favorable because Oregon and Clemson have multiple quarterbacks. That's why he's still looking real hard at Ohio State."

### Five Years Ago – 2014

A late offer from Ohio State resonated with Columbus Bishop Ready three-star offensive tackle Brady Taylor (6-5, 285), who flipped from Virginia Tech to the Buckeyes on Jan. 20.

"A lot of kids want to be an astronaut or a teacher when they grow up, but I always wanted to be a Buckeye," Taylor told BSB.

He first issued his pledge to the Hokies on July 29 after camping with OSU on June 10 and coming away without an offer. Ohio State missed on several targets and circled back to Taylor, who officially visited the weekend of Jan. 17.

"It was something that I worked at for a long time, and I think I deserved (Ohio State's offer)," Taylor said. "When it happened, it was something that I couldn't turn down."

### One Year Ago – 2018

As the Buckeyes put the finishing touches on their 2018 recruiting class, they earned commitments from Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep four-star defensive tackle Tyler Friday (6-3, 263) on Jan. 19 and San Marcos (Calif.) Mission Hills three-star wide receiver Chris Olave (6-1, 170) on Jan. 28.

Friday chose the Buckeyes over Alabama and Michigan in his top three. He picked up an OSU offer in December 2015 before taking an unofficial visit in March 2016 and returning for an official visit on Nov. 18, 2017, for the 52-14 rout of Illinois at Ohio Stadium.

"I am choosing Ohio State, and the reason for that is because I fell in love with everything they had to tell me," Friday said. "When I first got there, they mapped out a plan for me from freshman year all the way to senior year, or halfway through my junior year if I'm lucky."

Olave picked Ohio State after including UCLA, USC and Utah in his final four. He hauled in an offer from the Buckeyes in October 2017 and officially visited Ohio Stadium for OSU's 48-3 blowout win over Michigan State, Nov. 11.

Swint included the Buckeyes in his top seven Dec. 17, despite not taking a trip to campus in the past year. Williams, on the other hand, had been to OSU twice – July 28 and Nov. 24 – with the Scarlet and Gray among the favorites in his top 10.

Ohio State had been recruiting Williams with several of his 2020 teammates – five-star outside linebacker Mekhail Sherman (6-3, 234), five-star wide receiver Rakim Jarrett (6-0, 182) and four-star cornerback Luke Hill (5-11, 180). Clemson is also recruiting all three teammates.

## Buckeyes Offer Duos At Multiple Schools

Active all over, Ohio State left no stone unturned with its new coaching staff out on the recruiting trail across the country. At multiple stops, the Buckeyes offered two players per school.

The first came Jan. 16 when OSU extended scholarships to Philadelphia St. Joseph's 2021 duo of quarterback Kyle McCord (6-3, 195) and wide receiver Marvin Harrison (6-3½, 174).

McCord holds offers from Central Michigan (June 17, 2017), Boston College (Feb. 1), Temple (Feb. 1), Michigan (Feb. 6), Rutgers (Feb. 6), Syracuse (May 7), West Virginia (May 7), Baylor (May 17), North Carolina (May 17), Arizona (May 22), Penn State (June 23) and Pittsburgh (Dec. 17). He completed 201 of 302 passes for 2,883 yards (school record) and totaled 38 touchdowns as a sophomore in 2018, becoming the Philadelphia Catholic League MVP and leading St. Joseph's (13-0) to the Pennsylvania 6A State Championship.

Harrison holds offers from Syracuse (May 10), Florida (Aug. 13), Penn State (Dec. 14), West Virginia (Jan. 15) and Baylor (Jan. 16). His father, Marvin Harrison, played 13 seasons in the NFL with the Indianapolis Colts from 1996-2008 with 1,102 receptions for 14,580 yards and 128 touchdowns. The Syracuse product is a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The next day, Jan. 17, Ohio State offered Saint Peters (Mo.) Lutheran St. Charles 2021 defensive end Travion Ford (6-4, 215). The Buckeyes joined LSU (Nov. 4), Tennessee

(Nov. 10), Nebraska (Nov. 17), Alabama (Nov. 25), Iowa (Dec. 16) and Minnesota (Jan. 16) among Ford's early suitors. Five days later, OSU extended an offer again at the school Jan. 22 to 2021 defensive tackle Gabriel Rubio (6-5, 280). Rubio had offers from Nebraska (Nov. 30), Kentucky (Dec. 3), Illinois (Dec. 4) and Iowa (Dec. 16) prior to OSU and was wrapping up an unofficial visit Jan. 26-27 to Notre Dame when BSB went to press.

Among other spots in the D.C.-Maryland-Virginia area that Ohio State had hit throughout the month, Baltimore St. Frances Academy resulted in two offers Jan. 24 when the Buckeyes extended offers to the 2020 four-star duo of wide receiver Traeshon Holden (6-3, 195) and running back Blake Corum (5-9, 180). OSU marked the 23rd offer for Holden and 27th school in the mix for Corum.

*For the latest in Ohio State football recruiting news leading up to the traditional National Signing Day on Feb. 6, be sure to check out BuckeyeSports.com, free to all BSB print subscribers, daily. For simple sign-up information, see page 5.*

# DT McKenzie Eager For Competition At OSU

By JOE DEMPSEY  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writers

If you do not thoroughly enjoy competition, the Ohio State football team might not be the place for you. Fortunately for incoming freshman Jaden McKenzie, he thrives off that pressure.

While Ohio State associate head coach and defensive line coach Larry Johnson has brought a slew of highly rated recruits into the program, McKenzie is a Buckeye signee who flew under the radar. McKenzie is the No. 887 overall player in his class, the No. 64 defensive tackle and the No. 42 overall player in North Carolina, according to the 247Sports composite.

"I think that pushes me more now especially while I'm not on campus yet," McKenzie said of his low ratings. "Especially when I committed, a lot of people said, 'He's a three-star, why did you all offer?' Stuff like that."

McKenzie does not let his three-star rating get to him. Instead the Wake Forest, N.C., product sees it as an opportunity to prove people wrong.

"It doesn't really bother me," McKenzie told BSB. "I feel like it drives me to be better, and that's why I knew I want to take on that challenge of going to Ohio State. Because I know they recruit some top, top-of-the-line dudes and so I wanted to go over there and try to compete."

Wake Forest head coach Reggie Lucas is not concerned with McKenzie's rankings or star ratings. Lucas said the future Buckeye will be great in Columbus because he's coachable and quick off the ball, adding that McKenzie is underrated because he did not attend any summer camps.

"He just wasn't that type of guy," Lucas told BSB. "He played football here, he really didn't travel a lot. His mom is a single parent raising two kids, so he didn't get out and travel to those camps to get those rankings and stuff like that. So honestly, that's what I think of his rankings."

While Lucas understood why McKenzie might have been overlooked, he said Ohio State will not be disappointed. Lucas added that he knew McKenzie was destined to play at the highest level when he saw the way he aggressively competed in his first weeks as a freshman.

"Having him anchor that defensive line, that was big for us the last three years," Lucas said. "Going back to when he started playing for us his freshman year as well – in four years Jaden has only lost one game. So he's been a winner since he's been in high school, and just having him being an anchor on defense, he's been a captain,

we've been blessed to have a young man like him to lead our defense."

McKenzie was a standout at Wake Forest and considered a blessing by his coach, but he comes to Columbus as a three-star recruit in one of the deepest, most talented position groups in the country. He does not fear the transition but instead embraces the opportunity to compete.

"With me, it's weird," McKenzie said. "I'm willing to work – I'm always willing to work – but I get super competitive and way more on top of my game when I know that someone's in front of me. If I have to fight for a position, I'm going to fight for it. I'm not just going to sit there and not do anything."

"I think that's where my motivation comes. And how I'm a three-star and everybody else is a four- or five-star, and everybody's saying I probably won't go in and do anything, and I'll be sitting out my four years. And it just pushes me. That makes me work harder. I just find little chips to put on my shoulder. I did that throughout high school too."

The little chips on his shoulder helped McKenzie at Wake Forest, where he started in three consecutive state title games and totaled 28½ sacks in his final three seasons. After recording 97 tackles, 23 tackles for loss and nine sacks as a junior, the Buckeye signee had 71 tackles and 10½ sacks as a senior. McKenzie's stats might have been more impressive with more playing time, but the Cougars often rested their starters after building substantial leads.

Although he's a fierce competitor between the lines, McKenzie is well-liked by fellow students, coaches and teachers.

"Easygoing, laid-back, really nice kid, soft-spoken, fun to be around," Lucas responded when asked how he'd describe McKenzie. "He's a people person. He's going to get along with his teammates well. He loves the game of football. In four years of high school I don't know anyone on this campus that didn't like him."

McKenzie seems like a good fit for Johnson's close-knit defensive line unit at Ohio State, which is loaded with sociable young men with immense talent and a shared competitive drive. Fortunately for McKenzie, he is no stranger to competing with other talented defensive linemen.

Wake Forest defensive line coach Blake Brooks told BSB that he pulled McKenzie up to varsity as a freshman, where he gained valuable experience playing alongside Dexter Lawrence and Xach Gill, who went on to play for Clemson and North Carolina, respectively.

"He learned a lot, but he was still a

## Get To Know: Jaden McKenzie

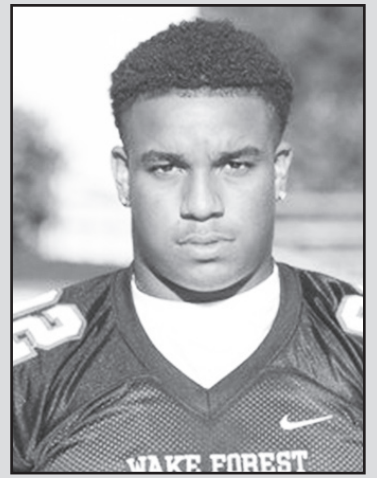
**High School** – Wake Forest, N.C.

**Position** – Defensive Tackle

**Height, Weight** – 6-3, 285 pounds

**Rankings** – McKenzie is rated a three-star prospect, the No. 64 defensive tackle and No. 887 overall prospect in the 247Sports composite.

**Player Evaluation** – "He is a great run defender and can eat up blockers to free up his teammates to make easy tackles. Expect him to make an impact after getting acclimated to the strength and conditioning program in Columbus." – Buckeye Grove's Marc Givler



pup," Brooks said. "And he got better and better. Jaden has what we call the 'it' factor. He loves to play, he loves to hit, he's a physical player. And that's part of why he's a great player."

Brooks added that McKenzie, who is listed at 6-3 and 285 pounds, will have to hit the weight room to prepare for the size of Division I linemen, which was not a concern for his former teammate, Lawrence, who stands at 6-5, 350 pounds.

Lawrence was the No. 2 overall player in the 2016 class and totaled 18 TFLs and 10 sacks in three seasons at Clemson. McKenzie said Lawrence was very helpful to him as a young player, particularly with the example he set.

"I learned a lot, he was a great leader, he did the right things all the time, and he practiced with a purpose," he said. "He did everything the way he was supposed to do it, and if he didn't do it right, he would fix it."

"He was that man, so it was like, if you follow these footsteps, you can become that man. I think that those were some good lessons."

Lucas drew comparisons between the two immediately, despite such a wide differential in size.

"When you watch the film, the takeoff, they're very quick and then, the use of their hands, they got a lot of power in using their hands," Lucas said. "Jaden is very good with his hands. And then the other thing is just being so big and powerful, the

footwork, footwork is unbelievable, being able to change directions – him and Dexter were real similar in that.

"Taking on not just the smaller linemen, but the bigger linemen that he's going to go up against – he's just able to hold his own and you don't get many players that play high school that are that big and that quick and that powerful. And obviously, when you compare Dexter and Jaden, I think about those things."

McKenzie may lack the high ratings and hype that surrounded Lawrence as a prepster, but he is not concerned about that. McKenzie received the only rating that mattered to him, and that was a high rating from Johnson when he visited Ohio State for The Game.

"I didn't really know how the coaches felt about me," McKenzie said of Ohio State's interest. "And I was just like, 'OK, well I know they recruit some high-level kids, and I'm probably just here like a little fish in a big lake or whatever.'"

"But when I got there, I talked to some of the coaches, and Coach Johnson actually was looking at me for a while, and he's been contacting me throughout the recruiting process. He was like, he really liked my film and he's only going to take one defensive tackle and there were other ones that wanted to commit. But honestly, I knew I wanted to commit when I went on that official visit to that Michigan game. I knew that's where I wanted to go."

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# Passing Attack Earns Top Marks For Buckeyes

By **TIM MOODY**  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

After shining through the first half of the season, the Ohio State offense hit a speed bump in weeks seven and eight.

First, the Buckeyes needed 412 passing yards from sophomore Dwayne Haskins to overcome a putrid run game (92 yards on 32 attempts) to outlast Minnesota, 30-14. Then the Buckeyes hit a low point in their 49-20 loss at Purdue, marking the worst scoring output of the season.

Things steadily improved after that, though, as Ohio State rattled off wins against Nebraska, Michigan State and Maryland before the offensive dominated The Game – a 62-39 win over Michigan.

Then came wins in the Big Ten title game and the Rose Bowl, which each brought mixed results from the offense as well. One thing was certain, though – the 2018 Ohio State offense went only as far as Haskins led it, and it turned out he was good enough to still deliver one of the best offenses in the nation.

What follows is a look at how each position group on offense did from the Minnesota game through the end of the season, followed by the midterm grade, a second-half grade and a final grade for each group.

## Quarterback

If the quarterbacks – mainly Haskins – got an A+ in the first half, it would be difficult to bump that grade down much for his per-

formance over the final eight games of the year. That said, his overall play was streaky down the stretch at times, especially against Purdue (despite setting school records with 49 completions, 73 attempts and 470 passing yards) and Nebraska (56.3 completion percentage).

But Haskins also had his best performances of the year toward the end, mainly a 396-yard, six-touchdown day against Michigan and a 499-yard, five-touchdown output against Northwestern when he was 34 of 41 passing (82.9 percent).

He also showed a greater willingness to run as the season wore on, highlighted by his 15 carries for 59 yards and three crucial touchdowns in the 52-51 overtime win over Maryland.

At times in the second half, it seemed like Haskins was best suited for the biggest moments, while he struggled at times against lesser opponents. Part of that is leadership, and that might be the area in which Haskins improved the most.

“I’d say the thing I’m most proud of is his leadership, just the way that he’s handled himself, the way he walks and talks, that’s come a long way,” offensive-coordinator-turned-head-coach Ryan Day said of Haskins before the Rose Bowl. “Because one

of the No. 1 jobs of a quarterback is to lead the 10 men that are on the field with you.

“He’s grown a lot as a player but also as a young man. He’s a guy who came in as a sophomore with no collegiate starts, and look in 13 games what he’s done, which is really amazing when you think back on what he’s done in such a short period of time.”

Despite some tough moments, Haskins earns an A for the second half himself, but the overall quarterback grade was bumped down a tick due to the use of backup Tate Martell, who wasn’t allowed to thrive due to questionable play calling when he entered the game in red-zone situations.

**BSB Midterm Grade: A+**

**BSB Second-Half Grade: A-**

**BSB Final Grade: A**

## Rating The Offense

Here is where the OSU offense ranked among the Big Ten and nationally.

Category	Stats	NCAA	Big Ten
Rushing Offense	171.3	63rd	7th
Passing Offense	364.3	2nd	1st
Total Offense	535.6	2nd	1st
Scoring Offense	42.4	8th	1st
Turnovers Lost	17	T-35th	3rd
Third Down Con.	46.6	17th	2nd

## Running Back

The 2018 Ohio State run game is difficult to understand.

On one hand, J.K. Dobbins finished his sophomore season with 1,053 yards and 10 touchdowns on the ground while junior Mike Weber ran for 954 yards and five more scores. But the duo often struggled, even in the second half of the year, due to inconsistent blocking up front.

So, do the running backs get docked or

does the blame fall on the offensive line? The answer has to be somewhere in between.

Dobbins does get credit for two huge performances in the second half of the year – 23 carries for 163 yards and three scores against Nebraska and 37 totes for 203 yards and a touchdown at Maryland. Weber, too, shone at times. He carried it nine times for 91 yards against Nebraska and 22 times for 104 yards and a score at Michigan State before rushing 13 times for 96 yards and a touchdown vs. Michigan. The Buckeyes probably don’t beat the Spartans without Weber carrying the load, and he played a key part in The Game as well.

Weber capped the season playing better than Dobbins, in fact, after he sparked the offense with 15 carries for 96 yards in the Rose Bowl – Dobbins had just seven rushes for 24 yards, although he did score a touchdown.

Heading into the year, the goal was to get both backs over 1,000 yards. They came close to that, and the rotation was very successful at times as well.

“It helped keep us fresh – or fresher, you know,” Dobbins said. “It was a great bond, and we made some great memories. So I think it was a great time this year.”

All in all, there was some improvement from the unit in the second half of the season, but they still weren’t anywhere near the standard expected at Ohio State.

**BSB Midterm Grade: B**

**BSB Second-Half Grade: B+**

**BSB Final Grade: B**

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## FINAL GRADES: OFFENSE



JOSH WINSLOW

**BIG YEAR** – Fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell (21) set an Ohio State record with 90 receptions in 2018.

### Offensive Line

Sometimes it can be hard to judge offensive line play on paper, but there are two key stats to look at – average yards per rush and number of sacks allowed.

First, for the rushing. In the first six games of the season, Ohio State ran for 1,206 yards and a per-carry clip of 4.7. In the next eight games, the Buckeyes managed just 1,192 yards, good for an average of 3.8 yards per attempt. The blame has to fall on the running backs, too, but the offensive line consistently struggled to get a push up front, especially when the field became compact in the red zone.

If not for a total of seven rushing touchdowns between the Nebraska and Maryland games, the offensive line's grade might have ended up even lower.

Now for the sacks. In the first six games, Ohio State allowed just eight sacks total. The next eight? Fifteen sacks – nearly two a game.

While that number isn't horrible, it showed a drop-off from the first half of the season, but the line was outstanding against Michigan – arguably the best defensive front it faced all year – as the Buckeyes didn't allow a single sack in The Game.

Penalties were an issue throughout the campaign – even from veterans such as senior right tackle Isaiah Prince – and junior Michael Jordan just never seemed like a perfect fit at center, despite earning All-American honors.

Injuries were an issue as well. Sophomore left tackle Thayer Munford missed most of

the Maryland game and sat out the Rose Bowl, although junior Joshua Alabi was outstanding in his place, while fifth-year senior Demetrius Knox was injured late against Michigan, paving the way for redshirt freshman Wyatt Davis to start the final two games of the year.

The second half of the year was a disappointment for the offensive line as Ohio State searched for ways to get the run game sparked, but the line still played at a high level against Michigan and allowed Haskins enough time to put up some of the best numbers in the nation.

**BSB Midterm Grade: B-**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: C+**  
**BSB Final Grade: C+**

### Tight End

On the days when Ohio State's run game did get going in the final eight games, the tight ends were a big part of the solution. The Buckeyes even went with three-tight sets at times, allowing sophomore Luke Farrell, junior Rashod Berry and freshman Jeremy Ruckert to all get playing time.

Ruckert, considered as a high-level pass-catching prospect, didn't have a single reception after the season opener, which was a disappointment for the tight end room. Farrell, though, was serviceable, catching 17 passes over the final eight games while Berry scored a crucial touchdown in the Rose Bowl win over Washington.

In reality, the 2018 Ohio State offense

wasn't set up for the tight ends to thrive in the passing game, but they did their part more often than not when called on to block. With Berry's key touchdown thrown in, the tight ends get a much higher grade for the work over the final eight games of the season.

**BSB Midterm Grade: C+**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: B+**  
**BSB Final Grade: B**

### Wide Receiver

There probably isn't a player who improved more than fifth-year senior wide receiver Parris Campbell over the past few seasons, and the way he capped his career was a good indicator of how the receivers did overall, especially in the second half of the season.

Campbell set the school record for receptions in a season with 90, 55 of which came over the final eight games, a stretch during which he had at least four receptions in every contest. Campbell capped the season with 11 receptions against Washington in the Rose Bowl after having the best game of his career with six receptions for 192 yards and two scores against Michigan.

And that's just one player in a deep rotation.

Junior K.J. Hill caught 70 passes for 885 yards and six scores, fifth-year senior Terry McLaurin reeled in 35 balls for 701 yards and 11 scores while fifth-year senior Johnnie Dixon had 42 catches for 669 yards and eight touchdowns.

"I feel like all three of the guys (Campbell, McLaurin and Dixon) made some money, even K.J.," Haskins said of the receivers. "But as far as Parris putting the work to be

an all-around receiver, we all knew how fast he was but as far as his route running and him tracking the ball, he's worked on that tremendously throughout the offseason and it's paid off for him, and I feel like he definitely showed scouts or NFL people that he could catch the ball and he could run good routes. That's important."

Haskins said he knew back in fall camp that 2018 would be a huge year for the top receivers on the team.

"Just seeing how much work they were putting in and how much they wanted to be great, and (Campbell) wanted to do everything possible for himself to be in a good position for the draft and he did that."

After that, though, there was admittedly some inconsistency. Junior Binjimen Victor flashed at times, including with a key touchdown at Maryland, but he also went without a catch against Michigan State and Michigan and reeled in just one pass against Nebraska despite the Buckeyes being without starting X Austin Mack after he was injured against Purdue.

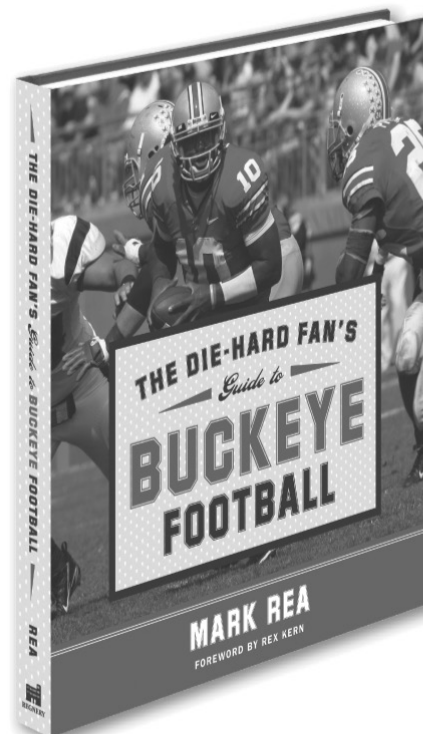
Victor's inconsistency won't dock the position group as a whole, though, especially when you take into account freshman Chris Olave, who exploded onto the scene with two catches for 48 yards and two touchdowns against Michigan before reeling in five passes for 79 yards and a score in the Big Ten title game.

As a whole, the position group was deep, consistent and productive in helping Haskins have the best season by a quarterback in program history.

**BSB Midterm Grade: A-**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: A+**  
**BSB Final Grade: A+**

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# OSU Defense Inconsistent Throughout 2018

By GARRETT STEPIEN  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Midway through the 2018 season, Ohio State's defense was shaky but the Buckeyes still had jumped out to a 7-0 start. From head coach Urban Meyer to defensive coordinator Greg Schiano and co-defensive coordinator/safeties coach Alex Grinch, the Buckeyes were well aware of their shortcomings, but they were unable to correct those mounting issues in time for Oct. 20 when Purdue's 49-20 blowout derailed the undefeated campaign.

All three aforementioned coaches are no longer with OSU – Meyer retired Jan. 2, Grinch became Oklahoma's defensive coordinator Jan. 4 and Schiano left to pursue NFL options.

OSU's crash against the Boilermakers was thought to be like its 55-24 defeat in 2017 at Iowa, where the defense was gashed but turned around down the stretch. Lightning did not strike twice for Ohio State, which rode the arm of sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins en route to its 13-1 season with a 28-23 win over Washington in the Jan. 1 Rose Bowl, overcoming close calls in triumphs over Nebraska (36-31, Nov. 3) and Maryland (52-51 in overtime, Nov. 17).

The Buckeye defense dominated Michigan State's inept offense Nov. 10 in Big Ten tundra conditions for a 26-6 win before it turned in mixed outings in victories against Michigan (62-39, Nov. 24) and Northwestern (45-24, Dec. 1), leaving Ryan Day to make



JOSH WINSLOW

**MAKING STOPS** – Ohio State junior linebacker Malik Harrison (39) tied for the team lead with 81 tackles in 2018, joined at the top by junior safety Jordan Fuller.



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changes on his defensive coaching staff when he took over full-time responsibilities Jan. 2.

Before the page turns entirely to 2019 and where the defensive side of the ball stands ahead of spring camp's March 4 start, BSB looks back one more time at 2018 with position-by-position analysis of Ohio State's unit from its final eight games, plus a final grade for all 14 contests.

**Defensive Line**

Considered the team's deepest group on either side of the ball, position coach Larry Johnson got the most from his "Rushmen" after he lost the best edge rusher in college football earlier in the season. Nick Bosa (6-4, 263) went down Sept. 15 in the third quarter of the Buckeyes' 40-28 win over TCU and never returned, undergoing core muscle surgery and showing signs of progress before he shut his junior campaign down Oct. 16, withdrawing from the university and focusing on the NFL draft.

Despite losing Bosa, OSU overcame its initial struggles to get enough pressure up front. Accelerated development of four freshmen – defensive ends Tyler Friday (6-4, 255) and Tyreke Smith (6-4, 255), plus defensive tackles Tommy Togiai (6-2, 300) and Taron Vincent (6-2, 288) – helped Ohio State's depth. Junior defensive tackles Robert Landers (6-1, 283) and Davon Hamilton (6-4, 308) lined up alongside junior Dre'Mont Jones (6-3, 286), who fought admirably through a nagging ankle injury and racked up three of his nine sacks in the final six games. Junior defensive end Jashon Cornell (6-3, 273), who converted from three-technique during spring camp, grew more comfortable in an increased role on the edge.

"They're growing," Johnson said in October. "That's another thing – Tyreke plays about 15, 20 plays. He's in our third-down package, so he's on the field playing as a true freshman – Tyler Friday, too. I think those two guys are our future. I think they're all doing a great job."

Junior defensive end Jonathon Cooper (6-4, 257) served as an experienced starter in Bosa's absence. Three of Cooper's five tackles for loss came between Oct. 20 and Jan. 1, highlighted by his sack and three tackles in the Buckeyes' rout of the Wolverines, when OSU sacked U-M three times, knocking out starting quarterback Shea Patterson in the second half.

"As a defense, as a whole, my brothers and I went out there and we graded out really well," Cooper said in November. "As far as the message from Coach Johnson, his message was just go out there and have the greatest performance, go out and play your hearts out, just leave it all out there. Leave nothing for chance or for granted. Just go out there and play hard."

But the biggest player for Johnson after Bosa went out was sophomore defensive end Chase Young (6-5, 265), who quietly fought through rolled ankles throughout the whole season and still somehow managed 10½ sacks. After a five-game stretch from Oct. 6 against Indiana to Nov. 10 at Michigan State in which he recorded just half a sack, Young recovered in time and strung together game-changing performances, ending his sophomore campaign with six sacks in Ohio State's last four wins.

"After the Penn State game, I think everybody expected something crazy every game," Young said in December, talking about the Buckeyes' 27-26 victory against the Nittany Lions, where he had his coming-out party with two sacks and two pass breakups. "That's what I tried to do. I tried to put it on the line every game. But offenses prepare

for defense, and it's not going to go like that every game. (Johnson) said to me, 'Early success, everybody wants greatness game after game.' When I didn't play the games I wanted to play, I would get down on myself, like every player who wants to be great does. (Johnson) told me that happens to everybody, and I just tried to finish strong."

Given what OSU had to overcome with Bosa's absence and how much the line carried the back seven, Johnson's group gets a bump up from BSB's first-half grade.

**BSB Midterm Grade: A-**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: A**  
**BSB Final Grade: A**

**Linebackers**

With a deep blend of sophomores and juniors surrounding fifth-year senior Dante Booker (6-3, 235), talent was never in question for Ohio State's linebackers. The Buckeyes did, however, lack overall experience, and it showed. OSU went with sophomore Tuf Borland (6-1, 230) in the middle while junior Malik Harrison (6-3, 245) and sophomore Pete Werner (6-3, 236) manned the outside – all first-year starters.

No game exposed Ohio State's linebackers worse than Oct. 20 at Purdue, where the Boilermakers racked up 539 total yards – 378 passing and 161 rushing. Head coach Jeff Brohm explained how Purdue was able to exploit the Buckeyes' linebackers.

"I thought their linebackers were good players, but they run to the line of scrimmage quite a bit," Brohm said. "And if you could get past that first level, there was a bigger level between them and the safeties because they play up so far."

Although the OSU coaching staff promised during the Oct. 27 open week that it would go back to the drawing board, making necessary tweaks to scheme and personnel, the trend continued for the linebackers in particular over the final two months of the campaign. Ohio State's perimeter defense suffered Nov. 17 at Maryland, among other outings, allowing the Terrapins to rack up 535 total yards – 196 passing and 339 rushing.

In his third year with the Buckeyes, Borland became a team captain and starter but appeared mismatched against spread offenses' skill players in open space.

"I think sometimes success doesn't show right away," Borland said in November. "In some of our practices, we've been practicing very well. We've had very good days. Sometimes that just kind of lags behind what is shown on the field at times."

Similar to Borland, Werner's speed sometimes appeared overmatched whether he defended tight ends or running backs in open space. Werner followed Borland with 58 tackles (7½ for loss), three sacks and two forced fumbles, and he tied redshirt freshman cornerback Shaun Wade for second on the team in pass breakups with seven, but he admitted the linebackers' struggles in the second half of the fall.

"There is a little trend – it's kind of hard to say," Werner said in November. "We're not using our proper technique like we did at the start. We need to focus more on that. Guys are running out there – including myself – just using a lot of upper body and not getting low."

Among the starters, Harrison was Ohio

State's bright spot. He tied with junior safety Jordan Fuller for first on the team in tackles (81), adding 8½ for loss and 2½ sacks plus an interception and a fumble recovery.

Harrison held off the NFL draft for one more year in Columbus, returning with Borland and Werner as rising juniors. The only departure via graduation is Booker, who contributed 12 tackles (three for loss) and a sack in 13 games, while junior Keandre Jones (6-2, 228) reportedly entered the NCAA transfer portal Jan. 18 after playing all 14 games but sparingly with 10 tackles (one for loss) and one sack.

Beyond a lock for Harrison, Ohio State's starting lineup at linebacker in 2019 might be open with Michigan's Al Washington replacing Bill Davis, who was hired by the Arizona Cardinals as linebackers coach. As a sophomore, Baron Browning (6-3, 240) pushed for time in the rotation with 23 tackles (3½ for loss) and one sack in 12 games. He missed the Michigan State and Maryland games due to concussion.

Junior Justin Hilliard added 20 tackles (one for loss) and two pass breakups in 13 games. Whether it was scheme or personnel, though, OSU's starters struggled down the stretch, and that leaves questions about the pecking order heading into 2019 with young talent – freshmen Teradja Mitchell (6-2, 236), Dallas Gant (6-3, 225) and K'Vaughan Pope (6-1, 226) – waiting in the wings.

**BSB Midterm Grade: B**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: C-**  
**BSB Final Grade: C+**

**Safeties**

After its experiment with sophomore Jahsen Wint (5-11, 196) ended, Ohio State tried sophomore Isaiah Pryor (6-2, 197) and Wade (6-1, 195) at safety next to incumbent starter Fuller.

The Buckeyes eventually found their fit for that spot, but not purposely, Nov. 3 against Nebraska when they inserted sophomore Brendon White for Fuller after a targeting ejection in the first half. White (6-2, 210) filled in admirably for Fuller (6-2, 204), racking up a career-high 13 tackles (two for loss) off the bench.

From that point, White remained OSU's starter with Fuller. Aside from a missed tackle on the weak side leading to running back Anthony McFarland's 81-yard touchdown run to open Ohio State's eventual 52-51 overtime triumph at Maryland, White gave the defense the toughness it needed for a back seven that became so prone to big plays.

"I'm starting to be a big part of the game plan now," White, who converted officially from wide receiver late last fall, said in November. "It's just about locking in more, staying prepared and staying ready and staying focused, and don't get sidetracked."

White stayed on that path with 46 tackles (four for loss) and an interception, culminated by his Jan. 1 honor as Rose Bowl defensive player of the game after he tallied eight (two for loss) in the Buckeyes' win over Washington. OSU needed a late stand in the fourth quarter, and White's 5-yard tackle for loss proved crucial for holding on.

Fuller, meanwhile, built upon his stature among Ohio State's top defenders as he tied Harrison with his team-best 81 tackles (2½ for loss), plus an interception and two fumble

recoveries. He delayed his NFL career for one more year, giving the Buckeyes a promising one-two punch with White.

"I have a lot of goals for myself, as well as the team," Fuller said in December. "The team goals come first. I am definitely so happy that we finished the way we did. We've got one more task."

While Wade's future appears to be back at corner, Pryor and Wint enter next year as backups. There is also a chance for freshman Josh Proctor (6-2, 198) to see more time after the extent of his action came on special teams, although he became a backup slot corner when OSU's depth was squeezed in November due to injuries.

**BSB Midterm Grade: D**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: B+**  
**BSB Final Grade: C+**

**Cornerbacks**

A position filled with promise heading into Ohio State's 2018 season, the Buckeye cornerbacks never quite took off. OSU returned juniors Damon Arnette (6-0, 195) and Kendall Sheffield (6-0, 193), but neither established all that much consistency throughout the campaign's first or second half.

Defensive pass interference penalties plagued Arnette. Sheffield, on the other hand, was mostly solid but never took the next step – he got beat often on 50-50 balls in the red zone – before bypassing his senior campaign for the NFL draft.

Arnette returns for his fifth-year senior season after he recorded 40 tackles, an interception and six pass breakups. Down the stretch, he stepped up Dec. 1 in the Big Ten Championship Game with his interception in the third quarter that helped Ohio State past Northwestern after a late comeback attempt by the Wildcats.

"Our focus changed," Arnette said Jan. 1. "We had a different level of intensity and focus that definitely translated over into the games later on in the season."

Beyond the juniors, sophomore Jeffrey Okudah (6-1, 199) increasingly saw more time in the Buckeyes' three-man rotation. Okudah was everywhere in OSU's Rose Bowl win over Washington, tying a season-high five tackles and breaking up two passes.

"My second year I played here, they really changed the way I played and the way I approached things," Okudah, who had 32 tackles and eight pass breakups to go with a fumble recovery, said Jan. 1. "Iron sharpens iron here at Ohio State. I feel I grew throughout the season."

Although Arnette returns, Okudah and Wade may push for Ohio State's two starting spots next year. After he floated around his positions in the secondary, Wade found a home back at nickel corner when White settled at safety.

"Corner is really just playing press man," Wade, who posted 31 tackles and seven pass breakups with a team-best three interceptions, said in October. "(Switching between positions) is no big deal for me."

Sophomore Marcus Williamson (5-11, 186) missed most of the season with an undisclosed injury sustained in September, while freshmen Tyreke Johnson (6-1, 193) and Cameron Brown (6-0, 185) remain talented redshirts waiting in the wings. Sevyn Banks (6-0, 195) debuted on special teams as a freshman and is another name to watch going into 2019.

Next year, Ohio State no longer has the excuse of being too young at cornerback. But for 2018, the position group was simply stagnant from its first-half grade.

**BSB Midterm Grade: C+**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: C+**  
**BSB Final Grade: C+**

# Special Teams Boost Buckeyes In Key Moments

By JOE DEMPSEY  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The special teams unit was oftentimes a weakness for Ohio State a season ago, but the Buckeyes turned that weakness into a strength in 2018.

Ohio State ranked eighth in the nation in special teams efficiency, according to Football Outsiders, which calculates the average value generated per possession by special teams and is adjusted for the strength of opponent special teams units faced.

Below is BSB's evaluation of each aspect of special teams, with a corresponding grade for the second half of the season and a final 2018 mark.

## Punting Game

Sophomore punter Drue Chrisman and the Ohio State punting unit had an excellent season, often helping the Buckeyes gain an advantage in the field-position battle. The Cincinnati La Salle product averaged 43.2 yards per punt. Despite ranking 33rd in the nation in punting average, Ohio State was sixth in the country in net punting average at 41.8 yards per punt.

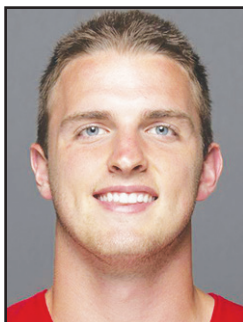
The Buckeyes excelled in punt coverage all season, forcing many fair catches and stifling nearly all return efforts. The Ohio State punt coverage team ranked eighth in the country in opponent punt return average at 3.3 yards per return. Buckeye opponents attempted to return just 13 punts for 43 yards in 14 games.

The punt team received an A on BSB's midseason grades, partially for Chrisman's excellent performance at Penn State. The timeliness of Chrisman's backbreaking boots continued to give the Buckeyes an advantage against their latter opponents as well.

In a 17-14 game against Minnesota, the Ohio State offense stalled out on its first drive of the second half. Chrisman drilled a

46-yard punt, and the Buckeye punt coverage team downed the ball at the 1-yard line, flipping the field in favor of Ohio State, which went on to defeat the Golden Gophers, 30-14.

After a couple of solid performances against Purdue and Nebraska, the sophomore punter stole the show at Michigan State. After his first punt went a career-low 4 yards, Chrisman responded with punts of 47, 46 and 47 yards. Then, on the first drive of the second half, Ohio State head coach Urban Meyer faced the decision to go for it or punt on fourth-and-4 at the MSU 38. Meyer elected to punt, and Chrisman's boot initially appeared to be destined to be a touchback. However, fifth-year senior wide receiver/gunner Terry McLaurin leaped in the air and prevented the ball from landing in the end zone, tapping it back to be downed at the MSU 5.



Drue Chrisman

McLaurin, whom Meyer referred to as the best gunner he had in his seven seasons in Columbus, said he prides himself on his ability to avoid blocks, track the ball and pin the opposition deep.

"We have a big board and there's like a 3 percent chance for teams to score the ball when they start inside their own 5," McLaurin said in the postgame interview. "So we preach that, we believe in that, and I was just telling the young guys when they brought me up, 'If you want to make your spot on this team and grab a lot of respect, especially from Coach Meyer, special teams is the way to do it.'"

Chrisman's next two punts were downed at the 6 and 3, respectively. Then, facing fourth-and-6 at the MSU 40, Chrisman delivered a 39-yarder down to the MSU 1. The excellent punt led to a safety, where the

Spartans intentionally snapped the ball out of the back of the end zone.

"That's our goal - pin them deep and then get the ball back and we'll get some points out of it," Chrisman said. "So if we're doing our job tilting the field on them, it makes it harder on them for sure."

On the following drive, Chrisman once again pinned Michigan State deep, this time with a 44-yard punt down to the MSU 2. The Spartans fumbled on first down, and Ohio State junior defensive tackle Dre'Mont Jones recovered for his second touchdown of the season. Jones credited the punt team for his rare opportunity to hit pay dirt.

"Our efforts are because of Drue Chrisman - Drue Chrisman and Terry McLaurin, their ability to stop the ball before it got to the end zone," Jones said. "That really gave us a lot of juice and a lot of enthusiasm going out there to get a safety or go make a play."

Chrisman was solid in high-scoring victories against Maryland and Michigan but was not called on a lot. The Cincinnati native was superb in the Big Ten Championship Game, drilling four punts for a remarkable 54.8-yard average, with a long of 62 and two inside the 20. Chrisman also had a busy Rose Bowl, punting eight times for a 42.8-yard average, including a long of 55 yards and two punts downed inside the 20.

**BSB Midterm Grade: A**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: A**  
**BSB Final Grade: A**

## Kicking Game

Fifth-year senior kicker Sean Nuernberger suffered an injury in pregame warmups before the Buckeyes' matchup with Minnesota, and sophomore kickoff specialist Blake Haubeil was thrust into the role as the team's primary placekicker.

Haubeil heard his number called on the Buckeyes' first drive, and the sophomore from Buffalo, N.Y., hit his first career field-goal attempt from 21 yards out.

"Definitely," Haubeil said postgame when asked if there were any nerves. "Going out there for the first time and hitting that first field goal in front of 100,000, there were a little bit of nerves, but full confidence."

Haubeil's confidence carried over to the second half when Meyer put his trust in the sophomore to hit a 47-yard field goal in a 17-14 game. He connected on another field goal in the fourth quarter and finished 3 for 3 on field goals and 3 for 3 on extra-point attempts, earning the job for the rest of the season.

"It's a blessing," Haubeil said, "to be in that situation and to go out there and help in a huge team win. It was a team win today. We needed offense, defense and special teams, but it meant a lot. With the amount the specialists work and to get that result and see it go through the uprights was big."

Haubeil hit 10 of 13 field goals in eight games after taking over for Nuernberger, who was just 3 of 5 in six games. Haubeil continued Nuernberger's perfection on extra-point tries, hitting 37 of 37 after Nuernberger began the season 39 of 39. In

addition to the Buckeyes' improvement on field goals, the team excelled on kickoffs. Ohio State had the second-best kickoff return defense in the nation, allowing only 14.9 yards per return, barely behind New Mexico's 14.9-yard average. The Scarlet and Gray kickoff coverage team, which dubbed itself "The Turn-Up Crew," suffocated most of the opposition's return efforts before they even started.

**BSB Midterm Grade: B**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: A-**  
**BSB Final Grade: B+**

## Return Game

Ohio State did not have much success on traditional punt returns in 2018, but the unit still made an impact with three blocked punts. That number tied them with six other teams for fourth in the country.

Junior linebacker Keandre Jones made a big-time play against Nebraska, screaming through the line to block a punt. The ball bounced out of the end zone for a safety, cutting the Cornhusker lead to 7-2 in a game that the Buckeyes won 36-31. As a whole, the Buckeye punt return unit returned 27 punts for 216 yards and one touchdown in 14 games. Ohio State's average of 8.0 yards per return tied for 73rd in the nation with Oregon State.

The Buckeyes' lone return touchdown came in The Game, and it was another timely blocked punt that spurred the score. The Wolverines were forced to punt from their own 36-yard line, trailing just 27-19. Freshman wide receiver Chris Olave lined up on the edge and crashed inside at the snap, getting free and blocking the punt. Freshman cornerback Sevin Banks caught the ball and returned it for a 33-yard touchdown, and the Buckeyes never looked back, winning 62-39.

Beyond blocked punts, junior receiver K.J. Hill led the team with 14 returns for 76 yards (5.4 per return). Junior wide receiver C.J. Saunders ran back eight punts for 50 yards (6.2), and sophomore Demario McCall had three returns for 32 yards (10.7).

The Ohio State kickoff return unit left more to be desired in 2018. The Buckeyes ranked No. 112 in the country in return average at 17.8 yards per return. On 26 returns Ohio State gained only 463 yards.

Fifth-year senior wide receiver Johnnie Dixon returned 13 kicks for 240 yards (18.5) with a long of 38. McCall returned 10 kicks for 195 yards (19.5).

Although the Buckeye kick return team struggled to make an impact throughout most of the season, the unit came through when needed the most. With the Buckeyes trailing Maryland, 45-38, with 1:32 left in the game, McCall awaited the Terrapins' kick. The North Ridgeville, Ohio, native caught the ball at the OSU 8-yard line and burst to midfield for a pivotal 42-yard return. McCall's timely return set up an Ohio State game-tying touchdown drive that took just 56 seconds.

McCall showed off his elite speed at Lucas Oil Stadium in the Big Ten Championship Game, flying past Northwestern defenders for a 26-yard return.

"I feel great about returning kicks," McCall said after the game. "The energy that my guys had today on the KOR was amazing."

**BSB Midterm Grade: C**  
**BSB Second-Half Grade: B-**  
**BSB Final Grade: C+**

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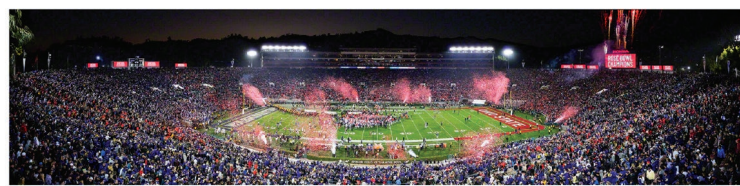


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# Meyer Suspension, Retirement Highlight 2018

By TIM MOODY  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Editor

Football is king in Columbus – that's how it's always been. But the gridders still dominated the news cycle in 2018 like never before.

First it was spring camp, which brought a hotly-contested quarterback battle that led to Joe Burrow transferring to LSU. Then, in late July, a key assistant was fired and a legendary head coach came under heavy scrutiny. By the end of the year, that coach was calling it a career as well.

The season itself had twists at every turn – a star player withdrawing after three games and a first-year starter earning an invite to the Heisman ceremony, not to mention a shocking loss and a resounding win in The Game.

And we haven't even touched on the basketball team that was led back to March Madness by a first-year coach or the departure of one of the most decorated athletes in school history. Overall, it's safe to say 2018 was an eventful year for Ohio State athletics.

What follows is a breakdown of the top 10 stories of the 2018 calendar year, as voted on by the Buckeye Sports Bulletin staff.

## 1. Meyer Suspended After Investigation

On Aug. 22, a large gathering of media members wait impatiently at the Longaberger Alumni House for more than 10 hours, all the while hoping to find out head football coach Urban Meyer's fate.

That day was the culmination of a process that had begun in Chicago in late July. On July 23, Meyer fired wide receivers coach Zach Smith after multiple past allegations of domestic abuse leveled by his ex-wife, Courtney Smith, became public. The next day, Meyer took to the lectern in Chicago for Big Ten Media Day and admitted he knew about allegations from 2009, but he denied, or seemed to deny, any knowledge of an incident that occurred in 2015.

Soon after, media reports surfaced suggesting that Meyer had known about everything, and he was placed on paid administrative leave Aug. 1 – the day before the Buckeyes opened fall camp. In his place, offensive coordinator Ryan Day was pegged to serve as acting head coach.

After a 14-day investigation, the university board of trustees eventually convened at the Longaberger Alumni House for their long meeting, ultimately settling on a three-game suspension for Meyer and comparable suspension for athletic director Gene Smith. The investigation found that the pair hadn't ignored abuse allegations, but the employment of Zach Smith had generally been mishandled.

"We wanted to be fair," OSU president Michael Drake said Aug. 22. "We wanted to be equitable. We wanted to be just. We wanted to be appropriate. We worked to refine our decisions and our actions to be able to do the best that we could to achieve those goals."

Meyer was given his chance to address the suspension that day as well, focusing on the negative impact it had on a school he loved.

"I know the impact that the events (of the) last three weeks have had on this institution, an institution that I love, and how challenging this has been for our community, our president, a man who I have great



SONNY BROCKWAY

**CHANGING OF THE GUARD** – Head football coach Urban Meyer (left) announced his retirement Dec. 4, the same day athletic director Gene Smith (right) hired Ryan Day (center) as the 25th coach in program history.

respect for, and for that I am deeply sorry," he said. "I am fully aware that I'm ultimately responsible for the situation that has harmed the university as a whole and our department of athletics and our football program."

## 2. Meyer Retires, OSU Hires Day

Fast-forward a few months to early December. Ohio State had just clinched a second straight Big Ten title, and the Buckeyes were preparing to play in the Rose Bowl for just the second time since the turn of the century.

On Dec. 4, an early-morning press release from Ohio State stated that there would be a press conference that afternoon. The purpose? Meyer was announcing his retirement, effective after the Rose Bowl, and Day was being hired as the 25th full-time head coach in program history.

The announcement was weeks in the making, with whispers of a potential end to Meyer's time with the Buckeyes becoming louder after he collapsed with a severe headache during Ohio State's win over Indiana on Oct. 6. Those health issues, which stem from an arachnoid cyst on his brain and have been around for years, were the main factor in his retirement, but that suspension and everything that surrounded it certainly played a part as well.

"I'm honored to have represented my home state and this great university the past seven seasons," Meyer said. "I want to thank Buckeye Nation, our students and faculty, our state high school coaches, Gene Smith for giving me this opportunity, my awesome family and most importantly our staff and student-athletes for all they've done during this time.

"My goal has always been to make this one of the premier and most comprehensive programs in America. It's always been a goal to see a healthy, strong program handed to an elite coach and person to make it even better."

At the time, Meyer had an 82-9 record as head coach and a 54-4 mark in the Big Ten with two conference titles and a national championship. Day, his replacement, had a 3-0 record as acting head coach but had never led a program at any level previously.

Gene Smith still felt comfortable enough to forgo a national search and put Day in charge.

"We all know the tremendous job he did and the challenging time," the AD said in regard to Day's term as acting head coach. "He led our program through unbelievable adversity earlier in the year. He offers us a terrific, terrific skill and talent. We're just so fortunate that he was here."

## 3. Buckeyes Thrash U-M In 'The Game'

Michigan was favored to beat Ohio State in Columbus for the first time since 2004. The Wolverines were ranked fourth and undefeated in the Big Ten while the Buckeyes were, at least at times, struggling to come away with wins vs. overmatched opponents.

This was supposed to be the year Jim Harbaugh finally found a way to beat Meyer, but instead the Buckeye head coach got to close his career with a perfect 7-0 record in The Game.

And Ohio State did it in style.

First, sophomore quarterback Dwayne Haskins hit freshman wideout Chris Olave for a 24-yard score. Then, after two Michigan

field goals, Haskins found Olave for another 24-yard touchdown and hit fifth-year senior Johnnie Dixon for a 31-yard strike. The rout was on, it seemed, before a couple of gaffes by Ohio State brought the score back to 24-19 at halftime.

That didn't matter, though, as the Buckeyes posted 17 unanswered points in the third quarter on the way to a resounding, 62-39, victory.

Haskins posted 396 passing yards and six touchdowns while Parris Campbell caught six passes for 192 yards and two fourth-quarter scores in the victory.

For the Buckeyes, it was a huge celebration and another high point in a rivalry that has been dominated by the Scarlet and Gray in the recent past. For Michigan and its seniors, it was a tough pill to swallow.

"That's the toughest part," Michigan safety Tyree Kinnel said. "I'm going to have to sleep on that the rest of my life. I wasn't able to win in this game."

## 4. OSU Coaching Legend Bruce Dies At 87

After a battle with Alzheimer's disease, Ohio State Hall of Fame coach Earle Bruce died at age 87 at his suburban Columbus home April 20.

Bruce attended Ohio State in the 1950s and first joined the coaching staff under Woody Hayes in 1966. After head coaching stops at Tampa (1972) and Iowa State (1973-78), Bruce was eventually hired in Columbus in 1979 as Hayes' replacement, and he went on to lead the Buckeyes to an 81-26-1 record over nine seasons, including five bowl wins and two trips to the Rose Bowl.

Bruce was also the man who initially brought Meyer to Columbus as a graduate

assistant in 1986, and he went on to be a central point of guidance for Meyer through the rest of his life.

In fact, his coaching tree includes multiple future Ohio State head coaches. Jim Tressel served as an assistant for Bruce from 1983-85 before eventually coaching the Buckeyes himself from 2001-10. Tressel, now the president of Youngstown State University, was one of the speakers at a memorial service held for Bruce at St. John Arena.

"Somebody asked me earlier in the week, 'How many years did you coach for Coach Bruce?' " Tressel said. "I said, 'Thirteen.' They said, 'You were an assistant for 13 years for Coach Bruce?' I said, 'No, I was an assistant coach for three years, but I was the head coach here for 10 years. But he was in the building, so really, I was an assistant coach for Earle for 10 more years.' That's just the reality of the situation."

Bruce's presence at Ohio State was felt throughout his career and the remainder of his life. From start to finish, he never stopped being a Buckeye.

### 5. Bosa Withdraws After Injury

Heading into the season, junior defensive end Nick Bosa was considered the top defensive player in the nation by many, and through the first three games, he certainly played like it – despite hardly playing in any of the three second halves.

During his appearances against Oregon State, Rutgers and TCU, Bosa tallied four sacks and six tackles for loss with a forced fumble and a fumble recovery for a touchdown. But in the second half against TCU, he left the game with a lower body injury that was eventually diagnosed as a core muscle injury. He had surgery the following



Nick Bosa

week, and on Oct. 16 the school announced that Bosa had opted to withdraw, instead focusing on his rehabilitation ahead of entering the 2019 NFL draft.

"I was hopeful that Nick would be able to return to play again for us," Meyer said. "I know this was an extremely difficult and emotional decision for Nick and his family, and I wish him well as he moves on to get himself 100 percent healthy and ready for his next chapter. I want to thank Nick for the remarkable efforts he gave for this program. He is a first-class young man who we have been honored to coach."

Bosa is widely projected to be the No. 1 overall pick in the upcoming draft.

### 6. Haskins Earns Heisman Invite, B1G Awards

For a first-year starter, Haskins had a pretty good year. In fact, he had the best statistical season for any quarterback in program history, and it wasn't close.

Through the Big Ten title game, Haskins had already set school records for a full season or single game in pretty much every major passing category. At that point, he had completed 348 of 496 passes (70.2 percent) for 4,580 yards and 47 touchdowns to eight interceptions. Those marks were good enough to earn first-team All-Big Ten honors, Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year, Big Ten Quarterback of the Year and the Chicago Tribune Silver Football as league MVP.

Haskins' play, highlighted by his 499-yard performance in the Big Ten title game, also earned him an invite to New York City as a Heisman Trophy finalist.

The signal caller ended up finishing third

in the vote as Oklahoma quarterback Tyler Murray took home the trophy after throwing for 4,053 yards and 40 touchdowns with seven interceptions while rushing for 892 yards and another 11 scores. Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa was second after throwing for 3,353 yards and 37 touchdowns with just four interceptions.

Haskins was the first Heisman finalist from OSU since Troy Smith won the award in 2006.

### 7. Holtmann Leads OSU Back To March Madness

Heading into the 2017-18 men's basketball season, longtime head coach Thad Matta was let go before Gene Smith pegged Chris Holtmann as his replacement – a story BSB covered in this space a year ago.

After the move, the Buckeyes didn't have high expectations heading into the season, but they took off when Big Ten play began. Ohio State opened league play 13-1 with wins over then-No. 1 Michigan State at home Jan. 7 and a victory on the road against then-No. 3 Purdue. The Buckeyes eventually finished second in the conference in the regular season and found themselves back in the NCAA Tournament as a five seed after missing out the previous two seasons.

The season eventually came to an end with a 90-84 loss to fourth-seeded Gonzaga in the round of 32, but the Buckeyes were never supposed to make it that far in the first place.

"We were supposed to be done a month ago," senior Jae'Sean Tate said. "So to just be able to come here and compete against an opponent that's going to the Sweet 16, we set the standard. We ended up coming up short, but I think the way we fought this year, we put Ohio State back on the map. It ended

short, but I wouldn't change it for the world." Holtmann's first season in charge ended with a 25-9 overall record and a 15-3 mark in the Big Ten while fourth-year junior Keita Bates-Diop was named the Big Ten Player of the Year after averaging 19.8 points and 8.7 rebounds per contest.

### 8. Buckeyes Fall At Purdue, 49-20

When the Ohio State football team arrived in West Lafayette, Ind., on Oct. 20, it had a perfect record and a No. 2 national ranking. Haskins was already drawing Heisman Trophy buzz, and the Buckeyes were looking destined for the College Football Playoff.

A road game at Ross-Ade Stadium turned out to be kryptonite for the Buckeyes.

By halftime, Ohio State already found itself in a 14-3 hole. The offense was moving the ball some, but the running game couldn't get on track. Heading into the fourth, the deficit had ballooned to 21-6, and nothing Ohio State did seemed to make much difference.

In the final frame, the Buckeyes scored twice, but the Boilermakers scored three touchdowns of 40 yards or more then returned an interception 41 yards for another score to ice a resounding, 49-20 victory.

"The glaring shortcomings we have ... were exposed," Meyer said. "The No. 1 (issue) off the top of my head is our red-zone offense. You go down there three times – two field goals, one missed field goal. You've got to score points. We've never had this issue, so we're going to get a real thorough evaluation of that and the big plays on defense."

Haskins threw for a then-school-record 470 yards in the loss – on 73 attempts – but

the running game managed just 76 yards on 25 rushes while the defense allowed Purdue to rack up 539 total yards, including 378 through the air.

### 9. Burrow Transfers After Spring QB Battle

When spring practice ended, there was no firm decision at quarterback for Ohio State as the Buckeyes tried to replace J.T. Barrett.

Haskins was considered by many as the likely pick, but junior Joe Burrow, who graduated at the end of the spring semester, had impressed as well. Both players looked ready to start at Ohio State.

"I know I'm going to get a bunch of questions about the quarterback," Meyer said after the spring game. "I'll go ahead and answer one of them right now, and that is we're going to have to make some decisions. Those decisions have not been made."

Before any public decision was announced, though, Burrow stated his intention to transfer to another school. On May 19, he announced that he was headed to LSU, picking the Tigers rather than staying in his home state to play for Cincinnati.

Burrow went on to win the starting job in Baton Rouge, throwing for 2,894 yards with 16 touchdowns and five interceptions in his first season with LSU.

### 10. Snyder Closes With Another Title

Kyle Snyder will be remembered as one of the greatest athletes to compete at Ohio

State, and his collegiate career came to a close May 18 after he captured his third individual national championship. The Buckeyes as a team finished second at the NCAA championships after clinching a Big Ten title earlier in the year.

Snyder, from Woodbine, Md., won three high school state titles, three individual collegiate titles, one team national title in college and was the gold medalist at 97kg at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. By the time his Ohio State career came to an end, he was a two-time world champion as well, making him one of the most decorated wrestlers in U.S. history.

### Honorable Mention

- On Dec. 2, the Ohio State football team dispatched Northwestern, 45-24, to win a second straight Big Ten title and the third of Meyer's seven-year career with the Buckeyes.

- On Sept. 29 in University Park, Pa., Ohio State found itself trailing Penn State, 26-14, with eight minutes on the clock. Haskins hit Binjimen Victor for a 47-yard touchdown less than two minutes later then found K.J. Hill for a 24-yard score with 2:03 to play to put the Buckeyes ahead, 27-26, marking a second straight come-from-behind win over the Nittany Lions.

- College Football Hall of Famer Jim Stillwagon, who played for the 1968 national championship winning Buckeyes, died in February at the age of 68.

- The men's and women's ice hockey teams both advanced to the Frozen Four in 2018 before falling in the semifinals.



Kyle Snyder

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# Losing Streak Part Of Growing Pains For Young Bucks

Imagine having exceeded expectations in your first season as head coach at a school by taking a stagnant program to a 25-9 record and earning an unexpected bid to the NCAA Tournament, only to hear people admonish you.

## COURT REPORT Craig Merz

That was the plight of Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann, who replaced Thad Matta on June 12, 2017.

In Holtmann's case there were folks who told him that he did too good a job last season, setting up the fans for unrealistic expectations, especially considering this season's team is far less experienced.

"The number of people who told me in the offseason, 'You made a critical error winning in your first year,' I could rattle off 100," Holtmann said Jan. 17. "Fans on the street (said), 'Coach, what were you doing, winning so much your first year?'"

It didn't help that the Buckeyes opened this season by winning 12 of their first 13 games and peaking at No. 14 in the Associated Press poll.

"When you go 12-1 it changes your perspective, everybody's expectations, thoughts," Holtmann said. "That's just reality."

Well, those who thought winning was a bad thing must have been satisfied when the Buckeyes went through their worst losing streak in 21 years, dropping five straight before a 70-60 win at Nebraska on Jan. 26 to improve to 13-6 overall and 3-5 in the Big Ten.

It's clear there is a vast difference from last season's team that featured 2018 Big Ten Player of the Year Keita Bates-Diop, the energetic play of Jae'Sean Tate and the veteran leadership of Andrew Dakich and Kam Williams. None returned for the 2018-



KEVIN DYE

**TOUGH CALLS** – Ohio State's leading scorer, sophomore forward Kaleb Wesson (34), has struggled to limit his fouls this season, leading to extended time spent on the bench.

19 edition of the Buckeyes which has four freshmen in the rotation.

"I did think with the number of new

freshmen and sophomores that we would be playing there's going to be some transition stuff happen," Holtmann said. "I went

into the season thinking that and now we're facing adversity with this group for the first time."

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# Win Vs. Huskers Snaps OSU's 5-Game Skid

By CRAIG MERZ  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Amid a difficult run in Big Ten play, the Ohio State men's basketball team lost to Maryland and Purdue at home before topping Nebraska on the road since BSB last went to press.

The win over the Cornhuskers moved the Buckeyes to 13-6 overall and 3-5 in conference play.

What follows are recaps of the losses to the Terrapins and Boilermakers and the win at Nebraska.

## Maryland 75, Ohio State 61

The longest losing streak of the Chris Holtmann era at Ohio State got longer Jan. 18 in Columbus.

The Buckeyes lost their fourth straight game to No. 19 Maryland, 75-61, as the Terrapins shot a solid 58.1 percent from the floor, including blistering 64.7 percent from behind the three-point arc. For comparison, Ohio State (12-5, 2-4 Big Ten) shot 23.1 percent (6 of 26) from long range in front of 14,716 at Value City Arena.

Defensively, the Buckeyes tried to trap, allowing Maryland (16-3, 7-1) some open looks on the outside.

"They got some threes off of our trapping," Holtmann said. "We were trying to keep our guys out of foul trouble, and (Maryland) did a really good job passing out of it. They shot it really well. They're a good shooting team."

Senior guard C.J. Jackson said he felt Ohio State was "going through the motions" on defense at times.

"We weren't really guarding with a purpose as to what we preach and what the coaches preach every day in practice," Jackson said. "We were just there, we were just kind of there. They were in a rhythm and when you give a good team like that a rhythm, they're going to make wide-open shots."

The first half was a back-and-forth affair that featured 11 lead changes and five tie scores. The Terps were finally able to make a push with more than five minutes to play

in the frame, going on an 8-0 spurt to take a 38-30 lead with 4:39 remaining in the half.

Ohio State cut the deficit to four after a layup from freshman guard Duane Washington at 1:05, but on the ensuing possession, Kaleb Wesson fouled Maryland's Jalen Smith on a three-point attempt. Smith cashed in all three free throws to extend the Terps' lead back to seven. Washington countered with a long-range jumper of his own before Maryland ended the first half with a corner three from Aaron Wiggins to take a 45-38 advantage into the locker room.

Trailing by seven at halftime, Ohio State scored the first six points of the second half, forcing Maryland head coach Mark Turgeon to call a timeout as Wesson scored a bucket and both Jackson and freshman guard Luther Muhammad converted on breakaway layups to bring the Buckeyes within a point.

Following the timeout, however, Maryland rattled off a 13-2 spurt to take a 58-46 lead at the 13:08 mark as the Buckeye defense routinely surrendered open looks to the Terps shooters. Ohio State would get only as close as six for the remainder of the game, the last time at 8:42 on a Wesson three-pointer.

"I don't take this win lightly," Turgeon said. "I think it's a heck of a win for our program."

Maryland shot 7 of 10 from beyond the arc in the opening frame, while Washington kept Ohio State close with 11 of his 14 points off the bench in the first half. Jackson led OSU with 15 for the game.

After committing 21 turnovers in a loss to Iowa on Jan. 12, Ohio State limited its giveaways to just 10 against the Terrapins, but the improvement wasn't enough to get the victory. Wesson, who had been limited in Ohio State's recent outings, largely stayed out of foul trouble but managed just 11 points in the loss.

Maryland's Anthony Cowan led all scorers with 20 on 5-of-13 shooting, and Fernando Bruno (13), Darryl Morsell (11), Wiggins (11) and Smith (10) were also in double figures.

## Purdue 79, Ohio State 67

A first-half skid doomed Ohio State to

its fifth straight defeat despite a valiant second-half effort when Purdue defeated the Buckeyes 79-67 on Jan. 23 for a rare win at Value City Arena.

OSU led 17-8 before the Boilermakers went on a 22-1 run for a 30-18 advantage that stretched to as many as 15 before junior Andre Wesson brought a roar from the crowd of 12,736 with a shot from just beyond mid-court at the buzzer to make it 39-29 at the half.

Despite Kaleb Wesson's continuing foul troubles, the Buckeyes (12-6, 2-5) were able to pull to within two points, 58-56, on threes by Andre Wesson and Musa Jallow midway through the half. The Boilermakers (13-6, 6-2) pulled away, however, with the help of Carsen Edwards, who had 27 points, 14 in the final 20 minutes. The Buckeyes would never get closer than three the rest of the way.

Ohio State lost its fifth in a row for the first time since a 17-game losing streak in the 1997-98 season.

"This is one that we really needed," Andre Wesson said. "We've been on a losing streak. When you lose four straight, you need it, you're desperate. That's what you saw."

He led the Buckeyes with a career-high 22 points, going 9 of 10 from the floor with his only miss coming with 3:09 left in the game on a three-point try.

His younger brother was limited to six points in just 16 minutes of action before fouling out with 4:43 remaining in the game.

Kaleb Wesson was involved in one of the pivotal moments in the game when he was whistled for his third foul with 1:42 left in the first half. The Westerville (Ohio) South product had his arms straight up yet was called for hitting Edwards in the head.

The crowd erupted and, after Edwards made his first shot of two shots from the charity stripe, Holtmann was hit with a technical foul. Edwards made the ensuing three free throws for a 39-24 lead.

"There's no question it was a critical call, and I made that clear to (the official) multiple times, in various ways, that that was a really critical point, that you're limiting one of our interior guys, and, currently, our leading scorer," Holtmann said. "I just adamantly disagreed with the call."

## Maryland 75, Ohio State 61

Jan. 18, 2019												
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio												
		1		2						F		
UMD (16-3, 7-1 B1G)		45		30		-		-		75		
OSU (12-5, 2-4 B1G)		38		23		-		-		61		
Maryland												
		Total		FG		FT		Reb.				
		Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.				
Fernando	33	5-6	3-3	3-12	4	3	13					
Smith	30	3-4	3-3	1-5	0	2	10					
Cowan	38	5-13	7-8	0-4	6	1	20					
Ayala	20	2-3	0-0	0-1	1	2	6					
Morsell	31	5-9	0-0	0-2	1	3	6					
Wiggins	23	4-7	0-0	0-3	0	2	11					
Smith	8	1-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	3					
Bender	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0					
Lindo	11	0-0	1-2	0-1	0	2	1					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>25-43</b>	<b>14-16</b>	<b>4-29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>75</b>					
<b>Percentages: FG: 58.1%. FT: 87.5%. 3-point goals: 11-17 (Smith 1-1, Cowan 3-7, Ayala 2-2, Morsell 1-2, Wiggins 3-4, Smith 1-1). Team rebounds: 1. Blocked shots: 2 (Fernando, Ayala). Turnovers: 19 (Smith 4, Cowan 4, Morsell 3, Fernando 2, Bender 2, Ayala, Wiggins, Smith, TEAM). Steals: 8 (Cowan 3, Morsell 2, Fernando, Ayala, Wiggins).</b>												
Ohio State												
		Total		FG		FT		Reb.				
		Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.				
A. Wesson	30	2-7	2-2	2-1	0	4	7					
K. Wesson	32	3-7	4-4	3-3	3	3	11					
Muhammad	29	1-7	0-0	1-2	2	0	2					
Jackson	38	6-15	2-2	0-3	2	1	15					
Woods	26	3-8	0-0	1-1	1	2	6					
Jallow	3	0-0	0-1	0-0	0	0	0					
Washington	21	5-10	1-2	1-5	0	0	14					
Ahrens	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0					
LeDee	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Young	14	3-3	0-1	2-1	0	4	6					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>23-59</b>	<b>9-12</b>	<b>10-16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>61</b>					
<b>Percentages: FG: 39.0%. FT: 75.0%. 3-point goals: 6-26 (A. Wesson 1-4, K. Wesson 1-3, Muhammad 0-2, Jackson 1-6, Woods 0-2, Washington 3-7, Ahrens 0-1, LeDee 0-1). Team rebounds: None. Blocked shots: None. Turnovers: 10 (Jackson 3, Woods 2, Young 2, A. Wesson, K. Wesson, Washington). Steals: 6 (Jackson 4, Muhammad, Young). Officials: Green, Simpson, Wymer. A: 14,716.</b>												

"I asked them coming out of halftime if they reviewed it and they said again it was a foul."

Wesson picked up his fourth foul, second on the offensive end, at 16:45 of the second half with the Buckeyes trailing 48-34. He returned with 5:34 left and OSU down 69-63 and fouled out 51 seconds later. The Boilermakers outscored Ohio State, 10-4, the rest of the way.

Even Purdue coach Matt Painter was sympathetic to the big man's plight.

"He didn't get a good whistle tonight," he said.

Wesson's absence was felt even more because Ohio State played its first game without sophomore forward Kyle Young, who sustained a stress fracture in his right leg that was diagnosed after the Maryland game on Jan. 18.

Without a big-man presence, the Buckeyes went small as Andre Wesson moved from forward to the five.

"We played differently offensively in the second half," Holtmann said. "We decided to run something different, and it just created a little more space."

Purdue, which improved to 3-13 at Value City Arena since it opened in 1998, outbounded the Buckeyes 30-23 and made 21 of 25 (84.0 percent) free throws. The Buckeyes went to the line 16 times, making 11 (68.8 percent). The Boilermakers also hit half their long-range shots (12 of 24), while going 23 of 48 from the field (47.9 percent).

Ohio State from the floor was 13 of 23 (56.5 percent) in the second half, including 8 of 16 from beyond the arc, and 23 of 44 (52.3 percent) for the game.

## Ohio State 70, Nebraska 60

Two struggling teams entered the brunch-time Big Ten matchup at Pinnacle Bank Arena in Lincoln, Neb., on Jan. 26.

Only Ohio State felt better afterward by defeating Nebraska 70-60 behind a career-



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# OHIO STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

## Purdue 79, Ohio State 67

Jan. 23, 2019									
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio									
	1	2	F						
<b>Purdue (13-6, 6-2 B1G)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>79</b>				
<b>OSU (12-6, 2-5 B1G)</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>67</b>				
Purdue	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Eifert	26	3-4	0-1	2-4	4	3	9		
Williams	13	4-6	2-3	3-0	0	4	10		
Edwards	38	6-16	11-13	0-4	4	2	27		
Cline	34	4-9	2-2	0-0	2	1	13		
Eastern	31	1-5	1-1	0-2	2	1	3		
Wheeler	14	1-3	0-0	2-2	1	1	3		
Hunter	9	2-2	0-0	0-1	0	0	5		
Boudreaux	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0		
Haarms	24	2-2	5-5	0-7	0	3	9		
Stefanovic	9	0-1	0-0	1-0	0	1	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>23-48</b>	<b>21-25</b>	<b>10-13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>79</b>		

**Percentages:** FG: 47.9%. FT: 84.0%. **3-point goals:** 12-24 (Eifert 3-4, Williams 0-1, Edwards 4-9, Cline 3-5, Wheeler 1-3, Hunter 1-1, Stefanovic 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 3 (Haarms 2, Wheeler). **Turnovers:** 18 (Edwards 7, Eastern 3, Williams 2, Eifert, Cline, Wheeler, Hunter, Boudreaux, Stefanovic). **Steals:** 8 (Edwards 5, Eifert, Williams, Cline).

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
A. Wesson	37	9-10	0-1	1-2	0	4	22		
K. Wesson	16	1-4	4-4	0-3	2	5	6		
Muhammad	33	3-6	3-4	0-2	1	1	10		
Jackson	34	2-7	2-2	0-1	3	2	7		
Washington	10	1-4	0-0	1-2	1	2	2		
Jallow	31	5-7	0-3	2-4	1	1	12		
Ahrens	17	2-5	0-0	0-5	1	1	6		
LeDee	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0		
Woods	17	0-1	2-2	0-0	2	2	2		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>23-44</b>	<b>11-16</b>	<b>4-19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>67</b>		

**Percentages:** FG: 52.3%. FT: 68.8%. **3-point goals:** 10-22 (A. Wesson 4-5, K. Wesson 0-1, Muhammad 1-2, Jackson 1-3, Washington 0-2, Jallow 2-4, Ahrens 2-5). **Team rebounds:** None. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Jallow). **Turnovers:** 19 (Jackson 5, Muhammad 3, Ahrens 3, K. Wesson 2, A. Wesson, Washington, Jallow, LeDee, Woods, TEAM). **Steals:** 9 (Jallow 5, Muhammad 2, A. Wesson, Jackson). **Officials:** Beaver, Dorsey, Szec. **A:** 12,736.

## Ohio State 70, Nebraska 60

Jan. 26, 2019									
Pinnacle Bank Arena • Lincoln, Neb.									
	1	2	F						
<b>OSU (13-6, 3-5 B1G)</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>70</b>				
<b>NEB (13-7, 3-6 B1G)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>60</b>				
Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
A. Wesson	31	4-9	1-1	2-1	0	2	10		
K. Wesson	25	3-8	0-3	2-9	1	4	7		
Muhammad	35	7-12	7-8	0-6	2	2	24		
Jallow	23	2-3	0-0	0-4	1	0	5		
Jackson	33	4-9	0-0	3-1	4	2	10		
Washington	8	1-5	0-0	0-2	0	1	2		
Ahrens	10	0-2	0-0	1-2	0	0	0		
LeDee	10	0-2	3-4	1-2	0	1	3		
Woods	25	3-8	2-2	3-3	0	2	9		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>24-58</b>	<b>13-18</b>	<b>14-31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>70</b>		

**Percentages:** FG: 41.4%. FT: 72.2%. **3-point goals:** 9-27 (A. Wesson 1-5, K. Wesson 1-1, Muhammad 3-4, Jallow 1-2, Jackson 2-6, Washington 0-2, Ahrens 0-2, Woods 1-5). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Jallow). **Turnovers:** 13 (K. Wesson 4, Jackson 3, Muhammad, Jallow, Ahrens, LeDee, Woods, TEAM). **Steals:** 8 (Muhammad 3, Jackson 2, Woods 2, K. Wesson).

Nebraska	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Copeland	15	3-5	0-0	0-1	0	1	8		
Roby	32	3-6	0-0	1-8	3	5	7		
Palmer	36	7-17	2-3	2-1	4	2	19		
Watson	32	5-10	7-7	0-1	1	2	18		
Allen	34	2-11	0-0	1-3	1	0	5		
Harris	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Borchardt	25	1-3	1-2	3-5	1	2	3		
Aktenen	15	0-4	0-0	0-1	0	1	0		
Thorbjarnarso	1	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	2	0		
Heiman	9	0-2	0-0	0-1	0	1	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>21-58</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>7-24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>60</b>		

**Percentages:** FG: 36.2%. FT: 83.3%. **3-point goals:** 8-22 (Copeland 2-3, Roby 1-1, Palmer 3-6, Watson 1-4, Allen 1-5, Aktenen 0-3). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Allen). **Turnovers:** 11 (Roby 4, Copeland 2, Palmer 2, Watson, Allen, Harris). **Steals:** 5 (Allen 3, Borchardt, Heiman). **Officials:** Schumer, Curry, Simpson. **A:** 15,890.

high 24 points from Muhammad to end the Buckeyes' longest losing streak in 21 years.

"I was really proud of our guys' effort for this one here today," Holtmann said after the game. "I thought that we came in and played a really good team that's really well-coached in a tremendous environment."

Nebraska was within two possessions at 62-56 with 1:02 left, but Muhammad made all six of his free throws down the stretch and Woods added a pair of his own to help stop the losing streak at five games for the Buckeyes (13-6, 3-5).

Muhammad's previous high was 15 vs. High Point on Dec. 29. He had 18 in the second half vs. the Cornhuskers.

Jackson and Andre Wesson each had 10 points for the Buckeyes to send the sellout crowd of 15,890 home unhappy from a game that tipped off at 11 a.m. local time.

James Palmer had 19 points and Glynn Watson 18 for the Cornhuskers (13-7, 3-6), who have lost three straight and five of seven.

"Right now, it feels to me and looks to me like we just can't get out of our own way," Nebraska coach Tim Miles said.

Nebraska suffered a blow early in the second half when forward Isaac Copeland, who averages 14.3 points and 5.6 rebounds, left the game with a knee injury. He had eight points in 15 minutes.

The Buckeyes ran off eight straight points to assume a 44-38 lead with 13:21 to go in the game. A pair of foul shots by freshman Jaedon LeDee tied the game at 38, Jackson had a tip for two and Muhammad followed with a jumper. Kaleb Wesson's basket increased the lead to six.

That was part of a 20-5 run that pushed the lead to 56-43 with 7:56 left. The Buckeyes at one point hit four of five from beyond the arc with Muhammad making two and Kaleb Wesson and Jackson also connecting.

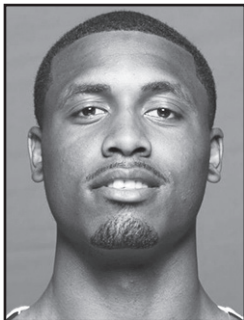
Nebraska responded after a timeout with

six consecutive points by Watson to make it 56-49, but Muhammed came back with a three-pointer as the shot clock expired to make it 59-49 with under five minutes left.

"I thought we did a much better job taking care of the ball in the second half," Holtmann said. "I thought we were smarter in the second half in some areas. We struggled to open the second half defending them, but I thought we got a lot of contributions from a lot of guys."

The Buckeyes had nine turnovers in the first half, but only four in the second.

OSU went into the game wanting to take the crowd out of it and did so, although it took a while.



Luther Muhammad

The Buckeyes ended the first half on a 12-2 run for their biggest lead of the first 20 minutes at 29-24. The Cornhuskers helped by missing nine of their final 10 shots after a strong start.

"This is my first time coaching here, but I've heard so much about this environment here," Holtmann said. "It's a beautiful place, the fans are terrific and right on top of you. That was

somewhat critical for us, trying to keep them as quiet as possible, and that's hard with this environment."

Nebraska jumped to a 17-12 lead midway through the first half, and Holtmann took Kaleb Wesson out after his third turnover and went to the smallish lineup with Jallow, Washington, Ahrens, Woods and Andre Wesson.

Woods' rebound bucket put OSU ahead 23-22 at the 5:22 mark, and Andre Wesson made it 25-22 with a reverse layup before Watson countered for the Huskers. Washington had a layup and Muhammad a steal and a dunk with a minute left for the halftime score.

Kaleb Wesson, who has been plagued by foul trouble during the losing streak played 25 minutes and had seven points while grabbing a game-high 11 rebounds. The Buckeyes dominated the boards 45-31, with 14 rebounds at the offensive end.

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The screenshot shows the Buckeye Sports Bulletin website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, SPORTS, FORUM, BSB ONLINE, EAT & STAY, and a LOG IN button. The main content area features a large image of a hockey player in action, with the text "MEN'S HOCKEY: BIG THIRD PERIOD CARRIES NO. 4 OHIO STATE PAST MICHIGAN 4-2". Below this, there are several news snippets: "No. 16 Ohio State drops third straight with 72-62 loss at Iowa", "Men's Hockey: No. 4 Buckeyes fall 2-1 to Michigan", and "Ohio State Cornerback Damon Arnette Returning For Senior Season". Each snippet includes a "READ MORE" link.

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# OSU Showing Promise Despite Inconsistency

When the Ohio State women's basketball team assembled for the 2018-19 season, head coach Kevin McGuff hardly had an idea of his starting five, let alone what he thought each player's role would be.

## DOUBLE DRIBBLE Garrett Stepien

Nearing the midway point of Big Ten play, though, the Buckeyes are settling in. After an 0-3 start to the conference slate, OSU ripped off three straight wins to even its record, reaching .500 before two tough losses dropped McGuff's squad back down.

Ohio State initially overcame its opening three defeats – 60-42 at Purdue on Dec. 28, 78-69 vs. Nebraska on Dec. 31 and 75-69 at Maryland on Jan. 5 – with victories against then-No. 25 Indiana (55-50, Jan. 10) and then-No. 17 Michigan State (65-55, Jan. 14), topped off by an overtime triumph at Penn State (76-71, Jan. 17). But the Buckeyes drew the short end of the stick on Jan. 20 at Michigan, losing 62-58, before No. 11 Maryland pulled out a 70-57 victory on Jan. 24.

The contest with the Terrapins in particular showed OSU what its capabilities are as the rotation's seven newcomers – four graduate transfers and three freshmen – put up a fight.

"It's frustrating," McGuff said Jan. 24 when asked by BSB about Ohio State's bat-

les with Maryland. "Maryland's a great team and obviously this could have been a huge win, but we didn't get there and Maryland played well – I thought, in the second half, especially. But it is frustrating, just knowing that we're right there. We just can't get over the hump."

Peaks and valleys have been a constant for the Buckeyes as they come together after stumbling out of the gate to commence the campaign. OSU opened 1-2 after getting routed by a pair of ranked teams – then-No. 22 South Florida (71-47) and then-No. 2 Connecticut (85-53) – around a 55-41 win over Detroit Mercy to start the nonconference slate.

After an 18-day layoff, Ohio State raised eyebrows with victories against North Carolina (76-69) and Cincinnati (69-56) to get back on track and then followed a 69-59 setback at Washington on Dec. 5 with a 46-41 edge of Florida on Dec. 16. The Buckeyes backtracked into Big Ten play after defeats against Butler (66-53, Dec. 20) and Virginia Tech (81-73, Dec. 21) at the West Palm Beach (Fla.) Invitational.

Despite the mixed results since the conference schedule picked up, gritty wins of late over the ranked Hoosiers and Spartans – plus an 18-point comeback against the Nittany Lions in the last seven minutes of regulation – have given McGuff reasons for optimism.

"We've gotten better throughout the year," McGuff said. "I thought we've played really hard in every conference game and competed and given ourselves a chance

## OSU Women's Basketball Signees & Verbal Commits

Players in the class of 2019 who have signed letters of intent to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School/Hometown
Kierstan Bell	G	6-1	★★★★★	Canton (Ohio) McKinley
Rikki Harris	G	5-11	★★★★★	Indianapolis North Central
Kaelynn Satterfield	W	6-0	★★★★★	Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ The King
Jacy Sheldon	G	5-7	★★★★★	Dublin (Ohio) Coffman
Aixa Wone	F	6-2	★★★	Pamplona, Spain

Players in the class of 2020 who have issued verbal commitments to play basketball at Ohio State.

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Stars	High School
Gabby Hutcherson	F	6-2	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South
Anysa Jones	G	5-9	★★★	Westerville (Ohio) South

to win. We won some good games. We've lost some tough ones, though. I just think, with this group, we've just got to stay with it. We've got to keep getting better. We've got to keep staying focused, and we'll get prepared for these games."

Graduate guard Carly Santoro echoed those sentiments. Despite her previous three years spent playing Division I basketball at Bowling Green, the Big Ten is certainly a step up from the MAC, and even she has had to fight past growing pains as OSU collectively adjusts on the fly.

"There's always positives each game – no matter what – if we win or lose," Santoro said. "We obviously went out there and competed and played hard (against Maryland), but we can still go and compete harder and play harder every single night. And that's what we're going to do in practice – we're going to focus on some of the things we messed up on, fix them and get ready for (the next game)."

### Buckeyes Slowed By Juhasz's Injury

When Ohio State sent out its starting five against Maryland, a noticeable player was missing. Dorka Juhasz plopped down on OSU's bench. In a gray sweat suit, she watched and rooted on her teammates but sat for the game.

After the game, McGuff revealed the reason Ohio State's freshman forward – the team's top scorer and rebounder with averages of 12.1 points and 8.3 boards in 16 contests – was held out.

"She's got an ankle sprain that she sustained in the Michigan game," McGuff said. "Coming out of this, she'll be day-to-day."

McGuff said Juhasz sprained her ankle when she posted 10 points and grabbed a team-high seven rebounds in the Buckeyes' loss at Michigan. In the four-day period between OSU's games against the Wolverines and Maryland, Juhasz rehabbed with team athletic trainer Jennifer Novak.

"(Juhasz) hasn't done a whole lot (in Ohio State's practices since the injury),"

McGuff said. "She's been working really hard in rehab and we're kind of going to see where she is. We're off (Jan. 25), so we'll see where we're at (Jan. 26) and we're hopeful she can get in some practices here the next few days and be ready on (Jan. 28 at Minnesota). We're hopeful, but we don't know yet."

Without Juhasz, the Buckeyes struggled to keep Maryland off the glass with the Terps gaining a 35-31 edge. OSU held its own against the Terps in the post, matching points in the paint but running out of gas as the second half slipped away.

"She was missed, especially in this game with how good Maryland's post players are," McGuff said of Juhasz. "In the first half, we did fine on the boards. We kind of got worn out in the second half and they beat us up on the glass. She helps with that. She's got a real physical presence around the basket that we didn't have. And then obviously we struggled to score at times, and she's one of our best scorers."

In Juhasz's place, Ohio State turned to another freshman forward. Aaliyah Patty produced with nine points, four rebounds and one block, but she committed six turnovers against the Terps.

"You know what? I thought that she played hard," McGuff said of Patty. "She competed and that was a tough challenge with playing against Maryland, which has some of the best post players in the Big Ten."

Santoro shared the same thoughts. The Buckeyes were forced to roll with a short bench without Juhasz.

"We all just said each of us have to step up in all of our roles," Santoro said. "A.P. came in and she was a solid post presence. Obviously, we're going to miss Dorka – she's big to our team – but we're going to continue fighting, with or without her, and she's going to be back sooner rather than later. But as of now, we're just going to keep working hard, no matter what."

Juhasz has grown up fast, providing OSU a versatile and athletic post presence its



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2018-19 Ohio State Women's Basketball Statistics

7-10 Overall (3-5 Big Ten)  
Statistics through games of Jan. 24

Player	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	Rebounds		PF-FO	A	TO	BS	ST	Pts.-Avg.
									O-D	T-Avg.						
Dorka Juhasz	16-16	446-27.9	72-160	.450	12-43	.279	37-59	.627	36-97	133-8.3	28-0	12	37	8	21	193-12.1
Carly Santoro	17-17	530-31.2	60-154	.390	26-77	.338	40-65	.615	27-49	76-4.5	32-0	24	38	2	20	186-10.9
M. Waterman	17-17	549-32.3	46-128	.359	4-23	.174	34-48	.708	38-53	91-5.4	57-3	29	44	25	18	130-7.6
Carmen Grande	17-17	573-33.7	40-144	.278	15-51	.294	26-29	.897	12-48	60-3.5	49-0	84	50	1	30	121-7.1
Janai Crooms	17-7	361-21.2	47-105	.448	9-22	.409	14-38	.368	4-42	46-2.7	32-1	23	47	10	12	117-6.9
Aaliyah Patty	17-1	296-17.4	43-93	.462	1-16	.063	13-20	.650	15-51	66-3.9	49-3	3	28	15	11	100-5.9
Adreana Miller	17-9	272-16.0	21-75	.280	16-42	.381	13-19	.684	13-17	30-1.8	34-1	5	16	3	3	71-4.2
Jensen Caretti	13-0	126-9.7	18-43	.419	4-13	.308	7-10	.700	4-14	18-1.4	3-0	7	10	5	4	47-3.6
Najah Queenland	17-1	273-16.1	21-47	.447	6-17	.353	9-13	.692	13-27	40-2.4	28-0	17	24	1	11	57-3.4
TEAM									28-35	63-3.7					4	
<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3,425</b>	<b>368-949</b>	<b>.388</b>	<b>93-304</b>	<b>.306</b>	<b>193-301</b>	<b>.641</b>	<b>190-433</b>	<b>623-36.6</b>	<b>312-3</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1,022-60.1</b>
<b>Opponents</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3,425</b>	<b>381-957</b>	<b>.398</b>	<b>106-323</b>	<b>.328</b>	<b>232-323</b>	<b>.718</b>	<b>177-437</b>	<b>614-36.1</b>	<b>312-2</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1,100-64.7</b>



SONNY BROCKWAY

**BOOSTING THE BUCKS – Graduate guard Carly Santoro (10) is second among Ohio State players with 10.9 points per game this season.**

retooled team needs. As conference competition continues, with or without Juhasz, McGuff looks for more than just Patty to step up.

"It's next person up," McGuff said. "We had Dorka out and that's a tough one to overcome, but we've got other capable people. I like how Carly responded with that and kind of rose to

the challenge, and maybe we get Dorka back at some point with Carly still going – just have a few more scoring threats out there."

**Santoro Providing Scoring Boost**

Even before Juhasz's injury, Santoro stepped up to the plate for Ohio State.

Beginning in the Buckeyes' upset of Michigan State, in which Santoro scored a season-high 25 points, her production has risen in recent Big Ten games. She also led the team in points with 16 at Michigan, followed by 23 against Maryland.

"I thought (Santoro) played hard, she competed," McGuff said following the game with the Terps. "She played aggressively throughout. I thought we were a little bit inconsistent as a team, in terms of how aggressive we played on the offensive end, to try to generate points. But she was pretty consistent throughout, which is why she was able to put some points up."

Santoro came to Columbus from Bowling Green with averages of 12.8 points and 8.7 rebounds as a junior in the Falcons' 2017-18 season. Seventeen games into her one-year stint with the Scarlet and Gray, Santoro sat behind only Juhasz as second on the team in points (10.9), while stacking up as its top three-point shooter with 26 makes from long range. As her time on the floor increases, her confidence grows.

"Obviously, being a grad transfer, they wanted me to come in and be a scorer and just have a good role," Santoro said. "And each night, I'm going to do whatever it takes for my team to win. Obviously, (against the Terps) I needed to step up into more of a scoring role without Dorka, so that's what I did. Each night, it's going to be something different and that's what I do. That's my role."

**All-American Game Selects Ohio State Signee**

Reinforcements are on the way for Ohio State in 2019. While the Buckeyes have to wait until the summer to get all five signees from their recruiting class, nationally ranked fourth by ESPN, they can take comfort in the fact that one future Buckeye is an All-American.

On Jan. 24, Canton (Ohio) McKinley five-star guard Kierstan Bell became OSU's only recruit to be named one of 24 McDonald's All-Americans. Bell is ESPN's No. 6 overall prospect for the 2019 class.

"It was great, it was well deserved," McGuff said of Bell's selection Jan. 24. "She's an unbelievable player – just an amazing talent. We're obviously thrilled to have her coming to Ohio State. We can't wait to get her here and kind of get her in the fold."

In the 42nd McDonald's All-American Game, Bell will play for the West Team March 27 at State Farm Arena in Atlanta. Bell is one of four players from Ohio in the showcase – Columbus Africentric guard Jordan Horston (Tennessee), Toledo Rogers guard Zia Cooke (South Carolina) and Mason wing Sammie Puisis (Florida State) are on the East Team.

**BIG Women's Basketball**

	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Rutgers	8	1	.889	16	4	.800
Maryland	7	2	.778	18	2	.900
Iowa	7	2	.778	16	4	.800
Purdue	6	3	.667	15	7	.682
Northwestern	5	3	.625	12	7	.632
Indiana	5	4	.556	16	5	.762
Michigan State	5	4	.556	15	5	.750
Nebraska	4	5	.444	9	11	.450
<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>.375</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>.412</b>
Michigan	3	6	.333	12	9	.571
Penn State	3	6	.333	10	10	.500
Minnesota	2	6	.250	13	6	.684
Wisconsin	2	7	.222	11	10	.524
Illinois	1	7	.125	9	10	.474

**Jan. 14 Scores**

Ohio State 65, Michigan State 55  
Iowa 81, Minnesota 63

**Jan. 16 Scores**

Rutgers 65, Purdue 63  
Northwestern 75, Indiana 69

**Jan. 17 Scores**

Michigan State 77, Maryland 60  
Iowa 75, Michigan 61

Minnesota 78, Wisconsin 50  
**Ohio State 76, Penn State 71 (OT)**  
Nebraska 77, Illinois 67

**Jan. 20 Scores**

Maryland 79, Penn State 67  
Rutgers 76, Michigan State 62

Purdue 56, Indiana 53  
Iowa 94, Illinois 75

**Michigan 62, Ohio State 58**  
Northwestern 72, Wisconsin 46  
Nebraska 63, Minnesota 57

**Jan. 23 Score**

Iowa 72, Rutgers 66

**Jan. 24 Scores**

Indiana 70, Michigan 60  
Michigan State 77, Illinois 60

**Maryland 70, Ohio State 57**  
Purdue 64, Minnesota 53  
Northwestern 58, Nebraska 54  
Penn State 65, Wisconsin 59

**Jan. 27 Scores**

Maryland 76, Indiana 56  
Michigan State 77, Michigan 73  
Rutgers 69, Penn State 61  
Iowa 72, Purdue 58  
Northwestern 64, Illinois 56  
Wisconsin 70, Nebraska 69

**Jan. 28 Game**

Ohio State at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.

**Jan. 31 Games**

Iowa at Michigan, 6 p.m.  
Wisconsin at Maryland, 7 p.m.  
Penn State at Michigan State, 7 p.m.  
Indiana at Rutgers, 7 p.m.

**Illinois at Ohio State, 7 p.m.**  
Minnesota at Northwestern, 8 p.m.  
Nebraska at Purdue, 8 p.m.

**Feb. 3 Games**

Purdue at Michigan State, 2 p.m.  
Iowa at Penn State, 2 p.m.  
Indiana at Nebraska, 3 p.m.  
Michigan at Wisconsin, 3 p.m.  
Rutgers at Minnesota, 4 p.m.

**Ohio State at Northwestern, 4:30 p.m.**  
**Feb. 4 Game**  
Maryland at Illinois, 7:30 p.m.

**Feb. 6 Games**

Minnesota at Indiana, 7 p.m.  
**Penn State at Ohio State, 7 p.m.**

**Feb. 7 Games**

Northwestern at Maryland, 6:30 p.m.  
Illinois at Purdue, 7 p.m.  
Nebraska at Michigan, 7 p.m.  
Michigan State at Iowa, 9 p.m.

**Feb. 10 Games**

Maryland at Rutgers, 2 p.m.  
Northwestern at Minnesota, 2 p.m.  
Michigan at Penn State, 2 p.m.  
Wisconsin at Illinois, 3 p.m.  
Purdue at Nebraska, 3 p.m.

**Iowa at Ohio State, 4 p.m.**



## OHIO STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

### Maryland 70, Ohio State 57

Jan. 24, 2019									
Value City Arena • Columbus, Ohio									
	1	2	3	4	F				
<b>UMD (17-2, 6-2)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>70</b>				
<b>OSU (7-10, 3-5)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>57</b>				
Maryland	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Austin	26	3-8	2-9	5-6	1	2	8		
Jones	34	7-12	6-7	1-3	3	2	20		
Charles	19	2-4	4-4	0-3	0	4	8		
Mikesell	36	5-10	1-1	0-3	7	1	14		
Watson	20	2-5	1-2	0-4	1	3	7		
Fraser	13	1-1	0-0	2-2	0	1	2		
Lewis	21	2-4	0-0	0-1	3	1	5		
Vujacic	24	3-5	0-0	1-2	0	4	6		
Myers	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0		
Owens	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>25-49</b>	<b>14-23</b>	<b>10-25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>70</b>		

**Percentages:** FG: 51.0%. FT: 60.9%. **3-point goals:** 6-14 (Mikesell 3-7, Watson 2-5, Lewis 1-1, Vujacic 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 2. **Blocked shots:** 3 (Austin 2, Charles). **Turnovers:** 23 (Mikesell 7, Lewis 3, Austin 2, Jones 2, Charles 2, Watson 2, Fraser 2, Vujacic 2, TEAM). **Steals:** 8 (Austin 2, Jones 2, Mikesell 2, Fraser, Vujacic).

Ohio State	Total	FG	FT	Reb.					
	Min.	M-A	M-A	O-D	A	PF	Pts.		
Waterman	27	2-10	0-0	2-3	1	3	4		
Patty	24	4-7	1-2	3-1	0	4	9		
Grande	38	2-8	2-2	1-2	4	3	6		
Crooms	33	2-9	1-2	0-2	3	2	6		
Santoro	31	10-18	0-1	3-3	0	0	23		
Miller	27	1-4	2-2	3-1	0	5	5		
Caretti	9	0-2	4-4	0-3	0	1	4		
Queenland	11	0-1	0-0	0-1	1	0	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>21-59</b>	<b>10-13</b>	<b>14-17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>57</b>		

**Percentages:** FG: 35.6%. FT: 76.9%. **3-point goals:** 5-17 (Waterman 0-1, Grande 0-2, Crooms 1-4, Santoro 3-6, Miller 1-3, Queenland 0-1). **Team rebounds:** 3. **Blocked shots:** 1 (Miller). **Turnovers:** 19 (Patty 6, Crooms 4, Miller 3, Waterman 2, TEAM 2, Grande, Caretti). **Steals:** 11 (Grande 6, Santoro 2, Waterman, Crooms, Caretti). **Officials:** Zentz, Hall, Smith. **A:** 3,962.

said Michigan head coach Kim Barnes Arico. "And I think us scoring, our fans behind us, the crowd getting rowdy, we were able to get stops. And not only were we able to get stops, but we came up with the rebounds. And I think our kids were really selling out, doing everything they could to come up with those rebounds down the stretch."

Santoro scored a team-high 16 points for OSU (7-9, 3-4), which shot 45.7 percent (21 of 46) from the field but only 29.4 percent (5 of 17) on three-pointers compared to U-M's marks of 46.2 percent (24 of 52) and 40.0 percent (6 of 15).

Michigan's double-digit duo of Hillmon (game-high 20 points) and Munger (18 points) combined for 38 of its 62 points. Outside of Santoro, Crooms (11 points) and Juhasz (10 points) were the only Buckeyes in double figures.

### Maryland 70, Ohio St. 57

Without its top scorer and rebounder as Juhasz (12.1 points and 8.3 rebounds) sat near the end of the bench in a gray sweat suit, out for the night with a sprained ankle, the Ohio State women's basketball team fell to No. 11 Maryland, 70-57, on Jan. 24 at Value City Arena in Columbus.

The Buckeyes tried to pick up the slack with Santoro's game-high 23 points and team-high six rebounds, followed by freshman forward Aaliyah Patty's nine points on 4-of-7 shooting, but it wasn't enough to keep pace with the Terrapins down the stretch.

The loss meant OSU (7-10, 3-5) was unable to avenge its 75-69 defeat Jan. 5 at XFINITY Center in College Park, Md. Maryland (17-2, 6-2) rode Stephanie Jones (20 points) and Massillon (Ohio) Jackson product Taylor Mikesell (14 points) in double figures to pull off its latest win.

"I thought that, for the most part, we played hard, physically, and in the first half, really competed with great competitive character," McGuff said. "But in the second half, when things didn't go our way, I thought we continued to play hard, but mentally, we allowed some of those mistakes to really carry over to the next play, the next play and allowed Maryland to go on runs."

Maryland jumped out in front 5-0 in the first 55 seconds on Mikesell's three-pointer and Shakira Austin's layup, extending its lead to

8-2 just 2:15 into the game with Patty's layup at the 8:07 mark as Ohio State's only bucket. The Buckeyes put together a 9-0 run with points from Patty, Crooms and Santoro for an 11-8 edge before a back-and-forth final 3:59 resulted in an 18-18 tie to close the frame.

The Terps started the second quarter with the first five points again before OSU answered on layups from Santoro and Patty to stop the drought and make it 23-22 at the 3:53 mark. Maryland led 32-28 at the half.

After the Terrapins opened the third quarter on a 6-3 spurt to take a 38-31 advantage 1:28

into the frame, the Buckeyes responded with a 7-0 run that featured five straight points from Santoro to even the score at 38 at the 6:22 mark. Maryland retook the lead and stretched the margin back to 45-38, but OSU answered once more on an 8-3 spurt to close the gap to 48-46 at the 2:21 mark after fifth-year senior forward Makayla Waterman's layup.

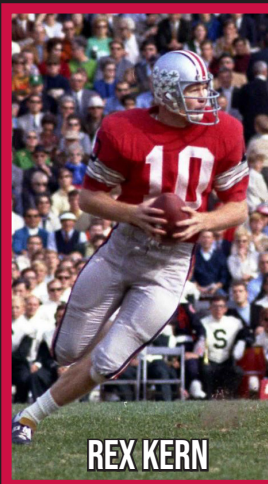
Maryland, however, surged into the fourth quarter after its 6-0 run in the third quarter's last 1:51 to make the score 54-46 heading into the last frame. The momentum spilled into the game's final 10 minutes, where the Terrapins

scored the first seven points and stretched their run to 13-0 until they finally surrendered an Ohio State basket at the 5:57 mark on Miller's corner triple that made it 61-49.

The Buckeyes never got closer than 11 after that.

"I don't want to use the word 'frustrating' because we can't get frustrated, no matter what," Santoro said when asked about staying with Maryland for three quarters or more before fading down the stretch in each of Ohio State's two meetings against its ranked Big Ten foe. "We just have to keep working."

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# Skaters On Track For Rare Regular-Season Title

Ohio State is set up for an historic finish to the regular season with 10 games left.

The Buckeyes had an open weekend Jan. 25-26 but maintained their lead in the Big Ten despite the other six teams competing in conference play. OSU has a four-point lead (29-25) over Notre Dame in one fewer league game. Minnesota is third with 24 points but has played two more games than the Buckeyes.

## IN THE CREASE Craig Merz

Now, with 10 games to go, OSU (15-5-4, 8-3-3-2 Big Ten) has a chance to win a conference regular-season title for the second time in school history, the other being the inaugural season of the Central Collegiate Hockey Association in 1971-72.

Back then, the Buckeyes were tops among four teams with an 8-4-0 league record and 24-5-0 overall mark. They also won the postseason tournament. Ohio State's other championship came in the 2004 CCHA tournament.

The current team isn't thinking ahead to another title because the No. 3 Buckeyes have four road and six home games remaining.

"We can't get stuck looking at the standings," junior defenseman Matt Miller said. "That's when you get comfortable, and that's when stuff doesn't go your way."

The break comes at a good time with several players able to use the downtime to recover from injuries. Junior Tanner Laczynski sustained a shoulder injury against Penn State on Jan. 19 and likely would have been doubtful if the Buckeyes had played the following weekend.

"Having this week off to recover is huge for us right now," Miller said.

Also, freshman Gustaf Westlund was still working his way back from missing

the Michigan series Jan. 11-12 because of an injury. Although he had three goals and two assists in two games vs. Penn State the following weekend, he wasn't at full strength.

"His not 100 percent was pretty good," OSU coach Steve Rohlik joked.

Rohlik said the open weekend came at great spot in the schedule.

"The focus is getting better this week by rehabbing, by teaching and getting ready for the stretch run," Rohlik said. "We know there's no more stops the rest of the way. This is an important week for us. This is our last break."

There are more than just bragging rights at stake in winning the conference. Finishing first would earn a quarterfinal bye and allow the Buckeyes to host a semifinal at Value City Arena on March 17 with a chance to play for the title there on March 24.

Also, it would help in seeding for the NCAA tournament and possibly one of four regional top seeds for a second straight season. The Buckeyes last season reached the Frozen Four for the second time, the other being in 1998.

Ohio State starts the stretch drive at home vs. Notre Dame on Feb. 1 (7 p.m.) and 2 (8 p.m.). The Buckeyes play at Wisconsin on Feb. 8-9, return to Value City Arena for 6 p.m. games Feb. 15-16 vs. Minnesota and go to Michigan on Feb. 22-23.

Michigan State visits Columbus on March 1 (6:30 p.m.) and 2 (5 p.m.) to wrap up the regular season.

### Same As It Was

The Buckeyes have the identical record as last season after 24 games with the difference being in conference where they were second to Notre Dame, which opened league play with 15 straight wins and coasted to the title from there.

Having the same record as a year ago might come as a surprise.

"It seems like we were almost struggling at the beginning of the year, but when you look at the standings and our record, we're on a pretty good path," Miller said.

Much of it has to do with expectations. The Buckeyes ascended to the top ranking in the country the first week of the season because of their veteran group led by seniors Mason Jobst and Dakota Joshua, junior Tanner Laczynski and the goaltending duo of senior Sean Romeo and sophomore Tommy Nappier.

The Buckeyes appear to be peaking at the right time. They have won three

straight and are 7-1-3 in the past 11 games.

### Ryan's Hope

Former Buckeye standout Ryan Dzingel returned to Columbus on Dec. 31 with the Ottawa Senators looking to break out of a slump. Being in familiar surroundings may have helped because he scored twice in a 6-3 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets.

"I texted him before the game," Rohlik said. "I said I had a good feeling you're probably going to score a Gino (hockey slang for goal). I didn't know it would be two."

"I was rooting for him individually and rooting for a Blue Jackets win, and it turned out pretty good for me."

Dzingel played for the Buckeyes from 2011-12 through his junior season of 2013-14 when he became an All-American with 46 points (22 goals, 24 assists).

"I got to see a couple of my old buddies, teammates," Dzingel said. "It's been five years now. It's sad. I'm getting older but every year it's nice to come back and see everybody."

He said he follows the Buckeyes as much as he can.

"I don't know anyone left (at OSU) except for Rohls," he said. "He's still a mentor and a good friend to me. I still talk to him a little bit. Rohls has done a great job. It goes to him and how great a coach he is."

Dzingel's final season was Rohlik's first as head coach, having been promoted from an assistant when Mark Osiecki was fired.

"You kind of get to be buddy-buddy with the assistant coaches, not so much with the head coach so I got to know him more," Dzingel said of Rohlik. "A really good guy. I can't say enough good things about him. I like him as a friend and a guy who helps me."

He praised the work Rohlik has done to make OSU a premier program.

"College hockey is tough," Dzingel said. "We had four guys from my class my junior year that signed with the NHL that played games. We were all on the same team and we couldn't get the job done, so I know how tough it is. Kudos to him."

As he noted, Max McCormick (Ottawa), Tanner Fritz (New York Islanders) and Anthony Greco (Florida Panthers) also made it to the NHL. In fact, Greco made his NHL debut, his lone game so far, on Dec. 13 at the Minnesota Wild.

"One thing it states about Ohio State hockey is we have all the resources in the world to develop you to get to the next



Steve Rohlik

## BIG Men's Hockey

	Pts.	W	L	T	SW	GF	GA
Ohio State	29	8	3	3	2	49	29
Notre Dame	25	7	6	2	2	39	42
Minnesota	24	7	6	3	0	54	45
Michigan	21	5	6	4	2	43	45
Penn State	20	6	9	1	1	62	68
Wisconsin	20	5	5	4	1	42	45
Michigan State	20	5	8	3	2	45	60

**Overall records – Ohio State 15-5-4**, Notre Dame 14-8-3, Minnesota 10-11-4, Michigan 9-10-6, Penn State 14-10-2, Wisconsin 9-11-4, Michigan State 9-13-4.

### Jan. 18 Scores

**Ohio State 4, Penn State 1**  
Notre Dame 6, Wisconsin 4

### Jan. 19 Scores

**Ohio State 6, Penn State 4**  
Michigan State 5, Minnesota 3

### Jan. 20 Scores

Michigan State 5, Minnesota 3  
Notre Dame 2, Wisconsin 2 (OT, ND 3x3 W)

### Jan. 24 Score

Michigan 5, Penn State 1

### Jan. 25 Scores

Minnesota 9, Wisconsin 4  
Notre Dame 6, Michigan State 3

### Jan. 26 Scores

Wisconsin 4, Minnesota 3  
Penn State 5, Michigan 2  
Notre Dame 1, Michigan St. 1 (OT, ND SW W)

### Feb. 1 Games

Wisconsin at Michigan State, 7 p.m.  
**Notre Dame at Ohio State, 7 p.m.**  
Michigan at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

### Feb. 2 Games

Wisconsin at Michigan State, 5:30 p.m.  
Michigan at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

**Notre Dame at Ohio State, 8 p.m.**

### Feb. 8 Games

Minnesota at Penn State, 6 p.m.  
Michigan State at Michigan, 7:30 p.m.

**Ohio State at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.**

### Feb. 9 Games

Minnesota at Penn State, 6 p.m.  
Michigan State at Michigan, 7 p.m.

**Ohio State at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.**

### Feb. 12 Game

Michigan at Notre Dame, 7:05 p.m.

level," Rohlik said. "Ryan took advantage of that when he was here.

"No matter if it's at that level, Europe or any pro level, the opportunities are there and if our guys chase their dreams and it ends whenever that is, they can rely on that piece of paper from Ohio State to take care of their families the rest of their lives."

### Taming The Lions

Since BSB last went to press, the Buckeyes swept Penn State 4-1 and 6-4 on the road Jan. 18-19. Jobst and Laczynski each had a goal and four assists along with Westlund's five points in the series.

In the opener, Westlund scored twice and Laczynski had a goal and two assists while Romeo stopped 24 of 25 shots. The Buckeyes led 3-1 after two periods and got a late goal by junior Ronnie Hein vs. the Nittany Lions (13-8-2, 5-7-1-1).

In the rematch, PSU scored two short-handed goals, but the Buckeyes broke a 3-3 tie on goals by Joshua (his second of the game), Westlund and Jobst.

For a complete recap of Ohio State's series at Penn State go to BSB's BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all Buckeye Sports Bulletin subscribers.



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# Heinselman Shining After Shedding Redshirt

It is not extremely common for a true freshman to compete at the Division I level, and it is particularly rare for first-year wrestlers to excel on the mat.

## ON THE MAT Joe Dempsey

Freshman Malik Heinselman received that opportunity when the 125-pounder peeled off his redshirt at Indiana on Jan. 11. Heinselman used a go-ahead takedown with 1:15 left to defeat three-time NCAA Qualifier Elijah Oliver, 3-2.

"It definitely gave me some confidence," Heinselman said. "Before that match I was having a little bit of worries about pulling (the redshirt), and then I won that match. It gave me a little confidence for the rest of the season, so I'm ready."

The Castle Rock, Colo., native has experience with success. Heinselman was a three-time 5A Colorado state champion, compiling a 168-9 record along with three freestyle championships and a Greco-Roman title at the prestigious Fargo (N.D.) Cadet National Championships.

"Those are just high school matches," Heinselman said of his prior success. "They're great while they last, but you've got to keep moving forward and getting better. It's definitely helped me transition into college though."

Heinselman, who studies Health Science, said he's gained some knowledge in class regarding his diet, which differs from most wrestlers.

"I've just got to keep eating a lot more," Heinselman said. "They want me to gain weight still so eat more carbs, protein, just pretty much everything."

While gaining weight and training strenuously, Heinselman has been finding his place within the team. Head coach Tom Ryan said that he and the coaching staff knew Heinselman belonged in the elite wrestling program at Ohio State but wanted to ensure that the freshman held that self-belief.

"It's been going great, I mean, I belong here," Heinselman said when asked of his transition and Ryan's comments. "Everyone wants to come here and do the best they can, and that's what I want to do, so I fit in perfectly."

Following a tough loss to No. 13 Drew Mattin of Michigan Jan. 25, Heinselman is 14-5 as a true freshman, which might come as a surprise to some, but not Ryan. The Buckeye wrestling coach knew Heinselman would be a perfect fit from his very first evaluation.

"He's beautiful," Ryan told BSB. "He's got a great mom, he's got a great dad. I fell in love with this kid in three seconds. I walked in the back office and I watched him on video. I was asking our recruiting coordinator, Coach (Anthony) Ralph, 'Can you please show me - what do we got lightweights? We need a life-timer.' And he said, 'Watch this kid from Colorado.' I walked in - I think it was maybe six seconds - I saw his energy on the mat. I said I need to call him. I want to call him."

"I ended up watching a couple of his matches, and then I got to meet him and meet his parents, and he committed right away. We were his first choice. We didn't know it. And he wasn't our first choice until I watched him and then it was, 'We've got to get this guy.' Great student, I think he's almost like a 4.0, lives a clean life, just honest, kind, he's just like his face looks. I mean, his face sums him up."

### Hayes Leads In New Role

Fourth-year junior Ke-Shawn Hayes has stepped into the 157-pound role for Ohio State following a 29-7 sophomore campaign at 149 pounds.

The junior from Kansas City, Mo., took third place at the Big Ten championships, qualifying for the NCAA tournament. Although his seven major decisions tied for the team lead and his eight tech falls ranked second on the team and within the top 10 nationally, Hayes said the season was a disappointment.

"I feel like I underperformed last year and I just took a lot in, learned a lot," Hayes said. "It was my first full season, and it was a lot more of a grind than I expected. That's really what I learned from it is just to be prepared for it to be long and grueling - and to be ready to go when it becomes time for Big Tens and nationals."

After coming in as a 141-pounder, Hayes wrestled at 149 as a sophomore and is up to 157 as a junior. The Kansas City (Mo.) Park Hill product admitted the difficulty of gaining mass while training at a high level.

"I've been trying to bulk up but when we go twice a day most days, it's hard to keep weight on," Hayes said. "I've been working with the coaches and our strength coach Riley Ross a lot and just trying to keep my weight up, which is different than what most wrestlers would say. But with the two-a-days, most days I've been trying to keep my weight up, so I feel fine about it."

Hayes chooses to look at the challenge as an advantage - he feels like not cutting so much weight helps his endurance, and it shows.

"The biggest advantage is just that I have more energy when I'm out there wrestling," Hayes said. "I don't get the heavy legs when you're out there. Because I know whenever I was wrestling 141, as soon as the match starts you're like, 'Aw, my legs already feel heavy.'"

"But now for me it's like I can finish a match and I still won't have that feeling in my legs. But I just have to work on using that advantage more than I have already, and just keep pushing the pace and make sure that I make the most of that advantage."

Now in his fourth year in the program, Hayes has grown under strong leadership and has competed with some of the most elite athletes in the sport. Using that experience Hayes has become a strong leader within the Buckeye locker room.

"I would just say normal day-to-day things,"

Hayes said of how he's taken on a bigger leadership role. "Just doing what I'm supposed to do, getting the job done in the classroom is an important thing for me as well, and then just being someone that the guys can talk to. Being a friend to the younger guys, giving them someone to look up to and giving them someone that they can talk to if they need advice or something is a way that I help out."

Hayes, who earned Academic All-Big Ten and National Wrestling Coaches Association All-Academic honors, has made an impression on his coach.

"He's just a great leader, just a tremendous student," Ryan said of Hayes. "He cares about the team, he's a good teammate - just a guy that you want on your side. And we all want for him what we know he's capable of, that's all we want for him is what he's capable of, no more."

Ryan sees the potential for Hayes to be great at Ohio State but admits that the student-athlete must push himself even harder to actualize it. Hayes, who is the No. 7-ranked 157-pounder, is 14-4 on the season after a tight, 3-2 loss to No. 11 Alec Pantaleo of Michigan. Ryan is confident Hayes is capable of beating anyone in the weight class, but he must take the next step.

"I think he's growing mentally," Ryan said. "I mean, Ke-Shawn is an incredible talent. He's got strength, he's got speed. Ke-Shawn just has to believe. Ke-Shawn has to know that there's a level of fight that's needed that he's just not quite competing at."

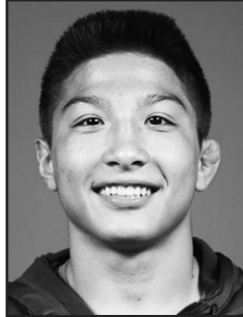
"It's amazing, right? Someone can compete their whole life and then to get to this level, and then for someone else to just say you're just not competing hard enough. And they go, 'I've done this my whole life, what do you mean I'm not competing?' There's a level of competition, there's a level of focus and effort that's needed to excel at this level, and he's ready. And he's been focusing on that."

### Romero Progresses

Redshirt freshman Kaleb Romero has been coming along for the Buckeyes in the 165-pound weight class.

Romero, a Mechanicsburg, Ohio, native, went 202-3 on his way to four Ohio state wrestling titles, including consecutive 52-0 seasons to cap his prep career.

Romero was so dominant that he did not yield an offensive point his entire senior season, earning Division III Most Outstanding Wrestler honors.



Malik Heinselman

## BIG Wrestling

	Conf.			Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.
Iowa	5	0	1.000	10	0	1.000
Michigan	5	0	1.000	9	0	1.000
Penn State	5	0	1.000	9	0	1.000
Minnesota	4	1	.800	11	2	.846
<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.750</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.875</b>
Nebraska	3	2	.600	9	3	.750
Rutgers	2	2	.500	8	4	.667
Purdue	2	3	.400	5	6	.455
Michigan State	2	4	.333	5	6	.455
Northwestern	1	3	.250	3	6	.333
Illinois	1	4	.200	2	5	.286
Wisconsin	1	5	.167	6	5	.546
Indiana	1	5	.167	4	9	.308
Maryland	0	4	.000	0	7	.000

After an 11-1 redshirt season when he reached the finals in the three tournaments he competed in, Romero earned the 165-pound spot for the Scarlet and Gray.

Romero, who was also a first-team All-Ohio quarterback, fell to 7-5 on the season after losing to No. 7 Logan Massa of Michigan. Ryan said he can sense some frustration from the talented redshirt freshman, but he thinks Romero will find success if he stays the course.

"I like to say if you're climbing a mountain-top, when you're the guy climbing the mountain you might be a hundred yards from the top and you don't know it," Ryan said. "Everyone else can see it, but you don't know it, and I feel like he's right there."

"I feel like he continues to work hard, his wrestling's improving - he just needs to get it done. He's had a couple matches where when you look at the Indiana match, you look at the North Carolina State match, opportunities to score - he's had more than his opponent, but his opponents come away with a win. So we kind of look at that stuff as well."

"It's soccer - we had 10 shots on goal, they had two. They put them in, we didn't. You've got to put them in, so you've got to be a finisher. So that's a big thing for Kaleb, is being a finisher."



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# Synchronized Swimmers Committed To Service

By JOE DEMPSEY  
Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

The Ohio State synchronized swimming team is seeking its third consecutive national championship, but the team's impact goes far beyond its performance in the pool. The Buckeyes do not just work tirelessly at their craft, but they have made a program-wide commitment to community service.

With their competitions taking place during the spring semester, the Buckeyes devote their free time in the fall toward helping others. Having already worked with 15 organizations since September, the Ohio State synchronized swimming team has made an impact around the greater Columbus area and beyond.

Each member of the team devotes at least 24 hours toward various service opportunities per semester. Some examples of the team's service include reading to children at the

Stiles Elementary School with the 2nd & 7 Foundation, volunteering for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Light the Night walk for cancer research, assisting with the Columbus Metropolitan Library and spending Saturday mornings beautifying multiple local parks.

The synchronized swimming team also impacts the community beyond the city of Columbus. The team has made a commitment to ensuring all of its competitions are zero-waste events, where trash is sorted to make sure the team and its fans are mindful of their impact on the environment.

In addition to all of the community service, the team puts on an event called Sync Cancer, inviting everyone to McCorkle Aquatic Pavilion to swim laps and raise money for cancer research for The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center. The event was created to honor former Ohio State synchronized swimmer Emily Marsh Fleming and her courageous fight with breast cancer. In just six

years since its advent, Sync Cancer has raised more than \$42,000 to support cancer research.

Team members also dedicate their little free time on weekends to helping the local Columbus community. Senior captain Rachel Warren said the team is grateful for all that it has and wants to continue the program's strong tradition of service.

"This community gives us so much that we want to give back, like a day to all of the people that are helping us be a part of it, like our fans, the kids," Warren said. "We do 2nd & 7 Foundation, which was started by football players here. And we read to second-graders, and it's the coolest thing."

"We walk in every time they're like, 'Oh, are you the football team?' And we're like, 'No, we're not, but close!' But it's just so cool to see little kids who are from all over Columbus who are just so inspired by Ohio State Buckeyes. It's really cool."

Warren expressed her gratitude for the people in the community who are always there to

support the synchronized swimming team. That attitude of gratitude has been instilled in her since she first came to Columbus. Head coach Holly Vargo-Brown and assistant coach Suzanna Hyatt have made a point to emphasize all that the team has to be thankful for as Buckeyes.

"We feel a very strong commitment to making sure our student-athletes remain grateful for everything that they've been provided, the resources, the fabulous facility, the amazing equipment, all the stuff that goes into being a varsity athlete at Ohio State," Vargo-Brown said. "So from our level, from the coaching staff, we feel an extreme sense of gratefulness for that, so we have a commitment with each other to make sure that every student-athlete that comes in gets that and understands that."

Having national championship expectations coincide with the expectations of doing community service and excelling in the classroom, an Ohio State synchronized swimmer has a lot on her plate. Vargo-Brown understands the lofty expectations can be stressful for the student-athletes but is confident the ones that she brought in are up to the task.

"You would think, you want to win a championship, you're going to bring in the very best," Vargo-Brown said when asked what she looks for in recruits. "Certainly we're looking for the very best, but if the very best person does not have the ability to commit to the other things, it's not going to work in our program. It's just not going to work."

"So we're looking for both of those things. When I'm recruiting, I'm saying that to prospects. I'm explaining what it takes to be a part of this team. It's an elite team regardless of their successes. The way they function is as an elite team, because they're balancing these things that we as a team are committed to, and they have to have the energy and the belief that it's the right thing to do in order to do that."

Vargo-Brown said that when she and Hyatt took over the program, their commitment to service was met with good feedback and the swimmers basically did what was expected of them at the beginning. Now in their seventh year together, Vargo-Brown said something has happened in the culture of the program where the swimmers lead the way in an ongoing commitment to service.

The student-athletes often come to their coaches with ideas of different types of service they can do. Vargo-Brown said that if she left today, the team's commitment to service would continue because it's embedded in the culture now.

The synchronized swimming team recently hosted recruits for their first competition of the season, where they excelled against Wheaton University and the University of Michigan's teams, winning the solo, duet, trio, and Figure A and B competitions. Vargo-Brown said the student-athletes on her team have a great sense of who belongs in Columbus and give their input when asked.

"We will hear she's going to be a good Buckeye – that's the energy they will give to us," Vargo-Brown said. "They won't say, 'Oh, she's going to be the best synchronized swimmer ever,' or 'Oh, she's so smart.' They will say, 'She's going to be a good Buckeye, or she's not going to be a good Buckeye,' because they know what it takes."

*In order to better introduce BSB readers to Ohio State's Olympic sports teams and athletes, we have shifted to more feature-oriented coverage of the various squads. Buckeye Sports Bulletin will provide a roundup of all the games, matches and meets involving OSU's teams each Monday on our BuckeyeSports.com website, free to all print subscribers.*



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## 2019 FOOTBALL (All Times TBA)

**Aug. 31** FLORIDA ATLANTIC.  
**Sept. 7** CINCINNATI; **14** at Indiana; **21** MIAMI (OHIO); **28** at Nebraska.  
**Oct. 5** MICHIGAN STATE; **18** at Northwestern; **26** WISCONSIN.  
**Nov. 9** MARYLAND; **16** at Rutgers; **23** PENN STATE; **30** at Michigan.  
**Dec. 7** Big Ten Championship Game at Indianapolis.

## MEN'S BASKETBALL (13-6, 3-5 BIG TEN)

**Nov. 1** UNC PEMBROKE (exhibition), W 81-63; **7** at Cincinnati, W 64-56; **11** PFW, W 107-61; **15** at Creighton, W 69-60; **18** SOUTH CAROLINA STATE, W 89-61; **20** SAMFORD, W 68-50; **23** CLEVELAND STATE at St. John Arena, W 89-62; **28** SYRACUSE, L 72-62.  
**Dec. 2** MINNESOTA, W 79-59; **5** vs. Illinois at Chicago, W 77-67; **15** BUCKNELL, W 73-71; **18** YOUNGSTOWN STATE, W 75-56; **22** vs. UCLA at Chicago, W 80-66; **29** HIGH POINT, W 82-64.  
**Jan. 5** (8) MICHIGAN STATE, L 86-77; **9** at Rutgers, L 64-61; **12** at Iowa, L 72-62; **18** (19) MARYLAND, L 75-61; **23** PURDUE, L 79-67; **26** at Nebraska, W 70-60; **29** at Michigan, 9 p.m.  
**Feb. 2** RUTGERS, Noon; **7** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** at Indiana, 1 p.m.; **14** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.; **17** at Michigan State, 1 p.m.; **20** NORTHWESTERN, 8:30 p.m.; **23** at Maryland, 2 p.m.; **26** IOWA, 7 p.m.  
**March 2** at Purdue, 2 p.m.; **6** at Northwestern, 9 p.m.; **10** WISCONSIN, 4:30 p.m.; 13-17 Big Ten Tournament at Chicago.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL (7-10, 3-5 BIG TEN)

**Oct. 28** IUP (exhibition), W 72-50.  
**Nov. 6** (22) USF, L 71-47; **9** DETROIT MERCY, W 55-41; **11** at (2) UConn, L 85-53; **16** at Sacramento State, canceled; **18** at Stanford, canceled; **29** NORTH CAROLINA, W 76-69.  
**Dec. 2** CINCINNATI, W 69-56; **5** at Washington, L 69-59; **16** FLORIDA at St. John Arena, W 46-41; **20** vs. Butler at West Palm Beach, Fla., L 66-53; **21** vs. Virginia Tech at West Palm Beach, Fla., L 81-73; **28** at Purdue, L 60-42; **31** NEBRASKA, L 78-69.  
**Jan. 5** at (4) Maryland, L 75-69; **10** (25) INDIANA, W 55-50; **14** (25) MICHIGAN STATE, W 65-55; **17** at Penn State, W 76-71 (OT); **20** at Michigan, L 62-58; **24** (11) MARYLAND, L 70-57; **28** at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m.; **31** ILLINOIS, 7 p.m.  
**Feb. 3** at Northwestern, 4:30 p.m.; **6** PENN STATE, 7 p.m.; **10** IOWA, 4 p.m.; **14** at Rutgers, 7 p.m.; **17** WISCONSIN, 2 p.m.; **21** at Michigan State, 6 p.m.; **28** at Wisconsin, 9 p.m.  
**March 3** RUTGERS, TBA; **6-10** Big Ten Tournament at Indianapolis.

## MEN'S GYMNASTICS (0-1)

**Jan. 12** Rocky Mountain Open at Colorado Spring, Colo., 4th/6 (398.500); **26** at (1) Oklahoma, L 423.950-395.400.  
**Feb. 2** at Michigan, 4 p.m.; **15/17** Winter Cup at Las Vegas.  
**March 2** ARNOLD CHALLENGE, 1:30 p.m.; **8** MINNESOTA/NEBRASKA, 6 p.m.; **16** at Iowa, 7 p.m.; **24** ILLINOIS, 5 p.m.  
**April 5-6** Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa; **19** NCAA Qualifier at Champaign, Ill.; **20** NCAA Championships at Champaign, Ill.

## WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS (3-1, 2-0 BIG TEN)

**Jan. 5** at (7) Georgia, L 196.600-194.900; **12** at (25) N.C. State, W 196.025-194.550; **19** at Penn State, W 196.075-194.850; **27** at Michigan State, W 196.200-195.225.  
**Feb. 2** IOWA, Noon; **8** at Maryland, 7 p.m.; **16** NEBRASKA, 4 p.m.; **23** Big Five Meet at Toledo, Ohio, 6 p.m.  
**March 2** WEST VIRGINIA, 4 p.m.; TEMPLE, 4 p.m.; **9** BOWLING GREEN, 4 p.m.; **17** at West Virginia, 2 p.m.; vs. N.C. State at Morgantown, W.Va., 2 p.m.; vs. Penn State at Morgantown, W.Va., 2 p.m.; **23** Big Ten Championships at University Park, Pa.  
**April 4** NCAA Regional First Round; **5** NCAA Regional Second Round; **6** NCAA Regional Final; **19** NCAA Semifinals at Fort Worth, Texas; **20** NCAA Championships at Fort Worth, Texas.

## MEN'S ICE HOCKEY (15-5-4, 8-3-3 BIG TEN)

**Oct. 12-13** at Arizona State, W 3-2; W 3-0; **19-20** MASSACHUSETTS, L 6-3; W 3-1; **26** (15)

BOWLING GREEN, L 8-2; **27** at Bowling Green, T 2-2 (OT).

**Nov. 2-3** at (5) Notre Dame, W 1-0; L 2-1; **9-10** at Colgate, W 3-0; W 1-0; **16-17** WISCONSIN, W 4-0; W 3-1; **23-24** (6) PENN STATE, L 4-3; W 5-2; **30-Dec. 1** at Minnesota, T 2-2 (OSU 3x3 OT Win); T 2-2 (OSU 3x3 OT Win).  
**Dec. 28-29** MERCYHURST, W 3-1; W 5-4.  
**Jan. 4-5** at Michigan State, T 7-7 (OSU 3x3 OT Loss); W 6-0; **11-12** MICHIGAN, L 2-1; W 4-2; **18-19** at (13) Penn State, W 4-1; W 6-4.  
**Feb. 1-2** NOTRE DAME, 7 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **8-9** at Wisconsin, 8 p.m.; 8 p.m.; **15-16** MINNESOTA, 6 p.m.; 6 p.m.; **22-23** at Michigan, 6:30 p.m.; 6 p.m.  
**March 1-2** MICHIGAN STATE, 6:30 p.m.; 5 p.m.; **8-10** Big Ten Tournament First Round; **16** Big Ten Tournament Semifinals; **23** Big Ten Tournament Finals; **29-31** NCAA Regionals.

**April 11/13** NCAA Frozen Four at Buffalo, N.Y.

## WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY (15-11-0, 9-9-0 WCHA)

**Sept. 28-29** at Quinnipiac, W 3-2; W 3-2.  
**Oct. 5-6** COLGATE, W 4-3; L 5-2; **12-13** MINNESOTA STATE, W 4-0; W 2-1 (OT); **19-20** at Minnesota, L 3-0; W 3-2; **26-27** at St. Lawrence, L 3-2; W 6-1.  
**Nov. 2-3** ST. CLOUD STATE, W 3-2; W 3-2; **9-10** at Bemidji State, L 2-1; L 4-2; **16-17** MINNESOTA DULUTH, W 3-1; W 4-1.  
**Dec. 1-2** at Minnesota State, L 3-0; W 2-0; **15-16** MERCYHURST, W 2-1 (OT); W 9-2.  
**Jan. 5-6** MINNESOTA WHITECAPS (exhibition games), L 3-2 (OT); L 3-1; **11-12** (1) WISCONSIN, W 1-0; L 5-2; **18-19** at Minnesota Duluth, L 5-2; L 6-3; **25-26** (2) MINNESOTA, L 7-2; L 7-1.  
**Feb. 1-2** at St. Cloud State, 4:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.; **8-9** BEMIDJI STATE, 6:07 p.m.; 3:07 p.m.; **22-23** at Wisconsin, 8:07 p.m.; 4:07 p.m.  
**March 1-3** WCHA Quarterfinals; **9-10** WCHA Final Faceoff at Minneapolis; **16** NCAA Quarterfinals; **22/24** NCAA Frozen Four at Hamden, Conn.

## SWIMMING & DIVING

**Sept. 27** ALABAMA, Men: W 156-144; Women: W 181-119.  
**Oct. 12/13** TEXAS A&M, Men: W 199-153; Women: L 209-142; **13** LOUISVILLE, Men: W 192-161; **27** vs. Virginia Tech at Christiansburg, Va., Men: L 182-171; Women: W 225-128; vs. Penn State at Christiansburg, Va., Men: W 250-103; Women: W 231-122.  
**Nov. 2** DENISON, Men: W 221-75; Women: W 224-75; AKRON, Women: W 174.5-124.5; **9** KENYON (exhibition); **10-11** ACC/Big Ten Challenge at West Lafayette, Ind., Men: Big Ten wins 179-174;

Women: Big Ten wins 251-102; **15-17** OHIO STATE INVITATIONAL, Men: 1st/9; Women: 4th/11.

**Jan. 4-5** at Florida, Men: L 317.50-263.50; Women: L 403-178; vs. Kentucky at Gainesville, Fla., Men: W 336-245; Women: L 375-206; **19** at Michigan, Men: L 202-98; Women: L 196-104; **25-26** Shamrock Invitational at Notre Dame, Ind., Men: 1st/4; Women: 3rd/4.  
**Feb. 16-17** WINTER INVITATIONAL; **20-23** Women's Big Ten Championships at Bloomington, Ind.; **27-March 2** Men's Big Ten Championships at Iowa City, Iowa.  
**March 3** LAST CHANCE MEET (women); **10** Last Chance Meet at TBA (men); **14-16** CSCAA National Invitational at Cleveland; NCAA Zone Diving at West Lafayette, Ind.; **20-23** Women's NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas; **27-30** Men's NCAA Championships at Austin, Texas.

## MEN'S TENNIS (5-0)

**Jan. 7** COLUMBUS CHALLENGER, NTS; **20** CLEVELAND STATE, W 5-0, W 4-0; XAVIER, Cancelled; **26** VCU, W 4-0; **27** ARKANSAS, W 4-1; TOLEDO, W 4-0.  
**Feb. 2** STANFORD, Noon; **8** ARIZONA STATE, 6 p.m.; **10** GEORGIA, Noon; **12** SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 6 p.m.; **15** ITA National Indoor Team Championships at Chicago; **20** KENTUCKY, 2 p.m.; **24** NOTRE DAME, Noon.  
**March 1** at Penn State, 4 p.m.; **11** at Texas A&M, 7 p.m.; **14** at Texas, 6:30 p.m.; **22** MICHIGAN STATE, 6 p.m.; **24** at Michigan, Noon; **29** WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **31** MINNESOTA, Noon.  
**April 5** at Nebraska, 7 p.m.; **7** at Iowa, Noon; **12** at Northwestern, 7 p.m.; **14** at Illinois, 1 p.m.; **19** PURDUE, 6 p.m.; **21** INDIANA, Noon; **26-28** Big Ten Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich.  
**May 3** NCAA First & Second Round; **10** NCAA Regional; **16** NCAA Championships at Orlando, Fla.

## WOMEN'S TENNIS (2-0)

**Jan. 19** Michigan Tournament at Ann Arbor, Mich., NTS; **26** ITA Kickoff at Atlanta vs. Georgia Tech, W 4-0; **27** ITA Kickoff at Atlanta vs. Kentucky, W 4-1.  
**Feb. 1** TEXAS, 6 p.m.; **3** NOTRE DAME, Noon; **20** CLEVELAND STATE, 10 a.m.; AKRON, 6 p.m.; **23** at Arizona State, 2 p.m.; **24** vs. TCU at Tempe, Ariz., Noon.  
**March 3** BAYLOR, Noon; **13** at UNLV, 10 a.m.; **17** PENN STATE, Noon; **22** at Nebraska, 5 p.m.; **24** IOWA, Noon; **29** at Michigan State, 5 p.m.; **31** at Michigan, 1 p.m.  
**April 5** WISCONSIN, 6 p.m.; **7** MINNESOTA, Noon; **12** PURDUE, 6 p.m.; **14** INDIANA, Noon; **20** at Northwestern, 11 a.m.; **21** at Illinois, Noon.

## INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

**Jan. 11-12** Kentucky Invite at Lexington, Ky., NTS; **19** Simmons-Harvey Big Ten Invitational at Ann Arbor, Mich., NTS; **24-26** New Balance at New York, NTS.

**Feb. 1-2** Rod McCravy Memorial at Lexington, Ky.; **7-9** Tiger Paw Invite at Clemson, S.C.; **15** BUCKEYE TUNE UP; **16** Alex Wilson Invitational at Notre Dame, Ind.; **22-23** Big Ten Championships at Ann Arbor, Mich.

**March 8-9** NCAA Championships at Birmingham, Ala.

## MEN'S VOLLEYBALL (3-4, 0-1 MIVA)

**Jan. 4** CHARLESTON, W 3-0; **5** PENN STATE, W 3-1; **10** at (5) BYU, L 3-0; **12** at (11) Stanford, L 3-1; **18** GEORGE MASON, L 3-1; **19** ERSKINE, W 3-1; **26** at Ball State, L 3-1.  
**Feb. 1** SAINT FRANCIS, 7 p.m.; **2** LINCOLN MEMORIAL, 8 p.m.; **5** at Purdue Fort Wayne, 7 p.m.; **8** at U.C. Santa Barbara, 7 p.m.; **9** at Long Beach State, 10 p.m.; **15** at Lindenwood, 8 p.m.; **16** at Quincy, 8 p.m.; **21** LEWIS, 7 p.m.; **23** LOYOLA CHICAGO, 2 p.m.

**March 1/3** MCKENDREE, 7 p.m.; 2 p.m.; **8** at UCLA, 8 p.m.; **9** at USC, 11 p.m.; **15** LEES-MCRAE, 7 p.m.; **19** at Penn State, 7 p.m.; **22** LINDENWOOD, 7 p.m.; **23** QUINCY, 7 p.m.; **29** at Loyola Chicago, 8 p.m.; **30** at Lewis, 8 p.m.

**April 4** PURDUE FORT WAYNE, 7 p.m.; **6** BALL STATE, 7 p.m.; **13** MIVA Quarterfinals; **17** MIVA Semifinals; **20** MIVA Finals; **26** NCAA Play-In Match at campus sites; **30** NCAA Play-In Match at Long Beach, Calif.

**May 2** NCAA Semifinals at Long Beach, Calif.; **4** NCAA Finals at Long Beach, Calif.

## WRESTLING (7-1, 3-1 BIG TEN)

**Nov. 3** vs. Navy at Owings Mills, Md., W 28-9; **11** Ohio Intercollegiate Open at Cleveland, NTS; **16** at California Baptist, W 42-0; **18** at Arizona State, W 22-17; **30-Dec. 1** Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational, 1st/43 (148).

**Dec. 9** (19) WISCONSIN, W 23-13.  
**Jan. 6** (4) N.C. STATE, W 26-10; **11** at Indiana, W 43-3; **13** MICHIGAN STATE, W 37-4; **25** (5) MICHIGAN, L 19-17.

**Feb. 1** at Illinois, 9 p.m.; **3** at Northwestern, 1 p.m.; **8** PENN STATE, 8:30 p.m.; **15** at Purdue, 7 p.m.; **17** NEBRASKA, 2 p.m.; **22** at Cornell, 6:30 p.m.

**March 9-10** Big Ten Championships at Minneapolis; **21-23** NCAA Championships at Pittsburgh.

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# Early NFL Departures Come With Pros And Cons

Not sure if this is a good ranking to be near the national top in, but Ohio State was No. 2 in the country this year for early exits to the NFL. The bad part of this is losing talent early. The good part is that it means Ohio State must be doing something right in recruiting and developing talent.

## EXNER POINT Rich Exner

Some 135 players nationally were accepted into the NFL draft with college eligibility remaining. Alabama led the way with seven. Next, with six each, were Ohio State and Oklahoma.

This list includes 32 players such as Dre'Mont Jones who graduated with eligibility remaining but decided to go ahead and enter the draft.

Most of the players – 103 – were not graduates but were eligible for the NFL draft because they were at least three years removed from high school. This list included Buckeyes Nick Bosa, Dwayne Haskins, Michael Jordan, Kendall Sheffield and Mike Weber.

In all, 21 players from the Big Ten were part of the 135. That's the second most of any conference. Thirty-six were from SEC schools, 18 from the ACC, 12 from the Big 12 and nine from the Pac-12.

Others from the Big Ten:

Penn State (5) – Offensive tackle Ryan Bates (graduate), defensive tackle Kevin Givens, guard Connor McGovern, defensive

end Shareef Miller and running back Miles Sanders.

Iowa (4) – Defensive end Anthony Nelson (graduate), tight end Noah Fant, tight end T.J. Hockenson and defensive Amani Hooker.

Michigan (4) – Linebacker Devin Bush, defensive end Rashan Gary, tight end Zach Gentry and defensive back David Long.

Michigan State (1) – Defensive back Justin Layne.

Wisconsin (1) – Offensive tackle David Edwards.

### Mock Season

We're now into mock season, as in mock drafts. Anything being said now is just a guess. But it's interesting to start looking at things.

The consensus seems to be that Bosa will be chosen first when the draft gets under way on April 25. An NFL.com mock draft lists Bosa first and Haskins sixth overall. USA Today also listed Bosa as first and Haskins sixth. No other Buckeyes were listed in the first round by either.

Going sixth, according to the current draft order, would place Haskins with the New York Giants. The next quarterback, Missouri's Drew Lock, would go 10th to the Denver Broncos, according to USA Today. The difference is huge in terms of dollars because first-round salaries are mostly predetermined.

The first overall pick will receive a \$34.9 million contract, including a \$23.4 million signing bonus according to the salary website spotrac.com. The sixth pick will get a \$25.5 million deal, with a signing bonus of \$16.6 million. And the 10th pick will get an \$18.7 million contract, with a \$11.7 million signing bonus.

Drop to 15th, and you'll be worth a mere \$14.6 million, including a signing bonus of \$9.5 million.

This is why I questioned whether it actually was wise for Haskins to leave Ohio State early. I wondered whether he would be the 15th or 20th pick. Moving up five spots, as you can see, is worth \$5 million to \$10 million.

But if these expectations hold at sixth overall, Haskins made the right move financially. There's very little room to improve from there.

### Signs Of A New Era

Georgia quarterback transfers to Ohio State.

Ohio State quarterback transfers to Miami.

Alabama quarterback transfers to Oklahoma.

Oklahoma quarterback transfers to West Virginia.

At Penn State, published reports say up to 11 transfers out have been confirmed, with two more possible.

All this within a couple of weeks of the close of the last college football season. This certainly is a different time in college football.

Just as shown with the case of NFL prospects sitting out bowl games, this rash of transfers is a reminder that the college game isn't what it once was. Players don't go to school and stay there anymore.

But who could blame them? There's only one time in their lives that they have the opportunity to play college football. Coaches switch schools freely. Opening up the same opportunities to players is long overdue.

But, as a fan, that doesn't mean it's a good thing. It's just the reality of the game these days.

### Humor From The NCAA

I'm sure the NCAA doesn't mean this as humor, but the published guide on transfer rules had me laughing out loud when I was researching the restrictions that still exist for the players. Generally, players are required to sit out a year, unlike coaches, when transferring from one major college to another.

It's the stated reasoning that gave me pause.

Under the heading "When can I play," this is the explanation:

"Generally, you need to spend one academic year at your new school as a full-time student before you are eligible to compete. This time is called an academic year of residence and is designed to allow you to become comfortable in your new environment. Requiring student-athletes to sit out of competition for a year after transferring encourages them to make decisions motivated by academics as well as athletics. Most student-athletes who are not eligible to compete immediately benefit from a year to adjust to their new school and focus on their classes."

So, it really has nothing to do with coaches and schools not wanting to lose their players to a competitor prematurely?

### Buckeyes Robbed Of Super Bowl

The no-call on an obvious interference penalty in the NFC Championship Game – I call it the worst no-call in the history of the forward pass – cost six Ohio State Buckeyes a trip to the Super Bowl.

Yes, in case you were not counting, the New Orleans Saints roster numbers six former Buckeyes: cornerback Eli Apple, safety Kurt Coleman, safety Vonn Bell, cornerback Marshon Lattimore, wide receiver Michael Thomas and wide receiver Ted Ginn.

But the no-call did send ex-Buckeye Jake McQuaide, a long snapper, to the Super Bowl as a member of the Los Angeles Rams. Two ex-Bucks are on the New England Patriots roster – defensive end John Simon and defensive back Nate Ebner.

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# Issues With Defense, Discipline Never Got Fixed

I was just editing Mark Rea's column for this issue, and as you may have already read, he constructed his column out of stuff that he had to edit out of columns during the football season due to space constraints. Ironically, I approached this issue of BSB with a similar notion – to try to address some things that I was unable to get to previously, due to similar space constraints. Mark was ahead of me in that he had already written his stuff. Here I go from scratch:

## The Defense Improved?

By closing the season with an impressive win over its rival, followed by victories in the Big Ten Championship Game against Northwestern and the Rose Bowl against Washington to finish 13-1 and No. 3 in the country, the Ohio State football team had a successful season by almost any measuring stick. Still, it's hard to ignore the fact that even in those season-defining wins in the final three games, the OSU defense yielded an uncharacteristic 28.7 points per game – hardly awe-inspiring.

Add in the Maryland fiasco the week before the Michigan game, and the Buckeyes yielded an average of 34.3 points and 449.5 yards over the final four games of the campaign, which would not indicate much improvement over the course of the season by the defense and make it little surprise that new coach Ryan Day all but cleaned coaching house on the defensive side of the ball after the season's conclusion.

To put those four-game figures in perspective, if the Buckeyes had posted those numbers for the full season, they would have finished 106th in scoring defense and 109th in yards allowed. As it is they finished tied for 51st while yielding 25.5 points for the season and 72nd with 403.4 opposing yards per game – not the type of rankings normally associated with championship teams.

Believe it or not, I bring these troubling numbers up as a backdrop for a defensive positive I saw down the stretch. I thought defensive end Chase Young came on strong in the big games to close the season. The 6-5, 265-pound sophomore had somewhat disappeared after his breakout performance in Ohio State's 27-26 victory at Penn State in the fifth game of the season.

In that game, Young seemed everywhere, recording six tackles, three for losses, a pair of sacks for 9 yards, two pass breakups and two quarterback hurries. I guess we expected the guy we gave the unenviable task of single-handedly replacing the production of all-everything Nick Bosa to play like he did against the Nittany Lions every game. Even Bosa couldn't have done that.

"After the Penn State game, I think everybody expected something crazy every game," Young admitted as the Buckeyes prepared for the Rose Bowl. "That's what I tried to do. I tried to put it on the line every game. But offenses prepare for defenses, and it's not going to go like that every game. (Defensive line coach Larry Johnson) said to me, 'Early success, everybody wants greatness game after game.' When I didn't play the games I wanted to play, I would get down on myself, like every player who wants to be great does. He told me that happens to everybody, and I just tried to finish strong."

That's what Young did.

He had a tackle for loss, a pass breakup and QB hurry against Michigan, three sacks and a forced fumble against Northwestern in the conference championship game and another sack against Washington in the Rose Bowl, giving him 10½ sacks for the season to rank 18th in the country.

## THE VIEW FROM 15TH & HIGH Frank Moskowitz, Publisher

To give you reason to be excited about Young heading into next season – and enjoy him because I have a feeling it will be his last go-around in Columbus – compare Young's sophomore numbers to those of Bosa as a sophomore in 2017. Young had two more sacks than Bosa's 8½, for 13 more yards, 74-61. Bosa had a slight edge in tackles for loss, 16 to 15½, but Young had more TFL yardage, 86-74. They each had 34 total tackles.

Bottom line? Look for Young to have a big season in 2019, just as Bosa would have had in '18 if he had been around and able for the whole season.

## They Never Fixed It

There are two things that you often think of when you think of championship teams. One is defense, and the other is discipline. We've already looked at Ohio State's defense in 2018. Then there was the matter of penalties – or too many of them – an issue that the Buckeyes never seemed able to correct.

It first showed its ugly face in week two with 11 flags for 120 yards against Rutgers, and it never really went away. In the team's impressive closing stretch drive, the Buckeyes had 12 penalties for 150 yards against Michigan, nine for 90 yards against Northwestern and nine more for 53 yards against the Huskies.

Ohio State finished the season averaging 8.3 penalties per game for 75.4 yards, to rank 124th and 126th, respectively, out of 129 teams. I'm sorry. That's embarrassing.

Trying to find some championship point of comparison, I looked back to the Buckeyes' 2002 and 2014 championship seasons. In 2002, OSU was one of the more disciplined teams in the country, being flagged for 5.4 penalties a game (20th) for an average of 40.8 yards (10th). In 2014, Ohio State was more middle of the pack with 5.6 penalties on average (50th) for 47.4 yards (43rd). While not up to '02 standards, that's a far cry from 2018's wild and woolly record.

While I have nothing to base this on other than watching the two for 10 and seven successful years, respectively, why am I not surprised that Jim Tressel's championship team had a better ranking as far as penalties than Urban Meyer's?

## The Flip Side Of QBs

As mentioned in this space last issue, we have extended Buckeye Sports Bulletin's year of the quarterback. We are now looking at opposing QB greats who have faced Ohio State in the BSB era with reprints from our archives as part of our Reprint Thursdays on the electronic BuckeyeSports.com. We started with Kliff Kingsbury, who got us to thinking about opposing quarterbacks when he was recently named head coach of the Arizona Cardinals and who had faced the Buckeyes with Texas Tech in that 2002 championship season.

On Jan. 16, we reprinted stories from John Elway's two games against the Buckeyes with Stanford in 1981 and '82. The Buckeyes won the first game in Palo Alto, 24-19, with Art Schlichter outdueling Elway, but the college and pro Hall of Famer put together one of his patented late-game marches, driving his team 80 yards in the final 1:38 to win the rematch, 23-20, in Ohio Stadium.

Elway threw the ball 63 times in the win, an

almost unheard of figure back then, completing 35 for 407 yards, a pair of scores including the 18-yard game-winner with 34 seconds to play, and three interceptions. He was 28 of 42 the year before in the loss, giving him 105 attempts in his two games against the Buckeyes. By comparison, Ohio State threw only 240 passes for the entire 12-game 1982 season.

You'll want to read what one NFL scout had to say when comparing Elway and Schlichter upon their meeting in '81.

Schlichter had this to say about his rival, who would go on to a Hall of Fame career in the NFL with the Denver Broncos: "He's got a fine arm and does a lot of things well. You have to be impressed with him. He uses his backs well."

We were supposed to go with reprints of another Hall of Famer on Jan. 23 in Steve Young, who played against the Buckeyes with BYU in the 1982 Holiday Bowl. Unfortunately, I had marked up the only copy of that paper we had in the archives for the purposes of paying our freelance help so we couldn't reproduce it.

For the record, the Buckeyes blasted BYU, 47-17. Young completed 27 of 45 passes for 341 yards and a pair of touchdowns but was sacked four times by the Buckeyes for 30 yards.

As the BSB that I was unable to reprint explained, "Young was of little use in the third quarter as BYU was able to run only one play from scrimmage in the first nine minutes of the stanza."

The Buckeyes took the kickoff to start the half at their 12, and Mike Tomczak marched his club 88 yards in 15 plays, eating up more than six minutes. When Young and the Cougars got the ball back, Garcia Lane picked him off on the first play to set up another TD, and then the Buckeyes forced a fumble on the ensuing kickoff to set up a field goal. By the time Young got the ball back in earnest with 6:00 to play in the third, his team trailed 34-10.

With no Holiday Bowl wrap-up to reprint we had to jump ahead to 1991, when Drew Bledsoe led his Washington State team into Ohio Stadium. While Bledsoe was one of the nation's most highly-rated quarterbacks, it was OSU's Kirk Herbstreit who stole the show in a 33-19 OSU victory. Making his first collegiate start in place of an injured Kent Graham, Herbstreit was 8 of 13 passing for 158 yards and a 39-yard TD pass to Bernard Edwards that kicked off the game's scoring. He also made his mark on the ground, where he rushed six times for 41 yards.

Bledsoe, meanwhile, was 26 of 43 for 287 yards and a touchdown. However, he gave up an interception that Roger Harper returned 42 yards for a pick-six to make it 14-0 with 4:14 to go in the first quarter.

"He was a tough player," Buckeye linebacker Steve Tovar said of Bledsoe. "He was a big guy, but he was a lot stronger than we thought he might be. He also hung in there tough when we rushed on him. We knew he was going to throw, but we didn't think he'd run that much."

The 6-5, 235-pound Bledsoe, who would go on to be the overall No. 1 pick in the 1993 NFL draft, carried 18 times for 24 yards.

On Jan. 30, we will be celebrating Super Bowl week by running reprints from Tom Brady's games against the Buckeyes. All past reprints are archived at BuckeyeSports.com for your information and enjoyment.

## Tate, We Hardly Knew Ye

As I write this, I am unclear on the eligibility status of either new Buckeye quarterback Justin Fields or new Miami (Fla.) quarterback Tate Martell. I guess I'm unclear because their status remains unclear, but the national whirlwind of players transferring here, there and everywhere is making me a little dizzy.

I wish that Martell had at least stuck around until Fields' status was determined. When you are dealing with the NCAA, nothing is guaranteed, and the sophomore-to-be from Las Vegas might have found himself the starter by default if Fields does not get his waiver. Or maybe the cocksure Martell would have beaten the Buckeye newcomer outright.

Just as Joe Burrow did before him, however, Martell had to do what he felt was best for him, and even from my viewpoint outside the program, it appeared that Fields was new coach Ryan Day's man.

Ohio State's loss proved Miami's gain.

"He's been received great," said my good friend Gary Ferman, publisher of CaneSport.com, of Martell for a story on BuckeyeSports.com. "Miami very badly needs to upgrade its level of talent at quarterback. And I think there's the anticipation that he can do that. So he's been received very well and will continue to be, and from this point it's up to him."

Ferman added that Martell's arrival "has created a feeling of excitement and anticipation."

Funny, it wasn't long ago that Buckeye fans felt exactly the same way when Meyer and his crew scored a coup by landing Martell. In fact, as Dwayne Haskins was rewriting the Ohio State passing record books this past season, Buckeye fans still clamored for Martell to take the field, even if only in red-zone situations.

Like many of you I am sure, I don't know that much about Fields, other than he was one of the most highly-rated quarterbacks coming out of high school in recent memory. I have never seen him play.

His freshman season at Georgia was similar to that of Martell, with little meaningful action. Fields was 27 of 39 passing for 328 yards, a 69.2 percentage and four scores against no picks. He rushed 42 times for 266 yards, a 6.3 yard average and four scores.

Martell was 23 of 28 passing for 269 yards and a sparkling 82.1 percentage with a TD and also no picks. He added 128 yards on 22 carries for a 5.8 yard average and two scores.

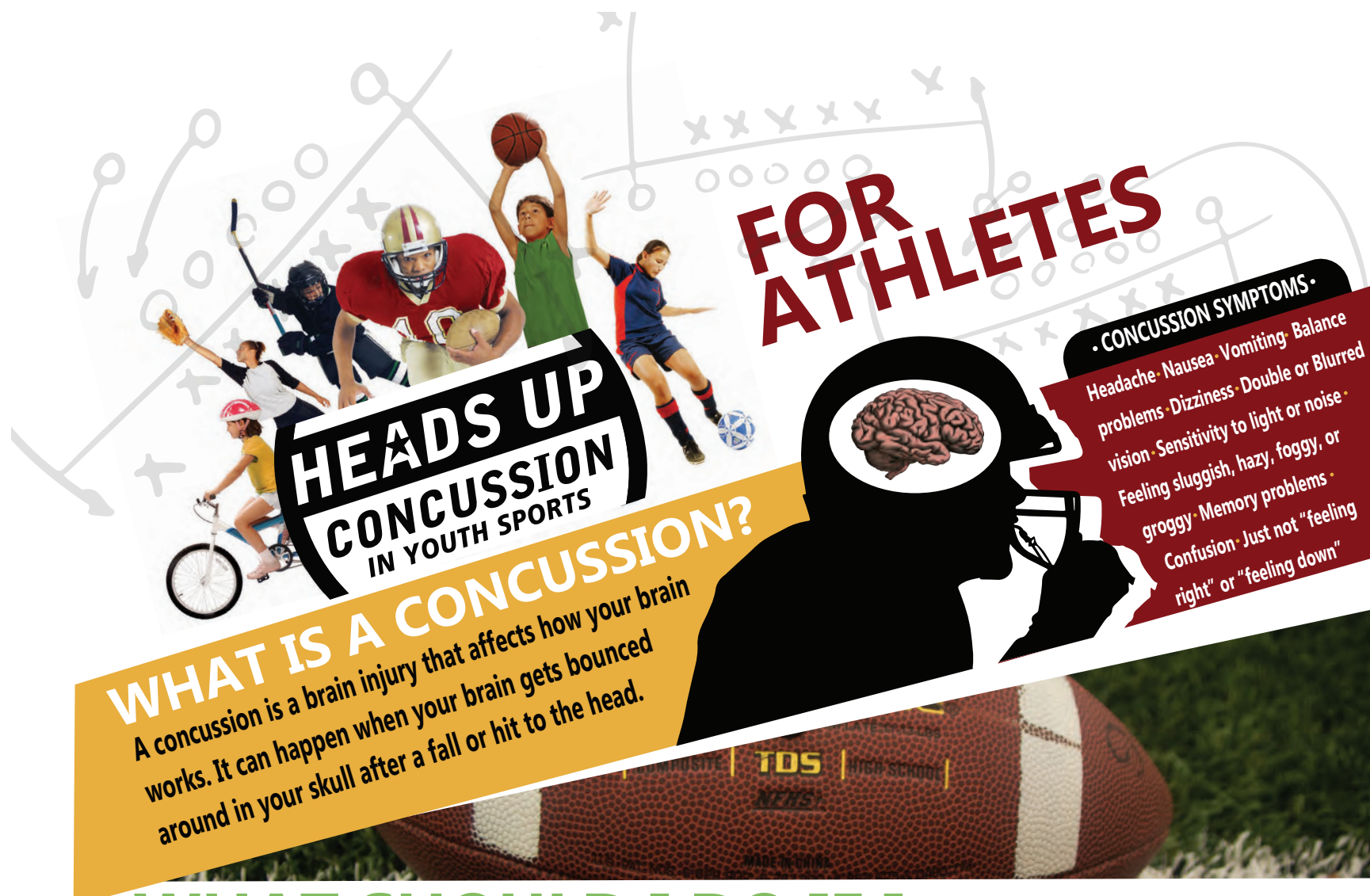
But the thing that always seemed to intrigue Buckeye fans, and me as well, was the so-called "it" factor that Martell brought with him from Las Vegas, a flair that he displayed in his limited action with the Buckeyes such as his play against Rutgers when he had a 51-yard scoring pass and a 47-yard touchdown run among other plays. It's a factor that you can't teach. Either you have it or you don't. Does Fields have it? We are going to find out.

I still remain baffled that a coaching staff that included such offensive gurus as Meyer, Day and Kevin Wilson couldn't come up with anything better than the completely lame plays that were run on the extremely rare instances that Martell was behind center once the meat of the Buckeye schedule rolled around. They would have been better off just snapping the ball and letting him freelance.

A spring battle between Martell and Fields would have certainly been entertaining and would have made both quarterbacks better players. As mentioned, who's to say Martell wouldn't have won the battle?

I know this much.

Won't both Buckeye and 'Cane fans – and coaches – be disappointed if their new quarterbacks aren't eligible for this season.



# FOR ATHLETES

## HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

#### CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Double or Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

**REPORT IT.** Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.

**GET CHECKED OUT.** If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a health care provider can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

**GIVE YOUR BRAIN TIME TO HEAL.** A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

### WHY SHOULD I TELL MY COACH & PARENTS ABOUT MY SYMPTOMS?

Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.

While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain and can even be fatal.

**GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW: IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON**

<http://www.healthy.ohio.gov/concussion>



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention